

2019

Colonialism, Apartheid, and Democracy: South Africa's Historical Implications on the Land Reform Debate

Adeline Piotrowski Ms.

Southern Adventist University, adelinepiotrowski@southern.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/jiur>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Piotrowski, Adeline Ms. (2019) "Colonialism, Apartheid, and Democracy: South Africa's Historical Implications on the Land Reform Debate," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 11 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/jiur/vol11/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Peer Reviewed Journals at KnowledgeExchange@Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research* by an authorized editor of KnowledgeExchange@Southern. For more information, please contact jspears@southern.edu.

Colonialism, Apartheid, and Democracy: South Africa's Historical Implications on the Land Reform Debate

Adeline Piotrowski

Abstract: This research examines South African history, beginning with it as a colonial entity up until its inception as a democratic state, and how it works in conjunction with the land reform debate. This paper addresses arguments of South Africa's colonial history, analyzes policy making during the apartheid era, and traces the steps taken towards becoming a democracy. Furthermore, it places special attention to how actions mandated by the apartheid government, and legislation from this time period, are currently affecting the debate at hand. It then addresses the current debates on land reform and some social implications that come along with its implementation. By tracing the land reform debate through the lens of South African history, this research makes the critical connection of the present debate to the past and how implications of this policy stem from an equally important historical context.

The history of South Africa reaches far beyond Nelson Mandela, apartheid, and colonialism.¹ Just like the country itself is rooted at the foot of the African continent, anchored by the same rich soil that feeds into the dense interior of the Congo and up into the Nile River Valley, so is the history of this country. This soil runs deep with veins of gold, whispers of diamonds, and fertile silt much like its past. Yet, South Africa's rich history does not begin with European occupation, the Khoisan people, nor the wild beasts that still roam its grasslands today: it begins ground-deep when the foundations of the earth were laid.

I would first like to thank Dr. Lisa Clark Diller for working with me, and advising me through the course of this thesis. She has been an invaluable resource, pillar of support, and someone who I have deep respect for as a professional. I would also like to thank Professor Shannon Martin for taking the time to edit, mentor, and guide me through the planning and finishing of this thesis. Without her expertise and guidance, this thesis would not have developed into what it is, and I am truly grateful for that. I would also like to recognize Dr. Mark Peach, the director of the Southern Scholars Program, who supported me in my research, aided in the process of having my proposal approved, and affirmed my love for research. Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my family in South Africa. This thesis would never have seen its genesis without my inspired love for South Africa. This is a country I hold dear to my heart, and I know that the love I have for this country, the want to see its success, and my appreciation for my South African heritage was inspired by you all. To my parents, you sacrificed everything to come to the United States, but you never let me forget where I come from, and I am forever grateful for that.

Colonism, Apartheid, and Democracy

Inevitably, time brought along change, and with change came the parameters of mankind. Just as the lion lays out his territory, so did man when he entered into the Kalahari and down into the Cape. People clashed, as they always do, and blood soaked the African soil. In his humanness, man fought brother, foreigner, and native in order to secure his part of Africa. This land, which predates mankind, was soon the cause of bloodshed, violence, and genocide.

Now, this rich land is the center of South African history once again. Regardless of its past and the progress that has been made, all is casted aside in an attempt to grab up a part of Africa once again. This young state is now at the mercy of land reform, an issue that is currently plaguing South African politics. Instead of constructive conversations, understanding, and reconciliation, an ugly spirit of divisiveness and dissent has again taken root at the foot of Africa. The Rainbow Nation is seemingly being torn apart as a spirit of “us versus them” becomes more and more evident in the course of these debates.

In an attempt to find the basis of this dissent and understand the land reform debate today, one must look at the history of South Africa. Just as past injustices, racist legislation, and segregation should be weighed when discussing this issue, so should the many people groups that make up South African history and the social implications that come with land reform. By combining these aspects, the true nature of this dispute can be clearly seen, mutual understanding can be achieved, and the fragility of South African democracy can be preserved.

Scholars in the Field

Since the 1990s, the debate on land reform in South Africa has undergone tremendous change as promises from the African National Congress (ANC), made at the dawn of the democratic South Africa, have fallen short of realization. With this said, only a handful of academics outside of South Africa have dedicated their time and resources to doing research on this subject. Compared to larger subjects in history and political science, land reform in South Africa is a relatively new subject that renders little academic publishing. Limited to mostly governmental reports, journal articles, and statistical data, South African land reform is the subject of only a small fraction of published academic books.

Among the few dedicated authors are Cheryl Walker and Ben Cousins. Both have been proponents of land reform and have written extensive research on the subject. In 2015, both co-edited a book entitled *Land Divided, Land Restored*, which remains a holistic publication on the land reform debate in South Africa. This book is a compilation of essays regarding the present debate, the history of it, and other related fields of study. The book contains sixteen different contributors: Cheryl Walker and Ben Cousins among them. Each author adds a different perspective on the debate. These include opinions on the Natives Land Act of 1913, environmental change, urban planning, the many disagreements about land reform, the “willing buyer, willing seller” debate, and agrarian reform. The authors remain relatively neutral in their analysis of the subjects, yet every chapter helps feed into the book’s ultimate goal of showing “that

much of the material needed for this work [land reform] is already within our grasp.”² The book provides readers with a better understanding of why this debate is relevant to South African politics, and what they can learn about the issue.

Another relevant work is a book entitled *Land Reform in South Africa: An Uneven Transformation*, which was co-authored by Brent McCusker, William G. Moseley, and Maano Ramutsindela. This work provides a more theoretical and historical context on land reform. Throughout the book, the authors examine various approaches to the debate, while ultimately asserting that hegemonic blocs play a large role in both the history of South Africa and the present debate. They conclude that “Hegemonic relations between subaltern and dominant classes are fluid, ever changing, and subject to disruption at any time.”³ This translates directly to the “land question,” and how class status affects the distribution of land.

