FW De Klerk

– Explaining the Policy Change Preceding the South African Transition to Democracy

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Abstract

On the 2nd of February 1990, the South African Nationalist Party leader, President FW De Klerk, announced the end of the apartheid system and the start of the South African transition to democracy. By doing so, he radically changed from a hard line policy of separate development to a soft line policy of negotiation. In this thesis, we use theories of decision-making, such as Political Learning and Rational Actors Model, to analyze the reasons behind the policy change. These theories themselves, do not explain the policy change. We find, based upon the results of a literature study, that the policy change of FW De Klerk was an outcome of political learning and rational action in combination with the downfall of communism and the sudden death of then president PW Botha.

Keywords: FW De Klerk, Fall of Apartheid, Policy Change, Political Learning, Rational Action

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1 Introduction

A fascinating aspect of politics is the role that a conscious committed actor can play. That an individual changes his beliefs and opinions and breaks up with his and his surroundings postures can have immense consequences for a nation and its citizens. The consequences of such a change can be immense if they occur in a person with huge political influence. The phenomenon is often referred to as policy change and it is an exciting field of research.

FW de Klerk was born and raised in an environment deeply connected with the Afrikaner nationalist sphere that created and implemented the segregating racist system named apartheid. He followed in his father's footsteps, started a political career and worked his way up on the ranks of the National Party hierarchy. Even during the last years of apartheid he appeared to be a hawk, a conservative hardliner, a guardian of the prevailing system that showed no ambition of reforms. Hence, the surprise amongst foreign political actors and opposition leaders was great when he in his inauguration speech as President of the republic on 2 February 1990 agitated for a democratic South Africa and announced numerous reforms. Reforms that would dismantle the prevailing apartheid system and that meant the release of several political prisoners, including the ANC-leader Nelson Mandela.

The appointment of De Klerk as president was if not the start of, clearly the revival of the halted transitional process that would lead to democracy and the take over of presidency by Nelson Mandela four years later. What had happened? The seemingly inconsistent actions by De Klerk have caught our attention and in this thesis, we aim to unravel the reasons behind the policy change by FW De Klerk. Was he the firm conservative political hawk that he appeared to be before the political u-turn? Alternatively, was he a pragmatic politician that adjusted to the current situation and acted coherently?

1.1 Statement of Purpose

Policy change constitutes a complex field of study where in most cases there is no absolute truth to be presented. By the use of existing theories, we wish to explain the de Klerk policy change preceding the South African transition from a system built on apartheid to democracy. We aim not to present the absolute truth of the de Klerk policy change, but to deliver a far-reaching explanation of the crucial reasons behind the decision that changed the lives of the people off South Africa. Thus, this thesis aims to provide an answer to the following problem:

- How can we explain and understand the F.W de Klerk decision to abandon apartheid and to start the South African transition to democracy in 1989?

Knowing why political actors make the choices they make – for example to make a policy change – students of political change can explain the various positions actors take in negotiations and make some tentative predictions about the outcome. By studying the counterparts in an ongoing negotiation, students can evaluate the probability for democracy as the final outcome. Hence, there are good reasons for further research on policy change within the field of political science. To our knowledge, there is no previous study that with our specific approach, examines the policy change of the South African leader.

1.2   Method and Material

The character of the study is *disciplined-configurative* (Eckstein 1975). That means we have used existing theories in order to explain the case. The case is the South African transition to democracy. The study has the form of a literature study, mainly based on secondary material in form of published articles and books. The material used in the study has been obtained using the National Library of Sweden catalogue LIBRIS and the Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN) article database of Lund University Libraries.

By help of motive studies, we have tried to map the various considerations de Klerk might have done. We have paid regard to the motivations explicitly expressed by de Klerk and to these added the conceivable motives we have found. Hence, not only explicit motives have been considered, but also implicit motives not expressed by de Klerk. The motivations have then been used in an attempt to construct the De Klerk calculus of decision and to explain the De Klerk decision by use of the core concepts of the Rational Actors Model. We have also used theory of political learning to explain the policy change of FW De Klerk as an outcome of learning.

Well aware of the necessity of a critical approach we have used the de Klerk autobiography *The Last Trek- A new Beginning* and the Nelson Mandela autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. By identifying the turning points, our wish was to obtain a fair and non-subjective picture of the nationalist party leader's intentions. Nevertheless, we cannot escape the fact that we, by material selection and personal inferences, have marked the results of the research project. We recognize the subjectivity in our results from both the autobiographies as well as the secondary sources.

1.3   Theoretical Approach

We consider the transition to democracy in South Africa, as one where the transition theory presented by O'Donner and Schmitter presented in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (1986) is particularly applicable. We therefore take off in this actor-based theory by considering that De Klerk constitutes such a conscious committed actor who promoted and lead the transition to democracy as leader of the prevailing apartheid regime. Therefore our study has no ambitions of examining to which extent the democratization in South Africa can be attributed to the leadership of De Klerk.

We analyze the behaviour and actions by de Klerk by using theories on individual acting in politics such as *policy change* and *decision-making* theories. It was our pre-understanding that the actions of Mr De Klerk were the result of either a rational calculated action or a change in beliefs on a personal level. We therefore found it fruitful to look for support in models such as the RAM (Rational Actors Model) presented by Graham Allison and the concept of Political learning presented by Jack Levy. These theories were originally developed to be able explain foreign policy change, but can also be applied to our case.

1.4   Assumptions and Limitations

To study the democratic transition that followed the release of Nelson Mandela may be fascinating as well as fruitful. Yet we have limited our study only to investigating the FW de Klerk role in the initial phase of the South African democratic reforms. In terms of time this means that we concentrate on the events just before and after the well-known de Klerk Rubicon-speech of February 1990 and the following release of Nelson Mandela. Focus will be on the de Klerk policy change. What preceded the decision? Was it a result of a rational calculus, a pragmatic approach, or had De Klerk per se changed from the advocate of apartheid he once was, to be a true democrat? Due to the time restrictions, we concluded that there was no scope for doing a complete motive study by using the model by Axel Hadenius (1983). Instead, we opted for a reduced implementation of the model.

We make the assumption that de Klerk took a leading part in the South African transition to democracy and will therefore put no effort in investigating how and to which extent he was important to the outcome of the transition. By support of de Klerk's own words and the de facto South African transition to democracy, we assume that de Klerk in fact has undergone a factual policy

change. By policy change, we mean a reversal in attitude or (political) point of view.

1.5 Dispositions

With chapter one coming to an end, this thesis is divided into six additional parts. In order to understand the de Klerk policy change one has to be familiar with the political climate of South Africa in the late 1980s. Thus in chapter 2 there is an introduction to South African politics and the apartheid system, followed by a presentation of FW de Klerk. Focus is on the characteristics of apartheid as political system and de Klerk as political leader. In chapter three we take off in transition theory, work us through theory of motive studies and end up in theory of rational action and political learning. Chapter four contains an introduction to the then prevailing situation of South Africa, where a number of structural reasons for the abolish of the apartheid system are identified. In chapter five and six, we make use of the theories presented in chapter three to explain FW de Klerk's policy change as a result of: 1) Political learning 2) Rational acting. Chapter seven includes summarizing conclusions.

