

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE OF MBEKI

The Polokwane Counter-Revolution of 18 December 2007
and Afrikaners

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“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”

(MARX, 1852, ch. I)

ABSTRACT

*This article takes Thabo MBEKI's warning of a real and present counter-revolution as a serious national-security threat. It argues that he **misunderstands, misrepresents and underestimates** it. The critique seeks a more accurate diagnosis.*

*Three errors shape the critique: **excessive reduction, false equivalence and semantic conflation**. False equivalence lies in MBEKI's comparison of the United States and South Africa as if analogous redress answered equivalent histories. Both are settler-colonial societies shaped by comparable racial and religious politics, but their outcomes diverged: settler rule prevailed in the United States, where Black descendants of enslaved Africans remain a minority incorporated through affirmative action into an established White-dominated system; national liberation defeated settler rule in South Africa, where the Black African majority now holds political power. South Africa radically redesigned its political institutions after liberation but did not comparably rebuild its economy. The paper argues that White business elites blocked structural transformation by design, promoting BEE as reformative, American-style inclusion and incorporating a small Black elite into inherited mining and commodity structures. This reproduced the inherited order and left a misaligned political-economy between a Black-led polity and white-led economy, with severe social costs and eroding ANC support. MBEKI rightly exposes TRUMP's hypocrisy and rejects the false Afrikaner-genocide claim. Yet his analogy obscures economic continuity and treats criticism of BEE as a presumed right-wing threat.*

***The threat is complex and multi-dimensional**, and MBEKI's ethnic reduction obscures its dimensions and underestimates its danger.*

*The paper reads MBEKI's **political purpose** as rescuing the ANC's last principal source of power, the People, through **scapegoating**. This is an analytical interpretation, not a claim to private knowledge. **The FREGE method** that we apply treats a single sentence as a structure of rich logical complexity. Function-argument analysis separates actors, actions, targets and objectives for evidential assessment. Applying FREGE's logical method reveals the complex and multi-dimensional character of the threat. It yields a richer understanding, one that supports more effective interventions to counter and manage both the threat and its escalating risk.*

1. Introduction: purpose and political stakes

In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis BONAPARTE, MARX examined how political actors make history under inherited conditions (MARX, 1852, ch. I). This essay applies that insight to Thabo MBEKI's warning about counter-revolution and Afrikaners. It also examines the decisive Polokwane vote of 18 December 2007, when MBEKI lost the ANC presidency to Jacob ZUMA by 1,505 votes to 2,329 (WOLMARANS, BURBIDGE and SAPA-AFP, 2007).

MARX's title was itself a comparison. The original Eighteenth Brumaire, 9 November 1799, brought Napoleon BONAPARTE to power; the pamphlet dissected the coup of 2 December 1851 by his nephew. The comparison was not decorative. MARX used it to ask which classes, institutions and inherited traditions had made the repetition possible, and why the second event resembled the first in form while differing from it in substance. The same discipline is applied here to MBEKI's own comparisons: between the United States and South Africa, between the apartheid security establishment and contemporary Afrikaner organisations, and between Polokwane and a counter-revolutionary seizure.

This critique takes the warning of counter-revolution seriously. It challenges the excessive explanatory weight placed on a narrow agent identified as mainly Afrikaner former security operatives. MBEKI also brings contemporary Afrikaner civic formations into that account. The two categories must be distinguished, and their relationship established. Concentrating blame on these formations redirects attention from the ANC's failure to consolidate power and transform the misaligned political economy. The scapegoating thesis concerns this explanatory and mobilising displacement. It does not require denying that particular operatives or organisations can engage in hostile activity.

White-led mineral-energy and commodity capital has played a longer and more consequential role in creating the conditions for revolutionary failure. That role dates back at least to 1985. It outweighs the role of the minority of

White Afrikaner organisations now aligning with White nationalists amid Western decline.

These dynamics present two connected national-security threats. First, domestic groups may become entangled in geopolitical networks and align with white nationalists in the Western world. They may mobilise narratives of “White, Male grievances” rooted in the political formations from which racist colonial projects emerged. Second, orthodox economic policies, BEE, and South Africa's continued insertion into the declining Western-American economic sphere may reproduce and entrench the colonial-apartheid structure of national production.

The most serious structural threat is the misalignment between a transformed, Black-led polity and an outdated, white-led, increasingly oligarchic production structure. Addressing it requires a policy paradigm shift: from orthodox free-trade economics to heterodox, production-centred developmentalism. As we have warned for more than 20 years, South Africa cannot create national wealth with such a narrow, undiversified and outdated economic “team.”

SCHUMPETER placed creative destruction at the centre of capitalist development:

“This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism.” (SCHUMPETER, 1942, p. 83) In his account, innovation drives the creation of new goods, technologies, markets and forms of organisation. These displace established production. The shift towards AI, automation and humanoid robotics makes productive renewal urgent. South Africa is already unable to compete. Low growth, high unemployment and severe inequality expose the weakness of its production structure. Production-centred developmentalism must build innovation capacity, diversify production and capture more value at home.

The political purpose attributed to MBEKI here is an analytical interpretation of his intervention. It is not a claim to direct knowledge of his private intentions. The ANC historically drew power from four sources: the People;

the State; the ANC organisation; and regional and international prestige. The argument is that their erosion leaves popular allegiance as the last source the party can try to recover through mobilisation. “Last” names the strategic diagnosis advanced here; it does not mean that the other sources have literally disappeared (ZAAIMAN, 2026a).

Scapegoating links that diagnosis to political action. A visible enemy provides a common object of blame, redirects frustration away from governing responsibility, and offers a threatened constituency a reason to regroup. In this reading, MBEKI’s warning is both an account of danger and an attempt to rescue the ANC’s relationship with the People. The constructive purpose of this paper differs. It takes the warning seriously and asks whether its explanation can support an adequate national-security response (GIRARD, 1986; GLAESER, 2005).

2. Method: FREGE and the decomposition of political claims

MBEKI’s counter-revolution argument can be examined through one sentence:

“These facts demonstrate that the Counter Revolution is succeeding in terms of its goal to defeat and destroy the ANC!”

(MBEKI, 2026, p. 86)

The immediate context concerns the ANC’s declining electoral support and its consequent inability to govern alone. The preceding discussion alleges an organised intervention by former apartheid-security elements, including an intervention at Polokwane in 2007 (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 82-86). The quoted sentence nevertheless compresses several distinct propositions into one conclusion. It asserts that an identifiable collective actor exists; that this actor possesses a common intention; that its interventions caused the developments described; and that weakening the ANC constitutes progress towards counter-revolution.

In §9 of *Begriffsschrift*, FREGE explains how an expression can be decomposed by treating selected components as replaceable while holding the remainder fixed (FREGE, 1972 [1879], pp. 126-127). Applied to MBEKI's sentence, the procedure opens different positions for analysis. Who is succeeding? Through which actions? Against which object? Towards which objective? The following application extends FREGE's method into political argument analysis. It does not attribute a theory of counter-revolution to FREGE.

FREGE's innovation was to expose logical structure that ordinary grammar could conceal. An apparently simple sentence can contain several predicates, relations and dependencies. His formal treatment of quantification made it possible to distinguish who or what a claim ranges over and how its components relate (FREGE, 1972 [1879]). A political concept can likewise compress different uses and objects into one expression. The procedure adopted here decomposes those expressions before drawing conclusions about their historical relationships.

RUSSELL's paradox showed that FREGE's Basic Law V makes his arithmetic foundations inconsistent. The collection R of all sets that are not members of themselves is a member of itself if and only if it is not. FREGE acknowledged the problem in the appendix to *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, Vol. II (FREGE, 1903, pp. 253–265). It undermined that axiomatic form of logicism, but not his advances in function-argument analysis and quantification. The display uses substitution, assertion and a conditional, not quantification; politically, it tests distinctions and inferences rather than deriving historical facts from symbols.

Three analytical errors organise the critique. Excessive reduction assigns a complex configuration of class power, institutional failure and external leverage to a narrow ethnic agent. False equivalence transfers conclusions between different historical cases or political outcomes without establishing the relevant similarity. Semantic conflation allows terms such as ANC, liberation, democracy, transformation and hegemony to stand for one another. These errors interact, but each requires a different correction.

