

## Chapter 23 – Resources & Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa – SSWG 2d

### 1. Introduction



The tall, gray-haired man approached the ballot box. At 76 years of age, he appeared strong, fit, and determined. With a warm smile, he pushed his ballot into the box. Like other blacks throughout South Africa, he was being allowed to vote in an election for the first time. This elderly man was not just anyone, however. He was Nelson Mandela, and when all the votes had been tallied, Mandela would become the newly elected president of South Africa.

South Africa is a **multiracial** society, which is a society that is made up of many **ethnic groups**. South Africa has four major ethnic groups. South Africans call the four groups blacks, whites, coloreds, and Asians. Before that historic election day in 1994, it was illegal for black South Africans to vote or to hold office.

For nearly 50 years, whites had ruled South Africa under a policy called **apartheid**, a word that means “separateness.” Under apartheid, whites and nonwhites lived apart from each other. This policy of racial **segregation** hurt nonwhite ethnic groups. They had fewer economic resources than whites, and they also had less political power.

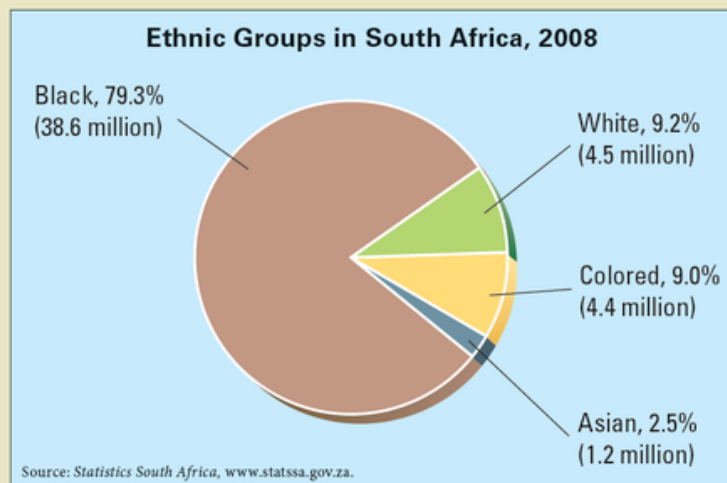
In this chapter, you will learn about life in South Africa under the policy of apartheid. You will discover how the **distribution**, or division, of power and resources changed after the end of apartheid. Finally, you will read about some of the challenges facing the people of South Africa today.

#### Essential Question

**How might ethnic group differences affect who controls resources and power in a society?**

This circle graph shows four main ethnic groups in South Africa in 2008. Note the size of the white ethnic group. Until 1994, this group controlled most of the nation’s wealth and power. Keep this graph in mind as you try to answer the Essential Question.

#### Graphic Organizer



## 2. The Geographic Setting



South Africa is located at the southern tip of Africa. Compared with many other African countries, it is small in land area, but it is the most developed African country. Although only about 5 percent of Africans live in South Africa, the country produces two fifths of Africa's factory goods and about half of its minerals. South Africa also produces about a fifth of the continent's farm products.

### A Land Rich in Natural Resources

Much of South Africa's wealth has been built on the export of mineral resources, including large deposits of gold, copper, and other valuable minerals. The development of these mineral resources has transformed the country of South Africa into an economic powerhouse.

South Africa's mild [climate](#) and rich soil are also valuable resources. Many [cash crops](#) grow well here, including corn, wheat, and sugarcane. Cattle, sheep, and goats graze on vast ranch lands.

#### ► Geoterns

**apartheid** the former official South African policy of separating people according to race. Apartheid gave most of the political and economic power to whites.

**distribution** the way people or things are spread out over an area or space. This term can also refer to the way resources, power, or goods are divided among people or groups.

**multiracial** made up of people from several ethnic groups

**segregation** the separation of one group of people from another, such as by race. Segregation can involve laws or customs that require different groups to use different facilities and live in separate areas.

South Africa has a great variety of [wildlife](#). In the past, these animals were important for groups of people who lived by hunting. In recent years, however, wildlife has become a tourist attraction. Visitors arrive from all over the world to see elephants, lions, zebras, and other animals in their natural [habitats](#).

