



# The Footprints of Mont Fleur:

The Mont Fleur Scenario Project, South Africa  
1991-1992

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## Introduction and Focus

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At the University of the Western Cape, Professor Pieter le Roux and his colleague, Professor Vincent Maphai, first thought about using a different approach to convene a group to think together about possible futures for the “new South Africa,” because they were weary of the kind of conferences that were all too familiar—conferences that le Roux referred to as “dialogues of the deaf.” At that time, around 1990, various European funding agencies were sponsoring such conferences, each attempting to promote its own formula for democracy, such as Social Democracy or Federalism. When one of them invited le Roux to organize a gathering, he was unenthusiastic. Those who believed in the approach the funders were promoting would come, he thought, and those who did not agree with it would not come, and so it would be a futile event. Instead, the two professors decided to try the scenario methodology, a respected tool for strategic thinking in the business arena but one that had not yet been tried in the civic realm. “Vincent and I just said that conferences try and sell ideas and do not really involve people,” said le

Roux. “A scenario exercise is a way that you can get combined involvement from different groups.” This was the genesis of the Mont Fleur Scenario Project.<sup>1</sup>

This paper argues that there were three important arenas in which the Mont Fleur project had an impact. First, it influenced the thinking of the individuals who were involved in the scenario work, some of whom went on to occupy powerful political and national positions as a result of South Africa’s first democratic elections, in 1994. Second, the scenarios created at Mont Fleur, informed public debate in the period of transition to democracy, as project participants presented them to the National Executive Committees of political parties, to the cabinet of the existing government, to business leaders, and to the general public. Finally, the Mont Fleur project had an impact on the thinking of the African National Congress (ANC) executive group, particularly around the development of its economic policy, which was influenced by scenario work that illuminated some of the dangers of a populist macro-economic approach.

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes in this paper are taken from interviews with 14 of the 22 participants in the Mont Fleur Project. The interviews were conducted in June and July 2000 in South Africa.



## 1 Mont Fleur

### 1.1 Context and Conditions in the Country

In February 1990, South African President F.W. de Klerk announced Nelson Mandela's release from prison after 27 years. In the same announcement, he rescinded an order banning Mandela's party, the ANC,<sup>2</sup> and other political groups that had formed to fight apartheid—the Pan African Congress (PAC), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). With this move, everything in the country changed, and it was clear that institutionalized apartheid was dead.

At the time the Mont Fleur Project began, in September 1991, the country as a whole was changing gear, and there was uncertainty and confusion about how the transition from apartheid to democracy would take place. The violence that had characterized the previous decade continued. At the same time, there were talks going on everywhere about the future of the country—in the formal multi-party negotiating forum, the

Congress for a Democratic South Africa; in policy meetings on a wide array of topics; and in informal “bos-beraads” (gatherings in remote retreat settings) that simply brought people together to get to know each other and talk about the issues together for the first time. The transition period between 1990 and 1994 presented an opportunity for people to get acquainted across racial barriers, and many individuals and groups took advantage of it.

Although a negotiated political settlement was not assured, the likelihood was that democratic elections would produce an ANC government, representing the black majority. In that case, most ANC supporters expected it to act quickly to address the plight of the poor, for example by providing housing for all. The business establishment had similar expectations. It feared that the ANC would nationalize major industries and implement other strategies for the rapid redistribution of wealth, further crippling an already stagnant economy.

## 1.2 Timeline

Date	Event
Feb.-Aug. 1991	Preparation phase:
Sept. 1991	First scenario team workshop held at Mont Fleur 22 participants (see list of participants below) meet for 3 days, brainstorm 30 stories
Sept.-Nov. 1991	selected non-team members do supporting research, distribute research papers to team members; core team holds weekly meetings, finalizes 9 preliminary stories
Nov. 1991	Second team workshop at Mont Fleur Workshop team assesses stories, agrees on 4 draft scenarios and names them
Dec.-March 1992	Core team writes up scenarios and consults with political parties, academics, and others about them
March 1992	Third team workshop at Mont Fleur Workshop team refines the 4 final scenarios, agrees on the name “Mont Fleur Scenarios” The team meets with a video production crew and Discusses dissemination of scenarios
April 1992	The video producer creates a video The core team holds a workshop to test scenarios with invited leaders
May 1992	National launch of Mont Fleur scenarios This includes: reports in major newspapers publication of a Mont Fleur booklet presentations to general public mailings to embassies, trade unions, other groups to “market” presentations of the scenarios beginning of dissemination process

