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Understanding Contemporary Africa

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IN THIS ISSUE

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.


Prof Ronit Frenkel

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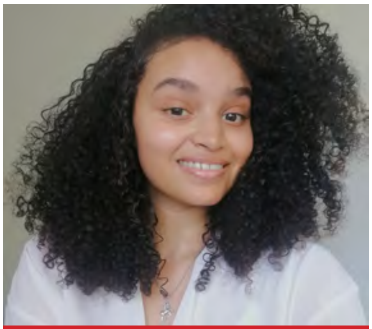
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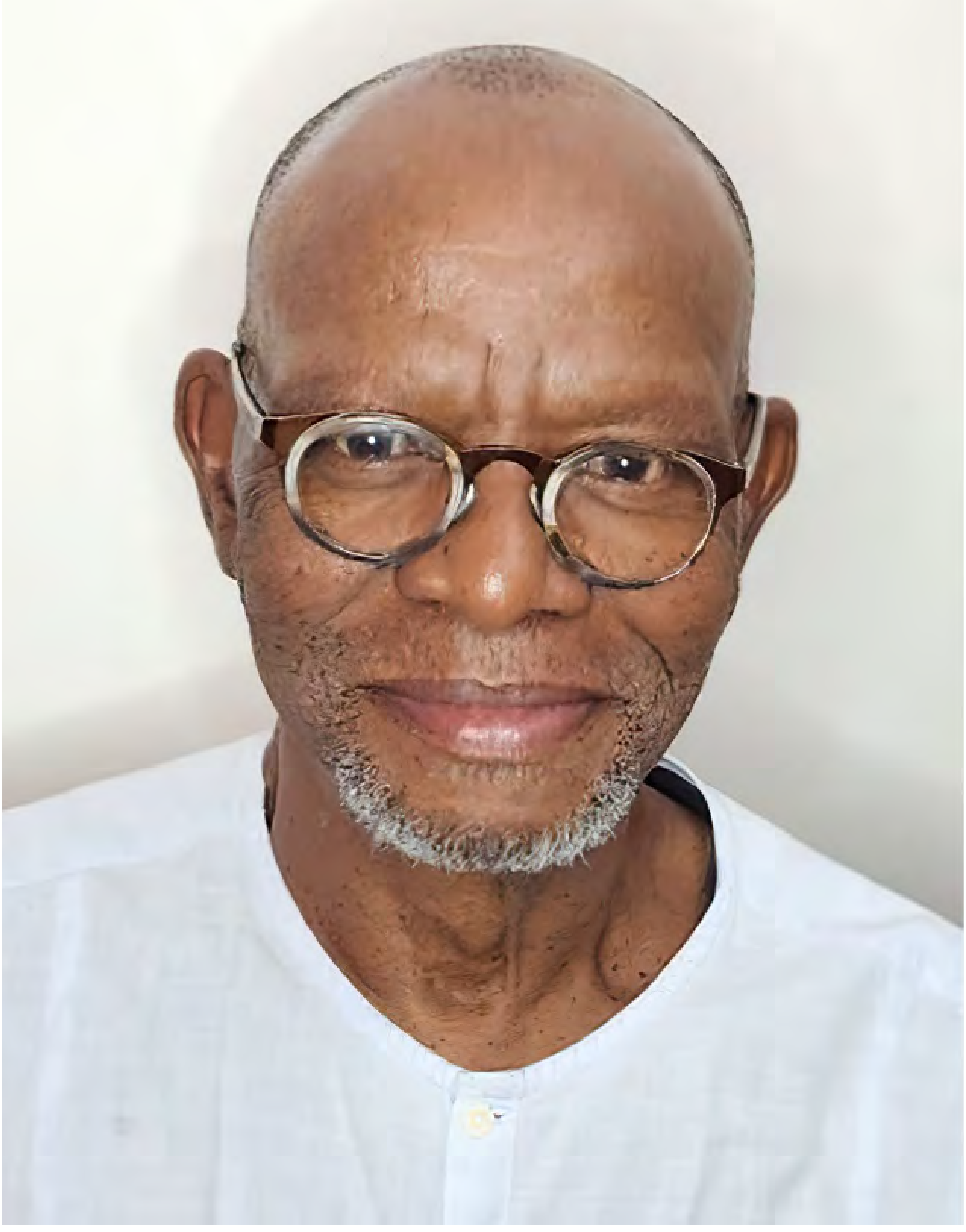
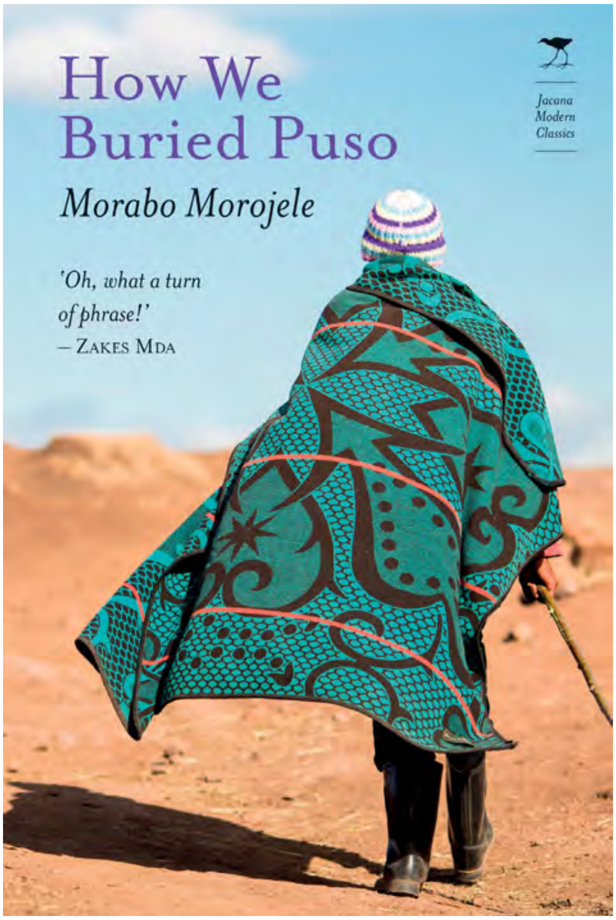
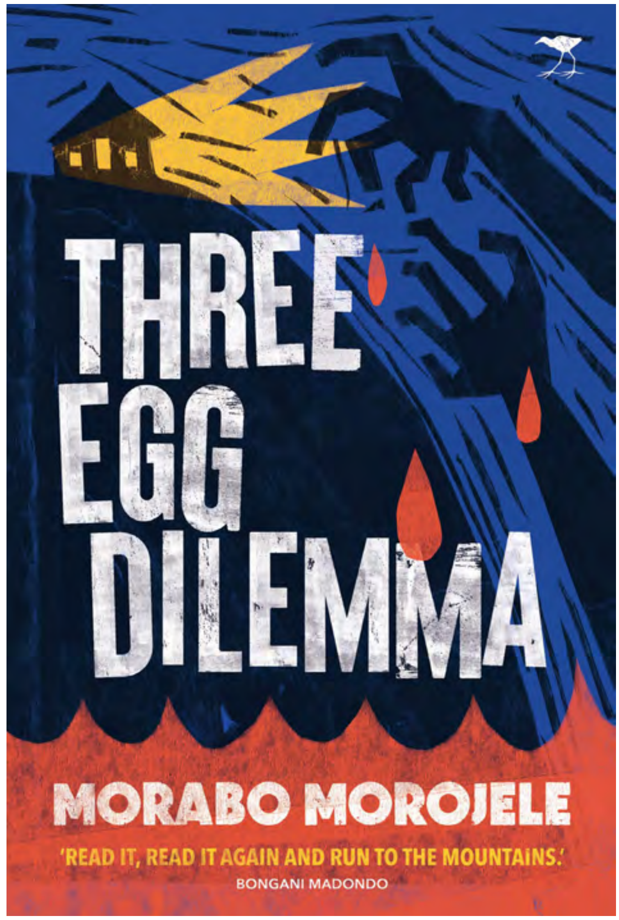
MORABO MOROJELE (1960–2025)







A Satirist of the Present, Chronicler of our Exile and a Visionary of the Possible: A Literary Tribute to Morabo Morojele.

By Thabo Tšehloane, University of Johannesburg.

Morabo Morojele stands as a singular and resonant voice within the landscape of contemporary African literature. With only two novels—*How We Buried Puso* (2006) and *Three Egg Dilemma* (2023)—he has carved epochal milestones in the literary cartography of Southern Africa. These works do far more than chronicle the existential anxieties and social dislocations of their era; they radically reimagine the very possibilities of narrative form, language and the African novel itself.

A Literary Innovator

Morojele's body of work is marked by a fearless departure from convention. His prose is a tapestry of linguistic innovation and formal experimentation, blending realism with the magical and the mundane with the extraordinary. By centering marginalised perspectives and embedding incisive social critique within richly textured, non-linear narratives, Morojele redefines African literary expression and invites readers into a dynamic and transformative engagement with his texts. His novels are as intellectually demanding as they are aesthetically rewarding.

At the heart of Morojele's narrative strategy is a dismantling of the archetype of the flawless and triumphant hero. His protagonists are ordinary, fallible, and deeply enmeshed in the intricate web of social and gender dynamics. By foregrounding the limits of individual agency amidst societal collapse and amplifying the voices of the marginalised, Morojele offers a nuanced, realistic, and ethically complex vision of human experience. Through layered characterisation, ambiguous narration, and captivating dialogue, he transcends the boundaries of conventional heroism, presenting instead a tapestry of lived realities that are both particular and universal.

The Lyrical Exile: *How We Buried Puso*

In *How We Buried Puso*, Morojele crafts a narrative that is at once intimate and epic, lyrical and political. The novel follows Molefe, a young man whose search for opportunity abroad mirrors the broader postcolonial African experience—torn between the allure of the foreign and the gravitational pull of home, tradition and memory. Morojele's poetic and musical prose—marked by syntactic daring and linguistic playfulness—imbues the novel with a haunting rhythm and a palpable sense of perpetual exile.

Thematically, the novel excavates the wounds of colonialism, the ache of alienation and the complexities of return. Through flashbacks and fragmented memories, Morojele constructs a world where past and present bleed into each other, mirroring the psychic dislocation of his characters. The result is a novel that is challenging yet profoundly rewarding—a work that asks much of its readers and gives even more in return. *How We Buried Puso* stands as a moving testament to the enduring power of memory and the complexities of return for those marked by displacement.

Satire and Spectrality: *Three Egg Dilemma*

With *Three Egg Dilemma*, Morojele extends his literary project into the realms of satire and speculative fiction. Winner of the 2024 University of Johannesburg Main Prize for Literature, the novel has been celebrated for its wit, vibrant characters, and incisive social critique. Set against a backdrop of civil disintegration and societal malaise, it is unflinching in its depiction of violence and uncertainty, yet suffused with moments of hope and resilience. In the midst of the unfolding tragedy, the narrative is alive and vibrating with witticisms, humour and thrilling descriptions.

Morojele's use of magical realism and satire enables him to paint a dystopia that is both universal in its resonance and deeply rooted in African realities. The narrative orbits around EG Mohlala and his ill-assorted companions, whose habitual congregation at Mada's tavern becomes a microcosm of survival amid the breakdown of social and political order. For these characters, fantasy becomes an alternative reality—a wellspring of comfort and strength in the face of adversity. Their dreams and desires, though unattainable in the present, illuminate the possibilities of a different world. With its unforgettable characters, evocative setting, and profound insight, *Three Egg Dilemma* stands as a new classic of Southern African literature—a work both timely and timeless.

Morojele's Enduring Legacy: Visionary of the Possible

Morabo Morojele's novels are demanding and transformative. His work challenges the conventions of narrative and language, compelling readers to confront the ambiguities of identity, the scars of history, and the dilemmas of modernity. In *How We Buried Puso* and *Three Egg Dilemma*, Morojele has given us more than stories; he has provided instruments for thinking, feeling, and imagining alternative realities.

His novels function as both mirrors—reflecting the fractured realities of postcolonial Africa—and windows—opening onto new vistas of possibility and hope. For his audacious reimagining of the African novel and the enduring music of his prose, Morabo Morojele deserves our deepest gratitude and highest acclaim. With just two novels, he has not only enriched African literary discourse but also expanded the horizons of global literature itself.

Morabo Morojele may have left us, but his words and vision remain—a beacon of hope for future generations of readers, writers and literary scholars. As a satirist of the present, a chronicler of our exile, and a visionary of the possible, Morojele's legacy endures—timely, timeless, and transformative.

ROBALA KA KGOTSO MOTLOUNG.

Recent Developments in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and Its Effects on Ethiopia-Egypt Relations: Somalia as the Epicenter of Conflict

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Abstract

This paper examines the recent developments surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and its implications for Ethiopia-Egypt relations, with Somalia emerging as a central point of the conflict zone. Egypt's historical involvement in Middle East conflicts, particularly regarding the Gaza conflict, highlights its significant role in regional diplomacy. However, Egypt's stance on the GERD reveals a contradictory position: while it remains relatively passive in supporting Palestinians nearby, it emphasizes its historical rights over the Nile and simultaneously supports Somalia which is both geographically distant yet strategically relevant. This dynamic raises questions about Egypt's motivations and priorities.

Ethiopia, grappling with internal challenges, must effectively navigate these complexities to counter external threats. The current situation necessitates a shift in Egypt's approach; rather than clinging to historical claims; it should adopt a win-win principle that promotes equitable resource sharing from the Nile River. The methodology employed in this study primarily involves news analysis from various media outlets, providing a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics surrounding the GERD and its broader implications for regional relations. By exploring these interconnections, this paper aims to illuminate the complexities of Ethiopia-Egypt interactions and identify potential pathways toward resolution amidst escalating tensions.