### The Development of a Multiracial Society

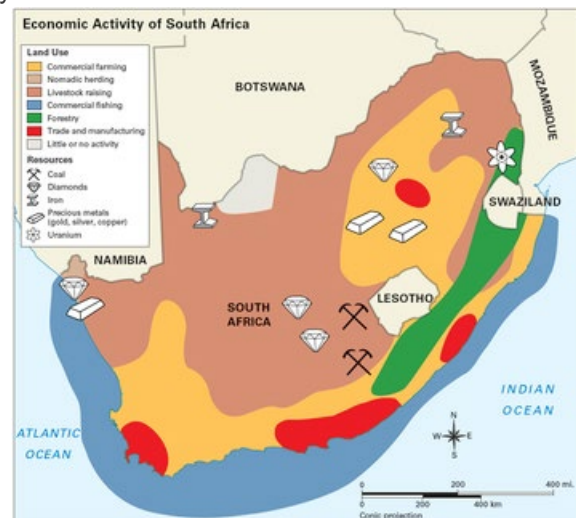
People have lived in what is now South Africa for a very long time. The ancestors of most South African blacks came from Central Africa, probably migrating south approximately 2,000 years ago. South African blacks form a large ethnic group that is made up of many smaller groups, each with its own language and culture. Europeans began to settle in Southern Africa in

1652. The first to arrive were Dutch colonists who were known as *Boers*, which is the Dutch word for "farmers." Their settlement was called Cape Colony. In time, settlers from other parts of Europe joined the Boers. Dutch remained the language of the colonists, with the addition of many words picked up from other settlers and from black Africans. The result was a new language called Afrikaans. The white colonists who spoke this language came to be known as Afrikaners.

Settlers from Great Britain began to arrive in Cape Colony around 1820. Most of these British settlers were farmers. In 1867, a rich diamond field was discovered within the colony. A few years later, gold was found. These discoveries of diamonds and gold attracted more colonists. Descendants of the first Afrikaners and British colonists make up South Africa's white ethnic group.

Over time, some blacks and whites in Cape Colony married and had families. The children from these mixed marriages were described as colored. Today their descendants form South Africa's third major ethnic group, the coloreds.

Asians first came to South Africa in the 1860s. Most were from India, which was then a British colony. The Asians came to work for British colonists on their sugarcane plantations. Their descendants in South Africa are still called Asians, and they form the last major ethnic group in this multiracial society.



### 3. South Africa During Apartheid



South Africa's colonial period ended in 1910, which was the year that the Union of South Africa became an independent country. The new country's constitution awarded whites complete control over the national government.

#### Apartheid Makes Segregation an Official Policy

Segregation became a way of life throughout South Africa after independence. Then, in 1948, the ruling whites took this practice a step further by making apartheid an official government policy.

Under the new apartheid laws, South Africans were classified by race. Whites and nonwhites were kept separate from one another. They lived in segregated neighborhoods. They went to different schools, hospitals, movie theaters, and restaurants. They were separated on trains and buses. Signs appeared on public beaches and in parks announcing "For White Persons Only."



#### Apartheid Treats Each Ethnic Group Differently

Under the policy of apartheid, whites in South Africa lived well. They had the best schools, the best jobs, the best health care, and the best living conditions. They ran the government and the economy.

Asians and coloreds were treated as second-class citizens. They did not have the same job opportunities as whites, and their schools were inferior to those of whites. Their political rights were limited as well.

No ethnic group in South Africa, however, was treated as poorly as blacks. Many black families were forced to move to poor rural areas that were called *homelands*. There were few jobs or resources in these areas. Schools in the homelands were very poor, and there was little access to health care.

Blacks were not allowed to move freely throughout the country. They could leave their homelands to work in distant cities. However, blacks who worked in the cities were forced to live in townships that consisted of slums located just outside the cities. A typical township home was a shack that lacked running water and electricity. During the day, black workers went to their jobs in the "white" cities and, at night, they had to return to the townships.

## 4. Protests Lead to Political Change

Long before apartheid became an official government policy, blacks had formed groups to protest unfair treatment by whites. The most important group, the African National Congress (ANC), was established in 1912. "The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa," said one of the group's founders, "a union in which we have no voice in the making of the laws." It would take the ANC decades of protest to gain that voice for blacks.