### 1.3 Summary of the Scenarios

Mont Fleur workshop participants analyzed the social, political, and economic issues confronting South Africa and compiled 30 stories about how events might unfold over the next decade. These included stories of revolution, right wing revolts, and democratic, free market utopias. The workshop team then carefully evaluated these potential scenarios against criteria such as plausibility and consistency, until nine stories survived. These ultimately became the following four possible futures for the country.

#### The Ostrich Scenario

The Ostrich depicts a government that does not want to face reality and hides its head in the sand at the first sign of danger. It is unable to fly. As a result of the initial steps taken by the de Klerk government, the international community becomes more tolerant towards white South Africa. Encouraged by this support the Nationalist government hardens its negotiation position, while at the same time, the liberation movement loses international support because it is too radical. The result is a stand-off: negotiations break down, and the government decides to form a moderate alliance unacceptable to the black majority. The state represses by force the resistance that ensues. The business climate worsens and the economy remains stagnant. Social

inequities remain unaddressed, and eventually the opposing parties are forced back to the negotiating table, but under worse social, political, and economic conditions than before.

#### The Lame Duck Scenario

The Lame Duck envisions a protracted transition period lasting for most of the decade. No matter how hard it tries, the nation cannot get off the ground. The Nationalist government and leaders of the liberation movement succeed in making a negotiated settlement, but it is a transitional arrangement, filled with “sunset clauses” containing minority vetoes, and various other checks and balances. These agreements, which respond to the wishes of all parties, but in fact satisfy none, are paralyzing to the government. The social and economic crisis remains inadequately addressed, with the government mired in a long and indecisive transition period. This situation discourages investors and creates more uncertainty about the future.

#### The Icarus Scenario

Icarus was the figure in Greek mythology who achieved flight on wings made of wax and feathers but, exhilarated by his new-found freedom and power, flew too close to the sun. The sun melted the wax, and Icarus fell to his death. In this scenario, the new democratically elected government

tries to achieve too much too quickly, embarking on a massive spending spree to address the imbalances of the past. Initially, living standards increase and social conditions improve, but this is economically unsustainable and results in economic collapse. The very people the new government is attempting to serve end up worse off than before.

### The Flamingo Scenario

This is the scenario of inclusive democracy and steady growth. Flamingoes take off slowly, rise together, and fly high. In order to achieve such a future for South Africa, the new government creates conditions in which economic growth is initially slow, but sustainable. It adopts sound social and economic policies and observes macroeconomic constraints. It makes well-targeted social investments, which give people confidence that their social needs will be met in the longer term. Business people become convinced that the government is trustworthy and that its policies will remain consistent, and therefore investment and employment grow. The essence of this scenario is the notion of broad participation that allows for a sound balance between social reconstruction and sustained economic growth.

## 2 Findings

The findings described in the following pages are based primarily on interviews with Mont Fleur participants conducted in June 2000 in South Africa. These were open-ended, one-on-one interviews, focused on a set of questions designed to encourage reflection and surface observations and learning by the interviewees. The learning historians tested their initial findings with a sub-group of the interviewees, in a dialogue held at Mont Fleur, and modified them as a result of the group's input.

### 2.1 Influence on Individuals

The Mont Fleur project was a multi-stakeholder dialogue process, like many of the national debates and discussions that were going on in the period of transition to democracy. Two major elements made it different, however. One was the use of the scenario methodology. The other was the fact that the participants—people from many different interest groups—attended as individuals in their own right, not as representatives of the parties or groups to which they belonged.

