

It deserves a place in research libraries or on the shelves of those looking for detailed documentary evidence from this period and for these countries.

John Quinn
 Truman State University
 Kirksville, Missouri

James L. Gibson and Amanda Gouws. *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 221 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00. Cloth.

The successful institutionalization of new democracies does not rely on formal political institutions alone. To develop and flourish, any new democratic system requires not only the creation of a legal structure that specifies basic rights, but also the actual enforcement of those rights. Perhaps more important, history demonstrates that citizens cannot simply depend upon the state for such enforcement. While the active engagement of a diverse civil society as a check upon state actions is necessary for the effective functioning of a democracy, not all associations of civil society promote democracy. Actors in civil society must be tolerant of their opponents, and this essential tolerance cannot be assumed. James Gibson and Amanda Gouws seek to measure this crucial trait of tolerance in South Africa. Underlining the central connection between political tolerance and the success of new democracies, they ask: How tolerant are South Africans? And they add a further question: "How does one come to tolerate those who have been responsible for the worst oppression" (xiii)?

In order to answer these questions, the authors surveyed 2,557 respondents in the primary sample and 477 in the boost (supplementary) sample in early 1996, and followed up with over half the interviewees in 1997. This study of mass public opinion in South Africa is welcome at a time when so many analysts continue to focus upon the interests and values of political elites. There are, nevertheless, many challenges facing such survey research. First and foremost is the matter of context, particularly in a country that has experienced such extreme discrimination, political violence, and conflict. Gibson and Gouws attempt to address this both in the design of their study and in their second chapter, which focuses on the South African context. This chapter points to the gross intolerance of the apartheid regime and underlines the violent nature of the struggle to end it. In their discussion of the liberation movement, however, the authors place excessive emphasis upon the violence of that struggle and completely ignore (except in a single footnote) the democratic aspects of anti-apartheid mass organizations, especially within the UDF, the unions, and many civic organizations before the state of emergency. This leads to a perception, unfortunately carried throughout the text, of the poor masses as

presenting the greatest danger to the future of South Africa's democracy and therefore the most in need of reform. The authors employ their survey results to confirm this perception.

Tolerance as defined by Gibson and Gouws is "forbearance[,]... the restraint of the urge to repress one's political enemies" (45); elsewhere, it is "liberal democratic political tolerance" (46). According to this definition, the authors found "widespread intolerance" (70) among South Africans. They point to "strong group identity" as "associated with greater intergroup antipathy, threat, and intolerance" and see such identities as "inimical to democratic politics in South Africa" (93). But causation is a question here, as they admit on the following page: "We cannot be certain whether group identities are a cause or an effect of xenophobia" (94). Throughout the discussion of their findings, both in measuring tolerance and in attempting to persuade interviewees to become tolerant, one point is repeated over and over again: Perceptions of threat are strongly correlated with intolerance. Threat perceptions were highest among black South African respondents; this was also the group judged to be most intolerant. Interestingly, the authors also find as they test for people's responses to authorities (encouraging tolerance or intolerance) that blacks are the most activist (they will attempt to challenge actions they disagree with and support those they agree with), while whites are the most passive (table 163). This point is strongly supported by South African popular history and suggests a deep distrust of authority—natural enough in the aftermath of apartheid brutality.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the authors underline the importance of context, they do not sufficiently engage South African history in the design of their study or in their analysis. Interestingly, their definition of intolerance does not include racism; if a particular individual is willing to allow opposing groups to engage in public debate (including the racist and violent AWB) but also harbors extreme racist beliefs, he or she would be considered tolerant in this study. Racism is only mentioned a handful of times in a book of over two hundred pages. Correspondingly, the causes of perceived threats are never investigated. Though the authors clearly underline that these perceptions are tied to the discrimination and violence of the past, they never fully address this past or consider the extent to which racism and violence reinforce each other in South Africa today. Threat remains exogenous to the models presented, and racism is simply and shockingly absent.

This is clearly a product of the perspective of this study, that is, the application of an external model to the South African case, one that has until now not been comprehensively applied to the developing world. It is a test of how South Africans respond to key questions concerning attributes of liberal democracy as understood in the United States. What this study fails to consider is how the subjects themselves might view democracy. What values are important to them? What have their experiences of struggle

taught them? Why might they be intolerant of a group such as the AWB? By defining an ahistorical model of tolerant citizens and then asking to what extent South Africans, particularly black South Africans, fit this model, the study sees any differences in South African attitudes as shortcomings. Findings that do not match expectations—such as the perceived power of a group not correlating with perceived threats posed by that group—are defined as puzzles that defy logic (212–13).

The authors note that “tolerance research can be rightly criticized for being too abstract and too insensitive to the role of contextual factors in tolerance judgments” (213). Unfortunately, such criticism fits this study all too well. It remains an analysis of the applicability of American research on political tolerance and therefore fails to offer new insights from or into the South African case, presenting those who were most oppressed in the former system as the greatest threat to its future without seeking to understand their experiences. Gibson and Gouws’s South African respondents might well have wished to ask the authors: Why should those who were responsible for the worst oppression be tolerated—in fact, be given a platform to air their racist views? The threat of an exclusionary, racist state is not an abstraction to most South Africans, and the perception of threat may not be irrational.

Elke Zuern

*Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, New York*

Jamie Frueh. *Political Identity and Social Change: The Remaking of the South African Social Order*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. xvii + 236 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Price not reported. Paper.

In *Political Identity and Social Change*, three recent episodes of South Africa’s political history are analyzed from a constructivist perspective. The author emphasizes the restructuring of identity through redefinition of identity labels during the Soweto uprising, the debates over the initiation of the tri-cameral parliament, and the postapartheid concern with crime.

During normal times, identity labels enjoy a certain legitimacy and consensus and serve to delimit expected roles and responsibilities in a variety of situations. Conflict often presents opportunities for critics of these labels, roles, and expectations to challenge them and offer an alternative perspective. Because labels are integral to a system that provides a certain imposed order on the world, the study of these conceptions of identity provides a useful and interesting perspective for exploring various topics. This excellent work could provide interesting reading for a class on nationalism or identity, either at the advanced undergraduate or the graduate level, as well as for any course dealing with South Africa. The early chapter on constructivism summarizes significant thought within that approach succinctly