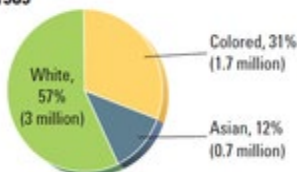
### The Fight Against Apartheid

The African National Congress led the struggle against apartheid. In 1952, the organization began its "Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws." An ANC lawyer named Nelson Mandela took charge of this fight to end apartheid laws. In 1962, Mandela was jailed for his protest activities, and he would remain in prison for the next 27 years.

The struggle continued, at times turning deadly. The worst violence began in the township of Soweto on a June morning in 1976, when 10,000 students gathered for a protest march against apartheid. When the police tried to break up the crowd, some of the students threw rocks in response. The police reacted by opening fire on the protesters. By the end of the day, 172 protesters lay dead. The protests quickly spread to other townships. Nearly 600 people had died by the time the demonstrations were finally crushed.

Some whites, coloreds, and Asians in South Africa joined the struggle. People around the world protested as well. Many countries refused to trade with South Africa until it ended apartheid. Mandela became the world's most famous prisoner, and the United Nations formally called for his release from jail.

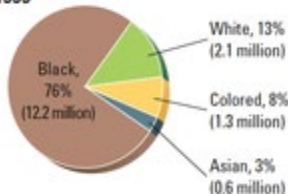
1989



### Apartheid Ends and Blacks Gain Political Power

In 1989, an Afrikaner named F. W. de Klerk became the president of South Africa. In the past, de Klerk had supported segregation, but later he decided that South Africa would never be at peace until apartheid was abolished. He quickly freed Mandela and other political prisoners. By 1991, South Africa's apartheid laws had been ended.

1999



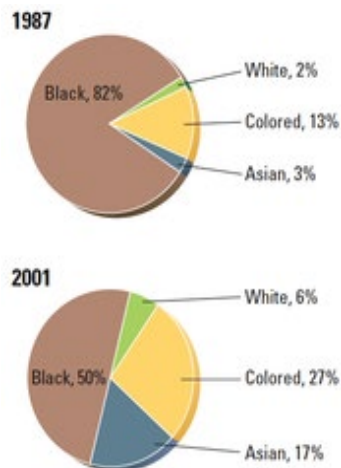
Sources: *Election '99: South Africa from Mandela to Mbeki*, Andrew Reynolds, ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. South African Institute of Race Relations, <http://www.sairr.org.za/>.

In 1993, de Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, an award given each year to those who have done the most to bring peace to the world. These two South Africans were honored for their work to end apartheid.

A year later, all South Africans could both vote and run for political office. As a result, the distribution of political power in the country shifted. The ANC became South Africa's most powerful political party, and the party's leader, Nelson Mandela, was elected as the country's first black president.

Under Mandela's leadership, South Africa established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Reconciliation* means the ending of conflict between groups. This commission investigated many unjust acts that had taken place under apartheid. South Africans saw this as a necessary step toward healing the wounds left by those acts. As Bishop Desmond Tutu, the head of the commission, explained, "You cannot forgive what you do not know."

## 5. South Africa Today: Job Opportunities



Sources: South Africa, 1989-1990: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, 15th ed., Pretoria: Bureau of Information, 1990. PBS, "Wideangle."

In 2001, for the first time ever, blacks took home more than half of all the income that was earned by South Africans. Before then, whites had always earned the majority of the money. Yet this fact does not tell the whole story of the distribution of wealth within the country. As you know, there are far more blacks than whites in South Africa, which means that blacks still earned far less per capita than whites.

### Government Programs Open Up Job Opportunities

During apartheid, whites received the best jobs, and they also earned the most money. When apartheid ended, the ANC-led government took steps to change the distribution of job opportunities. One step was to help blacks start businesses. By 2010, the government wants 25 percent of businesses in the country to be headed by blacks.

In 1998, the government also passed the Employment Equity Act, which opens job opportunities to all South Africans. This law identifies groups that have been unfairly denied jobs in the past, including blacks, coloreds, Asians, women, and the disabled. The act requires businesses to hire people from these groups when filling jobs and to pay all workers fairly.