2 Empirical Background

2.1 South African History and Politics

The white colonisation of South Africa was first initiated by the Dutch claim of Table Bay in 1652. The early purpose was not to form a colony, but to establish a victualing station on behalf of the Dutch East India Company. For most of the 17th and 18th centuries, the settlement was a Dutch possession. In 1787, Great Britain seized the Cape of Good Hope area, the Dutch declared bankruptcy and the Cape Colony was annexed in 1805. The discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886 intensified the subjugation of the natives and encouraged immigration and economic growth. The Boers successfully resisted British encroachments during the First Boer War (1880–1881), but the British later returned in great numbers and gained full sovereignty of the South African Republics at the end of the second Boer War in 1902. After four years of negotiations, the Union of South Africa was formed in May 31, 1910, exactly eight years after the Second Boer War.

The modern South African state was established in 1910 on a unitary rather than federal basis, though with functions devoted to four white provincial assemblies (Glaser 2001:85). In constitutional terms, the government had a British-style parliamentary system where, except for the Cape region, the electorate was confined to whites. During the first fifty years of South Africa's existence as a political entity, the most important changes to the constitution were changes in the franchise. In the 1930s African voters in the Cape region lost the franchise and in the 1950s coloured people in the same region were no longer entitled to vote.

The 1910-1989 South African state combined features of both a liberal-democratic and an authoritarian state (ibid.). The arbitrary behaviour of agents of the state seemingly unconstrained by law and the manner in which the states racial politics affected the lives of its citizens can be used to make the assertion that South Africa at the time even was a totalitarian state. But at the same time as the ultimate control of African affairs rested firmly with white controlled departmental bureaucracies at the centre, the state was no single entity (Glaser 2001:75). From the 1920s reserve-based Africans where placed under the authority of state-backed traditional leaders and in the 1960s a range of functions and powers were transferred to, formally independent, African national states ("Homelands"). In the 1970s the state become more segmented as functions and

later powers were devolved also to African, coloured and Indian municipal bodies.

As Glaser argues the South African state 1910-1989 was unique in the aspect of being structured on the basis of a formalized system of racial difference and hierarchy, but not in combining features of both a liberal-democratic and an authoritarian state (2001:85). Yet scholars disagree over the democratic components being artificial or real. The most obvious evidence for the period's non-democratic form of government is the fact that the Afrikaner nationalist movement in the 1930s and 1940s resembled European fascist and Nazi movements (ibid.). In addition, Afrikaner nationalists sympathized with Germany during the Second World War. At the same time, the *Volkstaat* pictured by many in the nationalist movement was never fully fascist and was renounced by the party in 1942. Furthermore, there was Afrikaner traditionalists who were suspicious of foreign doctrines like fascism and many sympathized with Germany mainly for anti-British reasons (Glaser 2001:86).

In power after 1948 Afrikaner nationalists preserved white parliamentary democracy and even if it was a "Herrenwolk" democracy reserved for the English and Afrikaner parties, its field of operational could not be entirely contained within the white society. But at the same time the white political parties had no interest in a racially inclusive parliamentary democracy, as it provided incentive for both English and Afrikaner parties to compete for black voters (Glaser 2001:91). A political factor of significant importance in creating space for opposition to the government after 1948 was the persistence of ethnic divisions among whites (Guelke 2005:23). The abyss between Afrikaners and the English-speaking white community prevented the government from achieving complete political hegemony over the society, as it was more difficult to take action against white opponents than opponents that came from the communities without the right to vote.

In 1961, the Union of South Africa was transformed to the Republic of South Africa by the installation of President Charles Robberts Swart. The only substantial constitutional change was the replacement of the Governor-General with the State President as head of state (Guelke 2005:22). Of greater importance, for how the country was governed in the 1970s and 1980s, was the policy of granting independence to ethnically based African homelands. Further constitutional change was made in the 1980s with the adoption of the tricameral system of government. At the same time as the presidency was transformed into an executive post in 1983, the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act established a House of Representatives to be elected by coloured voters and a House of Delegates to be elected by the country's Indian minority.

2.2   Evolution of the Apartheid System

The ideas of separate development were deeply rooted in the history of South Africa even long before the implementation of the completely separating, discriminating and racist legal system of apartheid in the middle of the 20th century. Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for separateness, and became the slogan of the National Party in general election of 1948. The term had been used earlier in debates about racial policy but then in a more naive approach advocating separate development of different races (Guelke 2005:3).

The Natives land act from 1913, which reserved a major part of the land for whites, was one of the first and one of the most important of the racist laws that formed the segregated South Africa. The blacks who were a majority of the population were assigned to a mere 9% of the country (ibid: 65). The creation of the law was a result of the peace treaty between the Afrikaner Boers and the English after the second Anglo-Boer war. After the end of World War II however, the United Party government and its leader Prime Minister Jan Smuts dispersed the enforcement of these laws. Smuts also set up the Fagan commission to investigate changes to the system. The commission submitted a report in favour of a clean up of discriminatory laws and an end to the segregation. The right wing Afrikaner National Party didn't agree and based on their own investigation, the Sauer Commission, on the matter they developed the concept of apartheid which meant an even stricter tightening-up of segregation and racial discrimination (Glaser 2001:96; Guelke 2005:85).

Afrikaner nationalism flourished as the white South Africans feared about the African urbanisation and its consequences for the labour market and the white political domination. When Jan Smuts proposed that South Africa should join the allies during the Second World War, the unity of his United Party ceased to be. The political opponents broke out and revived the National Party. The opponents were lead by DF Malan and consisted of a group of prominent Afrikaner nationalists with roots in the Broederbond, a fraternal organization which promotes the interests of Afrikaners and that was based on the principle of Baaskap (domination) which claimed white supremacy and that the Afrikaners where destined to rule South Africa (Beck 2000:126). Hence, the revived National Party was against South African involvement in WWII at least on the side of the Allies.

The legal system that was introduced after the National Party victory institutionalised the apartheid that per se ruled in South Africa through numerous racial segregation policies. According to Guelke, these policies can be divided into two aspects. The first, the *grand apartheid* aspect consisted of laws with the ambitious objective to territorially separate the different races and the *petty apartheid* which expanded the grand idea of apartheid to comprise meticulous laws that dictated the day to day life for millions of black South Africans (Guelke

2005:27). The grand idea of apartheid has it roots in Dutch and British colonialism (Glaser 2001:27.30) and the addition of the petty apartheid laws by the National Party were influenced by contemporary Nazi and racist regimes and their Social Darwinist ideas.

2.2.1 Petty Apartheid and Grand Apartheid

The petty apartheid laws consisted of laws that prohibited mixed marriage and mixed sexual relations between different races, laws that reduced black peoples labour rights and strongly restricted the mobility of non-whites by prohibiting them from staying in various areas. The Separate Amenities Act of 1953 created, among other things, separate beaches, buses, hospitals, schools, and even park benches. Blacks were also compelled to carry identity documents at all times and were prohibited from staying in town without granted permission.

One of the similarities with the Nazi regime of Germany was the implementation of the Population Registration Act in 1950 where the racial classification system that reminded of the Nuremberg laws was created. The Population Registration act was the foundation of apartheid as it established the "distinct racial categorization of the population according to subjective interpretation of reputation and 'appearance'" (Sisk 1998:105). To this came the laws that forbid political engagement of blacks.