Let C designate the collective actor MBEKI calls “the Counter Revolution”; A the ANC; D the constitutional democratic order; and H the ANC’s ideological hegemony. Let Φ express “is succeeding in its goal to defeat and destroy”. FREGE’s function-argument notation permits the following distinct contents (FREGE, 1972 [1879], §§9-10):

$$\Phi(C, A) \quad \Phi(C, D) \quad \Phi(C, H)$$

Holding the actor fixed while replacing the target changes the proposition. Success against the ANC does not by itself establish success against democracy or even the destruction of ANC hegemony. Conversely, holding the ANC fixed and replacing C tests rival attributions: a covert organisation, an internal faction, electoral opposition or a coalition of economic interests. These are hypotheses requiring their own evidence. They are not interchangeable causes.

FREGE also distinguishes presenting a content from asserting its truth. His horizontal content stroke and vertical judgement stroke are reproduced below. The conditional places the consequent above and the antecedent below. Here F denotes the reported developments concerning ANC decline. These letters are explanatory designations, not universally quantified variables (FREGE, 1972 [1879], §§2, 5 and 10).

—	$\Phi(C, A)$	Content considered
—	$\Phi(C, A)$	Content asserted
	$\Phi(C, A)$ F	If F, then $\Phi(C, A)$

The conditional supplies a proposed bridge: if F, then $\Phi(C, A)$. F alone does not establish that conclusion. Independent evidence must connect the observed decline to the actor, actions and intention attributed to it. A further bridge is needed to infer reversal of the democratic settlement from

weakening the ANC. The display reconstructs an inference to be justified; it does not prove a historical explanation. The function Φ leaves success and intention internally unanalyzed.

Electoral decline can coexist with organised hostile intervention. It can also reflect corruption, deficient services, internal conflict and changing political allegiance. These mechanisms may interact. An account of national security must distinguish outcome evidence from mechanism evidence. The method therefore asks: who acts; against what target; with what objective; through which mechanisms; and on what evidence?

The most consequential substitution concerns the object of “defeat and destroy”. Replacing “the ANC” with “the democratic constitutional order”, “the National Democratic Revolution”, “the inherited economic structure” or “the ANC’s ideological leadership” produces different propositions. The ANC is an organisation. Democracy is an institutional and normative order. The National Democratic Revolution is a political programme. Hegemony concerns leadership, consent and the organisation of social meaning. Their historical connections do not make them interchangeable. FREGE’s later distinction between sense and reference supplies a second methodological test. Reference concerns what an expression designates; sense concerns its mode of presentation (FREGE, 1948 [1892]). In the application developed here, “apartheid” refers to the historical regime. That regime can be presented through different interpretive frameworks. The analysis extends FREGE’s distinction into political interpretation; it does not equate sense with any individual’s passing opinion.

For MBEKI, as someone subjected to apartheid, the regime signifies racial domination, exclusion and oppression. Particular Afrikaner nationalist formations presented the same regime as self-determination, separate development, communal survival and the institutional expression of a religious-national worldview. These modes of presentation organised opposing understandings of the same historical regime. Recognising them neither endorses its justification nor assigns that nationalist interpretation to all Afrikaners. The distinction helps explain allegiance and consent, rather

than adjudicating oppression as a matter of taste (FREGE, 1948 [1892]; TAMARKIN, 2020).

A second distinction concerns scope. When “apartheid” denotes the entire ideological worldview rather than the regime, the object of analysis changes. A worldview and its institutional expression are related but not identical. The abolition of the regime therefore does not entail the disappearance of the framework that helped legitimate it. Section 9 investigates that survival and adaptation. Equating regime abolition with ideological disappearance would combine false equivalence with semantic conflation. Likewise, identifying the ANC as a bearer of liberation does not make the organisation identical to liberation’s substantive achievements.

The historical argument that follows applies this discipline. It first defines the threatened achievements and systems. It then examines economic continuity, comparative inference, ideological adaptation and international convergence. Logical decomposition identifies what must be established; it does not replace empirical inquiry.

3. Defining the threat and its targets

A counter-revolutionary project is defined by its historical direction. It seeks to reverse substantive achievements of a revolution, obstruct their consolidation or restore relations of domination that the revolution displaced. The relevant question is therefore: which achievement is being reversed? Equal citizenship, democratic sovereignty, redistribution and the liberation movement’s control of government are different objects. The loss of the last does not, by itself, establish the reversal of the others. A counter-revolutionary objective can nevertheless be pursued gradually, through lawful institutions, rather than through an overt attempt to reinstate the previous regime.

A counter-systemic project is defined by the organising principles it challenges. The system must be specified before the category can explain anything. A movement may challenge the constitutional order while defending capitalist ownership. Another may defend constitutional

democracy while seeking to transform inherited racial and economic hierarchies. A third may contest the governing party while remaining committed to both the Constitution and the existing distribution of economic power. Opposition to an incumbent government is therefore insufficient to establish counter-systemic intent. A project can be disruptive in one sphere and preservative in another.

A counter-hegemonic project is defined by its relationship to a dominant formation's leadership and capacity to secure consent. It contests authoritative interpretations of history, legitimate membership, justice, social obligation and national purpose. Following GRAMSCI's account as developed by COX, this struggle takes place through civil society as well as the state (COX, 1983). Schools, universities, churches, media, professional networks and cultural organisations help establish what people regard as normal and defensible. Counter-hegemony is consequently a struggle over the production of common sense and the institutions that reproduce it.

The term is relational. Counter-hegemony against ANC leadership may simultaneously defend the hegemony of inherited property relations or ethnic privilege. It is not inherently progressive. Conversely, a challenge to racial domination may be counter-hegemonic in an emancipatory sense. The three categories answer different questions: what historical achievement is being reversed; what system is being challenged; and whose leadership over social meaning is being contested. A project may connect all three. Its connections must be demonstrated, not compressed into a single designation.

MBEKI's own definition is political before it is ethnic. He first describes the counter-revolution as those within the National Party and the apartheid state institutions who continued to regard the ANC and its allies as a strategic enemy, and who constituted themselves into an organised group that included elements of the former SADF's Defence Intelligence Division (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 83, 115). Only elsewhere does he characterise that group as "mainly Afrikaner" and the counter-revolution as "Afrikaner-led"

(MBEKI, 2026, pp. 44, 101, 118). The reduction this essay critiques lies in that move.

Each concept is defined by its target. To establish who is responsible, and what the cause is, one must first establish what is being attacked. MBEKI's paper is explicit about three targets. The first is the ANC's leadership, which the counter-revolution sought to capture at Polokwane, drawing on agents infiltrated into the ANC by the apartheid intelligence services (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 84, 116). The second is the democratic state, which it sought to reduce to what MBEKI, borrowing from ENDRES, calls the "emasculated State" (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 100-101). The third is the ANC's popular base: the counter-revolution, he writes, set out to make the ANC fail as a governing party and so lose the trust and support of the population (MBEKI, 2026, p. 116). The economic relationship has a different direction: the inherited socio-economic construct is the order to be preserved, while its substantive transformation is to be obstructed (MBEKI, 2026, p. 101).

This corrects the direction of the relation. Capital can defend the inherited economic system while opposing liberation's programme of reconstruction. Its project is preservative towards that system and counter-revolutionary towards the transformation of it. The target cannot be inferred simply from an actor's opposition to the ANC (MBEKI, 2026, p. 101; STRANGE, 1988).

The three categories must consequently remain relational. Specific civic formations can contest ANC hegemony without seeking to abolish constitutional democracy. Capital can defend economic continuity without restoring apartheid law. Extra-constitutional action is one possible mechanism of counter-revolution, not a necessary condition for every obstruction of revolutionary transformation. Evidence must identify the objective and mechanism in each case.

4. Political-economy misalignment as a national-security threat

The primary threat to South Africa's national security does not come from a minority of Afrikaner organisations, nor from former operatives of the

apartheid security establishment. It comes from a structural misalignment at the core of the post-1994 settlement, and its consequences are now measurable. In episode 43 of the African Renaissance Podcast, published on 7 September 2026, the former Statistician-General Pali LEHOHLA discussed democracy, education and the economy with Mbuyiseni NDLOZI, drawing on data and scenario planning to assess where the country's present trajectory leads by 2050 (LEHOHLA, 2026b). In print, he has reduced the finding of his "LEHOHLA Ledger" to a single sentence:

"According to LEHOHLA Ledger democracy has collapsed in 66 % of the South African population."

(LEHOHLA, 2026a, n.p.)

