

AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE OF AFRIKANER IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY (1961-1980): THE ROLE OF POLITICS AND RUGBY

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Abstract

Afrikaner ideological hegemony was well established in the decade 1961-1970, both on the political terrain and on the rugby field. In both instances, Afrikaner political prowess and masculinity were dominant and Afrikaner ideological hegemony firmly established. On the political front, internal black resistance was successfully suppressed and the white parliamentary opposition fragmented and ineffective. The attainment of independence from the Commonwealth and the declaration of South Africa as a Republic in 1961 were supported by a sharp upswing on the economic front, which also coincided with major triumphs on the rugby field by the Springboks. However, the international scene was changing and the racist sports policies, enforced by the National Party government, translated into the All Blacks' refusal to tour South Africa. Prime Minister John Vorster made superficial changes to dismantle "petty" apartheid, which made it possible for the All Blacks to include Maori players in their team. On the political front, however, developments took place that soon eroded the monolithic Afrikaner ideological hegemony. The right-wingers split from the National Party to form the "Herstigste Nasionale Party" (or translated, the Reformed National Party). Although the break was insignificant at first, the cracks in the solidarity of the National Party soon widened. In the next decade (1971-1980) there was an upsurge in black resistance and, as opposed to previous decades, it was better organised and with much more force. This time the resistance was able to seriously threaten the apartheid regime's resolve and confidence. On the rugby field, the situation was not much better. The Springboks was beaten in 1972 by an average English team and humiliated by the British Lions in 1974 when they were unable to win a single test on home soil. The decade 1971-1980 therefore formed a sharp contrast and stood in contradiction to the previous decade when Afrikaner ideological hegemony was at its peak. In contrast, the 1971-1980 decade was a period of decline and a period when the Afrikaner largely lost its dominance and its monolithic character. The National Party had to move to the left of the Conservative Party and this started a process to normalise sport in the country.

Keywords: Afrikaner; ideological hegemony; Springboks; rugby; British Lions; National Party.

Slutelwoorde: Afrikaner; ideologiese leierskap; Springbokke; rugby; Britse Leeus; Nasionale Party.

1. INTRODUCTION

Afrikaner ideological hegemony in the decades 1961 to 1970 and 1971 to 1980 constituted a strong paradox influenced by the dynamics and interaction of sport

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and politics in South Africa. The decade spanning from 1961 to 1970 reflected a strong upswing of Afrikaner ideological hegemony and displayed a strong political dominance within politics and sport in South Africa. This upswing of Afrikaner ideological hegemony from 1961 to 1970 culminated in the attainment of independence from the Commonwealth and the declaration of South Africa as a republic in 1961, which represented the pinnacle of Afrikaner constitutional autonomy and of statehood. The upswing in Afrikaner ideological hegemony coincided with the successful repression of domestic black resistance against apartheid and of Afrikaner ideological dominance over the parliamentary opposition in the country. This groundswell of Afrikaner political prowess and assertiveness in the period 1961-1970 enjoyed the additional stimulus of a successful Springbok rugby team. The Springboks enjoyed an exceptional winning streak, which started with a series win against the All Blacks on home soil in 1960. The national team then concluded the decade with a series win against France, the British Lions, Australia and another series win over the All Blacks in 1970. Afrikaner ideological hegemony was therefore strongly established during the decade 1961-1970. This was as a result of the dominating role of Afrikaners in national and local politics and within the rugby fraternity in South Africa.

The next decade, 1971 to 1980, however, formed a sharp contrast and displayed a distinct downwards trajectory of Afrikaner ideological hegemony. The downward trend and decline was predominately because it became progressively more difficult to curb the domestic black resistance against apartheid. The downward trend was exacerbated by the Springboks' decline in form and the loss of the aura of invincibility they had on the rugby field. The decline in politics and sport is in strong contradiction to the upswing experienced in the previous decade. The 1971-1980 decade was also the period when the National Party lost its monolithic Afrikaner character. Dr Albert Hertzog and a small faction left the National Party in 1969 and formed the *Herstigte Nasionale Party* (Reformed National Party). The split to the right happened predominately in reaction to a change in the National Party's sports policy. The change was introduced to ensure that overseas rugby teams could tour South Africa. The National Party government under John Vorster made allowances for "mixed" sport, which necessitated the dismantling of small or "petty" apartheid to accommodate visiting teams. The split to the right was, in reality, marginal – only four parliamentary members followed Hertzog – but it formed a niche to the right of the National Party which attracted right-wing political support. The split represented the beginning of the end of Afrikaner hegemony and the end of the monolithic unity of the Afrikaner (Johnson 2004:163).

2. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH FOCUS OF THE ARTICLE

As indicated, the two decades, 1961-1970 and 1971-1980, formed a distinct contrast to each other. This contrast relates to the government's ability to deal with domestic challenges in the form of black resistance against apartheid and parliamentary opposition. The contrast was also reflected in the performance of the Springbok rugby team and its inherent ability to stimulate Afrikaner political prowess through its dominance on the rugby field.