At the dawn of the 1960s, the NP changed the direction of its apartheid policy to focus on the grand apartheid, the policies of separate development. This included the creation of the so-called homelands to which the different groups of blacks were adhered. The man behind this extensive programme of separate development was Hendrik Verwoerd who became prime minister in 1959. Verwoerd is seen as the architect behind the apartheid system and his ideological blueprint envisaged a South Africa without African citizens (Guelke 2005:28). The blacks would lose their South African citizenship through association with a homeland. Still 87 per cent of the land was reserved for the white population. The National Party claimed that the separate development policy was a way to secure each group their rights to self-determination, cultural and political rights within their 'own' territory. This 'generosity' was not appreciated by blacks especially not since it was combined with a forced removal of the blacks residing in the "wrong" area (Marx 1998:107). When the protests led to violence, Verwoerd banned the major anti-apartheid organisations. Among them were the ANC, the African National Congress. Verwoerd used the strong relations of the ANC to the already banned communist party and the Soviet Union as a threat to unify the whites. He also declared a state of emergency, giving security forces the right to detain people without trial.

After the assassination of Verwoerd, committed by a Greek immigrant during a parliament session in 1966, John Vorster succeeded him. He made no particular changes to the apartheid policy but he sought to strengthen South African relations with is neighbour countries by allowing their diplomatic staff to live in white areas (Guelke 2005:115). The apartheid system was left intact and four of

the homelands gained independence, but failed to achieve international recognition. The aim of the establishment and the independence of the homelands was to deprive the blacks of their South African citizenship and make whites the majority of the South African citizens. The establishment of the homelands was followed by forced removals of people who inhabited other areas than the ones designated for them in the legal system.

2.2.2   Reformed Apartheid

With the departure of John Vorster in 1978, South Africa did not only get a new leader in General PW Botha, but also a paradigm change in the application of the apartheid system. Botha was minister of defence under John Vorster and retained his bonds with the military and was labelled as a securocrat because of his emphasis on the security forces. As a leader PW Botha had a very authoritarian style which led him into feuds with political allies and opponents.

Some of the petty apartheid laws as the Prohibition of mixed marriages act was abolished and others, among them the Group Areas Acts was relaxed (Marx 1998:110f). Botha also led the country to a new constitution with a tri-cameral parliament where the coloured and Indian minority populations got limited influence. Botha tried to win legitimacy for the segregated system through changing it but still retaining it's most important element: maintenance of white control (Sisk 1995:67).

Though Botha deemed apartheid as outdated (Marx 1998:111) he still wanted to retain the unity of the National Party by pleasing both the reformist *verligtes* and the hard line *verkramptes*. He did not succeed in this matter and the right wing Conservative Party was formed by the right-wingers of the National Party in 1985. Botha had intentions of reforms and planned to announce them in what is called the Rubicon speech in 1985. PW Botha was upset over the international involvement on the issue and therefore he refused to give under for the pressure laid on him by the international community. (Guelke 2005:149. The speech was dominated by resent against the international community that overshadowed what was the abandonment of the Verwoerdian apartheid system. De Klerk calls this episode: "probably the greatest communication disaster in South African history" (1998:103). This was typical for the leadership of PW Botha. His stubbornness and pride took over and left reason behind. The years that followed the failed Rubicon speech became the most violent so far (Sisk 1995:65). This did not help to increase the reform eagerness of the securocrat PW Botha. He linked reform and security tightly together, the one required the other.

Botha's political career got an abrupt ending as he suffered from a stroke in the beginning of 1989. Even though he clenched the presidential chair, he finally had to give in to the pressure from his fellow National Party politicians and hand over the baton to FW De Klerk. A leadership change that produced a breakthrough in the democratization of South Africa that had a political stalemate (Sisk1995:75)

2.3 FW De Klerk

When writing an essay with such a strong focus on a specific political actor we find it fruitful to preset at least a summarised biography. For those who share our fascination for the character of FW De Klerk and his political achievements we recommend reading his autobiography *The Last Trek – a new beginning*. A 'trek' is Afrikaans and means "long hard journey". It is an expression used to describe epic moments in the Afrikaner history and especially the migration of the Afrikaners in mid 19th century that is referred to as *the Great Trek*. We will here give you the brief version of the life that lead to the South African "miracle" – the transition from apartheid to democracy without civil war.

Frederik Wilhelm de Klerk was born in Johannesburg in 1936 into a family deeply involved in the history of Afrikaner nationalism. His father Jan de Klerk was a prominent NP politician who served as cabinet minister1954-1967 with a variety of portfolios, amongst them the home affairs and education and as such he was adopting and implementing the policies of apartheid which his son FW were to abolish some decades later.

De Klerk finished high school in Krugersdorf and went on to the Potchefstroom University where he graduated with a combined BA/LLB in Law 1958. In his younger years De Klerk was a member of the Voortrekkers, the Afrikaans equivalent of the boy scouts which deepened his connection to the culture and history of Afrikaners. He also became a member of the NP Youth League – just a confirmation of the fact that he was practically born into politics. During his University years, he was engaged into different student organisations and showed his leader abilities. After graduating, De Klerk moved to serve as articled clerk to get the two years experience needed to be attorney. As attorney he worked in Vereeniging, in a firm which he bought with another young law practician. De Klerk worked as a full-time attorney for 12 years working with company and mercantile law.

FW De Klerk continued his engagement in the National Party. He took part in the successful campaign for the yes-vote in the referendum on the question whether South Africa should become a republic and by that cutting the ropes with the British monarchy. He was actively involved in the local structures of the NP and became its local leader. In 1972, he was offered the position as professor of Administrative Law at Potchefstroom University, but declined as he had decided to enter active politics.

He became Member of Parliament later the same year by conquering the seat of Vereeniging. In parliament, he was part of the study groups that focused on justice, labour and home affairs. The proficiency as a debater and having good connections with the National Party leadership made De Klerk's journey to a place in the cabinet a rather painless task. Hence, after only five years as a backbencher in the parliament he joined John Vorster's cabinet as Minister of posts and telecommunications and Social Welfare and Pensions in 1978. During the following 11 years he was responsible for a handful portfolios in Vorster and

his successor PW Botha's governments including Internal Affairs and National Education.

During his years as minister, De Klerk did not reveal any eagerness to reform the apartheid system. Instead, he appeared to be a verkrampte, a rigidly conservative politician guarding the rights of the white minority regime. As Minister of Education, he was a supporter of segregated universities. He was loyal to the party whip. However, when the right wing Andries Treurnicht broke up from the party and formed the Conservative party in 1982, De Klerk was one of the main figures in the political strategy to rid Treurnicht off his duties as National Party leader in Transvaal. This incident led to a big step for De Klerk towards the leadership of the National Party when he succeeded Treurnicht as leader in the important Transvaal province.

In February 1989, de Klerk was elected leader of the National Party and in September 1989 he was elected State President. Six months later, the man who had a reputation of being a political hardliner, surprised many by officially arguing for political reforms. This was the start of the South African transition to democracy.