Finally, Dr. Edward Lahiff, from the Program for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), has published a number of works on the subject. His involvement with PLAAS has enabled him to have a direct hand in the conversation. His works have been utilized by The World Bank in assessing the debate on land reform in South Africa and neighboring countries. One of those papers, entitled “Land Redistribution in South Africa—A Critical Review,” which was co-authored with Guo Li, gives a twenty-eight-page overview on the debate on land reform and its necessity to South African politics and social schemata. In their report, their argument is centered on the idea that “Successful rural development and land reform is crucial for South Africa’s economic and social future.”⁴ Their argument continues by expanding on the idea that “Land reform in South Africa...seeks to address over 350 years of race-based colonization and dispossession, as part of the transition to a democratic society.”⁵ Their research and explanation on the land reform initiative that is currently taking place in the country provides readers with a generalized overview on the morphology of land redistribution beginning in the colonial era up until the end of apartheid. However, it offers no specifics. Brushing aside the history of the debate, the authors provide good analysis of the structure and arguments that surround the land reform debate, but they lack foundational context when discussing the colonialization of South Africa, an important element to the topic. They conclude that market-based reform alone does not work, that there is a need for appropriate legislation and rigorous application, and that there needs to be less of a focus on land acquisition and ownership, and more on land use.⁶ With these fundamental elements, one can take their conclusions and expand on their research.

This thesis seeks to not only couple the research that has already been done on this

2 Ben Cousins and Cheryl Walker, eds., *Land Divided, Land Restored: Land Reform in South Africa For the 21st Century* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana, 2015), 16.

3 Brent McCusker, William G. Moseley, and Maano Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa: An Uneven Transformation* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 36.

4 Edward Lahiff and Guo Li, “Land Redistribution in South Africa—A Critical Review,” *The World Bank*, May 28, 2012, 3, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/525981468302460916/pdf/808740WP0South0x0379822B00PUBLIC0.pdf>.

5 Lahiff and Li, 4.

6 Lahiff and Li, 22.

issue, but also expound on the importance of South Africa's history when discussing this debate. By beginning with its inception as a colonial entity and tracing its history up until the present, this paper discusses the many points in history that lead up to the current debate. As much of the current research focuses mostly on theoretical aspects of the debate, this research seeks to bridge the gap between the history of South Africa and the current debate, as it is an essential element that must be examined in totality when discussing this subject.

The Colonization of South Africa

It is impossible to understand the genesis of policies such as land redistribution without looking at South Africa's history. Yet, "the telling of history reflects the perspective of those in power...it is not surprising that South Africa's history has usually been told from the perspective of whites."⁷ The colonization of South Africa, as is the case with many of the African states, can be riddled with irregularities and may be translated through only a single lens: a colonizer's perspective. Additionally, the effects of colonization can be seen in the current debate on land reform. When analyzing the foundations of South Africa, it is important to understand that its history can be skewed to favor European ideology. By understanding that African states share a colonial history, it is easier to understand the wider context as to how their history is translated and why colonial powers acted the way that they did.

Alfred Moleah states that "The most devastating effect of colonization in South Africa was the dispossession of the land."⁸ Therefore, it is important to first address South Africa's pre-colonial and colonial history before analyzing the current discussion of land reform. However, understanding the magnitude and development of power structures over time in the country is difficult since an ongoing debate exists upon who the first "colonizers" of South Africa were. The first group to migrate into this region was the pastoral farmers from the northern parts of sub-Saharan Africa, though such movements usually do not fit the formal framework of colonization. More traditional colonial theory points to the Dutch and British settlers. However the debate over who supposedly colonized South Africa first cannot be used as a foundational argument for the debate of land reform since the transfer of land, whether through conquest or nomadic occupation, has been riddled with irregularities, lack of documentation, and lack of a solid, credible timeline. As a result, no single tribe, indigenous group, or European power can lay claim to the land that has been occupied by all of the above influences throughout the centuries.

When traditional colonization did occur, it began a noted disparity in land ownership that would continue well into the twentieth-century. As Moleah states in *South Africa: Colonialism, Apartheid, and African Dispossession*, "European colonialism...rearranged the world in accordance with a European image in a largely brutal and violent manner."⁹ This was ever true for South Africa after the Europeans arrived in

7 Patrick H. O'Neil et al., *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 5th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 678.

8 Alfred Tokollo Moleah, *South Africa: Colonialism, Apartheid and African Dispossession* (Wilmington, DE: Disa Press, 1993), 447.

9 Moleah, 1.

the Cape. Traditional colonization was characterized by the arrival of European powers reaching into the southern hemisphere, the iconic Dutch trading company known as the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), and finally, the British Empire. This colonization began in the mid-1600s and continued over a three-hundred-year span.¹⁰ With an increase in European trade, Portuguese seafarers searched for an easier route to India and China to trade goods. This meant rounding the tip of Africa and sailing the Indian Ocean. After this, settlement by European powers took place first in Cape Town, and then spread into the interior of the land. Finally, with an increase in traffic along these trade routes, competition between the European powers increased until a transition from Dutch to British rule occurred in 1806.

As described in the book *Cases in Comparative Politics*, “While most of the colonial ‘scramble for Africa’ took place in the nineteenth century, European domination of South Africa began almost two centuries earlier. Cape Town was initially settled by the Dutch East India Company to resupply ships heading to and from Dutch colonies in Indonesia.”¹¹ With this settlement of Dutch merchants, a new people group also realized its genesis: the Afrikaners. These early Dutch settlers were farmers who “quickly seized the fertile land of the Cape of Good Hope.”¹² The land was not the only resource that would be exploited by the colonizers. The indigenous Khoikhoi pastoralists were robbed of an independent existence after European settlement in 1652.¹³ Soon after, slavery and forced labor characterized these early European settlements.