During the decade 1961 to 1970, black resistance against apartheid was largely "contained" and "successfully" suppressed by the security police. The success on the political front was underpinned and augmented by the Springboks' dominance on the rugby field, with the team losing only two out of a total of 16 rugby tests on home soil. The Springboks was regarded by many rugby followers as the unofficial world champions.

However, on the political front, the leaders of the black resistance movements had improved their structures and their efforts. The anti-apartheid resistance during the decade 1971-1980 continued to filter through the apartheid system and gradually weakened its ability to deal with black resistance. It slowly opened up cracks in the apartheid security apparatus and violence erupted in 1976 with the Soweto uprising, forming the apex of black resistance. Organised black resistance, in fact, started in 1973 with the formation and legitimisation of the black trade union movement, which introduced vibrant dynamics into South African politics. The new collective and structured development, for the first time, seriously challenged the apartheid regime. The destabilisation of the apartheid government continued to escalate in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising in 1976 and through the subsequent actions of the Black Consciousness Movement which supplemented the resistance. The apartheid regime and the control of the Afrikaner elite suddenly seemed tentative and vulnerable in the face of the challenges that have been made to its hegemony during the decade 1971-1980.

The superiority and dominance of the Springbok rugby team against their arch foe, the English, was also severely tarnished in the decade 1971-1980. Two touring parties from the United Kingdom, the proverbial arch enemy of the Afrikaner, changed the fortunes of the Springboks. The depleted English team that toured the country in 1972 was able to defeat the mighty Springboks on home soil in Johannesburg. As if this was not enough, the 1974 British Lions, who last won a series in South Africa in 1896, changed the statistics in dramatic fashion. The image of the invincible Springboks was destroyed when the home team was unable to win a single test against the marauding Lions team. The Springboks drew the last test under controversial circumstances, but lost the first three tests in humiliating fashion (Greyvenstein 1995:115). The superiority of the Springboks was challenged

and smashed in spectacular fashion. The 1974 British Lions team dispelled the myth of Afrikaner dominance on the rugby field.

From an analytical perspective, the two decades (1961-1970 and 1971-1980) stand in a sharp contrast and in contradiction to each other. The pivotal point between the two decades, which started the downward slide of Afrikaner ideological hegemony, happened in 1969 with the split in the National Party and the formation of the *Herstigte Nasionale Party*, which broke Afrikaner hegemony and solidarity and the monolithic character of the Afrikaner.

The purpose of the article is to elaborate on the relationship between rugby and politics in the decades 1961-1970 and 1971-1980. The article will highlight how the two decades formed a sharp contrast in terms of the ascendancy and descendency of Afrikaner hegemony and political dominance. It will be pointed out in the article how the ascendancy of the Afrikaner and the National Party started to erode after 1969 when the first split occurred in the party.

3. RUGBY, AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AND MASCULINITY

In his seminal work, *Beyond the try line – rugby and South African society*, Grundlingh (1995:106) highlights the correlation between rugby, Afrikaner nationalism and masculinity in South Africa. In this relationship, rugby is an important role player, because it serves as an outlet of Afrikaner masculinity; a physical demonstration of Afrikaner prowess in sport and in politics.

As Hall, Parry and Winch (2009:8-17) explain, sport was always part of a broader ideology in South Africa that ensured that racial boundaries, which determined the overall structure of the country, were set for the future. The authors demonstrated how cricket was used from the onset in the 1860s in South Africa as part of the institutionalisation of segregation and, eventually, of apartheid. Sport was always an important instrument often utilised to enhance deeper, more fundamental values in society.

The importance of sport to create a positive mindset is without parallel. The former prime minister of the United Kingdom, Harold Wilson, was convinced that if England had beaten Germany in the 1970 World Cup, the Labour Party would most probably have won the next general election. A victory in sport contributes to the creation of a “feel-good” feeling which extends well beyond sport, because it is accessible to everyone and has the inherent ability to allow everyone to share in the success. During the 1980s, in an era in Britain that was epitomised by strife and social division in society, the performances of the two world stars, Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett, gave the people in the United Kingdom something to be proud of. Their performances provided excellence to a nation in distress and it allowed the British to be proud to be British (Butcher 2005: 6).

In any society, sport – and in this case, rugby – creates a subculture with its own internal rules. It was this subcultural zone that allowed the Afrikaner space to challenge the dominance of English-speaking South Africans. In South Africa, the Afrikaner was initially not economically and politically in a position to challenge the dominance of English-speaking South Africans. However, they became very successful in utilising rugby as a vehicle to exert dominance on and off the rugby field. Over time, rugby became an import zone for the Afrikaner; a space where they could articulate their feelings of nationalism and express their political masculinity. This is a theme and a form of physical expression that permeates the history of the Afrikaner since the early twentieth century, during the apartheid period, and even during the early post-apartheid period.

In 1991, when the Springboks were allowed back into the international fold after a long period of isolation, they played the All Blacks in a one-off test at the Ellis Park Stadium. In spite of a political and diplomatic compromise that the old national anthem would not be played and that the old flag would not be waved, this happened in clear defiance of the spirit of the agreement. The message was unequivocally that white South Africa was not going to give in to Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC). The spectators and the majority of the white rugby administrators were adamant that anything less than a test victory was unacceptable, because a victory would extend this confidence and, “show the world what we were made of” (Williams 1998:164).