Key words: Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia-Egypt relations, Somalia, resource sharing, regional diplomacy

Introduction

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has become a significant source of tension between Ethiopia and Egypt, profoundly influencing their bilateral relations. The GERD is located in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region, near the Sudanese border, and it plays a crucial role in Ethiopia's socioeconomic development and national energy needs. Egypt, as a downstream nation heavily dependent on Nile waters for agriculture and drinking supply, views the dam as a significant threat to its water security. Sudan occupies a strategic position between the two, facing both potential benefits from the dam's electricity generation and risks related to flooding. Although Somalia is not directly adjacent to the Nile, its involvement highlights broader regional security concerns, particularly regarding resource management and the potential spillover effects of tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt. Understanding these dynamics is essential for comprehending the complex interplay of interests among these nations in the context of ongoing geopolitical conflicts.

This paper explores recent developments related to the GERD and their implications for Ethiopia-Egypt relations, with Somalia emerging as a central conflict zone. The Nile River is shared by ten countries, including Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, but in 1959, Egypt and Sudan signed an agreement that allocated the river's water resources exclusively to themselves, leaving limited rights for other riparian states. For Ethiopia, constructing the GERD is a crucial strategy to meet its developmental needs and assert its rights over the Nile. However, this initiative has escalated disputes involving Egypt and Sudan, as Egypt fears that the dam will reduce its access to essential water resources.

Historically, Egypt has played a vital role in Middle Eastern conflicts; however, its silence regarding the situation in Gaza raises questions about its influence in regional diplomacy. This stance appears contradictory, as Egypt seeks to uphold its historical claims over the Nile waters while simultaneously supporting Somalia a nation that is geographically distant but strategically significant for regional stability. The deployment of Egyptian troops in Somalia is perceived as part of a broader geopolitical rivalry with Ethiopia regarding the GERD. As Ethiopia faces internal challenges, it must navigate these complexities to counter external threats effectively. The current situation necessitates a shift in Egypt's approach; instead of clinging to historical claims, it should adopt a win-win principle that promotes equitable resource sharing from the Nile River. This perspective is essential for fostering cooperation and ensuring long-term stability in the region. Applying a discourse model approach reveals that the discussion surrounding Ethiopia's internal challenges and Egypt's need to revise its resource-sharing strategy is intricately connected to various elements, including structural, contextual, intentional, and interactive factors. By examining these dimensions, we can gain deeper insights into the broader implications for regional cooperation and stability amid ongoing challenges.

“The Nile River is shared by ten countries, including Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, but in 1959, Egypt and Sudan signed an agreement that allocated the river's water resources exclusively to themselves...”

Research Methodology

This study primarily involves news analysis from various media outlets, providing a comprehensive overview of the evolving dynamics surrounding the GERD and its broader implications for regional relations. The qualitative analysis involves examining the language, tone, and framing used in news reports to understand how issues are presented to various audiences. The approach is both multifaceted and comprehensive, addressing the complex interplay of geopolitical dynamics, historical context, and the various interests of the involved parties. By examining these interconnections, this paper aims to clarify the complexities of Ethiopia-Egypt interactions and propose potential pathways toward resolution amidst escalating tensions.

Data Collection

News Analysis: The primary data sources for this study include articles from reputable newspapers and international media outlets. This approach ensures a diverse representation of viewpoints and insights into the ongoing tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia related to the GERD.

Digital Media Monitoring: In addition to traditional print media, the study incorporates digital news platforms, allowing for real-time updates and a broader understanding of public sentiment and media framing surrounding the issue.

Content Analysis: A systematic content analysis is conducted to identify key themes, narratives, within the news coverage. This includes coding articles based on specific categories such as diplomatic relations, military actions, and regional security concerns.

Egypt's Role in the Middle East Conflicts

Egypt has historically served as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly during periods of heightened violence. The recent escalation following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, has positioned Egypt in a pivotal role. The Egyptian government is apprehensive about a possible influx of refugees from Gaza into its territory, especially in the Sinai Peninsula, which could worsen existing security issues.

In light of the conflict in Gaza, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has advocated for allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza while firmly rejecting any proposals to transfer Palestinian refugees into Egypt. This position underscores Egypt's intent to uphold its sovereignty and internal stability while also addressing humanitarian needs. Egypt has opened the Rafah crossing to facilitate aid but remains cautious about permitting large numbers of refugees to enter (Al-Anani 2020).

Egypt's diplomatic initiatives include proposing a ceasefire plan developed in collaboration with Qatar. This plan seeks a phased release of hostages held by Hamas alongside Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention. However, the effectiveness of these efforts is hindered by the complex realities on the ground and the differing interests of regional actors (Al-Anani 2020). Currently, Egypt's role in the Gaza conflict appears limited to calls for humanitarian assistance, leading to perceptions among its Arab counterparts that Egypt is an unreliable partner. By not adopting a more assertive position on this matter, Egypt claims it is prioritizing assistance to Somalia, a member of the Arab League. This strategy has faced criticism, as many argue that Egypt should be more actively involved in resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza instead of focusing on its engagement with Somalia (The Soufan Center 2023; Harb 2023).

Egypt's Dispute with Ethiopia on GERD

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been a significant source of tension between Egypt and Ethiopia. The Nile River is crucial for Egypt's water supply, providing approximately 95% of its freshwater resources (Mbaku 2020). As Ethiopia continues to fill the dam unilaterally, Egypt perceives this as an existential threat to its water security. Recently, significant developments have occurred regarding the Nile River and its management, particularly with the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), also known as the Entebbe Agreement. On October 13, 2024, the CFA officially came into force after South Sudan's accession, which was a critical step in establishing a legal framework for equitable water resource management among Nile Basin countries (Khazen 2024). The agreement allows upstream nations to implement projects along the Nile without requiring consent from downstream countries like Egypt and Sudan, which has led to renewed tensions. Egypt's Irrigation Minister has called for a reconsideration of the CFA, emphasizing that it undermines Egypt's water security, as the Nile provides over 98% of its freshwater resources. This situation highlights ongoing conflicts and differing interests among the Nile Basin states, particularly as they navigate issues related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and its implications for regional cooperation (Chang 2024).

The dispute over the Nile River has its roots in colonial treaties that granted Egypt and Sudan rights to the river's waters while excluding upstream countries like Ethiopia from negotiations. The 1929 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the 1959 agreement between Egypt and Sudan established their dominance over the Nile waters (Mohyeldeen 2021). However, Ethiopia contends that these treaties are outdated and do not reflect its rights as a sovereign nation (BBC News 2023).

> "The agreement allows upstream nations to implement projects along the Nile without requiring consent from downstream countries like Egypt and Sudan, which has led to renewed tensions."

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been a focal point of regional discussions and negotiations since its inception. The dam, located on the Blue Nile River, is designed to significantly enhance Ethiopia's electricity generation capacity and is poised to become the largest hydropower facility in Africa, with a capacity of 5,150 megawatts and a reservoir capacity of 74 billion cubic meters (Addis Insight 2024; Basheer et al. 2021).

Ethiopia presents several key arguments to justify the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project. Firstly, the GERD is viewed as essential for meeting the country's economic and development needs, particularly in addressing its acute energy shortage. With over 62% of Ethiopians lacking access to electricity, the dam is expected to generate more than 5 giga watts of hydroelectric power, significantly increasing Ethiopia's electricity generation capacity and facilitating plans for 100% electrification by 2025 (Al-Anani 2022). Additionally, the GERD is projected to enable Ethiopia to become a major electricity exporter, potentially earning up to $1 billion annually from exports to neighboring countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya (Al-Anani 2022).

Moreover, the dam is anticipated to enhance agricultural irrigation and mitigate flooding, which has historically posed challenges for communities along the Blue Nile. By regulating water flow, the GERD aims to improve agricultural productivity and create numerous job opportunities for Ethiopian farmers (Al-Anani 2022). Ethiopia also argues that the construction, filling, and operation of the GERD represent its sovereign rights over its natural resources. The country contends that colonial-era treaties granting Egypt and Sudan significant rights over the Nile's waters are outdated and do not reflect Ethiopia's rights as a sovereign nation (Al-Anani 2022). Ethiopia emphasizes its willingness to engage in negotiations regarding the dam's operation while asserting that it seeks a cooperative approach that benefits all Nile Basin countries. Ethiopia continues the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) amid ongoing negotiations. As of July 2024, Ethiopia has initiated the fifth filling phase, which is expected to conclude in early September. This phase aims to raise the dam's middle wall to a height of 640 meters, allowing the reservoir's capacity to increase from 41 billion cubic meters to approximately 64 billion cubic meters (Tawil 2024).

Ethiopia commenced the filling of the GERD in July 2020, which has been conducted in several stages: First Stage (July 2020): Approximately 4.9 billion cubic meters (bcm) of water were captured. Second Stage (July 2021) The total volume increased significantly. Third Stage (August 2022): The reservoir volume reached about 21.5 bcm. Fourth Stage (August 2023): The total water volume reached approximately 41.53 bcm (Addis Insight 2024).

The filling process has raised concerns among downstream countries, particularly Egypt and

> Ethiopia argued that the construction, filling, and operation of the GERD represent its sovereign rights over its natural resources.

Sudan, regarding potential impacts on their water supplies. Ethiopia asserts that the dam will not drastically disrupt downstream flows and emphasizes its benefits for regional energy security and economic development (Basheer et al. 2021).

The filling strategy has been contentious due to its implications for water management in the Nile Basin. Studies indicate that while Ethiopia aims to utilize the dam for energy generation, it must also consider the hydrological impacts on downstream nations (Ali et al. 2023).

The lack of a comprehensive agreement among Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan regarding the dam's operation and filling has led to ongoing tensions and negotiations since the dam's construction began (IDOS Research 2021).

Despite the lack of a legally binding agreement with downstream countries Egypt and Sudan, Ethiopia maintains that the dam will not significantly disrupt their water supplies. The current water flow at the dam is about 300 million cubic meters per day, projected to rise to around 600 million cubic meters per day by August (Addis Insight 2024).

Negotiations regarding the filling and operation of the GERD have been ongoing since construction began in 2011, but no consensus has been reached. Both Egypt and Sudan have expressed concerns over potential impacts on their water security, particularly during drought conditions (Basheer et al. 2021).

As tensions escalate, both countries have taken their grievances to international forums like the United Nations. Egypt has lodged complaints regarding Ethiopia's unilateral actions in filling the GERD reservoir, claiming they violate prior agreements (Abdu 2024). Ethiopian officials have dismissed these claims as unfounded allegations and accused Egypt of attempting to maintain a monopoly over Nile waters (Abdu 2024).

The situation remains precarious as negotiations have repeatedly stalled since they began in 2011. Recent rounds of talks have failed to produce a binding agreement on how the dam should be operated during periods of drought or reduced water flow (BBC News 2023).

Egypt's Self-Contradictory Position

Egypt views stability in Somalia as essential for regional security and has engaged in diplomatic efforts to support peace initiatives while addressing humanitarian needs (Al-Anani 2020). However, Somalia is geographically distant from Egypt, raising questions about why Egypt prioritizes this relationship over its immediate concerns with Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, which directly impact their security due to their neighboring relationships. From the Egyptian perspective, remaining silent on the Gaza issue while actively protecting Somalia—a member of the Arab League—appears paradoxical and self-contradictory to many observers.

In stark contrast to its muted response to the Gaza conflict, Egypt has actively engaged in Somalia, signing a military cooperation agreement that includes deploying troops as part of an African Union peacekeeping mission (Ali 2024). This move is seen as part of Egypt's broader strategy to enhance its influence in the Horn of Africa amid rising tensions with Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Egypt's recent military cooperation with Somalia includes plans to deploy thousands of troops as part of a revamped African Union-led mission. This deployment aims to bolster Somalia's stability amid ongoing tensions with Ethiopia, particularly over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project, which Egypt views as an existential threat to its water security. The Egyptian government perceives its military presence in Somalia as a means to counterbalance Ethiopia's influence and secure its interests in the Nile River basin (Addis Standard 2024; Al Jazeera 2024; Karr and Borens 2024; Ali 2024)

In August 2024, Egypt and Somalia signed a defense pact aimed at bolstering security cooperation between the two nations. This agreement was formalized during a visit by Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to Egypt and is described as a "historic" pact that underscores their commitment to combat international terrorism (Dhaysane 2024). Under this pact, Egypt plans to send up to 10,000 troops to Somalia as part of a new African Union-led peacekeeping mission, marking Egypt's first significant military involvement in the region since the early 1960s (Amin 2024).

The defense pact not only focuses on military support but also includes provisions for training Somali forces to strengthen their capacity to combat terrorism (Sudan War Monitor 2024). However, this military involvement raises concerns about escalating tensions with Ethiopia, especially given the historical context of conflict over water resources related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) (Amin 2024).

The military engagement in Somalia is perceived as a strategic maneuver to counter Ethiopia's growing influence in the Horn of Africa, particularly following Ethiopia's agreement with Somaliland to establish a naval base (Asem 2024). This deployment aims to deter potential Ethiopian encroachment and enhance Somalia's military capabilities against threats such as al-Shabaab (Fides News Agency 2024).

Ethiopia remains vocal about recent developments in Egypt, particularly because the Horn of Africa is a more pressing concern for Ethiopia than it is for Egypt. The tensions in this region, especially between Ethiopia and Somalia, are exacerbated by Egypt's military support to Somalia, including arms shipments and a defense pact. This military cooperation raises alarms in Ethiopia, which views it as a direct threat to its national security and stability in the region (France 24 2020; Amin 2024).

