H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Ian Shapiro, Kahreen Tebeau, eds. *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011. vi + 376 pp. $40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8139-3097-8; ISBN 978-0-8139-3101-2.

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Published on H-SAfrica (November, 2012)
Commissioned by Elisabeth Peyroux

Muddling through the Transition to Parliamentary Democracy: South Africa at a Crossroads

In April 1994, The African National Congress (ANC) won a landslide electoral victory in South Africa's first inclusive and openly democratic elections. Many political commentators were quick to hail the transition as a "small miracle"–a kind of singular event that marked the end to formalized racial discrimination. But as the initial euphoria has faded into the past, a mundane kind of normalcy has settled into everyday life. In *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* Ian Shapiro and Kahreen Tebeau have assembled a collection of twelve essays that address the challenges that the "new democracy" faced during its first seventeen to eighteeen years of existence. Written largely by South African academics, these essays cover a range of topics and provide a broad panama of viewpoints. After *Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* is one of the first efforts to offer a thoroughgoing assessment of South Africa following its epochal transition to democracy almost two decades ago. The aim of these essays is to survey the successes and failures of the new democracy and to assess possible futures. While most of the authors never directly speculate about the future, the overall thrust of the essays is to stress a kind of hopeful optimism mixed with a sanguine expectation of "more of the same." There is a normative tone to many of the essays, where authors more or less suggest that the ANC-in-government "must change" or face the consequence of failed public policies, stagnant economic growth, and bad education. The disciplinary backgrounds of the authors are drawn primarily from the social sciences, particularly economics, political science, and sociology. They rely primarily upon standard academic sources, newspapers, and published reports. Authors like Nicoli Nattrass, Jeremy Seekings, Janine Aron, and Robert Mattes rely on information derived from official government data-collecting agencies. The methodological approaches range from single case studies employed to illustrate an argument, to simple comparisons. The statistics that are used are illustrative. The two editors are a qualified team: Ian Shapiro has produced a long line of monographs and edited volumes dealing with democratic theory and practice in South Africa and elsewhere, while Kahreen Tebeau is a PhD candidate at Yale University.

The essays in this edited collection are divided into four distinct categories: (1) "Politics and the Macroeconomy"; (2) "Health and Social Welfare"; (3) "The Rule of Law"; and (4) "Language and Media." The five essays that make up part 1 constitute the core analysis of the volume. The editors of the volume are primarily concerned with state policy. This approach has the advantage of concentrating the efforts of the assembled authors on policy analysis. The drawback is that it limits the scope of what can be investigated. The consequence of focusing on policy is perhaps to produce an undue stress on decision making and the failures of policymakers to match the expectations of the immediate post-1994 euphoria. In the opening essay in part 1 (entitled "Poverty and Inequality in South Africa, 1994-2007"), Jeremy Seekings argues that state economic policies under the ruling ANC have failed to make significant inroads into redressing the extreme levels of poverty and inequality in South Africa after the end of apartheid. He attributes the causes of persistent poverty and inequality to the choice of an economic growth path that actually discourages job creation for low-skilled and marginally employed wage-earners, coupled with a failing educational system that has not worked for the poor. Despite a fairly effective redistributive social welfare system, job creation after the end of apartheid has remained anemic. As an antidote to the slow pace of job creation, Seekings argues in favor of the adoption of a wholly different labor market policy that would reduce the existing cost of labor along with an expanded social safety net for the "poorest of the poor."

What Seekings seems to overlook is the power of

large-scale businesses to go their own way, thereby ignoring the pleas and protestations of policymakers. This perspective has generated a great deal of controversy in both academic and trade union circles. Trade union activists, for example, warn that adopting policies that would reduce the cost of labor will only result in creating more precariousness for workers. Academics on the political left like Franco Barchiesi, Ashwin Desai, Patrick Bond, and numerous others take issue with this position, arguing that labor policies advocated by Seekings represent a step backward, and result in a loosening of the institutional gains that organized workers were able to achieve as a consequence of their contribution to the struggle against apartheid. Indeed, one of the most contentious programs enacted with the transition to parliamentary democracy is black economic empowerment (BEE). In his essay, Anthony Butler takes a critical look at these efforts to address the imbalances in wealth distribution across the lines of race. He begins with a critical appraisal of the usefulness of BEE as a strategy of empowerment. He then turns to a careful dissection of the practice of BEE. Butler remains skeptical about the current state of affairs. He suggests that if BEE and its variants remain an arena open for favoritism and "rewarding friends," then the entire framework may collapse, leading to a loss of business confidence, which would be harmful for future economic growth.

In his essay, Robert Mattes unpacks the strengths and weaknesses of the ANC's efforts to foster various forms of democratic legitimacy since 1994. He raises some concerns about the lack of political engagement and participation in democratic institutions at the grassroots level. In his essay, "Business Community after Apartheid and Beyond," Theuns Eloff chronicles the role of organized business in promoting an ideal business environment as the wellspring for continued economic growth. Finally, Janine Aron takes a broader look at the successes and failures of macroeconomic (fiscal and monetary) policies since 1994. She remains cautiously optimistic for monetary policy in South Africa, as long as policymakers do not deviate from a strict commitment to conventional market-based approaches. As a general rule, the essays on macroeconomics are framed within conventional market-led approaches to socioeconomic growth and stability. The narrow starting point limits the options for thinking about alternatives.