Of the 14 Mont Fleur participants interviewed, most had vivid



recollections of their experience of thinking and working together during that time. For most, it was a very special experience, and they felt privileged to have engaged in it. One or two interviewees described it as the high point of their lives. Nine years later, some of them remembered exact dates and times of the shifts in their thinking, and they still felt the excitement of the process and the discovery of others they experienced. Although some of them had met before at one or another of the numerous conferences and meetings that were going on in the country, they had never had to grapple with thinking together in the way the scenario process required. They recalled being forced to challenge their ideas of what “other” South Africans were like, and they noted that simply engaging in conversation with those others was dramatically unusual:

*We had a very diverse team of whites, blacks, Asians, coloreds, rich, poor, community workers, trade unionists—a really interesting mix, and the fact that we could get together every now and then for three or four days at a time in a place like Mont Fleur—work together, play together, go for long walks after the sessions were over [was remarkable]. We would be walking for instance with a guy like Tito Mboweni [an ANC economist who later became Governor of the South African Reserve Bank]. Tito Mboweni was the*

*last sort of person I would have talked to a year before that... very articulate, very bright. We did not meet blacks like that normally. I do not know where they were all buried, but they were there. ...new [for me] was how open-minded they themselves were. These were not people who simply said: ‘Look, this is how it is going to be when we take over one day.’ They were prepared to say: ‘Hey, how would it be? Let’s discuss it.’*

Businessman

It was not only the perceptions of each other that shifted during the Mont Fleur Project, but also people’s views about what the future might look like. One interviewee described gaining the capacity to think in terms of a longer-term future for herself and for South Africa.

*You know, we came from a background of having lived in a country which was isolated from the rest of the world for more than twenty years. Because of the violence of the apartheid system, many of us, especially [those of us from] the oppressed group, tended to live only for tomorrow: ‘As long as I can live till tomorrow, do not get shot on the street or arrested at a rally, or be jailed for my political activities, I will make the best of today and not think about tomorrow. Not plan for tomorrow.’ The scenario work*



*taught me to see the bigger picture and to look further and wider, [to look] on a personal level [at] my financial well-being, [at] my actions today which would help me fulfill my dreams for the future and for my children's future.*

Community  
Organization Leader and  
Women's Leader

Participants in the Mont Fleur workshops indicated that the scenario project had a significant impact on their lives in a variety of ways. Many were deeply affected by the experience of working closely with people whose experience and thinking were very different from their own. Some noted they were surprised by, interested in, and ultimately influenced by the views of people whom they had not expected to respect. Interviewees said they had learned patience, or developed listening skills, or in other cases learned the value of open dialogue. The Mont Fleur experience changed many people's thinking, in part because the scenario work made them take a longer-term perspective. The process was uncomfortable for many participants, especially at the beginning, but it created strong bonds among them.

## 2.2 Influence on Individuals who Later Occupied National Positions

A substantial number of Mont Fleur participants went on to occupy in-

fluential positions in South Africa. In 2000 these included the Minister of Finance, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the Chairman of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Managing Director of Transnet, a large transport company, and two influential ANC members of parliament. Others became advisors to government ministers, the leader of an educational institution serving 80,000 students, the Director of Education in one of the provinces, a leading participant in the Reconstruction and Development Project, and a member of the team that reformed the South African Post Office and privatized telephone services. How did the scenario work influence them? It appears that an important consequence of their participation in Mont Fleur was that they acquired skills personally and were educated about matters in which they were not previously conversant.

*A big fear that most of us have about most things is what we don't know. ...I thought my skills were largely organizational, and I think that by working in the way that we did [at Mont Fleur], it kind of broke through that fear. I saw I could engage with the [economic] issues. Certainly, at a personal level, it was an enormous fillip for my own confidence and for doing what I needed to do... The strength of a process like this is that it actually sends forth people with skill*

Minister of Finance

*I learned an enormous amount because I have never been involved in economics, particularly. There was quite a heavy emphasis on the economic side—a lot of economists on the project—and quite a heavy emphasis on what was going to happen to the economy and how the country would progress. I was coming from the development side. [But] I became interested in [economics] and it has affected me because now I serve on the finance committee [in Parliament] and ...I often think about the Mont Fleur scenarios...I think we nailed the issues quite accurately, [though] it has been much more difficult to implement than any of us imagined.*