Ethiopia's foreign ministry has expressed significant apprehension regarding the potential for weapons supplied to Somalia to fall into the hands of militant groups like Al-Shabaab. The ongoing military dynamics indicate that Ethiopia is prioritizing its security interests in the Horn of Africa over its relationship with Egypt, which has been strained due to disputes over resources like the Nile River and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) (Brookings Institution 2022; Karr and Borens 2024).

Egypt's recent foreign policy decisions reflect a complex interplay of regional dynamics, particularly in light of its involvement in Somalia and its stance on the ongoing conflict in Gaza. While Egypt has maintained a relatively muted response to the recent war between Israel and Hamas, it has taken assertive actions in Somalia, seemingly contradicting its position as a member of the Arab League.

As these geopolitical tensions unfold, Ethiopia's focus on the Horn of Africa underscores its perception of regional security as paramount compared to Egypt's broader interests (Soufan Center 2024).

The military pact signed between Egypt and Somalia includes provisions for military training and support aimed at combating terrorism and enhancing Somalia's national security capabilities (Amin2024). Egypt's involvement in Somalia is partly motivated by its desire to counter Ethiopia's growing influence in the region, particularly following Ethiopia's recent agreements with Somaliland, which Somalia claims threaten its territorial integrity. This engagement reflects Egypt's strategic interests in asserting its presence in the Horn of Africa, especially as tensions rise between Somalia and Ethiopia. By strengthening ties with Somalia, Egypt aims to create a buffer against perceived threats from Ethiopia, which has been expanding its influence through military and diplomatic initiatives (Ali 2024; Amin 2024; Al Jazeera 2024).

Egypt views its engagement in Somalia as a means to bolster its security interests against perceived threats from Ethiopia. In August 2024, Egypt signed a defense pact with Somalia that includes deploying troops as part of a new African Union-led Support and Stabilization Mission (AUSSOM). This mission aims to replace the current African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS) and is focused on peace-building and capacity building for Somali civil servants (Amin 2024). The agreement marks Egypt's first contribution to an African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia, signaling a renewed commitment to regional security (Ali 2024). By supporting Somalia militarily, Egypt aims to establish a foothold near Ethiopia's borders, potentially deterring any actions that could jeopardize Egypt's water security related to the Nile River (Amin 2024). This strategy reflects a broader shift towards a more assertive Egyptian foreign policy after years of relative disengagement from African affairs. However, this stance is unacceptable to Ethiopia, as the situation in Somalia primarily concerns Ethiopians and other nations in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, Egypt's participation in peacekeeping missions in the region is seen as potentially destabilizing, providing opportunities for extremist groups like Al-Shabaab to acquire weapons and pose further threats to regional security (Ali 2024; Amin 2024). The opposition is not only from Ethiopian side but also from local people in Somalia. Many locals view the arrival of Egyptian troops as a threat to national sovereignty and regional stability (EBC, 2024). This public sentiment can influence economic stability; if protests escalate into violence or civil unrest, it could further deter investment and disrupt local markets.

The deployment of Egypt in Somalia is considered by many as a threat to national sovereignty. Local leaders and community representatives have voiced their concerns that Egyptian troops could undermine the progress made by Ethiopian forces in stabilizing the region and combating threats from militant groups like Al-Shabaab (EBC 2024). The perception that Egypt is attempting to exert control over Somali affairs has fueled resentment and distrust among the populace. Moreover, there are concerns that Egypt's involvement is not purely humanitarian but rather an attempt to extend its influence in a region where Ethiopia has traditionally played a stabilizing role. As tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt escalate over issues such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), many Somalis fear that Egypt's military presence could transform Somalia into a battleground for proxy conflicts between these two nations (Karr and Borens 2024).

The local opposition in Somalia to Egyptian involvement is driven by several key concerns. Many Somalis view the presence of Egyptian forces as a direct threat to their national sovereignty and regional stability. Protests have erupted across major cities, with demonstrators holding signs that read "We Don't Need Egypt!" and "We Need Ethiopia!" This sentiment reflects a widespread belief that replacing Ethiopian troops with Egyptian forces could jeopardize the fragile security gains achieved in the fight against Al-Shabaab militants (EBC 2024; Hiiraan 2024).

Local leaders, including those from the Hudur District, have expressed strong support for the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), which they believe have made significant sacrifices to ensure the safety of their communities. They argue that introducing Egyptian troops could disrupt the overall security of the region and expose vulnerable populations to renewed violence (Horn Observer 2024). Additionally, there is a historical context that informs this opposition; many Somalis recall Egypt's past support for clan militias during the 1990s, which led to conflict and suffering in their communities (Horn Observer 2024). Egypt's recent decision to deploy troops to Somalia is poised to significantly impact the stability of the Horn of Africa. This military engagement, part of a broader defense pact with Somalia, has escalated tensions with Ethiopia and could lead to a range of geopolitical consequences for the region.

Egypt's current foreign policy reflects a complex balancing act between regional security interests and historical commitments as a leader within the Arab League. While its silence on the Gaza conflict raises questions about its commitment to Palestine, its active engagement in Somalia demonstrates a strategic pivot aimed at bolstering national security against perceived threats from Ethiopia. Egypt's decision to deploy troops to Somalia is driven by several strategic and geopolitical factors. This move reflects Egypt's intent to enhance its influence in the Horn of Africa, counter Ethiopia's growing power, and address security threats in the region.

Ethiopia has expressed significant concern over Egypt's military buildup in Somalia, perceiving it as a national security threat. The presence of Egyptian troops could escalate tensions, especially since Ethiopian forces are also stationed in Somalia as part of the ATMIS (Karr and Borens 2024). This dynamic creates a precarious situation where both nations may find themselves in direct confrontation. Egypt views its engagement in Somalia as a strategy to bolster its security interests against perceived threats from Ethiopia. However, this stance is unacceptable to Ethiopia, as the situation in Somalia primarily concerns Ethiopians and other nations in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, Egypt's participation in peacekeeping missions in the region is seen as potentially destabilizing, providing opportunities for extremist groups like Al-Shabaab to acquire weapons and pose further threats to regional security (Ali 2024; Amin 2024).

The local opposition in Somalia to Egyptian involvement is rooted in several significant concerns. Many Somalis perceive the deployment of Egyptian troops as a threat to their national sovereignty, fearing that it could undermine the progress made by Ethiopian forces in stabilizing the region and combating threats from militant groups like Al-Shabaab (Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation 2024). Local leaders and community representatives have voiced their apprehensions that the presence of Egyptian forces might disrupt the security landscape and lead to increased instability. Additionally, there is a growing sentiment among the populace that Egypt's involvement is an attempt to exert control over Somali affairs, which has fueled resentment and distrust towards Egypt (Asem 2024; Ali 2024). This perception is further exacerbated by Egypt's military agreements with Somalia, which many view as a shift in regional power dynamics favoring Egypt at the expense of Somali sovereignty.

Egypt's military cooperation with Somalia can also be interpreted as an attempt to exert political pressure on Ethiopia regarding the GERD negotiations. By enhancing its military footprint in Somalia and strengthening ties with Mogadishu, Egypt seeks to build alliances with Ethiopia's neighbors and create leverage against Addis Ababa (Ali 2024). This strategy reflects a broader Egyptian ambition to reassert its influence in African affairs after years of relative disengagement.

What the Somali Federal Government fails to understand, or perhaps reacts to emotionally in its response to Ethiopia, is that Egypt's military involvement is intended to support Somali forces against threats such as Al-Shabaab. However, this involvement may also destabilize Somalia itself. The deployment of Egyptian troops could provoke local opposition, as some Somali factions might view these forces as foreign occupiers rather than liberators (Ali 2024). This internal dissent risks undermining the authority of the Somali government and complicating efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

The deployment of Egyptian troops in Somalia is viewed as a potential threat to the authority of the Somali Federal Government (SFG). The SFG's choice to phase out Ethiopian forces while inviting Egyptian troops has created divisions within Somali politics, raising concerns about national sovereignty and the legitimacy of foreign military presence. Critics argue that this shift could deepen internal divisions and further fragment Somalia's political landscape.

Egypt's troop deployment marks a significant change in its foreign policy, reflecting its strategic interests in countering Ethiopian influence and addressing regional security threats. However, this move carries substantial risks that could destabilize not only Somalia but also the broader Horn of Africa. Increased tensions with Ethiopia may lead to military confrontations, complicate local governance in Somalia, foster proxy conflicts among local actors, and disrupt ongoing peace efforts. Therefore, Egypt's actions require careful management to avoid worsening an already volatile situation.

> "Ethiopia remains vocal about recent developments in Egypt, particularly because the Horn of Africa is a more pressing concern for Ethiopia than it is for Egypt."

Additionally, Egypt's military cooperation with Somalia is seen as part of a larger geopolitical strategy aimed at countering Ethiopia's influence in the region. This alignment has heightened tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia, complicating diplomatic relations and raising the possibility of conflict. There are concerns that Egypt's involvement may not only destabilize Somalia but also draw it into a larger regional rivalry that could have detrimental effects on its fragile political situation.

Recent developments regarding the Nile River and its implications for the riparian countries, particularly South Sudan, have been shaped by escalating tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The newly established Nile River Basin Commission (NRBC) is tasked with addressing the contentious issue of equitable water use among Nile Basin states. This comes in the wake of the Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework (CFA), which took effect on October 13, 2024. The CFA aims to resolve disputes over Nile water resources within six months, amidst heightened geopolitical tensions in the Horn of Africa. (Okello 2024).

The CFA emphasizes the right of each Nile Basin state to use the waters within its territory and outlines principles for equitable and reasonable utilization. It aims to replace colonial-era treaties that primarily benefited Egypt and Sudan by recognizing the rights of upstream countries (International Water Law Project, 2024). The agreement establishes the Nile River Basin Commission (NRBC) to facilitate cooperation and manage shared water resources effectively. This commission is intended to enhance collaboration among member states in sustainable development and conservation efforts (Nile Basin Initiative, 2024). The CFA requires ratification by six countries to enter into force officially. As of October 2024, five countries have ratified it, with South Sudan being the latest to join. However, Egypt and Sudan have expressed strong opposition to the agreement, arguing that it undermines their historical rights to Nile waters (Khazen 2024). The CFA officially came into force on October 13, 2024. Following this development, Egypt has called for a reassessment of the agreement, emphasizing that it allows upstream countries to undertake projects without downstream consent, which they view as detrimental to their water security (Chang 2024).

Resolving Internal Conflicts in Ethiopia to Address External Threats due to GERD

The current conflict in Ethiopia is characterized by a complex interplay of internal strife and external pressures, particularly in the context of rising Egyptian influence. Following the Tigray War, which lasted from November 2020 to November 2022 and resulted in significant loss of life and displacement, Ethiopia has been grappling with renewed violence involving militia groups from the Amhara and Oromia regions. This resurgence of conflict began in 2021, coinciding with the escalation of tensions during the Tigray War, as the Ethiopian government sought to consolidate control over regional security forces and combat ethnic violence (Council on Foreign Relations 2025).

In this context, Ethiopia's ability to counter Egyptian influence hinges on its success in resolving these internal conflicts through peaceful means. The Ethiopian government has faced criticism for its handling of regional militias and ethnic tensions, particularly as it has engaged in military confrontations with former allies in Amhara and Oromia (Council on Foreign Relations 2025). The ongoing violence not only undermines national stability but also complicates Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts to address external threats, including those posed by Egypt's military involvement in Somalia.

Moreover, Ethiopia's strategic maneuvers, such as signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Somaliland for access to ports, have heightened tensions with Somalia and further strained Ethiopia's regional relationships (Biyenssa 2024). As Egypt strengthens its military ties with Somalia, it risks exacerbating Ethiopia's internal divisions and diverting attention from critical issues that need resolution within the country.

To effectively combat Egyptian influence and stabilize its position in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia must prioritize dialogue and reconciliation among its diverse ethnic groups. This approach would not only foster national unity but also enhance Ethiopia's diplomatic leverage in regional affairs. Peaceful resolution of internal conflicts is essential for establishing a cohesive front against external pressures and ensuring long-term stability in the region

Ethiopia's ability to counter external influence largely depends on its success in resolving these internal conflicts peacefully. The Ethiopian government has faced criticism for its handling of regional militias and ethnic tensions, especially as it has engaged in military confrontations with former allies in Amhara and Oromia (Council on Foreign Relations 2025). The ongoing violence not only undermines national stability but also complicates Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts to address external threats, including those posed by Egypt's military involvement in Somalia.

Additionally, Ethiopia's strategic actions—such as signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Somaliland for port access—have heightened tensions with Somalia and strained its regional relationships (Biyenssa 2024). This agreement allows Ethiopia to build a naval base and use the port of Berbera, which has angered Somali leaders who view Somaliland as part of their territory. As Egypt strengthens its military ties with Somalia, it risks exacerbating Ethiopia's internal divisions and distracting from critical issues that need resolution within the country. Ethiopia's concerns are compounded by fears that Egypt's involvement could embolden opposition groups or insurgents within its borders. The situation requires careful management to prevent further destabilization in the region.

To effectively counter Egypt's position, particularly in relation to internal conflict and regional stability,

> "Ethiopia must prioritize dialogue and reconciliation among its diverse ethnic groups to combat external influence and stabilize its position in the Horn of Africa."