3 Theoretical Background

3.1 Transition Theory

Theories of democratization aim to find and explain the key elements behind and even the preconditions for determine the prospects of a successful democratization. Earlier literature in this research field focuses mainly on structural factors as decisive for the initiation and outcome of a transition process. This literature includes the works of Martin Lipset where he formulates the *Modernization theory* which in short asserts that the richer a nation is, the greater its chances of developing and sustaining democracy. This causality has by studies that are more recent been changed to a correlation (Grugel 2002:47-50). The other structural theory is *Historical Sociology* which focuses on how the relation between the state and classes shapes the structure political system. *Transition theory* or *Agency approach* focuses on the role that conscious committed actors can play in a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. We see the transition theory as the one of three distinct approaches in democratization research field that provides a credible explanation of the South African miracle: the transition.

One of the greatest contributions to the transition theory line of research is *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule,* which was published by Schmitter, O'Donnell and Whitehead (1986). The thesis presented in this work is that structural conditions do not determine the future of a country. Economic development does not guarantee a transition to democracy. It can facilitate the transition but it will not take place by itself.

The actor-based theories use theories on political actions such as the theory political learning or the Rational Actors Model to explain democratization. This means that it offers "a 'political' explanation of the democratization" (Grugel 2002:58). Democratization is seen as a process of policy changes. Policy changes that are the result of rational choice, which means that the actors preferences result in the adopted strategies of the process.

Both the authoritarian regime and the democratic opposition can generally be divided into two subgroups; One more ideologically rigid, principled group of people that are opposed to negotiations, labelled hard-liners and one more compromise friendly or reform minded group of people that advocate negotiations instead of violence and rattle of arms, labelled soft-liners (O'Donnell, Schmitter 1986:16).

The transition theory emphasizes the pact making between the authoritarian and the democratic forces. This is often the case when a new liberalising, soft-
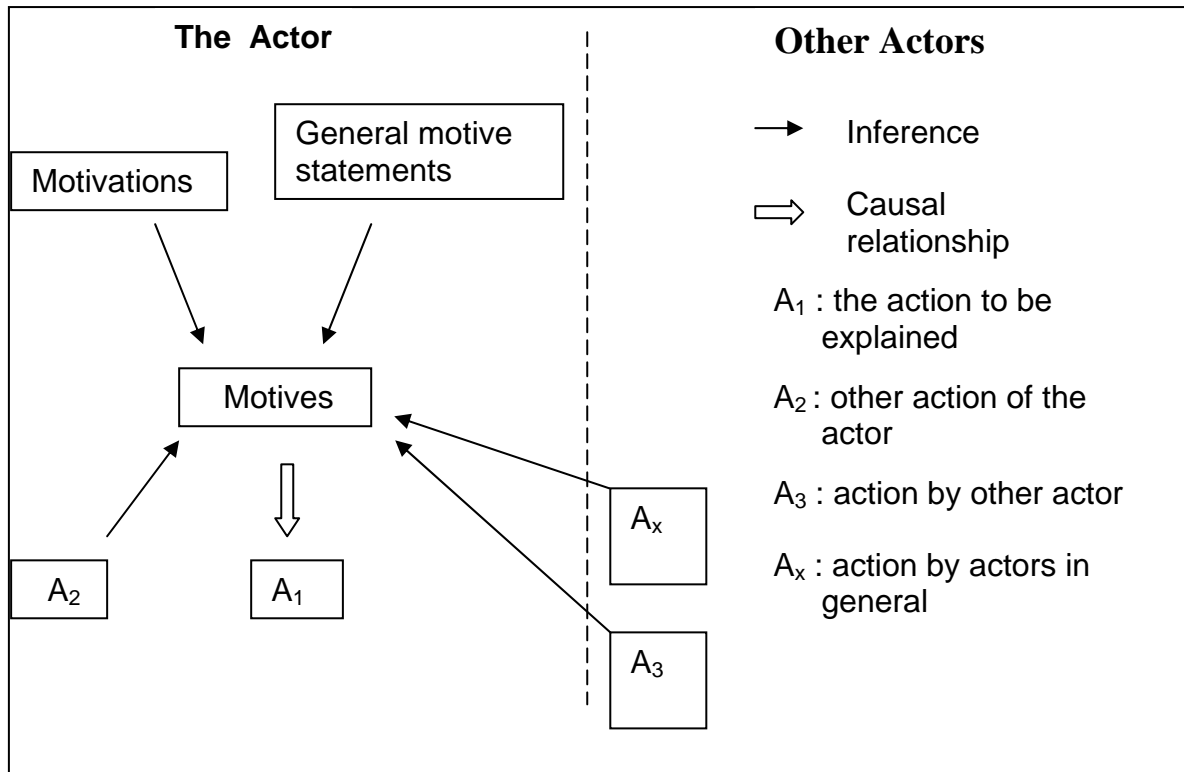
line, regime comes into power with the realization that changes are needed for its own security (Sisk 1995:39). Leading the democratization process can thus be rational for the authoritarian rulers as they can influence their constitutional future in a way that would not be possible after a transition evoked by a revolution.

3.2   Motive Studies

Motive studies aims to map the conscious considerations made by an actor before a decision or action is made (Esaiasson 2004:317). What is the purpose of the act? Which are the intentions? What are the goals and what is included in the actor's calculus of decision? Given that the act is known, the objective of the motive study consists in the discovery of the motives that compose the explanatory factor (Hadenius 1983:125). It precedes through adduction of various kinds of empirical data (motive indicators) and by means of the information conveyed by these indicators the researcher draw an inference from diverse data to the motive. The motives found will then help to explain the action. Motive studies are commonly used within social sciences, although the researcher will never be able to prove that the study object's true motives have been found. Hence, motive studies will not give us an indisputable explanation of the research problem.

Nonetheless, some useful rules for motive studies do exist. In his article *The Verification of Motives* Axel Hadenius presents a relatively simple model that can be used by the researcher (1983:125-136). The motive that is to explain the action (A_1) is derived from other action by the actor (A_2), action by other actor(s) (A_3), action by actors in general (A_X), motivations stated by the actor and general motive assumptions. Motivations may be described as direct motive sources if they make an explicit statement about the action that is to be explained but can also be inferred from other, more indirect statements such as motivations expressed in more general terms (Hadenius 1983:127). General statements are to be found in all political spheres and can come to our notice through a diversity of material. Further motives can also be derived from action. As Hadenius argues inferences can be drawn from actions made by the actor (A_2) because it is intuitively understood that certain actions are such as to declare in part why they are performed (1983:128). Also from studying actions by other actors (A_3) of the same type and in the same context, inferences can be drawn about the motives. A states decision to go to war can for example be explained by the fact that other states of the like have made the same decision. Finally by knowledge of the fact that certain acts (A_X) usually have a certain objective, inferences can be drawn of the actor's motive when such an act is committed.

The Actor | **Other Actors**

Motivations

General motive statements

Motives

A_2

A_1

A_x

A_3

→ Inference

⇒ Causal relationship

A_1 : the action to be explained

A_2 : other action of the actor

A_3 : action by other actor

A_x : action by actors in general

Several methods can be used in order to test the validity of the research. A general problem in explanations of intent is that they do not permit a primary observation of the explanatory factor per se. The explanatory factor is a mental phenomenon that occurs in the individual and cannot be observed. Hadenius presents a number of rules for testing the validity that can be applied to different motive sources (1983:137f). The perhaps easiest method, frequently used within motive studies, is to test the correspondence between motive statements and action.