Because of increasing contact with the natives in the Cape through trade and skirmishes, the Dutch established a colony on the eastern part of the Cape.¹⁴ Regarding the governance of land in the Cape, “Land policies in the early period of state formation in the Cape reflected the context of a frontier society.”¹⁵ Because of the European-skewed governance, from the initial foundation of Cape Town in 1652 until 1814, the Dutch entered into conflicts with the native San population. As a result, “San (Bushman) society in the Cape Colony was almost completely annihilated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a result of land confiscation, massacre, forced labour and cultural suppression that accompanied colonial rule.”¹⁶ This massacre was not isolated to the Cape territory or to this time. Instead, it continued through the apartheid era until the formation of the Democratic South Africa. According to a review on land redistribution published by The World Bank, however, “The extent to which the indigenous people of South Africa were dispossessed by European colonists—mainly Dutch and British settlers—was greater than in any other country in Africa, and

10 Lahiff and Li, “Land Redistribution in South Africa,” 3.

11 O’Neil et al., *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 678–679.

12 O’Neil et al., 679.

13 Beck, R. (2000). *The history of south africa*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

14 Oliver, E. & Oliver, W.H., 2017, ‘The Colonisation of South Africa: A unique case’, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3), a4498.

15 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 42.

16 Mohamed Adhikari, “A Total Extinction Confidently Hoped For: The Destruction of Cape San Society under Dutch Colonial Rule, 1700–1795,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 1–2 (2010): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20941880>.

it persisted for an exceptionally long time.”¹⁷ During this time, the property rights of many white South Africans remained intact, while blacks were marginalized on smaller, disproportionate sizes of land.

When discussing the schemata of colonial rule in South Africa, Lungisile Ntsebeza references the French and British use of local power.¹⁸ This is a system known as indirect rule: one in which a larger power utilizes small factions to indirectly rule a large portion of land. One can look at how the ruling powers utilized tribes and tribal leadership to govern large sections of land when exploring how a minority was able to control a majority later in South African history. This indirect rule was a tool for British and French authorities to maintain indirect rule in South Africa. Initially, “Some Khoikhoi men and women served as intermediaries between the early Dutch colonists and neighboring Khoikhoi clans, and later with Bantu-speakers to the north and east.”¹⁹ When putting this in relevant terms, “The post-1994 state has inherited a system of administration that was based on the concentration of all power in these rural areas in the hands of unaccountable traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen).”²⁰ This is seen as intrinsic in the discussion of land reform in the sense that, “From the onset of white settlement of Africa in 1652...land was seized and African chiefdoms crushed one by one as they sought to retain their autonomy.”²¹ The colonizers had no idea that what they were doing would have a direct impact on land redistribution in the twenty-first century—almost four hundred years later.

It is said that “Explanations for South African land policies throughout its history have ranged from racism, to demand for labor, to political geography, to some facet of political deal making.”²² By already exercising some kind of racial control of the indigenous population, the Europeans monopolized their grasp on the raw materials in South Africa and soon began to change the hierarchy of land ownership. This would later feed into racial policies that were written into legislation regarding land ownership, distribution of land, and white minority rule.

Transition from Colonial State to Apartheid Government

When colonial rule began to diminish and the establishment of the Union of South Africa occurred in 1910, land policies were adopted and adapted from the British and implemented in the Union of South Africa. Throughout much of the twentieth century, controversial legislation on land ownership was passed to ensure that the majority of land would remain in the hands of white farmers. As a result, the years leading up to the establishment of the apartheid government in 1961, especially legislation published between 1913 and 1936, had the most impact on land distribution and the indigenous

17 Oliver, E. & Oliver, W.H., 2017, ‘The Colonisation of South Africa: A unique case’, HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 73(3), a4498.

18 Lungisile Ntsebeza, *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of Land in South Africa* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 17.

19 Beck, *The History of South Africa*, 15.

20 Ntsebeza, *Democracy Compromised*, 14.

21 Raymond Suttner, “The African National Congress Centenary: A Long and Difficult Journey,” *International Affairs* 88, no. 4 (July 1, 2012): 719.

22 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 42.

African population of South Africa.

When reflecting on the current political situation, it can be argued that the policies that were mandated under the Union of South Africa have a direct affect on the current debates on land reform. In the 1990s, the Mandela presidency was faced with resolving land policies that originated from this transitional period, or more specifically, with restitution associated with the Natives Land Act of 1913, a monumental piece of legislation that is at the heart of the land reform debate currently. In essence, this document, that was drafted by the then Parliament of South Africa, drastically limited land rights of native Africans and created a noted disparity in land ownership between the social population.

According to Cheryl Walker, the Natives Land Act is “a foundational piece of segregationist legislation on the part of the first all-white Parliament of the still very new Union of South Africa.”²³ She goes on to further argue that the act would be the cornerstone for the division of South Africa into wealthy, majority-white landowners and an impoverished native community that was perpetuated throughout the twentieth century.²⁴ Essentially, “The final bill restricted African land purchases, leases, and any other such arrangements outside of land specifically reserved for Africans.”²⁵ This legislation reached its centennial in 2013, at which time the government posted on their website that the Natives Land Act of 1913, “opened the door for white ownership of 87 percent of land, leaving black people to scramble for what was left.”²⁶ This is the origin story of the land reform debate. Since Section 25 of the South African constitution deals specifically with land lost as a result of the Natives Land Act, this legislation is truly center stage of the current debate.

As stated in *Land Divided, Land Restored*, the Natives Land Act of 1913 is “the fundamental cause of land dispossession in South Africa.... At the stroke of a pen, the majority of the population were cruelly robbed of their land, the source of their food and the site of their families’ homes for generations. Thousands were evicted and many died.”²⁷ With changes and variations to the Natives Land Act of 1913, this legislation morphed into a new piece in 1936. As a result, the South African government allotted 87 percent of South African land to white settlers, leaving natives with just over 13 percent in total. This fluctuated with the revision in 1936, but the minority held onto the majority of land.

During this time, South Africa’s population was experiencing an increase in urbanization. Under these conditions, the South African government established a Native Law Commission in 1948 that, “had it prevailed, would have set the country on a very different trajectory from what transpired after 1948.”²⁸ This Native Law

23 Cheryl Walker, “Land Question in South Africa: 1913 and Beyond,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, March 2017, 2, <http://africanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-79#acrefore-9780190277734-e-79-note-3>.

24 Walker, 2.

25 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 49.