LEHOHLA does not locate the cause of that collapse in an ethnic minority. He describes the beneficiaries of the present order as "black surrogate capitalists with their white masters" and blames economic policy for the decline (LEHOHLA, quoted in MOLOTO, 2026, n.p.).

LEHOHLA's warning reaches further than the ANC's electoral decline. The ANC's share of the vote fell from 65.90 per cent in 2009 to 40.18 per cent in 2024 (SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT NEWS AGENCY, 2009; IEC, 2024), and it is tempting to read that fall as a transfer of loyalty between parties. His figure points to something deeper. The people who appear electorally to be slipping away from the ANC are in fact deeply frustrated, not only with the ANC but with the fetish of democracy itself: a democracy that has delivered procedure without material change. CABRAL warned that the people are not fighting for ideas, "for the things in anyone's head", but to win material benefits, to live better and to secure their children's future (CABRAL, 1974, pp. 70-72). DENG's injunction to "seek truth from facts" (DENG, 1978, n.p.) points the same way: policy must answer to material evidence, not to ideological sandcastles. The people must therefore be led towards developmentalism, not towards populism or anarchy.

Since 1994 the polity has been transformed. A Black majority leads the democratic state, the legislature and the executive under a Constitution that embodies the national consensus and the right to national self-

determination. The economy has not been transformed. Its ownership and production structure remains white-led, concentrated in the mineral-energy and commodity sectors, and organised around the extraction and export of raw materials that defined colonial and apartheid accumulation (FINE and RUSTOMJEE, 1996). It has maintained and reproduced the colonialapartheid economic structure under democratic rule. A Black-led polity governs above a white-led economy whose structure it did not design and does not control.

For more than 20 years we have warned that this misalignment is unsustainable: either the polity will give or the economy will give. A democratic order cannot indefinitely legitimate an economic structure that excludes most of its citizens from ownership, production and secure work. Where the economy does not change, the pressure moves to the polity. That is the deepest threat to the democratic order, because the Constitution is the embodiment of the national consensus reached in the transition. A Constitution that the majority experiences as the guardian of an unchanged economy loses the consent on which it rests.

LEHOHLA's diagnosis identifies the first symptom as a widespread loss of faith in democracy. The reported 66 per cent is his Ledger claim; without its underlying measurement design it should not be equated automatically with a nationally representative survey finding. We have argued before that the ANC's preoccupation with "democracy" at the expense of development, particularly over the last 15 years, was misplaced. It functioned as a liberal and old-order capital distraction from radical structural change, namely the construction of a new national innovation and productive structure of the kind that heterodox developmental economics proposes (CHANG, 2002). The emphasis on democratic procedure allowed the question of who owns and produces national wealth to be deferred. Two policy choices then deepened the misalignment:

- Jobs instead of development. Policy has pursued employment inside the existing production structure rather than the creation of a new one.

Employment is necessary, but job creation within an unchanged structure cannot substitute for productive diversification and development.

- BEE as inclusion. Black economic empowerment has served as a vehicle for inclusion into the inherited production structure. In that sense it has worked as reactionary co-optation: a few Black families and elites acquire stakes in the old order and, with them, an interest in defending it (DU TOIT, 2022).

The consequence could be predicted, and was predicted: a loss of faith in “democracy” that has the potential to turn into a revolt against it. Such a revolt need not restore the old order. It may instead dismantle the colonial-apartheid economic structure destructively, through a combination of popular uprisings and government panic. Zimbabwe is the regional precedent. From 2000, land occupations, in which war veterans were prominent, were followed by the government’s Fast Track Land Reform Programme, which overturned a century-old pattern of large-scale commercial farming (SCOONES et al., 2010). The field evidence on the new resettlements is more complex than the narrative of total failure (SCOONES et al., 2010). The dismantling, however, was driven by mobilisation and panic rather than by a developmental strategy, and it coincided with an economic collapse that ended in a hyperinflation peaking in November 2008 (HANKE and KWOK, 2009). In that scenario, “democracy” itself becomes the vehicle of a debilitating postcolonial decline.

The alternative is alignment: to align the economy with the democratic polity, not to align an “undemocratic” economy with an undemocratic polity. That requires a government strategy to develop a new, Black-led national productive and innovation structure that creates national rather than corporate wealth. This is the task of a developmental state, and it is the task that was not undertaken (EVANS, 1995; EDIGHEJI, 2010).

The task is now complicated by the rapid acceleration of AI and humanoid robotic manufacturing, which may radically change the organisation of labour and the distribution of productive gains. Technological change is already under way, and leading figures in the AI industry are themselves

warning of its scale. Anthropic's chief executive, Dario AMODEI, told Axios in May 2025 that AI could eliminate half of all entry-level white-collar jobs and raise unemployment to between 10 and 20 per cent within one to five years (VANDEHEI and ALLEN, 2025). A strategy built around "jobs" in the old structure is therefore doubly obsolete. This socio-economic revolution arrives in a highly contested geopolitical context, in which a declining West is generating wars and crises as a destructive escape from its own decomposition.

MBEKI is right to warn against counter-revolution. He does not articulate clearly enough, however, that the defence of the inherited economic structure, together with the co-optation of a few Black families and elites into it, is the cancer that threatens the entire system. His own paper names the counter-revolution's destination as the preservation of the settler colonial and apartheid socio-economic construct (MBEKI, 2026, p. 101). The question it should then have asked is this: why would a counter-revolution need to restore the apartheid polity, when the apartheid economy still exists structurally and is now defended by a few Black elites as well?

The weakened state is the result of a developmental state not having been built. It is here that the American comparison falls apart and exposes the flaw in its assumptions:

- The United States. A white settler majority used affirmative action to incorporate the descendants of enslaved Africans into an "American" system that was already aligned politically and economically: a white majority in a white-led economy, with Black workers.
- South Africa. The Black majority leads the democratic polity, while white-led capital has used BEE, the country's form of affirmative action, to co-opt a minority of Black South Africans: enough to stabilise a misaligned system.

The comparison is examined in Sections 6 to 8. Its political implication is drawn here. Unless South Africa makes and builds a developmental state that produces a new, Black-led, productive and innovative national economic structure, society will resort to scapegoating: if not "foreigners",

then “democracy”; if not “democracy”, then “Afrikaners”, or whichever group comes next (GIRARD, 1986; GLAESER, 2005).

5. Factual errors and the limits of their explanatory significance

MBEKI’s paper, *The United States of America and the Future of the Afrikaners in South Africa*, is a 123-page political intervention rather than an academic study. Its title page is dated 31 August 2026, although the circulated file is dated 27 September 2026. It carries no bibliography or footnotes, so many figures and quotations cannot be traced to exact publications or pages. Read against its own text and the primary record, the paper contains the following errors (ZAAIMAN, 2026d):

- **Mortality statistics.** MBEKI combines Statistics South Africa death data for 2000, 2005, 2015 and 2021, describes 527,387 as “the average murder figure”, and then treats the shares of young people dying from “non-natural causes” as if they were murders (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 27-28). The 527,387 figure refers to deaths from all causes; “non-natural causes” is a category of external causes that includes transport accidents, assault and events of undetermined intent. It is not a murder count.
- **Nominal agricultural income.** The rise in commercial agriculture income from R85.9 billion in 2007 to R445.45 billion in 2023, “around 418%”, is presented as evidence of Afrikaner prosperity (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 25, 53). The arithmetic is correct, but the figures are nominal, not inflation-adjusted, and they describe a sector rather than a population.
- **An “agreement” with Washington.** MBEKI describes the outcome of the June 2025 delegation of three Afrikaner leaders as an “Agreement” with the United States government (MBEKI, 2026, p. 20). The delegation’s own published account records stated expectations and conditions conveyed by White House officials. It does not establish a negotiated agreement.
- **“40 acres and a mule”.** MBEKI states that land under General SHERMAN’s Special Field Order No. 15 was “donated” to freed families

and “expropriated from the former slave owners without compensation” (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 4-5). The order set aside land for settlement; it did not confer permanent title, and the land was largely returned after the order was reversed, as MBEKI himself records (MBEKI, 2026, p. 5). He also writes that Andrew JOHNSON was “elected” to succeed LINCOLN; JOHNSON, as Vice-President, succeeded on LINCOLN’s assassination in April 1865.

