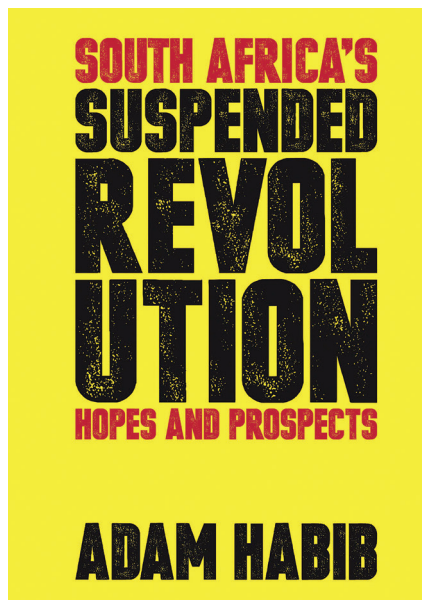


## South Africa's Suspended Revolution: Hopes and Prospects

By Adam Habib. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2013. ISBN (print) 978-1-86814-608-6. ISBN (digital) 978-1-86814-609-3.



In *South Africa's Suspended Revolution: Hopes and Prospects*, Adam Habib deals with South Africa's post-apartheid complexities through a meticulous analysis of its political and socio-economic evolution. The book draws on several decades of debates, deliberations and discourse on resistance in South Africa. Habib cleverly uses current ethical complexities in various contexts – including governance, political accountability, service delivery, political economy and civil society

pressures – to illustrate how political and policy outcomes are manipulated.

The book starts off with a depiction of the leadership and succession debacle that emerged not long after transition and has continued into present-day politics, highlighting South Africa's changing social landscape. Against this backdrop, Habib intelligently positions his analysis to elucidate how South Africa has arrived at where it is today, and what has to be done to set its trajectory to where it should be. Analysing institutional constraints, he reveals how choices have been conditioned and what the consequences of these choices have been, and explores the failures, policy options and behavioural choices of political, economic, civic and other leaders.

Addressing South Africa's economic policy, Habib questions the progressive orthodoxy that this has remained unchanged since 1994. He demonstrates the significant changes that economic policy has undergone over the first four post-apartheid administrations, underscoring the catastrophic consequences for inequality, poverty and unemployment that ensued during the Mandela administration and its largely neoliberal approach. While there have been gradual shifts to the left during the following three administrations, Habib

shows that the threats of corruption and divisions within the ruling party cannot be ignored.

Habib concludes that as of 2013, the existing political leadership does not have an 'inspiring' track record in bridging organisational divides, moulding an economic consensus and developing an ethical value system within the ruling party. Going forward, he explores the question of how to engage with an unfavourable and inequitable balance of power in a way that enhances the accountability of the political elites to the country's citizens. He also explores the policies and political choices that could potentially enable the pursuit of constitutional objectives.

This book, while low in academic terminology, is masterly crafted to provide highly scholarly analyses and opinions. It's an easy read for academics and the public alike, and a 'must-read' for anyone who considers South Africa's problems as important and in dire need of action. The book contains a wealth of information to keep the reader absorbed to the last page.

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