Expeditionary Culture Field Guide

SOUTH AFRICA

U.S. AIR FORCE

About this Guide

This guide is designed to help prepare you for deployment to culturally complex environments and successfully achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information it contains will help you understand the decisive cultural dimension of your assigned location and gain necessary skills to achieve mission success (Photo courtesy of Pro Quest 2011).

The guide consists of two parts:

Part 1: Introduces "Culture General," the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment (Photo courtesy of USAID).

Part 2: Presents "Culture Specific" South Africa, focusing on unique cultural features of South African society and is designed to complement other pre-deployment training. It applies culture-general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location.

For further information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at https://wwwmil.maxwell.af.mil/afclc or contact AFCLC's Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

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PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.

Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing – an image, word, object, idea, or story – represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual symbol of a core American value – freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic, representing the importance Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and

economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize these behaviors and systems into categories – what the Air Force refers to as "cultural domains" – in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains – which include kinship, language and communication, and social and political systems among others (see chart on next page) – as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the ways different cultures define family or kinship, a deployed military member can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

Social Behaviors Across Cultures

While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even group those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

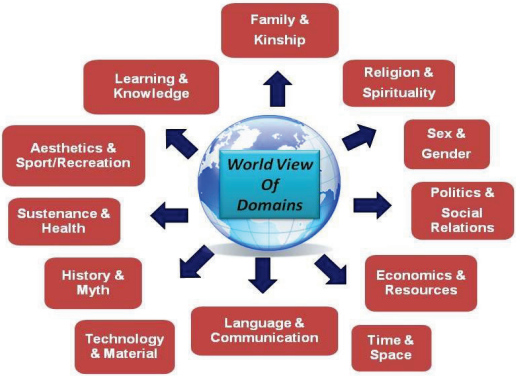
Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated market economies, producing foodstuffs for

universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition, although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

Worldview

One of our basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different according to our cultural standard.

As depicted in the chart below, we can apply the 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Consequently, we assume that individuals falling into the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

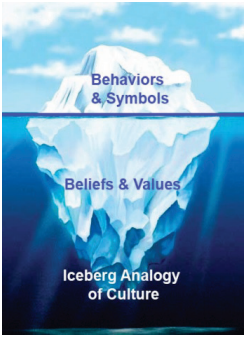


This collective perspective forms our worldview– how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for our actions and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

Cultural Belief System

An important component of a worldview is our belief system. A community's belief system sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true – regardless of whether there is physical evidence to support these ideas. Beliefs are a central facet of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have help shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.



Core Beliefs

Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the

deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend judgment in order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout the African Continent, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common among most African countries. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

1. History and Myth

History and myth are related concepts. History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.

Africa has a history that spans the entire existence of humankind. In ancient times prior to the emergence of written languages, history and wisdom were preserved across generations and

ethnic boundaries through oral folk legends or myths. Most early human evolution began as hunting and gathering cultures in East and South Africa, with countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa renowned for their early human sites. In the last several millennia, the development of agriculture and pastoralism (animal herding) replaced hunting and gathering lifestyles.

Ancient civilizations evolved in all corners of Africa, inspired in part by peoples from the Middle East bringing trade, beliefs, customs, language, and on occasion, colonization. Far from being isolated empires, the African civilizations were intimately connected by commerce and marriage throughout various regions of the continent, and when confronted by outsiders, managed to adapt to their influences. Eventually, Arab traders introduced Islam to Africa and also instituted the Trans-Saharan African slave trade that lasted from the 7th to 19th Centuries.

The “golden age” of European exploration, which lasted from the 18th to mid-20th century, prompted the wholesale exploitation of Africans resources – first human assets through slavery, followed by natural resources such as minerals, precious gems and metals, and wildlife, thereby diminishing most of what was traditional and African.

The introduction of the European Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade altered the slave trade through both the sheer number of Africans enslaved and through the cementing of a racist ideology of Black inferiority to legitimize the institution of slavery. Slavery decimated the African continent for over 400 years through the forced relocation of an estimated 25 to 30 million Africans worldwide. This figure does not include those Africans who died aboard ships or during capture. While abolition of the slave trade dissolved the institution of slavery, it did not end the European

presence on the African continent nor did it drastically alter their attitudes towards Africans.

Starting in the mid-19th century, European colonialism served to redefine African ethnic relations on a large scale; however, as African societies began to resist colonial rule and seek their independence, widespread ethnic conflict and genocide occurred. Sustained westernization and globalization continue to shape the continent through poverty, disease, and social reform. A history still to be recorded, Africa's future identity faces many challenges in critical areas such as environmental change, ethnic strife, women's health and security, and education.

2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community. Traditional African political organizations in the form of bands, tribes, and chiefdoms have existed for several millennia and continue to influence contemporary African governments. Uncommon in modern society, bands are limited to hunting and gathering economies, such as the !Kung of the southern African Kalahari Desert and foragers of central African forests.

Tribes are still represented today across the African political landscape, although the use of the word "tribe" is sometimes misinterpreted due to its western notion of "primitiveness" and oftentimes substituted with the term "ethnic group." Lacking centralized authority, tribes are organized around segmented descent groups or in some cases age groups.

Everyday governance is discharged through councils of respected elders and sanctioned through ritual and other means. East African pastoralist groups such as the Maasai,

along with some West African tribes and the Berbers in North Africa, represent this type of organization.

Chiefdoms or kingdoms are ruled by kings or queens from a royal clan and generally incorporate millions of subjects. Kingdoms such as the Zulu or Swazi in southern Africa developed through conquest, while others like Ghana's Ashante developed through an association of related traditional states. However, colonialism eventually diluted the power and reach of these empires, whose leaders were often retained as indirect rulers or figureheads.

Today, all three of these political organizations still exist, although in the confines of modern African nation-states created by colonial powers who had little regard or understanding of African cultures. This juxtaposition of modernity with tradition has caused severe conflict throughout the continent.

Challenged to construct their respective "national" identities, regional leaders attempt to do so by diluting the traditionally cohesive power of ancestry. These national ruling elites, who derive their power from wealth and commerce rather than tribal affiliation, feel threatened by loyalty to these traditional organizations, labeling their rule as "tribalism."

This "class versus descent" scrimmage for power has resulted in conflicts across the continent and a dramatic divergence of interests. As a means to overcome these and other issues on the continent, a 53-nation federation, the African Union (AU), was formed in 2002. AU's charter is to promote "greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples" by building partnerships in all segments of "civil society."

3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offer

individuals peace of mind, and explain the causes of events in a society. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity, the African continent consisted of orally transmitted indigenous religious practices. As in many societies, African indigenous beliefs influenced diet, subsistence patterns, family structures, marriage practices, and healing and burial processes. In essence, Africans constructed their worldview through their indigenous religions.

Today, the African continent is primarily either Muslim or Christian. Other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism exist as pockets in different regions of the continent, primarily in urban areas. The historical trajectories of Islamic and Christian expansion in Africa offer intriguing commonalities in how Africans across the continent initially reacted to the introduction of each of those religions. For example, it is common throughout the continent to find a blending of many elements of indigenous religious practices with local Islam and Christianity (Photo a courtesy of Wikimedia).

Consequently, many African native religions share similarities with religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in their understanding of God as the creator and ruler of all life, although He is considered untouchable by humans.

However, unlike Christianity and Islam, many African indigenous religions believe that God is not directly involved in people's lives. To them there is a spirit world populated with former good and bad human beings. The good spirits intercede with God on behalf of their living families to whom they then relay God's will through dreams and acquired possessions. The bad spirits work to bring misfortune through sickness,

death, or natural disasters to those who behave inappropriately.

Many indigenous African religions revere "nature" spirits living in the sky, water, and forests. These impersonal spirits help protect people from harm and provide them with life's essential ingredients such as water, sun, and wildlife. This belief system is commonly referred to as animism.

Just as spirits mediate relations between God and humans, religious specialists act as mediators between spirits and humans to provide protection from harm.

4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin").The traditional African family with respect to marriage, family structure, and descent is a much different arrangement than is found in most American families. Likewise, there are several components of the traditional African family that are common to all African cultures.

First, perhaps the most difficult feature to reconcile to Americans is that of polygyny – the practice of a husband having more than one wife. A benefit of this arrangement is that it promotes societal alliances through marriage, procreation, and family wealth through female labor.

Second, due to polygyny, the family in most African cultures has historically consisted of an expanded set of kin or relatives that extends well beyond the American notion of a nuclear family. This arrangement created a family environment where children considered all siblings as "brothers and sisters" and all of the wives/mothers as "mother."

Third, the extended African family traces descent through either the male or the female side of the family, a practice that differs considerably from the American family. Patrilineal descent (through the male side of the family) is the more common approach and usually features polygyny. The matrilineal (through the female bloodline) marriage pattern is more uncommon and almost always features monogamy – it is rare to encounter a wife having more than one husband.

Lastly, it is common for two or more blood lines (lineages) to share a common ancestor and collectively form a clan, which is the largest social unit. Clans do not have formal leaders or organizational structures. Membership is transferred from father to child and cuts across ethnic and social boundaries.

The dramatic social changes in Africa during and after colonialism in the last 4 decades have obviously affected the traditional family, and variations on these 3 features can be found across the continent.

5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological/reproductive differences between males and females, while gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles. Gender roles in Africa follow no single model nor is there a generalized concept of sex and common standard of sexual behavior.

Prehistorically, gender role differentiation in Africa's hunting and gathering cultures was based on a division of labor featuring different, yet complementary, sets of responsibilities for males and females, adults and children. Females gathered over half the caloric needs from natural vegetation, while also reproducing and raising offspring. Males were primarily hunters but also assisted with gathering.

These gender patterns continued as agricultural practices advanced.

Females shared in farming while continuing to provide for the family's subsistence, and males produced the cash crops. Pastoralists like the Maasai of Kenya traditionally have featured males involved in cattle-raising and females in food production.

The 19th-century European colonial period introduced a cash economy into Africa, with female labor used to produce the cash crops. By inserting male authority over females, colonial administrators disrupted the distinct yet complementary male/female relationship that had been traditionally African.

More recently, western influence across the continent has dramatically altered the traditional gender roles. Educational and professional opportunities for females, along with increased family migrations to urban areas, have radically altered traditional male and female gender roles.

Likewise, the number of singles parents and even child- or other relative-led families has increased with the predominance of HIV/AIDS-related deaths and warfare, further altering traditional gender responsibilities. Additionally, ethnic conflicts involving abuse of women are prevalent in many unstable countries, and while the rubric of traditional African gender generally remains, the forces of change are gradually ripping it away.

6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication is defined as the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally. America is predominantly a monolingual society, where traditionally, fluency in a second language has been considered a luxury rather than a necessity. Conversely, national survival for many societies in Africa required them throughout their existence to adopt multilingual

practices, if for no other reason than to preserve their native heritage.

You may find it challenging to comprehend the scope of Africa's linguistic diversity. There are over 2,000 African languages (many spoken-only) from 6 major language families, and perhaps 100 of these languages are used to communicate among the more dominant ethnic groups such as Berber, Swahili, Yoruba, and others.

Official languages of African nation-states are few, yet the linguistic diversity expressed across the continent (Nigeria has 250 languages) has prompted an awareness of the value of Africa's linguistic traditions. While most areas of the continent speak the adopted language of their colonial past – such as French and Portuguese in West Africa, French and Arabic in Morocco, and English in Kenya and South Africa – the majority of people also speak one or more traditional "indigenous" languages of their and other ethnic groups. As African independence spread throughout the continent, ethnic groups continued to depend on their indigenous identifiers, such as language, to celebrate their "release" from colonial rule and to preserve a sense of indigenous identity.

While communication styles tend to vary by ethnic or social groups, Africans generally are friendly and outgoing people although they tend to communicate with reserve to avoid confrontation. As in most kin-based societies, Africans believe that saving face or protecting one's honor and dignity are of utmost importance; therefore, they avoid public criticism and controversial topics at all costs – even to the extent of withholding their honest opinion or modifying the truth.

Africans admire and even expect extended greetings and small talk, and to attempt to rush or avoid social graces is considered disrespectful. Similarly, Africans avoid direct eye contact when communicating with new acquaintances and people of status,

particularly elders. They also are fond of non-verbal gestures, and it is common throughout African societies for members of the same gender to hold hands or touch while conversing.

7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) and culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems such as schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.

The contemporary African educational system hardly resembles the traditional pre-colonial structure, whereby community elders were primarily responsible for preparing youth for adulthood. Their instruction included fundamentals of ethnic ritual and ceremony, along with customary protocol for their distinctive gender roles. A rite-of-passage commemorating their successful journey from childhood to adulthood served as a form of graduation.

European colonialism brought a more structured, formal educational system that catered to a small group of African elite who demonstrated potential to administer expanding colonial territories. Following independence, many African nations adopted the European system because they believed it would prepare them to be more competitive in intra-continental and global marketplaces, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

However, progress in developing and maintaining reliable educational institutions has been slow for a variety of reasons. Since most Africans live in rural environments, they continue to rely heavily on child labor for family survival, resulting in decreased school enrollments or early withdrawals. Likewise, widespread HIV/AIDS epidemics, ethnic conflict, teacher and resource deficits, and inaccessibility to remote rural areas also hamper progress. According to 2005 statistics, only half of the

continent's children were enrolled in primary school, leaving over 40 million African children without any schooling at all.

8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In low-context western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to relationship-building. Conversely, most African cultures are traditionally high-context societies, whereby people center their activities on socializing and establishing close associations, having little regard for the passage-of-time.

Only after establishing trust and honor will your typical African counterpart agreeably proceed with business. In his worldview, time is a precious commodity used to establish relationships and form alliances. Any attempt to accelerate the tempo at the expense of social pleasantries will likely result in deadlock.

To an African, close physical proximity between individuals encourages cooperative trust, and for centuries they have viewed human linkage as a core element to survival. This closeness is best represented in a traditional African village where strong kinship connections are evidenced by a display of close interpersonal relations among family members.

While conventional African concepts of time and space remain intact, throughout the continent western influence and globalization have stepped up the pace of African living, mostly in urban areas. Consequently, rural-to-urban migrations have reshaped traditional social and subsistence patterns.