On a national level, governments in general play an important role to promote political values and ideas among citizens and societies (Houlihan 1997:115). A classic example of a government’s usage of sport to promote its own political ideology occurred in Nazi-Germany where sport was used to bolster political ideals. Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader, was especially interested in using the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games to promote the Nazi ideology of Nordic supremacy on the world stage (Coakley 2006:454; also see, Walters 2006).

The interrelationship between sport and politics has been the subject of many studies (Allison 1986; Leonard 1984; Jarvie 1996). The National Party realised a political dream when they gained independence and formed a republic in 1961. This happened at a time when the Springbok team continued to dominate the game internationally. The upswing on the political front in the early 1960s can certainly also be associated with the success of the Springboks on the rugby field. From 1967 until 1970, the Springboks won a total of 10 tests out of 14, drawing one and losing only three.

After the National Party came to power in 1948, the Afrikaners were very successful in gaining control of rugby. As Grundlingh (1995:131) states, “Afrikaner appropriation of rugby coincided with general Afrikaner nationalistic

political ascendancy, which was, in the final analysis, a way of demonstrating and representing a specific brand of ideological power.”

The National Party leadership was very successful in using rugby to promote Afrikaner superiority and to stimulate a specific hegemony in a period when they were asserting their values and ideas in the broader South African society. According to the Gramscian notion of hegemony, the ideological and cultural domination of one class over another is achieved by engineering consensus through controlling cultural forms and major institutions (Jarvie 2006:29). In this regard, the *Broederbond* (Brotherhood), through the apartheid regime, controlled all cultural forms, including sport (rugby) in South Africa (Griffiths 1996:115).

The secretive *Afrikaner Broederbond* organisation, which was established in 1918, had a specific goal, namely, to sustain Afrikaner culture and society. This was ensured by putting its more than 12 000 members in positions of influence around the country. Griffiths (2006:126) wrote that the “brothers” could be found within the National Party government, the armed forces, education structures and rugby. Griffiths points out that of the eight men that captained the Springboks between 1956 and 1965, only two were not members of the *Broederbond*. Their task was to ensure that Afrikaner influence was asserted and maintained on the sports field. Progressively, rugby became an instrument in the hands of the Afrikaner, used to demonstrate Afrikaner prowess to the rest of the country and the world, in what was referred to as the creation of “an imagined community”. In the process, rugby became a powerful disseminator of nationalist sentiment and a source of identification with the *volk* (the Afrikaner) at large (Grundlingh 1995:125).

The success of the Afrikaner dominated Springbok team from 1949 to 1969 was unprecedented in world rugby. The Springbok team did not lose a single series on home soil and dominated the mighty All Blacks in 1949 in a four tests series in South Africa. This was followed by the 1951/52 Springbok rugby tour to the United Kingdom, which resulted in spectacular victories over all the home unions and a victory in France. This dominance on the rugby field coincided with the rise of the National Party under Dr Malan, and of their victory in the 1948 election which started their dominance as a governing party.

The interrelationship between politics and sport continued throughout the decade and, in spite of a setback in 1965 in New Zealand against the All Blacks, it reached a pinnacle in the late 1960s. Afrikaner hegemony and dominance were, however, seriously challenged at the end of the first decade. The image of the invincibility of the Springbok rugby team was severely tarnished during the 1969/70 tour to the United Kingdom, when they were unable to win a single test against the home unions. Their image was totally destroyed when the 1974 British Lions team that toured South Africa not only comprehensively beat the Springboks on home soil (3-0), but they also humiliated the home team in the way they dominated

the game. Reference was even made to the fact that the Lions captain, Willie-John McBride, laughed at the Springboks during one of the tests (Alfred 2014:115).

In the next two subsections the two decades will be presented in more detail to illustrate the contrast in the fortunes of Afrikaner ideological hegemony during these periods.

4. THE DECADE 1961-1970; ASCENDENCY AND ENFORCING AFRIKANER HEGEMONY

By the mid-1960s, South Africa had slowly transformed itself into an urban society. The economic self-reliance boosted by the Second World War (1939-1945) and the realisation that the resistance to apartheid by the international community necessitated a more independent, diverse economic sector, accelerated the urbanisation of the country. The growing wealth of South Africa as a result of the rich mineral deposits, the expansion of world trade, and the improvement of communication during the war resulted in the mushrooming of industry, commerce and services.

As a result, more and more Afrikaners had established themselves in urban areas, bolstered by semi-state organisations which the government had opened up for them. More and more Afrikaner families moved into mining, industry and commerce and were rapidly developing into a strong middle class (Atwell 1986:105), which empowered them with the resources to assert their growing dominance on the broader society.