Ethiopia should adopt a multifaceted approach. First, fostering national unity is crucial; this involves promoting a sense of national identity among the diverse ethnic groups within the country to mitigate internal divisions. Strengthening diplomatic relations is also essential; Ethiopia should actively engage with regional and international partners to build coalitions that support its interests. Additionally, enhancing military readiness is important; investing in defense capabilities while ensuring that military strategies align with diplomatic efforts can help deter external threats. Public awareness campaigns can play a significant role as well, educating citizens on issues related to water security and regional dynamics, which can garner public support for government initiatives.

Ethiopia must prioritize dialogue and reconciliation among its diverse ethnic groups to combat external influence and stabilize its position in the Horn of Africa. This approach would foster national unity and enhance Ethiopia's diplomatic leverage in regional affairs. Peaceful resolution of internal conflicts is essential for establishing a cohesive front against external pressures and ensuring long-term stability in the region.

Egypt role in stabilizing the current situation with Ethiopia

From Egypt's perspective, shifting public attention towards the Nile issue is no longer a sustainable approach to solve the internal situation. There is a pressing need for a strategic pivot towards dialogue with Ethiopia, aimed at fostering mutual development and addressing the ongoing Nile River conflict. Engaging in constructive discussions is essential for Egypt to redirect public focus from domestic challenges and build a cooperative relationship with Ethiopia (Al-Anani 2020). However, Egypt's involvement in Somalia's affairs is increasingly viewed as counterproductive and may ultimately backfire on its own interests. The Egyptian government must learn from historical precedents, such as the experiences of U.S. soldiers in similar geopolitical contexts, to avoid repeating past mistakes that could complicate its regional strategy (Ali 2024).

To stabilize the current situation with Ethiopia regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Egypt should consider several strategic recommendations. First, Egypt should prioritize diplomatic engagement by actively participating in negotiations with Ethiopia and Sudan, fostering a collaborative dialogue that emphasizes mutual benefits and regional stability. This could involve seeking mediation from neutral third parties or international organizations to facilitate discussions.

Second, Egypt can enhance its public diplomacy efforts to effectively communicate its concerns regarding water security with Ethiopia. By raising awareness of the potential impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on its water supply, Egypt can garner support from both Ethiopian citizens and the international community while also addressing domestic concerns..

Moreover, Egypt should explore economic cooperation initiatives with Ethiopia, focusing on shared interests such as trade, infrastructure development, and environmental sustainability. By creating interdependencies, both nations may find common ground that mitigates tensions.

Additionally, Egypt must invest in regional partnerships with other Nile Basin countries in addition to Ethiopia to create a united front that advocates for equitable water resource management. This coalition can help and ensure that all parties have a voice in negotiations and work for mutual interest.

Lastly, addressing internal challenges within Egypt, such as water management and agricultural efficiency, will strengthen its position in negotiations. By demonstrating effective domestic policies that maximize water use, Egypt can bolster its credibility in discussions about the GERD.

By implementing these strategies, Egypt can work towards a more stable and cooperative relationship with Ethiopia concerning the GERD.

Western Involvement in Resolving the Current Conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt

The GERD represents a transformative project for Ethiopia but poses significant challenges for trans boundary water management in the Nile Basin. Continued dialogue and cooperation among the riparian states are essential to address shared concerns and ensure sustainable management of this critical resource.

In the conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt, Western nations can play a significant role in resolving their dispute, provided they remain impartial and genuinely aim to address the concerns of both countries. At the same time, the West must seriously consider Egypt's involvement in Somalia, which may be intended to either combat or create a psychological threat to Ethiopia. The current situation poses various challenges for Western interests, including geopolitical stability, counterterrorism efforts, water security, and humanitarian concerns.

The escalating tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia could destabilize the Horn of Africa, a region already fraught with conflict. The West has a vested interest in maintaining stability to prevent humanitarian crises that could arise from further conflicts (The Soufan Center 2024). Additionally, Egypt's military support in Somalia may inadvertently empower extremist groups like Al-Shabaab if it is perceived as foreign interference. This could complicate counterterrorism efforts in the region, which are also a priority for Western nations (Ali 2024).

The assertion that former President Donald Trump was attempting to mediate between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is indeed partial. Trump's comments during a press conference in October 2020 suggested a dramatic stance, implying that Egypt might resort to extreme measures against the dam. He stated, "It's a very dangerous situation because Egypt is not going to be able to live that way… They will end up blowing up the dam" (France 24 2020). This statement not only reflects Trump's frustration with Ethiopia's actions but also indicates a lack of a balanced diplomatic approach.

Trump's involvement was characterized by his close alignment with Egypt, particularly under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. He had previously agreed to mediate talks concerning the dam, which had been a source of escalating tension between Egypt and Ethiopia since its inception in 2011 (Amin 2024). However, the mediation efforts ultimately faltered, with Trump himself acknowledging that Ethiopia "broke the deal" that had been arranged (France 24 2020).

This context underscores the complexities of U.S. involvement in the Nile River dispute, where Trump's rhetoric may have inadvertently heightened tensions rather than fostering constructive dialogue. The situation illustrates how geopolitical interests can complicate mediation efforts, particularly when one party feels threatened by another's developmental projects.

Ethiopia's reaction to former President Donald Trump's remarks about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was one of strong condemnation and concern. Following Trump's suggestion that Egypt might resort to blowing up the dam, Ethiopian officials expressed outrage at what they deemed reckless incitement of conflict.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister summoned the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, to seek clarification on Trump's statements. He stated that such comments "neither reflect the longstanding partnership and strategic alliance between Ethiopia and the United States nor are acceptable in International Law governing interstate relations" (Ethiopian Embassy 2020). Gedu, the former Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, further emphasized that Ethiopia would not succumb to threats against its sovereignty and would remain committed to trilateral negotiations under the African Union framework.

Additionally, Ethiopia's Consul in Istanbul criticized Trump's remarks as irresponsible and indicative of a lack of understanding regarding the situation. The Ambassador reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to a peaceful resolution based on cooperation and equitable utilization of the Nile's resources (Ethiopian Embassy 2020). Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn also condemned Trump's comments on social media, asserting that Ethiopia would not be intimidated by such statements.

Overall, Ethiopia viewed Trump's remarks as a dangerous escalation that undermined diplomatic efforts and threatened regional stability.

Conclusion

Egypt's position in the current Middle Eastern conflicts is shaped by its historical role as a mediator, its geographical significance concerning water security with Ethiopia, its engagement in Somalia for regional stability, and its leadership within the Arab League. As tensions continue to escalate across the region, Egypt must navigate complex domestic pressures while striving to maintain its strategic alliances and address humanitarian concerns arising from ongoing conflicts.

Egypt's dual approach remaining largely silent on the Gaza conflict while actively engaging militarily in Somalia highlights contradictions within its role as a member of the Arab League. While Egypt seeks to present itself as a leader advocating for Palestinian rights, its actions in Somalia suggest a prioritization of national interests over collective Arab solidarity

This contradictory stance could have significant implications for Egypt's relationships within the Arab League. Many member states expect stronger leadership from Egypt regarding Palestinian issues. However, by focusing on military engagement in Somalia and maintaining a cautious approach toward Israel, Egypt risks alienating it from other Arab nations that are more vocally supportive of Palestinian rights (Al-Anani 2020).

Ethiopia must address its internal conflicts to prevent foreign exploitation, while Egypt should engage with Ethiopia based on mutual benefit. Additionally, Western nations need to play an impartial role in facilitating a resolution to the disputes between the two countries. In summary, Egypt and Ethiopia should seek a peaceful resolution to their differences, focusing on creating a win-win situation for both parties.

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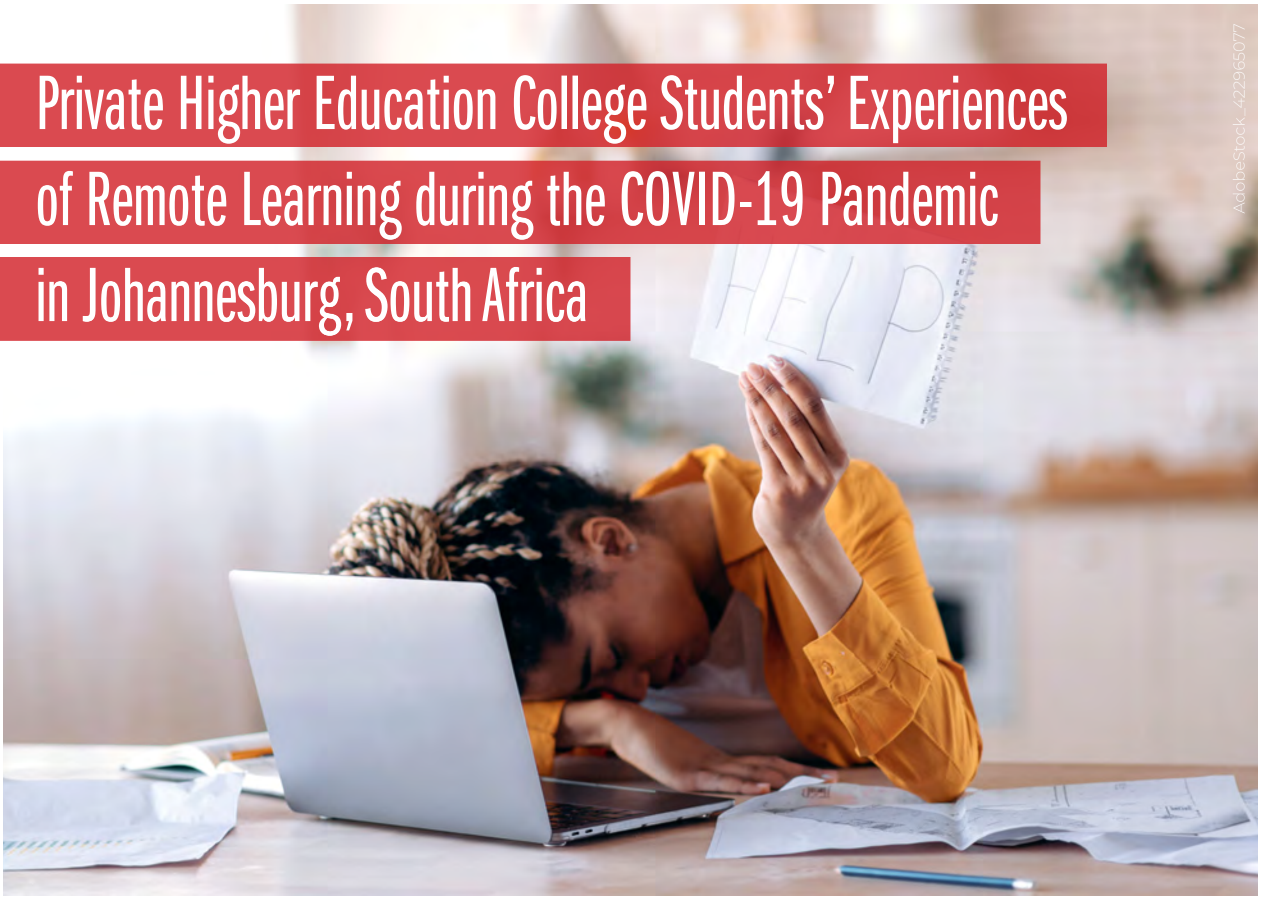
Private Higher Education College Students' Experiences of Remote Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Johannesburg, South Africa



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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown implemented in March 2020 prompted South African higher education institutions to shift from face-to-face to remote teaching and learning. The sudden transition presented challenges for students in higher education institutions such as universities, but there is limited research examining the perceptions of students in private higher education colleges. Henceforth, this study explores the experiences of students of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in private higher education colleges located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Employing a qualitative approach, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with sixteen students from private higher education colleges. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. The findings indicate that private higher education college students encountered difficulties in navigating remote learning during the national lockdown due to the intersection of factors, including unstable internet connections and network issues, lack of dedicated study spaces, and insufficient communication and support from lecturers. This article contributes to the body of knowledge on the remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown by shedding light on private college students' experiences.

Keywords: COVID-19, lockdown, remote learning, students, private higher education colleges, Johannesburg.

Introduction

The rapid spread of COVID-19 around the world prompted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to declare COVID-19 a global pandemic (WHO 2020). In South Africa, the first case of COVID-19 was reported on 5 March 2020 in Durban (Kiewit et al. 2020; Stiegler and Bouchard 2020). Subsequently, the South African government announced a national lockdown in an attempt to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Some of the lockdown interventions adopted included social distancing, and a stay-at-home and work-from-home policy (Bayane 2020; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown disrupted many sectors including the education sector whereby schools, universities and private colleges had to halt physical operation (Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). The physical closure of higher education institutions, for example, prompted the transition from face-to-face classes to remote teaching and learning. Remote learning, known as online learning, involves accessing learning materials and resources through the internet, enabling students to continue their studies remotely (Arkorful and Abaidoo 2014; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023).

While remote teaching and learning was a necessity for the continuation of the academic year, it was accompanied by challenges for students (Cranfield et al. 2021; Svongoro and Mudzi, 2023). Research focusing on public universities highlights that adapting to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for students, as some did not have the necessary resources such as laptops and data for online learning (Mhlanga and Moloi 2020; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). Pokhrel and Chhetri add that students from poor or low-income families reported high absenteeism in online classes compared to those from middle and upper-class families (2021). Nevertheless, there is limited research examining the experiences of private higher education college students of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown. It is unclear whether private college students had similar challenges to university students with regard to remote learning. It is against this background that we explore private college students' experiences of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This paper is guided by the primary research question: What are the students' experiences of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in private higher education colleges?