The Employment Equity Act has opened to all groups jobs that were once limited to whites. At the same time, the law has caused resentment among white job seekers, who argue that it is unfair to deny them jobs just because they are white.



Slow economic growth has also led to an increase in poverty. By the year 2005, half of all South Africans did not make enough money to take care of their basic needs. Many of the poorest people were struggling just to survive.

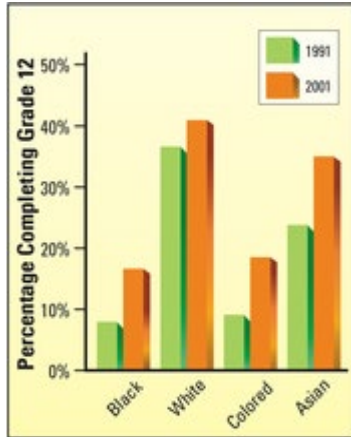
### Slow Economic Growth Hurts All Ethnic Groups

Despite these changes, many South Africans still lack jobs. One reason for this has been the slow growth of the economy. Not enough jobs are being created each year to hire everyone who wants to work. In 2005, four out of 10 job seekers could not find work. Some of these job seekers were whites, but blacks, coloreds, and Asians are still more likely to be out of work than white South Africans.

## 6. South Africa Today: Education

Any students attending a public school in South Africa today will learn not only to read and to write but also to do math and science. However, this was not always the case. During apartheid, there were separate schools for each ethnic group. Students who were attending a black school were not taught much about science or math. This lack of education was not accidental. The government knew that people with math and science skills would be able to get higher-paying jobs. By not teaching those skills to blacks, the government ensured that South Africa had a supply of cheap labor.





### The Link Between Education and Opportunity

In general, the more years of school that a person has completed, the more money he or she will make as an adult. In South Africa, more than half of the adults with no education are poor, while only 5 percent of South Africans who have gone to college are poor.

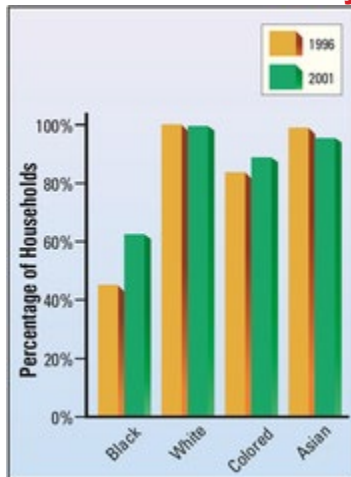
During apartheid, nonwhites had limited educational opportunities. Their schools were poorly built, and their teachers were undertrained and not well paid. Although children were supposed to attend school from the ages of 7 to 16, this requirement was not enforced. In fact, more than 10 million nonwhite adults never went to high school, and over 4 million received no schooling at all.

### Schools Are Now Open to All Ethnic Groups

The end of apartheid brought important changes to the educational system. The amount of money the government spends on schools has risen sharply. Also, students of all ethnic groups now attend the same public schools.

Schools in South Africa today are teaching the skills that all students will need to get good jobs, with a strong focus on science and math. Students of all ethnic groups are being strongly encouraged to remain in school. As a result, the percentage of students who finish high school has risen in every ethnic group. The number of nonwhites going to college has increased as well. This increase has occurred in spite of the fact that total college enrollment has declined because of slow economic growth. As more and more nonwhite children receive college educations, their opportunities for good jobs will improve.

## 7. South Africa Today: Living Conditions



Under the policy of apartheid, most whites in South Africa lived well. They owned nice homes in the cities. In contrast with houses in the black townships, these houses had electricity and running water, and many had swimming pools. Today, most South African whites still have those comforts. However, they also have something they did not have during apartheid: neighbors who are not white. A few nonwhites now live in the nice neighborhoods of South African cities.

### Cities Are Becoming Less Segregated

During apartheid, many South African cities were "whites only." Blacks were allowed to work in these cities during the day, but they had to leave at night. After apartheid, however, people could live wherever they could afford to buy housing. Some formerly "whites only" cities have become racially mixed as nonwhites have moved in.

