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Nokulunga Shabalala on

EMERGING WOMEN IN ACADEMICS

PLUS: David Moore on Mugabe's Legacy

The Thinker

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In This Issue

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Prof Ronit Frenkel

The University of Johannesburg acquired *The Thinker* in April 2019 from Dr Essop Pahad. Over the last decade, *The Thinker* has gained a reputation as a journal that explores Pan-African issues across fields and times. Ronit Frenkel, as the incoming editor, plans on maintaining the pan-African scope of the journal while increasing its coverage into fields such as books, art, literature and popular cultures. *The Thinker* is a 'hybrid' journal, publishing both journalistic pieces with more academic articles and contributors can now opt to have their submissions peer reviewed. We welcome Africa-centred articles from diverse perspectives, in order to enrich both knowledge of the continent and of issues impacting the continent.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS EDITION - All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity

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David Moore retired last year as Professor of Development Studies at UJ but is hanging on a bit as an associate and co-teaching an honours course. After work in Canada and Australia for ten years he moved to South Africa, where he remains after over two decades. In addition to Mugabe's Legacy this year has seen the appearance of New Leaders, New Dawns? South Africa and Zimbabwe under Cyril Ramaphosa and Emmerson Mnangagwa, co-edited with Chris Brown and Blair Rutherford (McGill-Queen's University Press).

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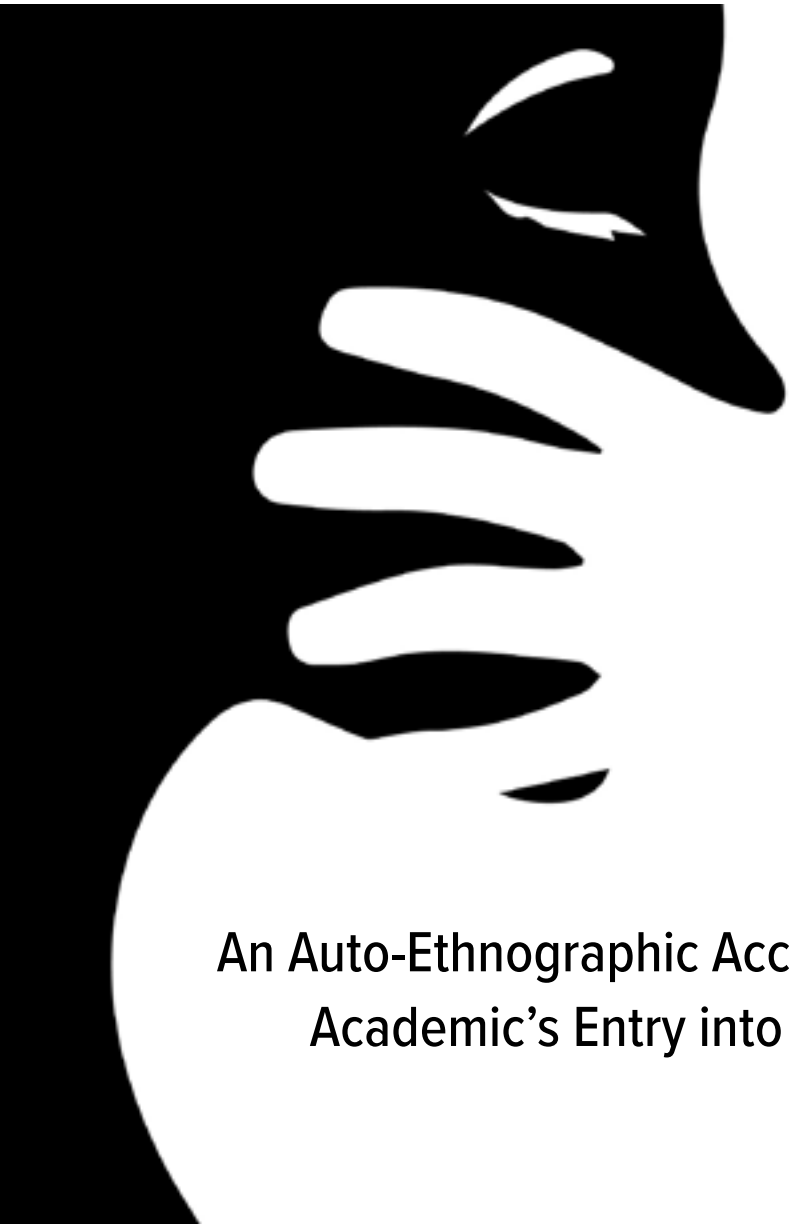

What Is Happening Here?

An Auto-Ethnographic Account of an Emerging Woman Academic's Entry into the Academy in South Africa

By Nokulunga Shabalala | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

This paper offers a critical auto-ethnographic account about navigating entry into the academy as an emerging woman academic. In this paper, I reflect on the multiple intersecting positions I inhabit to draw attention to the tensions often experienced by black women in the academy. I also allude to tensions inherent in being a psychologist and an academic. The paper aims to bring to the fore the dynamics that perpetuate black women academics' sense of non-belonging, voicelessness, and stagnation. Through my narrative, I critically discuss the concepts of time, space, temporality, emotion, and gender within the academic environment and how these elements intersect to shape experience. I make partial reference to feminist thought and critical psychology to drive the conversation about structural issues that persist within the academy that result in the feeling of dis-ease. I also argue that perhaps this dis-ease is the starting point for us to look at what is happening and move towards a radical or reimagined academy. Through this process, I recognised how I became violently silent and disillusioned but emerged hopeful that constant processes of confrontation such as this will eventually create a home for us

Introduction

Research on the experiences of black women in higher education in South Africa is not new. Many have written about how race and gender intersect to shape this experience and the extent to which black women academics feel at home or out of place in the academy (Khunou, 2019; Kiguwa, 2019; Maseti, 2018). This paper offers a critical auto-ethnographic account of my entry into the academy. I reflect on my positionality as an emerging academic and the intersects of race, age, gender, academic rank and my professional identity as a clinical psychologist. I reflect on feelings of self-doubt and anxiety, and I attempt to process what these feelings do. I also attempt to contextualise this by discussing the relentless demands of the job. These demands include research and the teaching and administrative responsibilities that are shouldered by academics (Bamberg et al., 2021). Bamberg et al. highlight how these demands are 'non-negotiable and are intimately tied to individual career identities and a sense of self-worth' (2021: 190). This seems to create a sense of competition and a never-ending race for survival (Bamberg et al., 2021).

This critical auto-ethnography aims to unpack, through my story, some of the structural dynamics of academia, which have historically marginalised black women. It also interrogates how some day-to-day experiences of race and gender, compounded by stereotypical ideas of black women, create precariousness and anxiety (Kiguwa, 2019). So, this paper serves as a confrontation of sorts. I know that I have to straddle a fine line when confronting dynamics that need to shift; this tentativeness regarding confrontation is something we are taught to err on the side of in psychology training. Being too aggressive with confrontation may evoke a defensive response in those who may not find resonance in my story. They may glaze over with boredom, tired of black people's moaning (Eddo-Lodge, 2018). On the other hand, not confronting the status quo at all – remaining silent – is equally problematic and can lead to collusion. Collusion, in this instance, maintains the dis-ease as the marginalised person's problem. Authors such as Griffin (2012), Khunou (2019) and Kiguwa (2019) call for resistance and speaking back. My inclination as a psychologist is to exercise caution in speaking up against particular discomforts; this may be where some of the tension lies.

The Critical in Critical Auto-Ethnography (Holman Jones, 2016: 229)

Critical auto-ethnography (CA) as an approach allows me to speak out against traditions of silence. This methodology brings to the fore the complicated and dialectical nature of lived experiences (Boylorn and Orbe, 2014; Parker, 2014). Offering my life in this way is an exposing process that presents my 'messiness' to be possibly scrutinised and criticised, but I hope that it is also understood (Todd, 2021). This form of inquiry falls within feminist and other emancipatory research approaches, where the idea is for one to be free to say the unsayable (Griffin, 2012). It also allows for a detailed description of an individualised experience and, by extension, opens up the possibility for assumptions to be made about the experiences of a particular group (Boylorn and Orbe, 2014; Gough, 2015; Shabalala, 2018). This kind of reflection on experience, as Parker (2014) highlights, is essential for qualitative inquiry in psychology. He further highlights that reflecting on experience is important because the academy constitutes a strange balance between secrecy and transparency (Parker, 2014). In other words, this paper attempts to draw attention to hidden affective experiences within the academy that are often experienced in a cycle of silence enforced by feelings of shame. This silence is often accompanied by the mandate of accountability embedded in the 'audit culture' of the neoliberal university (Parker, 2014). Baatjes et al. (2011: 139) argue that higher education in South Africa (with its history of enforcing racial capitalism) now perpetuates a market-oriented, neoliberal ideology that ultimately reinforces inequality.

I also draw on a number of theoretical resources, namely critical psychology, Marxism and feminism. Holman Jones (2016) argues that theory and storytelling exist in a reciprocal relationship where one influences the other, and theory helps us think through and discuss our experiences. Similarly, Parker (2014: 251) argues the following:

> When it is most tempting to go with what you know, with your immediate impression of what you are up against, it is most important to use theoretical frameworks to interpret it. Then it is more important than ever to locate what is happening here, to you, in broader context, to conceptualise what is going on.

The first attempt at this is stating upfront that I, and by extension, this paper, take a political position with the understanding that a lot of what I choose to do and not do is constituted by this political position. In other words, a recognition that I can affect and be affected, especially in my capacity as an academic, an educator and a psychologist. One rationale for this is that despite the efforts towards transformation within higher education in South Africa and seeing more black women within the academy, fewer black women occupy senior and management positions (Porter et al., 2020). There are also subtler inequalities that persist within the academy due to coloniality[1] (Shabalala, 2019; Swartz et al., 2009). These inequalities also influence how we work and, more importantly, how we talk about our experiences within this context (Shabalala, 2019). Martin and Mirraboopa (2003) have equally argued that this form of reflexivity allows for the integrity of identity during the research process while decolonising Western research methodologies. As I previously alluded to, the multiple positions I occupy also require this political stance, particularly as a South African psychologist. In psychology, for many years, the political has been treated as an addendum, or an add-on to psychology, which is problematic (Parker, 2014).

Discovering Tensions Inherent in Occupying the Academy

As a point of departure, I will discuss the idea of taking up space as an emerging black woman academic and the difficulty I have had in navigating this space. I will start off by telling a story of how things started in 2019. I entered academia in January of that year, and throughout the beginning of the first semester, I wondered if I had made the right decision. I often went back and forth struggling with my professional identity. I wondered if I could successfully balance being an academic and a clinician, as it has often felt that the two have been treated as separate streams of psychology. At that point, it felt like I did not belong in the intense environment that the academic space presents. The pace was also something I did not anticipate as a new academic. The number of outcomes to be met at a given time seemed unachievable. It felt like there was not enough time to settle into my new role and fully understand the space I was occupying. The symptoms of imposter syndrome – feelings of incompetence and thoughts of being 'caught out' – were increasingly present.

Within the first few months in my new position, I was allocated a Master's student to supervise for their minor dissertation. I was terrified because I had never supervised before, and I had not received the handbook to research supervision (if one ever existed). I tried to remember the type of feedback my research supervisor gave me during my Master's and PhD, attempting to recreate that in the room, but I quickly remembered that I am not a distinguished professor. It was new territory; I had to reconcile that I had to develop a new skill and do it quickly because there was and still is no time for me to do otherwise. This made me very uncomfortable – the idea of learning as I go and virtually acquiring supervision skills by osmosis. Reflecting on the supervision process is not what I intend to focus on now, but through the supervision process (with me being the supervisor), I have had to endure most of the growing pains.

“As a point of departure, I will discuss the idea of taking up space as an emerging black woman academic and the difficulty I have had in navigating this space. ...I often went back and forth struggling with my professional identity. I wondered if I could successfully balance being an academic and a clinician”

The student and I worked together and submitted the research proposal for internal review, and the reviews were dismal. As an unsure academic and supervisor, I found it very difficult not to take the reviews personally. The shame I sat with felt almost tangible. Not only did it feel like a direct reflection of me being in the wrong space and/or perhaps at the wrong time. It also felt as if I did not have enough time to take it personally because I was responsible to my student, and it counted as a research output for the year. There were also limited opportunities (perhaps also of my own making) to express just how much I was struggling and the emotional toll this took on me. So, I enlisted support.

One of my colleagues told me how they started running and likened it to the transition into academia in my quest for support and validation. They told me about how painful their first run was; they did not understand why people subjected themselves to such masochism. Eventually, they grew to enjoy it, and now running is a part of who they are. Central to their story was the theme of academia being marked by a few bad reviews and rejections that one needs to breathe through and, eventually, find one's pace. I started getting the sense that the 'breathing through' and the metabolising of the feelings that accompany these bad reviews had to be done in one's own time and not discussed publicly. While I am aware of how young I am in academia, this has me thinking about the extent to which there is enough time to process things (both positive and negative) and ultimately find a comfortable pace at which to feel at home in the job (Luvalo, 2019; Maseti, 2018).

There are, of course, multiple reasons why feeling at home or a sense of belonging seem like a point of conflict for a young black woman. One of these reasons relates directly to traditions embedded in coloniality and how that impedes the transformation agenda (Ratele, 2018; Shabalala, 2019). The other links back to the idea of the imposter I spoke of earlier or, put differently, the outsider-within position (Collins, 1986 as cited in Porter et al., 2020). This 'inside but on the periphery' position often necessitates that black women academics employ a number of coping strategies in order to stay strong, resilient and carry on (Porter et al., 2020). I unpack this rhetoric of a strong black woman and its ties to coloniality later. I will now turn back to the story to illustrate how the intersection of identity creates precariousness in me.

While my assuming an academic position occurred in 2019, I have been married to academics for many years. This relationship started with my long journey through psychology and the years spent courting the field. At the tail-end of my PhD, I felt like I had successfully (albeit uncomfortably) navigated my studies and entered academia. What has left me feeling some 'typ'a way' (Shabalala, 2018) this time is that suddenly I am no longer 20-something, and I had no idea where the time had gone. I had focused almost exclusively on my relationship with academia, and, after graduating, my PhD was greeted with congratulations from my family. They were also sure to tell me that they were praying for me to now find a husband, get married, and have children – a reminder that career success for a woman is never really fulfilled unless it is matched by marriage and children. As Thabo Msibi (2011) has similarly noted, despite my family's joy over completing the doctorate, they were worried, and I now had to be worried too. Another issue of time, space and pace had suddenly crept into my life as a young black woman academic: marriage, children, and a compatible partner; *when* are you? I felt a strong sense of frustration because, in my mind, a 30-year-old man who is a qualified clinical psychologist, holds a PhD, and occupies an academic post is seen as promising within academia and society. As a woman with a similar profile, I am 'overqualified and high-maintenance', as the Catholic priest jokingly pointed out at my god-child's baptism. In academia, for women, it is the feeling of needing to sacrifice one thing for the other – something I will come back to discuss.

As the new year started in 2020, I thought the worst was behind me, and I could now better prepare for the year ahead of me. However, no amount of preparation could have alleviated the impact of what then followed. The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced that COVID-19 infections had reached pandemic status (Landa, Zhou and Marongwe, 2021). The South African government subsequently declared a national state of disaster under the Disaster Management Act of 2002, and a national lockdown was initiated (Landa, Zhou and Marongwe, 2021). This had consequences for teaching as we moved from

contact learning (which was not permitted under the hard lockdown) to the online space. As a part-time clinician in private practice, it meant that I was also negotiating how to move my practice onto the online space. The lockdown period meant that I was restricted to my home for months. The lockdown meant that my home space was also my workspace, where I taught from, supervised from, saw patients from, and where I spent my 30th birthday alone. The period of March 2020 through to July 2020 was arguably the most difficult for me. It was the first real instance that the worry expressed by my loved ones became my worry, as the isolation (that I once thought I preferred) turned into loneliness. I realised how much I had been functioning in a silo only after this massive global pause was initiated. Time was a strange thing to negotiate; it stood still but moved at the same time – it felt like I had all the time in the world and none at the same time. And, unlike most colleagues, I did not have the interrupting sounds of pets, husbands or other proof of life in the background as I unmuted my mic during Microsoft Team meetings. As a result, some colleagues assumed that I had more time, and it seemed like my time was being taken for granted. This meant that I would be one of the people approached to provide relief or cover where others asked for relief. Managing my work and being collegial enough to cover others assumed that I had time in abundance. There was a heavy price to being conscientious, reliable and collegial because, at times, it felt exploitative.

Concerns were raised about how people were balancing work demands, student needs and home life. Most of the time, it seemed to me that there was more of an awareness of people who had to balance having their children at home while having to attend to work every day; then there was the occasional, *'Oh Lunga, you live alone, right? How have you been coping?'*. There were also moments of being expected to sit in meetings over weekends (which drew my attention to being contracted to fulfil work responsibilities over weekends), which embodies the masculine 'ideal academic' and the idea of constant availability (Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019). The rationale was that these pressing meetings that had to take place on weekends resulted from the COVID situation we found ourselves in (which is very accurate), but on the other hand, perhaps all COVID has done is to highlight problematic cultures or traditions that already existed (Ratele, 2018).

When I spoke up about the inability to find time and space to think and therefore write (in other words, be productive) because of these expectations, one senior academic responded, *'Why didn't you say no?'*. I do not recall having much of a response, but, in retrospect, I imagine feeling, as I often do now, that I had very limited choice. There are a few things I want to reflect on here. The first being the position of precariousness that I mentioned earlier – a nervous condition – which is ultimately always the condition of native or black people, especially women (Sartre, 1961). Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating (2019) discuss two types of precarity in academia: *labour-led* and *care-led* precarity, and that both forms of precarity demand a sacrifice. Negotiating this new space as an emerging woman academic sometimes leads me to an existential crossroad where there seems to be pressure to choose one extreme.

On the one hand, I may choose to pursue visibility through research rankings and publications and spend all my time doing that while my biological clock ticks away. In this manner, embracing the more masculine ideal. On the other hand, I may choose to forego visibility, actively contributing to knowledge, and getting promoted for a semblance of balance and 'life goals' for less financial gain and the possibility of being stuck in the trenches of heavy teaching loads (Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating, 2019). This conflict creates in me (a black body; a woman) a 'neurosis introduced and maintained by [coloniality] with [my] consent' (Sartre, 1961: liv). What sometimes feels worse is that it seems that one has to be violently silent about these decisions and temporal changes within the academy, which causes alienation and competition (Pillay, 2016). And in some ways, it's the same silence that then implicitly validates these archaic processes.

The other reflection relates to the 'strong black woman' trope and how that interacts with violent silence. I want to do this by going back to the question posed by my senior, *'Why didn't you say no?'*. In the first instance, the question presumes that I am complicit in the creation of my suffering, and this nervous condition is of my making. In retrospect, the

answer is, *'it just seems natural, and you just carry on',* as the protagonist, Nyasha, explains in *Nervous Conditions* (Dangaremba, 1988: 119). Parker (2014) argues that 'carrying on' is perhaps a way to protect and convince oneself that things are as they 'ought to be'. To further unpack this, the carrying on may also be linked to the notion of a strong black woman who is thick-skinned and does what needs to be done, irrespective of the consequences to herself. Consider the following quote from the American series, 'Harlem' (2020: lines 2–7):

> In comparison to white femininity, which is valued for beauty, vulnerability, and maternal softness. Black women have been valued for their labor, both literally and figuratively. A strong black woman suppresses her emotions, never letting anyone see her sweat… being labelled a strong black woman is a rite of passage. She is resilient, independent, and capable. But what if she isn't?

The problematic nature of this idea, Dayo (2021) argues, is that it tends to deprive black women of vulnerability and forces them into a stoicism that can be read as them being without emotion (Kiguwa, 2019). Thus, they can be relied upon to carry on as the labour force but not necessarily move up in rank. Them creating noise or speaking of dissatisfaction may lead to the labelling of them as emotional or angry (Dayo, 2021), which limits their productivity and thus progression. My inability to say no and not being able to question certain things is connected to not wanting to be labelled as angry or bitter, and thus I remain silent. This experience may also be compounded by functioning in a system that pushes productivity over recognition of personhood (Richards, Mapumulo and Swartz, 2018), one that is riddled with unfreedoms and has yet to radically transform itself through reimagination (Ratele, 2018; Wilson-Strydom, 2018). This brings me back to the discussion of the academy. There are two aspects that I want to draw attention to. The first is the affective experience of the academy and the politics of time and how these function within the neoliberal space.

"I focus on the politics of time, or what Felt (2017) terms 'chronopolitics'. I further reflect on the temporal structures that influence experience. I then briefly touch on the idea of time as a commodity and its impact. Time is considered neutral; however, the moment we start asking questions about pace and whose time matters within the academy, it lends itself to how time is political (or chronopolitics) and issues of temporality within the academy"

Chronopolitics, Temporality and Affect in Academia

In this section, I focus on the politics of time, or what Felt (2017) terms 'chronopolitics'. I further reflect on the temporal structures that influence experience. I then briefly touch on the idea of time as a commodity and its impact. Time is considered neutral; however, the moment we start asking questions about pace and whose time matters within the academy, it lends itself to how time is political (or chronopolitics) and issues of temporality within the academy (Shahjahan, 2019). Felt defines chronopolitics as 'the politics of time governing academic knowledge generation, epistemic entities, and academic lives and careers' (2017: 54).

Chronopolitics and the Neoliberal Academy

Berg and Seeber (2016) highlight that the nature of academic work, while flexible, is never really finished: they argue that the flexible nature of our hours is a definite privilege, but also caution that this could easily translate into us working all the time. Over the past year, what has occupied my mind is whether I had measurable things to show for the time spent. I felt I needed to show that the department made a good decision in hiring me and that I was productive. More recently, I have felt a different conflict with time – one that is associated with my exhaustion. Towards the end of 2021, I experienced extreme fatigue and burnout, but this conflict came when I had to sit with my manager during the final performance appraisal for the year. As my manager, she was privy to just how much I was teaching and how much effort I had put into the professional training programme. She

had also often reflected to me that she recognised how much work I was putting in during the time that ought to have been down-time. The unfortunate position she seemed to be put in was, on the one hand, empathically understanding and responding to my exhaustion, while on the other needing to drive the promotion agenda and emphasise the need for me to spend more time on what counts as productivity – or doing the emotional dirty work, as Parker (2014: 261) puts it. My performance review showed that I had failed to meet a particular key performance indicator, which is producing a publication, which meant that I had underperformed despite my exhaustion and exceeding in other areas. This further brewed resentment in me as emails circulated showing how people were publishing, and it reminded me of the colloquial saying *'we have the same 24 hours',* but do we? The further consequence of my lack of 'real' productivity meant that there are particular incentives that I continue to miss out on.

The academy has become a place for neoliberal capitalist endeavours that promote competition, in this instance in single-authored publications – as illustrated by the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) subsidy system for publications (Tomaselli, 2018). These ways of incentivising academics place a higher value on individual work than collaborative thinking, writing, and teaching. The effects of such a system are that, to academics, particularly emerging academics, these goals can appear unattainable and thus continue to serve to make us feel that we do not belong, or render us alienated. This job demands a particular skill set – teaching, curriculum development, supervision, and writing for publication. These skills did not necessarily form part of my formal education and professional training, hence my feeling of not belonging and being overwhelmed when I was assigned my first supervisee. Nevertheless, despite my feeling ill-equipped, I had to navigate the responsibilities because that is the job. This process of navigation draws attention to temporality and the academy.

Shahjahan (2020) refers to temporality as the ways in which we process and make meaning of everyday changes. These changes can be physical, biological, or emotional (Isaacs, 2020). Part of the discussion then becomes one of how (if at all) we respond to temporal changes within the academy, and questioning whether the time to do so exists. These changes cannot necessarily be separated from inherent structural and power dynamics. As such, we cannot separate time, politics, and power issues.

Shahjahan (2020) discusses how issues of power manifest within the academy by looking at the connection between it and everyday affective states. He argues that looking at such a connection allows us to delve deeper into 'the micropolitics of power operating in the "psychic life"' of working within higher education (2020: 786). These micropolitics lead to the tendency to self-monitor, compare and compete (Shahjahan, 2020). The other consequence is the feeling of alienation. It also seems like time does a weird shapeshifting and is affected by politics to become a commodity in the neoliberal university. As such, it becomes an important resource that can be competed for. An example of this may be how things like buying out teaching (for casual workers to offer some teaching relief) are negotiated. Senior, mainly professor level, academics can buy this teaching out to focus on research because they usually hold substantial research grants to do so. Feelings of being stuck, despondent and anxious then result for me, as on the one hand, I am desperate to get to that point where I can buy time, but it often feels like I do not have the time to collect incentives to do so.

Understanding Affect and Its Politics: Am I Just Being Emotional?

I now do a quick turn to emotions and affect. This may be an important exercise because my agenda with this paper is to conceptualise why I do what I do (the personal) and engage with the questions, 'what is going on?' and 'what do my emotions do?' (the political). Moreover, where they – the personal and political – come into contact; a process of becoming, according to Massumi (1995). Ott (2017) highlights that affect scholarship is vast and that defining the term 'affect' has somewhat been contentious (see Massumi, 1995; Tomkins, 2008; Wetherall, 2012). Therefore, I adopt the perspective of affect as practice (Wetherall, 2012) as it allows for the critical investigation into and conceptualisation of the unsayable, as Canham (2017) notes. He further highlights the argument that affect is not pre-personal or pre-political (see Hemmings, 2005). This links to Ahmed's (2014) approach to studying and

understanding affect as a movement that mediates everyday life.

In this paper I have reflected on my positionality and the intersecting realities of race, gender, and age that pull together and shape my not feeling at home within the academy (Luvalo, 2019; Maseti, 2018). I have also argued that my positionality and feeling a sense of precariousness within the academy have perpetuated a neurosis or nervous condition in me. As I describe these affective shifts within me, I am also cognisant of Canham's (2017) cautioning against using terms that pathologise the black affective experience. While I have consciously used neurosis to describe most of my emotional experience, I accept Canham's (2017) cautioning, as black emotionality is often the site of becoming or mobilising change. For example, Canham (2017) argues that black rage is agency, and whether one decides to expel or harbour it, it is daily work against racial and gendered infringements in order to survive. While rage can be destructive, it is necessary to embody for the purposes of resistance and transformation. This work is also often tiring, disheartening and slow (Canham, 2017), bringing to life Biko's (1979) argument about transformation being a slow process. It takes an emotional toll, but the alternative, 'deep acting', is not ideal either. It results in the death of identity, which ultimately happens in and benefits the neoliberal academy (Parker, 2014). Deep acting would mean carrying on – not asking questions and not expressing my discomfort and many other complex feelings I tend to sit with. This process eats away at my identity, especially because the neoliberal academy praises and promotes the masculine, white supremacist ideal, which is not me.

Concluding Thoughts: Have I Said Too Much?

> *I'm careful not to go too far, trying not to offend. Is this self-protection or 'double consciousness'?* (Bishop, 2021: 369)

Much like my other work, I always find wrapping things up nicely difficult, especially given the complexity of what I am trying to engage in. It is complicated and political, and I am very scared that I will offend, so one does tend to be careful not to go too far or rock the boat. What started as reflections on what I was feeling in 2019 when I entered academia has evolved into a deep dive into investigating what is happening in the academy in South Africa through my personal experience. As usual, it is never my intention to essentialise experience, but I also do not think it is fair nor useful to reduce the experience to just a 'me thing'. A problem that just needs to be taken to therapy, and all will be well. While that may also be accurate – the need for therapy that is – I am not interested in inhabiting a false consciousness that often protects many of our colleagues from feeling these affective shifts (Parker, 2014).

Despite the very strong words I have had for describing the academy and my experience of discomfort and dis-ease, I hope that the academy becomes a place I can call home for many years to come. I do plan to grow and get promoted. I also recognise the naivety with which I entered the academy. Having seen women who look like me – some referenced in this paper – who had made it, I thought to myself, '*black girl, it is possible!'*. However, somewhere down the line, I thought, *'not for me, clearly!'*. I thought I was doing something wrong. This brought about panic and arresting helplessness – bouts of depression in some instances. I thought I had to process all this emotion on my own and be sure to bite my tongue (Griffin, 2012) until I started writing and putting what I was feeling on paper. This reflective process made me acutely aware of the politics entrenched in academia, and I could start separating what was my responsibility to hold and what was not. Through this critical auto-ethnography, I also found the freedom *to*[2] start being and discovering my professional identity within academia – the freedom *to* reimagine. However, this is my process. Much still needs to be done.

The academy, in many ways, reflects greater socio-political realities, which is why it is political, despite its attempts at moving away from them. The difficulty, as I have tried to show in this paper, and as Ratele (2015) argues, is that the academy's structure does not allow for 'deep transformation'. This is especially true when there seems to be a continuous focus on merely 'bringing the poor, blacks, women, queers, and disabled' without a reimagining of what an inclusive academy can look like beyond transformation by numbers (Ratele, 2015). If misrecognition and unfreedoms persist as a result of coloniality, then some of the issues highlighted in this paper will

persist. How do we create an environment that has a focus on humility (Kiguwa, 2019) for academics and, ultimately, the students? What is going on? What do we need to remedy? Do we know? Part of the issue is that we treat concepts like 'transformation' and 'decoloniality' as buzzwords and tick box exercises and do not have honest conversations about what these things can radically look like.

Notes

1. A way in which inequalities are reproduced in contemporary South Africa as remnants of our segregationist past (Shabalala, 2019).

2. See Dladla's (2017) conversation about the freedom *from* vs. the freedom *to*.

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WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP as a Strategy for Sustainable Livelihoods

By Tanusha Raniga | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

Women establish their entrepreneurial projects for economic independence and to reduce vulnerability to poverty. The number of women engaged in entrepreneurial activities has increased as a result of access to business training and mentorship facilitated by non-governmental organisations. This paper advances empirical evidence in the field of social development and sustainable livelihoods. Using qualitative methodology, I present evidence from 20 women who were beneficiaries of a Non-Governmental Organisation's entrepreneurship training in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. Underscored by the sustainable livelihood approach, this paper deliberates three connected themes: motivational factors that promote women entrepreneurs, nurturing social networks, and navigating financial capital challenges. The paper affirms women entrepreneurship as a positive social development strategy to assist unemployed women to work towards economic self-reliance.

Introduction

The alarming rate of unemployment amongst women in South Africa is a serious concern to the government and is seen as a key contributing factor to the feminisation of poverty. Social entrepreneurship is the cornerstone of socio-economic development of women in society as it opens new job avenues both in the formal and informal economies. The structural humanist theory explores entrepreneurship as opportunities to address access to resources which can either encourage or discourage entrepreneurial behaviour amongst individuals (Derera et al., 2020). Globally, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a social development inspiration for private, public and social service sectors. South Africa's economic growth would be skewed without the active involvement of women entrepreneurs, as they constitute approximately half of the country's population (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The promotion of women as entrepreneurs is one such initiative geared up both in the Global North and Global South countries. A global survey conducted by the World Bank in 2017 revealed that Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Sweden, the UK and the US have dominated in propagating women entrepreneurship (Global Women Entrepreneur Leaders, 2017). Transitional economies such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa have in the past decade been promoting the growth of women entrepreneurship through government policy, awareness campaigns, corporate social investment, the implementation of social development programs, business training and transformative marketing programs facilitated primarily by non-governmental organisations. In the same breath, we must acknowledge that in the informal economy there is a wide disparity in women's economic status. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the reasons for the economic and gender disparity of access to resources – and to identify policy and practice strategies to promote the status of women entrepreneurs in the informal economy.

The field of women entrepreneurship has attracted the invaluable attention of human service professionals, policy makers, and academics across Africa. This study sought to answer the question: to what extent have entrepreneurial activities contributed to women's quest to sustain their livelihoods and enhance their social, human and financial capital development?