ANC Member of Parliament

It is clear that the experience of Mont Fleur, both the rigorous process of scenario work and the content of the scenarios themselves, are still vividly carried by those participants who are now in leadership positions in South Africa. In a speech in 2000—eight years after the scenario project concluded—Tito Mboweni, Governor of the Reserve Bank, alluded to the Icarus scenario. “I can still visualize the way in which we took the discussion of macroeconomic policies,” another participant said. “I can replay that tape over and over in my head and I know I am not the only one who can.”

The conveners of Mont Fleur were able to attract future leaders into the civic scenario project because they were widely respected and not closely aligned with any political party. One of the limitations of the project, however, was that they were not able to draw people from two important sectors, the trade unions and the main party of the Zulu people, Inkatha.

### 2.3 Macro Economic Policy

It is not possible to establish a direct cause/effect relationship between the macroeconomic policy of the ANC, which emerged in the early 1990s, and the work that was done at Mont Fleur. Yet, one important factor, as indicated above, is that several Mont Fleur participants occupied influential national positions in South Africa after the elections. Others had a hand in research and policy-making during the period before the elections. However, as one participant put it: “You can see the footprints of Mont Fleur everywhere.”

According to one economist who attended,

*...there were a lot of people there who had the idea that if we could just have a change of government and a change in the economic system, then Utopia would be there. There was that undercurrent.... that notion... At that stage in South Africa,*

*there was this feeling that things were wrong. Now, some people would say that things were wrong because the politics were wrong. We just had to change the political system and everything would come right. Other people would say, well, you just have to change the economic system and everything will come right. And then there were those who said, well, you have to change the economic system and the political system and everything will come right.*

*But what I tried to do in the whole process was to say: 'Listen, irrespective of the economic system we have, irrespective of the political system we have, there are a number of basic realities about South African economic life which are going to determine what is going to happen in this country. Irrespective of our systems.'*

Establishment economist

There were several participants who believed that their contribution to the Mont Fleur project was to play the role of naysayer to the ANC participants. The question of the ANC's economic policy was very much the topic of the moment in the early 1990s, and clearly those who were working on the scenarios and who were also part of the work on policy development, had an ideal forum in which to explore ideas.

Prior to 1990, the ANC's economic model, or at least the common

view of what it would be, was focused more on macroeconomic populism, in particular, nationalization. At Mont Fleur, participants had the opportunity to think through the logical outcome of such a policy and to look at what had happened in other countries that had pursued this approach. Many of the ANC's new leaders had been in exile in other countries, particularly in Africa, where they experienced some of the problems of nationalization first hand. This made them more open to hearing the arguments advanced by advocates of a liberalized market economy.

In thinking about the impact of Mont Fleur on subsequent ANC economic policy, and the relationship between its influence on future leaders and new policy development, the following remarks are typical of the views of several interviewees:

*It is very difficult to say whether the chicken or the egg came first because at the time, Trevor Manuel was head of the (ANC) Economics Desk and Tito Mboweni was, I think, number two on that desk. We did not even know that they were going to be ministers at the time. Then there was Saki Macozoma, who is head of Transnet...and we did not know what he was going to be either. But I cannot help but think of the way in which the philosophies of those three, in particular, have developed. That a lot of it had its roots in the discussions we had at Mont*

*Fleur. I do not know what happened to them in their lives. I am sure that there were a lot of other influences, but the simplicity with which we came to these conclusions together-it was quite simple, in many ways-was also profound, I thought.*

ANC Member of Parliament

*In April 1994, the Government of National Unity came to power in South Africa, under Nelson Mandela. Trevor Manuel became Minister of Finance in 1996. A few months later, he introduced the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) strategy-a conventional, conservative, supply side type of economic policy. It kept interest rates high, applied conservative fiscal policy with a low budget deficit, and liberalized exports. It was intended to promote growth and drive unemployment down. When I saw GEAR-and this was not even conceptualized at Mont Fleur, it was something that was decided by the new government and the appropriate structures-when I saw it, I could look at the relationship between what the policy said and where I thought it was going to take us, and those are the sort of footprints that Mont Fleur made.*