In order to extend the study and enhance the explanatory power, "objective" conditions can also be included in the study (Esaiasson 2004: 318). The "objective" conditions are important to the study in that it decides the actor's possible choices of action. For example, structural changes in world politics can create opportunities and alternatives of action that were not considered possible before. The object of the study can be a single actor as well as a state, party, government, company or interest organization.
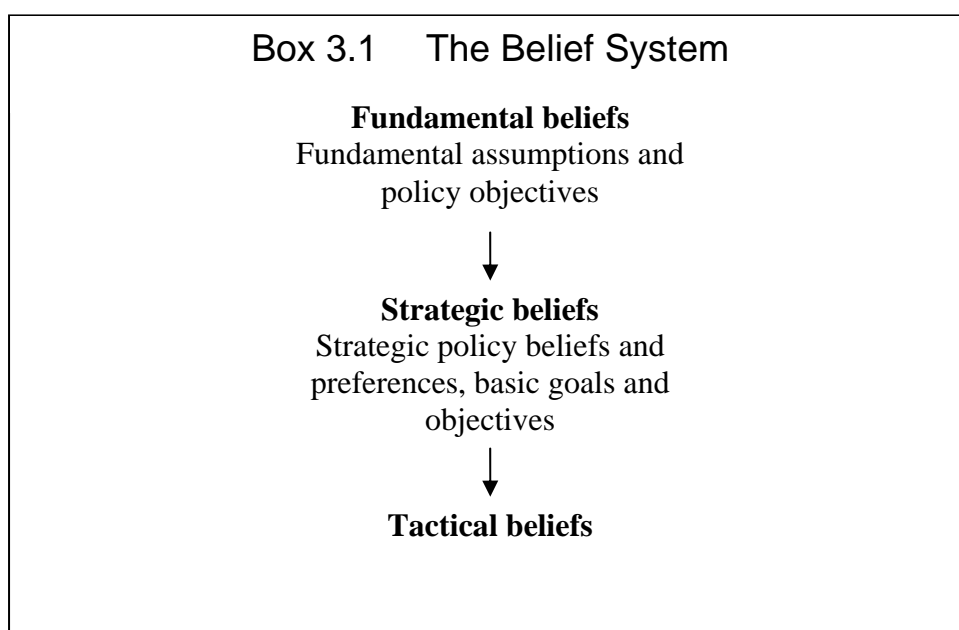
3.3 Political Learning

There is yet no unified theory of learning, and psychology has not identified the conditions that predict when learning is likely to occur. The main problem is that most of the theories within psychology are not able to explain how and why learning occurs in real life. "Most psychological theories are not very useful in specifying the dynamic of learning, mainly because they analyze learning within highly structured environments" (Gross Stein 1994:170). For example, learning

theorists in educational and experimental psychology treat learning as a change in the probability of a specified response in the face of changing reward contingencies. To be able to prove that learning in fact has happened the responses must be pre-known to the researcher. Hence, this concept of learning is not helpful in an environment where appropriate responses are unknown or disputed.

The political scientist Jack Levy defines learning as a change of beliefs, or the development of new beliefs, skills or procedures as a result of observation and interpretation of experience (Levy 1994:283). Although most of the literature does also include policy change, an improved understanding of the world and an increasingly complex cognitive structure in the definition of learning, Levy tries to keep his definition slim. He argues that learning does not have to mean policy change because not all learning is translated into policy change and not all policy change is a result of learning (Levy 1994:290). For that reason, Levy claims, there is no need to include policy change in the definition of learning. The researcher do better in first focusing on the study object's set of beliefs and then investigate if the change of beliefs can be linked to the policy change of the object.

Beliefs can be understood as propositions that policy makers hold to be true, even if they cannot be verified. In literature on cognitive theory a persons set of beliefs, or belief system, is commonly divided into subgroups; by Alexander George into philosophical and instrumental beliefs and by Phillip Tetlock into fundamental, strategic and tactical beliefs (George p.199-205, Tetlock p.27-31). The beliefs are hierarchically organized with assumptions and premises regarding the fundamental nature of politics/political conflict, and one's opponents at the top and beliefs about strategy and tactics concerning political action, risk taking and timing at the bottom (see Box 3.1). Tetlock argues that because learning at the strategic and especially the fundamental level is so psychologically difficult that it is likely to occur only in conjunction with massive personnel shifts, that most learning takes place at the tactical level (Tetlock p.27-31).

Box 3.1   The Belief System

Fundamental beliefs
Fundamental assumptions and
policy objectives

↓

Strategic beliefs
Strategic policy beliefs and
preferences, basic goals and
objectives

↓

Tactical beliefs

Cognitive theory is based on the premises that central beliefs are the most consequential in understanding the process of perception and cognition. The more central the beliefs, the more stable and resistant it is to change (Rosati 1995:63). However, beyond this consensus, theory of cognitive consistency and schema theory differ on the likelihood and nature of attitudinal change. Cognitive consistency stresses the overall rigidity of beliefs and should change occur, the abrupt and all-encompassing nature of the belief system change (ibid.). That means the more coherent and interconnected belief system, the more resistant to change and, should change occur, the more likely that it will be abrupt and profound. Schema theory, on the other hand, stipulates that beliefs are much more isolated and inconsistent with each other. Thus, according to schema theorists, the belief system is less resistant and more open to a gradual change over time.

3.4   Rational Actors Model

Based on the major assumption that people seek ego gratification, scholars of economics, political science, sociology and psychology study human behaviour as a purposive, goal-directed activity. Models of rational action are much influenced by economics theory of Rational Choice where rational consumers purchase the amount of goods, A, B or C, that maximizes their utility function and rational firms produce at a point that maximizes profit. In the same way, in rational action theories, rational decision-makers are assumed to make the decisions that to the uttermost satisfy their own personal interests. To be able to choose the alternative that represents the best outcome the actor need to be perfectly informed of the situation.

Rational Actors Models are based on the following core concepts:

1.   Goals and objectives. The interests and values of the agent are translated into a "pay-off" or "utility" or "preference" function, which represents the desirability or utility of alternative sets of consequences. A the outset of the decision problem, the agent has a payoff function which ranks all possible sets of consequences in terms of her or his values and objectives. Each bundle of consequences will also contain a number of side effects. At a minimum the agent is expected to be able to rank in order of preference each possible set of consequences that might result from a particular action.
2.   Alternatives. The rational agent must choose among a set of alternatives displayed before her or him in a particular situation. The alternative courses of action may include more than a simple act, but the specification of a course of action must be sufficiently precise to differentiate it from other alternatives.
3.   Consequences. To each alternative is attached a set of consequences or outcomes of choice that will ensue if that particular alternative is chosen.
4.   Choice. Rational choice consists simply of selecting that alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decision makers payoff function.

(Source: Graham Allison 1999 Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis p.18)

Argued by Allison the concept of rationality is important because if a person acts rationally, his behaviour can be explained in terms of the goals he is trying to achieve. Thus, the concept of rational behaviour is often a very explanatory principle in that it accounts for a large number of empirical facts about people's behaviour in terms of a few simple assumptions about the goals or ends people are trying to achieve (Allison 1999:19). Nevertheless, the simplicity of the model does also constitute its weakness. As mentioned above a prerequisite for rational choice is the actor having perfect information. In order to be able to rank the consequences of his actions the actor has to be perfectly aware of all the possible alternatives and their likely outcomes. Hence, the model demands a lot of the object in focus of the study.