- Conflated court cases. MBEKI presents *United States v. Paradise and JOHNSON v. Transportation Agency, Santa Clara County* as a single 1987 case (MBEKI, 2026, p. 8). They are separate decisions: the one-for-one promotion requirement in the Alabama Department of Public Safety belongs to *Paradise*; *Johnson* concerned a voluntary plan under which a woman was promoted.
- The scope of *Students for Fair Admissions*. The conclusion states that the Supreme Court has argued that affirmative action in favour of African Americans is unconstitutional (MBEKI, 2026, p. 111). The 2023 decision invalidated the admissions systems of Harvard and the University of North Carolina; the Chief Justice’s words quoted by MBEKI himself address race-based admissions, not every form of affirmative action (MBEKI, 2026, p. 11).
- Misattributions and inconsistent dates. Justice Ketanji Brown JACKSON is referred to as “he” (MBEKI, 2026, p. 16). The Atlanta speech launching the Platinum Plan is dated 25 September 2024 in one place (MBEKI, 2026, p. 17) and 25 September 2020 in another (MBEKI, 2026, p. 112); the plan was launched in the 2020 campaign.
- Electoral arithmetic. The ANC’s fall from 65.90 per cent in 2009 to 40.18 per cent in 2024 is given as “a massive 25.78%” drop (MBEKI, 2026, p. 86). The difference between the official results is 25.72 percentage points, which is a fall in percentage points, not per cent (SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT NEWS AGENCY, 2009; IEC, 2024).

These factual errors weaken the paper as a work of record. The mortality passage requires correction. They do not, by themselves, settle the central

causal dispute. The claims about nominal income, policy categories and judicial scope also affect the comparative argument's precision. The account of counter-revolution must be evaluated separately: MBEKI describes a false genocide narrative carried to Washington, progress before 2007, deterioration after Polokwane, and openings for parallel Afrikaner institutions (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 19-22, 77-88, 100-105). Even where those developments are established, they do not alone identify the actor or mechanism that produced them. Sections 6 to 11 examine the inferential steps connecting observation to attribution.

A different category of claim requires attention. Some statements are not errors but assertions that the paper does not evidence: that the counter-revolution “brought a group of assassins to Polokwane” (MBEKI, 2026, p. 84), and that the Solidarity Movement’s 21 years of engagement in the United States must have been with the white-supremacist movement (MBEKI, 2026, p. 67). Neither is necessarily false. Each, however, needs corroborated evidence of organisation, purpose and action before it can carry analytical weight (ZAAIMAN, 2026c). The more serious problem lies elsewhere, in the method by which the paper builds its explanation.

6. False equivalence in the comparative method

Comparison is indispensable to political analysis. It refines concepts, describes variation and tests explanations. Cases need not be identical, but the analyst must state what is compared, on which dimension and for what inference (LIJPHART, 1971; COLLIER, 1993). False equivalence occurs when a comparison treats two cases as equivalent in a respect the evidence does not warrant. It usually begins with surface resemblance and ends with an inference about shared cause, category or remedy (ZAAIMAN, 2026b). Four errors produce it:

- Surface resemblance substitutes for a defined comparison. Shared labels such as “revolution”, “genocide” or “national question” conceal different definitions, actors, institutions and processes. A label begins analysis; it does not complete it.

- Concepts are stretched across contexts. SARTORI warned that extending a concept to cover more cases can strip away the attributes that made it analytically useful (SARTORI, 1970). If a concept does not travel, the scope must be narrowed or a weaker claim made.
- Indicators are assumed to mean the same thing. The same term or count can represent different underlying realities across countries and periods; identical labels do not prove equivalent observations (ADCOCK and COLLIER, 2001).
- Context and causal mechanism are ignored. Similar outcomes may arise by different paths, and similar causes may produce different outcomes where institutions, timing or prior conditions differ. Processes and sequences must be compared, not only endpoints.

A fifth danger is case selection. Choosing cases because they look alike, or because they support a preferred argument, hides the variation that would test the claim (KING, KEOHANE and VERBA, 1994).

MBEKI's paper commits each of these errors at its foundation. The Prologue sets out the two cases in parallel and links them with a single word, "Similarly" (MBEKI, 2026, p. 1). Each country is said to have been born carrying the same burden:

"Accordingly, as the RSA was born, it carried in its bosom the national question, born of the colonisation and subjugation of the indigenous African people."

(MBEKI, 2026, p. 1)

The tertium comparationis is the "national question" and its redress. MBEKI then extends the analogy across distinct objects: SHERMAN's field order becomes an early BEE measure; TRUMP's Platinum Plan becomes affirmative action; and South African emancipation becomes a delayed US counterpart (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 4, 18, 112). He closes the circle:

“In the US, emancipation meant that ultimately everything had to be done to eradicate the legacy of slavery and segregation. In South Africa, emancipation meant that everything had to be done to eradicate the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.”

(MBEKI, 2026, p. 113)

The resemblance is rhetorically effective, because it turns the American administration’s hostility to South African redress into hypocrisy. Analytically, however, it does more work than the comparison can bear.

“Black economic empowerment” is stretched to cover a wartime land order, federal contracting rules and a campaign platform. The indicator “Black” refers in one case to a minority of about one in eight and in the other to a majority of about four in five. Above all, the mechanism by which each settler project ended is ignored. The difference is not incidental. It changes what redress means, which institutions it requires, and therefore what a counter-revolution against it would have to target.

7. Two settler colonialisms and different tasks of redress

The difference can be stated precisely with the framework in Figure 1. Colonialism, rooted in racism and imperialism, divides into two forms. In colonial occupation, the settler eventually returns to the motherland. In settler colonialism, the settler stays, “nativises” or creolises, and pursues demographic engineering, land dispossession and partition. Settler colonialism then has two possible outcomes. Where the settler wins, the result is extermination and dissipative politicide, as in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Where the settler loses, the outcome is a national liberation struggle, as in the Afro-Asian and Caribbean bloc, from South Africa to Palestine and the Sahrawi cause.

The framework is consistent with the scholarly literature on settler colonialism. WOLFE argues that settler colonialism is organised by a logic of elimination, because the settler wants the land rather than the labour of the native (WOLFE, 2006). VERACINI distinguishes settler colonialism from colonialism proper by the settler’s intention to stay and to found a new

political order (VERACINI, 2010). MAMDANI treats the United States as the paradigmatic settler state that manufactured “permanent minorities”, and South Africa as the case in which settler and native were politically unmade into equal citizens (MAMDANI, 2020).

On this basis, the United States is an unfinished settler colony. Its White settlers engineered a White demographic majority through genocide, racial discrimination, the confinement of Native nations on reservations and a national narrative of a “nation of immigrants” that writes the dispossession out of its founding. In the 2020 census, 61.6 per cent of the population identified as White alone, 12.4 per cent as Black or African American alone, and 1.1 per cent as American Indian and Alaska Native alone (JONES et al., 2021). The native question is unresolved, because the settler project succeeded: the original owners of the land were reduced to a small minority within the settler nation. MBEKI himself recognises the genocide and the reservations in his Prologue (MBEKI, 2026, p. 1), but then redefines the American national question as essentially the fate of the descendants of slaves, which allows the comparison with South Africa to proceed.

In South Africa, the national liberation project defeated the settler colonial project. Black South Africans are the majority: in Census 2022, 81.4 per cent of the population was Black African and 7.3 per cent White (STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA, 2023). The settler state did not succeed in turning the indigenous majority into a minority; it attempted to do so by legal fiction, through the homelands, and failed.

This explains why the United States needed affirmative action. In America the oppressed were reduced to minorities within institutions designed by and for a settler majority. Once the racial laws were repealed through the civil-rights struggle of African Americans, the descendants of enslaved Africans, through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, those institutions remained intact and had to be opened from within. Affirmative action, a term introduced into federal policy by Executive Order 10925 in 1961 and extended by Executive Order 11246 in 1965, was the instrument for opening them. It presupposes that the institutions are

legitimate in purpose and need only to be made accessible to a minority excluded from them.