The central premise of this article is that to achieve gender equality, human service professionals and policy makers must give women access to business training, psychosocial support, and funding resources. Additionally, unemployed women who are determined to break the cycle of poverty have the capacity to sustain their own livelihoods through embracing opportunities for human capabilities development, nurturing business networks, and lobbying for access to government funding to sustain their businesses in the informal economy. The paper begins with a review of literature on the feminisation of poverty which follows an outline of the research methodology. The discussion subsequently presents the three connected themes that distilled from the data analysis. The final section of the paper synthesises the women's reflections and highlights improvement for policy and practice.

The Feminisation of Poverty and Social Entrepreneurship

The feminisation of poverty is a dominant feature in most Global South countries where gender discrimination and exclusion are rampant (McFerson, 2010). Even though women comprise more than 50% of the world population, it is ironic that women make up over 70% of the poor in Global South countries (Cheteni, Khamfula and Mah, 2019). Lombard (2019) argues that it is important to take into account that there are significant differences in the life experiences of different groups of women in various African countries. However, what is common is that they share the same intersectional discriminatory experiences – that of race, class and gender, which are closely connected to structural and systemic flaws in society, as such women across the continent continue to have minimal representation in mainstream economic and policy development.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 32.7% of women are illiterate, 23% are unemployed, and 59% have little or no access to family wealth (Reichelt, Makovi and Sargsyan,

“The National Department of Social Development Strategic Plan (2020–2025) maintains that the over-influx of women who work as entrepreneurs in the informal economy, combined with insufficient jobs in the formal economy, remain as challenges for gender mainstreaming.”

2021). To strive for economic empowerment and to break the cycle of poverty of African women, there is a need to promote an entrepreneurial culture.

The National Department of Social Development Strategic Plan (2020–2025) maintains that the over-influx of women who work as entrepreneurs in the informal economy, combined with insufficient jobs in the formal economy, remain as challenges for gender mainstreaming. In order to address this macro challenge, it is positive to note that the Gauteng Department of Social Development as well as non-governmental organisations are involved in the implementation of entrepreneurial training to promote women entrepreneurs in the age group 18 to 55 years (Review of the White Paper on Social Welfare, 2016). In addition, government and NGO practitioners are tapping on corporate social investment funding and private sponsorships to facilitate the development and empowerment of women entrepreneurship. Empirical evidence put forth by Raniga (2021) in a qualitative study with eight successful women entrepreneurs revealed that economic empowerment can be nurtured through appropriate business training, transformative intervention, and policy support. According to Statistics South Africa (2020), women working in the informal economy in Gauteng are considered the backbone of the state's informal economy. They have participated in entrepreneurial activities mostly in the textile industry – processing raw materials, making garments and quilts, shawls and sweaters.

The Review of the White Paper on Social Welfare in 2016 and the National Development Plan Vision 2030 are commendable policy roll-outs put forth by government to address gender inequality and the socio-economic imbalances that affect women. Whilst much was expected from the National Development Plan Vision 2030 to mitigate the feminisation of poverty in South Africa, research undertaken by Cheteni, Khamfula and Mah (2019) concludes that girl children and women are still grossly exposed to the feminisation of poverty. Raniga (2021) and Lombard (2019) posit that entrepreneurial activities have opened up new job opportunities for women and this has emerged as a key economic empowerment strategy in low-income communities. Entrepreneurial activities focus on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights – thereby influencing public policies, societal attitudes, and socio-political processes (Basal et al., 2019). In South Africa, women in urban areas have discovered opportunities where they can network and engage in implementing group economic cooperatives to generate income and sustain livelihoods (Raniga, 2017).

Sustainable Livelihood Approach

This study employed the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) as the key theoretical foundation. Prominent proponents of SLA, Chambers and Conway (1992), note that the livelihoods framework provides conceptual tools such as assets, capabilities and capitals that enable women to make a sustainable living. This is enshrined in the developmental social welfare approach in South Africa where practitioners who work in low-income communities are encouraged to set up economic cooperatives to improve the social and economic profile and reduce gendered poverty (White Paper on Social Welfare, 1997). Serrat (2017) states that the SLA does not replace other intervention frameworks such as participatory development or integrated rural development. Instead, it makes a connection between women and the economic environment that influences the outcomes of entrepreneurial activities. It brings attention to the inherent capabilities of women in terms of tapping into their proficiencies, social networks, access to physical resources and financial assets.

The SLA recognises that poor women are conscious of and understand their survival challenges best and are in a position to formulate solutions and strategies to solve these challenges (Raniga, 2021). Entrepreneurial activities thrive on access to natural capital, social capital, human capital, financial capital and physical capital which inherently improves business performance and sustains households. The relationships, coalitions and networks formed by women in entrepreneurial ventures are beyond economic purposes and benefit as they enhance self-empowerment, skills development and confidence – while sustaining livelihoods (Nel, 2014; Raniga, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

This study provides insight into women entrepreneurship by investigating the experiences of 20 women in Gauteng province who benefitted from an NGO named The Clothing Bank (TCB) and the implementation of business training programmes.

Context of the Study: The Clothing Bank

The Clothing Bank (TCB) is a social enterprise that was established in 2010 in Cape Town to empower unemployed women to become confident, competent and independent entrepreneurs. As a Non-Profit, the organisation set out to establish a platform for unemployed women to become financially and socially independent through the implementation of entrepreneurial activities. The Clothing Bank has satellite offices in four provinces: Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and East London.

The Clothing Bank was started by two retired women who had worked in multinational companies in the private sector. These project coordinators had a deep sense of social responsibility and they wanted to share their business skills with unemployed women who resided in impoverished communities. The project coordinators across the four provinces have recruited about 2,200 unemployed women between the ages of 18–55 years since 2019.

Non-profit organisations seeking to facilitate the entrepreneurship of women have been earmarked as powerful platforms with the potential to increase the sustainable incomes of women (Derera et al., 2020). These women participated in a two-year training programme, which covered topics such as savings, asset training, technical assistance, psycho-social support and business management. The women were encouraged to set up their own businesses in their communities through selling clothing and household items. A positive aspect of this collective organisation and training was that the women received seed funding from TCB to purchase their goods while also having access to consistent psychosocial support, encouragement and mentorship from the project coordinators. It was positive that in 2014, TCB received substantial funding from the Job Fund to facilitate the training of the women. In addition, many private sector companies donated unused clothing and household items to TCB and this was sold to the women at reduced costs when they started their own businesses. The project coordinators encouraged the women to have a sense of 'social responsibility' and to recruit other unemployed women in their resident communities. This paper reports on the experiences of twenty women who benefitted from TCB training and provides insight into factors that motivated the women, their social networks, and how they navigated financial challenges in order to sustain their livelihoods.

Methodology

In order to address the research purpose, a qualitative, descriptive design was employed. According to Rubin and Babbie (2017: 134), a descriptive design is concerned 'with conveying what it's like to walk in the shoes of people, providing rich details about their environments, interactions, meanings and everyday lives.' This approach afforded the women the opportunity to speak with confidence about the benefits and challenges regarding their participation in TCB entrepreneurial training. The researcher was concerned with how these women make sense of their lived experiences, taking into account the intersectional socio-economic and gender factors that profoundly impact their daily living in impoverished communities in Gauteng province. Gauteng is known as the economic hub in Africa and is the most populous province in South Africa – with a total of 15 million people and an estimated 37% unemployment rate (Statistics South Africa, 2021). While there is no recent statistical data on the impact of poverty on women in this province,

The National Department of Social Development (2020) report reveals that high levels of poverty, crime, lack of housing and economic opportunities are key developmental challenges.

As applicable to qualitative methodology, the researcher employed non-probability purposive sampling to select the women. The researcher undertook several field visits to TCB office located in a formal suburb North of Gauteng. The purpose of these visits was to gain information from the project coordinators about the history and background of the organisation and the branch operating in Gauteng. The second purpose was to peruse through records and to observe women who were involved in the business training. A letter detailing the research process and its purpose was given to the director and the project coordinator and an appointment for the follow-up interview was set. The criteria for inclusion of the participants were:

- Women who had participated in the NGO for the past two years
- Women who had completed the training at TCB
- Women who resided in low-income communities in Gauteng

The researcher envisaged a total of twenty-five women who would participate in the study but data saturation was reached with twenty women. The researcher made contact with them by means of WhatsApp, telephone, email and site visits. During this initial contact, the purpose and objectives of the research were discussed and the womens' voluntary participation in the study was ascertained.

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Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of one higher education institution to conduct the study. Since this study presents the experiences of a small sample of 20 women, the findings cannot be generalised. The ethical issues outlined by Marlow (2011) were respected and adhered to as follows: no harm done to the participants, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity when reporting the data, and participants not having unrealistic expectations of the study. Voluntary written consent, as well as permission to audio-record and to take field notes during the interviews, were sought from the participants.

Data was collected between November 2018 and 2019 and interviews were conducted at a neutral venue, namely the women's place of business or at the TCB offices. Two methods were used to collect the data: social media records of TCB and one in-depth interview with each of the women. The interview was conducted with the aid of an interview guide which comprised open-ended questions and which covered topics on motivations to start a business, financial benefits, social benefits, and challenges to sustaining the businesses (Marlow, 2011).

Interviews were conducted in English and the average duration of the interview session was 1.5 hours. The advantage of the interview was that it provided the women with an opportunity to answer questions in their own space and terms, avoiding bias and providing extensive, rich information on their experiences while participating in TCB training.

Consistent revision of the transcripts with the women through member-checks and multiple peer review sessions with the project coordinators served to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the data. In addition, the use of two data collection sources (interview and NGO records) contributed to enhancing the dependability of the data (Marlow, 2011). The data analysis comprised a systematic process of introspective examination, categorisation, tabulating and recombining the data to address the purpose of the study.

Presentation of Results and Discussion

Three interconnected themes emerged from the data analysis which form the central premise of the results and discussion below: motivational factors, social associations, and financial capital challenges. Pseudonyms are used to document the voices of the women in the discussion below.

Motivational Factors Promoting Women Entrepreneurs

There were two prominent reasons that motivated the women to join the NGO and initiate their own businesses. First, their choice related to the desire for entrepreneurial aspirations (McClelland et al., 2005). The women spoke about the desire for independence, self-fulfilment, wealth creation, social status and power, desire for a flexible lifestyle and enhancing their creative entrepreneurial skills.

Second, the more urgent motivation that the women related to was insufficient family income, dissatisfaction with a salaried job, difficulty in finding work in the formal work sector, desire for flexible work schedules and perceived lack of opportunity for career advancement (McClelland et al., 2005). Some of the comments shared by the women were:

> ***Angeline:*** *Being involved in the NGO gave me the opportunity to grow and spread my wings.*
> ***Lillian:*** *I never dreamt that I would be running my own business. Now I am able to employ two women.*
> ***Martha:*** *For the first time in my life I am working for myself and making my own money.*
> ***Nkensani:*** *The best part is helping other poor women to also succeed like me.*

Personal, interpersonal and organisational factors can promote or impede the sustainable livelihoods of women entrepreneurs. The women in the interviews spoke about personal factors such as accumulated life experience, access to education, social networks and work-life balance issues. Lenka and Agarwal (2017), writing about women entrepreneurs in India, stated that the role of government, NGOs and financial institutions are environmental factors that can deter or enhance the growth of women entrepreneurs. The stories shared by the women provide evidence of their gratitude towards the NGO for increasing their business skills, confidence, professional knowledge and access to psycho-social supportive services. All the women expressed appreciation to the staff at TCB for their facilitation of training and mentorship, and for providing psycho-social counselling and support. Some of the sentiments shared by the women were:

> ***Paulina*****:** *When you are suffering it doesn't mean that you are dead, where things happen that you didn't think could happen to you it doesn't mean it is the end of the world. You can still stand up.*
> ***Sizwe:*** *At the beginning there was always self-pity but then the counsellor will say: pull yourself towards yourself and do something with your life. If you are not going to do it no one else is going to do it.*
> ***Tinyiko:*** *I know that I have got responsibilities towards my kids so I have to get up and run my business.*
> ***Wendy:*** *I say never give up because you can still change your life never mind how old you are.*

This study resonates with Skelton, Evans and La Chanaye (2020), who argue that it is important for women entrepreneurs to enhance their human capital skills and to join the NGO training programs to realise their economic potential and to increase their social networks. This study demonstrates that human service professionals must consider women entrepreneurs' socio-economic circumstances within the broader political economic agenda. Hence it is imperative to take note of Gibson-Graham's (2006) conceptualisation of community economies and local innovation as the findings affirm a conscious appreciation of women's entrepreneurial strengths, skills and collective associations that contributes to nurturing business social networks. This theme is explored further in the next section.

Nurturing Business Social Networks

Emerging data suggests that TCB has succeeded in empowering the women with access to goods and clothing, as well as with marketing and business skills that enable them to transform their lives, improve their food security, and sustain their livelihoods. Thaba et al. (2015) revealed that women in Gauteng tend to have a low morale, lack affirmation and

opportunity to succeed as entrepreneurs in the informal economy due to their unemployed status. It was established through the interviews that all the women made conscious efforts to consistently nurture social networks and associations with those women who had completed the training and to share business experiences and to enhance the sale of their products. The women stated that the interpersonal support, networking and marketing skills that they gained during the training workshops helped them to mobilise support from other women in their resident communities. In addition, it was deemed important for the women to keep in contact with the project coordinator and all the staff employed at TCB so that they could enhance marketing of their businesses. Many of the women stated that the NGO training had helped them to associate with women from all economic backgrounds and that the social bonds formed united women from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds in the Gauteng province. Some of the women's comments are:

> ***Rose:*** *NGOs that focus on women give us HOPE and inspire us to become social entrepreneurs and economically empowered.*
> ***Beauty:*** *We have established a business forum to provide ongoing support and training for women who are entrepreneurs.*
> ***Thabsile:*** *We have set up WhatsApp groups to stay in touch and share our business experiences.*

Given the development of information and communication technology, it was clear that the women established WhatsApp business support groups to deal with challenges, seek expertise, and share their strengths and resources. All the women indicated that the major challenges they experienced related to access to a market for sale of their clothing products and lack of financial capital. Hence, nurturing business support and social networks with women within and outside of their resident communities served to enhance their business success. What was interesting is that it also gave the women the opportunity to encourage other unemployed women to join the NGO training and to initiate their own businesses. The findings corroborate the research evidence put forth by Lenka and Agarwal (2017) who aptly maintain that social support and networking provide a platform for women's economic development.

Navigating Financial Capital Challenges

One of the key challenges mentioned by the women in the interviews was a lack of access to consistent funding or cash to sustain their entrepreneurial activities. Thembeni commented that: 'it was difficult for me during the training as I needed to pay someone to take care of my child yet I was not earning any money.' Paulina spoke about how grateful she was to the project coordinator at the NGO who had given her a loan to purchase her clothing. She commented: 'this helped me a lot as I was able to sell the clothing for a profit and to pay back the loan.' It must be noted that the sustainability of entrepreneurial activities depends to a large extent on access to credit and funding from both non-governmental organisations and government institutions who are primarily responsible for promoting women's economic development (Raniga and Ngcobo, 2014). A comment from Angeline illustrates the funding challenge which had implications for sustaining her business:

> If we had access to government or private funding, we would be able to help more unemployed women and assist them to start their own businesses.

These assertions concur with Raniga's (2021) empirical evidence obtained from qualitative voices with eight women involved in cooperatives that lack of funding from government are key factors that lead to the unsustainability of cooperatives. A practical solution that all the women had instituted through their Business WhatsApp groups was to share resources such as transport for delivery of goods to customers and monthly cash contributions as an emergency fund to subsidise and support each other when in financial crisis.

The findings reveal that all the women were committed to transforming their material realities and to providing opportunities to increase income security in their households. It was clear that the life choices made by the majority of the women to run their own businesses enhanced their self-confidence and business skills – and increased the profits from the sale of their garments. It was encouraging to

note that this translated into the women receiving a steady monthly income from the sale of their garments. In fact, Beauty shared that she was able to employ three women in her business. Some of the comments made by the women were:

> ***Beatrice:*** *I am now able to send my children to private schools and to university.*
> ***Tami:*** *I never dreamt of opening a second business. Now I am able to do so.*
> ***Tumi:*** *I opened up a clothing store and I'm able to employ two women.*
> ***Mama D:*** *I am coming from poverty and now my future is glowing because of the NGO.*

Researchers such as Thaba and Mbohwa (2015) provide empirical evidence that the role of non-governmental organisations is fundamental in supporting women's entrepreneurial activities and their quest to survive independently from external support and to confidently compete in relevant markets to sell their products. Bradshaw et al. (2010) state that transferring financial capital to meet basic material and non-material needs is key to sustaining a household. All the women believed that the consistent mentoring and access to seed funding from TCB to purchase their goods was a major part of the success of their businesses in their resident communities. Raniga (2021) reiterated that it is imperative for human service professionals to integrate SLA as a social development strategy to assist women entrepreneurs to facilitate a household analysis of the economic, human, physical and social assets that are needed to sustain a household. All the women unanimously acknowledged that their participation in the NGO training had led to an improvement in their own human capital development, enhanced social status, and income security in their respective households.

Final Conclusions

The entrepreneurial training facilitated by the NGO The Clothing Bank in this study highlights that entrepreneurial learning helps in the development of human capabilities, social networking, and entrepreneurial competencies. The women in this study had acquired a business identity through their training and networks which contributed to sustaining livelihoods.

The Clothing Bank's training provides evidence of an innovative case where the staff were committed to enhancing the innate capabilities of unemployed women who were keen to break the cycle of poverty. Evidently, the experiences of the women highlight that nurturing business networks and building partnerships using social media platforms were useful strategies for sharing material resources and navigating financial challenges in their quest to sustain their businesses.

The findings also reveal that access to financial capital remains a dire challenge for women entrepreneurs as a result of poor funding from the private sector and government intervention. Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- Transformative interventions should include the establishment of online business forums to assist women entrepreneurs with access to ongoing business training, networking, and advocating for funding from government.
- It is important that policy makers support the livelihood activities of women through access to micro credit schemes and better access to financial literacy training.
- Lobbying by human service professionals to address the economic and educational needs of women residing in low-income communities is necessary.
- This study represented a limited sample of 20 women who participated in one NGO training project in one province in South Africa. This clearly warrants further qualitative research to be conducted with both men and women entrepreneurs across various provinces in South Africa.

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Daring to Be Different:

The First-Person HIV-Positive Narrator in Two South African Novels

– Masande Ntshanga's *The Reactive* and Eben Venter's *My Beautiful Death*[1]

By Lizzy Attree | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

Masande Ntshanga's novel *The Reactive* (2014) is the first South African novel written by a black male writer to feature the first-person voice of an HIV-positive man, Lindanathi. Following Kgebetli Moele's *The Book of the Dead* (2009), which gave the virus itself a voice, *The Reactive* heralds a significant shift in the portrayal of HIV in South African literature. Eben Venter's Afrikaans novel *Ek Stamel, Ek Sterwe* (1996) which was translated into English by Luke Stubbs as *My Beautiful Death* (2004), and which has – significantly – received little critical review in English as an HIV narrative, tells the story of a white South African man, Konstant, in the Australian diaspora who eventually succumbs to AIDS. Both novels complicate ideas of masculinity and can be described as 'coming of age' narratives or *bildungsromans*. Both novels sit historically on the cusp of change, before and after the widespread availability of ARVs. Given their commonality of subject and narrative perspective, these texts seem ripe for comparison despite their authors' different backgrounds. The shifts and continuities in the representation of HIV/AIDS found between these two novels, published 18 years apart, seem to disrupt the trajectory of the post-colonial *bildungsroman* as it is mediated (for the first time?) through the HIV-positive narrator. Reading these two novels together helps us to understand literary patterns, associations and dissociations, which reveal a cultural symbology of HIV/AIDS, part of a wider cultural symbology of illness in South African literature.

Masande Ntshanga's novel *The Reactive* (2014) is the first South African novel written by a black male writer to feature the first-person voice of an HIV-positive man, Lindanathi. Following Kgebetli Moele's *The Book of the Dead* (2009), which gave the virus itself a voice, *The Reactive* heralds a significant shift in the portrayal of HIV in South African literature. Imraan Coovadia suggests that 'Ntshanga sets out on a thrilling new expedition of writerly daring'[2] - centring the interior life of a nihilistic HIV-positive protagonist. Such daring is also detectable in Eben Venter's novel, written earlier in the HIV/AIDS pandemic and published in the mid-90s, only two years after Mandela was elected President. Venter's Afrikaans novel *Ek Stamel, Ek Sterwe* (1996)[3] which was translated into English by Luke Stubbs as *My Beautiful Death* (2004), and which has – significantly – received little critical review in English as an HIV narrative, tells the story of a white South African man, Konstant, in the Australian diaspora who eventually succumbs to AIDS. Both novels complicate ideas of masculinity and can be described as 'coming of age' narratives or *bildungsromans*. Both novels sit historically on the cusp of change, before and after the widespread availability of ARVs. Konstant lives in a time before effective treatment and Lindanathi initially squanders that luxury in South Africa, before re-emerging as a survivor just as higher quality ARVs are made more widely available. Given their commonality of subject and narrative perspective, these texts seem ripe for comparison despite their authors' different backgrounds.

The shifts and continuities in the representation of HIV/AIDS found between these two novels, published 18 years apart, seem to disrupt the trajectory of the post-colonial *bildungsroman* as it is mediated (for the first time?) through the HIV-positive narrator. Reading these two novels together helps us to understand literary patterns, associations and dissociations, which reveal a cultural symbology of HIV/AIDS, part of a wider cultural symbology of illness in South African literature. Rita Barnard identifies a gap in previous literary criticism of South African writing that 'there are, to date, surprisingly few critical works...that consider South African literature in a broad thematic way, and there are fewer still without the modifiers 'black' or 'white' inserted in the title' (Viljoen, 2013: xxii). This is further underscored by a reticence for working with translations, and certainly

"The shifts and continuities in the representation of HIV/AIDS found between these two novels, published 18 years apart, seem to disrupt the trajectory of the post-colonial bildungsroman as it is mediated (for the first time?) through the HIV-positive narrator."

for international students of South African literature, the vast body of Afrikaans literature is barely studied at all. Could it be daring then, in the South African context, to read Venter's novel comparatively alongside Ntshanga's novel?

Both novels demonstrate that the artistic and literary treatments of HIV are complex, culturally constructed, and nuanced. The language of Venter's novel has been described as 'rich with innuendo, textual references and streams-of-consciousness' (NB Publishers, 2006) – techniques used to vividly inhabit the mind of the protagonist whose internal monologue is both witty and filled with pathos. Ntshanga's novel is rich with existential introspection and tumultuous consciousness. By linking Venter and Ntshanga's texts it is possible to compare how the two writers tackle HIV, positioning their writing as part of a continuum in South African writing about HIV across two decades, which reflects the trajectory of the disease in the population as it moved from predominantly white gay men into the wider black heterosexual population. The habit of previously omitting or excluding texts written in Afrikaans[4] means we are missing crucial parts of the cultural narrative of HIV/AIDS in South African literature.

In addition to the wealth of research on HIV/AIDS in media messaging, myths, stigma, taboo, awareness campaigns, TV, artworks and activism, the TAC, Body Maps and the Memory Box project,[5] literature provides access to a complex web of cultural,

intimate information that other forms of research cannot. Anthropologist Didier Fassin remarks that 'works in the social sciences rarely mention subjectivity' (Fassin, 2007: 261), or in other words the creative capacity subjects have for re-defining, re-imagining and re-inscribing their reality. And social scientist Alex de Waal has written that 'We need to imagine HIV/AIDS before we can think practically about it' (2006: 117). He suggests we use literature, novels and short stories in particular, to put the ear closer to the ground to 'investigate what people actually talk about' (de Waal, 2006: 32). There is much to be learned about HIV/AIDS 'through those professional observers of everyday life: novelists.' Literature provides an opportunity to the reader and critic, not just to hear what people talk about, but most significantly, to *read* what they would perhaps otherwise *not* talk about. Writing and reading are a silent form of communication which open covert spaces in which to approach the unspeakable, and this is where literature featuring HIV/AIDS is vital.[6] This suggests that these novels can get to the heart of what Steinberg found so hard to discern in his non-fiction book *Three Letter Plague* (2008), when writing about Sizwe, who is HIV-positive, and whose inner thoughts he could not access.

Drawing on Paula Treichler's research which identifies HIV/AIDS as 'an epidemic of signification' (Treichler, 1999: 171), readers can interrogate the disease's multiple meanings and cultural connotations in these two South African novels. Building a cultural symbology across historical racial divides, of an illness that has affected so many South Africans, enables HIV/AIDS to be examined from new angles and folds the analysis in to the wider literary history of South Africa. The novel form is particularly concerned with ideas of the self, allowing as it does for introspection by first-person narrators into the condition of the self. Epstein outlines the correlation of disease with the body and formations of the self: 'diseases are cultural artifacts and social constructions as well as biological processes, and... individually, historically, and socially determined subjectivities impinge upon the relation of the body to the self' (1995: 1–2). And Gikandi asserts that literature tells us as much about the self as the nation, stating, 'to write is to claim a text of one's own; textuality is an instrument of territorial repossession; because the other confers on us an identity that alienates us from ourselves, narrative is crucial to the discovery of our selfhood' (1992: 384). This reclamation speaks of the functionality of literature, such that literature actively participates in the creation and formation of selfhood, particularly at a time of shifting national priorities. By writing in the first person, the HIV-positive narrators created by Venter and Ntshanga enact a process of discovering selfhood during sickness and in doing so, inscribe their exceptionally articulate characters into the history of illness in South African letters.

In his review of *The Reactive*, Nathan Goldman asks 'How does illness fit into a cultural symbology?' (Goldman, 2016). Drawing on Sontag's *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1988), he describes how her seminal text sought to 'clear away the metaphors surrounding these illnesses in order to confront them as brute facts, freed from symbolic baggage.' And yet through my research, since 2003, I have sought to *find* these culturally embedded metaphors and attempted to understand how they fit in to an imaginary or symbolic system that might help to explain the taboo around HIV/AIDS in South African fiction. Since the late 1980s and early '90s, HIV and AIDS are hardly ever named in literary texts and the first person narrator is rarely HIV-positive.[7] In these circumstances, it has been difficult in the past to establish whether AIDS does have a 'cultural symbology' in South Africa, and few other literary critics address these concerns. I argue that the analysis of these two texts in this article makes this idea of a broader cultural history of South African letters more viable. Central to *The Reactive* is the idea of becoming a man and this can also be said of *My Beautiful Death*. However, the presence of HIV/AIDS in both novels alters the trajectory of the conventional/post-colonial *bildungsroman*, complicating each protagonist's development as they confront their mortality at a young age. These novels re-define what it means to be HIV-positive at different historical moments.

Venter's novel is set in Australia, removing the action from the politically contested geographic centre of homophobic South Africa during apartheid (emigrating as a form of protest or escape: 'To get the hell out of here and make a life of my own' (7)) and positioning the personal experiences of Konstant Wasserman, the protagonist, in a comparatively more politically calm, liberal environment. Konstant leaves a small town (*dorp*) in the Free State, South

Africa to become a chef in Sydney where he forms close friendships with a woman called Shane, a fellow chef, and Jude, who becomes his lover. Konstant grows to realise that he has actually located himself in the centre of a 'plague' and the journey he makes becomes an internal journey as he discovers he is HIV-positive and will eventually die of AIDS in Australia.

The Reactive tells the story of Lindanathi Mda, a young Xhosa man who is HIV-positive, living with two other young South Africans, Cecilia (Cissie) and Ruan, in Cape Town between 2000 – 2010. The three friends make a living selling Lindanathi's antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) under the Mbeki regime that restricts their availability. As well as the virus, Lindanathi also carries guilt about his brother's death during his circumcision. The exact circumstances are unclear, but his brother was gay, and somehow did not survive this important transition to manhood, and Lindanathi believes he could have prevented his brother's death. This has led to Lindanathi abandoning his traditions: he remains uncircumcised, and he has fallen out of touch with his family in the Eastern Cape. The proceeds obtained by selling the ARVs are spent on drink and drugs, fuelling a period of 'waiting' in a liminal state, reflective of Lindanathi's name which means 'wait with us' in isiXhosa.

What is unusual and compelling about Ntshanga's novel and the approach he has taken is that he keeps Lindanathi's HIV-positive status in the background of the story, and focuses rather on the drug taking, the dream-like state that the protagonist and the two other central characters inhabit throughout the novel. However, simultaneously, the suffusion of glue-sniffing and drug-cocktail taking is only made possible by the fact that Lindanathi is selling his ARV medication to pay for this lifestyle. The lifestyle, then, at once seems like a form of denial of his status, as well as a mercenary and irresponsible approach to his serious illness. Equally, the elements of hedonism suggest that there are other possibilities in terms of enjoyment in whatever form he is attempting to seize. It also stares down the reality of the disease which had been thought incurable in the '80s and '90s, and for so long had not been treated with ARVs in South Africa, even though they were available in a limited form post-2011.[8]

The socio-political context in which Ntshanga wrote *The Reactive* is crucial to understanding the gap in to which Lindanathi's life falls in to circa 2005–2010. President Thabo Mbeki's AIDS denialism (1999–2008), and both the opposition and the ANC government's failure to hold the president to account, meant that it was not until 2016 that the South African government under Jacob Zuma (2009–2018) set a target to treat 5 million people with ARVs. This was far too late to save the lives of those who had been suffering and dying in great numbers since the 1990s[9]. The irony of the novel is that even when ARVs were available in South Africa, after years of campaigning by Zackie Achmat and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), they are treated as any other valuable commodity by the central characters of *The Reactive*. Set during this period of transition marked by official denialism, Lindanathi sells his potentially life-saving ARVs to fund a form of self-destructive behaviour which nevertheless bonds him to his best friends. This behaviour reflects a personal form of denialism and seems rooted in a need to escape from reality and enjoy life in a nihilistic way, while the troubles of South Africa, and Cape Town in particular, play out in the background.

Goldman (2016) states that Ntshanga's debut novel 'situates [itself] in two distinct but related traditions: the protest novel and the novel of fundamental human alienation.' Goldman goes on to outline the conjunction of the personal and political, saying that Ntshanga 'creates a space in which the reader can experience this metaphorization, as well as critique it.' He identifies the two epigraphs from Mbeki and Kafka included in the US edition[10] published by Two Dollar Radio (2016) as 'unified in the despair they suggest'. Former President Thabo Mbeki is quoted at the height of his denialism: 'We need to look at the question that is posed, understandably I suppose: does HIV cause AIDS?' positioning the novel within the protest tradition by refuting this view vehemently. This is juxtaposed by the quote from Kafka which reflects the personal dislocation and disorientation of the central characters: 'We are as forlorn as children lost in the woods.' By using both of these quotes, Ntshanga positions the novel as 'at the convergence of these traditions: its content is essentially and necessarily political, while in form it centers on a single thoughtful, uneasy consciousness' (Goldman, 2016).

The parallels with Venter's 'uneasy consciousness' bears further consideration. Shaun Viljoen paraphrases Njabulo Ndebele's *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (1994) when he posits that 'Postapartheid literature moves away from the exterior binaries and the protesting voice to a preoccupation with the inner, the intimate, the individual, and the intermingled ordinary' (Viljoen, 2013: xxii). And it is in this way that we can link Ntshanga's 'writing traditions' to Venter's, and even perceive that Venter's novel demonstrates a shift away from exterior binaries *before* the end of apartheid. Perhaps by writing a novel set 'in Australia' Venter escapes the dichotomies of 'apartheid literature'? It is undoubtedly the dearth of translation of Afrikaans writing into English (and vice versa) that has facilitated and accentuated the gap in critical thematic comparisons, meaning this link has not been made clear before.