4 Reasons for Change

In this chapter, we will present four reasons that all were important to the De Klerk decision to abolish apartheid and to start negotiations for democracy. The black resistance, sanctions directed against South Africa, the precarious social/economic situation and the fall of communism were all important in shaping the de Klerk calculus of decision.

4.1 The Significance of Black Resistance

> "The most serious problem that we [The National Party, our remark] experienced during my presidency was the insidious and pervasive violence that afflicted the country[…]The continuing violence made it more important than ever to press on with the negotiation process" (De Klerk 1998:193,205).

Analysts have debated the importance of black resistance in contributing to crisis that resulted in policy shifts in the 1940s and the 1970s and 1980s. Liberal political historians have largely explained the policy changes in intra-white electoral terms at the same time as a range of Marxist analysts have been keen to stress the importance of the black struggle for freedom (Glaser 2001:196). According to a wide range of writers, not only Marxist or radical, the black mass opposition was a crucial factor in persuading the white regime to dismantle racial laws and negotiate its own demise. What part did the black resistance play in the downfall of apartheid?

Nelson Mandela and the ANC never had the power to overthrow the oppressing system themselves. The South African state had its easily mobilized resources of self-defence, which beat off attacks and dissuaded prospective attackers. As a last resort, the state even had the option of deploying nuclear and biological weapons (Glaser 2001:197). Of course the blacks had their own weapons, but it was always more difficult to train large number of workers than to mobilize the South African state's firepower.

Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the black resistance played a vital role in the downfall of the system. The black resistance, dated from 1912 when the ANC was formed, turned to guerrilla warfare in the 1960s and caused much of the violence that erupted in the late 1980s (Baker, 1990:10). In 1989 the struggle against the armed ANC was a dearly expense for the South African Ministry of Defence. Four years earlier President Botha had announced reforms but in practice, nothing was made. The country was on the brink of a civil war. If the

government wanted to cut the expenses and stop the violence there was no other alternative than to rethink the apartheid system and start to negotiate.

Daryl Glaser asserts that even if the black majority before the 1990s never had more than a peripheral role in the South African state apparatus itself, it is clear that much of the white policy-making in the twentieth century was about blacks (2001:196). Because black resistance at least had an impact on the white imagination, it could casually affect the white political behaviour. Even if the protests did not make the white rulers take the blacks into consideration, the black resistance caused whites to do what they would not otherwise have done.

4.2   The Significance of International Pressure

"Obviously, sanctions also did serious damage to the country. Their general effects were to isolate the South African economy […] In many respects the sanctions appeared to achieve the opposite effect of their intention […]On the whole, I believe that sanctions did more to delay the process of transformation than they did to advance it."(De Klerk 1998:70)

On the 6th of November 1962, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 1761 condemning South African apartheid policies. The next year the United Nations Security Council established a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa, which was followed by a mandatory in November 1977. Two more resolutions, condemning the apartheid policies, were passed in 1978 and 1983. In the 1980s a significant divestment movement started, pressuring investors not to invest in South African companies or companies that did business with South Africa. The South African culture and tourism were boycotted and the country became increasingly isolated internationally.

Both De Klerk and Mandela are ambivalent about the effects of the sanctions because of the South African economy's independency at the time. For example, the arms embargo led to South Africa establishing its own highly sophisticated armaments industry and disinvestment by foreign multinational companies enabled the South African managers to buy out the local subsidiaries at bargain prices. The new owners continued to produce exactly the same products, sometimes on a more profitable basis. As argued by Guelke, sanctions were far from being the only reason why the government of de Klerk committed itself in 1990 to negotiations with the ANC on the future of South Africa" (Guelke 2005:197-198).

However, naturally the imposed sanctions and the international pressure influenced the South African leaders. If nothing more, it constituted a legible indication that the rest of the world did not tolerate the South African race-discrimination. Dr Pauline H. Baker writes: "Debt, inflation, a depressed gold price, disinvestment, and sanctions – the latter as much a *psychological* [our italicization] as a financial blow – produced protracted recession, capital flight, and a profound sense of of isolation" (1990:9). Perhaps the arms embargos did not

manage to stop the violence and perhaps the economic sanctions had little impact on the South African economy in specific. However, at least the sanctions forced the South African leaders to question the apartheid system

4.3 The Social/Economic Inequality and Economic Decline

> "Our economy, had been stagnation for almost a decade and the lack of growth had already become a source of social unrest." (De Klerk 1998:183)

The ultimate paradox of apartheid as an ideology and political system was the fundamental contradiction between the integrationist needs of a modernizing and rapidly industrializing economy and the political policy of "separate development" (Sisk 1995:57). At the same time as the government sought to consign black South Africans to independent self-governing states, or "homelands", the economy demanded their labour in "white" urban areas. Naturally, the separate development policy meant significant economic inequalities among racial groups and could not be combined with satisfactory economic growth.

By the end of the 1980s, the South African economy was marked by high inflation, declining terms of trade, capital flight, low levels of skilled labour, duplication of services as a result of apartheid policies, high external debt and high personal and corporate income taxes (Sisk 1995:12). Furthermore, some 60.5 percent of blacks were living below the subsistence level of income in South Africa. In the homelands, the rate of poverty among blacks was 81 percent.

As argued by Sisk, to resolve class conflict, South Africa had to forge a new political system *and* ameliorate inequality and deprivation. The economic as well as the social problems were not to be overcome with less than abolish of the apartheid system (Sisk 1995:13). Therefore, there were also economic and social reasons for change.

4.4 The Fall of Communism

> "Within the scope of a few months, one of our main strategic concerns for decades – the Soviet Unions role in southern Africa and its strong influence on the ANC and the SACP[South African Communist Party, our remark] – had all but disappeared. A window had suddenly opened" (De Klerk 1998:160).

One of the ANC's greatest international supporters was the communist regime of the Soviet Union. The South African government saw communism as a particularly dangerous threat against the prevailing apartheid system. Coherently the Verwoerd led cabinet established the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. It banned organizations that supported communism, though it used a wide definition that deemed anyone advocating equality of races. FW de Klerk's predecessor PW Botha took this threat against the National Party's ideology of separate development very seriously. He had built up the South African Defence Force from being rather mediocre to work as the most effective war machine in Southern Africa. The armed forces was used against Soviet supported guerrillas in several of South Africa's neighbour countries. The support and influence of the communist super-power strengthened the ANC and made them an unacceptable negotiation partner. Their opponents emphasized the communist threat to justify white minority rule (Guelke 2005:165).

Therefore, the fall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe affected the political situation in South Africa both in the sense that the threat of communism had been erased, but it also put pressure on the ANC for a negotiated settlement. The lack of military support from Eastern Europe had significantly weakened the ANC's position (Guelke 2005:161).