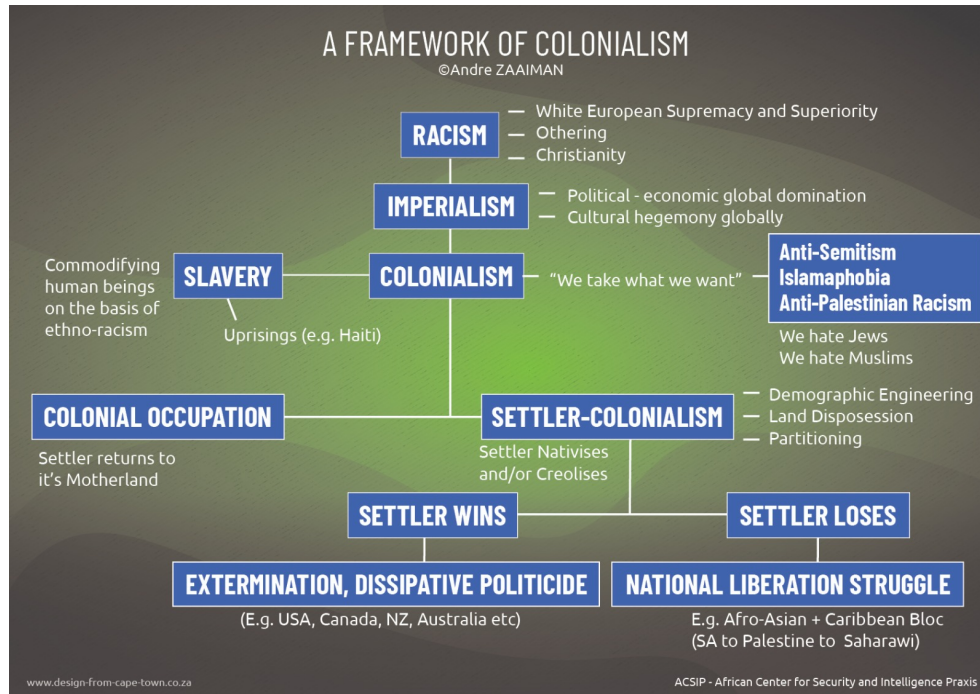


Figure 1. A framework of colonialism (ZAAIMAN, n.d.).

MBEKI's own American material confirms the point. He cites President JOHNSON's 1965 image of opening "the gates of opportunity" so that citizens may walk through them (MBEKI, 2026, p. 6). The image fits a minority entering established institutions. It does not fit a majority whose exclusion was the institutions' purpose. The comparison also flatters the American settlers, whom MBEKI describes as having gone to war to liberate the slaves (MBEKI, 2026, p. 113), while the Emancipation Proclamation he quotes freed only those held in states "in rebellion against the United States" (MBEKI, 2026, p. 4).

8. Revolutionary reformulation: the state, economy and missing cadre

The economic structure and its institutions were built in the same way. WOLPE showed that the reserves subsidised the reproduction of cheap

migrant labour-power, and that apartheid reorganised this system as the reserves disintegrated (WOLPE, 1972). Political engineering created a Black surplus labour force, while underdevelopment proceeded through commodity and mineral extraction and the export of raw materials. FINE and RUSTOMJEE characterise the resulting accumulation regime as a minerals-energy complex, centred on mining, energy and their linked sectors, which shaped the country's industrial structure and its failure to diversify (FINE and RUSTOMJEE, 1996).

South Africa required radical institutional reconstruction, for which affirmative action alone was insufficient. That reconstruction was achieved in the polity's constitutional architecture. The 1993 and 1996 Constitutions replaced racial oligarchy with non-racial democracy and a justiciable Bill of Rights. The new settlement also gave public institutions democratic obligations. The argument is not that the state received no new legal purpose. It is that developmental capability and the inherited production structure were not reconstructed to a corresponding depth. Deracialisation and elite inclusion could not complete that task.

- The state was integrated, deracialised and placed under a new constitution, but it was not equipped with the developmental capabilities required by its new mandate. A democratic developmental state, oriented to the creation of national rather than corporate wealth, needed to be built, not inherited. The comparative literature shows that developmental states rest on cohesive, competent bureaucracies embedded in, but autonomous from, business (EVANS, 1995). South African debate on such a state existed (EDIGHEJI, 2010), but the institution itself was never constructed.
- The economy was liberalised and reinserted into Western-centred trade and finance, while its ownership and production structure remained concentrated in the mineral-energy and commodity sectors. Black economic empowerment changed the composition of ownership at the top more than the structure of production beneath it.
- The cadre required by this radical project was never developed. Building a new state with a new purpose required a new cadre: politically formed,

technically competent and committed to national development. The ANC did not build this capability, and so lost the state as one of the four sources of power, alongside the people, the organisation and regional and international prestige, on which the democratic transition had rested (ZAAIMAN, 2026a).

This argument does not ignore the record of the first period of democratic government, which MBEKI documents through the work of ENDRES, HAVEMANN and CRONJE (MBEKI, 2026, pp. 77-81). Macroeconomic stability, employment growth and the extension of services were real achievements. They were achieved, however, within the inherited production structure. They did not transform it, and they could not survive the collapse of state capacity that followed.

Business also helped to shape the settlement. On 13 September 1985 a delegation led by Gavin RELLY of Anglo American met the ANC leadership under Oliver TAMBO in Zambia, and MBEKI was among the ANC participants (HARDEN, 1985; SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY ONLINE, n.d.). That meeting does not by itself prove a settled bargain, but it marks the point from which organised capital entered the negotiation over the post-apartheid economic order (DU TOIT, 2022). A counter-revolution that seeks to preserve the inherited economy did not need to be invented in 2007; its most powerful beneficiaries had been at the table for two decades.

This distinction explains the vulnerability of democratic institutions to capture and obstruction. Constitutional redesign did not automatically supply the competent administration, productive strategy and autonomous developmental authority required to pursue economic reconstruction. A state equipped with those capabilities would have been harder to capture or emasculate. MBEKI identifies the destination of counter-revolution clearly:

“essentially the preservation, in large measure, of the socio-economic construct of the settler colonial and apartheid years.”

(MBEKI, 2026, p. 101)

Yet the paper attributes that project to a single agent:

“the Counter Revolution we are talking about is composed of an organised group of mainly Afrikaner former operatives in the apartheid security establishment!”

(MBEKI, 2026, p. 101)

MBEKI names the order to be preserved, but he does not analyse the political-economy that sustains it, the misalignment between a Black-led polity and a white-led production structure, or the part played by the ANC’s own economic choices in reproducing it. Former security operatives can sabotage institutions; they cannot by themselves own the mines, set the terms of finance or determine the structure of production. By placing the explanatory weight on an “Afrikaner-led Counter Revolution” (MBEKI, 2026, p. 118), the paper turns a structural problem into an ethnic one. This is the classic form of scapegoating: a visible, bounded agent bears excessive explanatory responsibility for a crisis whose deeper causes lie elsewhere (GIRARD, 1986; GLAESER, 2005; TIR and JASINSKI, 2008).

9. World-making, institutional survival and adaptation

Afrikaner nationalism as a world-making project

Afrikaner nationalism can be understood as a world-making project: an organised effort to construct a social world in which a particular account of collective identity, authority and historical purpose becomes institutionally durable. In this political usage, world-making joins interpretation to practical organisation. It names the work of making a preferred social order appear natural, morally legitimate and capable of reproducing itself across generations. A worldview supplies an interpretive framework. A world-making project builds the institutions, practices and material arrangements through which that framework becomes lived reality.

The distinction introduced in Section 2 now acquires historical content. Apartheid was both a regime of coercive racial government and, for particular nationalist formations, an institutional expression of a wider account of social order. Its abolition removed the regime’s authority without automatically removing every institution that reproduced that account. The

claim that MBEKI misunderstands the threat concerns insufficient differentiation of these objects and their mechanisms of survival. It does not imply that he fails to notice contemporary Afrikaner organisation.

Its elements include an account of who constitutes the nation; a narrative of origins, suffering and destiny; religious or philosophical grounds for authority; classifications of insiders and outsiders; a hierarchy of social obligations; and an institutional programme for education, language, family life and economic advancement. Memory, ritual and cultural production reinforce these arrangements. Property and organisational resources make them sustainable. Together, these elements connect identity to power. They turn a description of the community into a programme for shaping society.

For influential Afrikaner nationalist formations, apartheid was a central institutional expression of this larger project. It sought to organise territory, labour, citizenship and political authority around racial differentiation and white dominance. The religious-ideological framework helped give those arrangements a moral vocabulary and an account of collective purpose. TAMARKIN (2020) documents how Christian-national intellectuals sought to shape Afrikaner society through religion, education, language and civic organisation. His analysis also records internal criticism of ethnocentric nationalism. The historical project was powerful but neither uniform nor uncontested.