Literature review

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption in South Africa's higher education sector (Leung and Sharma 2020; Bayane 2020; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). This sector includes institutions of higher learning that are registered and recognised by the minister of higher education under section 69(d) and offer qualifications and programmes in accordance with the National Qualification Framework Act of 2008 (Act 67 of 2008) and the South African Qualification Authority Act of 1995 (DHET 2022). Institutions of higher learning consist of universities, which provide a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, engage in research, and participate in community engagement (DHET 2022). In contrast, private higher education colleges offer higher education with a more limited scope and range of operations, meeting the criteria for recognition as higher education colleges as prescribed by the minister of higher education under section 69(d) and chapter 7 of the Higher Education Act (DHET 2022). Universities and private higher education colleges differ in size, offerings, and access to funding; for instance, public universities are funded by government, whereas private higher education colleges are financed by private businesses or individuals (DHET 2022; SchoolGistSA 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to explore the experiences of students at private higher education colleges of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, as most research is primarily focused on university students (Leung and Sharma 2020; Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023).

According to Muloiwa-Klenam et al., the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted the declaration of a national state of disaster in South Africa, disrupted face-to-face classes resulting in the adoption of remote teaching and learning in higher education institutions (2023). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in most institutions of higher learning, students engaged in blended learning characterised by face-to-face classes and access of study material using learning management systems such as Blackboard (Chisadza et al. 2021). The shift to remote teaching and learning therefore meant that students had to access study material, complete assessments and attend lectures online. Marongwe and Garidzirai (2021) and Muloiwa-Klenam et al. (2023), explain that remote teaching and learning was conducted through platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Blackboard. Remote teaching and learning included synchronous learning, which occurred in real time with live interaction or classes between the lecturers and students. Meanwhile, asynchronous learning involved non-interactive online platforms, such as recorded lessons that students could access at their convenience (DeMarchi 2023).

“The shift to remote teaching and learning therefore meant that students had to access study material, complete assessments and attend lectures online.”

While remote teaching and learning was crucial in terms of saving lives and continuation of academics, but it was challenging for students (Matarirano et al. 2021; Wise and Bergner 2020; Krige 2020; Chisadza et al. 2021). Matli and Phurutsi (2023, pp. 973-974) explain that during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, students had to move back home and others, especially those residing in rural areas, did not have access to resources such as the internet and computers at home, unlike when at campus. The lack of access to necessary resources for remote learning therefore resulted in poor attendance of online classes (Leung and Sharma 2020; Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021; Moonasamy-Reddy and Mulliah 2022). Even for those who managed to attend, the poor network connection made it difficult for them to communicate with their lecturers during online classes (Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023).

Additionally, students lacked adequate study space since they often share rooms and communal areas with family members (Anciano et al. 2020). The lack of a dedicated study space adversely affected their academic performance, as they struggled to find a quiet environment to focus on their studies (Anciano et al. 2020; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). Moreover, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns imposed additional responsibilities on students at home, such as caring for family members and managing household chores. Consequently, students faced considerable difficulties in balancing their academic obligations with their familial duties, as they had to prioritise their family responsibilities over their academic pursuits, resulting in a decline in their academic performance (Shin and Hickey 2020; Pillay et al. 2021; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic also had a significant impact on the mental health of students. With the sudden shift to remote learning, students began experiencing various challenges, leading to increased levels of anxiety, stress, and feelings of being overwhelmed (Govender et al. 2021). One of the primary difficulties has been the need to adapt to various online platforms for remote learning, often with limited prior knowledge, which has added further stress to their already full plates (Leung and Sharma 2020; Govender et al. 2021; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). The transition to remote learning also resulted in decreased motivation to learn, as students had limited contact with their lecturers and peers (Moloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). Additionally, simple questions that could have been easily resolved during in-person classes or breaks now required phone calls or text messages, leading to miscommunications and further frustration (Goyayi 2021).

Literature indicates that students from institutions of higher learning, such as universities, had a negative experience of remote learning due to issues such as lack of necessary resources and the inability to balance school and family responsibilities. Nonetheless, there is a dearth of scholarly work on the experiences of private higher education college students of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This study aims to empirically contribute to the body of knowledge by examining and identifying the similarities and differences between the remote learning experiences of private college students and university students. Additionally, we use intersectionality as a theoretical framework to explore how the intersection of multiple identities and issues shaped the remote learning experiences of private college students during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

Theoretical framework

Intersectionality, a theoretical framework introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, was utilised to understand private higher education college students' experiences of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Crenshaw coined intersectionality to address the shortcomings of feminist and anti-racist movements, which often overlooked the experiences of marginalised individuals (Crenshaw 1991). Intersectionality therefore argues that individuals' experiences are shaped by the fact that they are marginalised and are an intersection of multiple identities such as class, geographical location and others (Crenshaw 1991; Marstripieri 2021; Bayane 2019). Intersectionality, a widely adopted theoretical framework, helps comprehend individuals' experiences (Crenshaw 1991).

In this study, intersectionality is used to analyse the experiences of private higher education college students with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. We argue that students' challenging experiences are shaped by the intersection of multiple issues, such as the lack of necessary resources (e.g., stable internet connection or data), the absence of a dedicated study space at home, and limited interaction or communication with lecturers. These factors collectively contributed to the difficulties faced by private college students during remote learning. Additionally, intersectionality helps us understand that geographical location also influenced students' experiences. For instance, some students who lived in rural areas reported that their internet connection was unstable, which interfered with attending online classes during the pandemic. Therefore, intersectionality was a suitable theoretical framework for examining the experiences of private college students with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown (Crenshaw 1991).

Methodology

This study used qualitative research to examine students' experiences and challenges with remote learning during COVID-19. This approach involved building connections with participants and allowed for deep insights into their experiences. It helped gather more information by encouraging participants to talk in-depth about the topic, capturing the complexities of their experiences, and providing a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by students during remote learning (Sarantakos 2005). The study was conducted in the City of Johannesburg, focusing on regions A and C, as these regions had a high concentration of colleges transitioning to remote learning during COVID-19 (Yes Media 2021; DHET 2022). One college was selected from Sunninghill in Region A and one from Randburg in Region C.

The study included 16 private college students, with an equal split of 8 males and 8 females, ranging between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Participants were selected using a convenience technique where students were approached by students from private higher education colleges. Snowball sampling technique was also used as some of the interviewed participants referred researchers to their friends who were students, and they were then approached to be part of the study (Babbie 2021). To be eligible to participate in this study, participants had to attend the same college as the interviewed participants in either Region A or Region C, be between the ages of 18 and 35 years old, and had to have participated in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insight into experiences of remote learning during the pandemic (Bless et al. 2013). All interviews were conducted virtually on Microsoft Teams, lasting 40-60 minutes, and recorded for transcription. Participants agreed to English as the interview language. The interview guide included open-ended questions (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019).

The data was analysed using thematic content analysis to identify themes and subthemes (Alhojailan 2012). This study adhered to the data analysis procedures as described by Rosenthal (2016, pp. 513-514), which involved transcribing, integrating, coding, thematising, and writing. Initially, interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams and transcribed within the same platform. The transcripts were carefully checked and corrected by comparing them with the recorded interviews. A detailed review of the transcripts was done to understand the information collected. The data was coded by identifying common concepts and colour-coding them. Common themes were then identified and colour-coded based on research aims and objectives. Each theme and subtheme were interpreted in the final step of the analysis process.

Researchers must anticipate and address ethical dilemmas that may arise during a study. To ensure ethical standards are met, University A's College Research Ethics Committee granted ethical clearance for this study. A person's right to make their own decisions, such as whether to take part in a study, is included in the concept of autonomy. There must be no forms of pressure or coercion used to encourage participation. Through the distribution of an information sheet and informed consent, the researcher in this study made sure that participants were fully informed about the study (Bless et al. 2014). The participant gave the researcher their verbal and written consent, allowing the researcher to sign the consent form on their behalf. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. The use of pseudonyms to identify participants further ensured their anonymity. The study's purpose and the secure storage of the data to preserve confidentiality were also explained to the participants.

Findings: Remote Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging due to intersectional issues (i.e., poor internet connection, lack of study space and limited communication from lecturers).

Upon the declaration of a national state of disaster and implementation of a national lockdown by the South African government, higher education institutions transitioned from face-to-face instruction to remote teaching and learning. This shift required students to adapt to learning remotely from home, but it came with challenges. Using intersectionality as a theoretical lens, this study identified multiple and interconnected issues to have contributed to challenges experienced by private college students regarding remote learning. These challenges included poor internet connectivity and network problems, a lack of suitable study environments, and limited communication between students and lecturers. Students in this study struggled with remote learning, unreliable internet connections and network issues, which affected their ability to attend classes and complete assessments. Moses, a private college student, said the following about remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic:

> *I really struggled with the internet connection when attending classes remotely. One big issue was all the load shedding happening throughout the day, which made it hard to stay connected for classes. When the power went out while I was taking a test, it was a nightmare because I had to scramble to buy more data, which I could not really afford. If you ran out of data, you get disconnected and have even more problems. It was just a mess* (Moses 2023).

Moses describes remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic challenging due to multiple issues, firstly pinpointing internet connectivity as the primary obstacle that hindered his participation in online classes. He further elaborates on how power outages, known as loadshedding, negatively affected his internet connection and network, causing him to be occasionally disconnected from online classes and missing important lecture content. The instability of his internet connection also posed problems during tests and examinations, as he would experience random disconnections. Despite attempting to purchase data to mitigate these issues, he found remote learning to be a challenging task. Similar issues were reported by other students in this study, for instance, Nishaan said:

> *There were times when I did not have stable internet or data to connect to classes because I could not afford data and at other times my internet was very slow. When*

the internet was slow, I had to wait for the internet to come back up and then go back to my lecture and say listen, I did not hear you. Please can you repeat yourself? (Nishaan 2023).

Moses and Nishaan's experiences shed light on the challenges private college students faced with remote learning. Nishaan also encountered difficulties due to unreliable network connectivity, resulting in slow internet speeds that hindered her ability to effectively communicate with lecturers. This communication lag led to instances where she struggled to hear her lecturers clearly, often needing information to be repeated. Nishaan sometimes could not afford to use her data for online classes, highlighting the financial barrier posed by the high costs of data and maintaining a stable internet connection. Adding to the multiple issues contributing to the negative experience of remote learning, participants in the study emphasised that geographical location was also an issue. For instance, some students were residing in rural areas where poor internet and network connectivity is a problem. Sizwe, a private college student living in a rural area, said:

Remote learning was extremely difficult for me because I stay in rural areas and there is a network problem. I did not attend classes and participate the same way as it was with face-to-face classes. This really affected me as a student and my academic performance also declined (Sizwe 2023).

Unlike Moses and Nishaan, Sizwe pointed out that remote learning was a challenge for students residing in rural areas due to severe network issues compared to those in urban areas. He recalled the benefits of face-to-face classes and explained how attending and participating in online classes was difficult due to poor internet connections. Consequently, inadequate internet access and lack of data resulted in students' low attendance and participation in online classes, ultimately affecting their academic performance.

In this study, private higher education college students also identified a lack of suitable study space and environment as a significant issue. A conducive study environment is crucial for academic success, enabling students to focus and maximise productivity by minimising distractions. However, participants revealed that studying remotely at home posed difficulties due to the presence of others, leading to distractions. This is what Kamohelo said:

The home environment was not a well-constructed learning environment. The challenge that I experienced was that I could not study and do my schoolwork because I stay with my family, meaning that sometimes I was distracted by my parents and siblings in the house (Kamohelo 2023).

Kamohelo explains that the lack of a well-constructed learning environment at home posed significant challenges for him, hindering his ability to study effectively. Without a dedicated study space, Kamohelo found himself frequently distracted by family members, making it hard for him to focus on his studies and be productive. The contrast between Kamohelo's home environment and the college environment underscores the significance of having a suitable study environment. While private colleges attempted to provide students with the necessary resources and support to facilitate remote learning, the same cannot always be said for home environments. The distractions from family members hindered private college students from focusing on their academics. These sentiments were echoed by most participants in the study, who cited how distractions from parents and siblings adversely affected their academic performance.

Another factor contributing to the multiple issues identified by students during the COVID-19 pandemic was the limited communication and support received from lecturers in remote learning settings. In traditional face-to-face learning, students were accustomed to consistent and seamless interaction with their lecturers within the physical classroom. However, with the shift to remote learning, participants in this study expressed dissatisfaction with the reduced level of communication and support from lecturers. Seneliso, for example, shared her personal experience of interacting with lecturers during the pandemic. She stated:

You hardly had the opportunity to interact with lecturers. This is because lecturers had their own lives. The only time you will be able to get proper communication with lecturers

> *would be during the online lectures and this was very limited interaction with your lecturers. After that, you would just have to figure out things and learn on your own* (Seneliso 2023).

Seneliso reflects on her interaction with lecturers during the period of remote learning as severely limited, which posed a significant obstacle for her. The lack of extensive communication and interaction with her lecturers proved to be challenging, especially since she was used to having unrestricted access to consult with them before the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, she had to dedicate additional time to grasp the module content on her own. Therefore, remote learning due to COVID-19 proved to be challenging for students in private colleges, as they received minimal support and communication from their lecturers. One could argue that support and communication from lecturers were crucial during remote learning as they would assist students, but students did not receive such support. Similarly, Matheko complained of minimal communication received from lecturers during remote learning. He said:

> *What was most challenging for me with regards to remote learning, was the little support and communication I received from my lecturers. Lecturers during this time were only available during online classes and it was difficult to ask a lot of questions because we are many as students needing the support. This really affected me because I was still used to having access to lectures but noticed that things have changed with online learning* (Matheko 2023).