The upswing in political prowess was strongly supported by the economic growth in the country. The gold and foreign reserves increased with more than R100 million and at the end of 1962 its total value exceeded R500 million. The value of South Africa's gross national product, based on the 1963 prices, had increased from R5,324 million to R7,052 million. The surging economy was boosted by the output of the increased industrialisation of the economy. The contribution of factories to the gross national product increased from the 1959/60 level of 23,3% to 30% in 1964/65. The industrial manufacturing output increased by 55,5%, which represented a phenomenal growth in the production centre (Van der Walt 1996:495).

As a result, the South African economy registered an unprecedented growth in the 1960s, with a real growth rate of 8,1% in 1963, 6,7% in 1964 and 6,6% in 1965 (Grundlingh 1995:131). The boom phase in the economy strengthened the resolve of the National Party government, and the impact of economic sanctions which was instituted in the early 1960s was minimal and ineffective to warrant a change in national policies.

The ruling National Party also increased its dominance on the political front. Its main opposition, the United Party, went through a split in 1959 when

the Progressive Party broke away, and it was unable to offer any real threat to the growing prowess of the Afrikaner-dominated National Party. The increased support for the National Party encouraged the Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, to pursue the dream for a republic. Verwoerd's preference was to stay within the British Commonwealth, but on 15 March 1961 he was "forced" to withdraw the application to stay within the Commonwealth in the face of growing criticism of the National Party's racial policies (Van der Walt 1996:592). Verwoerd was welcomed back in South Africa as a hero and his support increased exponentially among the white population.

During the 1960s, the South African government successfully suppressed growing black resistance against the white minority regime. The threat posed by Poqo, the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress, was successfully quelled in 1962, with more than 3 000 of their members arrested. On 12 July 1963, the leaders of the African National Congress were arrested on the farm, Lilliesleaf, in Rivonia, which effectively removed the leadership structure of the organisation and rendered the followers rudderless.

The prominence of Verwoerd as a strong leader and the success of the National Party in dealing with opposition against the white minority regime increased domestic voter support for the National Party government. On the international front, the success in the World Court on 2 September 1966, when South Africa was successful in its bid to maintain its mandate over South-West Africa, also contributed to the popularity of Verwoerd and the National Party. In the 1966 general election, the National Party was ideally placed to strengthen its grip on the voter public and they subsequently won 126 out of a total of 166 seats in parliament (Van der Walt 1996:606).

The success of the National Party government on the political and economic front was augmented by what happened on the rugby fields of the country. In August 1962, in the last test against the visiting Lions team in Bloemfontein, the Springbok centre, Marnetjies Roux, scored a try that has since been immortalised in South African rugby folklore. Alfred (2014:7) states that the moment, "chimed perfectly with the political events in the country", because it amplified the upswing of Afrikaner prowess. The last test was a deciding match in the series against the Lions. The victory and the spectacular way in which Roux scored the try coincided with the earlier declaration of South Africa as a republic in May 1961, with, "the try representing a symbolic moment of independence, though an act of individual sporting brilliance" (Alfred 2014:7).

During the mid-1960s the National Party strengthened its hold on power in the country by defeating opposition parties with relative ease. The increase in power and authority led to defiance, but also to arrogance and a misreading of international reaction with regard to its sports policies. Verwoerd challenged the

sporting world with his speech at Loskop Dam when he declared that the Maoris were not welcome in South Africa. This led to the cancellation of the 1967 All Black tour to South Africa and a possibility of losing all future contact with New Zealand on the rugby field. In similar fashion, Verwoerd's successor, John Vorster, torpedoed the MCC cricket tour when the inclusion of Basil D'Oliveira, a coloured player originally from South Africa, was not accepted (D'Oliveira 1967:11). As a result of Vorster's actions, the MCC cancelled their proposed tour to South Africa.

During the 1960s, the control of the Afrikaner in politics and sport reached a zenith and it was so strong that English-speaking citizens were largely alienated. In sport, it became an impediment to be English-speaking and not an Afrikaner when gaining national or Springbok colours. Eddie Barlow, a famous cricketer during the 1960s, had to choose between cricket and rugby. Barlow (2006:34) wrote that he knew that his chances to gain success in rugby would have been advanced if he had been an Afrikaner. "I knew it was never going to be easy for an English-speaking centre like me. I am not saying it was impossible, but it would never be easy."

On the political front, the ruling National Party acted against the internal black opposition following the raid on *Umkhonto's* headquarters on a farm in Rivonia. All the major figures in the ANC leadership had to stand trial in Pretoria, and Nelson Mandela and most ANC leaders had to serve life sentences. The Communist Party had also been infiltrated and one of their influential leaders, Bram Fischer, was eventually caught and imprisoned.

The Rivonia trial, the success of the steps taken against black resistance in South Africa and the relative easy way in which domestic resistance was crushed exposed one important aspect during the 1960s: the bitter truth that the black resistance and opposition were amateurish, badly organised and ineffectual. It also showed that the government was winning its battle against black opposition. John Vorster, then Minister of Justice, and Hendrik van der Bergh, the Head of the Security Police, were able to build up a huge security apparatus which effectively put black resistance on the back foot for many years (Johnson 2004:158).