5 Apartheid System Reassessed: FW De Klerk as a Political Learner

> "We reluctantly had to accept–what the United States Supreme Court had decided in the 1950s– that the concept of separate but equal was unattainable […] As the years passed I became more and more convinced of the necessity of extricating ourselves from this situation–but in a manner that would not lead to a catastrophe for our own people and for all the other peoples of the country." (De Klerk 1998:77f)

During the eighties, the general view of apartheid amongst political scientist was that the situation in South Africa was intolerable and that as there were no prospects of a peaceful solution, a civil war was imminent. With his decision not just to reform but also to abolish the undemocratic system FW de Klerk lead South Africa from apartheid to democracy on a rather peaceful journey. How can we explain the changes of beliefs that preceded the policy change? In this chapter, we will discuss De Klerk as a political learner. We will do so by presenting the different views of apartheid that De Klerk claims to have possessed from his adolescence until the transition.

In the autobiography "The Last Trek – A new beginning" De Klerk describes the atmosphere in which he was brought up and educated. With his father being a leading National Party politician, it is no wonder that De Klerk himself for long had a firm belief in the system and especially in the idea of Separate development which was emphasized in his adolescence. De Klerk describes his and other Afrikaners thoughts in the mid 1950ies:

> "Ultimately we feared that if blacks and whites were to remain within the same system they would, sooner or later, become involved in a struggle for supremacy that would lead to a devastating race war" (De Klerk 1998:16).

At the time, the non-white South Africans were not regarded as a part of the South African nation. It was the Afrikaner nationalists belief that the non-white should find there own political destiny, within their own nations and areas. In 1954 Hans Strijdom, the then prime minister of South Africa, argued that the white man should remain the master of South Africa. He also claimed that the racial separation was in the interest of both blacks and whites. In 1959, the new Prime Minister Verwoerd established the principle that all black people would

have full independence and self-determination within their homelands. De Klerk writes: "He changed the horizontal differentiation of white supremacy to the vertical differentiation of separate development" (Ibid. p.30). The virtual turn of Verwoerd offered a moral solution and gave the national party an idealistic mission (Ibid. p.39). In 1972, when de Klerk first entered parliament, the national party still believed in apartheid. Nevertheless, the reform debate within the party had begun, at least about the future of those groups that did not adhere to a specific homeland: the Indians, the coloureds and the urban blacks.

There were voices for change from within the national party but they met strong opposition from the party's right wing. In a speech, Willem de Klerk (FW's brother) labelled these groups as verligtes and verkramptes. The former was the reform minded and the latter opposed to every attempt to reform the system. These fractions fought a long enduring battle on the influence of National Party policies and lead to the split of the party in 1982. De Klerk places himself in a third more balanced group that welcomed reform but had a more cautious approach than the verligtes (1998:79). The opposition of the hard-liners prevented the then leader of the National party, John Vorster from initiating reforms that would mean the split of the party. Proper reforms were not initiated until PW Botha who reformed the South African parliamentary system giving limited representative power to all groups but blacks succeeded Vorster. He also started to dismantle the petty apartheid laws but these steps where taken in an attempt to raise legitimacy of the system rather than to abolish it and replace it with democracy. In 1985, Botha even offered to release Nelson Mandela from prison but Mandela turned it down in protest of the still prevailing apartheid system.

De Klerk claims that during his time as minister of Home Affairs he came to an understanding of the downsides of the system and realized the difference in practice between the Verwoerdian theory of separate development and the impact that the apartheid system had for ordinary people. The department of Home Affairs was responsible for the Population Registration Act and the work with this core element in the system made de Klerk slowly realize that these laws could not be defended (De Klerk 1998:74). De Klerk writes in his book that by the start of 1989 he saw the concept of separate but equal as unattainable, and that change where necessary but in a controlled manner to prevent a disastrous development of events.

Have the beliefs of De Klerk de facto changed? According to the image of his views rendered in his autobiography, he is definitely what Levy (1994) would call a political learner. The young de Klerk's view on apartheid a vastly different from the view of the De Klerk that delivered the promises of reform on 2nd of February 1990. However, if you would ask De Klerk's most important negotiation partner Nelson Mandela he would probably deliver a different opinion. In his autobiography Long Walk to Freedom, he describes De Klerk as a pragmatic politician rather than a firm ideologist. To Mandela de Klerk probably appeared to be a turncoat and not the true democrat that he claims himself to be (Mandela 1994:550,560).

In fact, Mandela would not be the only person with this suspicion. To observers De Klerk appeared to be a conservative hardliner, a hawk, that did not

have any intentions to abolish the system and if he had any intentions of reform it would be to serve the interests of his own people, in trying to please the international opposition of the system and thereby preserve it. *The Economist* of February 11th 1989 pictures him as "a tough traditionalist who pleases his party by appealing to group interests, i.e. white supremacy". Indeed, under de Klerk, commentators argued, the National Party regime had a long path to tread before it reached its mythical Rubicon because "if de Klerk has liberal leanings, he keeps them well hidden" (*The Economist*, August 19 1989).

However, FW de Klerk showed the doubters and the detractors that they were wrong in questioning his motives. He kept the promises, delivered speeches and thus coherent actions followed unlike what was the case with his predecessor PW Botha. Thus, we claim that De Klerk de facto learned. His belief system did change at least about the sustainability of the apartheid system. The fact that policy change of De Klerk was on such a fundamental level makes it likely to believe that he really is a political learner. In his autobiography, he describes by the above-mentioned events how he gradually changed from a conservative to a reform-minded approach. This conforms well with the schema theory mentioned in Rosati(1995) presented in chapter three that changes in strategic and tactical beliefs can lead to a change in fundamental beliefs. De Klerk went from accepting that the system did not function, that it did not deliver what the Verwoerdian theory of separate development promised, to realizing that the system could not be defended.

In recent interviews De Klerk has expressed himself still in favour of separate development of different ethnic groups, regarding for example the Israel-Palestine question, but he also realize that such a system would not function in the South African demographical context where the outcome became a unjust society (Stengel 2004, Malde 2005). Naturally, these recent words of de Klerk can be questioned. Nevertheless, his actions speak for themselves. The fact that de Klerk was born and raised within the apartheid and the key role he had in the negotiations for democracy shows the change in his beliefs. De Klerk was vital for the South African transition and it is hard to believe that he could have played that role without the willingness for change.

We assert that de Klerk is a political learner but solely the fact that he learned was not enough to generate the policy change. We find support in the research of Jack Levy. In his article *"Learning and Policy change – Sweeping a conceptual minefield* (1994) he argues that political learning does not in it self imply a policy change: "If we study only learning that is followed by policy change, we can not understand when individual learning gets blocked by institutional or political constraints". Hence, a political actor can go through a learning process without this leading to a policy change. Thus, political learning does not deliver all-embracing explanation to why a policy change occurs as other aspects also influence this type of important political decisions. (1994:289f). Actors may learn but can still be prevented from transforming their newly acquired beliefs into policies due to domestic, economic or bureaucratic constrains. Gross-Stein shares this approach in her article "Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as uncommitted thinker and motivated learner". Learning is not enough for a policy

change to take place. Other factors must also intervene. A window of opportunity is created by a change is the above mentioned constrains. In the case of South Africa, two factors coincided, the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and the unforeseen leadership change in the National Party due to the sudden illness of PW Botha.