Eben Venter comments on the translation of his novel that 'the heart of my story has been captured, and I can still hear my voice when I read the English text' (Jenkings et al., 2007). However, there is ambiguity in the Afrikaans version over Jude's gender, which is more boldly presented as male in the English text. It is possible that the author can be more daring in translation, shifting representation 'performed at least one remove from reality'[11]. Nevertheless *Ek Stamel, Ek Sterwe* was declared one of the ten best novels in the Afrikaans literary canon and was reissued as part of Tafelberg's Klassiek/Classic Series in July 2005 (Jenkings et al., 2007)**.** Johann de Lange states that the novel 'has torn out my heart' and says it is '[A]n intense exploration of dying, and a tour de force by a writer who surprises with every new book'[12]. As an English-only reader, I have to assume that the translation is a good one and work with the text I have[13] The reason *My Beautiful Death* may also have been excluded from previous analysis of South African fiction could be because of its firm location in the Australian diaspora. In an early review, Rachelle Greeff commented that 'although set mostly in Australia, it confronts local readers with its raw but also delightful reality'[14] (*Rapport*, 1996).

Narrated right up to the protagonist's final breath, *My Beautiful Death* nevertheless contains elements of displacement reminiscent of other writing in English about HIV in South Africa, such as Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001) which was written in the second person. Like Lindanathi in *The Reactive*, Konstant is trying to escape his past and the novel opens with his decision to leave his family in South Africa and move to Australia. It is not uncommon for Afrikaans writing to feature this movement away from the farm or the homestead, towards the city.[15] Locating the story in Sydney, Australia removes the action from 'home' where the consequences of the illness for the main characters might be more drastically felt in terms of social ostracism, prejudice, and family repercussions. This could suggest a lack of courage, a fear of facing the consequences of being gay/HIV infection 'at home'. In comparison, Lindanathi has also moved away from the village to the metropolitan city of Cape Town in a similar attempt to escape his family and his past.[16] And yet both authors have made the courageous (literary) decision to voice their protagonists' dilemmas in the first-person which had previously been eschewed by South African novelists focusing on HIV/AIDS. There is also displacement in the deferral of blame which the protagonist, Konstant, manages throughout. The revelation that Jude seems to have deliberately infected Konstant is not made until halfway through the book (122). Similarly, there is no mention of who infected Lindanathi in *The Reactive* until towards the end of the novel when the shocking truth is revealed:

> The year after I graduated Tech, and a week before the sixth anniversary of your death, Luthando, **I infected myself** with HIV in the laboratories. That's how I became a reactive. I never had the reactions I needed to give myself and could not react to you when you called me for help. So I gave my body a situation it couldn't run away from. So here's your older brother and murderer, Luthando. His name is Lindanathi and his parents got it from a girl. (174)[17]

This is a way of removing victimhood from the protagonist, but there is clearly guilt to be felt and punishment to be courted. Lindanathi did not contract HIV in any of the usual ways, but deliberately infected himself. There is no one to blame, but clearly he blames himself for his brother's death ('I never went back home after we buried him' (6)) and for avoiding his brother once he realised his brother was gay: 'I was scared of being close to you, LT. The rumours about you had spread; you'd been set apart. I didn't want people to mix us up, to look

at me the same way. When the Mda house came under pressure to make a man out of its sissy son, I kept away – I crossed my arms in Cape Town' (173–4). He inflicts a horrific punishment on himself as a measure of how guilty and cowardly he feels.

The level of displacement in *The Reactive* is the basis for most of the novel. When Lindanathi writes 'What helps, of course, is to try to forget about it as much as possible. Which is what I do' (22), he is essentially telling us why he spends the entire novel high on drugs and alcohol. This is his coping strategy, and links to the writing of K. Sello Duiker in *Thirteen Cents* (2000) and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001). Goldman describes this strategy as a kind of haunting: 'Haunted by guilt, Lindanathi haunts his own life, which he drifts through, drugged and dazed. He understands himself as undead and refers to his HIV-positive status as a state of being between life and death – like a vampire, he feels the presence of a 'seemingly mystical barrier from returning home'; he's a denizen of the in-between' (2016). Both Ntshanga and Duiker excel at creating wandering existentially liminal characters who roam through Cape Town, delineating the suburbs, the townships and the seaboard through the haze of their consciousnesses. Ntshanga's updated hero in *The Reactive* has not been sexually abused like Azuro (*Thirteen Cents*) and does not suffer from schizophrenia like Tshepo (*The Quiet Violence of Dreams*). The key similarity is that all three are on the cusp of manhood, experiencing a crisis of masculinity and suppressed trauma, that is sublimated with intoxicants. Frenkel suggests that 'Nathi is unable to deal with his grief and feelings of loss from his brother's death' (2019: 76) and, in an interview with Nick Mulgrew, Ntshanga explains that 'part of what I wanted to do in the novel was complicate the idea of masculinity' (Mulgrew, 2014).

"Central to The Reactive is the avoidance of becoming a man. Allegorically, South Africa is also growing beyond 'freedom', and the birth of the nation, into adolescence, twenty years after apartheid ended (in 2014) and struggling with what it means to be 'free'."

Central to *The Reactive* is the avoidance of becoming a man. Allegorically, South Africa is also growing beyond 'freedom', and the birth of the nation, into adolescence, twenty years after apartheid ended (in 2014) and struggling with what it means to be 'free'. One aspect of masculinity studies suggests that the crisis of masculinity in South Africa has arisen partly because 'Ironically, men's greater social power places them in a position of vulnerability regarding HIV infection' (Walker, Reid and Cornell, 2004: 24). Walker et al. go on to posit that 'Traditional notions of masculinity are strongly associated with risk-taking behaviour such as increased alcohol consumption, intravenous drug use, multiple sexual partners and violence' (24) and cite Wood and Jewkes (1997) who write that 'Most studies show masculinity as rather fragile, provisional, something to be won and then defended, something under a constant threat of loss' (Walker et al., 2004: 26). In particular, 'Traditional male authority was undermined by colonial authority and apartheid rule' (33), so it's not surprising that 'one of the responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis has been to look back to tradition…a return to traditional customs is an attempt to take control over young bodies, sexuality and reproductive health' (81). Indeed, Frenkel makes the comparison with Niq Mhlongo's work and suggests that 'Ntshanga positions indigenous belief systems as offering redemption and restoration in a post-apartheid context' (Frenkel, 2019: 77).

Whether Ntshanga is returning to tradition in *The Reactive*, or simply examining the tradition of Ulwaluko (initiation in isiXhosa), it does mean that this ritual becomes a focal point for Lindanathi's understanding of what it is to become a man. Contrary to what Lindanathi believes (as he blames himself), his brother's death was as a *direct* result of his initiation. We do not learn exactly how he dies, except that he struggled and screamed: 'They called him the screamer' (Ntshanga, 2014: 6). It is only when Lindanathi returns home to eMthatha and undergoes initiation himself that he seems restored

to his sense of self. He comes back to Cape Town more hopeful and starts to talk about having 'many years left before the end of our paths' (186). This coincides with the announcement by the government that it will provide 'Free ARVS to the country's citizens' (193) and that there will soon be 'treatment for a hundred thousand of us' (193; my emphasis). This shift into the objective first person plural reflects a shift into the national narrative that alters the economic (not altruistic) imperative that drives much of the novel: 'the government was reported as having finally relented, ending a five-year struggle: under increased pressure from a civil disobedience suit' (193). Lindanathi seems to self-identify with the plural 'we', 'our' and 'us', as if he is no longer an outsider – he now feels that he is part of society again. Does this reflect a national coming of age of sorts? Aligning the *bildungsroman* with national allegory?

Indeed, the Cape Town of the entire novel is one in which 'the plague' is ever-present – creating a market for the ARVs that Lindanathi is selling. But HIV/AIDS is a national problem. Lindanathi's friend Ruan describes a guy called Ralph who thinks 'the AIDS-infected should be put on one island and left to fend for themselves' (136) and Lindanathi wonders 'how many of us were affected inside this taxi? Inside this metropolis?' (193). For those of us with an awareness of the scale of HIV incidence in South Africa, the figure of 100,000 is very small compared to the number of people who really needed treatment in 2011. It wasn't until 2016 that the government set a target to treat 5 million people with ARVs,[18] closer to the true number of affected people and for many far too late to save the lives of those who had been suffering and dying in great numbers since the 1990s. This is reflected in comments embedded in the text through memories of the past. A Biology teacher in Lindanathi's fourth year at high school describes 'How the Earth [near Richard's Bay] was gutted open with so many new graves for paupers…like a giant honeycomb…Each grave was meant to contain the bodies of twenty adults…that is HIV' (161). The vastness of the impact of AIDS in South Africa cannot be underestimated.

However, the novel demonstrates that an alternative is possible. There is a hopeful turn and by the end of the novel Lindanathi finally accepts and re-defines the imperative of his name which means 'wait with us', saying 'that is what I plan on doing' (198), instead of waiting in an altered reality. On the final page of the book, we read that Lindanathi plans to stay, to take his medication and to live with his HIV positive status. Lindanathi's name can be paralleled with Konstant's, as 'constant' relays a sense of the steady, loyal, staying power of Konstant's character, who does not give up, wanting to 'see until I die, I don't want to lose sight of the blue sky, or the red-winged rosellas' (Venter, 2004: 235) and even thirty pages from his death declaring 'I want to live, despite the fact that I have already begun making preparations for my departure…There's no redeeming salve for my lust for life. I still want to live, people, I really do' (248).

In Venter's novel, the presence of AIDS as a social problem in both South Africa and Australia is hardly mentioned, so the local detail (such as graves in Richard's Bay, or government announcements about treatment) does not appear much in Venter's novel. In Australia, the characters early on allude to a 'plague'[19] when a finger is cut in the kitchen and the chefs worry about the blood: 'A shriek, a shout. Everyone drops their work…. Pandemonium…There's a plague in the city, and who knows what's in Liz's blood?' (Venter, 2004: 93). Konstant displays his naivety when he apologises for leaving the knife in the sink and offers to 'suck your thumb' (94). He is quickly told off: 'Don't be crazy…Times have changed: you're not at home now. Where do you come from?' – suggesting Konstant is unaware of the potential threat of HIV contamination in blood. It is ironic in retrospect that South Africa, where Konstant came from, became the epicentre of the AIDS crisis (Avert, 2020), whereas Australia's infection rate dropped dramatically from its peak in 1987, to a drop off in prevalence in the '90s (due to ARVs) to its lowest rate in 1999 (Sedghi, 2018). It is a significant difference in the chronology of the two novels that when Venter was writing (before 1996) there was no really effective treatment available for HIV/AIDS and so Konstant's diagnosis is essentially a death sentence. By the time Ntshanga was writing twenty years later (before 2014), ARVs were scarce, expensive, but available – before becoming more widely available to patients across South Africa in 2016. Thus, the existential crisis for each protagonist is quite different. Konstant would have benefitted from treatment but is unable to access it and swiftly dies; Lindanathi has access to treatment and throws his good fortune away by selling his ARVs, risking his life as a consequence.

Konstant's infection is related as a tragedy, whereas Lindanathi's situation is more contrived and under control (or at least he is lucky that he does not develop AIDS-related complications while he is wilfully rejecting his ARV medication and selling it). Konstant is haplessly infected by his lover Jude who takes no responsibility for his terribly dangerous behaviour. Even when Jude suddenly drops into the conversation that 'I've got it already' (122) he finishes the sentence with 'is there more coffee?' He does not even blink when telling Konstant he is HIV positive even though Konstant has just said that 'I'm scared of the plague that's around. Aren't you?' Jude's seeming indifference to Konstant's fear, '[H]aven't I told you already?' (123), is followed by a 'thin, drawn-out sound' a cry which Konstant has never heard before, 'a yowl from the depths' (123). Jude covers up saying:

> I've got eight, maybe ten, perhaps even fifteen, if I'm lucky. There're [sic], yes, lift your head, there're people who are still alive after fifteen years. And as far as you're concerned, Konstant, I know by now how your head works: don't worry for a second. Everything is completely under control; you're as safe as a house.

This completely inadequate attempt at comforting Konstant simply leads to more questions. Konstant immediately responds to the idea that he is 'safe as a house' with the damning retort '...Of cards.' He continues explosively: 'Can't believe it Jude. When were you diagnosed? Why am I only informed now? Hell, we live together, share the same bed, bath and bread' (123). Jude's offhand disclosure, and completely false sense of impunity, makes this revelation as shocking as Lindanathi's revelation that he deliberately infected himself with HIV. In effect, Jude has deliberately infected not just Konstant, but all the other men he cruises with at the bluegum copse, by knowing he is infected, seeking out sex and apparently not using any protection.

In contrast to Venter's fictional gay white protagonist, the narrators of Edwin Cameron's *Witness to AIDS* (2005) and Adam Levin's *AIDS Safari* (2005) (which though non-fiction, share many other similarities with *My Beautiful Death*), do not locate the source of their infections in particular sexual partners (this is also true of Sizwe in *Three Letter Plague*, who attributes his infection to spirits/witchcraft). Theirs are accidental contractions of HIV, and of course their narratives are survivor memoirs/autobiographies[20], rather than the fictional novel form that Venter uses. Neither Cameron nor Levin focus on causation (possibly for legal reasons), whereas in both Venter and Ntshanga's novels the source of infection is a significant element of the plot.[21] Venter does not go as far as Moele, who takes deliberate infection to a psychopathic extreme in *The Book of the Dead* (2009). In fact, Venter's hero, Konstant, is surprisingly benevolent towards Jude after he finds out he has contracted HIV – perhaps because he also sympathises with Jude's infection. However foolhardy Konstant can seem as a character, there is no doubt he loves Jude, with all his flaws and apparent heartlessness. However, his heartlessness does not quite equate with abandonment. Jude is at least still present when Konstant finally dies and perhaps that is the sign of a greater love and a clear responsibility to care for Konstant in his last painful moments, particularly as Jude knows a similar fate could await him at any moment.

Although acquired differently, it is interesting to compare how the infection itself is described in both novels. Lindanathi describes the virus in his blood as 'I like to imagine I can hear my illness spinning inside my arteries, that it's rinsing itself and thinning out' (Ntshanga, 2014: 51) and Konstant, in his first fever after discovering the blue spots – Kaposi's sarcoma – on his legs (Venter, 2004: 157), says: 'You [Jude] led me to your lair and then throttled me...My blue spots, it's you, Jude, I feel it in my marrow. I know it...I know I've got it, I felt it inside me tonight, gnawing at me like an animal...I know my body. It was wriggling in my marrow' (168). He goes on to ask: 'What have I done to be punished like this? Thought I was invincible' (168). In one startling sequence Konstant imagines Jude, festively dressed in a bridal gown, in a vision by a river saying:

> I have bound you to myself with ties that cannot be broken...I gave you a present, man, a cell wrapped up in a fatty layer of protein. You were free to do with it what you wanted. As you know, you wanted it so badly that you tied it to your own T-cell. Do you understand now that I'm inseparable from you? (223–4)

This unsettling revelation of Konstant's unconscious fears suggests that he thinks HIV was a gift from Jude. If Konstant wanted the gift in order to bind himself to Jude, then this reveals a profound form of self-hatred. Konstant blames himself in order to accept and reverse the nature of the transaction that occurred between the two men. It is incredibly sad that in this vision Konstant sees the transmission of the virus as an act of love, and something that he brought on himself. This complete reversal means that in a way, like Lindanathi, there is a part of Konstant who wanted to be HIV-positive, however absurd that might seem, perhaps in order to punish himself for something? Perhaps to punish himself for being gay? The rest of the vision certainly confirms that he wrestled with the way his father loved him, believing that he was loved less because he was homosexual, though his father continues to deny this in the vision: 'Damn it all, Konstant, you know I've always loved you' (226).

The vital difference between the two protagonists, however they contracted the virus, is that Lindanathi's virus is arrested in his system, whereas Konstant quickly develops full-blown AIDS and eventually dies. There is much description of blood platelets and T-cell counts and Konstant is given a transfusion before going up to the house Shane rents in the blue mountains (where he develops a cough) and writing a letter to his parents to tell them that he is ill. Just like his mother's letter about Tannie Trynie, which doesn't mention the word 'cancer', Konstant doesn't mention the words HIV or AIDS. He adds a P.S. which reads: 'some people here speak of the plague, however that's not how it should be seen. It's not a shame; it's an illness. Remember, cancer can also infect – though only succeeding generations. And who gives a damn?' (202). Fascinatingly, Konstant tries to keep his system pure and his talents as a chef come in to play regularly in terms of the vegetarian food and healthy lifestyle he leads, whereas on the contrary Lindanathi pollutes his system with as many toxins as he can. Konstant tries to stay in control while Lindanathi attempts to lose control. It is a sign of the times that clean-living Konstant cannot survive in the '90s, whilst drug-addled Lindanathi somehow can in the new millennium. If these *bildungsroman*s are read as national allegories, what does this tell us about South Africa?

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Konstant is soon overwhelmed by the fear and anger that hits him, particularly when he is tired. He quickly loses his temper, not just with Jude and Shane, but with himself: 'I've lost every bit of control I had over my life, I scream' (211). He reiterates: 'I'm powerless! Totally powerless! You have no fucking idea how it feels, you know nothing. I scream and cry all at once...I will never get my rage shouted out in this life, there's too much of it' (212). Eventually, he comes to the real crisis: 'I don't care, don't care about anything, I scream myself senseless, Shane, Jude, I turn to them, it's irreversible: I am dying' (212). And it is here that we can trace the rupture of the normal progress of the *bildungsroman*, the development from youth to maturity is here suspended and directly confronts the enemy of progress, facing death. He admits that 'The word frightens me. I've never said it before. They've never heard it from me, maybe thought it, but waited for me to say it. It's better that it's out' (212). But apart from in this close circle, Konstant keeps his diagnosis a secret. He sends a postcard to his parents but admits that 'Not over my dead body will I say a word about the fact that I'm still deteriorating' (213). He also conceals his illness at work: 'The old fear that I'll be rejected comes back to haunt me. I wear wider shirts and looser trousers to cover up ever-thinning limbs' (214). On page 216, Konstant has his first black out and on pages 217–8, 'Jude, Shane and I enter into a kind of pact. We almost go as far as to cut our

wrists and mix blood-brother blood. They *will* get me better, if it's the last thing they do… So together the triumvirate will heal me.'

Like Konstant, who has his friends Jude and Shane, Lindanathi has two friends Ruan and Cecelia (Cissie). So both novels feature a trio of characters, relating to each other in different ways, but with similar levels of solidarity when it comes to dying. In *The Reactive* the friends talk about 'Last Life' which is 'the name we've come up with for what happens to me [Lindanathi] during my last year on the planet' (Ntshanga, 2014: 24) and the sense that the trio are always aware of their mortality prevails throughout the novel. On their way to meet their most mysterious customer who has just transferred a lot of money to their bank account they discuss who will risk their life to go in to meet him and with black humour Lindanathi says 'I'm the one who's halfway dead' (92). In the bar while they await the meeting, Cecilia asks 'What would you drink on your last day on Earth?' The sense of the apocalyptic is constant, 'what if Last Life was moved up to now?' Neither Ruan or Lindanathi can think of an answer and Lindanathi eventually responds 'Maybe it is now.' They fear the outcome of their meeting but are united in their fatalism. When they return to their flat, they consider what to do with the money they have been given and Ruan says 'We should just use the money and then kill ourselves' (107). Once again, their comrade-like fatalism kicks in: 'Cissie and I agree. We share another stem [of Khat] and tell Ruan that this isn't a bad idea.' Unlike the more serious nature of Konstant, Jude and Shane's triangular relationship, these three suicidal fatalists 'keep stems between our teeth and chew until we can't feel our faces any more. We prod our fingers into each other's sides and laugh like well-fed children' (107). The drugs take away their fears and displace their concerns with death (which they perhaps ultimately do not take that seriously). The next day they continue nihilistically: 'We walk out of the bottle store with a loaded shopping bag in each hand, skipping across the main road like the world might end tomorrow' (108). All of this undercuts the element of progress normally associated with the *bildungsroman*: the characters do not mature and learn from their experiences; they inhabit a liminal, suspended reality in which they don't care for consequences and refuse to embrace progress or change, at least until Lindanathi returns 'home' to undergo Ulwaluko.

Perhaps Lindanathi, like Konstant when he was asymptomatic, does not fully accept that he is really infected with HIV. Konstant recounts that 'Is it true that all the time with Jude I imagined myself invincible, so untouchable in my golden haze of happiness that I refused to confront the reality of his infectiousness?' (Venter, 2004: 190). Perhaps Lindanathi is in a similar state of denial, just as he is about his Uncle's insistence that he is ready for initiation. 'Lidanathi, my Uncle Bhut'Vuyo says, ukhulile ngoku, you've come of age' (Ntshanga, 2014: 27) – he repeatedly deletes text messages from his uncle and those from his case manager requesting his required CD4 counts. At the end of Part Two, Lindanathi in his drunken state lets himself go listening to Cissie's voice: 'the feeling I get, sitting here on her living-room floor, isn't about my uncle or Du Noon, it isn't about my sickness or my job. Instead, it's about the three of us sitting together in her flat in Newlands, the three of us knitting our fingers together, me, Ruan and Cecelia, closing our eyes and becoming one big house' (115–6). Certainly, for both HIV-positive narrators the friendship and family-like support of these close friends helps to stave off their fears of dying and gives them a sense of belonging, albeit in a distorted reality.

However, solidarity cannot suspend reality forever, and eventually Konstant develops a pain in his left eye and is diagnosed with cytomegalo virus which causes the retina to come loose from the chorion (Venter, 2004: 231). His doctor explains that: 'The virus also sends bacteria to attack the precious coli in the intestines, which causes chronic diarrhoea. In the worst-case scenario, it also affects the brain' (232). And it's here that the author's intent, voiced through Konstant, is made absolutely clear: 'God don't let me go mad. At least allow me the chance to verbalise my body's decay to the very end.' This is literally what Venter achieves in the novel, writing right up until Konstant's last breath so that the last page ends mid-sentence (271). The stylistic basis of the writing, that remains a fluid stream of consciousness even as Konstant's body fails and his sentences become more confused in the last few pages, is essential to the narrative and its attempt at mimicking the veracity of a voice that narrates right up until the

moment of death. He repeats: 'Not mad, please, don't let my brain ignite and my tongue spew forth the ash of demented words. Merciful God, don't allow my tongue's deft words to slip away' (232). Konstant has to choose between losing his sight and the medication azidothymidine (also known as AZT – an early form of ARV) that extends the life of infected people. He chooses 'to see until I die, I don't want to lose sight of the blue sky, or the red-winged rosellas in the Blue Mountains' (235). He wants to approach death eyes wide open and sentient. In doing so, Venter enables Konstant's narrative to continue, again, not in the pattern of a 'coming-of-age' novel, in which difficulties are overcome, but in a fairly brutal realist form which details Konstant's suffering as his health declines.

Venter also shows us how Konstant imagines AIDS when he talks to his T-cells one night saying that they 'were too weak, too few to keep the cytomegalo virus at bay. He slinks in, jumps up and kneels between my legs'. He goes on to characterise the virus as a hybrid kind of *tokoloshe* – 'the megaloshe' (234) – a creature who 'wants to smother me: he pulls the blanket over my eyes. It's the old incubus' (236). A *tokoloshe* is a mythical South African creature; Xhosa and Zulu societies believe it to be a mischievous dwarf-like being or animal that causes trouble and can be sent as a curse to poison, suffocate or kill a target. Konstant says that he 'recognises him immediately. He doesn't frighten me anymore. Ironic isn't it? My night fear becomes something of the past just when you have thinned out, my pathetic little cells. You forgot your own attack command! You should have shoved him off, my T-cell helpers' (236). The merging of the *tokoloshe* with the cytomegalo virus means Konstant transfers his intent to directly targeting his eyes: 'He [the megaloshe] wants to sit right on top of my head: he wants to destroy my last bit of sight.' Again, he accuses his T-cells of failing him: 'you could have helped me. After all, I did give you oxygen; I did eat calf liver to give you strength. How did you turn in to such wimps?' (236). He feels let down by his body but also blames his body for turning on itself. Exposing his inner reality shows how Konstant experiences his illness, personifying AIDS.

This extended conversation in the dark night is a reminder of Konstant's strong links to South Africa. There's an element of a shared cultural symbology in the reference to the *tokoloshe* of Xhosa mythology. He also recalls the farm and beliefs held in the countryside about spirits that prey on the vulnerable. In an extended quote he demonstrates his last attempt to fight the disease that is rapidly killing him:

> Herd them all together now, those weak cells. Down to the last one, or, rather, what is left of them. Herd each and every one into the kraal. May as well bring cyto closer too. Let incubus squat on the kraal wall. Observe the whole lot; count each one of the cells carefully, it's still possible. Cover cyto with a tarpaulin, and laugh at the stiff mannikin on the kraal wall. That's it, yes, have you had a good look at them all? Let them go now; open the gate so that the whole brood can scoot. Away with them, the bastards. And do you know? They accept the invitation. Just look! They're only too happy to piss off. All gone. (236)

He breathes in and dispels all the 'blue-in-the-face smothering anxiety, breathe all the old blue air out' (237) and here begins the downward spiral of increased sleep and lethargy, suffused with beauty, that characterises the final thirty pages of the novel.

In a surreal episode towards the end of *The Reactive* the trio go to a house in Woodstock expecting to meet their mysterious customer who instead speaks to them through a computer screen and sends them each into a different room where they experience individual dream sequences. Lindanathi recalls visiting the cemetery with Cissie 'where we test the ground and tell each other to choose sites… she tells me we're preparing ourselves for the end of the world' (Ntshanga, 2014: 138). Like Lindanathi, Cissie has experienced death, losing her mother to stomach cancer when she was twelve (91) and more recently her aunt (80), and believes her whole neighbourhood (in Newlands) is haunted by 'Calvinist ghosts' (75). She tells Lindanathi that 'when it comes, it won't be mass destruction; the end of the world is the destruction of the individual' (138). There are elements of attraction in their relationship but it stays platonic: 'I always looked at her when she wasn't looking at me. That way, I wouldn't fall for her for being beautiful and she wouldn't pity me for being unwell' (139). Like Konstant, Lindanathi

experiences a dark night of the soul which is worth quoting at length:

> Later, I can't sleep and have to do the next best thing and pass out. We've cleaned out the liquor stash and the glue, so I head straight for the fridge and look for the champagne. I miss my grandmother in a way that makes me feel sick again, and I watch another movie that convinces me I have AIDS. There's a quarter of the champagne left and the bubbles have gone flat. I only have HIV, I say, I don't have AIDS, and when I take a swig from the bottle, the champagne tastes like lemonade inside my mouth. (139)

Unlike Konstant, Lindanathi can continue to get wasted and block the prospective reality of AIDS out. They have different coping strategies based on the different realities of their disease. And Lindanathi is arguably altering his reality through his denial. In fact, the realities of these characters are altered by the chronology they inhabit, the twenty years that separates them (and the advances in science in that time) is what separates the AIDS victim from the HIV positive survivor.

Drawing these two disparate novels together for a thematic comparison enables the reader to follow two different trajectories of HIV infection across two decades. Both novels are daring attempts to be different, to write HIV/AIDS directly into the personal and political context of their history. By reading translation and cross-cultural comparison as a form of 'unprotected' transmission[22], of ideas, of imagery, and the experiences of a disease, death become the great leveller. By removing historical divisions between 'black' and 'white' writing, English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa, we can see a more holistic vision of the South African literary canon. It is only through translation and comparative reading that we have access to this potential continuum and the means to assess whether there is a common cultural symbology at work. The parallels between Venter and Ntshanga's narrative symbolism, imagery and literary techniques appear to suggest there is a continuum: differences in language do not mean the texts inhabit entirely different cultural systems. The comparison of these texts widens the poetics of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

Both novels express different aspects of belonging and becoming men in different cultures. Both Konstant and Lindanathi want to become independent and respected but both men are constrained by the disease that infects them. Both novels contain elements of the *bildungsroman*, although the arc for Konstant is to achieve manhood: 'I've become so totally free here, like never before. So self-assured. No other country gives you as much space to be who you are. I could do anything here, achieve what I wanted' (Venter, 2004: 189) – and then be cut down in the prime of life. Lindanathi, in contrast, has already given up on life and learns through the novel to embrace life again and gives himself a second chance. In the process, both men experience a form of self-annihilation and yet Venter's novel is absurdly optimistic: Konstant stays stoic and cheerful to the end. Ntshanga, on the other hand, gives us the bleakest portrayal of a young life that is very nearly lost to despair amidst the drugs and chaos of a Cape Town that seems to suggest that Lindanathi's centre cannot hold. Lindanathi is sustained by his friends, much as Konstant is constantly buoyed up by his friendship with Shane and Jude. Lindanathi is also saved by his family, his uncle and aunt, who help to lead him back to his ancestors and face his cultural traditions and obligations so that he can 'authentically become a man'. Konstant, too, is supported by family: his brother arrives from South Africa at the last minute and provides some comfort to his dying sibling.

Essentially, the crucial commonality is HIV/AIDS, and yet the demise and survival of these two characters goes against the grain of other narratives of the disease, such as those shared by Cameron and Levin (in 2005), in which white gay men survive HIV infection and bouts of full-blown AIDS because of their access to private medical care, ARVs or health insurance. The novels reflect the trajectory of the disease in the population as it moved from predominantly white gay men into the wider black heterosexual population, but re-shape the confessional form of autobiography, so favoured by writers in the West, and by Cameron and Levin in South Africa. Fiction allows a close examination of the characters' inner worlds, revealed through translation into a shared language, showing just how much they have in common. The comparison highlights the historical

“The HIV-positive narrator allows the authors the creative capacity to re-define, re-imagine, and re-inscribe their reality. Most significantly, as works of fiction, the authors demonstrate how it is possible to alter reality and imagine ourselves inside the bodies of these two HIV positive men, allowing readers to identify a specifically South African cultural symbology and explore parallels beyond race, class and language, reaching deeper into an exploration of the body and the self.”

precedent of Venter's work, that enables the present form of Ntshanga's, while also creating something different from what came before, through fiction. Echoing Gikandi the authors use their narratives to shape notions of HIV-positive selfhood at different historical moments. In general, it has been black men like Lindanathi, who before ARVs were rolled out nationwide in South Africa, would succumb to AIDS very quickly. Ntshanga shows us an alternative to the 'survivor' trope that is more hard-won, partly due to different economic imperatives and the range of freedoms that came with democracy.

De Waal's suggestion was that before 2006, 'A small sample of African novels in English provides a first cut at exploring this topic, and it is clear that AIDS is approached indirectly, in diverse ways, through other issues' (2006: 32). Whereas in Venter and Ntshanga's novels HIV/AIDS is approached directly, in the first person, via the interior worlds of HIV-positive male protagonists, changing notions about intimacy, sexuality, gender, masculinity and community. Through the internal narrative of their protagonists, both novels function not only as emotional insights into the minds of those who are HIV positive, but they also delineate the courage required to face the disease both in life and in certain death, whether all too soon, or through treatment deferred. The HIV-positive narrator allows the authors the creative capacity to re-define, re-imagine, and re-inscribe their reality. Most significantly, as works of fiction, the authors demonstrate how it is possible to alter reality and imagine ourselves inside the bodies of these two HIV positive men, allowing readers to identify a specifically South African cultural symbology and explore parallels beyond race, class and language, reaching deeper into an exploration of the body and the self. Although they cannot map an entire tradition, these two novels provide us with the imaginative capacity to feel as the characters feel, and think as they might think, and face their divergent futures and prognoses together, as part of the continuum in South African writing about HIV/AIDS across two decades.

Notes

1. With thanks to Thando Njovane, Ranka Primorac, and Zoe Norridge for their unfailing support of my work. And thanks to Sue Marais and Lynda Spencer for giving me time to write at Rhodes University in the Department of Literary Studies in English in 2017. And to Carli Coetzee and Dorothy Driver whose intellectual rigour and encouragement was essential to the completion of this article.