The role of the *Broederbond* to propel South Africa to the top was echoed in parliament by the Speaker, Mr Henning Klopper, who boasted, "From the time the Afrikaner Broederbond picked up momentum, it has given the country its governments. It has given the country every Nationalist prime minister since 1948. Its efforts gave the Republic to the Afrikaner nation [...] We are part of the state, we are part of the church, we are part of every big movement that has been born of the nation. And we made our contributions unseen: we carried them through to the point that our nation has reached today" (Leach 1989:133).

Geographically, the balkanisation of the country started as early as 1913 with the *Land Act* and it was accelerated during the early 1960s with the creation of the first Bantu (black) homeland, the Transkei. The forced resettlements of black

people to their “homelands” were underway. The apartheid apparatus was in full swing and the internal opposition and international community was powerless to do anything about the forced segregation.

The South African economy had recovered from the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre and had entered a period of high growth, rapid expansion and soaring living standards for whites (Atwell 1986:102). The Republic of South Africa celebrated its first five years of existence in 1966, but the assassination of Verwoerd later in the year, put a damper on the prevailing optimism. It was left to Verwoerd’s successor, John Vorster, to start with a new chapter in the history of the country. Vorster did not fully realise it when he became prime minister, but he was confronted by clear signs that society was undergoing changes. The economic development, modernisation, education and exposure to outside values slowly brought apartheid into increasing conflict with the changing external realities around the regime.

Verwoerd’s insistence that the New Zealand Maoris were not welcome in South Africa created an untenable situation. This declaration effectively led to a severing of ties with the New Zealand All Blacks. Vorster, under pressure from a sports mad society, had to relent and he allowed the Maori players to be included in the 1970 All Black team touring South Africa (Steyn 1970:5). Vorster had taken a more pragmatic approach to the way apartheid was enforced, and he changed the offending aspects of “petty” apartheid. This made it possible for the All Blacks to tour South Africa. “Petty” apartheid refers to social changes made to allow different races to mix socially and to disregard certain social taboos (Leach 1989:133).

The role that sport played in the dismantling of “petty” apartheid, and how this ultimately filtered through and eventually led to the dismantling of grand apartheid, should therefore not be underestimated. However, in spite of the fact that Vorster was bending the rules of apartheid to allow rugby teams to tour the country, the initial effect on grand apartheid was marginal. In the broader scheme of things, apartheid still exists, although small cracks were appearing in the iron clad system (Atwell 1986:107).

The deconstruction of “petty” apartheid, such as changes to the sports policy, the idea of international hotels to accommodate non-whites in touring parties, and changes to other amenities, such as separate parks, shop entrances and lifts, had a ripple effect on the apartheid structure. In many public places the “whites only” signs were removed (Johnson 2004:162) and other races moved into white spaces, which speeded up the process.

The 1970 test series against the All Blacks was a seminal moment in the country, because it came at a critical juncture in the political and sports history of South Africa. The 1969/70 tour to the United Kingdom ended in near disaster as a result of the actions of protestors against South Africa’s apartheid policies. The

tour was seriously disrupted by the protestors (Viviers 1971:11), which made rugby authorities realise that tours to the United Kingdom, and probably elsewhere, will be doomed in future.

However, the success of the series against the French (1967), the British Lions (1968) and Australia (1969) had already spun a cloak of invincibility around the Springbok jersey. During the 1969/70 Springbok tour, the reaction of the general public in the United Kingdom, namely that they “don’t want the Springboks” and that the “Springboks should go home”, therefore came as a shock. This was compounded by the fact that the Springboks were unable to win a single test against the four home unions. It compared very unfavourably with the previous tour to the United Kingdom in 1960/61, when the Springboks whitewashed the home unions (Greyvenstein 1980:115).

To restore the balance and to regain global respectability, the 1970 All Black tour was therefore of critical importance. The tour came at a time when the South Africans started to feel the effects of the boycott, not only on sport, but on all fronts. The majority of sports codes were banned from participating in international competitions and were out in the cold, and future participation at the Olympic Games ended with South Africa’s expulsion from the International Olympic Committee (Le Roux 1984:115).

It was therefore of critical importance that the Springboks defeat the All Blacks and reclaim the title of world champions, which would again ensure their status as a sought after commodity. As Griffiths (2006:208) explained, the notion that the rest of the world could impose boycotts and sanctions, “but they still can’t beat us at rugby”, was a comforting idea for a beleaguered nation. However, the flip side was an unacceptable alternative, because losing may translate to slipping into oblivion and deeper into isolation. Winning against the All Blacks would ensure that the “feel good” feeling to be a South African would be restored, and pride would be regained after the setback of the 1969/70 tour to the United Kingdom.

Before their arrival in South Africa, the 1970 All Blacks team had set a world record by winning 17 tests in a row. The last test which they had lost was against the Springboks in 1965, and this was a solitary loss in a test series of four tests. In contrast, the Springboks were in turmoil after the disastrous 1969/70 tour to the United Kingdom and the hope was that they would not be humiliated on home soil.