9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill and style. Prior to 19th-century European colonization of Africa,

recreation served a vital subsistence role, whereby adolescents and adults alike participated in intellectually stimulating leisurely activities that concurrently served to develop essential hunting and pastoral skills.

Games of chance and skill were important to early childhood development, providing social outlets within and outside their community. Featuring wrestling, jumping and running; traditional African sport was steeped in religious ritual.

Along with colonialism came the introduction to Africa of western sports such as soccer, cricket, rugby and track and field. This emphasis on western sport continued to thrive with African independence and globalization, as seen in sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup.

Leaders such as Nelson Mandela skillfully employed sport to promote a unified South African nation. Importing the predominantly "white" game of rugby, Mandela used it to fuse a racially divided country following his election in 1992. This event is the theme of the motion picture "Invictus," exemplifying how sport can serve to create national identities and overcome ethnic division. His efforts have inspired many other African nations to follow suit.

Likewise, East African countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia have produced the world's dominant male and female distance runners, and South Africa, Cameroon and Nigeria emerged as strong contenders in the 2010 World Cup. African nations are now competing in leagues such as the International Basketball Association (FIBA) World Championships, and there is also a

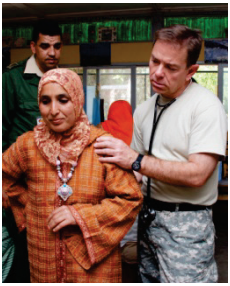
growing number of African basketball players on US college campuses and in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures and economics. Theories of disease and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.

Despite having only 11% of the global population, Africa is a victim of many of the world's debilitating health disorders. According to the World Health Organization, 60% of the global HIV/AIDS cases and 90% of malarial diseases occur in Africa.

These and other medical conditions are attributed primarily to viral infection and widespread poverty caused by extreme climatic conditions and civil unrest, coupled with inadequate preventative measures. While extensive drought generates widespread famine, civil disturbances generate millions of displaced persons. Likewise, with only 58% of the Sub-Saharan African population having access to safe drinking water, water-born bacterial diseases such as cholera and schistosomiasis are common.



Many people in Africa lack access to western medicine, and as a result depend on traditional health practices to combat disease. In addition, some traditional beliefs run counter to western medical practice and perhaps discourage individuals from utilizing those services even when they are available. This problem is further intensified by lack of federal regulatory healthcare management.

While modern healthcare procedures are more common in urban areas, many rural people rely on traditional practitioners who use a variety of plants and herbs to treat patients. Similarly, many families have their own secret remedies. While in some cases traditional medicine proves effective with fewer side effects than modern drugs, traditional practices do not adequately treat many of the more serious conditions.

On a positive note, western influence has stimulated some progress in combating Africa's health crisis. More resources are devoted to achieving basic human security by assessing disease symptoms early and with scientific accuracy.

11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. Traditionally having an agrarian-based economy, Africa today remains predominantly agricultural, featuring less industrialization than most other parts of the world. Post-colonial adversities such as civil war, disease, poverty, and unstable dictatorships posed unusual hardship on several young African nations; however, Africa currently stands at the cross-roads of economic development with many nations becoming some of fastest growing regions in the world.

Colonialism institutionalized the exploitation of Africa's mineral resources, resulting in today's oil industry dominating the economic market in several coastal regions. A surge in global oil prices; a growing African middle class; and reduction in civil wars, foreign aid, and inflation collectively promise a more positive outlook for the future.

Countries such as Botswana, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and South Africa are economically the wealthiest on the continent, with regions such as East Africa showing signs of economic stability. Despite the economic upswing, much of sub-Saharan

Africa's future economic prosperity is held hostage by devastating diseases such as AIDS, particularly in areas of southern Africa, and the growing effects of climate change and man-made environmental degradation throughout the subcontinent.

12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. Africa lags far behind most of the world in manufacturing capacity and output. Even the more economically-developed nations such as South Africa are competitively weak when compared to non-African industrialized nations. During the 1970s and 1980s, Africa experienced some growth in raw exports although this increase did little to boost long-term manufacturing capacity.

Today, Africa is experiencing an actual decline in manufacturing capacity due primarily to a lull in the global economy, along with other indigenous issues such as environmental stress, poor physical and organizational infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled personnel. Likewise, African manufacturing capacity is no match against global powers such as China and significant Southeast Asian markets.

International aid from both governmental and non-governmental organizations has helped African nations establish preliminary economic footholds. For example, many of them have dedicated industrial developmental zones to attract foreign investment and increase export-related manufacturing capacity, although Africa is far removed from having a significant role in the global marketplace in the foreseeable future.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize African society at large, we will now focus on specific features of South African society.

PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

1. HISTORY AND MYTH

Historical Overview

The history of South Africa is a story of competition between diverse groups to control scarce land and labor. While this contest was fairly balanced for several centuries, the discovery of minerals promoted a devastating period of white domination from which South Africa only recently began to recover.

Early South Africa

Hominid remains found near Johannesburg date back almost 2 million years, although the earliest modern humans to inhabit what is now South Africa appeared about 100,000 years ago. These nomadic hunter-gatherers were the ancestors of the modern Khoe and San (often referred to collectively as the Khoe-San), similar but distinct ethnic groups which diverged about 2,000 years ago when the Khoe settled and began to herd animals.

Around the same time, Bantu-speaking societies with Iron Age technology emerged in southern Africa (Important Note: “Bantu” is a linguistic classification. Speakers of Bantu languages should never be referred to as “Bantus,” as this term is offensive.) Although their settlements varied from rural homesteads to densely-populated townships, most Bantu-speakers raised cattle and assimilated into chiefdoms or centralized systems. A chiefdom contains two or more social groups loyal to a ruler whose position is a family legacy.

Over many years, a geographic and linguistic division emerged among the Bantu-speaking farmers. Sotho-Tswana-speakers remained on the ***Highveld***, an interior plateau, and established dense settlements of up to 20,000 people. Nguni-speakers, by contrast, moved to the Indian Ocean coastline and continued to live in small groups.

The Dutch East India Company

Portuguese explorers seeking a sea route to India became the first Europeans to reach present-day South Africa in 1487, but it was not until 1652 that Jan van Riebeeck (pictured) and a group of employees of the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or VOC) established the first European settlement in southern Africa at Table Bay on the Cape of Good Hope.

This settlement initially remained small and temporary because its only purpose was to supply passing Dutch ships with meat and produce procured from local Khoe herders. By 1657, however, the Khoe were no longer willing to supply the growing Dutch demand for provisions. Consequently, the VOC gave several of its employees a plot of farmland and the title of "free burgher" in order to promote permanent settlement.

These grants increased the demand for labor, prompting the VOC to import slaves from other parts of Africa and the East Indies. The grants also led to land conflicts with the Khoe, and after an unsuccessful Khoe rebellion in 1659 and a ruinous period of war from 1673 to 1677, the highly susceptible Khoe were largely decimated by the arrival of smallpox in 1713.

Hoping to expand agriculture in the Cape, the VOC in 1679 offered free farmland to Dutch and German emigrants, who were joined in 1688 by French Huguenots. These settlers established farms and raised livestock as their cultures merged through the adoption of the Dutch language. This process later gave rise to ***Afrikaans***, a uniquely African variant of the Dutch language (see *Language and Communication*).

Trekboers: The European emigrant farmers eventually came to view the VOC as corrupt, prompting many of them to leave the Cape in the early 18th century to establish farms on interior plots of land. Because these ***Trekboers*** or ***Boers*** (Dutch for "farmer") tried to claim land already occupied by the Khoe-San, warfare ensued for much of the 18th century. By the 1770s, Boers expanding eastward had also encroached upon land occupied by a Nguni-speaking ethnic group called the Xhosa, resulting in additional conflict.

The Arrival of the British

As Dutch sea power waned at the end of the 18th century, the British seized the Cape Colony in 1795 in order to prevent its sea route to India from falling into French hands. Although the British originally intended to limit their involvement in the Cape, imperial politics soon led to the adoption of land and labor policies which drew the British more deeply into colonial affairs (Pictured: Coat of Arms of the Cape Colony).

Land Policy: These policies began in 1799 when the British deployed troops against the Xhosa in order to mitigate land pressures faced by the Boers. After 20 years the British eventually drove the Xhosa north of the Great Fish River, which runs through the Eastern Cape Province, and positioned 5,000 British immigrant farmers on the new frontier to serve as a buffer. These actions simply resulted in new land pressures as the immigrant farmers discovered that their homesteads were unprofitably small and began to compete with the Boers for access to more arable land.

Labor Policy: After the British Parliament outlawed the slave trade in 1807, the colonial authorities attempted to appease the already disgruntled Boers by allowing them to retain their personal slaves. Consequently, non-whites were required to carry identification (ID) passes to avoid becoming forced laborers. Influential British missionaries objected to these practices, prompting the colonial authorities to establish a racially neutral court and have labor practices monitored. Already angered by the land policy, the Boers were further enraged when Parliament repealed the ID pass requirement in 1828 and fully enforced the banning of slavery in 1833.

The Zulu and the *Mfecane*

During the first half of the 19th century, southern Africa saw a rapid increase in warfare and migration as various groups competed for control over natural resources that had been diminished by overpopulation and drought. This period, known in the isiZulu language as the ***Mfecane***, or “crushing,” saw the rise of the Nguni-speaking Zulu Kingdom and its powerful leader Shaka.

Shaka: Born the illegitimate son of a Zulu chief in 1787, Shaka (pictured) began his military career under the command of Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthethwa, another Nguni group. After Dingiswayo helped Shaka succeed his father as Zulu chief in 1816, Shaka expanded and improved the Zulu military by introducing innovative weaponry and battle tactics.

After Dingiswayo was killed in 1818 by his Nguni rival, Shaka used his formidable military to take revenge and bring many Nguni peoples under the control of his Zulu state, which by the mid-1820s had an army of 40,000 and a population of over 100,000. Shaka consolidated his power by forging a unitary Zulu identity for all of his diverse population. Zulu power began to decline after Shaka was assassinated in 1828 and succeeded by his half-brother Dingane.

Aftermath: Shaka's aggressive expansion of the Zulu state caused many ethnic groups to form fortified states in order to bolster food security and provide defense against Zulu raiders. Some of these states, such as Lesotho and Swaziland, survive to this day. However, political development came at a heavy price. Zulu expansion led to the death or displacement of thousands of southern Africans and forced many more to seek employment in the Cape Colony at any available wage.

The Great Trek

In an effort to escape British land and labor restrictions, groups of Boer ***Voortrekkers***, or pioneers, began to migrate east from the Cape Colony in 1836. The largest group of Voortrekkers, led by Piet Retief, migrated to the southeastern tip of present-day South Africa, an area ruled by Dingane and the Zulu.

In February 1838, Retief and a group of followers approached Dingane and requested permission to settle. Dingane had the entire party killed and sent his military after the Voortrekkers. Hundreds of Voortrekkers were killed, prompting the survivors to return in December with Cape Colony reinforcements under the command of Andries Pretorius. The reinforced Voortrekkers defeated Dingane at the Battle of Blood River in 1843 and established the Republic of Natalia.

Colony of Natal: Fearing that the new Dutch-speaking republic would negotiate directly with other European powers, the British annexed the Republic of Natalia in 1843 and created the Colony of Natal, leading most Boers to relocate to Voortrekker settlements in the Highveld. Meanwhile, the British attempted to finance their new colony by importing thousands of Indian laborers (pictured) to work on sugarcane plantations.

The Boer Republics

The Boers in the Highveld formed two independent republics: the Orange Free State, situated between the Orange and Vaal rivers, and the South African Republic, located north of the Vaal River in an area known as the ***Transvaal***. Both republics, however, claimed territory in which African settlements already existed, and the Boers clashed frequently with Africans as they tried to establish their claims.

Due to this conflict, the Boers were only able to establish farms in the spotty areas between African settlements. Consequently, both republics were largely rural, and most Boers continued to hunt and trade livestock for a living. Supplying Cape Colony merchants with ivory, skins, and feathers also provided income.

Balance of Power

There was a balance of power in southern Africa by the end of the 1860s: the British controlled the Colony of Natal and the Cape Colony, the Boers claimed their two republics, and most African societies controlled their own independent chiefdoms. This balance of power was supported by a regional economy still based largely on agriculture. The discovery of minerals in the late 1860s, however, destroyed that economic model and led to two wars between the British and the Boer republics.

The First Boer War: Shortly after the discovery of diamonds in the Cape Colony in 1867, the British asserted their sovereignty and seized the diamond fields. The mining industry developed rapidly in the following years around the new city of Kimberley, creating huge demand for cheap labor.

In 1887, this labor demand led the British to annex the South African Republic as the Transvaal Colony. The official reason for this move was to prevent the collapse of the republic, which at the time was fighting a losing battle against the Pedi tribe. The unofficial reason was that the British hoped to conquer the Pedi and force them to work in the Kimberley mines. However, the Transvaalers soon declared their independence anew and rose in rebellion, defeating the British in 1881 at the Battle of Majuba Hill and reclaiming the right of self-government.

The tenuous peace that followed this Boer victory lasted only until 1886, when the discovery of massive gold deposits on the Witwatersrand led English-speaking businessmen to flock to the South African Republic in search of profits. By the 1890s these ***uitlanders***, as the Boers referred to them, constituted a majority of white males in the South African Republic. Few uitlanders could vote, however, due to residency requirements, and Paul Kruger (pictured), the South African Republic's President, enraged the British by refusing to make exceptions. The British were also concerned that Kruger would seek ties with Germany and Portugal, both of which were active in southern Africa at the time.

The Second Boer War: The British sent troops to southern Africa and demanded that Kruger extend the vote to uitlanders. Kruger refused and in 1900 preemptively declared war on the British in alliance with the Orange Free State. Both the Boers and the British conscripted Africans. Although the Boers won some early battles due to the element of surprise, the British soon overran them. The Boers refused to surrender, however, and began to launch guerilla attacks.

Unable to defeat this Boer insurgency by conventional means, the British resorted to "scorched earth" tactics that resulted in the destruction of 30,000 Boer farms. Many African farms were also ruined, leaving many Africans landless and dependent upon wage labor at white-owned mines and farms. The British also placed many Boers and Africans in concentration camps, where more than 25,000 Boers and roughly the same number of Africans died from disease and malnutrition.