KUYPER's account of Calvinism as a comprehensive life-system illuminates the breadth of the intellectual background. Religion, politics, science and education belonged to an encompassing understanding of life (KUYPER, 1899, lectures I and III). STOKER's legitimisation of apartheid represents a particular political appropriation requiring scrutiny (VAN WYK, 1994). DOOYEWEERD and D.F.M. STRAUSS cannot simply be assigned the same political position. STRAUSS (2015) explicitly argues that DOOYEWEERD's conception of the state rejects apartheid. The analysis must identify how philosophical ideas were appropriated and institutionalised, while retaining evidence of dissent and reinterpretation.

Regime change and the survival of the superstructure

The end of apartheid dismantled a decisive component of Afrikaner nationalist world-making: its legally enforced regime of racial government. It did not automatically abolish every religious-ideological framework, civic institution, cultural network or material advantage associated with that project. In this context, superstructure denotes the institutions and practices through which social relations acquire meaning, authority and legitimacy. It is not merely a collection of abstract beliefs. Its reproduction depends on organisations, resources, professional practices and everyday socialisation.

The distinction is between the radical redesign of political institutions and the incomplete reconstruction of economic and social relations. The constitutional settlement established equal citizenship while substantial inherited capacities for economic and cultural organisation remained in place. Those capacities could then be adapted to the new legal environment. A community may abandon explicit racial rule while preserving parts of its institutional autonomy and inherited advantage. The relevant historical question is which elements were repudiated, which survived, and which were translated into new political forms.

Genuine religious and democratic change also occurred; persistence cannot be inferred solely from shared language or institutional ancestry (TAMARKIN, 2020; STRAUSS, 2015).

The central criticism advanced here is that the ANC devoted insufficient strategic attention to this continuing contest over consent, institutions and social reproduction. Winning government was treated too readily as securing leadership over society. Affirmative action and BEE were presented as transformation while the deeper task of reconstructing the inherited production structure remained inadequately addressed. Yet counter-hegemonic projects could coexist with the democratic order from its inception. Their organisational survival did not require uninterrupted control of the state. The claim of insufficient attention is an analytical judgement about the liberation movement's strategy. It requires examination of its

educational, cultural, economic and institutional policies; it is not established by electoral decline alone.

The underestimation is therefore strategic as well as semantic. MBEKI recognises the growth of alternative institutions, but the explanation places excessive weight on an organised enemy acting against the ANC. The present analysis asks how inherited resources, ideological frameworks and constitutional opportunities sustain counter-hegemonic projects in their own right. Scapegoating can mobilise support against a visible actor while leaving those mechanisms intact. Rebuilding popular allegiance requires material development and a credible inclusive national project, alongside an understanding of rival institutions (GRAMSCI, 1971; COX, 1983).

Coexistence is not itself a failure of democracy. Constitutional freedoms properly permit competing identities and institutions. The strategic failure arises when a liberation movement mistakes legal recognition of pluralism for the disappearance of rival world-making projects, and mistakes changes in beneficiaries for changes in the economic system. Its democratic task is to build credible institutions, develop productive capabilities, improve material conditions and sustain an inclusive account of national purpose. Suppressing cultural or religious difference would reproduce domination rather than overcome it. The critique concerns the failure to contest exclusionary political effects and inherited economic concentration, not the existence of Afrikaner identity or Christian belief.

Adaptation within democracy and transnational reconnection

Adaptation can involve translating older claims of collective entitlement into the language of minority protection, cultural autonomy, property rights and institutional self-reliance. The same legal vocabulary can support legitimate democratic claims or defend unequal social arrangements. Its political significance must therefore be assessed through the practices it enables and the distribution of power it sustains. Contesting affirmative action identifies a policy conflict; it does not settle either side's relationship to structural transformation. Constitutional legality does not settle whether a

project advances substantive equality. Equally, constitutional advocacy alone does not establish a covert intention to restore apartheid.

Contemporary overseas advocacy provides concrete evidence of transnational mobilisation. AfriForum's Washington memorandum records meetings with TRUMP administration representatives and requests for pressure on ANC leaders over education, property and cultural recognition (AFRIFORUM, n.d.-b). MONJANE (2026) analyses contacts with United States and European political and media networks. He interprets narratives of threatened white minorities as connecting opposition to redistributive policies with international right-wing mobilisation. This paper distinguishes that interpretation from the separate question of whether the policies contested transform the inherited production structure. The evidence concerns specified organisations and channels, not Afrikaners as an undifferentiated population.

The reconnection operates through a shared political vocabulary of dispossession, demographic threat, civilisational insecurity and racial victimhood. Local grievances become legible to Western audiences already mobilised around comparable narratives. Attention, political endorsement and foreign pressure can then strengthen domestic campaigns. This supplies a mechanism through which an adapted nationalist project can participate in a wider white-nationalist resurgence without reproducing apartheid's original legal form. AfriForum publicly rejects white nationalism (AFRIFORUM, n.d.-a). That stated position must be distinguished from the circulation and political reception of its claims. MONJANE's interpretation concerns precisely that distinction (MONJANE, 2026).

Within a broader argument about declining Western primacy, these alignments can be interpreted as an effort to find external leverage amid struggles over relative power and belonging. Western decline is contextual here, not a demonstrated single cause of the alliances. The immediate explanatory mechanisms are organisational contacts, narrative amplification and the conversion of advocacy into political pressure. They must be traced independently of claims about an undifferentiated Western trajectory. The

political interpretation of public institutional failures is itself contested. Turning those failures into a general argument for private authority reproduces the neoliberal premise that this analysis challenges.

Libertarianism and nationalist world-making

Afrikaner civic self-reliance connects a market-oriented account of development to a distinct cultural project. Section 10 examines the primary political location of private-sector primacy within ANC and DA governing programmes. The Solidarity Movement publicly combines Christian-democratic commitments, free markets, property rights, federalism and community autonomy (SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT, n.d.). VAN STADEN's (2023) Free Market Foundation essay praises Solidarity and AfriForum from an explicitly libertarian perspective. These materials establish an articulation between market liberalism and organised Afrikaner communal power. They do not establish an identical doctrine across all organisations.

The nationalist-libertarian articulation changes the means of world-making. Earlier nationalist formations used state authority to organise communal advancement. Contemporary formations can seek to insulate their institutions and resources from democratic developmental direction. Freedom is thereby organised around protected property, autonomous provision and the reproduction of a bounded community. The analytical question is whose freedom this institutional arrangement secures, which inherited advantages sustain it, and what obligations it recognises towards a common social world. A universal vocabulary of liberty can conceal unequal capacities to exercise it.

In the critique advanced here, this articulation provides a contemporary vehicle for elements of white-nationalist world-making: historically accumulated white communal power can be preserved through property and institutional autonomy within constitutional democracy. This is an interpretation of the project's political effects and ideological connections. AfriForum's explicit rejection of white nationalism remains relevant evidence (AFRIFORUM, n.d.-a). The argument must therefore demonstrate the

relationship through institutional boundaries, resource distributions, narratives and alliances, rather than infer racial nationalism from libertarianism alone. Libertarianism and white nationalism are distinguishable doctrines whose conjunction is a historical question.

The resulting configuration has two connected dimensions. Within the ANC and the DA, private-sector fetishism can legitimise the preservation of concentrated economic command. Within particular Afrikaner civic formations, libertarian self-reliance can support counter-hegemonic communal organisation and its transnational nationalist connections. The latter does not explain the former's entire class project. MBEKI's concentration on the civic formations misses the more consequential reproduction of capital's authority within the liberation movement's own governing orientation.

10. The capital class, the ANC and the DA

Private-sector primacy within the ANC and the DA

The primary political location of the neoliberal argument examined here lies within the ANC and the DA. The problem is their elevation of the private sector into the privileged agent of development. Afrikaner civic formations reinforce and adapt this logic; they are not its principal source within the democratic governing order. The ANC can therefore reproduce the economic project it describes as an external threat. Its conflict with Afrikaner organisations does not remove the convergence between its governing practice and the preservation of inherited capital power.

The phrase private-sector fetishism identifies a specific ideological operation. Historically constituted private power is represented as the natural source of competence, investment and productive dynamism. The state is reduced to creating favourable conditions for that power. Its own responsibility to organise production, coordinate investment and build new capabilities becomes secondary. The critique concerns the attribution of developmental authority to existing capital without first interrogating its

historical structure and interests. It does not depend on denying the productive contribution of private enterprise.

