

GLOBALISATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

SOC2602

ASSIGNMENT 02 – SEMESTER 01

████████████████████

████████

DATE: 08 APRIL 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	Page 2
2. The limits and constraints of the negotiated settlement.....	Page 2
3. Conclusion.....	Page 5



Bibliography



Introduction

South Africa has been hailed all over the world for the miracle of 1994. What was supposed to end in a blood bath and civil war ended up in peaceful elections and ushered a new era; a new dawn. This of course came after much negotiation and discussion. Much was gained, but much was lost. In the end, the imminent freedom of black people was attained. After decades of oppression and apartheid, black people were about to see freedom. They finally received the right to vote for their preferred government, and freedom was the prize. But was that freedom attained? What is the freedom that we speak of? Have the lives of the black masses change? During the negotiations, the African National Congress and others were representing the black masses while the National Party and others were representing the white minority and their privileges. It would seem that the white minority has held on to their privileges while the black masses still grapple with the same issues they grappled with before 1994. ↑

Poor black South Africans may have received their freedom, in term of their civil rights and democracy but their socio economic conditions, for the most part, remained the same. In some instances, the conditions have deteriorated beyond apartheid years. This is not to say that the current government has no made a difference in people's lives.

Marais (2001) is of the view that the very negotiated settlement created restrictions when it came to socio economic transformation for South Africa. This paper looks at ways in which socio economic transformation was overlooked, over democracy and civil rights. I am in agreement with most points made by Marais but his view has some flaws and those will be analysed in this paper. ↑

According to the Study Guide (2006:114) Marais argues that although the ANC¹ had been the leader of the democratic movement and held radical views of political transformation, their socio economic agenda was not radical. Marais is of the view that the ANC did not have an official stance of supporting a mixed capitalist economy but did not necessarily speak boldly against it. If anything, even though the ANC wanted to see equal opportunities for the masses, their socioeconomic strategy was not radial and socialist. Although the ANC had always wanted civil rights for the people of South Africa there was no clear way that they

¹ African National Congress

were planning to give people economic freedom. It can be argued that, because of the banning of the ANC in 1960, amongst other factors, it was difficult for them to see and know the economic workings of the country and therefore had limited sight of what was ahead. During that time, the ultimate prize was the abolishment of apartheid and therefore the freedom of the people. In retrospect the two should have received equal attention so that when the people were ready to participate in the economy, they were well-armed for the task at hand. This has proven to be one of the limitations to social change in South Africa. ↴

Marais refers to compromises that were made during the negotiated settlement, by both the ANC and the National Party. Marais refers to this as “politics of compromise”. According to Marais, both parties came to the proverbial table with some common goals, albeit for different reasons. The ANC was aware of its limitations which were based on fear and weakness. After all, the NP was still in government and were eager to protect white capital, by any means possible. One of the compromises that the ANC made was agreeing to and adopting the sunset clause which suggested five years of coalition government. This guaranteed further concessions from both sides of the negotiating table. Further to that, according to Marais, the ANC subsequently pacified the security forces by offering amnesty by way of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this way they didn’t get to face criminal charges, but forgiveness by the families of their victims. This was indeed a mistake from the side of the ANC because, in retrospect, South Africa is a country that has never recovered from apartheid. The economic consequences of apartheid are still with us and could have been avoided, had there been foresight from the negotiated settlement. One of the challenges in South Africa currently, is the incidents of racism that crop up from time to time. One could argue that they stem from racial issues that were not dealt with. This is a stumbling block to social change in the country. Another compromise that was adopted by the ANC as stated by Marais, was the adoption and recognition of traditional leadership. This was quite peculiar because traditional leadership in itself doesn’t quite recognise democracy. Further to that, traditional leadership is totalitarian. This was also a humungous compromise on the side of the ANC and continues to pose a challenge to governance with regards to democracy for the people living in areas that are led by traditional leaders. ↴

One of the reasons why the National Party was finally willing to come to the negotiating table was because of the sanctions levelled against South Africa by the rest of the world. Marais (2001) states that from as early as the 1973 oil crisis, the South African economy started to show signs of ailment. The imposed sanction made it difficult for South Africa to export any

goods. This exposed some weaknesses in the entire structure of the economy which only catered for whites only, while suing the black community as cheap labour. According to Marais, things got worse during the time of the negotiated settlement between 1989 and 1993 when the country saw negative economic growth. Mining started to shed a lot of jobs since South Africa could not export any raw minerals such as gold. Miners began to lose jobs because mine owners were claiming not to make adequate profit. This meant that miners had to leave mining towns and go back to their villages where they had no employment and therefore couldn't participate in the economy. This, therefore, lowered the standard of living for black South Africans. That means that social change was being slowed down.

On the policy front, Marais states that even before the dawn of democracy, the ANC had already shown an affinity to neoliberal macro-economic policy. Although all parties wanted to see economic growth in South Africa, it can be argued that they all had different reasons for this. The national party needed to maintain the privileges of whites while the ANC wanted to see redistribution of wealth to black South Africans who had been left out of the economy for decades before that. It can be argued that the ANC could have had a few cadres that were to be "compensated" for their contribution to the liberation movement. Those who would have come back from exile to a free South Africa.

The ANC, says Marais, was also worried about the volatility that could likely come with this new democratic dream. They therefore didn't take a more radical approach to redress and redistribution. Foreign Direct Investment was very important at this time. One will remember that South Africa had come out of a period of sanctions and it was imperative that foreign investors see this new dawn as sustainable. The ANC still had a lot to do to prove to the international community that their economic policies were viable. The ANC, according to Marais had hoped that Foreign Direct Investment would go into the industrial sector. The hope was that this would increase South Africa's export potential, since South Africa was not lacking in raw materials. The plan was for South Africa to eventually export finished products, as opposed to raw materials. One of the challenges faced by this government was the IMF² "letter of intent" which required the government to keep inflation and wages under control which inadvertently meant wages were not to be increased. One should think that this was a huge blow to the masses of poor black people working in these industries their wages were not about to increase. These are people that had already waited for decades to see their

² International Monetary Fund

lives change. They had waited to see freedom but never economic freedom. The neo liberal approach that the ANC adopted, directly or indirectly did not too much to change the lives of the masses. This was one of the setbacks of the negotiated settlement. Marais argues that the National Party government appealed to the interests of the black people, particularly the leaders of the movement. One can argue that capital could have exchanged hands and thus allowed a certain class of black people to advance, leaving the masses behind.

Conclusion

Did the negotiated settlement bring about any change to the people of South Africa? Marais doesn't seem to think so, and moreover he argues that the socio economic results have not been seen. The National Party came to the negotiation table begrudgingly. The economic sanctions were crippling the economy and apartheid was unsustainable. This was a great challenge, but even so, the National Party had the duty to protect white interest in the country. It can be said that the ANC could have negotiated better, in the sense that they could have chosen policies that emancipate the poor people of South Africa.

A more controversial take on the negotiated settlement is that perhaps, there should have been a more decisive "revolution" where the oppressed would have come out as the victors, without the sunset clause or the government of national unity. That could have been a good place to start. Of course that did not happen and the country is still grappling with high unemployment figures and low literacy figures.

Therefore, in hindsight, the negotiated settlement had inconceivable limitations and constraints that have brought the country to where it is. Where inequality and poverty are the order of the day. Marais makes some excellent and factual points to that effect.

Bibliography



1. Study Guide, Martin, R & Gelderblom, D. (2006). *Globalisation and social change in South Africa: Only study guide for SOC202-3*. Pretoria: University of South Africa