Matheko echoes Seneliso's sentiment regarding the minimal support and communication received from lecturers during remote learning. He describes how the shift to remote learning posed significant challenges for him due to the lack of access to lecturers compared to before the pandemic, which had a noticeable impact on his learning experience. This highlights that remote learning was particularly challenging for students in private colleges, as many expressed dissatisfaction with the limited support they received. These difficulties can be attributed to the fact that lecturers were also adjusting to remote teaching methods.

The findings therefore problematise remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and link it to the intersection of issues including the unreliable internet connections, no dedicated study space at home, residing in rural areas, and limited support received from lecturers. Students expressed that their internet connectivity was unstable, which hindered their ability to fully participate in online classes and occasionally caused them to miss important lectures. We therefore argue that this issue was exacerbated by private colleges' abrupt transition from in-person to remote learning, without providing adequate support such as data provision, forcing students to shoulder the financial burden themselves. Additionally, the absence of a suitable study environment also contributed to the challenges of remote learning. Students reported that they struggled to concentrate on their academics due to distractions at home. Lastly, students noted that they received minimal communication and support from their lecturers, which made remote learning even more challenging for them, as they were accustomed to the support provided during face-to-face classes and meetings.

Discussion

This study empirically contributes to the body of literature on the challenges specifically faced by private higher education college students with remote learning during the pandemic. While there are structural differences between private higher education colleges and universities, the findings of this paper build on the experiences of university students about remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021; Moonasamy-Reddy and Mulliah 2022; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023). Research conducted among university students cited remote learning as challenging due to a lack of necessary resources, such as stable internet connections and adequate study spaces at home (Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). This study similarly investigated and problematised remote learning during the pandemic among private college students and identified several intersected factors contributing to their negative experiences with remote learning. Svongoro and Mudzi (2023, p. 211) highlighted that institutions of higher learning abruptly switched from face-to-face to remote learning without preparing students and lecturers. Likewise, private college students in this study found remote learning challenging. Many students reported that unreliable internet connections and network issues hindered their ability to fully participate in online classes, often causing them to miss lectures due to unexpected disconnections (Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). This issue was particularly pronounced for students living in rural areas, where access to stable networks was even more problematic (Matli and Phurustsi 2023). The financial burden of affording data packages also prevented some students from attending and engaging in classes regularly. These findings align with existing literature, which highlights the challenges faced by higher education students in remote learning environments due to inadequate access to resources (Shin and Hickey 2020; Chisadza et al. 2021; Moonasamy-Reddy and Mulliah 2022; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023; Muloiwa-Klenam et al. 2023).

As the nationwide lockdown led to the closure of higher education campuses, students had to return home (Chisadza et al. 2021; Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). Consequently, private college students faced significant challenges with remote learning due to the lack of a dedicated study space at home. Living with parents and siblings meant constant distractions, making it difficult for students to focus on academic work and attend online classes. The home environment presented numerous distractions, such as socialising with siblings and attending to household chores, thereby hindering successful engagement in remote learning. It can be argued that private college students struggled to maintain the same level of dedication and concentration at home as they would in traditional face-to-face settings (Shin and Hickey 2020).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns, students were accustomed to readily accessing support from their lecturers whenever needed (Svongoro and Mudzi 2023). However, the shift to remote learning during the pandemic brought forth challenges for students in terms of accessing the expected support and communication from their instructors. This study highlights the difficulties private college students encountered in reaching out to lecturers and obtaining assistance during online classes. The limited support and communication from lecturers made remote learning particularly challenging for students, necessitating them to dedicate more time to understanding course materials independently. Consequently, remote learning posed significant hurdles for students in private colleges, exacerbated by the intersection of factors such as unreliable internet connections, inadequate study environments, students residing in rural areas, and limited communication and support during remote learning sessions. The findings underscore that remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging, as private college students similarly grappled to adapt to remote learning methods (Moonasamy-Reddy and Mulliah 2022; Mohamedbhai 2020) due to the intersection of issues such as unstable internet connections, lack of data, students residing in rural areas, lack of study space, difficulty concentrating at home, and limited support received from lecturers.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdown led to the closure of schools and higher education institutions, including private colleges. These institutions were required to transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to remote learning. While existing research has highlighted challenges faced by students in other higher education settings during remote learning, this paper focuses specifically on the experiences of students attending private higher education colleges during the pandemic. The study revealed that private college students encountered significant difficulties with remote learning due to intersected factors or issues. These included unreliable internet connections and network issues, difficulties concentrating at home due to a lack of dedicated study spaces, and minimal support or communication from lecturers during remote sessions. This paper contributes to the body of literature regarding students' experiences of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although institutions resumed with physical operation, the findings underscore the critical importance of higher education institutions in ensuring that students receive adequate support and access to necessary resources to foster their academic success.

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Development and Implementation processes: The exploration of interprofessional education programmes

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Abstract

There have been many calls for Interprofessional Education (IPE) in the last decade. Many authors have attempted to produce guidelines, steps, and processes for developing undergraduate and graduate IPE programmes in health professions education. This scoping review, guided by the enhanced Arksey and O'Malley framework, sought to synthesise the nature, development, and implementation processes of interprofessional education programmes for health professions' students in higher education institutions.

Information was gathered from January 2016 to March 2022. Among the initially identified 1338 papers, thirty-four were selected and analysed. Our findings revealed that IPE programmes aimed to facilitate students' learning 'from', 'about', and 'with' each other, enhancing their interprofessional knowledge and skills for future professional settings. We observed that the design of IPE programmes was shaped by their intended purpose, target audience, and assessment methods. From the insights gleaned, we formulated a comprehensive ten-phase framework delineating the development process of IPE programmes: buy-in from the institution; form an IPE team; conduct stakeholder engagements regarding the IPE; learn from other institutions; articulate common IPE content of the various curricula; design the IPE programme/curriculum grounded in framework, theory and ethical principles; share programme for stakeholder inputs; finalise and seek accreditation/approval for the programme; implements programme; continually engage stakeholder involvement in evaluation and improvement. IPE stands as a cornerstone for the health workforce. We advocate for faculties and colleges of

health sciences to carefully consider the scientifically synthesised phases during the development and implementation of IPE programmes.

Keywords: Development, implementation, IPE programme, process, scoping review.

Introduction

For better collaboration in the workplace and to elevate healthcare outcomes for patients, multiple healthcare professionals from diverse disciplines engage in coordinated teamwork to deliver safe, comprehensive, and efficient care for their clients. This approach, known as Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (IPCP), emerges from interprofessional education (IPE), where students from various health professions learn from, alongside, and about each other (Mohammed et al. 2021). IPE involves acquiring knowledge about the roles, abilities, limitations, and legal constraints of professionals from different fields (World Health Organisation (WHO) 2010).

Despite IPE's more than 50-year existence, the last ten years have seen a marked growth in the need for its improvement and integration on a global scale (Endacott et al. 2015; Herath et al. 2017; Thistlethwaite 2016; WHO 2010). IPE seeks to give healthcare students the abilities required for teamwork in the clinical setting, enabling the delivery of all-encompassing healthcare services. The involvement and support of patients, their families, carers, and communities are highlighted by this collaborative paradigm (WHO 2010). Additionally, including IPE in the curriculum for students pursuing health professions helps them develop a common appreciation for collaborative practice and teamwork in their future professions (Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Byerly et al. 2021). Early exposure to IPE during undergraduate education helps students understand their own responsibilities and value the contributions of other medical professionals to patient care provided in a team environment (Samuriwo et al. 2020; Zechariah et al. 2019).

Despite IPE's advantages, a lot of medical professionals still receive their training in conventional silos, which prevents the health system as a whole from practicing collaboratively (Anderson et al. 2016a). The difficulty of creating and executing IPE projects is a factor in this pattern (Christmals and Armstrong 2020; Delawala 2020; Reitsma et al. 2019; Sulistyowati

“…to elevate healthcare outcomes for patients, multiple healthcare professionals from diverse disciplines engage in coordinated teamwork to deliver safe, comprehensive, and efficient care for their clients.”

and Walker 2019). Reitsma et al. (2019, p.298) found challenging professional curricula as a deterrent to IPE participation. Sunguya et al. (2014, p.3) mentioned various barriers, together with curriculum differences, scheduling problems, resource restrictions, and stereotypes. Additionally, Ahmady et al. (2020, p.229) emphasised structural, educational, and cultural challenges, such as lack of organisational support and facilitator skills. Delawala (2020, p.76) further mentioned that Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPECP) and teamwork are hindered by team stress.

Organisations like the Africa Interprofessional Education Network (AfrIPEN), have prompted IPECP programme development and implementation (Botma and Snyman 2019), gathering favourable regional and global responses. Several institutions in South Africa (SA) and around the world have carried out efforts to produce and implement IPE programmes (Ahmady et al. 2020; Botma and Snyman 2019; George Washington University 2020 and 2021; Grymonpre 2016; Nicol et al. 2013; Shrader et al. 2014; Sunguya et al. 2014; University of Southampton 2020; Western University 2020). Nevertheless, the design and execution of IPECP programmes vary among institutions, evident in their objectives, emphasis, and developmental approaches, though all aimed at preparing students for IPCP. Acquiring core and supplementary competencies for IPCP through IPE is resource-intensive and time-consuming. Evaluated IPECP programmes have demonstrated a beneficial influence on student learning and the broader healthcare system. Yet, the design and execution of IPECP programmes vary across institutions, encompassing aspects such as healthcare quality and safety for patients/clients, respect for diverse professions, enhanced interprofessional relationships, heightened productivity, cost reduction in healthcare, alignment in skills and knowledge, and anticipation of future healthcare system requirements (Acquavita et al. 2019; Bares et al. 2018; Chan et al. 2017; Forstater et al. 2019; Heath et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Kutt et al. 2019; Madigosky et al. 2019; Müller & Couper 2021; Nicol et al. 2013; Safabakhsh et al. 2018; Van Gessel et al. 2018).

The nature of the programme, development, and implementation processes within institutions in SA also vary. The University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of the Free State (UFS), the University of Witwatersrand (WITS) and Stellenbosch University (SU) have integrated IPE programmes into their health curricula (SU 2019; UFS 2020; UWC 2013; WITS 2020). At UWC, an Interprofessional Education Unit (IPEU) has been established to administer IPE, providing centralised curricula and venues for student training (UWC 2013). Likewise, the Centre for Health Professions Education (CHPE) at SU promotes a culture and skill set aimed at enhancing patient/client outcomes and fortifying the healthcare system through IPECP (SU 2019).

Many authors have endeavoured to streamline the development and implementation processes of IPE programs by producing guidelines, steps, and procedures for integrating interprofessional education within health professions (El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Kahaleh et al. 2015; O'Keefe & Ward 2018; van Diggele et al. 2020). The effectiveness of processes in the development and implementation of IPE programs remains unclear. This review aimed to consolidate the most effective steps by synthesising the nature, development, and implementation processes of IPE programs.

Method

Design: This scoping review followed the enhanced Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework outlined by Peters et al. (2015). Scoping reviews aim to summarise the breadth and depth of evidence within a particular field (Levac et al. 2010), serving as precursors to planned systematic reviews or standalone efforts to map evidence in emerging fields (Christmals and Armstrong 2019). Given that IPE is an evolving area of study, a scoping review was deemed the most suitable methodology. The scoping review framework is comprised of the following steps: synchronising the research question and the objectives; setting the inclusion criteria; literature search; inclusion and exclusion of evidence; data charting, synthesising and reporting of results (Peters et al. 2015).

Synchronising the research question and objectives: The review question was guided by the PCC (Population Concept and Context) mnemonic developed by Joanna Briggs Institute (The Joanna Briggs Institute 2015); thus, "what constitutes the nature, development and implementation processes of an IPE programme in health professions education"? The population (P) being explored are health professions' students, the concept (C) is the development and implementation processes of IPE programmes, and the context (C) is global.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria: Studies not centred on undergraduate students were excluded, as the primary focus was on IPE for undergraduates in health professions education. However, if the authors deemed it necessary, graduate studies were considered for further analysis. Additionally, studies were excluded if they evaluated IPE programmes without specifying the development and implementation process, as this did not align with the review's aim. Similarly, studies were excluded if they only presented outcomes related to opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of students, staff, and professionals on IPE programmes without detailing the development and implementation process. Lastly, studies focusing solely on one profession, despite providing the IPE programme development and implementation process, were also excluded.

Literature search: Searches were conducted on EBSCOhost (MEDLINE, CINAHL, Academic search complete, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, SocINDEX, MasterFILE Premier and Health-Source Consumer Edition), Scopus and PubMed, for relevant studies using Boolean combinations of the keywords: Interprofessional education, curriculum, development. The papers identified were imported into Mendeley reference manager where duplicates were removed. The titles of the studies were scanned for appropriateness; titles deemed irrelevant to the review, lacking either of the keywords or any related terms, were omitted from consideration. Abstracts of the remaining articles were read to determine the appropriateness of the studies to the review. Additional articles were excluded based on their abstracts if they did not offer information pertinent to the aim of this paper. Further literature was sought by scrutinising the reference lists of the chosen articles. The initial search was performed in September 2020 and subsequently updated in April 2022.

Studies included: We extracted relevant full-text articles and structured them into a data matrix (Table 1) to aid visual analysis and synthesis. This method of extracting evidence enabled the alignment of the results with the summary of the findings from the articles. The extraction process followed modified data extraction procedures outlined by Peters et al. (2015). The PRISMA flowchart illustrating the search and inclusion process is depicted below (Figure 1).