26 Walker, “Land Question in South Africa,” 2.

27 Cousins and Walker, eds., *Land Divided, Land Restored*, 24.

28 Walker, “Land Question in South Africa,” 10.

Commission argued that complete territorial separation was “impractical” and approached native integration into the greater South African society as slow and gradual. According to Ivan Evans, “The report advocated an ‘elastic policy’ of transitional segregation premised on a less rigid pass system, which would gradually be relaxed to a point where race would be eroded as an organizing principle in South Africa’s socioeconomic structure.”²⁹ However “elastic” the policy might have been, with the dissolving of the Union of South Africa, and the founding of the Republic of South Africa in 1961, the revision in 1948 was abandoned and apartheid policies were further solidified that set the country on a road wrought with segregation and racism. “After the 1948 electoral victory, Afrikaner nationalists were able to build on a solid foundation of segregationist land policy and begin to both erase any inconsistencies in policy and propel their vision of complete segregation to the fore.”³⁰ As the nationalist party came into power following the 1948 election, it was evident that the policies that were to follow were not going to be any more inclusive than those of previous years. If anything, it would continue the legacy of the Union of South Africa.

This is exactly what happened “on 26 May 1948 [when] the Afrikaner National Party came to power and instituted and institutionalized apartheid.”³¹ The racial divide in South Africa only grew with the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961. As Charles Robberts took the presidency, it seemed that the questions surrounding apartheid—what separation meant for the Afrikaners and Blacks, and what the new government was going to do about it—were becoming increasingly unsure.

The idea of social segregation, in the context of the South African government, was widely accepted and upheld as the norm in the new Republic of South Africa. However, it left a wound that would not easily be healed. As stated by Nicholas Waddy, “Social segregation in Africa not only created an atmosphere in which contact between white and black was severely limited and carefully controlled, but more importantly it made it very difficult for a world of real equality between the races even to be imagined, let alone fought for.”³² As delegates met together to deliberate on what apartheid meant and how it was defined, they struggled to grasp the idea.

In 1948, thirteen years before the fall of the Union of South Africa, the Smuts Regime knew that there were two principle criticisms facing apartheid: one, segregation had always been a policy of the South African government, and two, apartheid was vague.³³ In *Land Reform in South Africa: An Uneven Transformation*, the authors argue that “Complete segregation had never been accomplished and probably never could be;

29 Ivan Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

30 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 57.

31 Teboho J. Lebakeng, “Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe: Acknowledging the Legacy of a Pan-Africanist Hero,” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 11 (April 2018), http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A537173150/AONE?u=tel_a_sau&sid=AONE&xid=c384088d.

32 Nicholas Lawrence Waddy, *The Growing Divide: British and South African Parliamentary Attitudes to Racial Policy, 1945-1948*, PhD diss. (Ann Harbor, MI: Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001), 142.

33 Waddy, 143.

thus the official stances were inconsistent at best [regarding apartheid]...”³⁴ This did not overshadow the fact, however, that intermarriage was feared.³⁵ With this said, the segregation that was deliberately mandated in South African law had no justification. It appears that the founders of the Union of South Africa, namely the Smuts Regime in the late 1940s, had just adopted the racial policies of the British after South Africa became an independent state. This meant segregation not only in the social and economic realms, but also in land ownership. Despite the sanctions that were eventually placed against the country and the political outcry against the segregation occurring in South Africa, the country would not see a change in leadership and political structure until the 1990s.

Protests and opposition to the South African government initially began with peaceful demonstrations and marches. In *The African Renaissance and the Afro-Arab Spring*, the authors argue that “resistance to white racism and land deprivation by South Africa’s black population was limited to peaceful protests until the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress were banned in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960.”³⁶ The Sharpeville Massacre became the symbol for the struggle against the apartheid government. It soon became evident that “there could be no politics between black and white other than domination.”³⁷

After this episode, the evolution of the African National Congress (ANC) would take a very different route. This was realized with “growing repression, fueled by the Sharpeville Massacre that finally persuaded the ANC to ally with the South African Communist Party to initiate military action against the apartheid regime.”³⁸ After its banishment after Sharpeville, the ANC struggled to address the inequalities that were present in South Africa. They were being funded by the Soviet Union, but that discontinued after its fall in the early 1990s.³⁹ Before the creation of the Democratic Republic South Africa, the party had originally adopted a radical nationalist and orthodox Marxist-Lenin view, but shifted toward liberal democracy in the mid-1980s as a result of the “accumulating evidence of economic stagnation in countries led by orthodox Marxist and radical nationalist movements in Africa and elsewhere.”⁴⁰ With this change, the ANC seemed equipped with liberal democracy, which promised a new future for the fragile state.

From the beginning of the Republic of South Africa to the final break with apartheid ideology in the 1990s, the ANC stood opposed to the ruling party before becoming the ruling party. The origin story of the ANC resembles that of many civil rights movements in the United States during the 1950s–60s. The ANC was a largely black

34 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 49.

35 Waddy, *The Growing Divide*, 153–154.

36 Villa-Vicencio et al., *The African Renaissance and the Afro-Arab Spring: A Season of Rebirth?*,

33.

37 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 59.

38 O’Neil et al., *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 683.

39 Villa-Vicencio et al., *The African Renaissance and the Afro-Arab Spring*, 34.

40 Daryl Glaser, “South Africa and the Limits of Civil Society,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1, no. 32 (1997), quoted in McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 90.

organization that fought for suffrage for blacks. As to its overall importance, the ANC was the most influential organization resisting discrimination during the apartheid era.⁴¹ However, with the increase in use of military tactics against the apartheid regime, many of their notable leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, were arrested and sentenced to life in prison in 1963 and would not see freedom until thirty years later.⁴² As the world's eyes turned to South Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s, no one knew if the democratic transition would be realized. And yet, it was. The mostly-smooth transition of power shocked the whole world and left a promise of what can happen as a result of negotiations, compromise, and strife.