The secret weapon of the 1970s All Blacks was the second phase ball, with the centre bashing in to set up a maul that produced an opportunity for a second phase attack. The big All Blacks centre, Wayne Cottrell, attempted to set up a maul around the scrum in the first test. However, the big Springbok centre from the Free State, Joggie Jansen, in a decisive bone-crashing defence, tackled Cottrell into submission (Dobson 1996:137). The significance of the tackle is situated in its symbolism, the defiance of the unrelenting hard tackling, which drove the All Blacks back. This

set the tone for the 3-1 defeat against the All Blacks in the series, and created a positive mind-set in the country which dispelled the doom and gloom of the tour to the United Kingdom.

Although cricket was not dominated by Afrikaner players and administrators, the success of the Springbok cricket team was also of great significance during the last few years of this decade. The success against the MCC team in 1965 in England, the victory over Bobby Simpson's Australians in 1967, and the white wash of Bill Lawry's team in 1970, together with victories in the rugby, contributed to a "feel good" feeling (Barlow 2006:92).

However, the *status quo* was about to change. The internal changes to "petty" apartheid to allow further international contact had an effect on domestic politics. To broaden the base of his support, Prime Minister Vorster started to focus on the left-wing members of his party by appealing to the English-speaking voters. He even included two English-speaking ministers in his cabinet, which angered the right-wingers in the party (Leach 1989:88). The right-wing National Party members who broke away under the leadership of Dr Albert Hertzog had consequences for Afrikaner hegemony, because it fragmented the unity. Although the Reformed National Party failed to win a single seat in the 1970 elections, their support soon increased to 13% of the white vote. Their presence as a right-wing political party signalled the end of monolithic unity among the Afrikaner and the beginning of a pluralist reality in the country. The National Party, as a monolithic party, progressively lost its Afrikaner hegemonic dominance and moved closer to the centre of the political spectrum (Johnson 2004:163).

Afrikaner hegemony and dominance was destined to be challenged during the following decade (1971-1980) when black resistance returned; more effective, better organised and prepared to challenge the apartheid regime. It was not only black opposition and resistance against apartheid that could no longer be contained. A further threat to Afrikaner hegemonic dominance revealed itself on the sports fields. In 1972, the England rugby team toured South Africa and, following in their footsteps, the British Lions visited in 1974. They destroyed and humiliated the Springboks on home soil and ended the superiority of the Springboks as world champions.

5. THE DECADE 1971-1980 AND THE SLIPPERY SLOPE FOR AFRIKANER HEGEMONIC POWER

Grundlingh (1995:131) explains that, although sport is not fundamentally ideological, the values and norms associated with rugby can be ideological in nature. In South Africa, rugby became associated with a strong ideological content through the role of the *Broederbond*, and it was used as a vehicle to express and to enhance

Afrikaner values and norms. (See, Wilkens and Strydom 1980; Griffiths 2006). The *Broederbond*'s appropriation of rugby led to the institutionalisation of Afrikaner dominance in rugby and reflected an ideological power which permeated the sport for decades.

However, it should be understood that for this very reason this action and the utilisation of sport also set rugby up for attack by opposing forces (Grundlingh 1995:131). The appropriation of rugby by the Afrikaner and what it reflected in essence, namely white domination and separation between all races in all structures, set the Springboks up for future opposition and resistance. The opposition and resistance were not only at a local level, but especially on an international level which put all future overseas rugby tours in jeopardy. The South African rugby administrators were lulled into complacency with the 1960/61 Springbok tour to the United Kingdom when only moderate political opposition was experienced and success was achieved in all the tests against the home unions.

The 1969/70 Springbok tour to the United Kingdom and the reaction from the British public that they “don’t want the Springboks” and that the “Springboks should go home”, came as shock to the South African rugby fraternity. The Springboks were clearly upset by this reaction and the impact of the security arrangements to protect them against the protestors, and they were unable to win a single test against the four home unions (Greyvenstein 1980:115). The lack of success was an eye-opener for the wider rugby public in South Africa, but it also had an impact on the political thinking of Afrikaner political leaders.

The resultant changes to the sports policy and the tinkering with “petty” apartheid had a political impact and provided a pivotal point in the political landscape. The changes led to ideological differences and the result was that two opposing groups developed within the Afrikaner hegemony. The differences over the sports policy was one of the main catalysts for the political and ideological split (Leach 1988:188-189) within Afrikaner ranks.

Vorster, driven by the needs of *realpolitik*, threw his weight behind the more liberal group, which created tension and division in the cabinet. The changes in the sports policy and the lifting of the racial restrictions to allow the New Zealand Maoris to tour South Africa further fuelled the tension and accentuated the differences. The Minister of Postal Services, Dr Albert Hertzog, left the National Party in 1969 and set up his own political party, the *Herstigste Nasionale Party*, based on Verwoerdian ideological principals (Atwell 1968:108).

Although the new right-wing party split the unity of Afrikaner hegemony, its influence initially was minimal. However, this new political party formed an assembly and a gravitational rallying point that would progressively attract more support (Leach 1988:188-189). The immediate impact was that the split opened up the cracks in political Afrikaner solidarity, which slowly increased in size and significance.