In the leading essay in part 2, Nicoli Nattrass explores the causes and consequences of former president Thabo Mbeki's mystifying AIDS denialism. After unpacking various explanations for Mbeki's reluctance to act, she remains perplexed and bewildered. While she attributes some blame for slow response to the AIDS epidemic to the administrations of other former presidents, F. W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela, Nattrass focuses her attention squarely on the failure of the Mbeki administration to not only acknowledge that there were new and useful treatment and prevention strategies available, but also to act quickly to introduce well-known and appropriately tested antiretroviral drugs for treatment and for slowing the spread of AIDS. In their concluding essay in this section, Lauren Paremoer and Courtney Jung start with the observation that the ANC has faced very little meaningful electoral opposition to its policy choices (with the exception of the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape). They suggest that the battle for socioeconomic rights–such as the right to housing and health care–takes place largely through the court system. They trace the process through which civil society organizations have used the Constitutional Court to press for redress of grievances. The courts have become a primary site of opposition, offering the most formidable challenge to the ANC government when it fails to deliver on rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

In the opening essay in part 3, David Dyzenhaus demonstrates how the rule of law in the "new South Africa" is tied to not only a procedural conception of legality (where actions of state officials are backed by a warrant in law) but also a substantive conception, which requires that the litany of rights and liberties embedded in the Constitution be protected. Dyzenhaus issues a cautionary warning, pointing to efforts of the ANC-in-government to bypass the Constitutional Court and its rulings. In the next essay, Marianne Camerer assesses the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, of anticorruption efforts. In the concluding essay in this section, Lungisile Ntsebeza investigates the failure of redistributive land reform despite the promises in 1994 to rectify the imbalance. By adopting a "willing buyer, willing seller" principle, the ANC-in-government locked itself into a regulative land regime that was unable to break the entrenchment of private property rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The final essays in this collection take up the question of language and media. In his critical assessment of the language question, Neville Alexander (who passed away in September 2012 and whose consistently critical voice will be sorely missed) argues strenuously for the importance of mother-tongue-based education, particularly at the lower grades. While South Africa adopted a progressive approach toward the use of indigenous languages, language policy in practice has been disappointing. In the final essay of the volume, Guy Berger argues that the

ANC's commitment to a "managed liberalization" of the fields of communications is trapped with contradictory objectives. The reliance on market forces is often at odds with the goals of post-apartheid "transformation" of the entrenched media empire.

While several essays speak favorably of ANC policies, the overall tone of this collection is critical. Is this stance warranted? Certainly, the time for "rainbow sentimentalism" has past. All too often, the ruling ANC has sought to blame the apartheid past for current failures to redress persistent poverty and unequal access to basic resources like jobs, education, and health care. At the same time, the harshest social critics have focused undue attention on the failures of political leadership, the embarrassing levels of corruption, the temptations of crony capitalism, and self-enrichment of the new black elite while ignoring the structural constraints facing the political regime, the entrenched power of the white business class, and the persistence of racism as reasons for the failure to achieve the goals of 1994. Critical engagement can cut two ways: first, it can be seen as an effort to deepen democratic institutions and to push the ANC to adopt policies more in favor of the poor; or alternatively, it can serve to undermine the legitimacy of the ruling African National Congress. Taken together, the essays in *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* raise important questions for the prospects for the future in the new South Africa. The transfer of entrenched wealth and power from the old regime to the new has complicated efforts on the part of the ANC to engage in reforms that would benefit wage-earners and the poor. A good position in the ANC hierarchy is often a ticket to financial success, while at the same time, the large underclass trapped in poverty and unemployment and increasingly dissatisfied with government delivery poses a potential threat to political stability.

The intended audiences for *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* are scholars, post-graduate students, and upper-division undergraduates interested in understanding the challenges and opportunities for change in South Africa after the transition to parliamentary democracy. The essays focus primarily on the fields of politics, economics, law, and social policy. While these fields of inquiry are broad in scope, the overall impact of the book could have been aided by some gesture toward enduring geographical inequalities, the successes or failures of new metropolitan planning regimes, and changes in the built environment. *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* succeeds in uncovering the weaknesses in political leadership and the failure of the ruling ANC to deliver on its initial promises of upliftment. Yet there may be some overreach here. Taking a wider-angle view would be better able to situate the failures of political leadership in the context of the prevailing global conditions, structural constraints, and limitations that ANC faces in the current global climate of socioeconomic uncertainty and malaise. It is also the case that the choice of topics in this collection narrows the focus unnecessarily. The essays are typically framed around conventional approaches to studying macroeconomics, and to evaluating policy and decision making processes. One might ask if studying such themes as the spatial geography and the built environment, or political protest and popular mobilization, might yield more nuanced understandings of the transition to parliamentary democracy in South Africa. The essays in *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?* seem to overlook the power of large-scale business to shape the future, and how the pressures of global competitiveness have locked the ANC leadership into a limited range of policy choices.

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Citation: Martin J. Murray. Review of Shapiro, Ian; Tebeau, Kahreen, eds., *After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa?*. H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews. November, 2012.
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