The Union of South Africa

Although the British spent the next decade trying to create an English-speaking majority in South Africa, they ultimately failed because the war-ravaged economy could not attract enough English-speaking immigrants. Similarly, Dutch- and Afrikaans-speaking inhabitants (known as ***Afrikaners***) were uninterested in adopting the English language and culture. Consequently, the British began to encourage the four colonies to unite independently. The result in May 1910 was the Union of South Africa, a British dominion in which English and Dutch were coequal official languages.

The dominant white government quickly established a series of discriminatory laws, the most flagrant of which was the Natives Land Act of 1913. This law defined distinct areas where blacks and whites could own land. Although blacks comprised 2/3 of the population, they were assigned only 7.5% of the land.

This racial legislation and the British policies which preceded it inspired political activism by non-whites. The most enduring example is the creation in 1912 of the South African Native National Congress, later called the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC was created by a group of black intellectuals who sought moderate changes through non-violent means.

Hertzog and the National Party: In 1914 South Africa entered World War I by aligning with the Allies. Although the country was a British dominion, the decision to join the Allies was controversial because Germany had aided the Boers during the South African War. From this debate emerged the National Party (NP), which JBM Hertzog founded in 1914 to protect his fellow Afrikaners by limiting the power of mine owners and introducing policies that favored white workers.

The NP agenda gained steam in the 1920s as wage cuts and layoffs prompted white workers to strike and later march on Johannesburg. In 1924 Hertzog led a National Party-Labour Party alliance that harnessed this zeal into an election victory and a sweeping new round of discriminatory legislation.

The Great Depression: By the 1930s, the economic downturn of the Great Depression forced Hertzog to join forces with former Afrikaner rival Jan Smuts in order to secure reelection on a joint United Party (UP) ticket. Hertzog's racial policies hardly softened, however, even with the more moderate Smuts as his deputy. The UP soon introduced legislation that further restricted black voting rights and regulated existing identity pass laws (see **Land Policy** above) even more strictly.

World War II: In 1939, South Africa entered World War II after an intense debate between Hertzog, who favored neutrality, and Smuts, who favored supporting the British. The cabinet sided with Smuts, prompting Hertzog to resign and form the *Herenigde* (Reunited) National Party (NP) with Afrikaner nationalist DF Malan.

World War II resulted in a vast expansion of manufacturing in South Africa, creating a need for labor that was eventually filled by blacks who congregated in shantytowns on the outskirts of rapidly expanding cities. By the end of the war, South Africa was a far more industrial and urban society, causing even past proponents of racial segregation to question its practicality.

The Apartheid Era

Apartheid, meaning "apartness," refers to a system of legal racial segregation introduced after the NP took power in 1948. Although apartheid created new extremes of racial division, its motivations and ideology are easy to identify in behaviors and policies dating back to the arrival of the first Dutch settlers. Just like earlier forms of discrimination, apartheid was designed to support the economic interests and entrench the political power of South Africa's white minority.

Apartheid Laws: Passed in 1950, the fundamental apartheid laws were the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act. The former provided for the legal classification of all South Africans as black, white, "colored" (mixed-race), or Asian, while the latter established specific areas in which each racial group was allowed to live (see *Political and Social Relations*).

These acts provided the basis for a series of laws which banned interracial marriages and sexual relations, established separate authorities for black areas, deprived coloreds of the right to vote, created special protections for white workers, mandated that blacks carry “reference books” with all of their personal information, and provided for the creation of separate, unequal public facilities – including schools, parks, beaches, and toilets – for each of the different races.

Several security directives were issued to enforce these laws. Those directives greatly expanded police power by banning Communism (defined very broadly), increasing censorship, permitting the banishment of blacks to “Bantu” areas, and providing for the suspension of all laws in states of emergency.

Resistance: The only formal African political grouping, the ANC, had not been effective during its early years, and in the 1940s, its leadership gave way to a younger generation that advocated a more forceful approach. Groups representing other non-white races also began to protest against apartheid in the 1950s. The Congress Alliance was a brief coalition of these groups that produced the Freedom Charter, which is regarded today as a blueprint for modern South Africa. Other groups, such as the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), advocated violent resistance.

Sharpeville: In 1960, the PAC organized a peaceful protest in the Transvaal township of Sharpeville. The protest began when thousands of blacks congregated at the local police station without their reference books and asked to be arrested. Although there is no evidence that the protestors were armed, the police opened fire, killing at least 67 and wounding 186.

The Sharpeville massacre caused an international outcry which prompted a defiant South Africa to withdraw from the British Commonwealth and declare itself an independent republic in 1961. Meanwhile, the South African government outlawed both the ANC and the PAC, prompting both groups to embrace violent resistance and leading to the arrest or exile of many top leaders. Of note, Nelson Mandela and 7 other ANC leaders were sentenced to life in prison in 1964 at the Rivonia Trial.

Bantustans: Having fractured black resistance and restored investor confidence by the mid-1960s, the government tried to consolidate its gains by creating ***Bantustans***, or independent black homelands that were supposed to justify the denial of citizenship rights to Africans. Based on the 1913 Native Lands Act, Bantustans consisted of remote, fragmented, overcrowded land that totaled only 13% of South Africa's area. Although the Bantustans were dependent upon South Africa's economy, 3.5 million Africans were forced to relocate (Photo: Officials reviewing a Bantustan proposal).

Steve Biko: Political resistance soon resumed in full force with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Led by Steve Biko, the BCM argued that blacks had to distance themselves from white liberals and take pride in their culture in order to escape inferior status within a white establishment.

Soweto: Inspired partly by the BCM, a group of students in 1976 marched in the black township of Soweto to protest a new government order that half of their school subjects be taught in Afrikaans. After the police used tear gas and guns in an effort to end the protest, the demonstrators and some Soweto residents reacted by burning down government buildings. The violence at Soweto was the worst since the start of apartheid.

Although the police eventually quelled the violence in Soweto, similar protests erupted across South Africa. By February 1977, 494 blacks, 75 coloreds, 5 whites, and 1 Indian had been killed according to official statistics. Later that year the government banned all anti-apartheid groups, and in September Steve Biko was tortured to death by the South African secret police.

Dismantling Apartheid

Unrest spread from Soweto as the ANC encouraged followers to make South Africa ungovernable. During the 1980s, even the most brutal police tactics increasingly failed to suppress the chaos created by mass protests and attacks from exiled resistance groups. Meanwhile, the international community expressed its condemnation of apartheid by imposing devastating economic sanctions on South Africa.

FW de Klerk: The impasse between a restless populace and a repressive government was broken in 1989 when President PW Botha, an old guard Afrikaner nationalist, suffered a stroke and was replaced by FW de Klerk, the Minister of Education. De Klerk surprised many in a February 1990 address by lifting the ban on anti-apartheid groups and announcing the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela. Although de Klerk did not immediately remove all apartheid-era restrictions, he initiated earnest negotiations with Nelson Mandela in order to transition South Africa to a democratic government.

The New South Africa

Although Mandela (pictured) and de Klerk negotiated against a backdrop of intense racial mistrust and repeated outbreaks of violence, the two men eventually reached a deal that resulted in South Africa's first free elections being held April 26 - 29, 1994. With 88% voter turnout for what international observers described as free and fair elections, the ANC won 62.6% of the vote. A few days later, the new National Assembly elected Nelson Mandela to be South Africa's first post-apartheid President.

In 1995 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established under Archbishop Desmond Tutu (see *Religion and Spirituality*) with the intention of promoting national healing by soliciting testimony from both victims and transgressors about the tragedies of the apartheid era.

South Africa after Mandela

At the end of 1997, Mandela stepped down as ANC leader in favor of Thabo Mbeki, who became President in 1999. Today, former President Mandela is acknowledged as South African's national father figure. During his first term, Mbeki proved adept at handling both the economy and the ANC's electoral prospects. He later drew criticism for his marginal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and refusal to denounce the repressive actions of President Robert Mugabe of neighboring Zimbabwe. After a power struggle within the ANC, Jacob Zuma succeeded Mbeki in 2009. Although Zuma is known for his personal

popularity, some citizens have questioned his credibility and policy-making judgment (see *Political and Social Relations*).

South African Myth & Legend

In ancient times, African oral legends and myths were used to preserve history and wisdom across generations and ethnic boundaries, teach moral lessons, and entertain.

In South Africa, one popular legend is that of "Jan van Hunks and the Devil." Van Hunks was an early 18th century Dutch pirate who decided to retire from his perilous life at sea and reside on the slopes of South Africa's Devil's Peak, which is a mountainous backdrop to Cape Town.

As the story goes, Van Hunks would routinely seek refuge in the mountains to distance himself from his nagging wife and smoke his pipe peacefully. On one occasion while smoking on the mountain, a mysterious man approached van Hunks and asked to borrow some tobacco. Van Hunks acknowledged the request, and in the course of conversation, a smoking contest with high stakes emerged between the two men – the winner's prize would be a ship full of gold.

Following several days of competition, the retired pirate defeated the stranger, who was actually the devil in disguise. Soon after, thunder rolled and the clouds closed in on Jan van Hunks who disappeared leaving only a scorched patch.

Thereafter, the cloud of tobacco smoke metaphorically turned into a tablecloth or white cloud that can be seen over Table Mountain, a large flat-top peak overseeing Cape Town, when the southeasterly wind blows during the summer. At that time, Van Hunks and the devil are believed to be dueling once again.

2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Official Name
Republic of South Africa

Political Borders
Namibia: 600 mi
Botswana: 1,143 mi
Zimbabwe: 140 mi
Mozambique: 305 mi
Swaziland: 267 mi
Lesotho: 565 mi
Coastline: 1,739 mi

Capitals
South Africa has 3 capitals: Bloemfontein (judicial), Cape Town (legislative), and Pretoria (administrative).

Demographics
South Africa's population of 50.6 million is growing at a rate of 1.1% per year and divides into 4 major racial categories: blacks (79.5%), whites (9%), coloreds (mixed-race) (9%), and Asians (2.5%). South Africa's rate of HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 was the 4th highest in the world in 2009 at 17.8%. This high rate of HIV prevalence contributes to South Africa's high death rate, which is the 3rd highest in the world at 17.1 deaths per 1,000 people per year.

Flag

The centerpiece of the flag is a green horizontal Y which symbolizes the convergence and unity of South Africa's diverse cultural groups. The arms of the Y enclose a black triangle outlined in yellow on the hoist side of the flag, while the remainder of the flag is filled by two horizontal trapezoids of red and blue outlined in white. The colors match those of the African National Congress (black, green, yellow) and the flags of South Africa's colonizers, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (blue, red, white).

Geography

With a total area of 470,693 square miles, South Africa is about twice the size of Texas. Located at the southern tip of Africa, South Africa completely encloses the country of Lesotho in the southeast.

The defining geographical feature of South Africa is a massive plateau in the center of the country that is covered by savanna and semi-desert terrain. It reaches its highest elevations between 4000 and 6000 feet in an area known as the ***Highveld*** (see *History and Myth*). This interior plateau is separated from the coastal region by large, erosion-formed cliffs known as escarpments. Although the area around Cape Town in the southwest is mountainous, the western and northwestern regions tend to be dry and flat.

Climate

South Africa generally has lower temperatures than other countries at equivalent latitudes due to its high elevation. The eastern coast, which is warmed by the Agulhas current, has higher average temperatures than the western coast, which is cooled by the Benguela current. For example, temperatures in the eastern city of Durban vary seasonally between the mid-60s and mid-70s °F, while temperatures in the western city of Cape Town range from the mid-50s to the high 70s °F.

Average annual rainfall is slightly less than 18 inches per year, although rainfall amounts vary widely both across regions and from year-to-year. Although the Cape Town area receives ample precipitation, the arid western half of the country receives less than 8 inches of annual rainfall, mostly in the winter months of May to July. By contrast, the eastern half of the country receives about 20 inches of annual rainfall, mainly during the summer months of mid-October to mid-February. The Drakensburg and Maluti mountains in the east are the only parts of the country which receive snow.

Natural Hazards

Because of its low rainfall and a lack of major rivers and lakes, South Africa is constantly under threat of drought or surface water shortages. Consequently, the country requires rigid water conservation and control measures.

Government

South Africa is a multiparty parliamentary democracy divided into 9 provinces: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North-West, and Western Cape. Originally incorporated in 1910 as a British dominion, South Africa became an independent republic in 1961 (see *History and Myth*). After almost a half century under ***apartheid***, a system of racial segregation, South Africa held free elections in 1994 and adopted a new, non-discriminatory Constitution in 1996. Although there are currently 14 political parties in South Africa, the most significant are the African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Executive Branch

The President, currently Jacob Zuma (pictured), is selected by the National Assembly to serve a maximum of two 5-year terms. In addition to his role as head-of-state, head-of-government, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces; the President selects a Deputy President and a Cabinet of Ministers. The Deputy President is responsible for assuming the President's duties when the President is unable to fulfill them. Each President assigns the Cabinet Ministers' responsibilities.

Legislative Branch

South Africa has a 2-chamber Parliament composed of a Council of Provinces and a National Assembly. While the 400 members of the National Assembly are elected by popular vote through a proportional representation system, the 90 members of the Council of Provinces are selected by each of South Africa's 9 Provincial Legislatures (10 representatives for each province). All members of Parliament serve 5-year terms.

Judicial Branch

The original basis of South Africa's legal system is Roman Dutch law (Roman law as interpreted by Dutch scholars in the 17th and 18th centuries), although the influence of British colonization resulted in a hybrid legal system incorporating many aspects of British common law. As long as it does not conflict with the Constitution, South Africans can also choose to be subject to customary law, which comprises the traditional legal practices of indigenous ethnic groups.

There are four types of courts in South Africa's legal system. The 11-justice Constitutional Court is the ultimate authority on constitutional questions, while the 23-justice Supreme Court of Appeal is the highest court for all non-constitutional matters. The High Courts and the Magistrate Courts handle the majority of cases (Photo: Then Senator Obama with members of the Constitutional Court).