The British Lions team, captained by Willie John McBride, arrived in South Africa on 7 May 1974 to challenge the superiority of the Springboks on the rugby field. South African rugby was reeling after the unexpected victory of the England team in the one-off test in Johannesburg. On his team's arrival, when McBride was asked what their goals were, he explained that they were in South Africa for one reason and for one reason only, and that was to beat the Springboks on home soil (Alfred 2014:12-13).

The political landscape surrounding the arrival of the British Lions was vastly different from their previous tours in 1962 and 1968. The political climate was much more tense and loaded with pressure which lurked just under the surface. The political dynamics in the 1970s with the creation of the Black Consciousness Movement gave rise to student protests all over South Africa, and it escalated throughout most major centres. The movement was supported by changes in the labour market and the formation of black labour unions. Black labour unions were not legally recognised, but they were not illegal either. Their membership began to grow and in 1973 the country saw black industrial militancy on an unprecedented scale with the first of many wildcat strikes. The industrial "revolt" was led by the 1973 Durban strikes that involved 146 plants and over 60 000 workers. The government and the police were forced to interfere in the labour strikes and the leaders were arrested and sometimes tortured. The government appointed two commissions, led by PJ Riekert and another by NE Wiehahn, to investigate the position of trade unions. The most important recommendation was that the permanency of the black worker in urban areas should be acknowledged, which was another nail in the apartheid coffin (Johnston 2004:176).

Within the broader international geo-political landscape, the arrival of the British Lions coincided with a group of left-wing officers that overthrew Portugal's right wing military regime and effectively ended Portugal's 500-year colonial rule. In neighbouring Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe), the minority rule of Ian Smith was also under serious threat and the concessions that had been made over time, did not seem to diminish the demands of black activists in the country. The encroaching black opposition to white minority rule in countries surrounding South Africa hardened local white perspectives. The real possibility was that the whites in South Africa would be left stranded in a laager of white supremacy surrounded by hostile majority governments. In essence, the Afrikaners felt threatened on many terrains and they also experienced uncertainty in terms of their continued dominance on the rugby field.

The supremacy of the Springboks as the "rugby world champions" was somewhat restored after they had defeated the All Blacks in 1970. However, the defeat suffered by the Springboks in 1972 against a mediocre England team allowed real fears to surface that the team was slipping again. The 1974 Lions tour to South

Africa was therefore crucial, because it was another opportunity to restore the credibility of South African rugby. The presence of the Lions was also important, because it legitimised the changes introduced by the rugby administrators to allow multi-racial rugby in the country. As Alfred (2014: 13) explains, the tour gave credibility to the superficial changes to rugby in South Africa, because two additional games were organised against a coloured and a black team. In a sad way, the visiting Lions were “used” by the apartheid government, because they gave credibility and acceptance to the racial policies that existed in South Africa by playing against separate coloured teams (and not mixed teams).

On a deep, fundamental level, the success of the Springboks was important because, “if you are the best, other teams wanted to play against you”. The failure of the Springboks during the 1969/70 tour, as well as the clear message that they were not welcome in the United Kingdom, was a setback that was hard to swallow. The rugby administrators, the Springboks and the general public therefore realised that if they loose against the 1974 Lions, their “market value” would be seriously compromised.

The first test between the Springboks and the Lions at Newlands confirmed the worst fears of the rugby fraternity in South Africa. Although the score was not particularly high, the Lions won with a score of 12 points against three. The way in which the victory was achieved, created grave concerns. The Springbok scrum, traditionally and historically, represented the team’s raw power and ability to subdue their enemies on the rugby field. However, the Lions very successfully out-powered the Springboks in the scrums and put them on the back foot. The Lions’ scrum pushed the Springbok scrum unceremoniously back and the team into rugby oblivion. The victory by the Lions shocked the Springboks’ confidence, physically and symbolically (Greyvenstein 1995:115).

The Lions also showed that they were not prepared to back away from physical exchanges. The South African team was ready, as always, to “soften up” the touring team. The Lions had the added status as “arch foes”, since they were the descendants of South Africa’s colonial masters who politically suppressed the Afrikaner for centuries. However, this was a Lions team different from the previous tours; a team that was not prepared to give an inch (Griffiths 2006:238).

After they had suffered another loss at the hands of the Lions in the second test, the third test was the acid test for the Springboks. The Lions asserted their supremacy, as they swept all opposition before them aside with contempt. The Springbok selectors panicked, making changes to the team to such an extent that only three players played in all four tests. Even the inclusion of the “hard men” in the third test in an attempt to stop the Lions, had little effect. Johan Claassen, the convener of the selectors, boasted before the third test that he would go to the border with this team, a reference to the physicality of the team. The team included

hard, uncompromising men like Johan du Bruyn, Moaner van Heerden and Polla Fourie, who were fierce competitors. However, in spite of a spirited first half, their efforts petered out in the second half and the Lions eased to a 26-9 victory (Griffiths 2006:238).