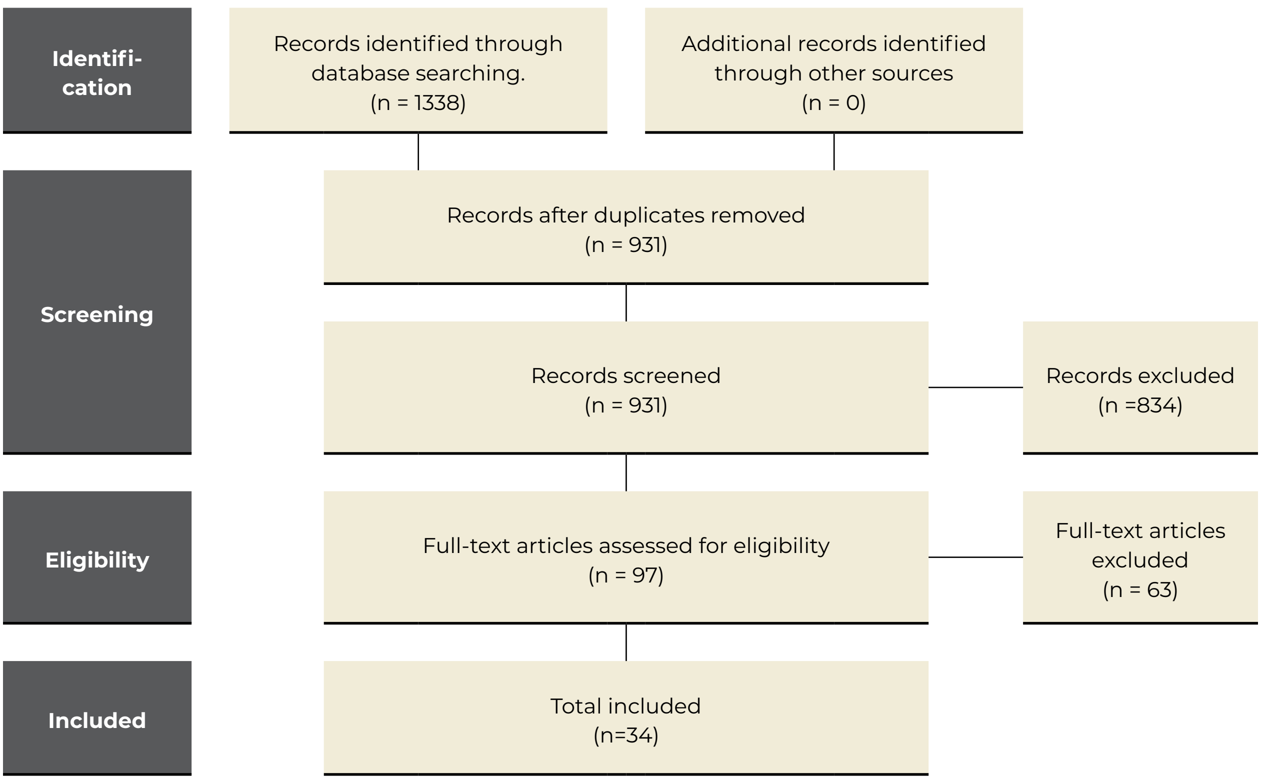

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart indicating search and inclusion

Data charting: The following aspects were charted: author, date and setting, purpose /outcomes of the study, target audience of the IPECP programme; programme development process and developed programme; and key findings/results related to the scoping review questions were extracted from the studies included into a data matrix (Table 1). The extraction process was conducted by the primary author and verified by the other two authors.

Analysis and Presentation of the Evidence

The data from the included studies were qualitatively synthesised and represented in the data matrix (Table 1) (Pearson et al., 2011). This synthesis involved individual review, interpretation, and analysis, consolidating data from various findings across the included studies. Similar findings were aggregated to facilitate coherent discussion and comprehension of the development and implementation of IPE programmes.

Distribution of studies included: Among the 34 included papers, 18 were published in the United States of America (USA), with four from the United Kingdom (UK), two each from the Peoples' Republic of China, Germany, and one each from Australia, Canada, Iran, Malaysia, Qatar, SA, Sweden, and Switzerland (Figure 2).In terms of the annual distribution of included studies, Figure 3 illustrates a downward trend, with the highest number (7) of studies published in 2019, decreasing to the lowest count (4) by the beginning of 2022.

The nature of the IPE programme: IPE programmes could be described in terms of their: a) purpose/ outcomes, b) target audience, and c) mode of assessment (Kahaleh et al. 2015).

Purpose/ outcomes: The objectives outlined in the IPE programmes featured in the studies determine their design, implementation, and intended audience. All IPE programmes aimed to enhance IPCP. While some focused on specific clinical or community contexts, others targeted general IPE competencies. For instance, certain programmes aimed to impart skills and attitudes for clinical practice, aligning with the Interprofessional Education and Collaborative (IPEC) competencies (Bares et al. 2018; Branch-Mays et al. 2018). Authentic learning experiences, as emphasised by Chan et al. (2017), provided students with opportunities for skill development and

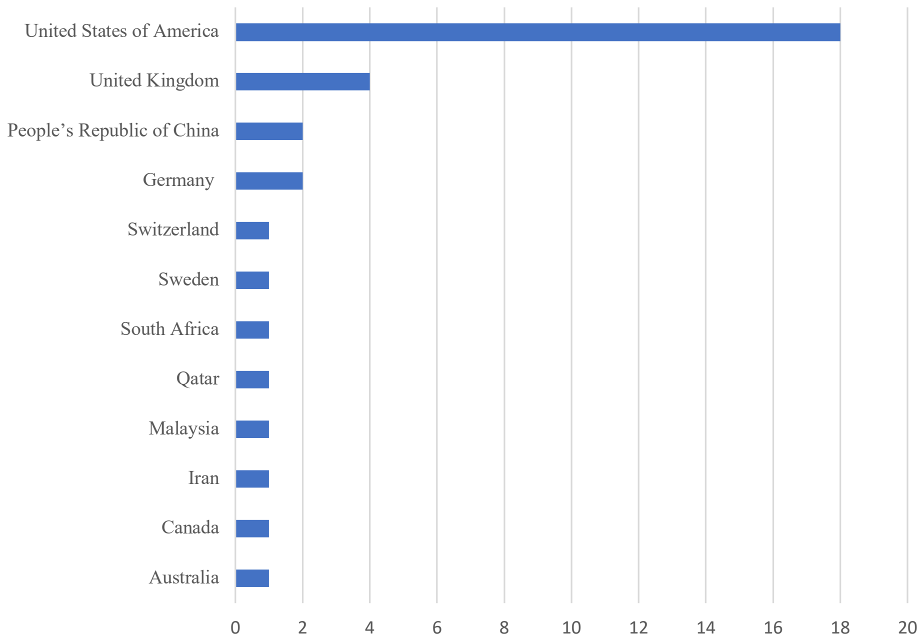

Figure 2. Country distribution of studies included

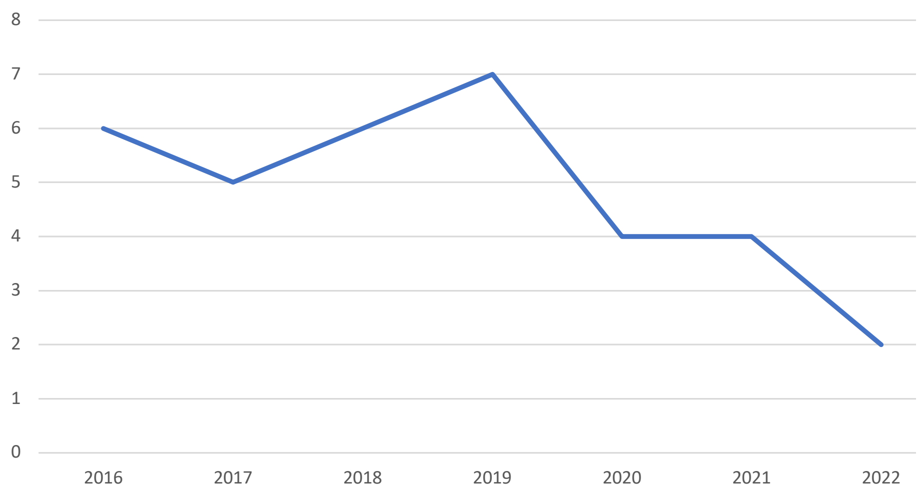

Figure 3. Yearly distribution of studies included (January 2016-March 2022)

fostering intra-team relationships for patient-centred care. Various studies identified potential outcomes such as patient safety, community wellness, and collaborative practice (Acquavita et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016a; Forstater et al. 2019; Heath et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Madigosky et al. 2019; Stubbs et al. 2017). Additionally, students in Kutt et al. (2019, p.278) emphasised the importance of conflict resolution, collaborative problem-solving, and time management within IPECP.

Target audience: The target audience for the assessed IPE programmes included students from all undergraduate health programmes. The following professions were included (pharmacy, social work, healthcare, medical, dentistry, radiography, physician assistant, nursing, medicine, nutrition, dietetics, occupational therapy, exercise science, psychology, veterinary medicine, natural medicine, public health, dental therapy, dental hygiene, osteopathic medicine, anaesthesiology assistant, medical laboratory science, healthcare administration, speech-language pathology, speech and hearing science, biomedical science, midwives, physiotherapy and medical radiology technologists) and other disciplines such as Chinese medicine (Chan et al. 2017) and theology (Stubbs et al. 2017). Four studies included students from undergraduate and graduate levels (Acquavita et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016a; Konrad et al. 2017; Schuller et al. 2017), whereas two were included graduate levels (Cahn et al. 2018; Forstater et al. 2019). For El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.2) and Safabaksh et al. (2018, p.461), no target audience was selected as these studies spoke about introducing, designing and developing IPE.

Clinical IPECP programmes typically cater to students pursuing clinical practice professions, whereas community-based programmes encompass a wider array of professions, extending to include disciplines such as theology and traditional medicine practitioners. For instance, compared to clinic-based IPE programmes offered by Bares et al. (2018), Forstater et al. (2019) and Kutt et al. (2019), the target audience for community-based programmes presented by Acquavita et al. (2019) and Stubbs et al. (2017) is larger. Some programmes are well-rounded, comprising acute care and community-based follow-up care components (Cahn et al. 2018; Prast et al. 2016). Some specialised community-based programmes, however, included fewer professionals (Heath et al. 2019; Herrera et al. 2019). Furthermore, social work professionals cut across clinical and community-based programmes (Acquavita et al. 2019; Chan et al. 2017; Heath et al. 2019; Herrera et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Stubbs et al. 2017).

Mode of assessment: Given the nature of different IPE programmes, it became clear that more than one mode of assessment of the students, was used in many studies. In specific contexts, students were instructed to undertake pre-tests and readiness assessments prior to engaging in the programme. In certain programmes, students underwent assessments following each activity within the IPE programme, while in others, they were required to complete post-tests, teamwork evaluations, assessments on IPE competencies, and programme evaluations. Consequently, assessments were administered both before, during, and after the IPE programme. Figure 4 illustrates the modes and tools of assessment employed in the studies.

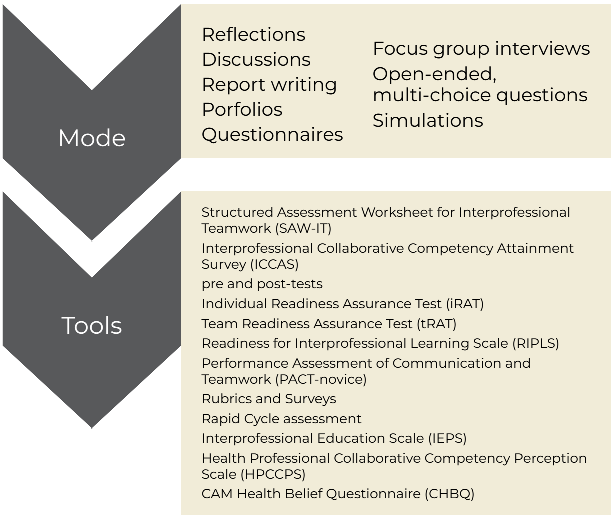

Figure 4. The mode and tools of assessment used in the studies included

Development of IPE programmes

Models, frameworks, and theories used in the development of IPE programmes: Eight papers mentioned specific models and frameworks employed in the development of IPE programmes. These included the Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Domains model (Prast et al. 2016), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) model (Acquavita et al. 2019), flipped classroom model (Forstater et al., 2019), Three Strand

Model of Interprofessional Learning (IPL) (Anderson et al. 2016b), the Boyer's model of scholarship (Frantz and Rhoda 2017); IPEC competencies (Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Cahn et al. 2018; Danielson and Willgerodt 2018).

Branch-Mays et al. (2018) aligned their objectives with the IPEC core competencies (IPEC 2011), emphasising small group sessions and facilitators within the course. Similarly, in Cahn et al. (2018, p.784), the integration of IPEC competencies was pivotal for fostering collaborative learning among students. Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1134-1136) utilised the Kirkpatrick framework, a tool for analysing and evaluating educational programmes, to map IPEC core competencies in their IPE framework development. This framework is geared towards assessing responses, attitudes, and insights from specific IPE activities, along with behavioural and structural changes. Anderson et al. (2016b, p.386-390) combined the Kirkpatrick framework with theories from cognitive constructivism to evaluate the impact of IPE within the three-strand model.

Kolb and Kolb's (2009) experiential learning theory was employed by some programmes (Acquavita et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016a; Bares et al. 2018; Forstater et al. 2019; Kutt et al. 2019; Van Gessel et al. 2018). Students had to complete the learning outcomes of IPE. Students' reflections and observations were based on concrete experiences, followed by the absorption of abstract concepts for implementation and lastly, evaluated in active trials.