Political Climate

Since the 1994 elections, South Africa has made great strides toward effective democratic government. With nearly 80% voter turnout in the 2009 election, South Africa benefits from a population enthusiastic for participatory democracy. South Africa also has several powerful public interest groups such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), black economic empowerment groups (BEEs), and the Treatment Action Campaign, which seeks to further HIV/AIDS prevention.

Jacob Zuma, who in 2009 became South Africa's 4th post-apartheid President despite allegations of rape and corruption, has met with mixed success during his tenure. Although Zuma gained positive attention for his successful management of the 2010 World Cup and his effective overhaul of predecessor Thabo Mbeki's HIV/AIDS policies, some of his economic policies have angered allies such as the COSATU. Some news outlets have reported speculation that the ANC may choose a different candidate ahead of the 2014 elections.

Defense

Formed in 1994 from the old South Africa Defence Force and the paramilitary wings of various anti-apartheid organizations, the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) is widely regarded as the best trained and best equipped military in sub-Saharan Africa. The SANDF currently has over 64,000 active-duty troops and close to 20,000 reserves divided between an Army, Navy, Air Force, and health service. Although the SANDF is a small force relative to the size of South Africa, it has a large and growing portfolio of regional responsibilities. South Africa's defense budget equals about 1.7% of GDP (Photo: Then Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Admiral Mike Mullen with General Godfrey Nhlanhla, Chief of the SANDF).

Army: Composed of about 39,000 active-duty troops and more than 12,000 reserves, the Army has two major multi-unit bases – Thaba Tshwane at Pretoria and Tempe at Bloemfontein – in addition to smaller, single-unit bases throughout the country. The main responsibilities of the army are to defend South Africa and regional allies from attack, assist the police in case of emergency, and supply and maintain peacekeeping forces.

Navy: The Navy, which comprises nearly 7,000 active-duty troops and more than 1,000 reserves, operates from 4 major stations, the largest of which is south of Cape Town at Simon's Town. The primary focus of the Navy is to protect South Africa's maritime trade, which accounts for 30% of GDP. The Navy conducts anti-piracy missions in the waters surrounding southern Africa with an emphasis on the ports at Cape Town and Durban.

Air Force: Composed of about 11,000 active-duty troops and just over 1,000 reserves, the Air Force is primarily responsible for South African airspace and troop deployment locations. Other responsibilities include transporting government officials and providing light air support and transport capabilities to the Army and police during border protection and internal security operations.

South African Air Force Rank Insignia

Security Issues

Crime: Crime is a major problem in South Africa and is often regarded as the primary threat to South Africa's social stability. In particular, South Africa's sky-high unemployment rate of 23.3% contributes to widespread violent crime such as mugging, armed robbery, carjacking, and rape.

Organized crime tied to illicit-drug trafficking is also a major problem. In addition to its status as a major transshipment point for cocaine, hashish, and heroin; South Africa also has growing domestic markets for cocaine and heroin and the world's largest market for methaqualone, an inexpensive sedative that is often mixed with cannabis.

Border Security: Maintaining the integrity of South Africa's land, air, and sea borders is necessary to control smuggling and illegal immigration. Consequently, in 2011 the SANDF shifted its focus from peacekeeping missions to border control.

South African troops currently are deployed along land borders with Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. Their main focus is stemming the tide of economic and political refugees from Zimbabwe. The SANDF also works with the armed forces of Namibia and Mozambique to increase security at ports and along coastal borders. In addition, because most contraband that reaches South Africa is smuggled by air, the Air Force has sought to tighten security along South Africa's 4,760 miles of air borders.

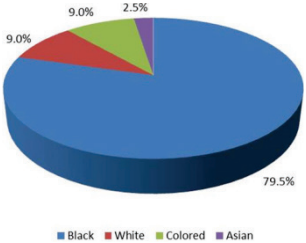
Diplomatic Relations

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has worked to repair its relationships with other countries in southern Africa. One aspect of this effort has been South Africa's active membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a 15-country organization that seeks to establish political and economic stability in southern Africa.

South Africa is also active in several multilateral organizations. Continentally, South Africa is active in the African Union (AU), a 54-country organization founded in 2002 to promote African unity and seek solutions to shared challenges. Of note, former South African President Thabo Mbeki served as the first chairman of the AU. Although the United Nations (UN) suspended South Africa's membership from 1974 to 1994 because of apartheid, South Africa is now an active member of the UN and in 2011 served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

US-South Africa Relations: Although relations between the US and South Africa have improved dramatically since the end of apartheid, the two countries have still experienced a number of diplomatic setbacks since 1994. While the US has criticized South Africa's ongoing relations with Cuba, Iran, and Libya; South Africa has expressed its disapproval of the War in Iraq (Photo: President Obama with South African President Jacob Zuma and British Prime Minister David Cameron).

The US in 2003 temporarily ended military aid to South Africa due to the South African government's insistence that Americans are subject to prosecution by the International Criminal Court, a body whose jurisdiction the US rejects. Nevertheless, the US and South Africa have enjoyed normal trade relations since 1994, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has praised South Africa for its role in fostering US trade relations across the African continent.



Ethnic Groups

The diverse population of South Africa contains 4 major racial groups which were rigidly defined during apartheid and are used by the census today. The 4 races are blacks, whites, coloreds (mixed-race), and Asians (see *History and Myth*).

Blacks

Comprising nearly 4/5 of the population, black South Africans divide into 4 ethnic group clusters (Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga, Venda) and 9 ethnic groups (Zulu, Xhosa, North Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi, Ndebele, Venda).

Nguni: There are 3 main divisions within the Nguni cluster of ethnic groups: the Northern Nguni, the Southern Nguni, and the Ndebele. The main Northern Nguni ethnic groups are the Zulu (South Africa's largest indigenous ethnic group with 23% of the population) and the Swazi (Photo: an early 20th-century Zulu warrior). The main Southern Nguni ethnic groups are the Mpondo, the Thembu, and the Xhosa (the second largest ethnic sub-group comprising 18% of the population).

Sotho: The diverse Sotho cluster of ethnic groups has several subdivisions, the largest of which are the Northern Sotho, the Southern Sotho, and the Western Sotho. Although the Northern Sotho consist of a wide variety of ethnic groups in the northern Transvaal, many were conquered and assimilated by the Pedi, the largest Northern Sotho ethnic group. The Southern Sotho, also known as the Basotho, live in Lesotho and the surrounding areas of South Africa. The Western Sotho, also known as the Tswana, live in Botswana and the border regions of the central part of northern South Africa.

Tsonga: The Tsonga are a much smaller cluster of ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Shangaan, the Thonga, and the Tonga. The Tsonga are descended from fisherfolk who inhabited small independent chiefdoms in the lowlands of southern Africa's eastern coast before moving inland during the ***Mfecane*** (see *History and Myth*). Today, more ethnic Tsonga live in Mozambique and Zimbabwe than in South Africa.

Venda: The Venda people constitute South Africa's smallest cluster of ethnic groups and live mainly along the Limpopo River on the southern border of Zimbabwe. Venda culture is notable for displaying a variety of influences from southern, eastern, and central Africa.

Whites

Comprising about 9% of the total population, the white inhabitants of South Africa subdivide into two main groups: English-speakers descended from English, Irish, and Scottish settlers; and Afrikaans-speakers descended from Dutch, French, and German settlers. Although English-speakers in South Africa have largely retained the cultural identities of their homelands, Afrikaans-speakers (***Afrikaners***) have formed a distinct cultural identity through the Afrikaans language and the Dutch Reformed Church (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Portuguese-speakers also comprise a small but significant minority of white South Africans. Although the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach South Africa, most Portuguese influence has entered South Africa through the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

Coloreds

Constituting about 9% of South Africa's population, coloreds are the mixed-race descendants of white settlers, indigenous Khoe, and slaves imported during the colonial era from the Dutch East Indies. For example, the colored Griqua people trace their roots to white settlers and native Khoe. Coloreds have their own unique culture and traditions and primarily speak Afrikaans.

Asians

Comprising about 2.5% of the population, South African Asians are mostly descended from the Indians originally imported by the British to work sugarcane plantations in Natal Colony (see *History and Myth*). Although South African Indians use English to communicate with other ethnic groups, they sometimes speak Hindi or Tamil in the home. Indians have historically been deeply involved in South African politics.

In addition, there is also a small minority of South African Asians who are of Chinese descent. Although they have succeeded in a wide range of fields, South African Chinese are best recognized for their accomplishments in medicine.

Social Relations

Despite the tragic legacy of apartheid, the multiracial society of modern South Africa functions with a degree of civility and smoothness which would have been unimaginable just a few decades ago. However, 350 years of economic inequality and racial strife did not disappear overnight.

Despite the introduction of hiring quotas designed to combat discrimination, many blacks continue to have difficulty finding work. Moreover, those same hiring quotas often marginalize coloreds, and whites occasionally report reverse discrimination. Consequently, although racial discrimination is no longer legal, whites, blacks, and coloreds continue to occupy vastly different social and economic classes.

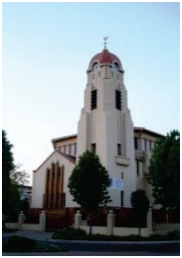
Socio-Economic Divisions

Although complete data is not readily available, there is little doubt that South Africa has one of the world's highest levels of income inequality. Consequently, socio-economic divisions are deeply etched into South African society, and they continue to be correlated with, if not completely determined by, race (Photo: Kayamandi Township near Stellenbosch, South Africa).

This socio-economic gap further curtails already limited social interaction between the races. Middle-class and wealthy South Africans, who are overwhelmingly white, live mainly in large, expensive brick houses surrounded by gates and connected to reliable supplies of water and electricity. They tend to socialize at heavily secured shopping malls with faux (French word for "false") sidewalk cafés and shops selling Western imports. Increasing numbers of wealthy South Africans have moved abroad in recent years in order to avoid widespread violent crime and pursue better careers.

Conversely, poor South Africans, who are mostly black, live in settlements composed of small, makeshift houses built from scavenged pieces of corrugated metal, cardboard, and wood. Neither clean drinking water nor adequate health facilities are necessarily available. Poor South Africans tend to socialize on street corners and at local bars.

3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY



Overview

Religion has played diverse, sometimes conflicting, roles in South Africa. White settlers used religion to justify their expansion into Africa and dominance over other races. Blacks looked to religion as a source of inspiration and unity in their struggle against apartheid and colonial rule. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, religion has promoted reconciliation and healing among many South Africans (Photo: A Dutch Reformed Church near Johannesburg).

According to a 2001 census, about 80% of South Africans self-identify as Christians, mostly of Protestant sects. About 15% of South Africans do not identify themselves as members of any organized faith. This group predominantly consists of atheists and followers of traditional African religions. Smaller numbers identified themselves as Muslims (1.5%), Hindus (1.2%), Jews (0.2%), and Buddhists (0.1%).

Traditional Beliefs

Although traditional beliefs vary widely in South Africa even within single ethnic groups, followers of traditional faiths tend to believe in a remote supreme being who created all things. This creator presides over daily life but does not exercise strong influence over daily events.

By contrast, subordinate spirits such as deceased ancestors are deeply concerned with daily events and influence mortals in both positive and negative ways. Consequently, people honor and seek to placate these spirits with libations (liquid poured on the ground as an offering) or other rituals performed under the supervision of family heads, chiefs, diviners, and healers.

Historically, traditional religion provided leaders with a way to reinforce their political authority by presiding over rituals of fertility, rainmaking, and warfare. In modern times, traditional beliefs form an important part of Christian worship for many South Africans.

Healers: Some South Africans rely on ***sangomas*** (traditional diviners) to lift curses, make predictions, and establish links with ancestral spirits to learn the cause of specific misfortunes. For certain ailments, some South Africans may also consult an ***inyanga*** (herbalist) or an ***umthakatis***, a type of healer with a detailed understanding of ***muti*** (traditional medicine).

Witchcraft: One of the primary roles of traditional healers is to counteract witchcraft, which is thought to cause a wide range of illnesses and misfortunes, including HIV/AIDS (see *Sustenance and Health*). The South African media have recently reported a spate of "***muti***-killings," in which people were allegedly killed by witches so that their body parts could be used to concoct especially potent ***muti*** intended for evil purposes.

Introduction of Christianity

Dutch traders introduced Christianity to southern Africa in 1652, when they founded the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk* or NGK) and brought Calvinist ideas of predestination into a new and complex cultural context. In the early years of European settlement most whites joined the NGK, which eventually became a key component of the Afrikaner identity (see *Political and Social Relations*). However, due to disputes during the 19th century, the NGK divided into three separate branches. Growing membership among non-whites later resulted in the establishment of separate NGK congregations for coloreds (1881) and blacks (1910) (Photo: NGK Church in Simon's Town, a suburb of Cape Town).

Mission Churches: Early Dutch settlers shunned missionary activities because Dutch religious authorities required baptized slaves to be freed. Some Dutch settlers even banned religious instruction for slaves in order to sidestep this ruling. By the late 18th century, however, missionaries began to arrive in present-day South Africa from Britain, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and the US. Consisting of Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Catholics; these missionaries sought new members in black and English-speaking white communities.

Although many of these European and American missionaries made important contributions by establishing schools and improving healthcare, they also imposed new cultural norms through the process of religious conversion, as Christianization was almost always accompanied by Westernization.

The Xhosa Prophecy

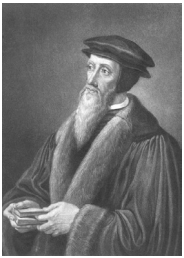
As the Xhosa grew increasingly outraged at British occupation around the middle of the 19th century (see *History and Myth*), a prominent diviner named Mlangeni organized an army and promised that his forces would have divine support if the Xhosa sacrificed all of their sandy-yellow cattle. Although the Xhosa answered Mlangeni's call, the British crushed the ensuing rebellion in 1853.

Following this defeat, a niece of the Xhosa chief predicted that British domination would end if the Xhosa killed the remainder of their cattle and destroyed their food stores. In 1856-1857, thousands of Xhosa followed these new instructions, sacrificing more than 400,000 cattle. The prophecy nevertheless proved incorrect and about 40,000 people died of starvation while a similar number were forced to seek wage labor in the colonial economy.