Economist

So, while an assessment of the extent to which Mont Fleur influen-

ced economic policy is an indefinite matter at best, everyone who was interviewed agreed that the work done over the period of the scenario project gave them an opportunity to think through particular courses of action to their logical conclusion. Economic policy was a central issue in the national debate in the early 1990s, and economists representing all sides of the debate were present at Mont Fleur, along with many future leaders of the ANC government. These facts strongly suggest a connection between the development of the Icarus scenario, which looked squarely at the dangers of macroeconomic populism and the unexpectedly conservative economic policies of the ANC after 1996, embodied in GEAR.

#### 2.4 Informing the National Debate and the Transition to Democracy

Between 1990, when the liberation movements were legalized and Mandela was released from prison, and 1994, when the first democratic elections were held, a period of intense negotiations and preparation for change took place in South Africa. It was a time of transition to democracy, and everyone knew it. The Mont Fleur project played its part in informing public debate and assisting in the transition in a variety of ways—through its impact on the individuals who participated, as described above; and also through the communication about the scenarios and the

project to people who did not participate directly. Following the completion and refinement of the scenarios, the core team and participants undertook a process of dissemination. They made presentations to many groups all over the country, including private sector companies, political parties, NGOs, trade unions, clubs, academic institutions, and embassies. Altogether, team members, along with others whom they trained, delivered around 70 presentations.

A number of these were especially important in informing the national debate and assisting in the transition process. For example, several of those interviewed indicated that the presentation made to the ANC's National Executive Committee—which all the members, including Oliver Thambo, then president of the ANC, and Nelson Mandela, attended—was not an easy one. The critical factor was that people with credibility in the ANC were there to speak out for the dangers of the Icarus scenario, in particular, even though this was hard for some of the executive members to hear.

The team chose the presenters for this meeting carefully, so that the scenarios would have the greatest possible impact. This was always the case when the team was preparing to make a presentation: those who presented were chosen for their credibility and the impact they would have on their audience by virtue of who they were. For example, the presentation to the ANC Executive was made by Trevor Manual (then Head, ANC

Economics desk), Pieter le Roux (a Mont Fleur convener), Tito Mboweni (ANC Economics Desk), and Koosum Kalyan (a private sector representative with credibility and standing among the left). When those individuals voiced the concerns about macroeconomic populism captured in the Icarus scenario, the ANC Executive group had to take them seriously. The video presentation of the Mont Fleur scenarios used the same approach—each scenario was presented by the person least likely, because of his political affiliations, to agree with the approach of that scenario.

The team also made presentations made to the PAC, a group to the left of the ANC. In the early 1990s was threatening to boycott elections and was known for its revolutionary slogan “One Settler, One Bullet.” Following a Mont Fleur presentation to its leadership, however, the PAC announced it would participate in the elections, and subsequently launched a scenario project of its own.

*If you look at the policies of the PAC prior to our policy conference in September 1993, there is no room...for changes. If you look at our policy after that, we had to revise the land policy; we had to revise quite a number of things. They were directly or indirectly influenced by Mont Fleur.*

PAC Member

The presentations of the Mont Fleur scenarios helped to stimulate

critical thinking and reflection in both the ANC and PAC at a critical time. The presentations made to business were also critical. The corporate world was nervous about what the next government—generally expected to be an ANC government—would do, especially with regard to economic policy. The presentations helped to calm those fears, and they enabled the future ANC leaders who were the presenters to build relationships with the business establishment.

