General Overview Of South Africa: Analytical Essay

South Africa is not everyone's main concern nor top priority but this country can be interesting if you are willing to learn about what it has to offer. Personally, South Africa is not a country that I know a lot about, but I thought it would be beneficial to learn and study about the different ways of life and beliefs. What little I do know is interesting because it is where the show goats that we use today come from. That is boer goats and boer goats originally originated from South Africa.

"In 1948, the Afrikaners' party also known as the National Party won the national election where the new government enacted a series of laws called apartheid"(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). This policy was the absolute segregation of races demanding where a black person lived, went to school, got medical care, and worked. Blacks were required to carry passes with them all the time everywhere they went to prove that they had jobs and the legal right to be in a city or township. With little success, the Black South Africans tried to resist white domination, but the police and army were called out every time the blacks rose against the apartheid laws. On March 21, 1960, a group of unarmed blacks made their way to the police station to make a peaceful protest against passbook laws. Thousands of demonstrators left their passbooks expecting to be arrested, but the peaceful demonstration was met with gunfire leaving sixty-nine blacks shot dead. Their death sparked a nationwide protest and was the start of a new era of oppression. In 1989, De Klerk an Afrikaner who was loyal to the National party took over but he understood that the apartheid would have to end if the country was going to survive. February 11, 1990, De Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison for his twenty-seven years for leading and organizing the ANC, a resistance group of apartheid laws. "In 1993, together with De Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in ending the apartheid peacefully"(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). This meant more to South Africa than just the end to legalized racial injustice. South Africans took full advantage of this opportunity and created a new form of government.

Nelson Mandela became South Africa's most famous prisoner, even from within the prison walls where he continued to influence others. During his trial for protesting against apartheid, he explained to the ANC's decision to use violence if necessary to change South Africa. Nelson Mandela said, "South Africa belongs to all the people who live in it, and not to one group, be it black or white….I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunity. It is an idea in which I hope to look for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an idea for which I am prepared to die"(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). After his release in 1990, four years later he became the first black president of South Africa. His release was on of the most remarkable turnaround in world politics.

May 10, 1994 their new government went to work and most of the members were black men and women, who had to learn how to do their new jobs. The government hired tutors to teach the newly members of the Parliament how to enact the laws and run the country. "The Parliament Government is based in Cape Town and has two houses, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces"(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). This system is equivalent to the U.S Senate and House of Representatives. Members of the Parliament chooses the president who serves as head of state and a five-year term. The Bill of Rights is one of the most

important parts of the South African Constitution that go far beyond those in the United States. These include the right to a healthy environment, health care, housing, food and water, and education.

South Africa has three branches of government the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, and the Judicial Branch. The Constitutional Court is South Africa's highest court for constitutional issues that deals with matters such as whether the new laws follow the constitution. The most highest regular court in South Africa is the Supreme Court of Appeal. Judges on both of these courts are appointed by the president of South Africa, where they hear appeals from all the lower courts.

"South Africa's absolute location is 30.5595° S, 22.9375° E; south of the equator, on the continent's southern tip of Africa"(InfoPlease, 2019). It is in both the eastern and southern hemispheres, where it borders the Atlantic Ocean on the west and the Indian Ocean on the south and east. Its land neighbors are Namibia in the northwest, Zimbabwe and Botswana in the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland in the northeast. The kingdom of Lesotho forms a portion of territory within the southeast part of South Africa, which takes up an area nearly three times that of California.

In South Africa the black African population numbers about 30 million people."The largest group is the Zulus, who number about 9 million, followed by the Xhosa, who number about 7 million. There are an estimated 3.5 million Pedi, 3.4 million Tswana, 2.7 million Southern Sotho, 1.8 million Tsonga, 1 million swazi 900,000 Venda, and 600,000 Ndebele"(Bram, 1996).

Today religion is an important part of millions of people's lives across the world. In South Africa religion happens to play an important role. South Africa is known as the rainbow nation because of its wide variety of people, cultures and religions. The people follow many spiritual traditions and religious faiths because the constitution in South Africa protects freedom of religion, where everyone is free to follow whatever faith they want to, or to not follow one at all Many South African people do not follow a formal, church-based religion, but they do have their strong religious beliefs. "Approximately three-quarters of all South African people are Christians, but mainly Protestant and about eight million attend African Independent churches. Another four million attend other Protestant churches including Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian"(Bram, 1996). In these church services they combine Protestant beliefs with their traditional African practices. In South Africa a father, mother, aunts, uncles, and all the ancestors who came before a person are considered part of the living community where they are believed to play huge role in the direction of daily life. They believed to influence good or bad luck in a person.