Transition from Apartheid to Democratic Governance

According to Colin Bundy, a noted South African historian, "Researchers on South Africa should take history seriously if they are to fully understand the extent to which it has shaped the present moment, and more importantly, how some policies that are credited to the ANC have their foundation in the apartheid era."⁴³ With the birth of the Democratic South Africa, the ANC took power and promised to guide the country towards a bright future with President Nelson Mandela at the forefront. "The South African settlement, celebrated around the world as an example of what can be achieved through peaceful negotiations, came at a high cost."⁴⁴ Thousands of people lost their lives from 1990 to 1993, and "The imperfect miracle is that the negotiations worked."⁴⁵ Unlike many other attempts of power transitions, South Africa's morph from the apartheid state to a democratic entity was relatively smooth, though the settlement of 1994 changed the landscape of the country fundamentally.⁴⁶ Although fierce opposition no doubt existed at the time, it was indeed a miracle to see democracy triumph without full-fledged civil war. However, with this done, the ANC, which had seemingly promised the world, now had to deliver. One of the fundamental aspects promised was land redistribution. This issue, although initially promised to be solved by 1998, continues to haunt the ANC today.

Before the talk of democratic elections could take place, documents had to be drafted, discussions had to take place, and leaders had to step forward. To initiate the transformation, talks had to begin somewhere, and that came in the form of a promising summit between then-president Frederik Willem de Klerk and Nelson Mandela in 1992.⁴⁷ Mandela, the freedom fighter who was arrested and detained for a number of years, finally had the opportunity to seek unity and reconciliation. Yet,

41 O'Neil et al., *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 683.

42 O'Neil et al., 683.

43 Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), paraphrased in McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 39.

44 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 35.

45 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela, 35.

46 Cousins and Walker, eds., *Land Divided, Land Restored*, 73.

47 Vincent Maphai, "Prospects for a Democratic South Africa," *International Affairs* 69, no. 2 (April 1993): 223, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2621591>.

despite this peaceful meeting between leaders and talks of hope for the future, there was a threat of civil war coming from the Afrikaners and the Inkatha Freedom Party.⁴⁸ Heavy opposition came with this new hope of democracy, but this would not stop what the majority of the country was pushing for: change.

Change came in many forms. From leadership to economics, legislation to social structure, with the presidency of Nelson Mandela came radical change. The most notable change would self-manifest in the form of a new constitution. This document would be unlike the former legal code. The *Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa*, drafted by the ANC, “were premised on the view that a constitution could not merely be a dry legal instrument; it had also to incorporate provisions for corrective action that guaranteed ‘a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth.’”⁴⁹ With the dream of a new South Africa came the dream of a land of equality—equality in wealth, social status, and land ownership. Since apartheid had created a deep disparity in wealth, the new constitution would be fitted to ensure that equal opportunities were made available to everyone. The idea of “a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth” went in line with the idea that, when discussing constitutional reform, the most useful “is one which emphasizes the incorporation not of minorities, but of the majority of citizens; not only politically, but economically.”⁵⁰ This implied that the tables would indeed be turning on the minority that had held onto the majority of the wealth, and in theory, would continue to trickle down into further policy changes that would take place under the ANC in the years to follow.

The Debate on Land Reform Today

When examining the current debate on land reform, many do not realize that South Africa is, indeed, at a crossroads. The debate is not solely on land redistribution and equality; it is saturated with constitutional reform, how that reform affects further constitutional action, and, more generally, what happens next. Furthermore, this debate is deep-rooted in emotion as a result of the past. As stated by Cousins and Walker, “Few issues in contemporary South Africa arouse as much emotion as ‘the land question,’ or reveal as little clarity as to purpose.”⁵¹ However, with any country that wishes to succeed, trials and adversary must be overcome, and if stability, unity, and prosperity are the wishes of the South African government, this emotional issue must not be cast aside haphazardly, as it is now center stage in South African politics.

In a diagnostic report on land reform drafted by the Parliament of South Africa, it is stated, “On the cusp of the transition to democracy, it was widely agreed that one key legacy of the past was the massively unequal distribution of land that had resulted

48 Janet Cherry, “Development, Conflict and the Politics of Ethnicity in South Africa’s Transition to Democracy,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (December 1994): 613.

49 Brokensha, David. (2010). David Welsh. *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Journal of International and Global Studies, 2(1), 146.

50 Cherry, “Development, Conflict and the Politics of Ethnicity in South Africa’s Transition to Democracy,” 614.

51 Cousins and Walker, eds., *Land Divided, Land Restored*, 1.

from three and a half centuries of dispossession.”⁵² The ANC kept this in mind when the new constitution of South Africa was drafted. As a result, Section 25 of the South African constitution deals specifically with the idea of property. In this section, rights concerning property ownership, land expropriation, and land lost as a result of past injustices are addressed. This was written into law primarily aid in the redistribution of wealth that the ANC was so fixated on. The report goes on to say that “The primary beneficiaries of land reform were defined as the ‘rural poor,’ but included a number of diverse interest groupings within that broad category: the victims of land dispossession, farm workers, labour tenants, communal area residents, people living in informal settlements, small-scale farmers, women and youth.”⁵³ Clarity is needed to address how this all functions. This is where the debate on land reform truly begins to take form.

The original stance of the government of South Africa was the idea of a “willing buyer, willing seller.” However, as stated by Michael Aliber in *Land Divided, Land Restored*, “If there is one thing regarding land reform in South Africa about which there is near-universal agreement, it is that the ‘willing buyer, willing seller’ approach is problematic.”⁵⁴ It is argued that this approach is the culprit for the slow pace of land reform, and “is the ugly face of the ‘property clause’...which some critics argue protects largely white landowners at the expense of the disenfranchised and thus also helps explain the slow pace of land reform.”⁵⁵ This approach was recommended by the World Bank as a market-led reform, which emphasizes “the voluntary nature of the process.”⁵⁶ Yet, this approach has been ridiculed time and time again for its inefficiency. Eventually, even the World Bank recognized that this approach was bureaucratically disorganized.⁵⁷ At the 2005 National Land Summit, Minister Thoko Didiza alluded to the fact that the “willing buyer, willing seller” approach needed to be modified:

It became clear that a majority of delegates felt strongly that the way the market-led approach in land delivery does not enable the state to move faster in delivery. This market mechanism has been understood as the principle of ‘willing buyer, willing seller.’ A proposed alternative that has emerged is that the state driven approach must be advocated. It was also noted that where the market mechanism on its own does not work, the state must intervene.⁵⁸

Now, more than ten years after this was stated, ongoing debates are circling regarding the state’s role in land reform. With many arguing the vagueness of Section 25 of the constitution, emotionally-charged debates on the “willing buyer, willing seller”

52 Parliament of South Africa, *Diagnostic Report on Land Reform in South Africa* (Cape Town, South Africa: University of the Western Cape, 2016), 3.