2. On the cover.

3. I must thank Tim Huisamen for identifying Eben Venter's work when I was researching and teaching at Rhodes University in 2010.

4. In an interview (published in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2004) Phaswane Mpe said that there were Afrikaner writers who had written about HIV/AIDS before he did in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. He suggested Koos Prinsloo had written stories featuring AIDS, so I commissioned Michiel Heyns to translate three stories into English. Two of those ground-breaking texts were published in the December 2018 issue of the *Johannesburg Review of Books*.

5. See, for example: Thomas (2014), Nattrass (2007), Hodes (2014).

6. de Waal makes it clear that 'It is not that public education messages are getting through in some places and not others' – in fact, it is the form of these messages, their calibre and their content, that has the greatest impact on audiences: 'It is actually counterproductive for all AIDS advocates to be 'on message', because that makes people

bored, sceptical and switched-off. Having been fed propaganda for decades they are instinctively distrustful of any message purveyed with earnest consensus.' (29–30)

7. Twidle (2019) comments on the 'politically vexed, constrained or symbolically coded articulation' that led to '"an uneasy South African sub-genre" of writing about the black experience of HIV/AIDS by white writers' (173) – namely Liz McGregor's *Khabzela* and Jonny Steinberg's *Three Letter Plague*.

8. Jodi McNeil (2012) writes that 'by the end of 2010 only 55 percent of people who needed ARV treatment were receiving it… On 1 December 2011 a third National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV, STDs and TB was released for 2012–2016… *in 2004 we had only 47 000 people on treatment… By mid-2011, we had 1.79 million people*.'

9. 'In the year 2000, it is estimated that 40% of all adult deaths in South Africa were due to AIDS' (Karim and Karim, 2002).

10. The epigraphs do not feature in my South African edition of the novel – presumably they were included in the US to provide context to an American audience.

11. I first use this phrase in Attree, L. (2010). 'Introduction', *Blood on the Page*: 15.

12. Cover quote.

13. Tim Huisamen met with me again on 7 August 2018 and said the literal translation of 'stamel' is to stutter or to stumble, which adds depth to the title which would read: 'I stammer I die' or 'I stumble I die'.

14. 'Hoewel dit grotendeels in Australië afspeel, lees jy jou van begin tot einde vas teen ons eie rou (sowel as heerlike!) werklikhede.'

15. See, for example: Van Coller (2008).

16. Refentse in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also moved from the village to Johannesburg and back again.

17. My emphasis.

18. 'In 2016, South Africa implemented the 'test and treat' strategy, making everyone with a positive diagnosis eligible for treatment regardless of how advanced HIV is in their body. This has seen the number of people eligible for treatment more than double in recent years: from 3.39 million in 2015 to 7.7 million people in 2018' (Avert, 2020).

19. Slightly archaic but common usage as a euphemism for HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and 90s.

20. Although Adam Levin has since died, in May 2019 (Chandler, 2019).

21. According to Johann de Lange, the Afrikaans version makes Jude's role ambiguous, so it is never clear whether the female Jude has infected Konstant.

22. I must credit Carli Coetzee with the suggestion that translation could be read in this way.

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Cultural Devotion as Depicted in J.C. Buthelezi's *Kushaywa Edonsayo*

By Zilibele Mtumane and Nkafotseng Laurencia Motloung | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

This article seeks to analyse cultural devotion as it is portrayed in J.C. Buthelezi's novel, *Kushaywa Edonsayo*. It intends to pull together some examples of how cultural devotion is portrayed in this isiZulu novel. It will firstly evaluate cultural conflicts that are demonstrated by characters. It will further explore cultural commitments among individuals in the society created by the novelist, and as applicable to real life society. The main subheadings in this discourse are: culture conflict and cultural commitment. The concept of culture will be defined as part of the introductory section of the article. Again, a concluding section will be included towards the end of the discourse, where the summary, observations and recommendations are provided. The reason this study is conducted is the intensive illustration of cultural devotion in the novel under consideration. It is also the fact that not much has been done on this topic on the isiZulu novel, in particular, and isiZulu literature in general. The revelation of how Buthelezi handles this aspect will add value to the study of isiZulu and, even, African literature.

Introduction

J.C. Buthelezi depicts cultural devotion in his novel titled *Kushaywa Edonsayo* (1993). However, so far, very little research has been conducted analysing this aspect of the novel. Motloung (2020), on whose Masters' dissertation this article is based, is probably the only one who has done so, by including a chapter on it in her study. The objective of this paper, then, is to analyse and reveal cultural devotion as it is illustrated in Buthelezi's novel.

Culture generally refers to attitudes and behaviours that characterise a particular social group. Grayman-Shimpson (2017: 2) maintains that culture is a joint meaning-making structure which is a group of history that is conveyed through generations. Holding a similar view is Spencer-Oaley (2012: 1), who states that culture refers to merits possessed by people of the same social group. Deducing from these scholars, culture is shared, learned and transmitted through generations. It is a socially shared concept.

Culture conflict

As maintained by Jaja (2012: 84), there is a predicament developing among Africans, between maintaining their culture and adapting to universal cultures. Africans are at the heart of globalisation, mainly because they are a legacy of colonisation. African societies, at large, are faced with culture conflict due to the adaptation of Western values. Within this context, conflict refers to an opposition between two groups: traditional conservative Africans and modern Africans.

In the novel *Kushaywa Edonsayo*, J.C. Buthelezi explores the intoxication of urban life and the perceived stagnation of rural existence. The main character, Bhekani Mchunu, is faced with a dilemma of being more Western, yet his life circumstances require him to preserve his traditional role of maintaining his father's home in the rural areas. According to Diop (2012: 223), there is pressure escalating in Africa with diverse elements that contaminate the African version of life. In this case, Bhekani's pressure is a result of his act of abandoning his rural home, to dwell in the alluring city. As a result of abandoning his responsibility to the family and the farm, misfortunes beset him. This is in line with the general belief, among Africans, that misfortunes do not just befall one but are instigated by a certain cause. Bhekani faces the tragedy of losing his mother, years after his father's passing away. After a few years of living in the city (eThekwini), he reflects on his mother's wishes that he is assumed to fulfil. Before passing away, his mother utters to Bhekani: *Uze ungalilahli futhi ungalifulatheli ikhaya* (Do not abandon nor turn your back towards your home) (Buthelezi, 1993: 14). These words imply that Bhekani has to leave the urban eThekwini and everything that he has worked hard for and go back to rural Jonono to take care of his home. As he is not content with his mother's wishes, these words continue to torment him. After the funeral, on Bhekani's way back to eThekwini, Buthelezi narrates a conversation between Bhekani and Samvu (Bhekani's wife):

Bhekani:
Umama wathi ngize ngingalilahli futhi ngingalifulatheli ikhaya.

(Mother said I must neither abandon nor turn my back on my home.)

Samvu:
Pho ukhathazwa yini kula mazwi Bheki-Bheki? ... Wayeqinisile umama, akufanele, akulungile ukufulathela ikhaya. Ikhaya likhaya Bhekani...

(So, what is bothering you with that instruction Bheki-Bheki?... Mother was telling the truth; it is neither right nor acceptable to abandon home. Home is home Bhekani...)

Bhekani:
Ngingeke ngakuphikisa ukuthi ikhaya likhaya ngisho abazali sebashona, kodwa wena awulazi leli khaya engikhuluma ngalo. Awuyazi imimango nemiqansa engibhekane nayo ngaleliya khaya ... Ngangibahlonipha abazali bami besaphila. Ngibahlonipha kakhulu manje uma sebengekho, kodwa la mazwi kamama ayengithusa. Kungathi kuzobanzinyana, ngizohluleka ukuwagcina nokuwahlonipha...

> (I will never deny that home is home even when parents are no more, but you do not know the home I am talking about. You do not know the quarrels and hardships that I am faced with about that home... I respected my parents while they were still alive. I respect them more now that they have passed away, but my mother's words are scarring me. It seems it will be difficult; I will not be able to fulfil and respect them.) (Buthelezi, 1993: 14)

In the extract above, Bhekani is in denial of fulfilling his deceased mother's command. Instead of following his mother's wishes, he explicitly states that, even though he respects his parents, it seems that it will be difficult to fulfil their wishes, although he is certain of what his parents wanted. He finds it easy to abandon his responsibility for the family that is composed of his siblings as well, and the farm. Justifying his decisions, he states that he will not be able to deal with the quarrels and the hardships that come with Jonono.

According to Brown (1999: 227), South Africa is a microcosm of the basic cultural conflict because it faces the battle between protecting the interests of culture or central rights of the individual. It is within his rights for Bhekani to choose the life that he wants for himself as an individual. However, his rights are in quarrel with his culture. In the above quotation, Bhekani states that he respects his parents more now that they have passed on. From these words, it can be concluded that he respects and acknowledges ancestors. Therefore, it is anticipated that he follows their instructions. Instead, Bhekani maintains:

> *Mina Samvu ngizohluleka ukushiya uMdubane nobucwecwebe bawo, ngishiye uSamvu wami, ngiyobutha inhlakanhlaka, ngiwole imvithimvithi, ngikhongozele, ngibuthezele, ngilungisa izigwegwe ezikade zagoba emzini kababa.*
>
> (Samvu, I will not be able to leave Durban and its luxury, leave my Samvu, to go pick up the pieces and fix the wrongs that were long there in my father's home.) (Buthelezi, 1993: 15)

Sibani (2018: 66) is of the view that the changes that are evident among African cultures are influenced by the socio-cultural evolution that has occurred world-wide, in favour of Western culture. The main concern raised by Bhekani, which prevents him from going back to Jonono, is the luxurious life that he has in Durban. Currency is another major influence on cultural change, even though currency is not necessarily part of African culture. At the heart of the life of luxury is money. Bhekani is now prioritising currency and luxury. Moreover, his reasons are influenced by the Western culture that he has adapted to. This attests to Sibani's (*Op cit.*) view that there are changes within African cultures that are influenced by the socio-cultural evolution. Bhekani no longer sees his home as his responsibility. The author further outlines his thoughts:

"Sibani (2018: 66) is of the view that the changes that are evident among African cultures are influenced by the socio-cultural evolution that has occurred world-wide, in favour of Western culture. The main concern raised by Bhekani, which prevents him from going back to Jonono, is the luxurious life that he has in Durban."

> *Uyise wayethe ikhaya lakwabo ngaleli gama leJourney's End ngoba kunguyena uyise owayezophelela kuleli khaya. Wayengaziboni-ke uBhekani izindlela zakhe ziphelela kuleli khaya eJonono, emaphandleni kwantuthu ...*
>
> (His father had named his home Journey's End because it was him (his father) whose life was to end there. Bhekani then never imagined himself ending up in Jonono, at the rural areas, where there is smoke...) (Buthelezi, 1993: 22)

Bhekani has been consumed by Western culture. As a result, he no longer sees himself as part of rural and traditional areas. Notwithstanding that he grew up in Jonono, he stresses that his father had decisively named Jonono Journey's End because he

(his father) wished his children not to grow old there. To him, going back to rural Jonono, where there are no modern developments, is not an option. However, being in denial of his parents' commands brings him bad dreams. Ever since his mother's burial, Bhekani has never slept peacefully. Sibani (2018) maintains that cultural adaptation results in great negative impacts on African tradition. It is African culture to fulfil ancestral commands. However, due to cultural evolution, Bhekani does not realise the significance of fulfilling his ancestor's wishes. Consequently, misfortunes torment him. He is continuously involved in car accidents and he loses his job.

Parkash (1993: 2) claims that the traditional African and modern (Western) cultures, that came into contact through colonisation, differ in philosophy and social structure. How Africans embrace life is different from how Westerners embrace it. Yet, due to systems such as colonisation, the African way of life has been contaminated. Buthelezi narrates Bhekani's concerns:

> *UBhekani wayezibuza eziphendula ukuthi kodwa unina uMaMkhize wayemsukele ngani emfumbathisa lesiqalekiso sokuba abheke ikhaya*.
>
> (Bhekani had unanswered questions; asking himself why his mother MaMkhize had given him the curse of watching over the home.) (Buthelezi, 1993: 36)

In African culture, ancestral commands are not regarded as a curse. It is a common belief among Africans to respect ancestors. Though, due to clashes in ideology and social structures between African and modern cultures, Bhekani regards his late mother's wishes as a curse. Evidently, the significant modification of ideology and social structure has intensified some conflicts among African cultures. Lame (2013: 12) is of the view that there is a lifestyle that has infatuated Africans, which is degrading their own way of life.

Sibani (2018: 68–69) also brings another lifestyle that has brought conflict in African societies, which is a liberated sexual activity for young people. Another major concern that influences Bhekani's decision not to want to go back home is the quarrels in his parents' house. The quarrels are caused by overcrowding in his home. This is because all his sisters have many (out of wedlock) children staying under the same roof. The high number of children is a result of liberated sexual activities.

The conflict between tradition and modern ways of life has become an African central life theme. After the passing away of Bhekani's mother, Gogo Ximba (an old woman in the village) insists on cutting every child's hair as a symbol of respect to Bhekani's mother. Little does she know that Nkintsho (Bhekani's sister) does not believe in this ritual. On realising that her children's hair has been shaved, Nkintsho screams in disbelief:

> *Awu Gogo Ximba! Kodwa wenzani Gogo-mathetha? Wenzani nje? Ngiyazisa ngezinwele zomntanami! Hi---hi—hi--!*
>
> (Oh Gogo Ximba! What are you doing Gogo-mathetha? What are you doing? I am concerned about my child's hair! Hi—hi—hi--!) (Buthelezi, 1993: 6)

Among Africans, there is evidence of Western efforts to transform African culture. In general, among traditional Africans, the shaving of hair is used as a symbol of respect to the deceased. However, due to the influence of Western culture, Nkintsho does not approve of this ritual.

From the foregoing discussion, it is arguable that cultural assimilation does not necessarily and always result in a new culture. Instead, it may also lead to cultural conflicts between two worlds: traditional and modern worlds. As is evident, there is a battle between Bhekani's Western lifestyle and the life that his parents wished him to fulfil. Both these lives – Western and traditional African – vary dramatically in ideology and social structure, thus causing cultural conflict.

Cultural commitment

Cultural devotion is crucial, mainly because of its significance in instilling cultural and identity awareness among Africans. Cultural commitment entails enculturation, which is a process of maintaining norms, heritage and culture by societies. In this regard, commitment refers to the

retrieving of human norms, heritage and culture passed through ancestry. Based on Dei's (2012: 43) views, the retrieving of African culture is imperative to decolonising and recognising the genuineness of the African voice and human experience. J.C. Buthelezi profoundly attempts to enculturate people in his novel *Kushaywa Edonsayo* (1993). His emphasis is the sense of identity and unity amongst his characters.

At the beginning of the novel, Buthelezi recites MaMkhize's (Bhekani's mother) last words to Bhekani before she passes away:

> *Bhekani mntanami impilo igeleza njengamanzi ebheke olwandle. Uma sengemukile mina mntanami, kuko konke okwenzayo, uze ungalifulatheli leli khaya ...*
>
> (Bhekani my child, life flows like water to the ocean. When I am gone my child, in everything that you do, do not turn your back on this home...) (Buthelezi, 1993: 2–3)

According to Arunga (2017: 36), longing determination to ensuring cultural commitment among people is essential to recover continuity. The maintenance of cultural continuity will preserve African history and treasures. To MaMkhize, Jonono is a legacy that needs to be treasured. She explicitly instructs her son not to forget home when she is no longer alive. She further states that *Izithukuthuku zethu noyihlo ningazibukeli ziphelele emoyeni njengezenja* (Do not allow our sweat with your father to fade away into air like that of a dog) (Buthelezi, 1993: 3). Based on this citation, the sense of continuity is significant to MaMkhize; therefore, it is significant to the African society as a whole. In this extract, Buthelezi exposes the rank of cultural continuity and the importance of cultural commitment.

"In some African societies, the clash of ideologies is mostly influenced by religion. Nevertheless, Creff (2004: 3) argues that Christian churches should adopt a new mind-set and participate in the African renaissance. This new mind-set would entail the advocacy of African cultures, languages and histories."

As maintained by Husien and Kebede (2017: 61), among African societies, communal morals such as loyalty, respect, love, *ubuntu,* hospitality and many more, are stressed meticulously. Among these values, African morals emphasise the importance of helping each other, which is practised through *ubuntu*. Giving her last instructions to Bhekani, MaMkhize avers: *Uma ukhuphuka, khuphuka nabakwenu. Uselule isandla sakho ubadonse* (When you succeed, succeed with your siblings. Stretch your hand out and pull them) (Buthelezi, 1993: 3). Through her words, MaMkhize does not only remind her son of his cultural responsibilities, she also advocates for the spirit of helping each other. This is one of the communal morals that are shared and valued among Africans. Hence, Brown (1993) highlights that, among African communities, the sense of individualism is not encouraged.

In some African societies, the clash of ideologies is mostly influenced by religion. Nevertheless, Creff (2004: 3) argues that Christian churches should adopt a new mind-set and participate in the African renaissance. This new mind-set would entail the advocacy of African cultures, languages and histories. As Bhekani is no longer staying in Jonono, he has converted to Christianity. As misfortunes befall him, he decides to reconnect with his indigenous culture. Following the accidents that Bhekani has survived, he decides to invite his church members to join him as he gives thanks, for he has survived. On the day of the ceremony, to keep up with culture, he insists that they make traditional beer for the ancestors. This does not only reveal cultural commitment, it also affirms Creff's (*Op cit.)* view that Christian churches should also advocate for the African renaissance. In African culture, traditional beer is one of the mechanisms used to connect with ancestors; hence Bhekani sees it crucial to make it. Moreover, Mtumane (2014: 24) highlights that ancestors are considered as a

linkage between human beings and God. Therefore, Bhekani sees it fit to make traditional beer for the ceremony.

Husien and Kebede (2017: 61) maintain that, in most African communities, people do not perceive themselves as distinct and individuals. On the contrary, Bhekani finds it difficult to move back to Jonono. He continuously stresses that he is an individual and he has established his own life in Durban. However, Samvu (his wife) disagrees with his decision. Buthelezi narrates Samvu's response to Bhekani:

> *Masiphindele ekhaya Bhekani. Ngiyacela sthandwa sami. Injabulo yami ayigcwali, ayipheleli njengoba singumndeni onhlakanhlaka*.
>
> (Let us go back home Bhekani. I am pleading with you my dear. My happiness is not fulfilled as we are a scattered family.) (Buthelezi, 1993: 67)

In Africa, family is the cement of society. Even though Bhekani has adapted to the Western system of individualism, Samvu finds it her responsibility to remind him of the importance of the family. In this circumstance, Samvu emphasises that, without other family members, she feels empty. The idea of being distinct from their community does not compliment her principles. She further highlights that the family is scattered. This attests to Husien and Kebede's (2017: 62) view that communal morals are crucial to Africans. The spirit of *ubuntu* and solidarity is vital to ensure the well-being of society. Therefore, Samvu finds it significant to remind Bhekani of culture devotions. Moreover, Sibani (2018: 62) proclaims that a decent family structure in African societies is reached through the sense of good human relations.

Bhekani finally decides to move back to Jonono to fulfil his late mother's wishes, even though his concern is that, without his parents, Jonono is no longer a peaceful place. There are quarrels between his siblings and his uncles but he commits himself into fulfilling his responsibilities. As it has been maintained, the spirit of *ubuntu* and solidarity is of vital value to Africans. Therefore, Bhekani gathers his family to resolve family matters. He says:

> *Imizamo yethu yokwenyusa izindonga zomuzi kababa ingeke iphumelele uma ingaxhumene nemimoya yethu sonke esikulo muzi kababa*.
>
> (Our efforts to re-build our father's household will not succeed if our spirits are not in harmony in this household.) (Buthelezi 1993: 99)

Bhekani finds it important to firstly unite the family before engaging in other family responsibilities. He maintains that if their spirits, as a family, are not in harmony, nothing will succeed. According to Van der Walt (2003: 52), in African culture, truthfulness, charity, honesty, loyalty, generosity, respect and solidarity are important elements of good morals. Bhekani attempts to lay the foundation of re-building his home with honesty, truthfulness, loyalty and solidarity. Hence, he finds it necessary for the family to gather and iron out issues that are triggering conflicts in their home. This reveals Bhekani's will to commit to his culture and his family.

At Jonono, Bhekani puts his family farm into good use. He also uses the knowledge and skills he has acquired while still residing in Durban to open a huge shop and other facilities that would help his community. Everything goes accordingly until their unfortunate day, when they get attacked by bees at the shop. Oddly, the bees sting Bhekani only. Looking at this unfortunate matter, Kubheka (Bhekani's worker) requests a traditional healer, Khanyile, to come and give Bhekani traditional medicine. This reveals or highlights the confusion among Africans of whether to seek answers of deaths, misfortune, disasters and accidents from the Christian church or traditional healers. Even though Bhekani is a Christian, Kubheka represents the Africans who still seek clarity from traditional healers and who foster to maintain their culture. In addition, Gumede (another traditional healer) pays visit to Bhekani's home after the incident. He maintains:

> *Ungakhohlwa phela ukuthi thina singabantu, sinezethu izinkolo okungafanele sizilahle … Namakholwa amakhulu ayazi ukuthi idlozi liyabhekelwa nokuthi imibhulelo ingatholakala phakathi esontweni …*
>
> (Do not forget that we are Africans, we have our own beliefs that we must not forsake…Even highly

religious people know that ancestors need to be pleased and that sorcery acts can also be found in church...) (Buthelezi, 1993: 122–123)

In the above extract, Buthelezi exposes the importance of African beliefs. Gumede encourages Bhekani not to forsake his culture. Moreover, he warns him that, even though he is a Christian, he must be watchful because sorcery acts can also be found in church. As Bhekani is in the process of self-discovery, maintaining African ways of life seems to be important to his journey. Hence Gumede, as an elder, finds it his responsibility to remind Bhekani of how they perceive life in rural Jonono.

Based on Ushe's (2011: 5) views, traditional African morals are identified to encourage human well-being. Moreover, Metz (2007: 338) highlights that African morals grasp some acts to be wrong. In this regard, Bhekani looks at his sisters' children and states:

Uma intombazane itholele ingane ekhaya, le ngane kuba ngeyabazali bentombazane noma kube ngeyomalume.

(If a daughter gives birth to a child before marriage, that child belongs to her parents or the child's uncles.) (Buthelezi, 1993: 133)

Bhekani points out an act that is practised by most Africans. It is a common belief among these Africans that a child born before marriage belongs to the mother's family. It can be assumed that this cultural practice was established to maintain human well-being, especially if the mother wishes to marry into another family. The foregoing quote reveals the cultural commitment that Bhekani is keen to uphold. As stated earlier, Metz (2007: 329) proclaims that African morals value human life, community, honesty, hospitality, discipline, protection, respect, etc. Bhekani also emphasises these morals among his family members. In a conversation with his nephew about the influence of white people in South Africa, Bhekani articulates:

Bafunza izingane zethu ukungahloniphi lutho olwazo, zingahloniphi imilando yethu ... Loku kubiza amakhosi ethu, abantu abadala, ngamagama akuyona inhlonipho yase-Afrika ...

(They teach our children not to respect what is theirs, not to respect our history ...The culture of calling our kings and elderly people by names is not our African respect...) (Buthelezi, 1993: 138)

Through this conversation, Bhekani infuses the prominence of identity and respect. According to Sefa Dei (2012: 49), there is no African identity without the affirmation of cultures, spirituals, indigenous histories and language. Bhekani finds it necessary to inspire African culture to his nephew. This shows the importance of enculturation among African societies. Later on, Bhekani's efforts to transform Jonono into a vibrant area of development succeed. In this novel, Buthelezi strives to reveal the importance of embracing African identity and indigenous culture. Moreover, Bhekani's journey highlights the significance of cultural commitment and maintaining the African way of life.

Conclusion

This paper offered a discussion on cultural devotion in relation to Buthelezi's novel *Kushaywa Edonsayo* (1993). The aim was to explore cultural commitments presented in the novel. The discourse revealed cultural conflicts and cultural devotions as portrayed in the novel. The main sub-titles were culture, culture conflict and culture commitment.

From the above discussion, it is observable that there is a great culture conflict within African societies. The principles and ideologies that westernised traditional Africans, and which they maintain, vary dramatically. The major result of these differences is the conflict they cause in different societies. While it is understandable that societies at large are developing and improving, it is also noticeable that some of the developments looming in communities clash with the indigenous African cultures. It is still arguable that Western culture has a great influence on contaminating African cultures. Members of different societies now prefer maintaining Western culture rather than maintaining African culture. That includes abandoning ancestral beliefs and other African customs. The situation portrayed by Buthelezi suggests that there are still a number of Africans who do not regard African culture as important to their lives.

Although Buthelezi discloses culture neglect, he also strives to reveal culture commitment. Through his main character, Bhekani, he reveals the importance of maintaining African culture to ensure societal harmony. Before Western influence, many Africans valued African morals such as honesty, love, humanity, respect, *ubuntu,* hospitality, etc. Due to popular culture and globalisation, many Africans seem to have abandoned such morals. In his novel, Buthelezi encourages the enculturation of the African valued morals. The emphasis is on preserving communal morals that will unite Africans. It is, however, worth mentioning that not all Africans are victims of the acculturation of Western values. There are those who are still in line with their culture and traditions.

At the time of moral renaissance, it is a necessity to argue that there is a fair enculturation process taking place in Africa, especially among the youth. There seem to be some African individuals who are keen to maintain African culture and identity. On the other hand, there are still a great number of African individuals who are consumed by Western culture. Therefore, it is still a challenge for African societies to strive to maintain indigenous African values.

Recommendations

As the subject of culture is broad and not many scholars have analysed it as it is illustrated in African literary works, it is necessary that more students of literature conduct research on it. As this paper has considered the aspect only in one isiZulu novel, scholars may consider works by authors in the same or other languages. These works could include other genres of literature as well.

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The Public Transport Crisis in South Africa:

Through the Eyes of the Four Revolutions

By Mondli Hlatshwayo | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

Debates on the Fourth Industrial Revolution have tended not to focus on the direct relationship between all four technological revolutions and transportation – a crucial element of all technological surges. At the same time, scholarship on transportation has generally ignored the significance of transportation in all the revolutions. This article therefore seeks to strike a balance between these two extremes by showing that all the technological revolutions were also about transportation. In other words, the debates on the technological advances provide scholars, researchers, engineers, and working-class organisations with the space to foreground transport as an issue requiring special attention, especially in South Africa where the public transport system faces many challenges. Critically applying the prism of the four industrial revolutions, the article demonstrates that South Africa lags behind from a transport perspective, and still relies on the transportation of the Second Industrial Revolution when other countries are utilising technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Compounding matters is that even transport technologies invented in the 1800s are being stolen and vandalised, and the maintenance of the system is extremely poor. The article then submits that these transport problems may be solved by mobilisation and advocacy led by working-class and poor communities negatively affected by the crisis.

Introduction

Despite the ongoing academic and policy debates on the urgent need for South Africa to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (Xing and Marwala, 2017; Doorsamy et al., 2020), the reality on the ground is that the transport infrastructure and the public transport system are nowhere near the conditions forecast as required for the 4IR. The notion of the 4IR as a framework for understanding technological surges and development has been questioned by some leading scholars of innovation and development (Maharajh, 2019; Cooper, 2021). Others have gone as far as to argue that the 4IR is a myth created to defocus the marginalised and workers from the struggles of the social, economic, and ecological crisis facing the world today (Moll, 2021). The periodisation of technological development as four technological revolutions is also contested. In this regard, Cooper (2021) claims that the current phase of technological development is the second phase of the Third Technological Revolution, and is characterised by driverless cars, renewable energies, and other advanced technologies. For example, Maharajh (2019) indicates that there were five technological waves, starting with water-powered mechanisation in the 1780s to computerisation in the current era. Like this article, other scholars are sceptical about the use of 4IR to debate technology and development as South Africa has not even realised the uninterrupted technologies of the Second Industrial Revolution (2IR), such as electricity and public transport (Bond, 2020; Hlatshwayo, 2021).

“Like this article, other scholars are sceptical about the use of 4IR to debate technology and development as South Africa has not even realised the uninterrupted technologies of the Second Industrial Revolution (2IR), such as electricity and public transport (Bond, 2020; Hlatshwayo, 2021).”

Exacerbating this dire situation is that the transport infrastructure that is being neglected and destroyed emanates from the era of the 2IR which also did not meet the needs of road users and commuters in South Africa. The destruction of the transport infrastructure in conjunction with the electricity crisis that negatively affects the working of traffic lights, the flow of traffic, and the running of electric trains makes a mockery of the call of the state and State President, Cyril Ramaphosa, for economic growth and investments in the country (Ntingi, 2021).

Transport, particularly public transport, plays a major role in development and the expansion of economic activities, especially in the developing countries of Africa that continue to face many transportation challenges (Adeniran, 2016). The National Development Plan (NDP) (2013) proposes that South Africa needs to invest in public transport to improve the lives of low-income households by facilitating mobility to enable them to access economic opportunities in various parts of the country (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2013). Therefore, the current debates on the 4IR pave the way to discuss the role of transport in South Africa as all four industrial revolutions have had transport as one of their core deliverables.

One of the key elements of all four technological revolutions is transportation, which has been disregarded by the scholarship on the 4IR (Marwala and Xing, 2017; Matheba, 2019; Rodny-Gumede, 2019). Another strand in the literature on transport downplays the role of transport in all four revolutions by merely focusing on transport without locating it within the context of the technological revolutions (Walters, 2008; Luckan, 2022). A concession needs to be made here that a few transport scholars and researchers have discussed and debated transport and mentioned the 4IR (Mbatha et al., 2021). Both strands of the literature – the 4IR and the transport strand – are significant and help other scholars to understand the four technological revolutions and transport, although this is not done in a manner that demonstrates that the four technological

revolutions were also explicitly about transport, especially public transport.

The First Industrial Revolution (1IR), Transport and Coal

The 1IR, which roughly began in 1769 and ended in 1870, was driven by coal and steam engines, the textile industries, and iron. Later, James Watt designed a steam engine that was energy efficient and widely used by British industries from 1776. The cities of Manchester and Liverpool in England of the 1IR benefitted from the coal-powered engine when the steam engine was used as a mode of transport to move goods and people between the two cities. The very first public steam railway system was between Britain's Stockton and Darlington in 1825. Steam power of the 1IR enabled the expansion of transportation and the development of rail, sea, and road transportation of goods and people (Acerta, 2022).

The discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa in 1867 and 1886, respectively, accelerated industrialisation under British colonial rule. Machinery, tools, and equipment used in the 1IR of Britain were instrumental in the mining, manufacturing, and transportation sectors of the economy. The process of colonisation and industrialisation in southern Africa was violent and predicated on the mass killings of Africans and land dispossession – an issue the country is still grappling with to this day (Van Eck, 1953; Callinicos, 1985). The turning of black peasants into proletarians or workers who had to sell their labour power to survive changed the social, political, and economic landscape of South Africa. This means black migrant workers were forced to live in rural areas to work in the industrial cities and towns, such as Kimberley and Johannesburg when diamonds and gold were discovered and mined. As part of South Africa's 1IR, the Point to Durban – the steam train public railway line – was launched in 1860. This was a time lag of 35 years, if we consider that the first steam railway line in Britain was completed in 1825 (Kirby, 2002).

The Cape Main Line that connected Kimberley and De Aar came after the discovery of diamonds in 1866. In 1890, a six-mile steam railway line between Johannesburg and the Boksburg coal mines was the first railway line in the then Transvaal, which became one of Africa's economic hubs after the discovery of gold in 1886 (Delano, 2014). To show the significance of the steam-driven trains, according to the railway statistics, an annual average of 638,000 African migrant workers were transported between 1911 and 1920, while in the period 1921–1930, the number increased to 708,000 (Pirie, 1990: 728).