RAMAPHOSA's 2022 State of the Nation Address illustrates the formulation: "government does not create jobs. Business creates jobs" (RAMAPHOSA, 2022a). The address also supported public employment and infrastructure. His subsequent explanation explicitly endorsed both a developmental state and a dynamic private sector (RAMAPHOSA, 2022b). These qualifications matter. The critique must examine the allocation of authority, resources and responsibility in governing practice, rather than treat one sentence as a complete account of ANC policy. Nevertheless, the categorical formulation privileges business as the agent of employment and invites precisely the decomposition FREGE requires.

The relevant substitutions expose the concealed distinctions. Does "government" mean the current administration, public employers or the state's developmental institutions? Does "business" mean incumbent commodity capital, small producers or new productive enterprises? Direct employment, financing, procurement, infrastructure and the creation of productive capabilities are different causal relations. A statement about who signs an employment contract cannot establish who creates the conditions and capacities that make production possible. Nor does the existing private share of employment establish that private capital should determine the direction of economic reconstruction.

The DA articulates private-sector primacy more explicitly through economic liberalisation and its campaign against BEE, employment-equity and expropriation legislation (DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, n.d.). The ANC can retain the vocabulary of liberation while administering an economy organised around incumbent investment priorities. The DA offers liberal political management of that economy. Their rivalry over empowerment and access can consequently coexist with convergence on private capital's developmental authority. This is the paper's interpretation of a shared governing orientation, not an assertion that the parties have identical programmes or uniform internal positions. The "weak state" argument must

therefore be treated as an ideological argument when it converts particular public failures into a general case for private substitution. Public incapacity is then presented as inherent, while private competence is assumed. That move displaces the political question of how democratic institutions can be rebuilt to direct structural transformation. It also obscures how concentrated capital benefits from a state dependent on its investment decisions. The appropriate response is radical institutional and productive reconstruction. Documenting corruption or deficient services does not logically establish that democratic developmental authority should be surrendered.

The counter-revolution's target and the capital class

The central thesis is that the counter-revolutionary project is directed against the substantive economic completion of national liberation. Its object is to prevent democratic political power from reconstructing the inherited organisation of ownership, production and accumulation. It seeks to preserve the capacity of concentrated capital to determine investment, employment and the distribution of economic opportunity, while limiting the democratic state's ability to redirect those decisions. The target is therefore the conversion of political liberation into a different economic order. The ANC is an intermediary political actor, not the ultimate object whose fate defines the project.

On this account, the principal social force is the capital class, especially the dominant fractions whose power rests on concentrated ownership and control of the inherited economy. These include controlling owners, corporate leadership and financial institutions able to influence investment and its allocation. Professional, policy and political networks can mediate their influence. The analysis concerns a class position and its institutional power. It does not attribute identical interests or conduct to every business, investor or capitalist. Emerging productive enterprises and smaller firms can have interests different from those of entrenched incumbents.

The principal beneficiary of political-economy misalignment is the dominant capital bloc rooted in the white-led commodity and minerals-energy

economy. Its accumulated economic command can survive the replacement of the apartheid political regime. Indeed, a democratic government can legitimise continued accumulation while assuming responsibility for unemployment, poverty and failing public provision. The argument identifies the defence of that inherited command against substantive reconstruction as counter-revolutionary. Mere benefit from an unchanged economy is not, by itself, evidence of a coordinated strategy. The project must be traced through actions that reproduce or defend the structure and obstruct its transformation.

The project need not restore apartheid legislation. It can preserve economic command under democratic government, including through the incorporation of black elite beneficiaries. The decisive distinction is between changing the racial composition of some owners and changing the concentration, productive organisation and social purpose of ownership itself. Empowerment arrangements can facilitate incorporation while leaving incumbent power largely intact; PONTE and VAN SITTERT's (2007) fisheries study provides a sectoral illustration. The question is whether the institutions of accumulation have changed, not whether selected individuals have entered them.

The mechanisms to investigate include the shaping of policy agendas, control over investment decisions, resistance to developmental coordination, elite incorporation and the conversion of concentrated resources into political influence. Such processes can converge without a single secret command structure. A structural class project must be distinguished from a specific allegation of covert coordination. Establishing either requires evidence appropriate to it: ownership and investment patterns, policy decisions, institutional relationships, beneficiaries and, where alleged, operational records of coordination.

Afrikaner nationalist organisations occupy a different analytical position. They may supply cultural mobilisation, counter-hegemonic narratives or transnational leverage that reinforce the defence of inherited economic power. They may also pursue distinct communal objectives. Their visibility

does not establish that they originate or direct the larger capital-class project. Likewise, ANC elites can participate in reproducing that project even while contesting Afrikaner civic organisations. The political conflict between these formations does not necessarily constitute a conflict over the underlying system of accumulation.

In the class analysis developed here, the liberal Democratic Alliance is the political wing of the old-order capital class. It supplies a political programme and a democratic electoral vehicle through which that class can seek governing authority compatible with its economic command. The class can accommodate the co-option of a small black elite without reconstructing the inherited production structure. Elite incorporation changes membership within the dominant bloc; it does not necessarily change the bloc's organising interests. This is the paper's interpretation of the party's structural role, rather than a claim that every voter or member shares a consciously coordinated class strategy.

The DA's own programme favours economic liberalisation and private-sector participation. Its 2025 economic campaign explicitly targets BEE, employment-equity and expropriation legislation (DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, n.d.). In this analysis, its challenge to ANC empowerment policies offers an alternative political management of the inherited economy. Neither preserving those policies nor replacing them with liberal access measures resolves the misalignment between democratic political institutions and concentrated productive power. The critical distinction concerns the system of accumulation sustained by the policy, rather than the racial identity of selected beneficiaries.

Party-funding evidence makes particular relationships investigable. The Electoral Commission's 2025/26 third-quarter report records DA donations from Fynbos Ekwiteit, the BALL Family Trust, C.H. WIESE and Lawrin Investments, among others (ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA, 2026). These disclosures establish financial support. The designation "political wing of capital" is a broader interpretation of the relationship between funding, policy orientation and the economic interests

served by governing decisions. It must be assessed through those relationships rather than inferred from donations alone. A democratic electoral route is compatible with the preservation of an inherited economic hierarchy; its constitutional form does not settle its class content.

This exposes MBEKI's displacement of analytical attention. The specific Afrikaner groups are engaged in a counter-hegemonic contest. The dominant capital bloc benefits from economic continuity and can seek a more congenial political leadership through democratic competition. ANC elite incorporation can also reproduce that continuity. These are different actors, mechanisms and relationships. Their interaction does not require treating Afrikaner civic groups as the command centre of counter-revolution, or treating every DA voter as a participant in it. MBEKI's concentration on a visible minority obscures the wider question of who controls the productive economy and how that control shapes political alternatives.

The counter-revolution's success must consequently be assessed against structural economic outcomes. If democratically elected governments preserve the inherited concentration of productive power while presenting elite incorporation as transformation, liberation's economic completion is obstructed without an overt abolition of democracy. This is the central political-economy meaning of counter-revolution advanced here. MBEKI's focus on defeating the ANC reverses the explanatory priority: the party can be retained, weakened or displaced while the economic structure survives. The national-security problem is the continuing misalignment between democratic political authority and concentrated economic command.

11. Western economic insertion and foreign-policy convergence

The inherited economic order must also be situated internationally. Mining and commodity capital developed through incorporation into Western financial and commercial networks, with Britain occupying a particularly important position. This insertion concerns the organisation of finance, corporate authority and access to markets. It places domestic accumulation

within external institutions whose priorities can shape the scope of national economic reconstruction. The relationship is historical and institutional, rather than simply a contemporary preference expressed by individual executives.

Anglo American provides a concrete illustration. Its own centenary history records British and American funding at its foundation in 1917 (ANGLO AMERICAN, 2017a). Its account of subsequent restructuring records the transfer of its primary listing and head office to London in 1999 (ANGLO AMERICAN, 2017b). These episodes show how South African productive assets could be connected to Western financial authority across the transition from apartheid to democracy. They illustrate one major corporate trajectory; they do not establish that all commodity capital has identical interests or that its international relationships have remained unchanged.