Most nonwhites, though, cannot afford to live in nice city neighborhoods. Instead, the poor often settle in slums around the cities, typically living in homes constructed from scrap metal or wood. Even today, few of these houses have running water or electricity. Often these slum areas become a breeding ground for crime.

### Housing Conditions Are Improving

South Africa's constitution guarantees decent housing to all of the country's citizens. In the first decade following the end of apartheid, the government provided approximately 1.6 million homes to poor South Africans. Efforts to create more housing for the poor are continuing.

The government is also working to improve urban slums. Streets have been paved in some poor areas, and water systems have been constructed to provide safe water. Streetlamps have been installed to help

combat crime. The government is starting to replace shacks with improved housing. It is also beginning to build schools, police stations, and health clinics in poor neighborhoods.



### **Health Care Remains Limited**

In addition to improving housing, the government must face the challenge of providing better health care. During apartheid, most doctors and hospitals were located in "white" cities, and people living in rural areas had a difficult time finding health care. Although the cities are no longer segregated, 9 out of 10 doctors in South Africa still work in urban areas.

Today, South Africa is making a strong effort to bring health care to all citizens. By 2005, the government had built more than 500 health clinics in rural areas. Meanwhile,

new doctors are being asked to work for a year in a rural clinic in order to help reduce the shortage of doctors outside cities. Pregnant women and children under six are entitled to free health care.

The need for health care has risen sharply as a result of the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout South Africa. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the body's ability to fight disease. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the medical condition that results from an HIV infection. Victims of AIDS slowly grow weak and lose weight. Eventually, most will die. There is no cure for the disease, but treatment can help people infected with the virus to live longer.

South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. By 2008, almost 6 million South Africans had become victims of this disease. Almost 1,000 people die from HIV/AIDS in that country every day. The loss of so many people presents a huge challenge to South Africa's hope for a better future.

## **Summary - Beginning to Think Globally**

In this chapter, you learned about life in South Africa before, during, and after apartheid. You saw how segregation divided a multiracial society. You learned how the distribution of power and resources in the society changed over time, and you read about some of the challenges that face South Africa today.

One of those challenges is the continued spread of HIV/AIDS. When this disease first appeared in humans, no one knew how the virus was spread. Today, we know that the virus is found in the blood and other body fluids. The virus is passed through the transfer of blood or other body fluids from person to person. It can also be passed from mother to child during pregnancy and birth.

South Africa is not the only country facing the challenge of HIV/AIDS. The disease has become a global health threat. In 2007, about 33 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS. During that one year alone, about 3 million people were newly infected with the virus, and approximately 2 million people died from the disease. Think about this as you examine the map of HIV/AIDS infection rates around the world in the next section.



## Global Connections

This map shows the percentages of adults who have been infected with the HIV/AIDS virus in various areas worldwide. Note the areas with no color. These are the places where no one has collected information on HIV/AIDS. People there may or may not be free of the disease.

### Why has Africa been more affected by HIV/AIDS than other regions?

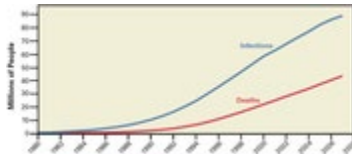
Scientists think the disease may have begun in Africa in the 1950s, which means the virus has been infecting people in this region for longer than in other parts of the world. Poverty has also contributed to the spread of the disease in Africa because poor countries lack money for education programs that might slow the spread of the virus.



### What factors have contributed to the global spread of HIV/AIDS?

Unlike many diseases, AIDS develops slowly. The virus that causes the disease can hide in the body for years without the person knowing it. As a result, victims can transmit the infection without knowing they have it. Improved transportation is also a

factor, as people today travel easily from country to country. As they do so, they transport the disease with them.



### How might HIV/AIDS hurt the countries that are most severely affected?

Most victims of the disease are working-age adults. The loss of these adults hurts a country in many ways. As people sicken and die, they leave the workforce. This can hurt a country's economy. They also leave children behind. Caring for many orphans is a burden for a poor country. If too many working-age people die, a country may be left with a population consisting of the very old and very young.