Moreover, transport in southern Africa connected South Africa and Mozambique. The coal-powered trains were the mode of transport used to move migrant workers from the eastern part of southern Africa (now called Mozambique) to the mines in the cities and towns of South Africa. In his book entitled *Night Trains*, van Onselen (2021) details the encounters of migrant workers travelling from Ressano Garcia, in Mozambique, to the Booysens station in Johannesburg between 1905 and 1955. The steam trains (later electric trains) carried men who had to work in the mines of South Africa at night. Those who were ill and injured due to minework were then transported by the same trains from the mines to Mozambique, as they were no longer considered to be useful by the mine employers. Workers of these privately-owned trains, using tracks owned by the state, were treated like goods and crammed into compartments which violated their dignity as human beings (van Onselen, 2021).

The 2IR and Transport

Largely led by national corporations of the Global North, such as Germany's Siemens and Bayer, and the USA's Edison Electric Illuminating Company of New York, the 2IR began after the 1870s. In essence, this revolution was comprised of electrification, chemicals, petrol, diesel, electric trains, diesel trains, and the subsequent rising output of petrol and diesel vehicles (Cooper, 2011). In the 1890s, Rudolf Diesel invented an engine that was named after him, paving the way for the elimination of steam-driven engines in the railways. By the 1930s, the latter replaced steam trains in Europe and in the USA on a massive scale. Economically, the diesel engines were efficient (Bryant, 1969).

The first electric passenger train was launched by the German inventor, Werner von Siemens, in Berlin in 1879. Visitors attending the Berlin Industrial

Exposition on May 31, 1879, were astonished to see a locomotive pass by without any smoke or steam. Unbeknownst to them, they were witnessing a ground-breaking technological innovation of the 19th century, the electric railway, which in its various forms – trams, subways, or high-speed trains – would come to dominate public transport (Hebestreit, 2022: 1).

Given that the colonies in southern Africa were dependent on the transportation technologies of the Global North, it took South Africa 45 years to have her first electric train, and that was after long economic and political processes. The formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 paved the way for further industrialisation in South Africa and the formation of state-owned national corporations that pioneered industrialisation and development. This included the formation of the Iron and Steel Corporation, a state-owned steel company, and the Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM), a national electricity generation and supply state company, in 1924. In the same year, the first electric train moved between Ladysmith and Chieveley in what is now known as KwaZulu-Natal, facilitating the massive expansion of the railway networks connecting various economic nodes of southern Africa (Hlatshwayo, 2021). Subsequently, diesel-electric driven trains were introduced in South Africa in 1939 and transported goods and people (Paxton and Bourne, 1985).

2IR, Ford and Fordism

Pivotal to the discussion on 2IR is the contribution Henry Ford made to manufacturing, especially transport. In 1903, he founded his Ford Motor Company, and half a decade later, its Model T was produced. Due to the high demand for the vehicle, Ford introduced Fordism – a production method based on the assembly line – characterised by standardised, sequenced production processes and mass production. Fordism was later adopted by manufacturers of other products globally, demonstrating that transportation, such as the production of motor vehicles by Ford, had far reaching implications not only in transportation but in other industries as well (History.com Editors, 2020). Using similar principles for manufacturing cars, Ford began manufacturing buses for transporting the public in 1937 (Johnson, 1977).

> “What is disappointing of the public transport system in South Africa is that the state has not embraced the technologies of the 3IR fully to improve the conditions of the poor and working-class people. Consequently, the benefits of ICTs enjoyed by other people in the world who use public transport have not been realised by South African passengers.”

2IR, Apartheid and Transport

Diesel-driven buses became a common mode of transport in South Africa from the 1940s. The first political activity of the former President Nelson Mandela was the Alexandra mass march against bus fare increase and the bus boycott of 1943 (Khosa, 1995; Walters, 2008). During apartheid, buses and trains were designed to move black workers from the overcrowded townships, often called ‘dormitories’, to their far away workplaces. The train stations in the towns and cities were clearly segregated with markings such as ‘Europeans only’ or ‘Whites only’ (Pirie, 1990).

Besides the buses, another mode of transport that evolved in the period of the 2IR was the minibus taxis. Fobosi (2021) reports that in the 1930s, Natalspruit, on the East Rand, had Valiants, Chevrolets, and other sedan vehicles with permits allowing them to ferry a limited number of black passengers from the black townships to town. Apartheid law, which limited the business activities of black people and controlled their movement through the pass system, made it impossible for the emergence of a black-owned and successful transportation system until the 1970s. However, from the late 1970s to the 1980s, the minibus taxi industry was deregulated, becoming a dominant mode of transport in the 1990s. The growth of the black-owned taxi industry was accompanied by

violence and killings caused by competition for lucrative taxi routes.

The Third Industrial Revolution (3IR) and its Implications for Transport

Beginning in 1969, the 3IR was engineered by the increased usage of electronics, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and computers. In 1969, the US Department of Defence developed systems that are used for Internet communication today. Facebook was launched in 2004, marking the beginning of the social media era (Metz, 2021). The 3IR led to the use of electronics and computer systems in cars and buses. These informed the drivers of the vehicles of malfunctioning parts, a function that was previously conducted manually by a mechanic. This in turn helped the driver to timeously attend to technical problems to avoid breakdown and other mechanical failures. Another example is the use of the global navigation system (GPS), smartphones, and online banking – all tools of the 3IR – which have made traveling by bus, trains, aeroplanes, and taxis easier for passengers who live in areas that have developed and sophisticated transport systems (Jurgen, 1986).

What is disappointing of the public transport system in South Africa is that the state has not embraced the technologies of the 3IR fully to improve the conditions of the poor and working-class people. Consequently, the benefits of ICTs enjoyed by other people in the world who use public transport have not been realised by South African passengers. According to Pertsovsky (2017), the Metrorail of the Western Cape region has not used ICTs to enhance the traveling experiences of commuters. In fact, Riana Scott, Head of Marketing and Communication at Metrorail Western Cape Region, commented: 'The primary reasons for delays are old and obsolete technology as a result of decades of disinvestment in rail and perpetual vandalism' (cited in Pertsovsky, 2017: 1). However, the private bus system that connects the towns and cities uses the Internet, making it easier for passengers to make bookings at their convenience. Another blow for passengers using a bus system called Autopax Passenger Services (SOC) Ltd was when this state company was put under business rescue in 2021 due to mismanagement. The company was struggling to pay salaries for its close to 1,000 employees, crippling its services. Previously known as *Transtate* and *Translux*, this service was safe and comfortable for passengers, and also used the Internet for bookings and to advertise its services (Autopax, 2022; Koka, 2021).

For taxis, there were attempts to introduce 3IR technologies, such as smart card systems, so that cash could be centrally collected in some taxi ranks in Gauteng. However, this system collapsed because taxi drivers did not have cash at hand to cover their daily expenses. Also, it compelled them to declare their exact earnings to the taxi owners. Normally less would be declared so that they could pocket the difference. Following bloodshed and the death of 15 passengers, this system was discontinued. Violence, intimidation, and taxi wars characterise the taxi industry in South Africa, in which countless numbers have lost their lives since the 1980s. The safety of commuters is another concern for passengers and the general public. For instance, in 2020, taxis accounted for close to 20% of major collisions, although they only represented 16% of vehicles using South African roads (Vegter, 2020).

Measures to reform and modernise the taxi industry have failed. For example, in 2006, a taxi recapitalisation programme was introduced by the state to ensure that modernised and safer taxis were on the roads to minimise road carnage. Another concern was that passengers had to sit comfortably in a taxi, because the existing taxi tended to be very uncomfortable and overloaded with limited space. In 2018, 72,653 old taxis were scrapped and the state paid R4,4 billion as a scrapping allowance. However, many of these old taxis were returning to the road illegally, undermining the very purpose of the recapitalisation programme (Raseroka, 2019).

The above facts regarding public transport in South Africa indicate that the 3IR is phantastic as the South African transport system has not adopted ICTs to enable it to function effectively and efficiently. The technology is very old and tends to be dysfunctional; vandalism, theft, corruption, lack of investments, and mismanagement within the transport system hinder the introduction of key elements of the 3IR that would have improved the conditions of transport users.

The 4IR and Transport

The 4IR commenced in 2008, and relies on artificial intelligence, the internet of things, sophisticated robots, 3-dimensional (3-D) printing, block chain bullet trains, and cloud technology. All these technologies have revolutionised production in profound ways. The modes of transport for this revolution are bullet trains, self-driving trucks, and cars travelling faster than the speed of aeroplanes (Lanzetti et al., 2021).

Table 1: *World's Fastest Trains*

World's Fastest Trains	Country	Speed record
L0 Series Maglev	Japan	374 mph (602 km/h)
*CRRC Qingdao Sifang 2021 Maglev**	China	373 mph (600 km/h)
TGV POS	France	357 mph (575 km/h)
CRH380A Hexie	China	302 mph (486 km/h)
Shanghai Maglev	China	268 mph (431 km/h)
HEMU-430X	South Korea	262 mph (422 km/h)
Fuxing Hao CR400AF	China	260 mph (418 km/h)
Frecciarossa 1000	Italy	245 mph (394 km/h)

(Source: Wallach, 2021)

The table above shows that in 2021, Japan had a bullet train with a speed of 602 km/h. However, Japan faces tough competition from China, which has the largest speed train network in the world (Wallach, 2021). A method that enables trains to run on the rails without touching the steel of the track but supported and controlled by the magnetic field is called the magnetic levitation (maglev) whose origins date back to the early 1900s. This method has been developed over the years, making it possible to have bullet trains today (GraduateWay, 2017).

South Africa's Failed Transport Revolution

Inspired by the 4IR, during his State of the Nation (SONA) address in 2019, President Ramaphosa exclaimed: 'We should imagine a country where a bullet train passes through Johannesburg as it travels to Musina and it stops in Buffalo City on the way from eThekwini to here in Cape Town' (Staff Writer, 2020: 1). However, there is a huge disjuncture between what Ramaphosa said about bullet trains as one of the key modes of transport and the actual reality of public transport in South Africa (BBC, 2019). Below, I demonstrate this point further.

The Gautrain, a train system operating in the north of Gauteng, was launched in 2010, just before South Africa's hosting of the FIFA World Cup. The highest speed of the train is 180 km per hour – making it to be the slowest train when compared to the fastest trains in the world (see Table 1 above; Jennings, 2015). The train links Johannesburg, Pretoria, and OR Tambo International Airport. There are also buses that take passengers from the train stations to their workplaces in areas where the Gautrain operates (Uys, 2021). One of the biggest challenges with the Gautrain is that it does not reach working-class areas that desperately need public transport. It is also unaffordable for working-class people who earn meagre wages or the unemployed (Thomas, 2013). In 2022, a trip from Park Station in Johannesburg to Hatfield in Pretoria cost between R70 and R148, which is much higher than the minimum wage of R23.19/hour by more than sixfold (Republic of South Africa [RSA]: Department of Employment and Labour, 2022; Rome2rio, 2022). However, there is a plan to extend the Gautrain to Soweto, a black area in the south of Johannesburg. This would add 150 kilometres of

railway tracks to the 80-kilometre network (Prinsloo and Henderson, 2020).

Just before the World Cup in 2010, the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system was introduced between Soweto and Johannesburg in 2007. Some bus lines were added later, and there is a plan to expand the service to other black townships. The bus system seeks to integrate and link the Metrorail system, a Gauteng local train network, and the Gautrain. However, users of the system have serious complaints about the function of the service. Also, President Ramaphosa understands the transport crisis or the failed transport revolution, because in 2019, during his participation in the electoral campaign of the African National Congress (ANC), he was stuck in a train for three hours on his way to Bosman train station in Tshwane (Mnukwa, 2020).

From a survey conducted by a University of Johannesburg (UJ) research team with 16,000 daily users it was found that approximately 46% considered the price of the Rea Vaya system to be fair. Evidently, the majority of the users were dissatisfied with the pricing of the service. There were also concerns raised about the lateness, reliability, and overload of the Rea Vaya system (Lengana et al., 2018).

Like the Rea Vaya BRT, the MyCiTi BRT was initiated by the City of Cape Town to transport hosts during the World Cup in 2010. Although the routes are in predominantly white areas, there are attempts to build bus stations in some of the black townships, such as Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha. The biggest weakness of the service is that it does not reach big, black townships such as Gugulethu, Nyanga, and the rest of the Cape Flats (MyCiTi, 2022).

“The problems of the BRT systems are exacerbated by the poorly run Metrorail system. In 2021, vandalism of the Metrorail system, cable theft, and the general destruction of the train infrastructure in Cape Town and the surrounding areas compounded the transport crisis in Cape Town. A more recent challenge is the cutting of critical fibre optic cables resulting in major delays in operations”

The problems of the BRT systems are exacerbated by the poorly run Metrorail system. In 2021, vandalism of the Metrorail system, cable theft, and the general destruction of the train infrastructure in Cape Town and the surrounding areas compounded the transport crisis in Cape Town. A more recent challenge is the cutting of critical fibre optic cables resulting in major delays in operations (Petersen, 2021). Transport Minister, Fikile Mbalula, blamed the vandalism and theft on the lockdown which began in March 2020. The lack of security on the train lines, at the train stations, and the general rail infrastructure were cited by Action SA, a new political party, as reasons for the damage and general collapse of infrastructure (Bhengu, 2022).

The complete destruction of train stations, such as the Kliptown station, took place during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. Other stations and railway lines, such as Park Station, Kempton Park, Elandsfontein, and others, were destroyed by thieves and vandals (Chothia, 2020). After the destruction and theft of the Metrorail infrastructure, which included rails and cables, only two lines out of 34 were operating using diesel-powered trains. Subsequent to that, 300 security guards were hired to protect the Metrorail line in Gauteng (Burroughs, 2020).

Furthermore, Prasa, a state-owned company responsible for short and long-distance public trains, had no train service linking the cities and towns for the whole year due to cable theft, vandalism, and other forms of destruction during the lockdown periods between 2020 and 2021. Towards the end of 2021, Prasa announced that some services were to resume. However, no detailed plan was announced to respond to the inefficiency of the rail system, which included extreme lack of reliability and poor integration of ICTs within the system (Ash, 2021; Emeran, 2013). In delivering a report on the state of Prasa last year, the company’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) commented that years of sabotage

and vandalism have cost Prasa more than R4 billion, of which more than a quarter was incurred during lockdown (Omarjee, 2021).

While passengers in the Global North, some parts of Asia, and other parts of the world are accessing public transport that is relatively reliable and affordable and that could be regarded as part of the 4IR, public transport in South Africa remains a curse that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The failed transport revolution was further confirmed by the release of travel statistics by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in 2020. About 17,4 million South Africans walked to their destinations. The taxis are the largest mode of transport used by 10,7 million people; this is followed by 6,3 million people who used cars or trucks as drivers. Trains were not a popular mode of transport, except in the Western Cape and Gauteng where 1,6% and 1,5% of household members use this mode of transport, respectively. The survey also reports: 'Train passengers have higher dissatisfaction rates, with the exception of fares, while Taxi and Bus passengers are particularly dissatisfied with facilities at taxi rank or bus stop, the behaviour of the taxi/bus drivers' (StatsSA, 2021: 1).

Poor access to transport has negative consequences for passengers, drivers, and other road users. Proper public transport enhances one's quality of life as it minimises stress caused by delays in public transport. It also assists in arriving on time at school, university, or at work, which improves productivity. In 2021, Numbeo, a company that monitors the cost of living globally, ranked South Africa as the 15th most traffic congested country in the world and reported that South African passengers spend 39.39 minutes extra per commute in traffic (Numbeo, 2022).

On a more positive note, it appears as if platform workers using smartphones have managed to fill what can be regarded as 'the transport gap', albeit in the cities and affluent areas. About 30,000 workers in South Africa are involved in various forms of e-hailing platform work (IOL, 2021). Relying on smartphones regulated by algorithms and GPS, which is built upon the sophisticated work of Albert Einstein, platform workers are able to process and deliver food orders and other goods to customers who would normally have to drive and collect these items themselves. Furthermore, passengers can be moved around using the same platforms from shopping centres to their homes, for instance. The platforms are owned by Uber, Bolt, and others – and the workers pay in order to be able to use them (Giddy, 2019). It can be argued that this is the only technological innovation that has been witnessed in South Africa in the phase of 4IR. The general failure to realise transportation in South Africa, especially in the context of the debates about 4IR, require some explanation.

Transport and Leadership Crises

Cronin (2006) writes about how the current transport challenges date back to the dark days of apartheid that entailed having black-working class areas in the outskirts of the cities, towns, and areas of economic activities surrounded by road networks and railway tracks. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, Cronin (2006) concedes that the building of new houses for the black majority in areas that are far away from the urban centres and where people work has entrenched the apartheid geography and exacerbated the transport crisis.

The failure of the South African state and its agents to deliver was not preordained. In other words, South Africa is a well-resourced and well-endowed country with an abundance of mineral resources. It is thus not a poor country. However, the policy choices made by the current leadership of the country since 1994 have deepened the social and economic divide. Furthermore, the ongoing corruption has also diverted the resources that were supposed to be used to build the transport infrastructure to individual leaders of the ruling party and their networks. States and sub-states, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Korea, were all colonised, but have been able to invest in research and development, enabling them to develop transport systems that are reliable and affordable (Goldin, 2019). Therefore, the transport crisis in South Africa is, in large part, a result of poor leadership of the state where the government has failed to mobilise resources to maintain the transport system inherited from the apartheid regime and to develop a new system of transport that subverts the apartheid geography that removed the working class and the poor from economic zones.

Responses to the Failed Transport Revolution

Sociologically and politically speaking, one cannot write any balanced narrative of the failed transport revolution in South Africa without examining the role played by various social agents and actors capable of shaping public transport policy and action, especially in the context where there is public and academic discourse on the need for South Africa to move towards the 4IR when the country has not even begun to use the transport technologies of the 2IR to move people around.

The state and its various agencies are supposed to maintain the road, rail and transport infrastructure, which includes traffic lights. However, potholes, dysfunctional traffic lights, traffic congestions, traffic lights and cable theft, road accidents and fatalities seem to occur on a regular basis. The transport crisis is exacerbated by the lack of investment to improve the road and transport infrastructure. In 2022, Mbalula addressed the Road Construction and Maintenance Indaba, highlighting that about R75 billion needs to be invested over the next five years to prevent the decay of the country's roads. Mbalula further stated that the total paved and gravel network at provincial level is 184,816 km; the biggest problem is that 40% of this network has reached its life cycle. According to Mbalula, about eight tenths of the road network has surpassed its 20-year life cycle (Cokayne, 2022).

The state has intensified the transport crisis through alleged cases of corruption and incompetence. For example, before 2015 Prasa planned to spend R7 billion (about R3.5 billion paid in 2015) to purchase trains which were too tall for the country's railway system (Open Secrets, 2021). The alleged corruption in Prasa, which also controls Metrorail, must have had a direct impact on the passenger rail system. The national travel survey published in 2021 revealed that: 'The number of people who regularly used trains dropped by 80% since 2013...The average time of a trip on a train has increased by 45% over the past eight years to 107 minutes' (cited in Daniel, 2021: 1).

One of the reasons that the working class and poor communities have very poor access to public transport is because their organisations, such as trade unions and community structures, are extremely weak and unable to pressurise the state sufficiently to promote access to safe and reliable public transport. However, there are attempts by organisations like the #UniteBehind, a coalition of organisations formed in 2017 seeking to use protests and the law to struggle for accessible, safe transport for the working class, particularly women and children. The organisation also uses the tools of the 3IR, such as Facebook, the Internet, and WhatsApp to achieve its aims (#UniteBehind, 2017: 1).

"Numerous countries, including Japan, China, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong, and many others are enjoying sophisticated public transport systems that enable workers, students, the general public, and tourists to freely move around the cities and towns (Pallavi, 2019). These countries have what can be regarded as 4IR transport systems with functional bullet trains and other complex transport systems, while South Africa faces its own 'Dark Age' with no end in sight."

Conclusion

As shown in this article, numerous countries, including Japan, China, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong, and many others are enjoying sophisticated public transport systems that enable workers, students, the general public, and tourists to freely move around the cities and towns (Pallavi, 2019). These countries have what can be regarded as 4IR transport systems with functional bullet trains and other complex transport systems, while South Africa faces its own 'Dark Age' with no end in sight.

These aforementioned countries have viable and expansive national systems of innovation that have developed, adopted, and advanced their technological and economic paradigms. They are enjoying the benefits of endogeneity and progressive systems of innovation with adequate public and private expenditures in research and development consistently over long histories.

However, South Africa is unable to even deliver the transport technology of the 2IR in the form of electric trains and diesel buses to move people efficiently around its towns and cities. The National Travel Survey of 2020 indicates that South African commuters are abandoning the trains because they are extremely unreliable and inefficient, causing them to be late for work and school. Instead, unsafe taxis are the dominant mode of transport (Daniel, 2021). It appears as if attempts to reform transport for the better require organising civil society structures, such as #UniteBehind, around concrete demands that include additional investment in safe public transport and transport infrastructure. In the context of decay, potholes, vandalism, and cable theft, localised community organising and vigilance is the only possible solution that can help improve public transport in South Africa. Commuter associations are another possible organisational response that can help commuters negotiate fares with the train, bus, and taxi authorities. Taxi violence and general lawlessness associated with the taxi industry require a state that can use its powers to protect commuters, especially women and children using this mode of transport.

To sum up the points made in this article, public transport and its current crisis has entrenched racial and class inequity in South Africa because the black population in the townships and rural areas do not have access to quality public transport – even after 28 years of democracy. Vandalism, theft of transport infrastructure, and the lack of adequate investment in public transport are most likely to entrench inequality with regard to access to transport.

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Unpacking the Municipal Demarcation Application in South Africa

By Zaakirah Iqbal Jeeva, Trynos Gumbo, and Juanee Cilliers | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

The year 2022 marks the sixth democratic local municipal demarcation process in South Africa. The Municipal Demarcation Board has invited the public to put forward their suggestions for the revision of local municipal boundaries based on the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998) by the end of March. However, the legislative criterion that guides the process remains as complex as it was in 1998 and the public still questions how and why municipal boundaries are demarcated in South Africa. A direct product of the complexity is that many voices remain muffled and their frustrations are displayed in public protests. These protests are to an extent due to municipalities being too large, lacking economic bases, and having poor governance structures to administer efficiently, resulting in many struggling to provide basic services and remain financially viable and sustainable. This article unpacks the application process that needs to be followed by the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB), the Member of Executive Council (MEC), and the public to motivate for the re-demarcation of local boundaries. The paper argues that the process is complicated and calls for its revision. Furthermore, the paper suggests that smaller and more compact municipalities, at scale and proportional to economic base, might be the solution to the on-going crises of South African Municipalities.

What Is the Issue?

Previously non-whites administrative areas located on the outskirts of urban areas were economically underdeveloped and inhabitants were forced to commute to city centres for commercial and employment purposes. Furthermore, national policies ensured that population numbers within these administrative regions were controlled via influx control measures. With democracy, the national government sought to create more integrated and cohesive administrative areas in order to provide equal opportunities and a better quality of life for all. As a result, the peripheral residential areas which operated as independent administrative areas were integrated with the previous white urban areas to form unified local municipalities (RSA, 1998) (See Figure 1 below).

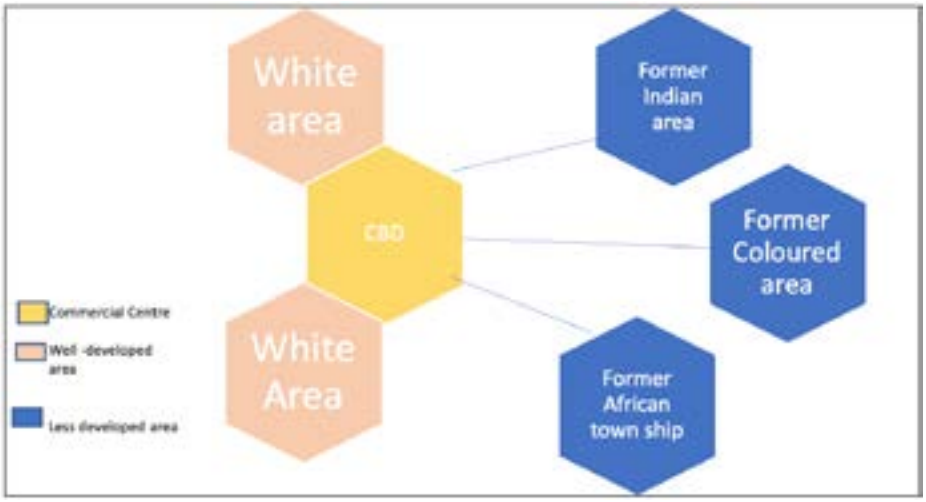

Figure 1: *Spatial arrangement of municipalities according to race and level of development (Authors' own construction)*

It was believed that this inclusion would allow for the more efficient and sustainable management of the administrative region (RSA, 1998). However, the municipality was to be governed by a 'one city, one tax base' principal, which meant that each area within the municipality would be taxed the same and the local administration would have the discretion to decide how the funds would be used. This remains a challenging task considering that the region delimited comprised of developed, undeveloped and underdeveloped areas which were connected by unnatural functional linkages. Additionally, with the termination of influx control measures, the newly formed municipalities welcomed large numbers of unemployed migrants from the former homelands and from other countries (Kwenda, Ntuli and Mudiriza, 2020).

This resulted in the newly elected local government, who lacked previous administrative experience, having to manage larger municipalities that were unequally developed and experiencing rapid in-migration of individuals, who demanded free access to basic services and houses, as was promised by the national government (see Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) policy). Additionally, the post 1994 national government promoted bottom-up planning, which forced the new local administration to conduct public participation meetings with local communities, before decisions affecting the local public were made. This resulted in a structural reform in South Africa which was not merely physical, but was also riddled by many socio-economic, functional, and administrative challenges (refer to Figure 1) (National Treasury, 2021). Irrespective of these challenges, the democratic government remained loyal to creating a racially and spatially integrated country that comprised of municipalities which extended from coast to coast or wall to wall.

However, the manner in which these municipalities were to be delimited remained the question. The newly elected national government was faced with the choice of whether to pursue economic growth or social development in order to develop their local regions. On the one hand, the underdevelopment of the non-white areas within the municipality required municipal funds to be utilised for social upliftment and basic service provision (equality) (See RDP policy)

(RSA, 1994). This required the delimitation of smaller and more intensively developed municipalities to ensure that underdeveloped regions would be developed effectively and efficiently. Consequently, in 1996, the Green Paper on local government proposed that rural and urban areas be delineated as separate administrations to allow for each to be intensively developed (RSA, 1996). However, the separation of the former white urban areas and the non-white rural areas raised questions around segregation, exclusion, and cohesive development – the very principals the government wanted to represent.

Consequently, during the same year, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) promoted economic development by enhancing areas of economic potential (former white areas) with the hope that it could attract investments and bring in further funds into the municipality (capitalism or unbalanced development) (Department of Finance, 1996). However, for the benefits to be shared, larger and more integrated municipal regions needed to be created (extensive development) (Turok and Borel-Saladin, 2013). Subsequently, in 1998, the White Paper on local government proposed that urban and rural areas that were functionally related be integrated, as one municipality, to provide economic equity and offer a more socially balanced development approach (RSA, 1998; SALGA, 2018; MDB, 2019) (Refer to Figure 2).

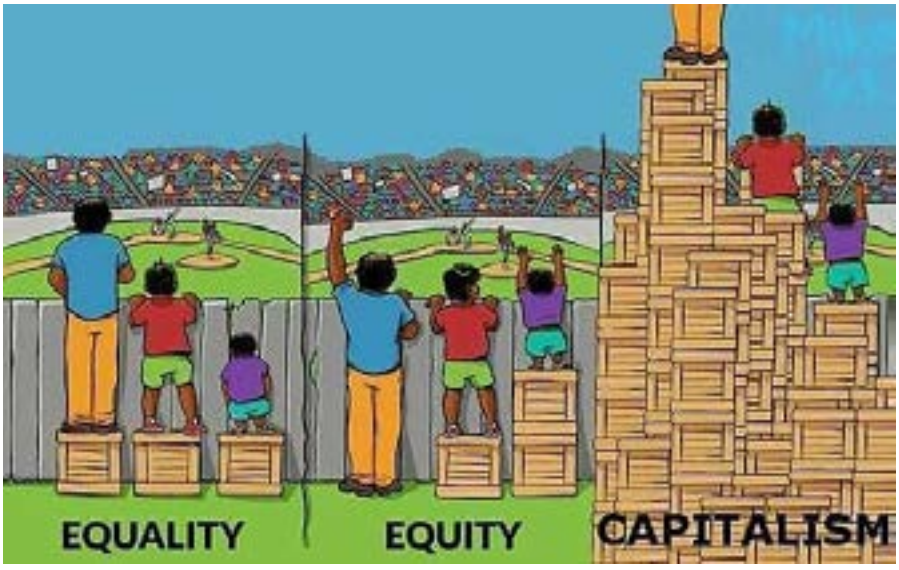

Figure 2: *Effects of policy to achieve equality, equity, and capitalism (Source: Olson, 2019)*

Consequently, in 1998, the Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) and the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998) both conceded to the equity approach and passed formal criteria on how municipalities should be demarcated and categorised in South Africa. Subsequently, Section 24 and 25 of the Municipal Demarcation Act prescribed a one-size-fits-all criteria that needed to be followed during the demarcation of municipal boundaries (refer to Table 2). Meanwhile, the Municipal Structures Act (27 of 1998) provided the criteria on how municipalities should be categorised as either Category A (Metropolitan), Category B (Local), or Category C (District) municipalities. This categorisation depended on their adherence or non-adherence to the criteria and the discretion of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) (RSA, 1998).

This policy opinion piece seeks to unpack the criteria used to demarcate municipalities in South Africa, 22 years later. It aims to determine if these criteria are actually easy for the public to understand, to motivate against, and to monitor. As a result, the paper does not go into theoretical discussions around the literature that informs the criteria, but rather investigates how these can be interpreted by the public. The following section briefly looks at the requirements of the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998) which was recently updated to the Municipal Demarcation Bill (2020).

Demarcation Criteria

In 1998, the White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998) called for the creation of 'developmental local government' which would address the needs of the community in an efficient and effective manner. This was to be achieved through the appointment of an accountable local government (Koma, 2012). This combined with the principle of integrated cohesive societies of the White Paper of Local Government, the balanced development economic approach from GEAR, and the criterion as stated in the Municipal Demarcation

Act 117 of 1998 (refer to Table 2) (RSA, 1996; RSA, 1998). As a result, the MDB opted to demarcate fewer but spatially larger municipalities in 2000. The rationale behind this was that the integration of urban and rural would promote balanced regional development, thereby reducing administrative costs and providing economics of scale (RSA, 1998). The developmental aspect as such was left to the appointed council of the municipality to fulfil. However, according to Sections 22 and 26 of the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998), the MDB can re-determine municipal boundaries every 5 years on request from the Minister, the MEC, the public, the municipality, or its own discretion. Subsequently, the Constitution also calls for the public to be actively involved in all decisions that affect them (RSA, 1996; Parliament, 2019). According to Parliament, public is defined as 'anyone from community', including interested or affected individuals, groups, communities, organisations, and civil society and government entities (Parliament, 2019: 3). According to Cogan and Sharpe (1986: 284) public participation provides information and ideas on public issues. They further found that a public who feels heard will support planning decisions – resulting in increased trust between governing parties, a reduction in public protests, and more effective implementation. This should be a natural process, considering that the public elects the government to 'work' for them.

