

# TRANS FORMATION

critical  
perspectives  
on  
Southern  
Africa

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## Editorial

This edition of *Transformation* comes soon after post-apartheid South Africa's second general elections. Political analysts often see second elections as distinct points in democratic trajectories, marking the shift from transition to consolidation. It thus seems an appropriate time to review the character of South Africa's democratic transition and assess its potential for addressing the popular concerns that inspired the anti-apartheid struggle. Sufficient time has of course not yet elapsed to enable definitive judgements to be made on the sustainability of the country's democratic experiment. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the ANC's first term in office does provide an opportunity for analysts at least to identify the key characteristics of the transition, and to assess their political implications for the consolidation of democracy.

All the contributors to this edition do this in various ways. Robert Mattes, Helen Taylor and Cherrel Africa analyse a series of post-1994 public opinion surveys to illustrate the electorate's changing views on the ANC's performance in government and how this impacts on their voting intentions. Franco Barchiesi analyses COSATU's responses to the challenges of the post-apartheid era, and its implications for the labour movement in the new millennium. John Saul identifies the neo-liberal economic logic that underlies government policies and programs in the post-1994 period, explores the shifting relations within the tripartite alliance, and the possibilities that are opening for more radical alternative economic trajectories. Roger Southall and Geoff Wood critically explore the political strategies currently available to COSATU and empirically ground this in an analysis of surveys that illustrate COSATU members' views on the ANC's performance in government and its strategic alliance with the labour federation. Finally, Guy Berger assesses the performance of the media in the post-1994 era through a critical analysis of the four major theoretical perspectives on the role of the media in South Africa's democracy.

The five contributions to this edition do not in any way share a unanimity on the trajectory and future of South Africa's transition. Indeed, their