53 Parliament of South Africa, *Diagnostic Report on Land Reform in South Africa*, 6.

54 Michael Aliber, “CHAPTER TITLE,” in *Land Divided, Land Restored: Land Reform in South Africa For the 21st Century*, ed. Ben Cousins and Cheryl Walker (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana, 2015), 145.

55 Cousins and Walker, eds., 145.

56 Lahiff and Li, “Land Redistribution in South Africa,” 10.

57 Lahiff and Li, 10.

58 Thoko Didiza, closing address at the Land Summit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, July 30, 2005, quoted in Cousins and Walker, eds., *Land Divided, Land Restored*, 127.

question, and calls for more radical reform, the debate seems to no longer be centered on land, but on defining the role and powers of the state in controversial issues.

Amidst these debates, a militant political party has seemingly stoked the fires. Led by former ANC member Julius Malema, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have gained popularity within South Africa, and much of sub-Saharan Africa, in recent years. This group has clearly outlined just who and what they are in their online pamphlet *What is the Economic Freedom Fighters*:

The EFF is a radical, leftist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement with an internationalist outlook anchored by popular grassroots formations and struggles. The EFF will be the vanguard of community and workers' struggles and will always be on the side of the people. The EFF will, with determination and consistency, associate with the protest movement in South Africa and will also join in struggles that defy unjust laws.⁵⁹

They go on to state that they are of the Marxist-Lenin and Fanonian schools of thought.⁶⁰ When discussing the land debate, it is important to highlight the EFF since they are one of the main proponents for land expropriation without compensation. In fact, one of their cardinal pillars is, "Expropriation of South Africa's land without compensation for equal redistribution in use."⁶¹ In a statement made on November 15, 2018, during the Joint Constitutional Review Committee, EFF deputy leader Floyd Shivambu alluded to this fact by stating,

Section 25 of the Constitution must be amended to make explicit that which is implicit in the Constitution with regards to expropriation of land without compensation as a legitimate option for land reform so as to address the historic wrongs caused by the arbitrary dispossession of land and, in so doing, ensure equitable access to land and further empower the majority of South Africans to be productive participants in ownership, food security and agricultural reform programmes.⁶²

Yet, this call for land expropriation without compensation is not originating from the EFF exclusively.

Recently, many have been calling for the government of South Africa to reexamine

59 *What Is the Economic Freedom Fighters*, Economic Freedom Fighters, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.effonline.org/what-is-the-economic-freedom-fighte>.

60 It should be noted that the Fanonian school of thought originates from Frantz Fanon, a noted post-colonial theorist. His work *Les Damnés de la Terre* is a comprehensive examination of decolonization and argues that violence plays a central part in that process. For more on Frantz Fanon and his ideology, refer to Tracey Nicholls, "Frantz Fanon," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource*, accessed November 28, 2018, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/fanon/>.

61 *What Is the Economic Freedom Fighters*, 6.

62 Jan Gerber, "Land Expropriation: EFF Brings ANC's Recommendation to Constitutional Review Committee," *News24*, November 15, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/land-expropriation-eff-brings-ancs-recommendation-to-constitutional-review-committee-20181115>.

the role of the state in regards to land expropriation without compensation. Many argue that this new approach would seemingly solve the “willing buyer, willing seller” issue. However, this has not been proven as the most effective method. Furthermore, the president has bounced between stances on the issue. In a state address on July 31, 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa remarked,

It has become pertinently clear that our people want the constitution to be more explicit about expropriation of land without compensation as demonstrated in the public hearings.... The ANC will through the parliamentary process finalize the proposed amendment to the constitution that outlines more clearly the conditions under which expropriation of land without compensation can be effected.⁶³

With this announcement, the president asserted his stance on the issue: taking land without compensation. His words strongly echoed that of the EFF. With this announcement, a wildfire of reports ignited around the world with headlines such as, “South Africa’s Government Wants to Take Land without Compensation.” In response, the president quickly retracted and seems to now be playing the middleman, stating, “This is no land grab.”⁶⁴ With an upcoming election year, some have called the president’s words into question as a political ploy in order to win votes.⁶⁵ Still, the president’s wavering stance and remarks regarding land reform are not the only pitfall of the “land question.”

Another snare of land reform is how much land is really being redistributed versus monetary compensation for historical injustice. To begin, the constitution only addresses historical injustices that took place after 1913. Anything that happened previously cannot be used as legitimate grounds for filing land claims. Furthermore, it appears that the majority of land claims that have been lodged are not seeking recompensation in the form of land, but rather money. As stated by Edward Lahiff, “restitution of historical claims...has been affected largely through cash compensation with relatively little impact in terms of landownership.”⁶⁶ This poses a problem for those set on land redistribution. Instead of addressing historical injustice, it appears that the majority of such claims filed by urban dwellers have not been dealt with in terms of land, but rather monetary compensation. The diagnostic report by the Parliament of South Africa states, “There has been overwhelming pressure on urban claimants to accept standard cash payouts that bear no relation to the value of what was

63 Cyril Ramaphosa, state address on July 31, 2018, quoted in Olivia Kumwenda-Mtambo, “South Africa’s ANC to Amend Constitution to Allow Land Expropriation,” *Reuters*, July 31, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-politics-land/south-africas-anc-to-amend-constitution-to-allow-land-expropriation-idUSKBN1KL2VN>.

64 “Land Reform in South Africa Is Crucial for Inclusive Growth,” *Financial Times*, August 23, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/c81543d8-a61b-11e8-926a-7342fe5e173f>.

65 Milton Nkosi, “Is South Africa’s Land Reform an Election Gimmick?” *BBC News*, August 11, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45099915>.