*I remember when we did a presentation for a group of businesspeople in Johannesburg. There were 100 or 200 people there and it had an impact in the sense that people knew beforehand that these people presenting the scenarios were going to become important in the South African setup. So people outside the scenarios, on the establishment side as well, took it seriously. I think having been exposed to the scenarios by and large made them more positive about the future.*

ANC Leader

Before the dissemination process began, the Mont Fleur team held a workshop to test the scenarios with a diverse group of prominent South Africans. Then, in mid-1992, an influential weekly newspaper that had credibility with the left published a booklet describing the scenarios and the Mont Fleur process. The team

also created a video, which it sent to all public libraries in South Africa, as well as to every major university and, on request, to individuals and companies. The dissemination strategy also included a few large-group public presentations of the scenarios, as well as presentation in other newspapers. However, most interviewees agreed that the most effective way of communicating was through interaction with relatively small groups.

*What has really worked is the small group, convincing people, not this mass [dissemination]. That is partly why we did not go for the wide publication, because it starts working when people ask questions and make contributions...the reason why we didn't is that sometimes I changed things on the spot. Immediately, by having one little thing in the scenario presentation changed, that specific person [would] buy into it.*

Mont Fleur convener

One important group, the Inkatha party, which had not participated in Mont Fleur, did not welcome a presentation of the scenarios. Yet, in general, by engaging people in carefully targeted small groups the Mont Fleur team was able to influence key players in South Africa at a time of national transition, at the same time exposing some of the future leaders of the country to constituencies they would otherwise not easily



have been able to access. In addition to receiving local exposure, the Mont Fleur scenarios were presented in the U.S. to staff at the World Bank, where the exercise was very well received.

*The response was: We are so proud of South Africa. You haven't even had your democratic elections yet, but the future government is looking at the long-term picture.*

Private sector participant

## 2.5 Power of the Scenarios

All this publicity made Mont Fleur quite well known for a while:

*What was nice is that it became a household name. You could talk about the Flight of the Flamingoes and everybody knew what it was. It was not as though you had to explain it to them...the nice thing was that nobody could tell us that the scenarios were wrong. They had such logic-it might not happen, but the fact is that it was a logical story...a very consistent story, very logical, very readable.*

Private sector participant

*...The imagery of the scenarios was captivating, the language simple, and the concepts explained in a comprehensible manner. ...de Klerk said quite a few times: 'No, I am*

*not a lame duck.'* Tito Mboweni recently said: 'I won't fly too close to the sun like Icarus' ...the images of the scenarios, I think, were part of the power. We happened to get very good images.

Mont Fleur convener

## 2.6 Recommendations from the Participants

Factors contributing to the success of Mont Fleur, and any successful civic scenario work, mentioned as important by most of those interviewed were:

- choosing a really good, unbiased facilitator
- selecting a representative, diverse group of people with the time to devote to such an exercise
- choosing a team consisting of intelligent visionaries committed to their country and willing to see the wider picture
- ensuring that the convening person or group has credibility with all the stakeholders
- having the right timing, in the sense that people have to be ready to talk to each other rather than fight
- paying attention to research and ensuring that it is focused enough to serve team members who are not specialized in the field under discussion; so that whatever is discussed is feasible, authentic and rooted in data



- drawing in those who were likely to be important players after the transition period
- keeping the scenarios simple and clear

people on the ground with the product.

- They would have included more women, more young people and more church groups on the team.

## 2.7 Limitations of the Mont Fleur Work

In hindsight, there was very little about Mont Fleur that those participants who were interviewed would do differently if they had the opportunity. They agreed, though, that there were a few things they would change, and would recommend that others embarking on national scenario projects might bear in mind.

- They would have made a stronger effort to include Inkatha, which is the main political party of the Zulu people, and one of the major contributors to the violent conflict with the ANC in KwaZulu/Natal province during the transition process and thereafter.
- They would have made a more serious effort to engage the unions.
- They would have started planning and thinking about the dissemination process earlier and done it more professionally-and made sure that they planned national TV coverage for the scenarios and had exposure in the most widely read newspapers instead of just among intellectual, progressive readers. Also, they would have embarked on a more aggressive marketing program to reach more

## 3 Learnings and Questions for the Future

### 3.1 Initial Confusion

One of the challenges many people alluded to was the confusion they faced at the beginning of the scenario process. A methodological question for future civic scenario projects is whether initial confusion is an inevitable part of the process and therefore unavoidable, or whether some improvement should be introduced to make the beginning easier for participants.