Ethiopian Churches: Rejecting the racial discrimination and denial of African culture inherent in Christian mission churches, some Africans founded congregations known as "Ethiopian" churches, a reference to a biblical prophecy and the ancient Orthodox Christian churches of Ethiopia.

Also known as African Independent Churches (AICs), these churches focus on creating an "Africa for Africans" and usually incorporate traditional beliefs into Christian worship. Notable early AICs include the Tembu National Church, founded in 1884, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, introduced near the end of the 19th century by American missionaries who established churches and trained preachers.

Christianity and Apartheid



Religious Support: Firmly entrenched since the arrival of Europeans in 1652, the idea of racial separation gained even more traction among whites in the early 20th century, when they began to feel that their survival as a community was under threat. Although they did not invent the idea of racial separation, NGK leaders acknowledged its theological credibility in the 1930s, when they used their Calvinist doctrines to develop a philosophical justification for the prevailing racist ideology and the apartheid policies that soon flowed from it (Photo: John Calvin).

The NGK's justification claimed that it was God's intention that the races remain separate and that racial distinctions were part of God's natural order, as evidenced by the division of people into languages and nations at Babel. As the "chosen" people predestined to be saved, Afrikaners had been set apart from all others by divine will. Consequently, the argument concluded, Afrikaners must reign supreme over all others.

Having espoused its own ideology of racial separation at least as early as 1932, the National Party (NP) embraced the NGK's argument as it took power in 1948 and established the policies of apartheid (see *History and Myth*). As its leaders continued to preach the religious and moral merits of the political order, the NGK became known as the "official church" of the NP. Some congregations of English-speaking Anglicans and Methodists joined the NGK in supporting the NP government.

Religious Opposition: Although most NGK leaders supported apartheid until the 1980s, some NGK clergy opposed apartheid much earlier. For example, Reverend Beyers Naudé began to question apartheid after the Sharpeville massacre (see *History and Myth*) and later left his white congregation for a black one. The NGK was suspended from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1982 after refusing to endorse a declaration that apartheid was a heresy. This sort of external pressure took a toll, however, and the NGK eventually withdrew its support for apartheid in 1986.

Other Denominations: Apartheid was a divisive issue in other Christian denominations. Although leaders of the (Anglican) Province of South Africa, the Roman Catholic Church, and the mostly black Methodist Church openly opposed the political system, many parishioners expressed concern about the idea of their religious leaders becoming involved in political activism. Apartheid remained controversial even after the leaders of many different denominations denounced it by issuing a series of ecumenical statements in the late 1980s.

The South African Council of Churches (SACC): In order to protect activist parishioners and leaders from public exposure, many denominations began as early as 1968 to coordinate their apartheid opposition through the SACC. Appointed Secretary-General of the SACC in 1978, Desmond Tutu (pictured) called for total opposition to the apartheid regime two years later. After being named the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town in 1986, Tutu became a prominent spokesperson for the anti-apartheid cause, calling for a peaceful transition to democracy and reconciliation between the races. Tutu later helped pursue this vision by leading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) from 1995 until 2003 (see *History and Myth*).

Religion Today

Christianity: AICs, consisting of Zionist or Apostolic churches, constitute the largest group of Christian churches in South Africa, having more than 10 million members and around 4,000 congregations. The next largest Christian denominations are the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Dutch Reformed Churches (including the NGK), and Pentecostal churches, each of which claim about 3 million members. There are also about 2 million members of the Anglican Church and 1 million members of the Lutheran Church. Blacks constitute a majority in all Christian denominations in South Africa except for the Dutch Reformed Churches.

Zion Christian Church (ZCC): With about 5 million members, the ZCC is South Africa's largest and fastest growing church. Established in 1910, the ZCC emphasizes religious healing through faith, purification rites, prophesying, dancing, and night communion. Although the ZCC generally respects traditional African religious beliefs, especially those concerning the importance of ancestors, there have been occasional clashes between ZCC leaders and ***sangomas***. ZCC members follow strict rules which prohibit drinking, smoking, and eating pork.

Islam: South Africa is home to about 650,000 predominantly Sunni Muslims, who live mostly near Johannesburg, Cape Town, or Durban. Most Muslims are descendants of slaves brought from the East Indies during the colonial era, but some are Indian, Pakistani, or mixed-race (Photo: American and South African Muslims in KwaZulu Natal Province).

Other Religions: About half of South Africa's ethnic Indian population practices Hinduism, with most Hindus residing in KwaZulu Natal. Residing mostly in Johannesburg, about 75,000 South Africans follow Judaism. There are also small communities of Buddhists and Baha'is (members of a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 19th-century Persia).

Interfaith Cooperation: South Africa's seven major religious communities – Christian, African Traditional, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, and Baha'i – work together in the National Religious Leaders' Forum to plan and implement social welfare initiatives such as poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Religion and Politics: During the 2009 election campaign, Jacob Zuma made remarks claiming the African National Congress (see *History and Myth*) had a religious mandate to govern South Africa. These remarks, in combination with Zuma's practice of polygyny (see *Family and Kinship*) and his habit of making political appeals from church pulpits, have prompted rebukes from both politicians and religious leaders.

4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Overview

In the traditional culture of black South Africans, the basic unit of social organization was the nuclear family, consisting of two parents and their children. Multiple nuclear families sharing a single common ancestor often lived together as an extended family within a single homestead. Patterns of descent were "patrilineal," or traced from father to son. Similarly, patterns of housing were "patrilocal," meaning that a married woman lived at the homestead of her husband's family.

These traditional kinship patterns were severely stressed and nearly wiped out by the industrialization of the South African economy (see *History and Myth*). As young men moved to cities in search of employment, they found it difficult to maintain connections with their rural homesteads. As new relationships and support networks took the place of traditional kinship bonds, the importance of the nuclear family surpassed that of the extended family.

Many migrant workers, however, never intended to become permanent city-dwellers. Some even sought to recreate their traditional lifestyle by settling near members of their lineage and reinvigorating traditional ceremonies. In some cases, these urban versions of traditional rural ceremonies are practiced on a much grander scale than the traditional versions ever were.

Residence

Homesteads: Among black South African ethnic groups, extended families traditionally lived together in ***imizi***, or homesteads. Typically comprised of a semi-circular cluster of round, one-room huts made from wood or clay, homesteads functioned as self-contained economic and political units. Almost all activities and life-cycle events took place within the homestead, including growing crops, tending livestock, raising children, consecrating marriages, worshipping ancestors, and performing death rites.

Townships: Beginning in 1923, black South Africans moving to urban areas were required to reside outside of cities in publicly provided housing. Along with all other non-whites, they were not allowed to own or purchase land in the cities or indeed any land outside of their "homelands" (see "Bantustans" in *History and Myth*). Because public housing was often substandard, many who moved to urban areas in search of work built makeshift shacks on the outskirts of municipal townships. Similar shacks remain common in South Africa to this day.

Built from cardboard, wood, and corrugated metal; township shacks usually consist of a single room without electricity or running water. Many shacks house multiple generations of a single extended family, while other shacks are home to non-traditional arrangements in which unrelated individuals gather around a core group of related residents. Despite the difficult circumstances in townships, they are closely knit communities.

Traditional Marriage

An essential life event for all black South African ethnic groups, marriage is seen more as a union of two families than a union of two individuals. Consequently, everyone is expected to get married and to strive to preserve their marriages.

Spouse Selection: In Nguni ethnic groups, which include the Swazi, Xhosa, and Zulu, spouses are chosen from distinct lineages. By contrast, in Sotho-Tswana ethnic groups, which include the Pedi, Sotho, and Tswana, spouses are preferably "cross-cousins" – the children of an individual's maternal uncle or paternal aunt.

Bridewealth: Called ***lobola*** by the Nguni and ***bogadi*** by the Sotho-Tswana, bridewealth is a form of material compensation paid by the groom's family to the bride's family in exchange for rights over the bride's labor and offspring. Although bridewealth traditionally consisted of cattle, today it is just as likely to be cash. While the Nguni consider it acceptable to negotiate the size of bridewealth, the Sotho-Tswana consider the bridewealth requested by the bride's family to be a final offer.

Among the Nguni, the transfer of the bride to the groom's home consecrates a marriage. The transfer of bridewealth has little ceremonial importance for the Nguni, although it is important in a legal sense. By contrast, the Sotho-Tswana consider the transfer of bridewealth as a critical event and attach little importance to the bride's relocation.

Nature of Marriage: Although rights over the bride are transferred to the groom at marriage, husbands are encouraged to treat their wives well. The groom's family welcomes the bride by providing her with a home, security, and a guarantee that even if her husband dies her physical and procreative needs will be met – usually by having a younger brother take his place. Polygyny, a practice in which men marry multiple women, is legal in South Africa, although its popularity has declined due to the spread of Christianity (Photo: *Xhosa-Zulu Wedding*, courtesy of ProQuest 2011).

Marriage in Urban Contexts

Marriage in urban areas differs in many ways from traditional marriage. Rather than marrying partners selected in close consultation with their families, city-dwellers tend to choose marriage partners independently from among the many people they meet through their various social interactions. In addition, due to the influence of the state and Christianity, modern marriages tend to occur in courthouses or churches rather than homesteads. Some city-dwellers also live together as couples without officially getting married at all.

Children

Among black South African ethnic groups, raising children is one of the most important duties that a person can perform, and marriages are not seen as fully consummated until they produce children. Regardless of biological parentage, children are seen socially and legally as belonging to the husband of their mother. Consequently, even couples in which one of the parents is sterile are expected to produce children through various types of surrogacy arrangements.

In addition to providing their parents with emotional fulfillment, children also serve many practical ends. Girls learn to perform domestic chores relatively early in life and secure bridewealth for their families upon marriage. Boys begin to tend livestock at a young age and later look after their elderly parents as adults.

Rites-of-Passage

Rites-of-passage are ceremonies recognizing life's transitions and tend to vary by ethic group.

Birth: Infants are traditionally delivered by older women and then secluded with their mothers for 6-10 days. Afterwards, the child is given a name and presented to the community at a feast marking his or her "social birth."

Puberty: Puberty rituals are intended to prepare young people to enter society. Male rituals are generally more prolonged and elaborate, but both genders undergo a process of seclusion, skills training, and reincorporation. Male training focuses on ethical principles as expressed in rituals, dances, songs, and myths. Female training emphasizes domestic skills needed to be a good wife and mother. As noted earlier, modern families adapt these rituals to changing circumstances.

Death and Funerals: Township funerals are scheduled so that out-of-town relatives have sufficient travel time. Funerals begin with a prayer meeting, after which mourners are transported by taxi to the cemetery, which is often decorated with red carpets and flowers. Following the funeral, mourners are provided with a meal. The expenses associated with this type of funeral often cause financial hardship for the family of the deceased.

Family and Kinship among White South Africans

The family and kinship patterns of white South Africans closely resemble those of Americans. Whites marry in courthouses or Christian churches and live in modern houses as nuclear families. Often raised with the help of non-white domestic workers, white children are considered adults at age 21. Upon death, whites are rendered appropriate rites according to their religious affiliation and then cremated or buried in a cemetery.

5. SEX AND GENDER

Overview

Although complete gender equality remains a distant ideal in South Africa, the status of women has slowly but steadily improved in recent years. In addition, both the legal system and public discourse in South Africa have grown notably more sensitive to gender issues.

Gender Roles and Work

In rural black communities men were traditionally responsible for running local political affairs, tending to livestock, and performing heavy agricultural labor such as plowing, loading, and transport. Women were responsible for all other agricultural labor. As South Africa's economy industrialized in the 19th century, black men increasingly relocated to urban centers and sought work in mining and industry, leaving women responsible for all aspects of running the household.

Modern: Women are far less likely than men to be employed in the modern economy: although 61% of men participate in the labor force and 23% are unemployed, only 48% of women participate in the labor force and 29% are unemployed. Those women who are employed are disproportionately represented in low-wage, insecure jobs and are generally still expected to raise children and perform domestic chores.

Common professions for women include wholesale and retail trade, clothing and food manufacturing, social services, and domestic work in private households. Men tend to be employed in manufacturing, social services, and trade as well as finance, construction, and transport.

Leadership: Among South African firms, women account for 17% of directors, 19% of executives, and 3% of CEOs. About 25% of firms have no women in senior management. These statistics are comparable to those in the US, where only 18 of the Fortune 500 firms (3%) have a female CEO.

Gender and Politics

Women are well-represented in the South African Parliament, holding 172 of 400 seats (43%) in the National Assembly and 19 of 54 seats (35%) in the National Council of Provinces. In addition, 14 of 34 cabinet ministers (41%) are women, including Minister of International Relations Maite Nkoana-Mashabane (pictured with Then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton). Legislation also requires that women constitute at least 1/3 of the National House of Traditional Leaders, which is a national advisory council.

Gender and the Law

The South African constitution guarantees gender equality, and legislation grants both genders equal rights with regard to inheritance, divorce, and child custody; however, women still face indirect legal barriers. For example, the male-dominated traditional authorities that control many rural areas often refuse to grant legal land ownership to women and thereby deny them access to government housing subsidies.

Gender-Based Violence

Across racial boundaries, South African culture promotes an ideal of masculinity in which men exert authority in order to earn respect. This ideal often becomes an excuse for violence against women, especially within relationships. According to one study, victims and perpetrators knew each other in about 90% of the assaults, 75% of the rapes, and 70-80% of the murders that occurred in South Africa between 2000 and 2010.

According to recent studies, about 40% of men report having been violent towards an intimate partner, and almost half of all women report having been victims. In addition, the female homicide rate in South Africa was six times the world average in 1999, with one 2009 study finding that over half of female homicide victims were killed by an intimate partner. There were over 55,000 reported rapes or indecent assaults between April

2009 and March 2010, and a 2005 study estimated that only one in nine rapes is reported to the police.

Sex and Procreation

Just as the industrialization of South Africa's economy changed traditional occupational arrangements, it also altered sexual relations. As young people moved to cities and escaped the supervision of elders, non-marital sex and sex with multiple partners became more common. These changes laid the foundation for modern South Africa's patterns of sex and procreation, which often contribute to social problems such as crime, poverty, the spread of HIV, and high rates of childhood sexual assaults.

