In aiming for a readable volume the work succeeds, although the breadth of the material covered leaves little space for the development of detailed analysis and insight. From the outset a lack of engagement with many critical issues, and the cursory mention made of many others, is apparent. For a book which considers the political and social situation of South Africa, it is surprising that there is no problematization of the use of racial identifiers within the text. Butler does mention race and ethnicity in the 'new' South Africa, but only in passing. HIV/AIDS, housing, affirmative action and black economic empowerment, xenophobia, migration, education, unemployment and accountability all appear on the roll-call of contemporary issues without being examined in a detailed discussion. In the case of HIV/AIDS, there are sporadic acknowledgements of the pandemic, but never a concerted engagement with it. A brief mention is made of gender violence and of gendered migration patterns, but the obvious connection of these with the spread of HIV/AIDS is not made. Again, the important links between xenophobia, migration, economic development and health care provision and HIV/AIDS are absent.

When he gives himself the opportunity to develop some analysis, Butler does make a number of prescient observations. The emergence of a quasi-Africanist element within the ANC is intimated in the book, and in 2005 this has become a major political problematic, inflaming tensions about marginalization, service delivery and a lack of accountability at all levels of government. The issue of floor-crossing also remains a pressing concern, as does the apparent emergence of an effective 'one-party' state. Overall, his discussion of the political and governance structures of the state comprise the strongest chapter of the book, but again there is a lack of detailed analysis and commentary.

In certain instances Butler's attempts to relate his chapters to broader discourse, as when he introduces his chapter on culture, read as trite and awkward. This chapter is the weakest in the book, with many worrying oversimplifications. Butler refers to expressions of identity and wealth without any engagement with the rapidly expanding literature on contemporary cultural – especially youth – identity in South Africa. While other texts provide overviews of South Africa, these tend to focus more upon specific areas: Deegan on politics or Christopher on geography. Butler's work bridges these more contained texts, offering a broad introduction, but sacrificing depth in the process. This work is a useful entry-level text to the political economy of South Africa, providing a balanced approach which acknowledges both the successes and failures that shape the contemporary situation. It succeeds in summarizing a range of literature and spheres of thought, but does not add to existing knowledge. Read in conjunction with more detailed texts, this book would be suited to introductory work on South Africa.

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ADRIAN GUELKE, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan (pb £18.99 – 0 333 98123 5; hb £55.00 – 0 333 98122 7). 2005, 272 pp.

This book is billed as a 'much needed antidote to recent revisionist attempts to ''rehabilitate'' apartheid'. Guelke attempts to go beyond previous analysis of South African historiography by incorporating consideration of global political and economic developments. The book traverses discussions of South African

racial policy through history and the interaction of domestic and international developments that influenced decision making in sustaining apartheid and then contributed to a transition to democracy.

The book is structured around a series of chapters, each titled with a question. Unfortunately, none of the chapters answers the question set and in some cases the content bears little relevance to the title. In a book that highlights the international element, Guelke brings a range of issues to the fore – changes in US foreign policy, the West's hypocritical balancing of values and interests, comparisons with Nazi Germany, the fall of the Berlin Wall and changes in the Cold War political economy affecting Southern Africa, and the shaping of early policy through interactions with colonial Britain. A number of these prove to be insightful, but analysis remains unsatisfactory in others. The debate on Western hypocrisy is engaging, and his discussion of the ending of the Cold War suggests an area for greater study. But surprisingly little consideration is given to British foreign policy between the 1960s and 1990s. There is also a failure to develop a compelling argument linked to domestic changes and pressures.

On the domestic front, Guelke presents a summary of the changing political situation, but questions remain over his unproblematic treatment of the way in which certain committee findings were selectively used. Political developments are given greater coverage – the transition from Vorster to Botha is well detailed – than socio-economic factors. This trend is evident in the concluding chapter, which focuses upon apartheid's continuing impacts in the post-apartheid era. Discussion of continued economic inequality as part of the 'incomplete transition' (p. 216) recognizes that the 'white' share of economic wealth has declined, and the 'black' share has increased. Here Guelke himself falls into the trap he complains of, that there has been little debate over the new, 'neo-apartheid' order (p. xiv) of economic inequality because of 'the domination of the political system by the ANC with an ideology of non-racialism' (p. xiv). Rather than engage with the challenges of embourgeoisement and the inevitable enriching of a minority middle class in a capitalist society, Guelke proposes a series of abstract questions about the duality of capitalism and poverty without attempting answers. Nor does he ask whether the ANC's actual policy is one of non-racialism or multi-racialism.