This historic insertion dovetails with the contemporary American activities of Afrikaner civic formations. AfriForum's Washington memorandum documents requests for United States pressure over domestic political and institutional disputes (AFRIFORUM, n.d.-b). The actors approach Western institutions from different positions. Capital seeks conditions conducive to accumulation, investment and the protection of economic command. Civic formations seek recognition, influence and support for communal and ideological objectives. Their activities can nevertheless converge where external authority favours the same domestic settlement of property, state power and institutional autonomy.

The DA supplies an explicit political expression of this orientation. Its 2023 AGOA campaign promised a DA-led government "fully aligned with the free world" and proposed a comprehensive free-trade agreement with Western countries (DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, 2023). The paper interprets this preference alongside inherited capital's Western financial insertion and Afrikaner civic advocacy in the United States. Commercial integration, party diplomacy and cultural mobilisation are distinct activities. Their convergence around Western alignment can connect domestic economic interests to an international ideological preference. Trade with Western states is not itself

proof of that preference; the analysis concerns the political priorities and institutional settlement attached to it.

The resulting entanglement explains why the distinction between counter-revolution and counter-hegemony remains necessary but cannot become a separation of their historical effects. A capital-class project can defend inherited economic command while a civic project contests the liberation movement's moral authority. The same external networks can provide different forms of leverage to both. In the configuration argued here, commercial access and investor expectations can reinforce demands compatible with economic continuity, while foreign political endorsement can amplify narratives that delegitimise democratic developmental reconstruction. Each connection requires evidence. Functional convergence does not require a single command centre or identical motives.

The danger arises when these forms of influence reinforce one another. Domestic economic concentration acquires international protection; communal narratives acquire foreign political authority; and foreign-policy preferences narrow the perceived alternatives available to the democratic state. Western actors are themselves divided, and South African capital also operates through other international markets. The argument therefore identifies a preference and a possible alignment of pressures, rather than an undifferentiated Western bloc. Its strategic significance is that counter-revolutionary preservation and counter-hegemonic mobilisation can become mutually enabling in the foreign-policy domain.

MBEKI consequently misunderstands and underestimates the threat when his designation concentrates explanatory responsibility on the Afrikaner formations themselves. Their American activities must be analysed within the wider international relations of the inherited economy and its political representation. FREGE's decomposition first distinguishes the projects; historical analysis then investigates their convergence. The threat is a configuration of economic command, ideological organisation and external leverage whose danger cannot be measured solely by whether the ANC retains office.

The electoral mechanism and peaceful counter-revolution

The sequence argued here is precise. Segments of organised Afrikaner civic life wage a counter-hegemonic struggle over legitimacy, identity and national purpose. Dominant capital blocks the substantive economic revolution by defending inherited command over ownership, production and investment. The political-economy consequently remains dangerously misaligned. The projects are distinct, but their effects can reinforce one another.

If the ANC loses the People as its popular source of power and is voted out, it also loses the State as a governing source of power. Under the interpretation advanced here, counter-revolution can then use the democratic system to engineer a peaceful transfer of office through the electoral mechanism. Economic obstruction, governing failure and counter-hegemonic mobilisation can prepare the conditions for that transfer. A successor administration committed to protecting inherited capital command can consolidate the blockage of liberation's economic completion.

The mechanism need not abolish elections or restore apartheid law. It can preserve constitutional procedure while closing the political opportunity for structural reconstruction. Its counter-revolutionary content lies in the economic settlement it defends and the transformative project it obstructs. The ANC's removal is the political means through which that preservation may be consolidated, rather than the ultimate definition of the threat.

This is a conditional causal argument. An electoral defeat alone neither proves nor disproves counter-revolutionary engineering. Attribution requires evidence linking capital's policy influence, investment power and political support to the mobilisation, transfer of office and subsequent defence of the inherited structure. Equally, ANC incumbency is not sufficient protection: the same structure can be reproduced through the ANC's own governing choices. Democratic alternation is legitimate; its class content and developmental consequences remain open to analysis.

12. Constructive national-security implications

The threat has two connected dimensions. The first concerns domestic formations, transnational grievance narratives and foreign leverage capable of narrowing democratic sovereignty or reinforcing exclusionary institutions. The second concerns the reproduction of the inherited production structure through policy orthodoxy, elite incorporation and concentrated control of investment. Their convergence matters more than an ethnic label. Neither structural continuity nor common preferences automatically establishes covert coordination.

A sound assessment separates structural vulnerability, identifiable threat activity and specific allegations. Structural analysis examines ownership, production, finance, public capacity and material exclusion. Threat attribution identifies actors, objectives, resources and actions. Covert allegations require corroborated operational evidence. Different evidentiary requirements prevent a political designation from becoming a substitute for explanation.

GRAMSCI's distinction between a war of position and a war of manoeuvre identifies complementary terrains. Institutions of education, culture and civic organisation shape consent over time. Acute confrontations concern the immediate exercise of power. Democratic prevention must build a credible inclusive national project and material capability across these terrains. Lawful cultural association and political opposition are not sufficient grounds for threat attribution (GRAMSCI, 1971; COX, 1983).

The practical response is heterodox, production-centred developmentalism. A capable state must coordinate investment, infrastructure, skills, productive diversification and innovation. Public authority needs technically competent institutions and a cadre able to exercise them. Private enterprise can contribute to this programme. Its inherited command over investment cannot be treated as the natural limit of democratic choice (EVANS, 1995; CHANG, 2002; EDIGHEJI, 2010).

Creative destruction concerns productive renewal, not indiscriminate institutional destruction. The task is to expand national capacity, move into more complex production and distribute the gains of innovation. South Africa's low growth, unemployment and inequality make reconstruction an immediate requirement. Popular mobilisation must support that material programme. Mobilisation through an ethnic scapegoat displaces it (SCHUMPETER, 1942; FINE and RUSTOMJEE, 1996).

13. Conclusion

MBEKI rightly identifies an old-order security-establishment counter-revolution in the making; French actors are connected to it, while American actors contribute to the counter-hegemonic threat. He nonetheless underestimates its wider configuration. Excessive reduction overweighs a mainly Afrikaner agent; false equivalence and semantic conflation obscure distinct histories, institutional purposes and the relation between the ANC, liberation and wider nationalist world-making.

The FREGE method corrects this compression. Function-argument analysis separates actor, action, target and objective within MBEKI's claim. Sense and reference distinguish the historical regime from the broader nationalist worldview. A single sentence can contain rich logical and historical complexity; analysis must make its structure visible before testing its claims.

The same apartheid regime was experienced by its victims as racial oppression and justified by particular nationalist formations through a religious-national account of communal survival. Its abolition did not erase every institution or mode of understanding sustaining that account. Hegemonic continuity must be analysed alongside political and economic transformation.

The paper interprets MBEKI's political purpose as rescuing the ANC's last principal source of power: the People. Scapegoating redirects blame and enables social mobilisation. This is an analytical interpretation, not a claim to private knowledge. Protecting the ANC and liberation's substantive achievements are distinct objectives, even when they coincide.

The threat is complex, with counter-hegemonic, counter-systemic and counter-revolutionary dimensions. Afrikaner civic groups pursue a counter-hegemonic project over identity, legitimacy and national purpose. Some former apartheid-security officials and White capital oligarchs pose a counter-revolutionary threat by defending inherited economic structures and the status quo. As radical restructuring remains blocked, some members of the People may misidentify the democratic polity and its transformed institutions as the cause of economic failure. That misplaced attribution can become counter-systemic and erode confidence in democratic rule. International dynamics may intensify convergence: Western panic over economic decline and white-nationalist mobilisation amid demographic shifts associated with emigration and mass migration can reinforce domestic reactionary projects. These distinct forces may converge without a single command centre. MBEKI's ethnic reduction obscures their interaction and underestimates its danger.

The threat is complex, multi-dimensional and a real and present danger: it risks developing into a counter-systemic threat that falsely scapegoats the democratic constitutional order itself as the source of the economic problems of the People, and of the inability of the electoral process to correct them.

MARX's question remains: which inherited relations obstruct a revolution within its own settlement? A peaceful electoral route can consolidate this outcome. If the ANC loses popular allegiance and is voted out, it loses People and State power. A successor that protects inherited capital command preserves the misaligned political-economy; counter-revolution can then operate through the democratic system itself. If counter-revolution succeeds through the electoral process, the risk of a counter-systemic threat against the democratic constitutional order rises significantly. The response is production-centred developmentalism: align economic command with democratic sovereignty, build capable institutions and a competent cadre, and make material improvement and participation in national wealth tangible to the People.

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