### 3.2 Dissemination of the Product

Another set of questions relates to the use and dissemination of the scenarios after they have been completed. To what extent is it possible to plan this process before the end of the work? And how is this best achieved? It is through “massification”—wide distribution to every community, every organization? Or is it through personal, in-depth presentation and discussion with smaller groups? Whom is one trying to reach and influence: the elite of each sector? the decision-makers of the future? the general population? To what must the answers to these questions

emerge through the group during the process, and to what extent can they be decided ahead of time?

Perhaps a limitation of the current civic scenario methodology is that it does not include a guide or map of what to do when the scenarios have been completed, for example, what a concept or set of alternatives for action steps might constitute and the pros and cons of different dissemination strategies.

### 3.3 Intention of Scenario Work

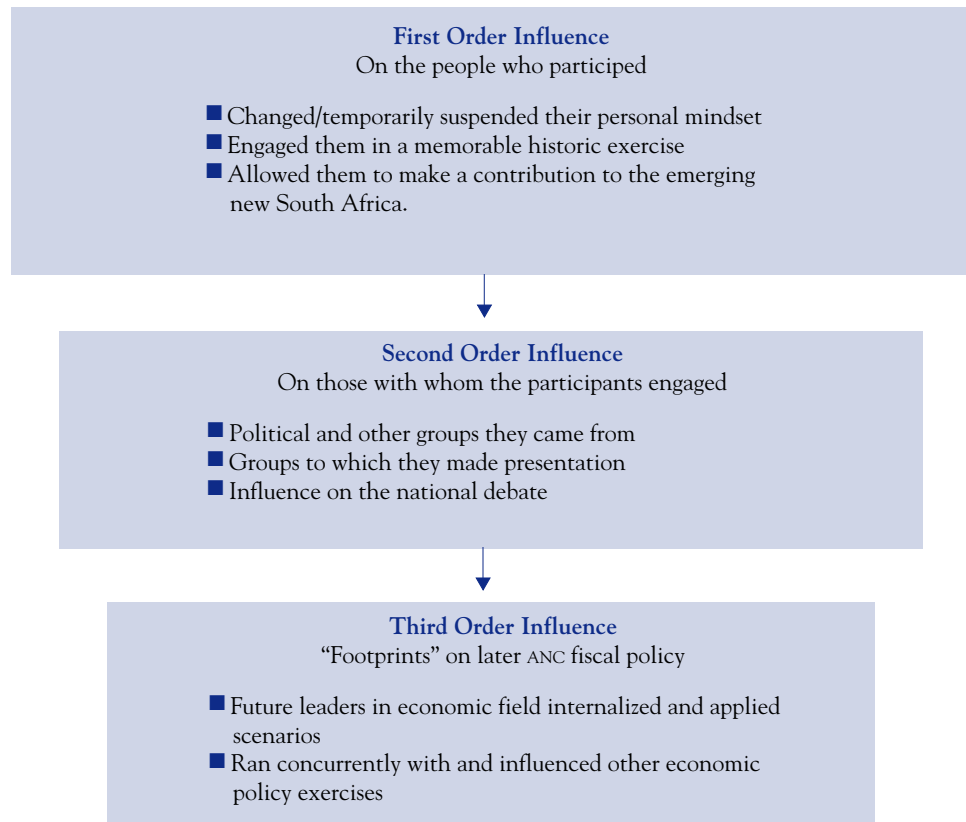
The question of the intention of scenario work is also an important one. It is clear from the interviews that the intention of the Mont Fleur project was to influence future leaders—future ANC leaders in particular. This was a serious exercise undertaken specifically to make a contribution to the future of South Africa by influencing the elite. Their clarity of intention shaped the project that emerged and helped to make it successful. Their experience suggests that planners of future civic scenario projects must question themselves closely about their own intentions: who is it they are seeking to influence, and why? And what is their agenda?