In view of this, Letlape and Dube (2020) found that between 2000 and 2022 the MDB has received over 1,030 applications to re-determine boundaries within the country. Each of these applications had to follow the entire legal demarcation process. However, to date, this has only resulted in 27 major adjustments (2000–2022) (Refer to Table 1 below). That is a 0.27% success rate. According to Letlape and Dube (2020), many of the applications received were unclear or did not provide reasons for the requests at all.

Nonetheless, there were numerous adjustments to boundaries over the 20-year period, not all of which resulted in the recategorization of municipalities. The mergers resulted in the number of municipalities declining from 284 in 2000 to 257 in 2016. The biggest decline occurred in local municipalities, which declined by 26 from 2000 to 2016; the number of district municipalities declined by three over the same time period. However, this decline resulted in the country receiving two more metropolitans over this period (refer to Table 1 below).

Year	Category A	Category B	Category C	Total
2000	6	231	47	284
2006	6	231	46	283
2011	8	226	44	278
2016	8	205	44	257

Table 1: *Number of municipalities determined or re-determined since 2000 (Source: Adapted from MDB, 2022).*

According to the MDB (2019), the mergers and subsequent recategorizations of municipalities are expected to create more effective municipalities that are more efficient in delivering services to local communities. However, in 2019, the MDB found that after each delimitation there was an increase in community protests, conflicting leadership, and lack of administrative capacity. In defence, the MDB (2019) rightfully dissolved responsibility of the dysfunctional municipalities, since it is only responsible for the delimitation of boundaries and could not be held responsible for poor service delivery or maladministration, as these are shortfalls of the municipal administration (Letlape and Dube, 2020). Additionally, the MDB states the public was involved in the delimitation process and there was large scale agreement, before formalization. Regardless, the public dissatisfaction in terms of public protests does raise concerns on the delimitation outcome and this – together with the high rate of failed delimitation applications – brings into question the entire delimitation process. The next section unpacks the delimitation application as listed on the MDB website.

Delimitation Application

In light of the upcoming delimitation, the MDB has invited applicants to put forward suggestions for the re-delimitation of local boundaries. However, each application needs to motivate how the proposed delimitation would meet the requirements below, before the MDB would consider it after 31 March 2022 (refer to Table 2).

Section 24	Section 25
(a) The objectives of re-determining municipal boundaries are to enable the municipality, for that area, to fulfil its constitutional obligations, including: (i) the provision of democratic and accountable government for the local communities; (ii) the provision of services to the communities in an equitable and sustainable manner; (iii) the promotion of social and economic development; and (iv) the promotion of a safe and healthy environment; (b) enable effective governance, (c) enable integrated development, (d) Have a tax base as inclusive as possible of users of municipal services in the municipality	(a) the interdependence of people, communities and economies as indicated by- (i) existing and expected patterns of human settlement and migration; (ii) employment; (iii) commuting and dominant transport movements; (iv) spending; (v) the use of amenities, recreational facilities and infrastructure; and commercial and industrial linkages (b) the need for cohesive, integrated and unfragmented areas, including metropolitan areas (c) the financial viability and administrative capacity of the municipality to perform municipal functions efficiently and effectively (d) the need to share and redistribute financial and administrative resources (e) provincial and municipal boundaries (f) areas of traditional rural communities (g) existing and proposed functional boundaries, including magisterial districts, voting districts, health, transport, police and census enumerator boundaries (h) existing and expected land use, social, economic and transport planning (i) the need for coordinated municipal, provincial and national programmes and services, including the needs for the administration of justice and health care (j) topographical, environmental and physical characteristics of the area (k) the administrative consequences of its boundary determination on- (i) municipal creditworthiness; (ii) existing municipalities, their council members and staff; and (iii) any other relevant matter; and (l) the need to rationalise the total number of municipalities within different categories and/or different types to achieve the objectives of effective and sustainable service delivery, financial viability and macro-economic stability.

Table 2: *Sections 24 and 25 of the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998)*

According to the MDB (2022) proposal form, the applicant has to first provide their name, position, email address and cell phone number. This information is used to motivate that the application came from a living person and was not just created. However, it compromises the anonymity of the application and could politicise the application. Section B of the form requires background to the application and requires the applicant to provide advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. This provides the public opinion on why the application is considered important, in general. However, from section C the application gets technical and requires the applicant to determine the impact that the delimitation may have and how it would intrude the affected municipalities, in terms of: 1) budgets; 2) equitable share; 3) national and provincial grants; 4) tax base; 5) infrastructure; 6) grading; 7) number of councillors; 8) administrations and human resources; 9) the transfer of assets and liabilities. This is the information the applicant would need to collect while lobbying the relevant stakeholders (MEC of local government, SALGA, community leaders, municipal leaders) in the affected municipalities to agree with the delimitation proposal and provide their consent in section D (MDB, 2022; RSA, 2020). This creates biases and exposes the applicant. Moreover, if the proposed application is not supported, the stakeholders could withhold their signatures and information – making the application obsolete.

Section E is rather complex and technical since it is based on the criterion as found in Section 24 of the Municipal Demarcation Act (117 of 1998) read together with Section 25 of the Municipal Demarcation Bill (2020) and Section 152 of the Constitution (refer to Table 2). This section requires the applicant to motivate why the region to be delimited is interrelated in terms of existing and expected human settlement patterns, employment, commuting and spending trends, and the use of amenities. The applicant should also motivate regarding the region's commercial and industrial linkages, and should ensure that the financial and administrative capacity of municipalities is interlinked and that settlements within the municipality are more interconnected with each other than with settlements outside of the municipality. Theoretically, this is a Functional Urban Region (FUR). However, the manner in which a region can be determined as a FUR is subjective and differs according to the interest of the applicant and the context (OECD, 2022). A seminar conducted between the HSRC and the MDB in 2019 revealed that currently there is no clear understanding on how this could be measured or determined – since the FUR could comprise of only urban areas (FUA), or only rural areas (FRA), or a combination of urban-rural areas. Furthermore, the distance between these settlements is not prescribed. Nonetheless, the MDB is still obligated to look at all applications in terms of the legislative criteria, even if there is no objective data to prove that any of the above-mentioned criteria are met (MDB, 2018; MDB, 2019). In light of this, decisions are based on motivations, viability, and public opinion.

To complicate the process further, Section F is based on Section 25 of the Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998) and Section 26 of the Municipal Demarcation Bill (2020) and requires the applicant to provide all of the following: relevant data on demographics, interdependence of people, communities, and economies; their ability to share and redistribute financial and administrative resources – to save cost; the financial viability of the entity; motivation on how it could operate as a single, cohesive, unfragmented area; land use patterns; human resource issues; credit rating; and how the municipality would fit in with municipal, provincial, and national programs in the future (RSA, 1998). Upon investigation, Section 25 is found to have too many criteria, some of which

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are duplicated from Section 24. For example, criteria (b) and (c) can be consolidated since both look at administrative capacity and financial viability; point (f), (g), (o) and (p) can be combined as one point that looks at functional boundaries; and points (h) and (i) can be joined and labelled as planning issues (MDB, 2022). Furthermore, the country as a whole has a national plan on how it wants to develop its administrative regions or which areas need to be developed strategically (See National Spatial Perspective (2007), the Integrated Urban Development Framework (2016), and the National Spatial Development Plan (2020)). However, the policy and legislative framework exhibits cracks and gaps as the implementation of transformative growth and development projects are slow. It remains unclear what instruments provinces, districts, and municipalities have to guide the allocation, distribution and budgeting of resources for land development, administration and management purposes. Therefore, it is also questionable how an individual from the public would know which data to collect and which policy to motivate against itself in terms of future strategic development.

Additionally, the applicant would have to further motivate Section G and the capacity of the municipality in terms of Section 85 of the Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) in terms of finance, human resources, and infrastructure. This is information that is not easily accessible to the public and makes the process complex and tedious although necessary. Section H is only necessary for motivation for a Category A municipality.

On the whole, the above-mentioned process is technical, complex, multi-disciplinary, politicizing and time-consuming. As a result, the voices of many individuals from the public who have limited knowledge on how to file the complicated application remain muted and dissatisfaction on the process could and has continued. This can be deduced from Section C of the MDB application, where it appears as if the voices of the public are only heard if they align with the technical requirements of the Municipal Demarcation Act and if they are approved by the MDB, MEC, and Provincial Ministers. However, the requirements and their adherence are subjective and case specific. In this manner, the administrative power of the MDB is dedicated to inciting, reinforcing, monitoring and optimizing the criteria prescribed in the legislation, without really considering alternatives (see Foucault, 1979). This brings into question the sovereignty of the state, the agency relationship between the MDB and the government, and the power that the public actually has to bring about change, even though they are included in the process. This surely cannot be constitutional and the frustration can clearly be noted by the public protests that occur.

A point that seems to become apparent through the analysis of the demarcation criteria is that the ideology of developmental local government is being lost in the attempt to create integrated municipalities. None of the criteria look at the quality of life in the municipality, the level of unemployment, the level of education, access to health care, birth and death rates, or access to basic services. The outcome, though not entirely, can be seen through present-day South Africa in the form of disrepair within cities and towns that were once the backbone of the economy, and through the backlog of basic service provisions (Khambule, Nomdo and Siswana, 2018). All the same, the social administrative challenges which include corruption, lack of adequate skills to run municipalities, political interferences and the culture of non-payment also play a contributing role in the poor non- developmental condition of our municipalities (MDB, 2019).

In light of this, one could also question if municipalities might not be too big to be sustainable, effective, efficient, and development orientated? The literature reveals that larger municipalities are supposed to be more economically efficient and allow for better social and physical integration and growth (OECD, 2018). However, in the South African case, integration and functional linkages are based on the unnatural linkages formed during apartheid. This means that the area demarcated might also be unusually and unnaturally large, hindering service delivery (Dube and Radikonyana, 2020). As a result, the question arises regarding whether smaller, more inclusive, and more development-oriented municipalities would offer the solutions to these multi-faceted problems. However, the criteria as found in the Municipal Demarcation Act (Refer to Table 2) does not allow an applicant to

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suggest de-amalgamation, even if they are found to be dysfunctional. This is something that requires further research.

Lastly, it should be considered that the delimitation of local boundaries every five years is costly and affects the financial viability and service delivery of municipalities (MDB, 2019). The shifting of local boundaries disturbs data collection, which is used to rationalise services, fees, tax rates, management costs, payroll systems, voters roll, and administrative and human resource policies (SALGA, 2018). This directly affects the service delivery in the area. It is suggested that a longer period, between delimitation, would allow the municipality to stabilise in terms of administration and would provide a clearer picture on whether the re-delimitation is required or not (MDB, 2019). Furthermore, more research into the legal requirements is required to ensure that it is applied consistently and that applicants understand the objective requirements before filling it.

In closing, local municipalities are the most important tier of government since they have direct contact with the citizens. The initial focus of creating cohesive municipalities has to a large extent been successful. However, the development orientation ideology that listens to the ‘will of the people’ is under scrutiny (RSA, 1996; RSA 1998; Turok and Borel-Saladin, 2013; MDB, 2019). The 2020 Auditor General report by Kimi Makwetu attests to the difficulties and challenges faced by municipalities in terms of administration, and to the resultant dysfunctionality – with only 8% receiving clean audits (Makwetu, 2020). The power of well-thought-out boundaries around administrative regions should not be overlooked as they could assist in reducing the number of challenges faced by the administration and assist in making them more specialised and economically stronger.

Conclusions

The South African demarcation exercise is unique in its own right. The democratic government inherited a spatially fragmented, unequally developed, and economically unbalanced landscape. As a result, its attempts to create an integrated and cohesive society have been accompanied with numerous challenges. Even though the democratic government has made provisions for the public to actively participate in the process, the process is too technical, complicated, and time consuming. As a result, many applicants are not successful in their proposed application, even though they have valid suggestions, creating dissatisfaction and public frustration. Maybe it is time to re-look at the application process and simplify it to actually make it public participation friendly. For the fear is, if they continue to be silenced through technicalities and complexity, the country would not truly progress developmentally and become a nation that serves the most vulnerable.

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The Buzz Around Access to Financial Services by Individuals

By Lusanda Batala | Peer Reviewed

Abstract

Expanding access to financial services is seen as a promising means of dealing with developmental challenges, reducing poverty, and promoting economic development. Greater access to financial services is essential to people's well-being as it promotes entrepreneurship, moves people out of poverty, and provides hope for a better economic future. Tools such as savings, payment, and credit services are crucial to smoothing household-level consumption, helping insure against risk, and allowing investment in education and other capital forms. As a result, many developing countries have committed to increasing people's access to financial services, especially the poor. However, achieving access to financial services remains a challenge despite this high-level importance. This article focuses on the determinants of individuals' access to financial services. It uses available literature and the National Income Dynamics Survey (NIDS) data for analyses.

Introduction

Globally, countries strive towards poverty alleviation or reduction – with international institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) foregrounding poverty reduction in their primary goals. Poverty encapsulates different multidimensional phenomena and depends on the context and perspective of an individual. Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, defines poverty as including joblessness, illiteracy, landlessness, homelessness, powerlessness, and lacking adequate capital, facilities, or food. Therefore, poverty alleviation reduces these conditions for an individual or a community. However, according to Shil (2009), the poor require assistance to overcome these conditions.

Various strategies have been proposed to overcome developmental challenges such as poverty. Some of these strategies include better nutrition, birth control, increasing girls' education, and more substantial property rights. UNDP believes that economic growth cannot reduce poverty, improve equality, and produce employment unless it is inclusive. Furthermore, UNDP indicates that despite progress since the Heads of State and Government endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2000, human poverty remains a challenge. However, globally, there is an acknowledgement that there has been a reduction in extreme poverty – a decrease of about 650 million during the last three decades. Despite this progress, more than a billion people worldwide still live in extreme poverty.

It is widely believed that economic growth helps to reduce poverty and improve individuals' welfare. However, Todaro (1997) points out that economic progress can increase growth, but does not necessarily guarantee the wellbeing of the poorest members of society. Beck (2007) also states that the close relationship between financial development and growth does not necessarily indicate that financial development contributes to poverty alleviation. Instead, the characteristic of growth is either with rising income inequality and poverty or falling income inequality and poverty (Inoue and Hamori, 2010). The implicit assumption is that if financial development improves growth, that automatically reduces poverty. However, this assumption might not be accurate as income distribution can worsen, resulting in disproportionate gains from growth transfer to the non-poor.

Expanding access to financial services is seen as a promising means of dealing with developmental challenges, reducing poverty, and promoting economic development. Greater access to financial services is essential to people's well-being as it promotes entrepreneurship, moves people out of poverty, and provides hope for a better economic future. Tools such as savings, payment, and credit services are crucial to smoothing household-level consumption, helping insure against risk, and allowing investment in education and other capital forms. As a result, many developing countries have committed to increasing people's access to financial services, especially the poor. In May 2015, 54 institutions across 61 countries signed the Maya Declaration pledging to recognise the importance of access to financial services, to develop policy, and to implement sound regulatory frameworks (Villasenor, West, and Lewis, 2015: 2–3).

However, achieving access to financial services remains a challenge despite this high-level importance. Banks have struggled to expand access to poor or low-income individuals, especially in developing countries. According to Morduch et al. (2009), about 2.5 billion people globally are unbanked. In most cases, the unbanked are the poor without assets as security when looking for loans. In addition, many unbanked individuals want to make transactions at too small a scale to attract much interest from profit-seeking institutions (Cull et al., 2009b; Johnston and Morduch, 2008). Furthermore, the 2014 World Bank Global Financial Index Report indicates that the gender gap on access to financial services is not narrowing, with a global average difference at seven percentage points on account ownership (58% for women and 65% for men) between 2011 and 2014. The gender gap is at nine percentage points on average in developing countries, with some countries experiencing a higher gap. Access to a transaction account is a first step towards broader access to financial services, as it allows an individual to store money and to send and receive payments – and acts as a gateway to other financial services.

> The implicit assumption is that if financial development improves growth, that automatically reduces poverty. However, this assumption might not be accurate as income distribution can worsen, resulting in disproportionate gains from growth transfer to the non-poor.

Collins et al. (2009) believe that what drives the financial activities of the poor are basic needs such as food, health, and school fees – as well as other sizeable expenses and, where possible, investment opportunities when they arise. The World Bank (2001b) identifies three critical areas for assessing the impact of finance on economic performance: contribution to economic growth, contribution to poverty reduction, and the ability to lead to financial stability. Therefore, understanding the determinants of access to financial services is critical.

Theoretical Basis and Review

Finance is at the core of the development agenda. Development practitioners argue that efficient and well-functioning systems are essential in properly allocating resources to improving opportunities and reducing poverty. The World Bank Policy Research report (2008: 21) indicates that 'improving access and building inclusive financial systems is a goal relevant to economies at all levels of development.'

The theory indicates that the challenge for better access to financial services is more significant than ensuring that more people access basic financial services. It is also about enhancing the quality and reach of credit, savings, payments, insurance, and other risk management products to facilitate sustained growth and productivity. The lack of inclusive financial systems results in poor households' reliance on their internal resources to invest in education, entrepreneurship, or growth opportunities. Moreover, there is a likelihood that imperfections, such as information asymmetries and transaction costs, are binding to talented poor individuals.

Stijin (2005) indicates that access to financial services consists of the demand and supply sides. The demand side focuses on the choice made by individuals about the services offered by financial institutions. The supply side is about financial services provision. Theories on access to financial services give a general framework for financial services and intermediation demand. Several theories exist in the literature on how individuals decide to access financial services, including: rationality theory, bounded rationality theory, theory of satisficing, prospect theory, intertemporal theory, delegated monitoring theory[1], information asymmetry theory, and transaction cost theory[2] (Scholtens and Wensveen, 2003). The delegated monitoring and rational choice[3] theories explain the demand for financial services. In contrast, the information asymmetry and the transaction cost theories deal with the supply side dimension of access to financial services.

The most influential theories which explain individual behaviour in response to a decision towards consumption and savings/borrowing include the 'Life Cycle Hypothesis' (Ando and Modigliani, 1963; Modigliani and Ando, 1957; Modigliani and Brumberg, 1954) and the 'Permanent Income Hypothesis' (Friedman, 1957). The bases for these hypotheses are on the assumptions that individuals are rational beings who respond in predictable ways to changes in incentives and that borrowing or savings are ways to 'smooth consumption' in facing income fluctuations. These models assume perfect capital markets; however, they suggest that individuals generally consider their consumption based on their income pattern. Therefore, the analysis of these models helps understand individuals' behaviours in response to income expectations.

Then, according to the General Theory, Keynes states that the marginal propensity to save and hold financial assets depends on subjective and objective factors. The strengths of these factors differ enormously among individuals with divergent socio-economic conditions. Similarly, the lifecycle theory predicts that an individual's consumption and saving behaviour

will change considerably with income, wealth, age, marital status, and other socio-economic conditions during various stages of the individual's life. Since the equilibrium demand for a financial asset is a function of income or wealth, which in turn is related to the demographic conditions of an individual, changes in the demographic variables would not only affect the level of income and wealth but also affect the demand for financial assets.

Modern development theory emphasises the central role played by the imperfection of financial markets. The shortcomings of the financial market determine the extent to which the poor can borrow to invest, for example, in education. Thus, finance influences the efficiency of resource allocation throughout the economy and the comparative economic opportunities of individuals from relatively rich or poor households. Improving access, then, means improving the degree to which financial services are available to all at a fair price. Since use is observable, it is easier to measure financial services, but usage is not always the same as access. Unlike general equilibrium models and the aggregate regression methodology, the micro-analyses often focus on the direct effect of access to finance on individuals' well-being, without always considering possible spillover and the indirect effects highlighted in the general equilibrium analyses.

The ecosystem approach is also relevant as it can find and analyse possible factors affecting access to financial services. Moore (1993) indicates that access to the financial services ecosystem consists of the environment and stakeholders: STEP (Socio-demographic, Technological, Economic and Political) describes the environment and ecosystem; STEPE considers the same factors, with the additional final component referring to Ecology (Davenport and Prusak, 1997). Despite the development of various models describing the environment, researchers regard STEP as the most appropriate because of the simplicity of its four basic dimensions of the ecosystem and its spheres as significant factors that could affect access to financial services.

What Does the Empirical Literature Say?

Access to financial services has demand and supply conditions (Claessens, 2006; Beck et al., 2009). The main barriers to accessing financial services have been the supply side, with limited focus on demand – bearing in mind that the demand constraints can result in voluntary exclusion. However, the discourse on access to financial services has mainly believed that all exclusion is involuntary. Empirical studies employing questions such as 'did the individual receive credit in the past year or not', without probing the willingness to access financial services, implicitly make such an assumption by outlining their questions in such a way that the possibility of voluntary exclusion is by the nature of the study design and implementation.

Much empirical research has been conducted to understand the factors that lead an individual to access financial services. The studies have unearthed vital findings that help propose policy interventions that could help deal with the developmental challenges of accessing financial services, especially for the poor. The literature indicates a considerable number of studies that have unearthed factors or determinants that lead to access to credit (Kochar, 1997; Atieno, 1997; Jabbar et al., 2002; Pal, 2002; Pitt and Khandker, 2002; Zeller and Sharma, 2002; Swain, 2007; Barslund and Tarp, 2008). There has also been a fair amount of focus on the determinants of access to savings (Deaton, 1992; Gurgand et al., 1994; Muradoglu and Taskin, 1996; Spio and Groenwald, 1996; Kimuyu, 1999; Aryeteey and Udry, 2000; Kiiza and Pederson, 2002). These dynamics are also similar for South Africa, where the analysis of factors is skewed towards credit (Okurut, 2006; Chauke et al., 2013) and with some focus on savings aspects (Chipote and Tsegaye, 2014; Zwane et al., 2016). However, the focus on the analysis of determinants on access to insurance in developing countries has been limited compared to access to credit and savings (Bendig et al., 2009; Asfaw, 2003; Jütting, 2003; Gine et al., 2008; Gine and Yang, 2007).

Research work that concentrates on the determinants of access to bank bonds (home loans) is limited. As the literature has shown, most research has focused on other basic banking transaction services, such as bank accounts and personal loans. As a result, the factors that influence access to a bank home loan have been overlooked. A study by Ford and Jones (2001) indicates that product features, emotional influences and reputation, credibility, and external factors all influence an individual in the decision-making process on accessing a bank bond loan.

Devlin (2002) indicates that professional advice, interest rates, another account with the financial institution, higher social class, higher household income, higher education attainment, and financial maturity are essential determinants of accessing a bank bond loan. Ngugi and Njori (2013) indicate that tax incentives, cost of capital, land registration systems, and loan maturation period are determinants of mortgage finance access. According to Jones and Stead (2020), the effective demand for housing is constrained by the inaccessibility of affordable finance and mortgages, especially for those working informally. Kamau (2018) indicates that income level, political environment, collateral, and interest rates are determinants of housing finance access. Olawumi, Adewusi, and Oyetunji (2019) indicate income, nature of the occupation, type of collateral, years of the banking relationship, loan duration, and loan sector as significant determinants of access to mortgage finance in Nigeria.

The empirical research findings are a mixture of different conclusions. For example, Pitt and Khandker (2002) indicate that households with a female head are negatively related to financial services. On the other hand, some researchers indicate that household size is an essential determinant of access to financial services (Dror et al., 2007; Swain, 2007; Barslund and Tarp, 2008). Other studies indicate that age negatively correlates with demand for informal credit (Barslund and Tarp, 2008) and the demand for insurance (Chankova et al., 2008; Gine et al., 2008).

Several other studies indicate that an individual is more likely to access financial services, especially loans (Kiiza and Pederson, 2002; Pal, 2002; Pitt and Khandker, 2002) or contract insurance with increasing income or wealth of the individual (Jütting, 2003; Pauly, 2004; Bhat and Jain, 2006; Dror et al., 2007; Gine et al., 2008). Lower levels of income have a negative correlation with access to financial services. Beck and Brown's (2011) empirical findings indicate that having a bank account increased with income and education. The literature suggests that banking services are standard for individuals who reside in urban areas, male heads, individuals with higher levels of education (university), and individuals with formal employment. A study by Woodruff and Martinez (2008) found that education and household assets have significant associations with opening accounts in urban areas, while the wealth, expenditure, and ownership of an agricultural business are substantial in opening accounts in rural households. These findings show the importance of assets ownership as a determinant of access to financial services. Using an ordered Probit model, Arun and Beindig (2010) measured the determinants which affect a household's decision to participate in none, one, two, or all three types of financial services. The three financial services under assessment were savings, credit, and insurance. The findings indicate that access to financial services is a diversified measure to cope with the consequences of risks. The study finding is that access to financial services is a function of the individual's past shocks. Therefore, the study concludes that broadening access to financial services for the poor and increasing financial literacy among low educated, illiterate, and some religious groups would raise awareness about the benefits of financial services, which would serve as efficient risk management strategies.

Ololade and Olagunju (2013), Nandru, Byram, and Rentala (2016), Soumaré, Tchana Tchana, and Kengne (2016), Khan, M.I. (2017), Kandari, Bahuguna, and Salgotra (2020), Mhlanga and Denhere (2020) all analysed the determinants of access to financial services. Their findings indicate that income, education, marital status, lack of guarantor, high-interest rate, age, race, gender, place of residence, and employment status matter concerning access to financial services. Beck, Demirguc-Kunt, and Peria (2006) indicate that there are several ways in which the importance of broad financial services outreach is justified. One of the ways is the importance of a well-developed financial system for economic development and poverty alleviation (Beck, Demirguc-Kunt and Levine, 2004; Honohan, 2004a). Another way is the Schumpeterian process of 'creative destruction' about economic structure revolution from within through creating a new form by destroying the old state. Finally, access to financial services is about inclusivity, hence the need to revolutionise the financial system to include those excluded. The literature indicates that economies with better developed financial systems experience a faster drop in income inequality and more rapid poverty reduction.

The World Bank economists have done most research in banking competition, focusing on determinants of access to and use of financial services (Beck et al.,

2007; Claessens, 2006; Honohan, 2008). For example, Berger and Hannan (1998) indicate that banks that are not in a competitive environment tend to be less efficient when compared to those subjected to more competition. In addition, the degree of competition can affect the efficiency, quality of products, and degree of innovation (Claessens and Laeven, 2005). Beck et al. (2007) indicate that physical infrastructure for connectivity and information is positively and significantly associated with access to financial services. The implication is that the costs of delivering banking services are reduced by better infrastructure, leading to increased access to banking services.

Burgess and Pande (2005) indicate that India's strategy to expand bank branches to rural areas led by the state assisted in reducing poverty. On the other hand, in Malawi, Brune et al. (2011) indicate that increased financial access through commitment savings accounts in rural areas improves the well-being of the poor as it provides access to their savings for agricultural input use. Furthermore, Allen et al. (2012) indicate that giving financial access to those who do not have it in Kenya can improve financial access. Also, Kumar (2013) indicates branch penetration as an essential dimension that impacts access to financial services. The study shows further that expanding branch networks has a considerable impact on access to financial services in India.

The studies that focused on the impact of banking concentration on access to financial services indicate a positive association between banking concentration and having a bank account (Owen and Pereira, 2018; Marin and Schwabe, 2013). However, Ardic et al. (2011) and Kendall et al. (2010) indicate that there is a negative relation between the market share of the five largest banks (concentration ratio) and the penetration of deposit accounts (bank accounts). They argue that the banking sector's competitiveness is essential for access to financial services. The studies mostly use cross-country data for their analysis.

The literature on mobile usage for accessing financial services indicates that mobile banking, from a demand side, does offer a great solution to individuals in emerging markets that have access to a mobile phone (Ismail and Masinge, 2012). One of the great benefits of mobile banking is minimising the time and distance that an individual spends visiting a bank branch, making financial services more accessible (Ismail and Masinge, 2012). According to Mago and Chitokwindo (2014), mobile banking in Zimbabwe leads to the poor's quick adoption of mobile banking. This is mainly due to mobile banking's access convenience and ease of use.

Besides the benefits of mobile banking, the literature analyses the factors that lead individuals to mobile banking. A study by Shaikh, Karjaluoto, and Chinje (2015) indicates that trust plays an essential role in promoting the continuous usage of mobile banking. Van Deventer, de Klerk, and Bevan-Dye (2017) believe the interest in mobile retailing and mobile financial services will continue to grow. Nevertheless, the trust is likely to discourage many potential customers and impede its growth. According to Roy et al. (2000), mobile transactions will increase and mature through the Internet. However, its success will depend primarily on achieving and upholding a certain level of trust. Another study by Kang, Lee, and Lee (2012) indicates that perceived usability, channel preference, and value are critical for sustained mobile banking usage. Mathew, Sulphey, and Prabhakaran's (2014) research on perceptions and intentions of mobile banking users indicate that usefulness and facilitating conditions are the most critical factors. Masrek et al. (2013), whose research focused on technology trust and mobile banking satisfaction, indicate that trust creates a positive relationship with mobile banking satisfaction. A study by Yu (2014), which looked at factors influencing consumers to transition from

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online to mobile banking, indicates that relative attitude and subjective norm positively motivated respondents to switch from Internet to mobile banking while relative perceived behaviour control deterred respondents from transitioning.

Furthermore, the literature indicates that banks' integrity plays an essential role in influencing customers' trust in mobile banking. Lin (2011) believes that if there is a lack of trust between the retail bank and the customer, the relationship is unlikely to succeed and continue. Another important factor relates to the system quality of mobile banking – ease of use, ease of navigation, visual appearance (Gu et al., 2009), and speed of access to mobile banking (Kleijnen et al., 2004). For example, Zhou (2013) indicates that mobile banking customers expect to make mobile account payments and access financial records easily, anytime and anywhere. In cases where information is out-of-date, incomplete, inaccurate, or irrelevant, the retail banks' capability will be questionable and will jeopardise trust in the retail bank and its mobile banking system.

Kim et al. (2009) indicate that contracts, regulations, policies, laws, agreements, and feedback forums are forms of structural assurances that can increase trust between a retail bank and a customer. However, another factor is risk, where some customers might perceive mobile banking as risky and where they will require some confident assurance concerning its safety for better adoption. Nor and Pearson (2008) stress the importance of effecting structural assurance, guarantees, and legal and technological safeguards that improve the trustworthiness of the cybernetic environment.

Contextual Review of Access to Financial Services in South Africa

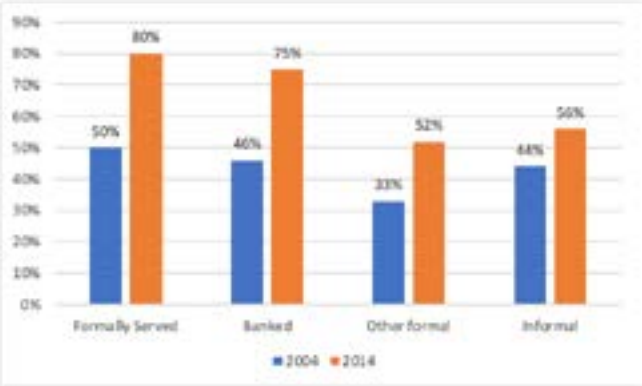
South Africa's financial system comes out of the mining boom of the late 1800s. As a result, it is known as developed and sophisticated. Based on the sophistication of the country's financial system, the logical expectation is that South Africa should be experiencing robust economic growth and be much more inclusive. However, according to the Global Financial Index data, South Africa's inclusivity is at about 54% of adults using a formal account to make deposits and withdrawals through banks.

However, even though South Africa performs better than the BRICS, the rest of Africa, and the rest of the developing world on account penetration, it still faces challenges. The account penetration in South Africa varies by the characteristics of the individual, such as income, residence, age, education, and gender. The gender disparity is evident, with women less likely to have an account compared to men. The World Bank Economic Update report (2013) indicates that the aggregate picture for South Africa conceals significant inequalities. South Africa experiences gaps in many areas of access to financial services. These are the gaps between the poorest and wealthiest quantiles: about 12 million adults still lack a basic bank account; only 35% of adults in the poorest 20% of income earners have formal accounts; 78% of the richest 20% do have accounts; and the distribution of account ownership is significant between the top and the bottom income quintiles.

