

Broadcasting the End of Apartheid: Live Television and the Birth of the New South Africa (International Library of African Studies)

MJ Evans

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South Africa came late to television; when it finally arrived in the late 1970s the rest of the world had already begun to shun the country because of apartheid. While the ruling National Party feared the integrative effects of television, they did not foresee how exclusion from globally unifying broadcasts would gradually erode their power. Throughout the apartheid-era South Africa was barred from participating in some of television's greatest global attractions, including sporting events such as the Olympics and contests such as Miss World. After apartheid, and with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison – itself one of the world's most memorable media events, came a proliferation of large-scale live broadcasts that attracted the admiration of the rest of the world. At the same time, the country was permitted to return to international competition. These events were pivotal in shaping and consolidating the country's emerging post-apartheid national identity. Broadcasting the End of Apartheid assesses the socio-political effect of live broadcasting on South Africa's transition to democracy. MJ Evans argues that just as print media had a powerful influence on the development of Afrikaner nationalism, so the 'liveness' of television helped to consolidate the 'newness' of the post-apartheid South African national identity.



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