6   The Calculus of Decision: FW De Klerk as a Rational Actor

Faced with several different ways of acting FW de Klerk in 1990 held the true Rubicon-speech that were to onset the South African transition to democracy. In doing so, he inevitably sacrificed some of his own political power to secure a peaceful process that limited the number of victims of violence compared to what could have been expected in the case of a civil war. Why did FW de Klerk make this decision? Was it an outcome of rationality? In this section, we will see what Rational Actor Models can add to the understanding of the de Klerk policy change.

In the literature, FW de Klerk is often described as a pragmatist politician. For example, Mandela stipulates that De Klerk was more of a pragmatic politician than a firm ideologist (1994:540). Hence, there is reason to believe that one can explain the De Klerk policy change as an outcome of rational decision-making. Timothy Sisk is of the same opinion. Sisk asserts that the choice for negotiation was the result of a reasoned decision taken after a careful consideration of many options (1995:84). According to the cabinet minister Stoffel van der Merwe interviewed by Sisk the decision was a calculated one based on the following three considerations: 1) The apartheid system would never work as it was intended 2) The time was right due to the collapse of communism 3) Negotiations were inevitable and there were no reasons to postpone the decision. Van der Merwe also revealed that the final decision to make the announcement was taken only few days before the crucial speech on 2 February 1990. This shows that the decision was the outcome of a thorough assessment if the different options that de Klerk and the National Party had. The pre-negotiation meeting that de Klerk had with Mandela in December the preceding year helped him in the process of eliminating worse alternatives (ibid.).

If the autobiography is to be trusted, the objective of FW De Klerk, as a politician, has always been to ensure "the best" future for the Afrikaner people. As discussed in chapter three, by the use of Rational Actor Models, people's behaviour can be explained in terms of assumptions about the goals or ends they are trying to achieve. In the case of FW De Klerk, the concern about the own people has made him walk in at least two different directions. For most of the de Klerk political career, to ensure "the best" future for Afrikaners meant the separation of white and non-white people. But, as argued in the previous chapter, by the end of the 1980s the de Klerk view on apartheid had changed. He did no longer believe in the policy of separate development. Consequently, in 1990 "the best" future for the Afrikaners meant to initiate negotiations with the African national congress.

The weakness of the Rational Actors Model is the prerequisite of perfect information. It can be questioned if it is even possible to reach that level of awareness. However, as a key figure in South African politics and leader of the National Party one can presume that De Klerk was if not perfectly informed, at least well informed of the situation. As a result of the above discussion, we assert that the de Klerk policy change in part can be seen as an outcome of the following calculus of decision:

Table 6.1: The De Klerk calculus of decision	
Possible action	**Likely Outcome**
A. Status quo – Keep the prevailing system.	- Continued economic decline - Increased global pressure - Continued violence - Risk of a devastating civil war - Lost support of verligte politicians + Still in power + Gained support of the verkramptes
B. Reform the system	- Increased global pressure - Continued violence - Risk of a devastating civil war - Economic uncertainty - Lost support from both verligtes and verkramptes + Still in power
C. Abolish the apartheid system - Start negotiations	- Risk of black majority rule - Lost support of verkrampte politicians - Lost political power +Ceased global pressure +Ability to influence the transitional process + Opportunity of economic growth + Less violence

The definite consequences of the different options that de Klerk had for his handling of the current situation are not easily anticipated, but in table 6:1 we have presented likely outcomes of each alternative course of action. The favourable ones are marked by a plus sign (+) and the unfavourable ones by a minus sign (-). The first course of action (A) is of course a very unlikely one. Keeping the system as it was would be a step back compared to the policy of De Klerk's predecessor PW Botha who himself offered reforms of the system, similar to the second option (B).This option had earlier showed to be unsuccessful and would imply no lifted sanctions, no ceased violence and continued uncertainty for

the South African economy. Expectations of change could have been dangerous if unsatisfied. With his predecessor's disastrous "Rubicon speech" in mind, De Klerk must have been keen not to upset the masses again (*The Economist*, January 27th 1989) In addition the Nationalist Party and De Klerk risked losing support from both verligtes and verkramptes.

Thus the last option (C) constitutes the most favourable course of action, even if it also implies sacrifices, especially on a personal level. In his biography, De Klerk writes that he and the Nationalist Party were reluctant to change because of the fear of black majority rule (1998:100). The National Party leaders wanted to be sure that in the democratic South Africa, where almost 90 percent of the votes would be confined to non-whites, the whites would still be able to influence the politics. Nevertheless, De Klerk realized that if the system had to be changed, it would be strategic to initiate the process himself. The benefits of a move to start negotiation are that they would assure De Klerk and his voters control in the construction a new constitutional design. Thus, they would find themselves in a much better position than if the transition was forced through by his political opponents and their international supporters (Sisk 1995:84). To De Klerk and the Nationalist Party the fall of communism in Eastern Europe was an important factor, as they believed that ANC had weakened due to the lost support of the Soviet Union. Perhaps this was a miscalculation, because the ANC's lost bonds with communist regimes strengthened their support from western countries, as the western government, like De Klerk, no longer had to worry about the threat of communism (Guelke 2005:162f). Later the ANC appeared to be a stronger negotiation partner than De Klerk had anticipated but at the time it affected his calculus of decision in favour of a radical change.

Hence, the alternatives of not discarding the system would be worse than the radical changes that De Klerk initiated. He realized that the mutually destructive conflict would persist without the reforms, that a continued conflict would be negative for South Africa, and that there would be no other means to end it.

In the spring of 1990 de Klerk and the National Party were faced with three alternatives, all with different outcomes. Eventually the choice fell on the alternative that at the time, for de Klerk, provided the best possible outcome.

7 Conclusions

In this thesis, we have examined the policy change of FW De Klerk from two different perspectives. We have studied the policy change as an outcome of political learning and rational action. By reading the autobiography *The Last Trek* as well as recent interviews and combining the motivations of these with presentations made by highly respected scholars within the field such as Timothy Sisk and Adrian Guelke we have made a thorough attempt to explain the motives behind the policy change of FW De Klerk to initiate negotiations with the ANC. The negotiations meant the end of the more than 50-year-old system of segregation and discrimination of the non-white citizens of South Africa.

Firstly, we have presented several reasons for change. The black resistance, the economic and social situation, the international pressure all made far-reaching reforms inevitable. In addition, the fall of communism and the unforeseen death of PW Botha both created a window of opportunity that was essential for the negotiations to start.

Secondly, we have demonstrated that political learning, as defined by Jack Levy, in part can explain the policy change since there is little doubt that de Klerk de facto did rethink the apartheid system. However solely political learning cannot explain the policy change. It takes a window of opportunity for political learning to be transited into policy change. As pointed out above, we have identified two such windows of opportunity: The change of leadership in the government party where FW de Klerk succeeded the more rigid PW Botha and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, that at least appeared to have weakened the strongest oppositional force, the ANC.

Finally, we have used the Rational Actors Model that Graham Allison presented on the issue of the Cuban missile crisis to reconstruct the De Klerk calculus of decision. We have pointed out the fact that the political stalemate that prevailed in South Africa with growing violence and regression in economic growth made the significant policy change and far-reaching reforms rational at the time. The De Klerk rethink of the apartheid system and the fall of communism afflicted the de Klerk calculus of decision, in that it changed the likely outcomes of the possible alternatives. With the fear of communism no longer in the picture, negotiations appeared to be a reasonable alternative.

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