Concluding with a comment about the omnipresent question – 'will South Africa follow Zimbabwe?' – Guelke criticizes this approach for isolating the individual state from global developments. Instead, he asserts, one must take account of international developments and 'to make any predictions about South Africa would be folly, since it is evident that the world itself is in flux' (p. 218). For this reviewer, such a conclusion is deeply unsatisfactory: Guelke appears to be writing himself, and many other academics, out of a job. Misgivings are not allayed by presentational errors such as the invitation (p. 167) to review further material on Lijphart's analysis on a page that makes no mention of this text. His remarks relating contemporary events to discussions of the apartheid era – for instance his comments about Tony Blair and the United States (p. 72) – are simply a distraction.

Guelke's statement that 'the role that the international community played on the sidelines was of crucial importance in determining the outcome [the fall of apartheid]' (p. 206) is a decisive conclusion to a book which fails to capture this power throughout. Advertised as a text bringing greater emphasis to the international role in the rise and fall of apartheid, it succeeds to an extent. However, there is lack of detailed analysis of the interaction of international political influences with domestic pressures and developments. If in some

places the book does contribute to a *rethinking*, in others it offers no more than a *re-presentation* of existing ideas.

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FLORENCE EBAM ETTA and SHEILA PARVYN-WAMAHIU (eds), *The Experience with Community Telecentres*, 'Information and Communication Technologies for Development in Africa' series, Volume 2. Ottawa/Dakar: IDRC/CODESRIA (pb £14.95/CAN $24.95 – 1552500063). 2003, 193 pp. (Distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford)

TINA JAMES (ed.), *Networking Institutions of Learning – SchoolNet*, 'Information and Communication Technologies for Development in Africa' series, Volume 3. Ottawa/Dakar: IDRC/CODESRIA (pb £14.95/CAN $24.95 – 155250008X). 2004, 264 pp. (Distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford)

The Experience with Community Telecentres presents the results of a set of studies that examined the effects of community telecentre projects of the Acacia initiative, a programme established in 1997 to promote the use and adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) by communities of sub-Saharan Africa. *Networking Institutions of Learning* explains the benefits and pitfalls experienced by the SchoolNet Africa movement in setting up connected African schools.

Community Telecentres starts off with some confusion over what exactly the authors mean by a telecentre, and after 54 pages of build-up to the evidence-based chapters it becomes clear that the editors have made inadequate efforts to tie together with the contributors a working definition of what exactly a telecentre is. A little improvement comes with Chapter 2, which concisely discusses the considerable constraints on getting high technology to areas that often do not have basic education and healthcare. As is so often the case in the ICT literature, the argument is given for the potential of these technologies to transform, based on the belief that 'telecentres can transform the lives and livelihoods of many in the developing world' (p. xviii), yet examples of novel ICT use cannot be credited to any of the case-study chapters. It is also regrettable that no mention is made of the greater question concerning developmental priorities between basic services and ICT (whatever the potentialities of ICT in helping to bring basic services). Here the study might benefit from a little background on the internal debates that led to the belief that information is all-important, and to the apparent – though unsubstantiated – general consensus that 'the telecentre concept is a valid development tool' (p. xvii). The 'glimpses from the literature' that follow certainly are just that and, while offering much from 1999, the section gives only a scattering of examples from literature written more recently. Much of this would be familiar to those readers to whom the evidence-based chapters appeal, with the result that little up to this point is original or new.

Comparison of the case-study evidence from Mali, Mozambique, Uganda, South Africa and Senegal (Chapters 3 to 7) is difficult because they are unequally weighted: Chapter 4, at ten pages, is a quarter as long as Chapter 5. The much longer chapter is worth reading in its entirety because the reader is treated to the voices of the interviewees, humanizing the issues and bringing