For example, the number of women with a sexual partner more than 5 years older has increased significantly in recent years. In most such relationships, a young woman trades sex for material support from an older man, an exchange which makes it difficult for young women to insist on safe-sex measures. Consequently, relationships intended to help young women escape poverty often put them at risk of single motherhood and HIV infection, outcomes which tend to promote poverty.

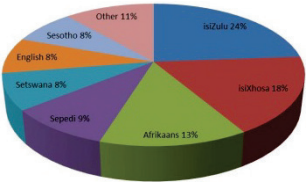
Awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention nevertheless seems to be growing. Due mainly to an aggressive government campaign, the share of South African adults who recently practiced safe sex rose from 27.3% in 2002 to 62.4% in 2008.

Homosexuality

Modern South Africa has some of the world's strongest legal protections for homosexuals. The South African Constitution was the first in the world to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 2006 South Africa became the first African country to legalize same-sex marriage. Even in 2006, however, a notable majority (63%) of South Africans believed that homosexuality was not acceptable.

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language Overview



Some of the 25 languages spoken in South Africa have been used historically not only as tools for communication but also as instruments of control, discrimination, division, and nationalism. The National Language Policy Framework introduced in 2002 sought to put all South African languages on an equal footing by recognizing more official languages and promoting linguistic diversity in education and government. However, the prevalence of English, an international *lingua franca*, continues to limit the number of people willing to learn and use the predominant isiZulu and isiXhosa languages of the black majority.

Each of South Africa's 11 official languages belongs either to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family (Afrikaans and English) or to the Bantu branch of the Niger-Congo language family (isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu). According to the 2001 census, 78% of South Africans speak one of the official Bantu languages in the home, 13% speak Afrikaans, and 8% speak English (see chart above).

Bantu Languages

The Bantu languages spoken in South Africa fall into several sub-groups, the largest of which are the Nguni languages, which include siSwati, isiZulu, and isiXhosa, and the Sotho-Tswana languages, which include Sepedi, Sesotho, and Setswana. Due to historical ties, the languages of each Bantu sub-group are mutually intelligible to some degree.

Nguni and Sotho-Tswana languages are tonal and incorporate various pop and click sounds. In 2001 Nguni languages were spoken in the home by 44% of South Africans, with the largest concentrations in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal provinces. Sotho-Tswana languages were spoken by 26% of the population, mostly in Northwest and Free State provinces.

Afrikaans

Although ultimately rooted in the Dutch spoken by early traders in the Cape of Good Hope, Afrikaans is the product of centuries of influence from other regional languages, including the Bantu tongues spoken by southern Africans and the French, English, German, and Malay languages spoken by settlers and slaves.

Due to these diverse influences, Afrikaans developed a unique grammar, pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary, leading many Afrikaans-speakers to consider their tongue an indigenous African language. Afrikaans is spoken throughout South Africa, with particularly high speaker concentrations in the Free State, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and Western Cape provinces.

English

English arrived in South Africa when the British seized the Cape Colony at the beginning of the 19th century (see *History and Myth*). Although mutually intelligible with most other global forms of English, South African English displays significant variations in syntax due to the influence of regional languages.

Because it has little association with tribal rivalries or apartheid-era oppression, English serves as a politically neutral language for inter-ethnic communication. Most street signs are written in both English and the predominant local language, and English is the primary language of business, government, and media. Because South Africans who learn English generally study it as a second or third language, levels of proficiency tend to be basic: about 75% of black South Africans are not functionally literate in English.

Other Languages

Although Indian South Africans tend to speak English most of the time, many continue to speak Indian languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, and Telugu. In addition, as of 2006 close to 60,000 South Africans continued to speak Nama, an indigenous, non-Bantu language spoken by the Khoe-San.

Mixing Languages

Because of the high degree of interaction among speakers of different languages, it is common for South Africans to speak three or more languages, often during the course of a single day. South Africans sometimes even mix languages in the same sentence, a practice known as "code-switching."

Many South Africans also speak "pidgins," or mixed languages, most of which resulted from isolated and sustained interaction among people from different linguistic backgrounds. Common examples include Kitchen English, a mixture of English and Afrikaans, and Tsotsitaal, a vernacular derived from Afrikaans and Bantu languages that is mainly spoken in cities.

Communication Style

Although communication styles vary across individuals and ethnic groups, South Africans generally emphasize tolerance and respect in order to limit the misunderstandings which can develop among people from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Language Choice: Because the language a speaker chooses greatly affects the outcome of an interaction in South Africa, the principles of tolerance and respect are fundamental components of effective communications. Although it may seem unnecessary due to the prevalence of English, foreign nationals are advised to learn and use a few phrases in the language of the South African groups with which they interact.

Listening: Active listening is critically important, especially for foreign nationals. South Africans often communicate indirectly, so foreign nationals must pick up on subtle contextual cues in order to receive information that is not stated explicitly. Foreign nationals should never interrupt a South African, especially one of higher status, as to do so is considered rude.

Speaking: South Africans consider direct communication to be offensive. Consequently, conversing tactfully and with reserve is crucial. South Africans prefer to engage in small talk and establish a relationship before "getting down to business."

Gender: In some parts of South Africa, women are expected to remain silent or pretend to be unintelligent in the company of men. Particularly among black South Africans, females rarely participate in mixed-gender conversations, and women who socialize with groups of men are seen as disreputable.

Saving Face

Black South Africans are deeply concerned with maintaining face both individually and collectively. These concerns can be partly explained by the ethical concept of ***Ubuntu***, which roughly equates to the idea that the reputation and success of the individual are inextricably linked to those of the group.

Foreign nationals are advised to communicate in a manner that allows the other party to maintain face. For example, if a South African gives an unclear or ambiguous answer to a question, follow-up questions should be framed as requests for assistance and should not imply that the South African presented the information poorly.

Foreign nationals should also be aware that this desire to save face may lead South Africans to answer a question with inaccurate information if they do not know the correct answer, although they will usually update their answer as soon as they have the correct information.

Conflicts

Likely due to decades of Apartheid (see *History and Myth*), South Africans do not tolerate conflict well and have developed a number of conflict avoidance practices. One strategy, particularly within Zulu culture, is to communicate frequently in order to promote understanding and defuse serious conflicts before they have a chance to develop. Another common approach is to use wit and sarcasm to relieve emotional tension without seriously damaging relationships. When conflicts do arise, they should be resolved directly and privately by the parties involved. Among white South Africans, English-speakers generally have a stronger aversion to conflict than Afrikaans-speakers.

Greetings

When a black South African initiates a conversation, he begins by saying in the appropriate language, “Hello, how are you?” The other person then responds, “Fine, and you?” The first person must respond, “Fine, thank you,” before the interaction can proceed. Although this type of greeting may seem boring, repetitive, or pointless; it is an indispensable part of interacting with black South Africans.

White South Africans typically initiate conversations with a handshake (see *Time and Space*), and greetings tend to be brief and formal until a strong relationship is established. *Mora Meneer* (“Morning, Mister”) is a typical greeting in Afrikaans, while a simple “Good morning” is common in English.

Titles

The use of proper titles shows respect and deference. Although first names are not commonly used, last names are sometimes used on their own as an indication of warmth. It is appropriate to call older men *Baba* in isiZulu, *Tata* in isiXhosa, and *Ntate* in Sesotho (“Father”) and to call older women *Mama* in isiZulu and isiXhosa and *Mme* in Sesotho (“Mother”). In Afrikaans, the respectful forms of address are *Meneer* (Mnr) for men and *Mevrou* (Mev) for women, and older adults are sometimes referred to as *Oom* (“Uncle”) or *Tannie* (“Aunt”).

Conversational Topics

Most conversations revolve around family, health, weather, and sports. Foreign nationals should avoid racist commentary, which is explicitly prohibited and punishable by law, and discussions on HIV/AIDS or the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (an economic development program sponsored by the African Union), which remains a controversial program.

Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at http://culture.af.mil/resources/index.aspx for language training resources.

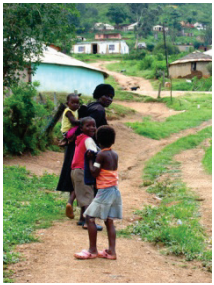
Useful Translations

English	Afrikaans	Zulu
Do you speak English?	Praat U Engels?	Ukhuluma isiNgisi na?
Hi/Hi everyone	Goeie dag	Sawubona!
How are you?	Hoe gaan dit met U?	Unjani?
Good morning	Goeiemôre	Sawubona!
Good night	Goeienag	Lala(ni) kahle!
Please	Asseblief	Siza
Thank you (very much)	(Baie) dankie	Ngiyabonga (kakhulu)
Welcome!	Welcom!	Ngiyakwemukela!
Yes/No	Ja/Nee	Yebo/Cha
OK	Lekker/Goed	Ngisaphila
Sorry	Jammer	Phephisa
What is your name?	Wat is U naam?	Ngubani igama lakho?
My name is…	My naam is...	Igama lami ngu…
Nice to meet you	Bly te kenne	Ngiyajabula ukukwazi!
See you later!	Totsiens!	Sizobonana!
Who?	Wie?	Ubani?(s)/Obani(pl)
What?	Wat?	Yini?
When?	Toe?	Nini?
Where?	Waar?	Kuphi?
Why?	Waarom?	Kungani?/Yini?
Calm down	Ontspan	Khululeka
Stop!	Stop!	Hhayibo!
Can you help me?	Kan U my help?	Ungangisiza na?
Zero, One, Two	Nul, Een, Twee	Iqanda, Kunye, Isibili
Three, Four, Five	Drie, Vier, Vyf	Kuthathu, Okune, Sihlanu
Six, Seven, Eight	Ses, Sewe, Ag	Isithupha, Isikhombisa, Isishiyagalombili
Nine, Ten	Nege, Tien	Isishiyagalolunye, Ishumi

7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 86.4%
- Male: 87%
- Female: 85.7% (2003 estimate)



Traditional Education

Traditional methods of education in South Africa varied by ethnic group, although most were intended to integrate young adults into society and to teach them the intellectual, moral, and practical skills they needed to thrive in their physical and social environment. Education was historically organized around puberty rites (see *Family and Kinship*) and primarily focused on both theoretical and practical lessons in topics such as domestic work, kinship duties, religious values, politics, and survival tactics. Elders also used parables to illustrate moral principles and recited oral histories that included tales of heroism and treachery (Photo: *A Zulu woman with her children*, courtesy of ProQuest 2011).

Throughout history, black South Africans have adapted these traditions to changing circumstances. Among the Zulu, for example, King Shaka abolished initiation rites for males and substituted military training. Later, the discovery of minerals in South Africa seriously disrupted traditional social arrangements as many men were forced to seek wage work in distant urban centers (see *History and Myth*). Today, some communities have reinvigorated traditional training and initiation as a way to deal with problems of youth delinquency.

Introduction of Formal Education

The earliest European schools in South Africa were established in the Cape Colony in the late 17th century by elders in the Dutch Reformed Church (or NGK, see *Religion and Spirituality* and *History and Myth*). Early efforts at educating black South Africans focused solely on religious education. Later, traveling teachers taught basic literacy and math skills in Dutch.

The first representatives of the London Missionary Society arrived in 1799, and by 1827 there were more than 24 English-language mission schools in the Cape Colony. From the beginning their presence irritated Afrikaners (or Dutch settlers, see *History and Myth*), who viewed the English language and school curriculum as contrary to their values. For much of the 19th century, Afrikaners chose to educate their children only in Afrikaans (see *Language and Communication*), either at home or in schools run by the NGK.

In the early 19th century British colonial officials began to encourage educated British families to emigrate and appointed a superintendent to oversee the education of British settlers. In the same period British mission schools began accepting black students. Methodist mission schools were especially eager to accept black students and accepted all Xhosa who applied.

The primary goal of both government and mission schools in 19th century education was to “civilize” indigenous South Africans in order to adapt them to European rule. NGK mission schools also stressed the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which Afrikaners interpreted to mean that they were a race set above all others by divine will (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Following the Boer Wars (see *History and Myth*), the British continued to spread the English language and values, bringing thousands of teachers from Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Some Afrikaner churches resisted and proposed their own curriculum known as Christian National Education. Although the British were reluctant to fund this curriculum, they eventually agreed in the interest of harmony among whites. The British decision did not promote harmony, however, and simply resulted in schools segregated by race and language.

By the early 20th century, mission schools were educating more blacks than government schools. These mission schools helped give rise to a moderately prosperous class of farmers, teachers, clergy, and small business owners who organized into a variety of civic groups, such as trade unions and the African National Congress (see *History and Myth*).

In response, activists in the National Party (NP) (see *History and Myth*) adopted opposition to racial integration in schools as their rallying cry. By the time the NP took power and began to enact its apartheid platform, government-sponsored education for black South Africans had become little more than vocational training for low-wage jobs, an arrangement which protected the white minority from competition with blacks for higher-wage jobs.

Education and Apartheid
Upon taking control of the government in 1948, the NP required the separation of Afrikaners from other whites in public schools in order to defend Afrikaner culture against British influence. Although the NP realized that a trained labor force was essential for the future growth of the South African economy, the NP distrusted the mission schools and believed they were transmitting alien ideas which facilitated organizing efforts by blacks.

Bantu Education: Consequently, the government passed the Bantu Education Act in 1953, which removed public schools from the control of provincial governments. The NP government then proceeded to withdraw funding from any black schools that did not adopt a racially discriminatory curriculum. This practice appeared to be a deliberate attempt to defame the history, culture, and identity of black South Africans. Unwilling to adopt this curriculum, yet unable to finance themselves independently, most mission schools were forced to close.

Consequently, black enrollment at government schools increased considerably, although there were major inequalities. Education was compulsory only for whites, and the government spent 10 times as much per capita on educating white children. Classes for blacks were twice as large as those for whites, and only schools for white children had adequate funding and resources. Although in 1978 there were 5 times as many black students as white, 3 times as many white students as black passed the exit examination.

Because schools taught and practiced apartheid ideology, they became closely identified with racist government policies. Not surprisingly, schools became a ready target for protests and violence as black resistance mounted. The best known of these protests occurred at Soweto in 1976 after the Department of Bantu Education mandated that several subjects be taught in Afrikaans (see *History and Myth*). Similar incidents, coupled with a serious shortage of teachers and resources, left the education system in crisis by the end of apartheid.