Language is a unifying force for most nations, but in South Africa, language was long used as a tool to control and separate people. Today, South Africa celebrates the many languages spoken there and for the first time, black African languages are recognized as having a place in business, government, and daily life. Languages don't stay the same changed throughout the years. Many words will change when the technologies change. Sometimes they will adopt other words from other countries because they explain and activity so well. "The Xhosas are the second largest ethnic group in South Africa after the Zulus. IsiXhosa is the first language of Nelson Mandela. It's known to the Westerners as a "click" language"(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). Many people in Soweto speak several languages. In the town of Soweto the casual of mixing languages even among young people has led to a special town slang. "Many Pedi,

Tswana, and Sotho people live in the northeastern part of the country. People who speak their languages also make up the population of the neighboring countries. Tswana-speaking people live in Botswana Sotho-speaking people live in the country of Lesotho. SiSwati is spoken by the Swazi people who live in the South African province of Mpumalanga”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). The Dutch language is the first language of most of all Afrikaners and many is called Coloured persons. On many of the news shows and like interviewers may all speak one language there for the people being interviewed answers in other languages.

In South Africa the foods that the white and black people eat represent their different cultures. “White people are used to choosing from a wide variety of foods and having something different for each of their meals, day after day, where poor black usually have a porridge made from corn flour called mealie pap. This dish is eaten everyday by many black South Africans”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). Black women can either buy their corn flour already prepared in the cities or in the rural areas, they can grow their own corn, then pound it before it can be cooked. A favorite food is roasted mealies which are corn on the cob. Ears of corn are also known as mealies. South African barbeques also known as “braais” are enjoyed just as much as Americans enjoy them and with the pleasant weather it allows for them to cook outdoors most of the year. A typical braai contains “boerewors” which are a sausage made with a variety of meats and spices. Homemade boerewors are often a family recipe that Afrikaners take great pride in making. Another typical South African food is “biltong” which is made up of dried meat, similar to meat jerky but much more delicious. Biltong can be made from any kind of meat, even ostrich, antelope, or crocodile.

“The surface area of South Africa covers 472, 281 square miles (1,223,201 sq km), stretching latitudinally from 22 degrees south to 35 degrees south and longitudinally from 17 degrees east to 33 degrees east”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). Its physical landscape and distinctions widely range from unspoilt beaches and coastal wetlands to bushveld, grasslands, forests, deserts and majestic mountain peaks. Its divided into eight different biomes. The biomes are grassland, savanna, succulent karoo, nama karoo, forest, fynbos, desert, and lastly thicket. South Africa is a land of great contrasts. South Africa has a bunch of regions of extreme dryness and an impressive amount of rainfall, and violent winds. In South Africa, mountains run from north to south, 50 to 200 miles (80 to 321 km) inland all along the coasts. In between the Dragon Mountains are dramatic valleys are sparkling streams that make there way down the hill. The members of the San’s people painted pictures of hunting and dancing. Most of the paintings now days are still visible in the region. Most of the middle of the region is a high, dry plateau where there is little rainfall. “South Africa’s western coastline, which stretches northward all the way to the Namibian border, is an eerie place there icy winds blows off the Atlantic ocean meet hot desert air. The weather in South Africa is normally warm and dry. In the winter, the temperature rarely falls below freezing the summer months-December, January,and temperature in the drier regions may rise above 104 Fahrenheit rainfall varies across the vast nation”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). The hardest rainfall happens eastern part of the coastline. At least as 6 feet of rain may be accounted in one year in the region.

The great variety of climate and terrain allow South Africa to be to a magnificent amount of plants and animals that are all so unique to the country. “There are more than three hundred different kinds of mammals, including the black rhinoceroses, many types of giraffes, zebras, baboons, cheetahs, elephants, hyenas, leopards, lions, oryxes, and wildebeests”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). Many years ago these animals could be found throughout most of the country but today they are only found in wildlife reserves. Sadly, the growth of population and hunting

have eliminated wildlife in the rest of the country. Also, more than five hundred bird species including the African Hoopoe, the Lilac-Breasted roller, and the crowned crane, all call South Africa home”(Blauer and Laure?, 2006). Most snakes found throughout South Africa are not harmful to people except the Cape Cobra. The Cape cobra is one of the most dangerous snakes around and if it strikes, its venom can quickly paralyze a person causing death.

After writing this research paper I feel more educated and knowledgeable about the country of South Africa. This helped me understand why South Africans have their cultural ways and means of living or simply surviving from day today. Some of their daily struggles they overcome range from numerous disease outbreaks to being in poverty. They suffer so much yet they continue to defeat the unimaginable challenges that they are faced every day. I definitely recommend learning about their culture and beliefs that help them thrive and look forward to the next day.

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