66 Edward Lahiff, “Land Reform in South Africa 100 Years after the Natives Land Act,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 14, no. 4 (October 2014): 587.

lost, or its current market value.”⁶⁷ While this compensation seems to fix a short-term problem, it leaves gaps in the land redistribution that has already taken place and poses additional social implications.

Social Implications of the Debate on Land Reform

Since the fall of apartheid, no single issue has so greatly divided the country socially as land reform. As argued by Guy Arnold, “Disputes about land may last longer and be more politically damaging to the new South Africa than many of the other problems of adjustment that have to be faced.”⁶⁸ As a result, this debate has produced a number of side effects that cannot be ignored. Heated division within the country, as a result of this debate, can not only be seen in politics, but in the social strata of the country as well. It is evident that the fall of apartheid did not mean the fall of racial divisiveness. Regardless of where it stems from, it exists and remains a core factor in the debate of land reform today in South Africa. For this reason, it should not be ignored, but highlighted when discussing possible resolutions. One of the most recent effects that has been highlighted by news and social media is farm attacks. Recently, farm attacks have been an increasingly popular topic of conversation both within South Africa and internationally. It even caught the attention of President Donald Trump in August of 2018 when he tweeted, “I have asked Secretary of State @SecPompeo to closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers. South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers.”⁶⁹ The post received extensive criticism probing many to research the subject. An extensive number of articles cited the fact that farm murders are down to an all-time low.⁷⁰ Despite the debate surrounding how “large scale” these farm attacks are, the fact remains that they exist. With that said, there is certainly statistical evidence that this charged language does not coincide with actual figures. In an article published by *Foreign Policy*, authors Robbie Gramer and Colum Lynch state, “The legacy of apartheid still manifests in how land is distributed: Though white South Africans make up less than 10 percent of the population, they own some 72 percent of the agricultural land.”⁷¹ With this in mind, it is easy to see how such disparity could cause a backlash from supporters of land reform within the country. However, there is no clear evidence supporting political motivation as a single motive behind such attacks.

The following statistics were compiled by Africa Check, a nonpartisan website that releases statistical data and articles regarding politicized topics within the African

67 Parliament of South Africa, *Diagnostic Report on Land Reform in South Africa*, 39.

68 Guy Arnold, *The New South Africa* (Basingstoke, England: Macmillan, 2000), 141.

69 Donald Trump, Twitter post, August 22, 2018, 7:28 PM, <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1032454567152246785>.

70 A number of articles surfaced after the tweet was posted highlighting the fact that these numbers were inflated, and more critically, up for debate. For further reading, refer to: David Meyers, “Trump Is Tweeting About White Farmers in South Africa. What to Know About the Deeply Racial Issue,” *Fortune*, August 23, 2018, <http://fortune.com/2018/08/23/trump-white-farmers-south-africa/>; and Robbie Gramer and Colum Lynch, “In Tacit Rebuke, U.S. Embassy in South Africa Rejects Trump Tweet,” *Foreign Policy*, August 29, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/29/in-tacit-rebuke-u-s-embassy-in-south-africa-rejects-trump-tweet/>.

71 Gramer and Lynch, “In Tacit Rebuke.”

continent. It outlines the number of farm attacks and murders that have taken place during years 2001–2018. The statistics are compiled solely of reports that were taken by the police in conjunction with these farm attacks/murders.



Despite the lack of evidence from 2008 to 2010, these statistics seem to suggest that attacks and murders have decreased.⁷² Nevertheless, they exist and can be connected to the land reform debate. With the recent debate on land reform going deeper than just politics, many Afrikaners are feeling threatened by some of the charged rhetoric that has been used in this argument. This is a result of the fact that land is “the emotional core of Afrikanerdom,”⁷³ and originates from a deeper problem that has plagued the Afrikaners since the fall of apartheid: identity.

In addition to farm attacks, another social pitfall of the land reform is centered on the idea of Afrikaner identity. As stated in an article published in *African Affairs*, “Just as after the Second World War the German language was shamefully associated with the holocaust and wartime aggression, Afrikaans is currently symbolically associated with

72 This article goes on to show that variations exist among different organizations who have collected evidence on farm attacks/murders since 1990. This includes the Transvaal Agriculture Union and AfriForum, whose statistical evidence has a correlation showing an increase in farm murders from the years 2010 to 2017. The author notes that because these numbers were collected based on financial year instead of calendar year, it makes it difficult to compare to the police’s findings. The method of collecting the data also varies as the majority of evidence from the Transvaal Agriculture Union and AfriForum comes from “monitoring traditional and social media.” Furthermore, the article cites how a 2003 committee inquiry on farm attacks analyzed 3,544 cases and attempted to identify a clear motive behind the attacks. They were only successful in identifying a clear motive in 2,644 cases. Out of these, 2,361 cases were attributed to robbery, 188 to intimidation, 52 to political/racial, and 43 to labor related.

73 Arnold, *The New South Africa*, 141.

South Africa's apartheid past." ⁷⁴ When apartheid fell, it continued to cling onto the Afrikaners who seem to be unable to shake this from their identity. When discussing the land reform issue, it gets even more complicated, as Afrikaners traditionally identify themselves as African. ⁷⁵ As stated by Max du Preez,

Just as I cannot change the colour of my skin, I cannot become an American, European or Australian. I would be an alien forever, like a polar bear in the Pretoria zoo. My soul is African. My skin colour is the only European thing about me ... African/Afrikaner. I am both. I call myself after the continent twice ... I am a native of this land, but unlike most other natives, I am pale.⁷⁶

Since land is so deeply rooted in Afrikaner culture, the debate turns ugly as many Afrikaners who self-identify as "African" are scrutinized for believing this. While debates remain on who the land truly belongs to, Afrikaners are perceived as nothing more than "the colonizers." There is little discussion on their claim to the land, what restitution means for them, and how they can effectively negotiate restitution while also remaining land owners. This also stems into deeper questions, such as why racist stigmas continued to linger after the fall of apartheid amongst the Afrikaner culture, or how the country might overcome the racial boundaries that continue to exist between these individual groups. More specifically, when discussing the social implications of land reform, it is important to note that while South African history has shaped the formation of policies, the response to these policies also originates from an equally important historical context. Whether from distinct ethnic/cultural groups such as the Afrikaners, Coloured, Xhosa, Zulu, San, Venda, Ndebele, etc., it is important to identify that there are many layers to this debate, making the social implications infinite in regards to racial divisiveness and its causation. No matter how Afrikaners identify, it is clear that a racial divide continues to exist between them and the majority of the South African population, not only in politics, but in socio-economics and societal boundaries.