Education after Apartheid

As apartheid laws were lifted in the early 1990s, President de Klerk called for a nonracial school system which allowed communities to preserve their cultures and languages. New policies mandated compulsory education for all children and earmarked almost 1/4 of the government's budget for education. When Nelson Mandela took office in 1994, there were still separate education departments for each race and homeland (see *History and Myth*), immense disparities in funding and resources for whites and non-whites, and a serious lack of qualified teachers. In addition, schools still used racist textbooks and curricula, and 24% of the population had never received any schooling at all.

Education in Modern South Africa

The South African Schools Act of 1996 mandates a single curriculum and equitable funding for all schools. Basic education runs from grade 0 – also called grade R or reception year – through grade 12, and school is compulsory from grades 1-9. Black South Africans generally study in their indigenous language until grade 7 and then switch to English or Afrikaans.

Despite commanding 20% of the government budget today, schools in predominantly black areas still tend to have fewer resources than those in primarily white areas. In addition, while 93% of South African children currently attend school, only 14% of the black population has a high school diploma or an advanced degree.

8. TIME AND SPACE

Overview

South Africans generally consider personal relationships and current interactions to be more important than schedules and future commitments. Despite the fact that South Africans have one of the most Westernized lifestyles in Africa, their relaxed tempo still prompts some to say that the country runs on "Soweto Time." This relaxed pace is especially pronounced among black South Africans and in rural areas.

Personal Space

South Africans tend to stand close to one another while conversing, and the average dialogue among South Africans takes place within what some Americans would view as personal space. Although an arm's length is generally a good measure, foreign nationals are advised to allow South Africans to determine speaking distance (Photo: Then Senator John Kerry speaking with residents of KwaZulu-Natal).

Touching: South Africa is a high contact culture, and touching is common in greetings, from firm formal handshakes to hugs, handholding, and backslapping between friends. Because touch can indicate positive regard and build trust, it is critical that foreign nationals not shy away from personal contact, especially among black South Africans.

Touch is not as common among white South Africans, who generally consider a traditional handshake sufficient. It is proper for a male foreign national to shake hands with a South African female only if she first offers her hand. Female foreign nationals should not initiate physical contact and should instead offer verbal greetings.

Photography: Foreign nationals should always ask permission before photographing South Africans and should avoid taking pictures or videos of police, soldiers, airports, military bases, or government buildings.

Gestures

Hand gestures are common among black South Africans and are used to show enthusiasm; however, they are less common among white South Africans. Although eye contact can help build trust, some South Africans prefer not to maintain eye contact for long periods of time.

Pointing, finger-wagging, and talking with hands in pockets are considered rude. Although traditionally it has been unacceptable to use the left hand for anything other than personal hygiene, this taboo is gradually being relaxed. As a precaution, foreign nationals are advised to use only the right hand in social settings.

Paralanguage: Black South Africans often emphasize points by speaking at a high volume with marked enthusiasm and inserting longer pauses between speaking turns than foreign nationals may expect. Similarly, they tend to communicate politeness in English through tones of voices that are difficult for non-native speakers to reproduce. Consequently, South Africans who speak English as a second language may sound rude or discourteous even when that is not their intention.

Time and Work

Most South Africans use the 24-hour clock (military time), and their only time zone is South African Standard Time (UTC+2). Although working hours vary, offices are usually open Monday through Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm with a 30-minute lunch break, and Saturday from 9:00am-12:00pm. Some urban stores also have night and weekend hours.

Seasons: Because seasons are reversed in the Southern Hemisphere, Christmas and New Year's Eve take place during the summer in South Africa. Consequently, South Africans tend to take long holidays from mid-December through mid-January, causing travel delays and business closures. Some of them refer to this period as ***komkommertyd,*** also known as "silly season" because of the preponderance of frivolous news stories during the holiday season. Another term for

komkommertyd is “cucumber time,” a term used in England in the 1800s to denote a slow season. ***Hols***, a similar but less busy holiday period, occurs in mid-July.

Negotiations: Most South Africans prefer to conduct business with individuals they know on a personal basis. Consequently, foreign nationals should seek to establish a relationship prior to negotiating with a South African. If time constraints are involved, an introduction from a trusted third party can help. Ideally, initial meetings should be limited to small talk, with business reserved for subsequent meetings. Of note, playing “hardball” is ineffective when negotiating with a South African.

Punctuality: Despite their relaxed view of time, punctuality is important to many South Africans, and foreign nationals are advised to arrive at meetings on time as a courtesy. Although visitors are sometimes kept waiting for appointments, waiting time is generally linked closely to the visitor’s status: the more important the visitor, the less time they will have to wait. Because formal time has little bearing on interactions, meetings rarely end when planned. Similarly, deadlines are not always taken seriously and project delays should be anticipated. Demonstrating impatience towards South Africans who stall for time can damage relationships.

Public Holidays

- January 1: New Year’s Day
- March 21: Human Rights Day
- Friday before Easter (variable): Good Friday
- Monday after Easter (variable): Family Day
- April 27: Freedom Day
- May 1: Workers’ Day
- June 16: Youth Day
- August 9: National Women’s Day
- September 24: Heritage Day
- December 16: Day of Reconciliation
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 26: Day of Goodwill

9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Overview

As with much of the national culture, aesthetic preferences and recreational practices in modern South Africa are a blend of both indigenous and foreign cultural influences and both traditional and modern practices.

Dress

South Africans consider clothing a reflection of social status, ethnicity, age, and gender. Consequently, South Africans value their appearance and tend to dress formally in public. Similarly, hairstyles are also considered an important means of self-expression.

Due to the strong influence of European culture, the vast majority of South Africans wear Western-style clothing. Although some rural South Africans wear traditional clothing, it is rarely seen in cities. Since the end of apartheid, however, there has been renewed interest in traditional dress as part of a broader resurgence in enthusiasm for all things African.

Men: Although businessmen commonly wear a full suit and tie, most urban men wear a shirt and pants. In rural areas, men often wear shorts and knee-length socks. Although traditional clothing varies across ethnic groups, some rural men who have reached puberty wear an apron that covers both front and back and is made from the skin of a small animal. Some rural men go shirtless.

Women: Urban women tend to wear Western-style garments such as dresses, skirts, tops, and pants and generally favor loose, comfortable clothing. Rural women usually wear more traditional ensembles which may include an apron, a scarf or headdress with a dress, or a skirt with a blouse. Made from beads and ***gazania*** leaves, the apron is a key part of traditional dress and is often worn along with a cloak.

A woman's choice of clothing can be highly symbolic. For example, because white represents moral and sexual purity among the Zulu, it is against social custom for married women to wear white. Although breast coverage is not universal in rural areas, covering the breasts was one of the earliest changes encouraged by European missionaries.

Children: Urban children wear Western-style clothing such as shorts and t-shirts for boys and dresses for girls, while some rural children remain nude apart from strings of beads worn around the waist for decoration. The only other garments commonly worn before puberty are penile tip covers for young boys and a white linen cloth draped around the shoulder for young girls. As they mature, girls are allowed to wear red in order to signify their emerging sexuality.

Sports and Games

Soccer: Especially among the black population, soccer is the most popular sport in South Africa. In addition to supporting the national team, nicknamed Bafana Bafana (Zulu for "The boys, the boys"), local soccer fans sponsor a variety of clubs in the South African Premier League. South Africa is also home to Soccer City (pictured), a 94,700-seat stadium in Johannesburg that was used extensively when South Africa hosted the 2010 International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup.

Rugby: Introduced to the game by a British schoolmaster in the mid-19th century, South Africans rapidly embraced rugby. For the first half of the 20th century, the South African national team, dubbed the ***Springboks*** by the British press, dominated international competition and lost not a single test match. The 2009 film *Invictus*, starring Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon, chronicled the Springboks' success in the 1995 Rugby World Cup. This event was hosted in South Africa the year after apartheid ended and used by President Nelson Mandela to promote national unity. Rugby is most closely associated with white South Africans, particularly Afrikaners.

Cricket: Introduced by British soldiers in the late 18th century, cricket is a popular sport among English-speaking white South Africans, and the South African national team ranks among the top 5 teams.

Other Sports: Due to South Africa's mild climate, residents enjoy a variety of outdoor sports such as camping, hiking, surfing, and swimming. Field hockey, golf, lawn bowling, sailing, and squash are also popular among South Africans who can afford the necessary equipment and access fees.

Music and Dance

Traditional Music: For many indigenous South African ethnic groups, rhythm is the defining feature of music. Vocal accompaniment often takes the form of choral singing, which is popular among Bantu-speakers, or even yodeling, which is practiced by the Khoe-San. Common instruments include musical bows, rattles, wind instruments made from antelope horns, and the ***marimba***, a type of wooden xylophone. Many traditional songs and dances correspond to specific occasions and ceremonies, and it is often either forbidden or meaningless to perform them outside of the intended context.

Praise Poetry: Praise poetry, a traditional practice in which choral recitations are set to a melody, is popular among many Bantu-speaking ethnic groups. The Zulu are well known for their praise poetry, and Zulu royal courts traditionally retained an ***imbongi***, or full-time praise poet.

Popular Music: Popular music in South Africa often blends traditional folk songs with modern sounds. For example, many young South Africans enjoy ***Kwaito***, a style which blends traditional African music with rock, hip-hop, and reggae and employs lyrics which reflect the difficulties of life in the townships through political and social commentary. The late Brenda Fassie, known as the "Queen of Kwaito" for her piercing and enthusiastic vocal style, is widely credited with popularizing Kwaito in the post-apartheid era.

Dance

Like their accompanying music, traditional South African dances are performed in conjunction with many major events and are often intended for a specific purpose or occasion. In most performances, dancers seek to synchronize their bodies, hands, and feet with rhythmic singing and drumming. Modern South African dance takes many forms, ranging from Western dances to performance art. Many of South Africa's energetic dance forms have gained global popularity in recent years.

Theater

South African theater ranges from "black theater" to European-style performances. Black theater is often performed entirely by black actors and uses scripts written by both black and white playwrights. South Africa also has a rich history of socially dissident theater that includes playwrights such as Athol Fugard and actors such as Zakes Mda. European-style performances include dance, drama, and opera (Photo: South African actor Andre Huguenet as Hamlet). Since the end of apartheid, there has been a deliberate effort within the arts community to combine both African and European traditions by using rituals, audience participation, and an emphasis on dance to create a distinctly South African style.

Literature

South Africa's literary tradition has been heavily influenced by its history of social strife. Many black authors such as Es'kia Mphahlele became well-known for works documenting their experiences living under apartheid, while some white authors such as Nadine Gordimer and JM Coetzee earned their reputations with works decrying apartheid-era injustices.

South African fiction is published in all 11 official languages, with a particularly large amount written in Afrikaans. Some of South Africa's most popular literature is not written at all; "spoken word poetry," a form of recital which fuses literary and musical performance, has enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years. Famous spoken-word poets include Lesego Rampolokeng, Lebogang Mashile, and Jessica Mbangegi.

Arts and Crafts

San: The San are renowned worldwide for their superb rock art, which involves painting rocks which have been engraved using hammers. Rock art is most widespread in South Africa's inner plateau, where the San have produced an estimated 15,000 rock paintings. Because all San hunting expeditions traditionally were commemorated with rock paintings, most San rock art features hunting scenes.

Bantu-speakers: South Africa's Bantu-speaking ethnic groups are known for wood carvings, pottery, musical instruments, beadwork, textiles, and carved headrests. The details of these handicrafts vary across ethnic groups. For example, the Pedi are known for their realistic depiction of the human body in wood carvings, while the Tsonga are known for elongating their sculptural interpretations of the human body.

European: The most popular art forms produced by white South Africans are paintings and sculptures. Painting was used by early Dutch traders to record their pioneering experiences, and sculpture became popular when the religious sculptures of German-born carpenter Anton Anreith became known in the late 18th century.

Festivals

Although festivals vary, most ethnic groups celebrate several of them during the year. One uniquely South African celebration is the Cape Coon New Year Festival, which began early in the colonial era as a celebration of the slaves' holiday on New Year's Day. Today people of all races celebrate "the Coon" as a rejection of racism and a celebration of equality.

A similar spirit of racial harmony and national unity motivated the post-apartheid South African government to designate December 16 as the Day of Reconciliation. Under the apartheid government, December 16 had been known as the Day of the Vow and marked the victory of the Voortrekkers over the Zulu at the Battle of Blood River in 1838 (see *History and Myth*).

10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

Dining Customs

Although dining customs vary across ethnic groups, mealtime plays a central role in the lives of all South Africans. It is not considered appropriate for adults to eat alone or on the street, and black South African children are taught at a young age that sharing food, especially meat, is a basic component of human decency.

White South Africans typically eat in the European style, with a fork in the left hand and a knife in the right, while black South Africans use spoons or their fingers. The main meal for all South Africans is dinner, which is typically eaten after 6:00pm.

Traditional Diet

Traditionally, indigenous Khoe-San hunter-gatherers subsisted on berries, fruit, insects, shellfish, and wild game. Modern South Africans include far more carbohydrates in their diet. A typical meal for black South Africans may consist of cornmeal, meat stew, and vegetables, while a standard meal for white South Africans may include meat, rice, and potatoes.

Staples: ***Emasi***, a type of sour milk, was the main staple food for black South Africans until the mid-18th century, when maize (corn) and millet (pictured) surpassed it. Both grains are ground into a paste known as ***mealie***, which is then used to make simple foods like ***pap***, a porridge accented with vegetables, herbs, sauces, or meat; and complex dishes like ***umngqusho***, which is made with dried corn kernels, butter, potatoes, onions, chilies, and lemons.

Meat: Most meat comes from livestock such as chickens, goats, lambs, and pigs. Although beef is consumed regularly in urban contexts, it is eaten only on special occasions in rural

areas due to the immense practical and symbolic importance of cattle (see *Economics and Resources*).

White South Africans are known for ***boerewors***, a type of farmer's sausage, and ***biltong***, a spiced and marinated jerky. Cape Malays, the descendants of slaves brought from the Dutch East Indies during the colonial era (see *Political and Social Relations*), have become famous for ***bobotie***, a minced meat pie made with beef or lamb; ***sosaties***, a type of marinated kebab; and ***bredie***, a meat and vegetable stew.