The crushing of the “invincible” Springbok team, especially by their arch enemies, was a severe blow to Afrikaner morale. Rugby, as a channel to demonstrate Afrikaner masculinity and prowess, was shattered at the Boet Erasmus Stadium in Port Elizabeth. To add insult to injury, the coloured supporters on the stands were cheering wildly for the Lions throughout the match. Hannes Marais, the Springbok captain, looked despondently at the stand reserved for the coloured supporters and stated, “Throughout my playing years, I never saw the people of colour supporting the Springboks [...] They always supported the opposition and, obviously, the 1974 Lions were their greatest heroes” (Griffiths 2006:238).

Luckily, sanity prevailed among the national selectors after the third test and some continuity was built into the team for the fourth test. As a result, the Springboks seemed to match the marauding Lions for the first time. The Springboks managed to draw the last test and Marais was cheered from the field, in spite of the fact that they lost the series 3-0. This was an act of defiance, but reflected the sad state of rugby in the country. White South Africa’s desperation to salvage some honour was obvious even to the point of cheering a draw and a loss of 0-3 in a test series. This reflected a broader uncertainty that prevailed under the surface, on all fronts, including uncertainty about political dominance in South Africa (Williams 1998:164).

On the political front, the domestic security situation deteriorated with the rise in black resistance and it started on the morning of 16 June 1976 in Soweto, southwest of Johannesburg. The uprising started with four days of rioting after the police confronted a group of protesting school children and opened fire on them. In Soweto alone, the official death toll was 176, while there were at least 1 800 people injured as a result of police action. Students from across the country joined in the resistance against the security apparatus of the apartheid regime. The situation escalated and further deaths were reported. The final death toll will never be known, but figures of 700 deaths had been mentioned. The unrest ran out of steam in the mid-1977s and the police moved in to arrest Steve Biko, a major figure in the student unrest. Biko died in police custody and his death caused a public outcry and turned him into a political martyr (Atwell 1986:113).

The Black Consciousness movements played a major part in changing the trajectory of South Africa politics and development. As Atwell (1986:116) indicated, their role broke the silence of black South Africa, whose voice had not been heard politically since their initial fragmented and badly coordinated resistance during the early 1960s. The strong resistance that sprung from the black community in the 1970s brought political maturity to a new generation of black people who

started to believe in their own worth and intrinsic right to justice. It liberated black South Africans psychologically and gave them the impetus to sacrifice their own safety and to collectively fight for basic justice.

The psychological impact of the widespread resistance on the Afrikaner and on the National Party government was profound. The leadership realised that the Soweto uprising and the unrests elsewhere in the country was not short term and that the resolve of blacks in the country had hardened. However, it would be extremely difficult to ascertain how much and to what extent the political unrest had psychologically impacted on the minds of the white community. It is an undisputable fact though, that it certainly resulted in a direction change and a realisation that the current *status quo* cannot be maintained. It is at this stage that the leadership of the National Party realised that changes to grand apartheid should be made.

The National Party's think tank suggested that coloureds and Indians be included as junior partners at national level and recommendations were circulated and presented to the electorate before the 1977 elections. The National Party was returned to parliament with a majority, but Vorster did not implement the changes and the suggested reforms were postponed. He was afraid of the split to the right and did not want to be accused of dividing the Afrikaner. This echoed the prevalent position in terms of the political development in South Africa, where, "everything was still set by the clock of what was convenient within the Afrikanerdom" (Johnson 2006:177). However, the Nationalists were just delaying the inevitable, because just over a decade later, in 1990, all restrictions were lifted by President FW de Klerk.

6. CONCLUSION AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

The Springbok rugby team managed to salvage some pride by beating the 1976 All Blacks team on home soil in a four test series and thus restored some pride that they had lost against the 1974 Lions. On the political front, the government went ahead with ideas for the introduction of moderate reforms which were, however, too late to satisfy the black majority and the international community. In the 1981 election, President PW Botha confirmed his mandate for reform by implementing limited reforms which led to the 1983 Constitution. However, this initiative still excluded the black majority from political participation. On the left of the political spectrum the Progressive Federal Party continued to expand, which seriously eroded the support for the National Party. With the conservative Afrikaners, who had lost confidence in Botha when he implemented the newly adopted policies mentioned previously, the onslaught from the right-wing forces within the party intensified. Dr Andries Treurnicht, a cabinet minister, moved to introduce a vote of

no confidence in Botha, which was not supported. He then quit the National Party to form the Conservative Party, which rapidly expanded and soon captured over a third of the Afrikaner vote (Johnston 2006:179).

The control that the Afrikaner had over rugby was also slipping. Wynand Claassen was appointed as the captain of the Springbok team to tour in New Zealand in 1981 and in his biography, *More than just rugby*, he highlighted the political divisions within the team. A large number of players in the team resisted the influence that the *Broederbond* exerted on the team. English-speaking players, such as Rob Louw, were fiercely anti-establishment (Louw 1988:7). In later years, even an ex-Rhodesian, the English-speaking Ian Macintosh, was appointed as the coach. The control that the Afrikaner had over rugby and politics, which peaked in the decade 1961-1970 and then slipped during the period 1971-1980, was eroded and then continued to slip to become a mere footnote in the annals of history. The Afrikaner had lost his ideological hegemonic power forever, and continues merely as a minority group within the broader South African post-apartheid community.

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