This feeds into the ultimate social implication of ethnic conglomeration. In *Land Reform in South Africa: An Uneven Transformation*, the authors make the argument that after the adoption of democracy, "The state used communal land in these notorious geopolitical and geostrategic areas to promote overt racial and ethnic divisions and to reanimate ethnic and tribal identities."⁷⁷ At the fall of apartheid, many hoped that South Africa would become the rainbow nation Nelson Mandela advocated for.

74 Michael G. Clyne, *The German Language in a Changing Europe* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Hermann Giliomee, "The rise and possible demise of Afrikaans as public language," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no. 1 (2004), 25–58, paraphrased in Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle, "Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-apartheid South Africa," *African Affairs* 111, no. 445 (October 1, 2012), <https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article/111/445/551/47260>.

75 Verwey and Quayle, "Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-apartheid South Africa."

76 Max du Preez, *Pale Native: Memories of a Renegade Reporter* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2003), 5, quoted in Verwey and Quayle, "Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-apartheid South Africa."

77 McCusker, Moseley, and Ramutsindela., *Land Reform in South Africa*, 97.

Colonism, Apartheid, and Democracy

However, the genesis of democracy in South Africa also opened Pandora's Box. As stated by author Nico Vorster,

The State had to keep racial classification alive to enforce affirmative action programmes; the individualist nature of Western human rights discourse collided with egalitarian and communalist African worldviews; and neo-liberal economic policy did not yield a sufficient trickle-down growth effect, nor did it agree with the socialist beliefs that were historically part and parcel of African nationalist identity.⁷⁸

This fractionalization of ethnic groups within South Africa set a precedent that would only further divide the country. In an attempt to find identity, groups pulled together more strongly. As this conglomeration took place, the idea of a national identity took root and continues to threaten the fragile democracy that was voted into place. Vorster articulates that "The search for a comprehensive collective national identity therefore risks fueling a Machiavellian race between opposing imaginaries who all want to control national discourse."⁷⁹ This is ultimately the reason for debate on land reform today in South Africa. As ethnic conglomeration occurs, individuals on both sides of the argument pull into themselves and advocate for their side rather than meeting in the middle through constructive conversation.

In light of this, the debates on land reform have inhibited unity from happening. In lieu of constructive discussions towards understanding and affirmation, there is a vicious mentality of "us versus them" that has arisen in the face of these debates further polarizing the country. Turning to history once again, the land reform debate, the emotions associated with it, and the divisiveness it has caused echoes that of what occurred during the prelude to the American Civil War. The misinterpretation of national legislation is a dangerous igniter to conflict. Rather than politicizing and emotionalizing this issue, South Africa must rationalize and compromise together, as one. Disagreement is healthy, as it shows that a democracy truly exists. However, a pitfall happens when these discussions are not accompanied by working solutions, understanding, and healing. This issue will not be solved by emotive politics, cultural conglomeration, and violence. Historical injustices must be made right, but should be effectively negotiated in order to preserve unity between ethnic groups. Unity can be achieved. It will be difficult, but in the end, "Its people could be prosperous and happy and live in an environment that allows them to realize their full potential."⁸⁰

Conclusion

South Africa is at a pivotal moment. The land question is an example of what many democracies have had to experience at one time or another during their history.

78 Nico Vorster, "Reformed Theology and 'Decolonised' Identity. Finding a Grammar for Peaceful Coexistence," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 74, no. 4 (April 30, 2018): 1, <https://ezproxy.southern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=132086353&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

79 Vorster, 2.

80 Moleah, *South Africa*, 480.

Much of this echoes what happened to the United States before the Civil War in the mid-1800s. Yet, this issue should not be the cause of a civil war. This debate does not merit war, violence, and emotive politics. Just as unity was achieved in the 1990s with Nelson Mandela, this issue should be seen as an opportunity for South Africans from every side of the political spectrum to exercise their democratic unity and overcome an obstacle. Otherwise, what may follow will threaten the existence of democracy in South Africa.

When looking at the land debate in totality, it is important to understand that the current debate is not merely one that emerged as the result of the ANC's victory in 1994. Instead, it has a deep-rooted historical context that must be recognized in order to move forward. With this said, just as history holds weight in these debates, so does reconciliation and understanding. No country can successfully move forward without letting the past guide them into the future. Looking into history to understand where these debates originate from, whom they affect, and how they should be addressed are essential. However, so is recognizing that South Africa has a rich history that has been marred with violence, bloodshed, and hate that cannot be attributed to one people group, colonial power, or skin color.

Furthermore, the social implications that surround the land question have an equally-important historical context. By recognizing that these current debates are creating social conglomeration, polarization, and hate, people can affirm their differences and begin to come together in hopes of reconciliation. South Africa is the Rainbow Nation. It is its differences that make it unique and strong. Yet, in regards to land reform, South Africa's differences have become a dividing point. By ignoring these poisonous stigmas and ethnic conglomerations, South Africa ignores the fact that the attributes which make it the Rainbow Nation can also lead to its downfall.

In the face of these heated debates, emotive politics, and divisiveness, South Africa must turn to its own history and see the progress that has been made. Divisiveness is what was fought against in the nineties, yet it is center stage once again in South African politics. It is here that South Africa will make the choice to hold true to what Nelson Mandela said in his inaugural speech, or to go against it: "We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity—a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."⁸¹

Mark Peach, Ph.D, Lisa Clark Diller, Ph.D, and Shannon Martin, M.A., Professors of History, acted as supervisors and consultants for this undergraduate research project and provided guidance to the student author.

81 Nelson Mandela, "Inaugural Speech" (speech, Pretoria, South Africa, May 9, 1994), Thought Co, <https://www.thoughtco.com/quotes-nelson-mandela-44276>.