Fish: Although not as popular as meat, fish is an important part of South African cuisine. Cape Malays are well known for their skill at preserving fish through spicing and pickling and particularly for their creatively spiced versions of grilled, fried, baked, and curried seafood. Among indigenous South Africans, the coastal Tsonga also eat preparations of dried fish.

Braai

One tradition shared by South Africans of all ethnic groups is the ***braai***, a type of cookout which can occur in nearly any setting, from the beach to the countryside to an urban backyard. At a typical braai, men gather around the grill to talk and drink beer as they roast meats such as boerewors, sosaties, steak, chicken, chops, and ribs. Women also form a group and chat as they prepare salads and side dishes. This element of socializing is essential to the character of braais and often ensures that they last for hours.

Beverages

Beer: In addition to using ***mealie*** as a foodstuff, black South Africans also use it to brew a variety of low-alcohol beers, the best known of which is the corn-based ***umqombothi***. Because mealie beers are high in calories and B vitamins, they are considered less a drink than a nutritious and nourishing food.

South Africans also enjoy non-mealie beers. The Tswana brew beer from honey, and European-style lager is available across

South Africa. Of note, SAB Miller, the world's second-largest brewer, was founded in Johannesburg in 1895.

Wine: Although the first South African wine was produced in 1659, just 7 years after the arrival of Dutch traders, it was not until the end of apartheid that improved technology and stricter regulations allowed South African wines to earn a reputation for quality and value. South Africa's wine-producing regions are primarily in the mountainous Western Cape, which enjoys a gentle Mediterranean climate.

Health

Traditional Medicine: An estimated 72% of black South Africans seek medical care from traditional practitioners. In 2007 there were an estimated 190,000 such practitioners, including herbalists (***inyanga***), diviners (***sangomas***) (see *Religion and Spirituality*), surgeons (***iingcibi***), and birth attendants (***ababelethisi*** or ***abazalisi***).

Although the details vary across ethnic groups, illness traditionally is believed to be caused by disharmony between an individual and ancestral spirits. Harmony between the two can be restored by taking ***muti*** (traditional medicine) derived from animals, plants, or other objects. Generally, diviners determine the spiritual cause of an illness, while herbalists dispense the appropriate ***muti***.

Many black South Africans consult both traditional practitioners and Western-style doctors, although attempts to integrate the two into a unified system have been hampered by the uncertain effectiveness and insufficient regulation of traditional medicine.

Modern Healthcare System: South Africa's healthcare system is disproportionate: 4.1% of GDP is spent on private healthcare for 16.2% of the population, while about the same amount goes to public healthcare for the other 83.8% of the population. The majority of South Africa's 36,000 medical professionals work in the private sector, and South Africa's public healthcare system,

which includes more than 4,000 public healthcare facilities, has only 7% of the doctors it requires. In addition, there are severe urban/rural disparities in the distribution of health care workers and resources across the country.

Health Challenges

HIV/AIDS: South Africa's 17.9% HIV rate for adults aged 15-49 is the 4th-highest in the world and more than 23 times the global average. Although only 0.7% of the world's population resides in South Africa, 17% of the world's HIV-positive people live there. In addition to slashing the country's life expectancy from a peak of 61.5 years in 1992 to 51.6 years in 2009, HIV has also become a primary contributor to its maternal, peri-natal (immediately before and after birth), and neo-natal (the 4 weeks following birth) mortality.

Although still serious, HIV prevalence appears to have stabilized in recent years, aided by significantly reduced rates of mother-to-child HIV transmission and much higher rates of safe-sex practices. South Africa also has the world's largest program for distributing anti-retroviral medications used to treat HIV/AIDS.

Tuberculosis: Tuberculosis (TB) was the most common opportunistic infection in HIV-positive South Africans in 2010, with 73% of new TB cases occurring in people with HIV. Lately, drug-resistant forms of TB have grown more common due to late detection or poorly managed treatment regimens.

Other: Largely due to alcohol abuse, South Africa has notably high injury and fatality rates associated with traffic collisions and interpersonal violence, especially against women and children (see *Sex and Gender*). In addition, smoking, alcohol abuse, lack of exercise, and poor nutrition are key contributors to high rates of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, hypertension, and respiratory diseases.

11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

Overview

Although South Africa has the largest and most advanced economy on the continent, it is considered an emerging market by global standards. Impacted significantly by the global economic downturn, South Africa suffered its first recession since the apartheid era in 2009; however, GDP grew 2.8% the following year due partly to economic activity associated with hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*).

South Africa nevertheless faces huge economic challenges. Although its unemployment rate has declined from a peak of 31% in 2003 to a current rate of 25.7%, this number does not account for 2.2 million South Africans who are too discouraged to seek employment. Unemployment is also racially skewed: 30% of blacks are unemployed compared with just 6% of whites. Finally, although South Africa has a relatively high per capita GDP of $10,700, it has one of the world's least equitable income distributions: the wealthiest 10% of citizens claim over half of annual income while the poorest 40% claim just 4%.

Services

The services sector consists of community and social services; finance and business services; domestic work; transportation; trade; and tourism. The services sector is the largest part of the South African economy, accounting for 66.7% of GDP in 2010. The services sector also accounts for 71.4% of South African jobs and is expected to provide most employment opportunities in coming years.

Tourism: Tourism has thrived in South Africa since the end of apartheid, with international arrivals increasing from 3.9 million in 1994 to 8.1 million in 2010. The Department of Tourism has recently tried to attract more business travelers because they spend 3 times more on average than leisure travelers.

Industry

Industry includes construction, manufacturing, mining, and utilities. This sector contributed 30.8% of GDP in 2010 and currently accounts for 24% of South African jobs. Industry is geographically concentrated in South Africa, with over 75% of industrial employment and output located in Gauteng Province, Western Cape Province, Durban, or Port Elizabeth.

Manufacturing: South Africa's primary manufactured products are chemicals, fertilizer, foodstuffs, iron and steel, machinery, metalwork, motor vehicles and parts, and textiles.

Mining: Although the mining sub-sector was the main catalyst for South Africa's industrialization (see *History and Myth*), its share of GDP has declined over the years, from 27.1% in 1911 to 7.9% in 2006. Nevertheless, South Africa remains the world's largest producer of gold, platinum, and chromium, and among the world's largest producers of coal, iron ore, and uranium.

Although the original Witwatersrand gold mines are now mostly depleted, the broader Witwatersrand basin still accounts for an estimated 98% of South Africa's gold production. South Africa also has significant reserves of antimony (largely used as an alloying material for lead and tin), copper, manganese, nickel, phosphates, tin, rare earth metals, and vanadium (primarily used as an additive to improve steel).

Agriculture

The agriculture sector includes animal herding, farming, forestry, and fishing. The smallest of South Africa's economic sectors, agriculture contributed only 2.5% of GDP in 2010 and currently accounts for only 4.6% of South African jobs. The country's mild and varied climate enables agricultural diversification, although drought and infrequent rainfall limit production.

While it must import some meat and grain, South Africa is basically self-sufficient in food crops and is a net exporter of agricultural products. Apart from corn, a staple for much of the population, South Africa's major agricultural products include beef, dairy, poultry, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables, and wool.

Money

The currency of South Africa is the Rand (R), which is subdivided into 100 Cents (c). The Rand is issued in 5 banknotes (R 10, 20, 50, 100, 200) and 7 coins (5c, 10, 20, 50, R 1, 2, 5). Although the exchange rate fluctuates, recently $1 has been worth between R 7 and R 8. The values of the currencies of Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia are fixed to the value of the Rand. In addition, the Rand has been legal tender in all three countries since the creation of the Common Monetary Area in 1974, and it is used alongside the US dollar as an unofficial national currency in Zimbabwe.

Cash: South Africa is probably the easiest country in Africa to access and spend money. ATMs are available in most cities, and credit cards are widely accepted. Because ATM scams are common even in affluent areas, foreign nationals should exercise caution by safeguarding their PINs and monitoring their accounts for fraud.

Foreign Trade

South Africa's imports totaled $81.9 billion in 2010 and consist primarily of chemicals, machinery, petroleum products, scientific instruments, textiles, and transportation equipment. Key import suppliers include China (17.2%), Germany (11.2%), the US (7.4%), Saudi Arabia (4.9%), and Japan (4.7%). Totaling $85.8 billion in 2010, South Africa's major exports include agricultural products, minerals, and motor vehicles and parts sold to China (10.3%), the US (9.2%), Japan (7.6%), Germany (7%), the UK (5.5%), and Switzerland (4.7%).

Although foreign investment in South Africa nearly halted entirely in the 1980s and 1990s due to international sanctions and high levels of violence, it began to accelerate in the early years of the new millennium. With a sound banking and transit

infrastructure, modern South Africa has become an attractive destination for foreign investors hoping to expand into Africa. However, high crime rates and restrictive labor laws continue to deter some investors.

Foreign Aid

South Africa received little official development assistance (ODA) prior to 1994, although in recent years it has become a top recipient in sub-Saharan Africa, receiving a total of $1.3 billion (about 0.5% of GDP) in 2009. Its largest donors included the EU, the US, Germany, and France; which jointly accounted for over 75% of that total.

Although South Africa needs some ODA, it is less dependent than many other recipients due to its reliable institutions, well-developed infrastructure, vast mineral reserves, and diverse economy. Consequently, South Africa tends to target its ODA towards specific problems. For example, 43% of South Africa's total ODA was spent on Population and Reproductive Health in 2009.

Standards of Wealth

Having a wide variety of uses in traditionally rural South African society, cattle have long been considered a symbol of wealth and status. Consequently, black South Africans traditionally prefer not to slaughter, sell, or trade their cattle unless absolutely necessary. Since men are expected to have surplus cattle to pay the bridewealth for multiple wives (see *Family and Kinship*), polygyny has also been considered as a traditional indicator of wealth and status.

Modern symbols of wealth and status emerged with the industrialization of South Africa's economy and the migration of job-seekers from rural areas to urban centers. These new symbols of urban wealth include Western education, a lucrative occupation, and monetary wealth.

12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Overview

South Africa is the most technologically advanced country in Africa and continues to improve due to large government investments in fields such as astronomy, biotechnology, information and communication technology (ICT), mining, water resources management, and nanotechnology, the study of manipulating atomic and molecular matter. In 2009 the South African government spent more than R 21 billion ($3 billion) on research and development.

Transportation

Although travel within South Africa could be difficult prior to 2010, the government undertook a huge expansion of the transportation infrastructure in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*). Recently, the Department of Transportation developed a plan known as "Natmap" to further advance the transportation infrastructure.

Taxis: Most common in urban areas, private minibus taxis account for 65% of passenger trips in cities. Minibus taxis are also used in rural areas and for travel between cities.

Buses: As part of its preparations for the World Cup, the South African government introduced the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System, also known as Rea Vaya, in order to provide express service between outlying suburbs and city centers through the use of high-capacity buses.

Roadways: In 2010 South Africa had about 43,500 miles of paved roads, including almost 2,000 miles of toll roads. Although much of the road system was in disrepair at the start of the new millennium, post-apartheid governments have made infrastructure improvement a priority. South African drivers have a reputation for violating traffic laws which is reflected in high accident rates: South Africa had 33.2 deaths per 100,000 vehicles in 2008, nearly triple the US rate.

Railways: Freight Rail, a subsidiary of state-owned company Transnet, operates the main South African rail network, which includes about 12,500 miles of rail or about 80% of all rail in Africa. Of note, the Durban to Gauteng line carries more freight than any other rail line in the southern hemisphere.

Transnet also operates Metro Rail, a subsidiary which serves 1.7 million passengers daily on its commuter rail services in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Johannesburg. In addition, plans are currently in the works to construct high-speed rail links connecting Johannesburg with Cape Town, Durban, Musina, and Pretoria.

Ports: South Africa has no commercially navigable inland waterways, although its major international transshipment ports at Cape Town, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay, and Saldanha Bay handle over 4 million tons of freight per year. About 98% of South African exports depart through these ports.

Airways: Although South Africa has 147 airports with paved runways, most international traffic goes through Cape Town, Durban, and O.R. Tambo International in Johannesburg. In addition to South African Airways, the national airline and largest airline in Africa, over 50 major global airlines service South African airports.

Energy

Despite having less than 1/20th of Africa's total landmass, South Africa generates almost 2/3 of the continent's electricity. Eskom, a state-owned utility company, generates about 95% of that electricity at its 24 power stations. Due to South Africa's Mass Electrification Program established in 1991, the number of households with electricity more than doubled from 4.5 million in 1994 to 9.4 million in 2010.

As the world's 5th largest coal producer, South Africa gets most of its electricity from coal-fired plants, with only 6% coming from the state-owned Koeberg nuclear plant. About 60% of South Africa's oil and gas is imported from Africa and the Middle East.

Media

The South African constitution guarantees free speech and free press, and diversity in the media has improved greatly since the end of apartheid. The national news agency is the South African Press Association, while the national broadcaster is the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Radio: The SABC operates a national network of 18 radio stations, with 11 stations broadcasting in each of South Africa's official languages, along with 4 community stations and 3 commercial stations. In addition, there are more than 100 community-based stations which extend coverage into rural areas.

Television: The SABC runs 3 broadcast stations and 1 pay station, and private firms offer paid satellite service. Broadcasts vary by language, covering all official languages. Some of the most popular television shows include locally produced soap operas and a national talent show similar to American Idol.

Print Media: Most of South Africa's 24 daily newspapers are produced by 1 publishing house. There are also 11 weekly newspapers and over 200 free community newspapers.

Telecommunications

Telephones: South Africa's landline system is the most advanced in Africa, although public telephones are rare. South Africa had about 4 million fixed telephone lines and over 50 million mobile subscriptions in 2010 or about one mobile subscription per person. Mobile service extends into all but the most remote areas of South Africa.

Internet: Between 1998 and 2010 the share of South Africans using the internet surged from 2.9% to 12.3%. About 750,000 people or 12.2% of internet users had broadband access in 2010. Ranking 98th for download speeds and 90th for upload speeds, South Africa's internet performance is middling in international terms. Internet cafés are widely available and typically charge a flat rate-per-hour.

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