In addition, South Africa's account penetration varies according to individual characteristics, such as income, residence, age, education, and gender. For example, in South Africa, 94% of adults with tertiary education have formal accounts, while only 43% of those with primary education or less have accounts. However, despite the impressive financial systems and account penetration performance, barriers to access call for new delivery mechanisms that consider the country's vast geographic segmentation – such as mobile and retail agent banking. Some of the obstacles cited by the unbanked relate to banking costs, lack of money, distance, lack of documentation, and low trust.

The challenge in South Africa persists beyond the unbanked population to the underbanked millions – that is, to people who hold bank accounts, but whose utilisation rate remains low. In South Africa, reliance on informal credit remains prevalent – such as borrowing from friends and family. The country has improved people's financial access over the past decade. Since 2004, some financial sector reforms have taken place: legislative (tiered banking, consumer credit bill, financial sector charter) and commercial (Mzansi account, Capitec, Teba, Pick' n Pay Go Banking). As a result of the financial sector reforms, the FinScope report (2014) indicates that the improvements increased banked customers and formally served clients.

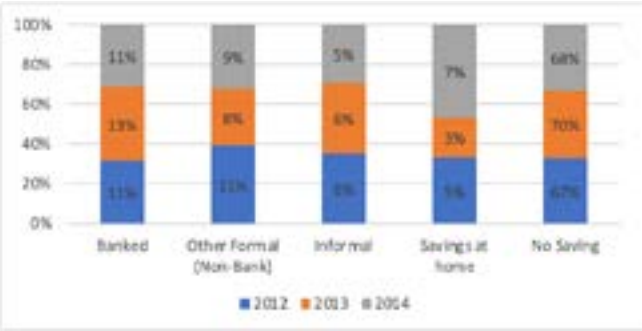
Figure 1: *Banked customers – comparison between 2004 and 2014*



Source: *FinScope South Africa, 2014*

The improvement in banking is mainly due to transactional banking. Savings and credit levels are still low in South Africa, whether through formal or informal means. In 2014, 68% of adult South Africans did not save at all.

Figure 2: *Rate of savings through various channels in South Africa*



Source: *FinScope*

In South Africa, institutional factors, product features, and individuals' socio-economic characteristics are the main factors influencing access to financial services. Location and conditions of the financial services institutions significantly affect access probability. Access to financial services tends to be limited only to those who are employed and earning a salary. However, there seems to be less focus on the poor, unemployed, self-employed, and informally employed.

The South African Case: Constraints to Accessing Financial Services

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Report (2013) indicates that in South Africa, consumers have limited resources and skills to understand financial sector complexities. As a result, the inability to evaluate the appropriateness of financial products concerning personal circumstances, predatory lending, high levels of consumer debt, low saving rates, the proliferation of pyramid schemes and financial scams, high product service and penalty fees, lack of accessible and comparable pricing information, and limited knowledge of recourse mechanisms are some of the compelling consumer issues in South Africa.

Savings Related Constraints

One common reason South Africans always raise with regard to savings is affordability. However, considering some of the research findings, South Africans indicate that several factors influence an individual's decision to save or not, such as country demographics, income levels, income stability, and employment levels.

Unemployment in South Africa is very high in comparison to other international emerging economies. This predicament harms income levels and income stability in South Africa. In addition, the country has a very high age dependency ratio – at over 50%. South Africa's household debt level is also very high, at 78% of disposable income, making individuals vulnerable to interest rate hikes. As a

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result, consumers in South Africa are under pressure, and there is a rise in dependency ratios.

Contributing to the savings dilemma in South Africa, education and financial literacy play a vital role in the population's ability to save with the complexity of financial products. Individual factors that impact willingness to save in South Africa are much more complex. During uncertain times, there is a tendency to save more. This ensures that individuals have a buffer to fall back on during rainy days. However, the relative ease of access to credit in South Africa creates a disincentive to save. After the 2008 banking crisis, individuals in South Africa are much more cautious about where they invest. Often, this leads to financial institutions' mistrust and advice. This predicament further leads to individuals either procrastinating or not saving.

Credit-Related Constraints

According to Von Pischke et al. (1983), a lack of access to credit can perpetuate poverty. However, according to Zeller and Sharma (2000), providing credit to the poor is an effective strategy. Increased access to credit relaxes liquidity constraints, improves a household's risk-bearing ability and productivity, equips individuals with new skills, and encourages activities that could generate economic growth (Zeller, 2000; Parker and Nagarajan, 2001; Khandker, 2003).

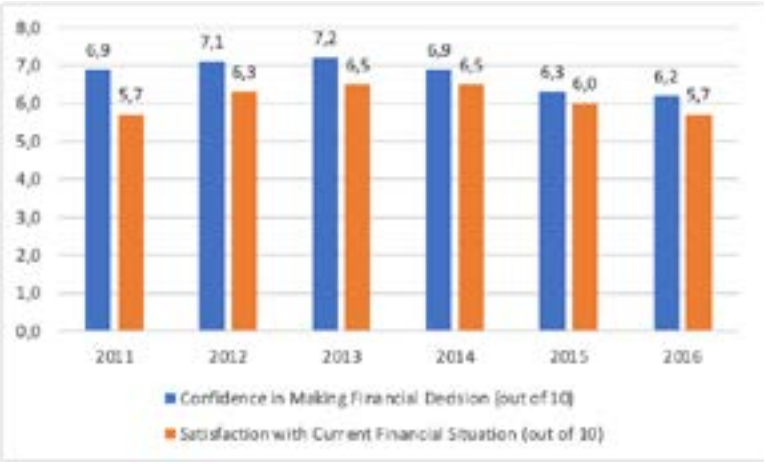
Credit constraints have various implications on an individual's well-being, such as effect on consumption in the short run and poverty reduction. Other effects of credit constraints relate to individuals' inability to cope in times of income shocks to smooth consumption (Zeldes, 1989) and the failure of an individual to invest in education and health (Behrman et al.,1982). Some of the main reasons the poor in South Africa do not have access to credit include: a lack of salary due to unemployment, a poor credit record, a lack of correct documentation, or the amount asked being too much.

Stylised Facts on South Africa's Access to Financial Services

Prior to 1994, South Africa's financial services were primarily accessible to non-black individuals (Meagher and Wilkinson, 2002). Following the Financial Service Charter (FSC) policy recommendations, the 'Mzansi' account was initiated in 2004, offering entry-level bank accounts. The initiative was broadly about the outreach of financial services: scale (number of clients), depth (poorer clients), scope (wide range of services), and breadth (reaching different social groups). The aim was to deal with the imbalance in access to financial services. Commercial banks and state-owned financial institutions took this as a lead to expanding access to financial services.

The depth target of outreach was that 80% of poor households should have access to transaction and savings products and services. Since the financial sector reforms started in 2004, South Africa's overall access to financial services has improved. However, the poor still lag behind. The 2011 Financial Services Board Financial Literacy Report indicates that most South Africans use basic products such as bank accounts. Still, only 39% are aware of more sophisticated alternatives such as unit trusts. This is a significant missed opportunity and points to the need for more consumer education on available choices of financial services. The outcome agrees with the Old Mutual Savings and Investment Monitor Survey that indicates that about 80% of South Africans are interested in learning more about savings (see Figure 3 below). However, South Africans' confidence in making a financial decision has been decreasing since 2013. A lack of financial knowledge could be the reason. These findings point to the need for a savings culture revival in South Africa.

Figure 3: *South Africans' attitudes about finances*



Source: *Old Mutual Savings and Investment Monitor Survey*

State of Credit Access in South Africa

Credit extension is an essential link in the transmission mechanism that relays changes in monetary policy to changes in the total demand for goods and services and the general level of economic activity. In addition, credit availability makes it easier for individuals to spend. South Africans use different forms of facilities to access credit. These can be either through formal institutions such as banks, through semi-formal institutions such as microlenders and store cards, or through informal institutions such as family, friends, and stokvels.

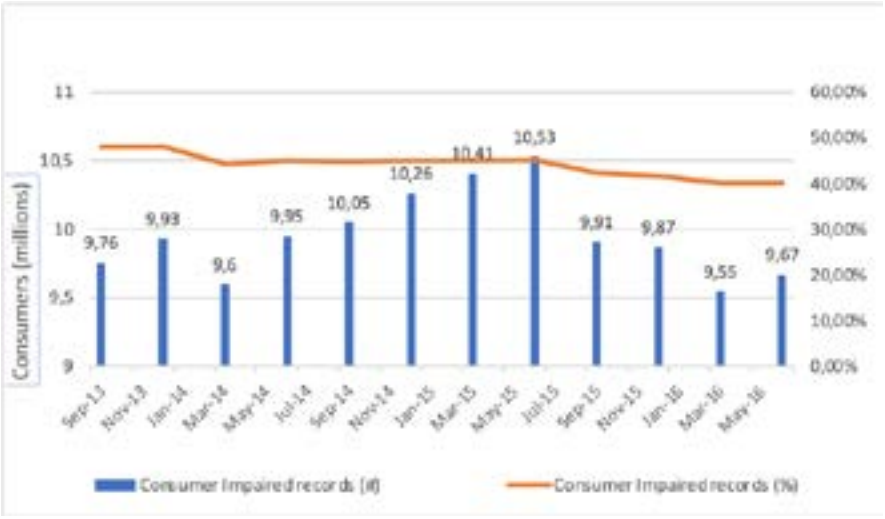
According to the National Credit Regulator (NCR), during the third quarter of 2015, different credit facilities were used or granted to households in South Africa. These entail mortgage loans, developmental credit, short-term loans, unsecured loans, and other secured loans. The Finscope consumer survey (2015) indicates that most South Africans are getting credit through formal products driven by unsecured loans that are used for short-term necessities, such as food (26%), emergencies (26%), transport fees (12%), bills (10%), and clothes (10%). Throughout the country, individuals can access credit led by those in KwaZulu Natal (12%), followed by the Free State (11%) and the Western Cape (10%).

Microcredit

One of the most far-reaching financial sector developments in South Africa has been the arrival and development of a market-driven microcredit model. Several international development communities funded microcredit programs in South Africa, including the Get Ahead Foundation (GAF) and the Small Enterprise Foundation (SEF). The initiatives lead commercial banks in South Africa to start providing microcredit directly through their branch networks and wholesale funding to the central Micro Credit Institutions (MCIs) for on-lending to the poor. Thus, there has been an increase in the supply of microcredit.The main weakness of developing the microcredit model in South Africa is that it primarily focused on employed individuals to meet consumption spending needs. As a result, it misses the opportunity to finance entrepreneurial ideas with income-generating prospects, as per the standard microcredit model.

In 2007, the government of South Africa passed the National Credit Act (NCA) and later the National Credit Register (NCR). These assisted with transparency, discipline, accountability, and fairness in the microcredit market. However, in 2010, South Africa's microcredit sector and the majority of the poor were plunged into a crisis of over-indebtedness. In 2012, nearly half of the 19 million credit-active consumers had 'impaired' credit records (meaning they were three or more months in arrears), while a further 15% were 'debt stressed'.

Figure 4: *Consumers with impaired credit records*



Source: *National Credit Regulator (NCR), 2016*

State of Savings in South Africa

In South Africa, domestic savings constitute three tiers: government, private sector, and individual households. Government is a net spender, detracting from the net domestic savings rate and widening the current account deficit. In addition, individuals in South Africa are not saving much at a net level.

Therefore, out of the three tiers, the private sector is the only sector that contributes to domestic savings.

Domestic Savings as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been decreasing in South Africa. The downward trend is from 20% between 1960 and the late 1990s to 13.2% in 2012. South Africa's average domestic savings between 1975 and 2012 are lower than other BRIC emerging market economies, with the exception of Brazil (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: *Domestic savings, 1975 – 2012*

Emerging Economy	Average Domestic Savings Percentage
China	42%
Russia	28%
India	25%
South Africa	19%
Brazil	17%

Source: *Investec, 'The poor state of savings in SA'*

Conclusion

Therefore, based on the available literature, we can conclude that the critical commonly identified factors that have the most significant impact on access to financial services are: age, income, education, employment, and the accessibility of financial institutions. Other additional determinants include household size, gender, marital status, wealth, financial institutions, distribution of banks, banking competition, and utilising mobile banking. However, the literature is not convincing concerning the effect of competition within the banking industry and whether competition can determine access to financial services. The literature indicates that greater bank competition strengthens financing obstacles and generates higher loan rates. However, a view exists that lower competition encourages incentives for banks to invest in soft information. Conversely, a higher level of competition lowers investments in banking relationships and leads to deteriorated access to services such as credit. A noticeable gap in the literature relates to subjective issues as determinants of access to financial services, such as an individual's self-assessment of their level of satisfaction with their life or well-being. For example, individuals who assess themselves as dissatisfied with their well-being are likely to be disinterested in accessing financial services. Therefore, socio-economic indicators show the influence of individual characteristics in access to financial services.

Notes

1. The delegated monitoring theory basis is on financial institutions that can act as trusted monitors for net savers (Diamond, 1984). This means delegation of the role of safekeeping of savings by depositors to financial intermediaries. Financial service providers have a fiduciary relationship with their clients to ensure no depreciation in deposits. The theory is on the demand side of access to financial services because individual savers perceive financial intermediaries as entities that can delegate their responsibilities.

2. The transaction cost theory is about the emergence of financial intermediaries to utilise economies of scale and transaction technology. The critical element of the approach includes costs associated with gathering and processing information that is needed to decide the transaction process, successful contract negotiation, and policing and enforcement of contracts (Benston and Smith, 1976).

3. Neo-classical economists promulgate the rational choice theory. The rational choice theory of demand for financial services involves typically an account of the following: (i) the desire for financial services (savings, credit, and money transfer services); (ii) nature and type of services provided by the financial institutions; (iii) the condition of services provision. The rational choice theory is based on the fundamental principle that the choices made by the individual are the best choice to help them achieve their objectives in light of all the uncontrollable factors.

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David Moore Interview

August 2022

RF:
David, as an academic who has researched Zimbabwe for many years, please tell us how and why you became interested in this country.

DM:
You could go back as far as 1971, when at the age of 15 or 16 I was skipping Sunday School for some reason (yes, I'm a WASP – White Anglo-Saxon Protestant raised in English Canada, but a bit of a quiet dissident even then) and listening to a really good Canadian Broadcasting Corporation current affairs radio show. This time it was about the Pearce Commission in (then) Rhodesia, which was set up by the Brits – who bore some responsibility for getting that nuisance Ian Smith and his white minority regime with its 'Unilateral (illegal) Declaration of Independence' propounded to stave off the wave of decolonisation around them - off the backs of those looking forward to being Zimbabweans with full democratic rights, and preparing a guerrilla war in order to do so. Some of the African nationalists and white liberals there had taken the Commissions mandate to 'consult the people of Rhodesia' literally, to include black Africans, so this widespread consultation process started all over the place. I was fascinated by this apparent stalling and re-igniting of democratic ideals in this part of the world. I also had an assignment for my World Politics class – taught by Mrs Cameron, one of the best high school teachers I ever had – due the next day or so. So there was a cool and unique story – I might even have had to present it orally – and I think I did quite well with it.

As the years went on, the guerrilla war, with all of its contradictions, proceeded, to reach its apogee in 1980, as my revival of a delayed undergraduate degree after some time in the Ivory Coast was reaching its end. The radical ferment in the universities those days had perhaps also approached its climax, and by the time I started post-graduate work I met my soon-to-be supervisor John Saul, who had been teaching in Tanzania and Mozambique. He was enamoured with Samora Machel of Mozambique's Front for the Liberation of Mozambique and FRELIMO's socialist potential, which in the midst of Robert Mugabe's rise to power within the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU went on to rule Zimbabwe and still does, albeit with the slightly different nomenclature of ZANU-Patriotic Front: there is quite a story behind *that*), which at the time he was in touch with Machel was supporting a group of young Marxist-oriented radicals who had been tasked with re-igniting the liberation struggle after a ceasefire whilst some ill-fated settlement plans were underway. One of their objectives was to unite the two main Zimbabwean liberation movements. It was not long until Mugabe – who for some time was under FRELIMO house arrest given the uncertainty of his provenance amidst the factional battles going on in ZANU – got to the top of the political pole and with the help of Machel imprisoned these 'young Turks'. They have since more-or-less been wiped out of the history books (although, ironically, as we talk the current regime is trying to make the leader of this short-lived and mostly ignored 'youth movement' a 'National Hero', along with a few other – ideologically and strategically very different! – forgotten nationalists, in some sort of attempt to patch together a fragmented ruling party as the 2023 elections approach).

The book argues that this late 1976-7 moment marked Mugabe's leadership style forever. When he announced a new central committee in the wake of their side-lining he warned that "the axe would fall" on any further agents of what he thought was 'counter-revolution'. But in the next moment he advised his co-leaders to get to the books to read up on Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. This instance signified his authoritarian ways mixed up in a melange of an attempt at intellectualism that marked his legacy for ever – ending with a sad, but soft, coup at 2017 came

"The book argues that this late 1976-7 moment marked Mugabe's leadership style forever. When he announced a new central committee in the wake of their side-lining he warned that "the axe would fall" on any further agents of what he thought was 'counter-revolution'. But in the next moment he advised his co-leaders to get to the books to read up on Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought."

to an end. This is probably the main aim of the book – after what is about half a century of my engagement with it, in various contexts.

RF:
This book attempts to answer questions about Robert Mugabe in a more expanded way, including the affective economies that surround the man. Can you tell us more about your aim in this book in that arena.

DM:
Well the book is not *really* about the political economy of Mugabe's legacy, although there are parts of it that discuss the massive inflationary consequences of printing money to stave off the many crises coalescing in Zimbabwe (and serve as a tricky way for those with access to official forex rates to get rich quick), and the epilogue gets into the current manifestation of them a bit. As South Africans we are somewhat familiar with the effects of Zimbabwe's many crises south of the Limpopo too: they contribute the xenophobia that has infected many South Africans. Some of the theoretical discussion in the book may however indicate some of the economies (in the sense that what some call 'Mugabeism' may indicate something akin to a new sort of 'mode of production and reproduction' or what some Anthropologists call a 'mode of belonging' that spreads far beyond Zimbabwe) contingent with the way Mugabe worked on the various fissures in an emerging ruling class – playing their agents off against each other with elements of coercion, consent, and corruption in a way that only a reincarnation of Antonio Gramsci could understand fully – led to his being persuaded by a section of the liberation 'war vets' in the late 1990s to follow through on his many promises to take over and parcel up a good proportion of the large capitalist farms owned by white Zimbabweans. That was one of his last straws as opposition to his rule was on the cards in his own party, and fully displayed with the new Movement for Democratic Change – with a working-class base and also in the wake of renewed liberalism, supported by 'the west', in post-Cold War Africa. Given that the forward and backward linkages between this capitalist agricultural sector and urban, industrial ones were tight, and many, the formal economy spiralled down quickly (and there went the working class and tne MDC's social democratic stance, to a great extent). Given a whole host of other global and local contradictions that last straw broke Zimbabwe's economic back. As Thabo Mbeki wrote in a fascinating 2001 ANC document this 'Mugabeist' mode of rule had led the country to the effective rule of the 'lumpen-proletariat'! One could say that the type of ruling class arising out of this process is a 'lumpen-bourgeoisie' with very little grasp of productive strategies, consensual leadership, or even a very solid hold on the levers of force. We have what many Anthropologists and political economy scholars

RF:
There is already quite a bit of scholarship on Mugabe and Zimbabwe. What intervention are you trying to make with this book in that area of scholarship?

DM:
Over forty year of scouring the archives, interviewing scores of actors, and visiting Zimbabwe many times – this is sort of a long-term ethnography of a ruling class-in-the-making, some of its best critics, and their formative moments since the 1960s – provides new empirical material with an historical depth and contemporary width that should be worthwhile and even unique amidst what is indeed a plethora. One of the reasons I moved to teach here in South Africa was to be closer to my favourite country. Furthermore, I think some of the theoretical interventions in the book – running from my 'Development Studies 101' riff on the Holy Trinity (the father is primitive accumulation – of course, Karl Marx; the son is a hybrid of Gramscian and Weberian takes on hegemonic construction and state formation; and the holy ghost is this wide-ranging idea of 'democracy' in both its deep and shallow manifestations) to what might be interesting discussions of 'truths and false truths' – and discussions of 'states of exception/emergency' – as they relate to the many real and imagined coup attempts running through this history and the conceits of this rapacious and often feckless ruling group might add some flavour based in recent theoretical discussions of a world in the midst of a long interregnum (bringing to mind recent thinking on Gramscian ideas of all the morbid symptoms within these long periods of liminality). I think the book builds on some of the best of what is an excellent core of a lot of Zimbabwean scholarship: only some of it is marred by some fairly obvious examples of partisan politics and that nearly eternal

“There are no solutions on offer as we have reached the cul-de-sac of any political-economic model – ranging from the debris of the old-Soviet style systems to the rise of the right embedded in the rule of Trumps and Bolsonaros all over. Come to think of it, the current instance of this global shift and its uncertain end – that being the war between Russia and Ukraine – impels us all to look much deeper into the histories of authoritarian rulers such as Putin to get back at the fantasies inherent in the American dream/nightmare, and many on this continent.”

moment of the nationalist myth bereft of decent class analysis and political economy.

It could also be said that the *African Arguments* motif is to present relatively short and accessible books that will suit both academics and interested ‘lay’ folks ranging from activists to other people whose roles Gramsci would have interrogated as ‘organic intellectuals’. If *Mugabe’s Legacy* manages very tough task it might be unique, too.

RF:
While this book focuses on Mugabe and Zimbabwe, what lessons and connections can be established from this research on a global scale.

DM:
As I look back on the book and its subjects I think we need more interrogation of the ideas of ‘mode of production’ that people such as Harold Wolpe wrote about in his path-breaking work on South Africa’s particular manifestation of the articulation of these modes here, in the crises of the 1970s as apartheid reached the beginning of its end. We are in crisis mode now too. It is manifested by new ways of thinking within a decentred intelligentsia ranging from decoloniality (which may get too centred on a romantic past) to the deader ends of ‘neo-patrimonialism’ among the liberals and conservative scholars stuck in their decades of Afro-pessimism: any of their optimism in the ‘neo-liberal’ (so often just a platitude of the ‘left’ with not much more to offer either) solution to the world-wide crises of the seventies (as the Golden Age of Capitalism came to a close) must have been quelled by now, given the dual challenges of the post-Covid recovery and the joblessness promised by the so-called 4th Industrial Revolution. There are no solutions on offer as we have reached the *cul-de-sac* of any political-economic model – ranging from the debris of the old-Soviet style systems to the rise of the right embedded in the rule of Trumps and Bolsonaros all over. Come to think of it, the current instance of this global shift and its uncertain end – that being the war between Russia and Ukraine – impels us all to look much deeper into the histories of authoritarian rulers such as Putin (he has his Rasputins, and of course they reach far back), to get back at the fantasies inherent in the American dream/nightmare, and many on this continent.

One of the aims of the book is to warn against the teleological views of history and futures – it’s a bit of a contradiction because so much of the weight in the Holy Trinity of Development is wrapped up in these certainties. If anything, Mugabe’s Legacy should warn us that uncertainty is what rules interregna that have no pre-determined end: this actually should enable open-ended thinking and arguing about what kind of future we could imagine out of the potentiality that is inherent in crises.

RF:
The relationship between Mugabe’s Zimbabwe and post-1994 South Africa has been complicated and controversial. How do you understand this relationship?

DM:
I think I noted this in my thoughts on Mbeki’s 2001 treatise. If anything these relations indicate the difficulties of what might be a ‘regional hegemon’ exercising leadership in the wake of a crisis of the southern African liberation legacy. As the promises of the Holy Trinity break down on one’s borders, ones borders cannot hold them off. From Cosatu’s support for the working class in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s to ‘Mbekian despair’ (not a do-nothingness but actual support: fraudulent elections were lauded as fair-enough; a negotiated ‘Government of National Unity’ in the wake of the 2008 rampant ruling party violence ended up giving ZANU-PF breathing space to recoup; and the 2017 coup was more-or-less

supported as the only way to remove Mugabe) to the current responses to xenophobic sentiments such as the cancellation of the Zimbabwean exemption permits, all illustrates the actual powerlessness of an already shakily emerging system of rule. It should be remembered that the days of July 2021 indicate the deep fractures in ANC rule, so it can't be expected that much can be done across borders.

RF:
Can you explain how Mugabe went from a freedom fighter to a ruthless dictator over the course of 40 years? What mechanisms do we have to understand this transition?

DM:
I think I have gone though this above: perhaps the contingencies of his rise to power amidst an already fracturing new ruling group suggest the extreme difficulties of fashioning freedom therein. But instead of working to fill the gaps, Mugabe worked them to his advantage until he grew too old to manage them. Rule by conspiracy and conceit leads to true and false coups. Marxists (hard and soft ones) and Weberians and most good social scientists never veered away from the violence inherent in changing modes of production and politics, but rulers hide from public acknowledgement of that reality while using it, simultaneously denying the means and ends of its use while it's in open display. To be sure, there are scores of underlings and aspirants who augment these mechanisms in the hopes of gaining from them. Perhaps when they find are forced to find their allies among the 'subalterns' instead of their commanders these mechanisms will change.

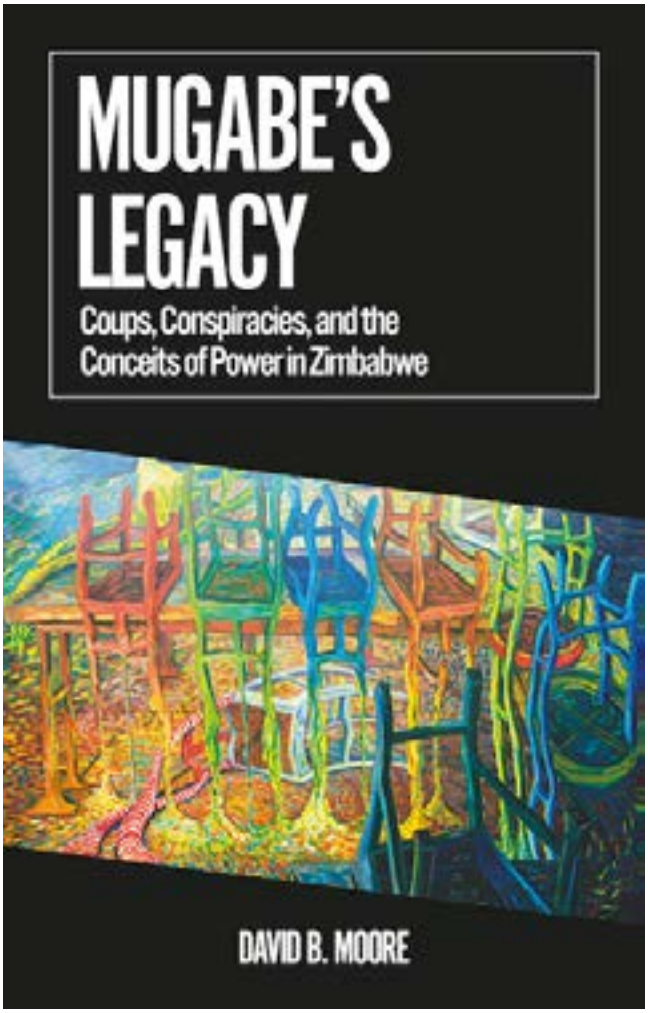
RF:
What do you think Mugabe's legacy is today, both inside Zimbabwe and within a pan-Africanist frame?

DM:
I guess a true pan-Africanism would threaten the states in which today's rulers gain much of their power and wealth, so the way in which Mugabe used an 'anti-imperialist' discourse did not do much to build that agenda. The struggles against such modalities of power and rhetoric *are* pan-African, as one sees from Sudan to Nigeria to here. There has always been a progressive legacy struggling from under 'Mugabeism' but it if often crushed: this is the lesson of the youthful challenges in the midst of the liberation war that he quelled.

RF:
In terms of your own research, what is next?

DM:
I promised the 'hero' of *Mugabe's Legacy* before he died in 2014 that I would edit and add to the second edition of his book (*Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter)* so that should be done within a decade of his death. I have always been a theorist *manqué* so would like to see if the idea of an 'African mode of production' has any traction, and I would like to jostle with Edmund Burke's ideas of 'tradition' with Gramsci's. I would also like to pursue the thoughts of Richard Wright as he moved from membership of the American Communist Party to his engagement with the leaders of the emerging 'third world' in his book arising from his visit to the Bandung conference in 1955 – that book, *The Colour Curtain,* was published by a CIA front. His 1940 *Native Son* is a stunning take on race and class in Chicago with a strong Marxisant take. This transition might say a lot about current ideological moves here and abroad. But I am supposed to be retired so should get to know what that is really like.

Excerpt from Moore's Mugabe's Legacy:
Coups, Conspiracies, and the Conceits of Power in Zimbabwe



After an attempt at a theoretical and contextual introduction to *Mugabe's Legacy*, I dug into the main menu with something akin to the mainstay of Joost Fontein's nearly simultaneously published book on the politics of death in Zimbabwe: a death. I am sure Joost would agree that such a denouement hardly means 'the end'. My end-that-is-a-new-beginning entailed the somewhat magical way I discovered that Robert Mugabe had indeed reached the final point of his mortal coil, and my recounting of Stephen Groote's hastily rallied Zimbabwean *éminence activistes grises'* epitaphs on SAFM's *Sunrise*. Surprisingly (to me), none of them mentioned in other than laudatory mode Mugabe's learning many of his trade's tricks during Zimbabwe's liberation war. I tried to remedy some of such lacunae at the end of the interviews on that September 6, 2019 morning, but when writing the book discovered writer Percy Zvomuya's historical delving reflected my interests. Zvomuya zeroed in on the mid-1970s moment *Mugabe's Legacy* takes as integral to Mugabe's political making: that being his ability to get rid of those he thought challenged him. Zvomuya's never-erring literary marksmanship hit on some remarkable writers' takes on history and politics, including Graham Greene, one of *African Arguments* brilliant managing editor Stephanie Kitchen's favourites. I brought Zvomuya and his interpretations to my story in these excerpts: I owe him the book's literary legacy.

> Percy Zvomuya's exception proved the rule that few of the raconteurs on the death of this man of history reached below the magic 1980 cut-off date. Zvomuya recalled a story recounting that even Mugabe's mother warned his fellow nationalists back in the early 1960s. Mbuya Bona Mugabe wondered why they thought her son cared about 'your politics'. She told them that 'he doesn't care one bit about that. You don't know how cruel my son is. You don't know him at all.' Of course, the issue rests on more than what a mother knows. As Zvomuya cited Graham Greene (apparently one of Mugabe's preferred reads), 'a man isn't presented with two courses to follow: one good and one bad. He gets caught up.' That brings us back to what is special about the maelstrom that sweeps up a very intelligent son. It involves the biographies of many people, spread far and wide in space and time. Zvomuya also took the mid-1970s as a missed turning point. He cited Robert Bolaño's warning about waiting too long for the stages of history to

> unfold as if to counterpoise the 'infantile and ultra-leftist' line Samora Machel impressed on the young political soldiers daring to cross Mugabe. We were on the same track, although I am still unsure if they were childish and extreme or the best indication of how the National Democratic Revolution might have worked had it a measure of time and space. Much depends on definitions of 'infantile'. If Frelimo's brand of 'democratic centralism' foreshadowed their future, it was hardly for Machel to invoke Lenin's swipes at those who sneered at parliamentary democracy when it was a viable option. Frelimo's economic policies were far from Bukharin's too. The *vashandi* feared ZANU (PF)'s road dead-ended at democracy.