## 4 Interpretive Conclusions

### 4.1 First, Second and Third Order Influence

The data provided by the interviews indicate that the primary impact of the Mont Fleur experience was on the people who participated. The second order of influence seems to have been on the people with whom the participants were involved, such as the political groups they were drawn from, and those to whom they made presentations and with whom they engaged in discussion. By this means, the national debate was influenced, which, at the time Mont Fleur was undertaken, was at the stage of needing to focus on future economic policy.

It was because of this, because of the future leadership positions assumed by several of the Mont Fleur participants, and because of the overlap with other exercises, research projects and studies being undertaken at the time, that the future macroeconomic policy of the country bears “the footprints of Mont Fleur.” This is the third order influence.



#### 4.2 Prototypical South African Experience

It can be said that the Mont Fleur project was a spectacular success. But it can also be argued that this kind of exercise-dialogues, ‘bosberaads,’ and forums of all kinds-constitute a prototypical South African experience, and that it was no accident that South Africa was the country that first adapted scenario planning for a national agenda, and in effect gave this kind of process to the world.

#### 4.3 The Politics of Civic Scenario Work

It can be argued that civic scenario work is entirely political in the sense that it seeks to influence those either already holding power or moving into positions of power, and thereby to influence the future of a nation. If its purpose is indeed to influence the dominant coalition, future leaders or the elite of different sectors (or to have these people influence and be influenced by each other), then there

are a number of questions to consider, the answers to which can have important political implications for nations embarking on scenario work.

- Who convenes the scenario team, and what is their agenda?
- Who funds the project, and why are they funding it?
- Who is selected to participate, and why?
- In the dissemination phase, who does the presentations, to whom, and why?
- Who owns the scenario project?

## 5 Summary

The following table summarizes key features that characterized the Mont Fleur Project.

### 5.1 Preparation Phase

#### Conveners

- Network leaders whose influence was greater than their positional power and who were well connected
- Credible and respected across sectors and political parties
- Well connected
- Transparent about own agenda and funding sources
- Committed
- Excellently informed about current national situation

#### Facilitator

- Experienced
- Trusted
- “Neutral”
- Foreign

#### Participants

- Potential future leaders
- Diverse group representative of the whole society
- Free to attend in their own right without mandates
- Good, non-dogmatic thinkers
- Had time to commit to project
- Committed to country’s development
- Chosen on the basis of a specific field of expertise
- Credible in South African society

#### Project Manager

- Person of standing and credibility across the board
- Knowledgeable about issues in the country
- Committed full time to project
- Connected with people on a personal level and able to sustain relationships
- Good at follow-up
- Sensitive to needs of participants
- Included spouses where possible

#### Venue

- Quiet, small, remote conference center

- Natural light
- Beautiful, wild surroundings with walks and recreation
- No television in rooms
- Good food
- Place to gather in the evenings

#### Timing

- Banning orders lifted on political parties
- Mandela and others released from prison
- Negotiations in process
- General understanding that there was to be transition to democracy
- Violence ongoing

#### 5.2 Workshops and Method

- Process adapted from corporate sector model
- Initial brainstorming of 30 stories which were refined down to four scenarios
- Three scenario team meetings of three days each were held
- Time from first to last meeting of scenario team was six months
- A lot of work was done between sessions e.g. by core team, researchers
- Facilitator respected and regarded as excellent by team-”non-interfering” and enabling
- Facilitator kept up to date by project manager on what was going on in the country between sessions

#### 5.3 Impact and Dissemination

- Three levels of impact: on those involved, on the groups they were drawn from and presented to, and less directly on the fiscal policy of the ANC government
- Dissemination strategy had three prongs: teams presented to small groups, a video was made and widely distributed, and a pamphlet was published and distributed through a national newspaper as well as being sent out separately
- Presenters carefully chosen for their credibility and potential influence with the group they would be presenting to

### 6 Appendix

#### 6.1 Participants in the Mont Fleur Scenario Project

**Dorothy Boesak**  
Project Manager

**Rob Davies**  
Research Professor & Co-director of the Center for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)

**Howard Gabriels**  
Previous Trade Unionist with the National Union of Mineworkers; represented the office of the funder