"Zvomuya's *New Frame* interviews with decolonial theorist Sabelo Gatsheni-Ndlovu also invoked history's makers and making, perhaps inadvertently contrasting these with more hifalutin endeavours. Zvomuya and Gatsheni-Ndlovu discussed why Mugabe and his peers-in-power embraced 'violence as a mode of rule': was it Nietzsche's monster, that being the progeny of colonial brutality, or was it *hamartia*?"

Zvomuya's *New Frame* interviews with decolonial theorist Sabelo Gatsheni-Ndlovu also invoked history's makers and making, perhaps inadvertently contrasting these with more hifalutin endeavours. Zvomuya and Gatsheni-Ndlovu discussed why Mugabe and his peers-in-power embraced 'violence as a mode of rule': was it Nietzsche's monster, that being the progeny of colonial brutality, or was it *hamartia*? Ndlovu-Gatsheni said it could have been a both an original condition and 'sociogenesis – political socialisation'. Ndlovu-Gatsheni emphasised how the liberation struggle 'schooled' the aspirant rulers' violent propensities, mentioning this at least seven times, as if it was uncontrollable. He invoked 'tribalism' too, although almost omitting the Ndebele and ZAPU from that sin. Then Zvomuya introduced the young *vashandi* ('the people' or more specifically 'the workers') radicals in the mid-1970s who Mugabe got rid of when tired of their critique. Ndlovu-Gatsheni dismissed the ginger group quickly: he

> praised the radicals' ability to suss out the falsity of the old guard's Marxism-Leninism, but claimed they had fallen into the colonial trap of accepting the Westphalian idea of the nation-state. Ironically, however, the *vashandi* question relates directly to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's claim that Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole [two who tried but failed to lead] 'lost it' because they were unwilling to 'worship the barrel of the gun'. Sithole and Muzorewa's losses were a direct result of the [young radicals'] ZIPA (Zimbabwe People's Army) ginger group's dismay at the possibility of their leadership. This, to carry the irony to a second level, was a large component of Mugabe's ladder to his coronation. Sithole – from 1964 until the 'coup in [Rhodesia's] prison' retired him in 1974 the leader of the breakaway party that eventually ruled Zimbabwe – 'lost it' in the wake of ZANU national chair Herbert Chitepo's assassination in Lusaka in March 1975. He abandoned 'his' soldiers to the Zambian army's guns and disappeared to the USA, apparently to visit his sick daughter. On return, he scurried to Nyerere in Tanzania to claim his due, and then the Mozambican camps to curry the soldiers' favour. He was too late.

Denied the freedom fighters' support, in the late 1970s neither Sithole nor Muzorewa hesitated for a second when the Smith regime offered the vicious 'auxiliaries' to pave the path to one of the most short-lived governments ever [that being 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia', lasting seven months in 1979].

Muzorewa's story is sad. The liberal and nationalist forces of opposition to a plebiscite on a mild-mannered constitutional proposal pulled the (American) Methodist bishop out of his pulpit in 1972 to preside over their 'no' campaign. Edgar Tekere told me that the imprisoned nationalist leaders approved – indeed suggested – Muzorewa thinking it was an interim measure for an umbrella grouping. Yet Muzorewa hung on long after the Pearce Commission, treading water out of his depth until dumped. Well past his

sell-by date, his last letter to Margaret Thatcher pleaded for his family's sustenance. In mid-1981 his ephemeral prime ministership in the hybrid 'Zimbabwe–Rhodesia' long gone, he asked for $25,500. His sons' university education needed cash. Kent State was about to expel one for non-payment of fees, the one in London was expensive. Five months on, he demanded $30,000 for Durawall fencing, security guards and a chauffeur, because the Zimbabwean state no longer provided these. In March 1980 Peter Carrington had donated $100,000 towards the residence. The negative reply – for which the poor prelate had to wait another month, if he got it at all – was for the Harare-based high commissioner to deliver orally: 'it would be a mistake in [Carrington's] view to commit any response to paper'. This should, Carrington relayed to Thatcher, put a stop to the perception that there is 'something of an open-ended commitment' in train. Whatever their ends, neither Sithole nor Muzorewa decried guns as means. Why did Ndlovu-Gatsheni say that their refusal to 'worship' them was why they failed?

Zvomuya's final conversation with Ndlovu-Gatsheni concluded with the Bible. If God planted the tree of knowledge in Eden, 'knowledge creates reality'. We were back to alternative truths [discussed in my introduction], seemingly out of thin air or holy breaths. It could be worthwhile to return to their pasts, to see which ones made history. That might take us beyond fleeting moments of idealist fantasy.

...

Graham Greene's historicism beats Edenesque fantasies. One finds history's webs and works the best way possible within them, changes them, or exits. Who finds whom in those labyrinths, and how do they work for or against each other? For Mugabe and his Zimbabwe, we need to know more about the stage on which his workings were constructed during the early decades of nationalism and the liberation struggle – and the actors acting (not just thinking) on them. Contra Greene, history did not just catch them up. They were catching up. Some won the race. Others were ahead of it but beaten by it: that might be the meaning of 'infantile ultra-leftism'.

Was Mugabe the only one in Zimbabwe who caught history, and made it fit his hands perfectly? Maybe for a moment: they soon went on their separate paths. The political historian's questions should be when and why.

Somewhere in proximity to this discussion, I inserted a vignette that seemed to illustrate how, as political history is caught or it escapes attempts to grasp it – is often imbued with variations on the notion of truth, i.e. representing reality as close as possible to what it might have been. When politicians are confronted with challenges to versions of history they would like to stand as their truth, it takes them awhile to shift strategies. Some are faster than others – sometimes too fast, as Donald Trump (might) indicate. Those who are not so quick-footed flounder in what Santiago Zabala might say are the large spaces in which "alternative facts" contest for the freedom to reveal themselves. And so a particular politician offered a new starting point for this book. Aside from attempting to analyse the many means by which Robert Mugabe gained power, and thus did so much to create a particular space of power for Zimbabwean politicians in his wake, *Mugabe's Legacy* also tries to account for the conceits that accrue with it. That includes believing their versions of truth will be consumed by their subjects without question.

After discussing ideas about 'development' ranging from Marx and Gramsci to magical realism, the book gets closer than these 'universal' abstractions to Mugabe and what he left us. Thus it arrives at an event that got the text moving from its initial focus on the November 2017 coup that ended Mugabe's nearly four decades of rule, to a longer view of how his power was finalised in such ignominy.

There may well be new means – universal enough, yet with closer grain and depth of field–enabling closer examination of the time and space of the above structured and processual phenomena as they wrapped around Robert Gabriel Mugabe's enigmatic 'agency' and its effects. The cure from excessive abstraction and context-and-thought-less empiricism could be recent academic indications of a renewed Gramsci. Combine them with a theory of lying, and one has a less vague

idea of Mugabe and his moments. Percolations from a particular event – which also led me to extend this book beyond the coup to more about the man who was soon to die – inspired this way of thinking. Following a rendition of the meeting that generated at least three variations of lying, I will attempt to 'interpret' them given the current age of extended interregna and 'alternative facts' If interregna stretch beyond imagination then so can Clausewitz's dictum that the difference between politics and war is only a matter of means. Likewise, that truth is the first casualty of war (be the expression's originator Aeschylus or a Johnson) bears similar semantic elasticity.

This particular event, a mid-2019 Chatham House conversation with Zimbabwe's foreign affairs and trade minister, involved at least three lies. The most important one has been transcribed and YouTubed for eternity. The other two circle around 'public intellectuals' within the state–civil-society–politics Gordian knot, which gets tighter the more it expands. Sibusiso Moyo (who [it is said, officially] died of Covid-19-related illnesses just as I was tweaking the last revisions on this book), famous while as a Major General he announced the 'militarily assisted transition', adept at defusing a demonstration threatening to move towards the State House, and later touted as a prospective president, was on the deck. He performed as well as one tutored by a World Bankish soul in the British embassy could ('long-term gain after short-term pain', etc., etc.).

“His answer(s) veered in and out of the scripts prescribed by the dictates of development discourse. He did not want to repeat what he had said a few months before at Chatham House regarding Zimbabwe's economic woes, but did claim that 'we learnt to unlearn the past, and as a result, we then managed to chart our way forward'.”

However, shaken by journalist Violet Gonda's fiery questions, he faltered further when I asked him two more.

The first was about the roots and consequences of the economic crisis, arguably the source of the many crises in his country. The land invasions that started the new millennium, perhaps? Maybe earlier: the 1998 intervention to assist Laurent Kabila in the war against Rwandan sponsored 'rebels', wherein army officers (and Emmerson Mnangagwa, and he) got rich via what the United Nations called the 'plundering' of the DRC's minerals? Second, I asked him if he was worried about the international reputation of a country where in January at least seventeen people died in a chaotic series of demonstrations, riots and killings sparked by a spike in the price of petrol. I wanted to know if a 'briefing' his office had apparently released after that, seemingly laying the blame at the feet of a group of democracy missionaries named 'Canvas', indicated his take on the root of Zimbabwe's existential threats.

His answer(s) veered in and out of the scripts prescribed by the dictates of development discourse. He did not want to repeat what he had said a few months before at Chatham House regarding Zimbabwe's economic woes, but did claim that 'we learnt to unlearn the past, and as a result, we then managed to chart our way forward'. Chuckling, he remarked that 'there are so many things, I'm sure, which have happened in your life, since you were born'. There were 'many factors' contributing to the crisis, 'which came to be to the boiling point, particularly in 2008'. Fundamentally, though, 'it was a country under sanctions'. Second, however, 'some of the issues were, also, the manner in which we dealt with specific matters … our own faults could have contributed'. After he said he wished he was rich, he uttered the following fascinating lines:

> but all I can tell you is that all these issues, which have been taking place, are issues which were as a result of perceptions and other, which then developed into real truth or false truth, whatever the case may be. But all I can tell you is that it's very straightforward and transparent.

I thought at the time that this was the answer to my second question. On reflection the minister might have still have been considering the DRC situation, which as far as he was concerned was all wrapped up because now 'we are very close' to Rwanda's president: the war was 'nothing personal, it was an organisational response … to that particular issue'. Still, his final words seemed indicative of one of Mugabe's legacies–lying. Was this what 'Operation Restore Legacy' (the coup) was resuscitating? Of course, being economical with the truth is a component part of coups and conspiracies. The conceit is that your power means everybody had better believe you. Yet there are many indicators of doubt within such utterances: 'all I can tell you', twice; 'perceptions and other' unnamed contingent approaches to veracity; and after the separation (or lack of it) between real and false truths, the second 'all I can tell you' was a promise that 'it's very straightforward and transparent'. What was 'it'?

The minister's confusing words have bothered me for a long time. As well as explaining a lot about the twists and turns in Zimbabwe's political history, they also spoke to a universal concern. The scourge of 'alternative facts' as they spewed forth from the mouth and Twitter account of the past president of the United States has generated much thinking about how truths are constructed.. Before trying to deal with some conceptual takes on the generality of real and false truths, however, the other two alternative truths around this particular communication event may be worth recounting.

Starting at the beginning might present a more rounded picture. When I arrived at the Chatham House meeting, I passed a small group, presumably of exiled Zimbabweans, demonstrating against the minister and the regime he represented. Violet Gonda was inside. The seat beside her was free. I took it. She was exuberant at scoring an interview with the minister, albeit on the side of the Chatham House meeting or another with members of the Zimbabwean diaspora at Zimbabwe House on the Strand that evening. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Lt. General (Retired) Dr Sibusiso Moyo's diary was quite full, but we guessed that since his primary reason for being in London was to attend a media freedom conference, he would deign to keep his promise to converse with a journalist seen to be solidly in the opposition's camp.

Ms Gonda's bold questioning gave me courage to stumble along with my queries. But as the meeting closed, she received a message cancelling her chances for further interrogation: no interview for her. Her manner was too confrontational. 'Crestfallen' barely manages to indicate her sentiments on that news. We left together, made some inquiries of the demonstrators, and I went to another meeting. While I was occupied in Regent's Park a protester sprayed water on the minister as he approached his car. Ndabaningi 'Nick' Mangwana, the regime's permanent secretary for information (perhaps ironically, a United Kingdom citizen),96 tweeted a condemnation of such wanton violence; Gonda heard that she was blamed for an organisational role in the demo. Tweets in her support revelled in the irony of her curtailed interview just after the minister's participation in the media freedom conference.

The day went on. Minister Moyo's meeting with the diaspora was next. The guest list was poorly organised, so I found it was easy to get in without an invitation. There was Violet Gonda, the intrepid journalist, in animated conversation with a couple of women showing off the latest wedding pictures of cabinet minister Dr Sekai Nzenza (who once worked for World Vision in Australia). After Minister Moyo announced the imminent one-stop investment window, another question period came up–mostly about business opportunities, for the good of the nation of course. When Minister Moyo belittled a journalist's scare-mongering questions that morning, Ms Gonda fired back with the issue of her cancelled interview. Soon her erstwhile friends, and many others, were booing, hissing and telling her to sit down. The moderator from Chatham House suggested she get to her question. S. B. Moyo looked perplexed. When the hubbub abated, he said he had never instructed Mangwana to call off the interview: had it taken

place, he and Ms Gonda would have been friends. Another false truth exposed.

What did they all mean? The message from a public-relations hack who thought he could protect a powerful minister (who, as with any one-time military leader, is never fully retired from the organisational means of force, but liked to talk to journalists) from a journalist's ostensible bad manners. Thus resulted social media wars, sullying the Zimbabwean 'second republic's' claims to media freedom, and a confused minister in front of a crowd. The fickle crowd turned on a dime against the outspoken journalist. Real truths; false truths; a legacy of lies: *and* a promise to make it all 'straightforward and transparent', possibly among 'friends'. A crowd that guaranteed the conceits of power. Was this day a microcosm of Zimbabwean politics *in toto*? To consider that this was simply the contemporary condition of world politics and its culture in miniature (there were assuredly more tears and wars in the Trump camp) might be taking things too far. So too would John le Carré's contention that a swindling father could well relieve a son or daughter (in this case him) 'of any real concept of the truth. Truth was what you got away with.' It is not enough to repeat the story about Mugabe's father abandoning him to understand the tangling of truth and power in his case. Who knows S. B. Moyo's psychohistory?

In any case, it was clear by that day's end that I would have to interrogate more than the coup. Its context and consequences would extend far before and after it. Mugabe's certain death also meant that more emphasis needed laying on the legacy already outgrowing him. The theories at hand seemed too big for that task. A few months on– during the purgatory phase of re-writing – new waves in those waters began to crest. They might help to unpack the uncertainties and untruths displayed at the London houses of Chatham and Zimbabwe – and the November 2017 events wrapped up in them.

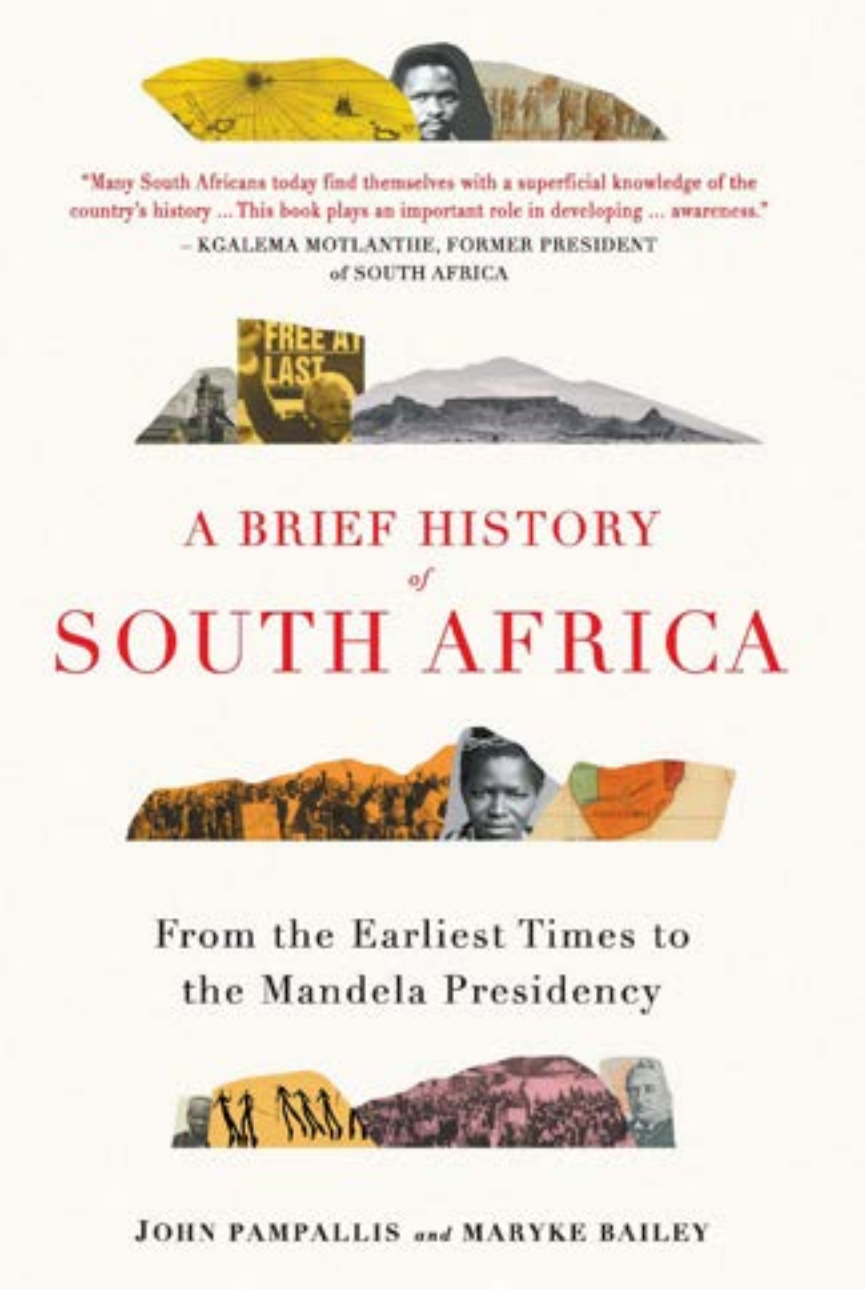
1. Percy Zvomuya, 'The accidental dictator: even Mugabe's mother said he shouldn't have been president', *The Citizen*, 9 September 2019, @ https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/insight/2176711/the-accidental-dictator-even-mugabes-mother-said-he-shouldnt-have-been-president/; 'What's left of Zimbabwe? Part III: too late for change', *New Frame*, 30 August 2018, @ https://www.newframe.com/whats-left-zimbabwe-part-iii-too-late-change/; 'Unlearning the Zimbabwean lesson,' *New Frame*, 17 April 2020, @ https://www.newframe.com/long-read-unlearning-the-zimbabwean-lesson.

2. Zvomuya, 'What's left …'*New Frame*, 30 August 2018; Henrick Ellert and Dennis Anderson, *A Brutal State of Affairs: The Rise and Fall of Rhodesia*. Harare: Weaver, 2020; Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003; Luise White, '"Normal political activities": Rhodesia, the Pearce Commission, and the African National Council', *Journal of African History*, 52 (3), 2011, 321–40; Luise White, *Unpopular Sovereignty: Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015; National Archives, UK. FCO 106/753, 'Bishop Muzorewa', 4 July, 25 November and 14 December 1981; Zvomuya, 'Part II: unlearning the Zimbabwean lesson', *New Frame,* 24 April 2020, @ https://www.newframe.com/long-read-part-two-unlearning-the-zimbabwean-lesson/.

3. Santiago Zabala, *Being at Large: Freedom in the Age of Alternative Facts*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2020.

Book Review

Reviewed by Mandla J. Radebe



The writing of South African history has been contentious, mainly due to the exclusion of the majority African people whose past achievements have often been ignored or treated contemptuously. Various tendencies in the writing of this history sought to dispute Africans' claim to South Africa. The Afrikaner tendency, for example, portrayed Africans as not being indigenous to this country (Theal, 1897). On the other hand, the liberal tradition considered South Africa as constituting a single nation with white people making up the core while black people in general, and Africans in particular, had to be integrated on the basis of meeting particular standards (Nxumalo, 1992).

This latter point is precisely what makes A Brief History of South Africa an important intervention. In this book, Pampallis and Bailey introduce the reader to a broad sweep of South African history, from the earliest times until the Mandela Presidency. While the book employs both a narrative chronology and thematic chapters, what is useful about this book is that it encourages critical thinking about key events that shaped the history of the country. This is done by, *inter alia*, portraying the agency of the oppressed majority in resisting colonialism and apartheid. This explains the emergence of political, social and trade union movements and their role in the liberation struggle.

Early Societies

Pampallis and Bailey introduce us to the part of our history which has seldom been told owing to our history of colonisation. In a fascinating fashion, they stretch our minds and knowledge to the seventeenth-century societies of southern Africa and reflect on the San as the first inhabitants of the region. Without being presumptuous in their argument that 'early modern humans were present in southern Africa over 100 000 years ago', they concede that 'owing to a lack of evidence, we know very little about these early residents' (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 18). The arrival of the Bantu-language speakers who were farmers is another dimension that is often misrepresented.

The expansion of the early Bantu-language speakers southwards from eastern Africa (the Great Lakes region) and western Africa (probably around Angola) debunks the revisionist notion presented by colonialist historians such as Theal (1897), which later became the basis of the ideology of the likes of Hendrik Verwoerd. Theal's writings had become part of the foundation of the Afrikaner ideology which racist politicians like Verwoerd relied upon to advance a baseless notion that 'Africans had no right to claim the whole of South African territory as belonging to them' (Nxumalo, 1992: 15). *A Brief History of South Africa* dispels this notion by pointing out that 'The earliest farmers settled around the Kruger National Park, eSwatini and Mozambique in about AD 250. Settlements spread south along the coast of KwaZulu-Natal over the next 500 years. By AD 700 some farmers had settled as far south as modern-day East London' (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 20).

Linked to this is the period between 1700 and 1800 which witnessed political changes among the Sotho–Tswana and Nguni groups. This is yet another epoch that has been misconstrued deliberately. Pampallis and Bailey describe this 'state formation in southern Africa' and the accompanying social, political and economic instability. How we understand and interpret this period of upheaval, known as the *mfecane* or the *difaqane,* is critical for understanding our present which is transmitted from the past. The book navigates various contentious issues such as the emergence of larger states such as the Zulu, Sotho and Ndebele kingdoms and their existence in the context of various kingdoms such as the Gaza, Swazi and Pedi kingdoms.

"The writing of South African history has been contentious, mainly due to the exclusion of the majority African people whose past achievements have often been ignored or treated contemptuously. Various tendencies in the writing of this history sought to dispute Africans' claim to South Africa."

How exactly these kingdoms co-existed and the sources of various conflicts are some of the crucial elements that this book unpacks. The political economy of this epoch included competition for the control of trade routes such as the one that 'ran from the Portuguese colonial trading ports in the north-west (Angola) and on the east coast (Mozambique) to the upper Marico district' – parts of our history that are seldom spoken about (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 33). For many, our history began with the arrival of the European settlers in 1652. By the time the colonists and raiders expanded from the Cape Colony by moving towards the north in the early 1800s, the African kingdoms had been in existence for centuries in this country.

The Resistance Struggles Before and After the Gold Rush

This colonial expansion and the brave African wars of resistance are discussed within a proper context of the history of South Africa. Fundamentally, the Africans, despite being technologically disadvantaged due to their reliance on primitive weaponry, were no walk over. Various books about the heroism of the Africans during this period have emerged in recent times, albeit insufficiently. *A Brief History of South Africa* is also useful in this regard. The Khoe and San responded to the Cape colonial expansion and hence the first Khoe–Dutch war is reported to have taken place in '1659 and lasted about a year' (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 38). Again, the war between the trekboers and the Xhosa people is located in the context of the co-existence that the Xhosas had sought to foster, similar to their absorption of the San, Khoe, Thembu and Bhaca people. However, it was the economic rivalry that led to the fights.

The colonial expansion and the resistance beyond the Cape Colony is presented in an easy-to-understand style and language that portrays the agency and innovation of Africans. Nevertheless, there are numerous nuances in the South African story. The book does not miss this crucial aspect. Many African communities regarded the Boers as just another group in competition for land and cattle, and in some instances 'African leaders sometimes allied with the Boers, or the British, in order to defeat a common enemy.' The fights of Chief Moroka II of the Rolong with Mzilikazi is one case in point. Nevertheless, even in such alliances, the perceived racial supremacy of the Voortrekkers, who 'saw themselves as racially superior', is palpable (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 41).

The heroics of the African kingdoms and their different responses to colonial expansion, such as the Basotho under King Moshoeshoe in the land across the Orange River and the Zulu kingdom under various Zulu kings across Natal, are presented. This is done in the context of various developments such as the indentured labour of Indians in Natal. The defeat of Mzilikazi, together with treaties and agreements with the more powerful kingdoms to the north and east, such as those of the Swazi and Pedi, lay the basis for our understanding for future developments in South Africa. In fact, the liberation struggle cannot be fully understood outside of this background.

South Africa's history would be incomplete without unpacking the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and the gold rush in Johannesburg 20 years later. It was on the back of these mining activities that South Africa became the largest industrialised economy on the African continent (Venter et al., 2012). The gold mines in particular not only brought about development, employment and wealth, but also, as Durand (2012) argues, 'the most devastating war in the history of South Africa, civil unrest, economical inequality, social uprooting, pollution, negative health impacts and ecological destruction.' The presentation of aspects such as the control of the mining industry and the wealth it created, the role of mine workers and racial dimensions, and fundamentally the impact of the mineral revolution in South Africa are therefore all critical.

Indeed, history does not proceed along a straight line but has twists and turns as witnessed in numerous events of our past such as the Anglo-Boer relations which led to the war and the Union of South Africa. Inevitably, these developments led to new forms of resistance including the formation of early black political organisations. The emergence of these modern political organisations in the late nineteenth century such as *Imbumba yama Afrika*, the Native Electoral Association and the Native Educational Association in what is now the Eastern Cape, provides us with insights to nascent modern resistance in South Africa (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 67). It was in this environment that the South

African Native National Congress, the forerunner of the African National Congress, was formed. Of course, developments such as the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the World Wars, make for complex and fascinating reading.

In the context of the spikes of the recent protest action in the country and the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the discussion of the post-war years, which ventures into issues such as the Spanish flu and strikes, connects our past with the present. Similarities between the Spanish flu and Covid-19 are striking in that both are transmitted through respiratory droplets, are highly contagious, and have no definitive cure (Lyngdoh, 2020). These linkages between the past and present are useful in our context as we seek to resolve the national question by building a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic country.

A Brief History of South Africa is replete with information such as the economic crisis of the 1930s, the emergence of the National Party (NP), its rise to power in 1948 and the establishment of apartheid. The initial resistance to apartheid and the revival of the mass movement after the liberation movement had been weakened during the economic boom period of the early 1960s is an important part of our recent history and is useful to understand. The revival of the mass movement in particular, as characterised *inter alia* by the rise of the student movement and Black Consciousness in the universities, the re-emergence of worker resistance as witnessed in the 1973 Durban strikes, the independence of the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola in 1975 and the broader political development in Southern Africa, Bantu Education and the uprising of 16 June 1976, and the Bantustans are some of the important aspects of understanding our history.

> “The second part of A Brief History of South Africa presents themes in South African history, and I found this most valuable. Among the themes presented is ‘The South African Economy’, which traces the various economic sectors in South Africa at different times and their influence in bringing about changes in South Africa’s politics and society.”

Freedom and Democracy

When the apartheid regime came under severe internal and external pressures, a negotiated settlement emerged as a solution. The processes leading towards negotiations – including the secret talks, overtures to release Mandela, the emergence of F.W. de Klerk as the new NP leader, and the ultimate release of political prisoners and unbanning of political organisations – are crucial elements in comprehending our negotiated settlement. Therefore, how South Africa’s democratic breakthrough came about can only be understood by reading this part of our history.

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process, which paved the way for the 1994 elections and the eventual rise of Mandela to power, constitutes the last part of the narrative section of *A Brief History*. With the first democratic government in power, a new constitution was drafted and eventually adopted in 1996.

In discussing Mandela’s legacy, the question of the constitution often crops up. Of course, other areas like the building of new institutions of democracy, the expansion and transformation of the social infrastructure, the promotion of reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the economy remain pertinent. However, it is in dealing with the economy in relation to Mandela’s legacy that the book could have done more. Although, it is mentioned that post-1994 the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was jettisoned for the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, the impact of this ideological shift cannot be discussed in one short paragraph.

Of course, the authors do not proffer to be experts on policy analysis; nevertheless, the historical process leading to GEAR could have been better articulated.

Moreover, the folly of the 1996 class project is being exposed daily through our intractable socio-economic problems. Particularly, the SACP and *Congress of South African Trade Unions* (*COSATU*) were vocal on the policy and issued numerous documents. For example, the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) released a document in December 1993 whose ideological orientation differed to that of GEAR. Among the salient features of this document was its focus on the importance of RDP. This history is crucial if future generations are to learn from some of the mistakes from the past.

Themes in South African History

The second part of *A Brief History of South Africa* presents themes in South African history, and I found this most valuable. Among the themes presented is 'The South African Economy', which traces the various economic sectors in South Africa at different times and their influence in bringing about changes in South Africa's politics and society. These sectors include subsistence agriculture which, for centuries, was the backbone of the South African economy; mining and commercial farming, which became the two dominant sectors after the discovery of diamonds in the late 1860s and gold in the mid-1880s; and manufacturing linked to the mining boom. The economic shifts of the 1970s linked to the rise of the financial and services sectors is another important aspect of our economic history.

A retelling of South Africa's history would be incomplete without a discussion of the Bantustans. The book presents a detailed logic behind this sham self-determination project of the National Party. It correctly posits that the 'bantustans helped the apartheid government to extend its control over the movement and labour of the African population' (Pampallis and Bailey, 2021: 202). This is certainly not how apartheid presented this initiative. Having presented a detailed and compelling history of the system, including the decline of the Bantustans due to, *inter alia*, protests against them, it would have been useful for the book to connect the current provincial system to Bantustans. There is no doubt that there are continuities of the Bantustan logic in the democratic period which have perpetuated backward tendencies like tribalism.

The theme on 'The History of Schooling in South Africa' is laden with inequalities as the result of our past. When discussing this theme, it is palpable that the authors are at their strength. It is not surprising, taking into account their backgrounds. The themes on 'Poverty and Inequality', 'Life under Apartheid: Urban and Rural Experiences', 'Women's Struggles', 'The Trade Union Movement', 'South Africa's Constitutions' and 'International Solidarity against Apartheid' are also important, and are more understandable after the scene of our history has been set in the first part of the book. In reality, these are not accidents of history but constructed realities that the African working class in particular must contend with as part of their daily lived experiences. It is credit to the authors for including such aspects as part of our history, for poverty and inequality, for example, form part of the South African landscape.

Concluding Thoughts

While the book does not pretend to present a comprehensive history of South Africa, a more nuanced and detailed discussion in relation to personal and organisational ideologies could have been presented more sharply. More importantly, not just in relation to the Mandela legacy but various aspects of the book, one would have expected to encounter something new given the praxis of the authors. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the book's attempt to present an accurate version of our historical past. Such books are imperative in shaping our damaged collective historical consciousness that has been affected by centuries of distortions of the history, particularly of the black majority. The authors must be commended for their efforts in successfully condensing an extensive historical period in a narrative of just over 300 pages.

A Brief History of South Africa is a useful guide for everyone interested in understanding our past. As to be expected of a book written by seasoned educators, it is a text that will come in handy for both formal and non-formal adult education purposes. However, its strength also lies in its usefulness as complementary material for history teaching in schools (including an appendix of Text Engagement Activities for learners) and, fundamentally, in political education circles. Educators and trainers will find the book a useful tool that is likely to expand their

own knowledge, particularly because each chapter points readers to a range of further readings with a variety of historical interpretations; it also provides questions for group discussion.

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