Phases of IPE programme development: Generally, IPE programmes were developed in phases (Danielson and Willgerodt 2018; El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Herrera et al. 2019). Developing IPE programmes requires significant labour and time investment, yet the resulting benefits justify the effort expended, surpassing the challenges encountered (Anderson et al. 2016a; El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Madigosky et al. 2019). Professionals in the field advocate for the gradual development and piloting of IPE programmes before their widespread implementation (Kemp et al. 2012). Numerous studies have delineated, to differing degrees, the stages or procedures involved in developing the IPE programmes (Anderson et al. 2016a; Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Danielson and Willgerodt 2018; El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Herrera et al. 2019; Kutt et al. 2019; Prast et al. 2016), while others did not detail the programme development process (Anderson et al. 2016b; Cahn et al. 2018; Frantz and Rhoda 2017; Heath et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Rajiah and Mari Kannan 2016; Schuller et al. 2017; Stubbs et al. 2017; Teodorczuk et al. 2016). However, they were clear regarding the implementation and evaluation of the programs. Figure 5 outlines the consolidated processes for developing IPE programmes in the included studies.

Buy-in from the institution: Institutional buy-in in terms of management and administrative level was important in IPE programme development (Cahn et al. 2018; El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Teodorczuk et al. 2016; Van Gessel et al. 2018). Cahn et al. (2018, p.784) highlighted the significance of initial leadership

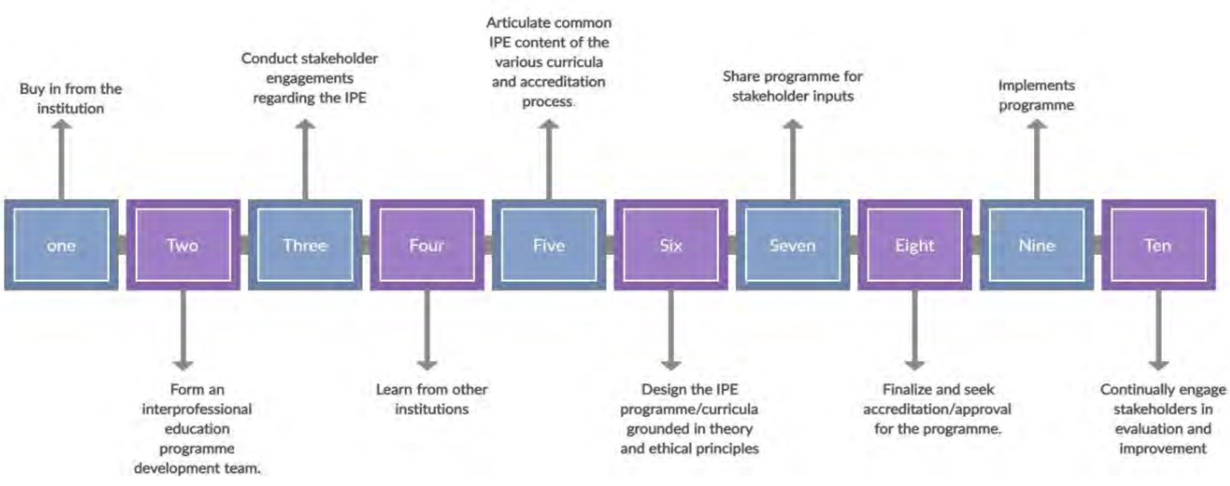

Figure 5. IPE programme ten-phased development process

support for the development of IPE programmes. It is essential for leadership to recognise the necessity of supporting the development of the IPE programme (El-Awaisi et al. 2016).

Form an IPE team: Typically, an IPE team is assembled by selecting staff members from each programme (Cahn et al. 2018). In Teodorczuk et al. (2016, p.9), it is referred to as an IPE advisory team, while Herrera et al. (2019, p.35) and Prast et al. (2016, p.167) use the terms IPE committee or task force. Additionally, Branch-Mays et al. (2018, p.60) established an IPE steering committee to set objectives and form a core interprofessional team. Anderson et al. (2016a, p.434), Danielson and Willlgerodt (2018, p.1135), and Kutt et al. (2019, p.275) concurred on establishing a local group to devise IPE strategies, a core faculty curriculum group, and a working group in their respective studies. El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.2) mentioned initiating the process by forming a learning group comprising colleagues who could compare their perceptions of IPL and Interprofessional Practice (IPP).

Conduct stakeholder engagements regarding the IPE: Identifying and engaging with stakeholders is necessary after formulating the IPE team (Anderson et al. 2016a, p.434). Targeting diverse stakeholders, especially students (El-Awaisi et al. 2016, p.2), to form a critical mass for IPE and IPP was also stated by Frantz and Rhoda (2017, p.182). Branch-Mays et al. (2018, p.60) noted that their core interprofessional team engaged and collaborated with stakeholders. In Kutt et al. (2019, p.274), working groups invited leaders from specific health professions' education units to engage with the IPE development phase. Anderson et al. (2016a, p.435) emphasised clinical facilities as a crucial stakeholder in IPE programme development.

Learn from other institutions: Stubbs et al. (2017, p.652) note that many institutions have integrated IPE into their curricula. The content of these established IPE programmes can serve as a basis for developing new programmes. There is variability in how these programmes are delivered to students, with some being credit-bearing components of health science curricula and others being non-credit-bearing and optional short programmes. Safabakhsh et al. (2018, p.461) propose a systematic approach to learning from experts, institutions, and studies to develop an IPE model, focusing on objectives, content, and strategies. Consulting experts from these universities can provide valuable insights into the development and implementation of IPE programmes (Safabakhsh et al. 2018). Additionally, published data from institutions can serve as a helpful guide in this process. El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.2) discuss the differences in IPE programme integration across institutions and advocate for embracing current collaborative frameworks and considering factors such as the number of professions involved in activities. Herrera et al. (2019, p.35) and Stubbs et al. (2017, p.653) underscore the importance of collaborative efforts between institutions in developing and implementing IPE programmes.

Articulate common IPE content of the various curricula: Articulating the common content for target health professions is a challenging aspect of IPE programme development (Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Teodorczuk et al. 2016). Utilising IPEC competencies can provide guidance in establishing this content (Cahn et al. 2018; Danielson and Willgerodt 2018). These competencies delineate the fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective interprofessional collaboration. Moreover, Cahn et al. (2018, p.782) emphasise the importance of considering accreditation, design, and assessment within the context of IPE programme development, which further supports the alignment of programme content with established standards and objectives. To facilitate collaborative planning, it is essential to establish structures that promote collaboration (Frantz and Rhoda 2017), as well as structures for the collaborative formulation of learning outcomes (Teodorczuk et al. 2016). Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1136) documented that a central faculty curriculum committee identified and delineated shared curriculum content, as well as assessed the proficiency level of students from each programme regarding this shared content. El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.3) and Herrera et al. (2019, p.35) also underscored the importance of identifying common themes in IPE across the curricula content of the respective professions to facilitate collaboration.

Design the IPE programme/curricula grounded in framework, theory and ethical principles: Frantz and Rhoda (2017, p.182) underscore the necessity for integrating a theoretical framework into the development process of the IPE programme.

Prast et al. (2016, p.167) utilised the IPCP competency domains to guide the development of the IPE programme. Acquavita et al. (2019), Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1136) and Anderson et al. (2016a, p.438) advocated for grounding the development of IPE programmes in theoretical principles. Teodorczuk et al. (2016, p.10) identified designs for clinical practice activities to be developed. Branch-Mays et al. (2018, p.60) utilised core competencies to draft their IPE programme, while Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1134) mapped IPE core competencies onto Kirkpatrick's evaluation domains to develop their IPCP curriculum framework. Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1134) also held bi-weekly meetings for reviewing and classifying competencies according to the IPE model developed by the Universities of Alberta and British Columbia (Charles et al. 2010), constituting the IPE curriculum framework. The curriculum framework then guided the development of their IPE curriculum. El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.3) emphasised the collaborative design of IPE programmes and determining their fit within the professional category. Herrera et al. (2019) incorporated their programme into existing curricula, while Forstater et al. (2019), Madigosky et al. (2019), and Mcquown et al. (2020) integrated inputs from the TeamSTEPPS® programme into their IPE development processes.

Share programme for stakeholder inputs: In this phase, the programme plan is shared with all possible stakeholders for their inputs (Anderson et al. 2016a; Branch-Mays et al. 2018). For instance, Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1135) distributed the IPE programme to internal stakeholders for assessment, subsequently engaging interprofessional groups, such as clinical practice stakeholders and international experts, for sequential review.

Finalise and seek accreditation/approval for the programme: Anderson et al. (2016a) mentioned seeking accreditation once the programme has been shared for input. However, before seeking approval from management, it is essential to consider accreditation requirements and align the programme accordingly. Accreditation guidelines may influence various aspects of programme design, content, and evaluation (Selesho 2013).

Implements programme: Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.1134) shared a common approach, incorporating an implementation plan based on the IPEC core competencies and the Kirkpatrick model. The implementation of the programme is crucial (Herrera et al. 2019; Kutt et al. 2019), and upon implementation, it's essential to motivate students and staff to fully embrace and participate in the IPE programme, underscoring the importance of collaboration. Without this buy-in and engagement, the programme risks falling short of its intended goals (El-Awaisi et al. 2016). Across the studies examined, IPE programmes were implemented employing diverse teaching methodologies, learning approaches, assessment techniques, and evaluation methods. The most frequently used methods and activities of implementation included patient scenarios, and students made use of documents such as keeping records, writings (notes), journals and guidebooks, practising in a community/rural environment, online platform/materials, case studies, and clinical experience (Acquavita et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016a; Anderson et al. 2016b; Bares et al. 2018; Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Cahn et al. 2018; Forstater et al. 2019; Guilding et al. 2020; Heath et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Kutt et al. 2019; Madigosky et al. 2019; Prast et al. 2016; Rajiah and Mari Kannan 2016; Schuller et al. 2017; Stubbs et al. 2017; Teodorczuk et al. 2016; Van Gessel et al. 2018).

Experiential learning emerged as a recurrent theme in the studies and plays a vital role in achieving the goals of IPE. First, engaging students in community diagnosis, reporting, and discussions provided them with "lived experiences," aiding in the development of competencies (Heath et al. 2019; Stubbs et al. 2017). Rajiah and Mari Kannan (2016, p.240) employed community-based learning to foster students' acquisition of attitudinal and cultural competencies in healthcare. Additionally, simulations involving simulated patients facilitated active and experiential learning, enabling the identification of various roles and responsibilities (Prast et al. 2016; Van Gessel et al. 2018). Prast et al. (2016, p.168) conducted simulations where team members were assigned specific roles to fulfil. Thirdly, engaging in clinical practice, where students gained real-life patient care experiences, was crucial for developing IPEC competencies in students (Konrad et al. 2017; Schuller et al. 2017; Teodorczuk et al. 2016; Van Gessel et al. 2018). Konrad et al. (2017, p.51) employed relational and

Practice Learning (PL) to foster relationships for future collaborations among practitioners. Additionally, Stubbs et al. (2017, p.653) elucidated that students could dedicate their time to service-learning (engaging with clients and problem-solving), thereby enhancing teamwork and comfort in collaborative learning.

Other types of activities used in implementing IPE programmes include Team-Based Learning (TBL), Case-Based Learning (CBL), Skill-Based Learning (SBL) and online learning. TBL was used in three studies (Chan et al. 2017; Konrad et al. 2017; Madigosky et al. 2019) to conduct IPE activities, fostering active student engagement within a team-oriented learning environment (Madigosky et al. 2019). In-class and online learning were supported (Chan et al. 2017), along with TBL in the clinical setting. Frantz and Rhoda (2017, p.181) advocated for the biopsychosocial approach, facilitating the representation of diverse health professions and thereby promoting IPE through activities like world cafes and IPP. Case-Based Learning (CBL) was integrated into several programmes, offering students experiential learning opportunities through scenario work, case analysis, assessments, and collaborative problem-solving with other healthcare professionals (Browne et al. 2021; Guilding et al. 2020; Konrad et al. 2017; Kutt et al. 2019). Moreover, Skill-Based Learning (SBL), a collaborative learning approach, was mentioned by Rajiah and Mari Kannan (2016) wherein students exchanged information and communicated their respective roles to other healthcare professionals.

Continually engage stakeholders in evaluation and improvement: The programme should undergo evaluation for potential enhancements (Anderson et al. 2016a; Anderson et al. 2016b). Danielson and Willgerodt (2018, p.) support the idea of faculty debriefing as it would facilitate engagement, reflection, area enhancement, and informed decision-making. Various methods, including concluding assessments, programme evaluations, and student assessments, are employed for programme evaluation (Acquavita et al. 2019; El-Awaisi et al. 2016; Herrera et al. 2019; Kutt et al. 2019). Evaluation tools such as the Interprofessional Attitudes Scale (IPAS) and the IPEC Assessment Tool can be utilised to assess students (Reeves and Barr 2016). Branch-Mays et al. (2018, p.60) recommend conducting annual reviews based on student and staff feedback, while El-Awaisi et al. (2016, p.4) propose sharing the IPE experience through academic means. Hence, evaluations play a crucial role in IPE programmes and can encompass reflections, discussions, structured observations, surveys, portfolio completion, and debates (Anderson et al. 2016b; Cahn et al. 2018; Herrera et al. 2019; Madigosky et al. 2019; Prast et al. 2016; Rajiah and Mari Kannan 2016; Stubbs et al. 2017). Other evaluation tools used included the IEPS, HPCCPS, CHBQ, ISVS, pre and post-tests, SAW-IT, rapid-cycle programme assessment, Kirkpatrick model, RIPLS, iRAT, tRAT and ICCAS (Bares et al. 2018; Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Chan et al. 2017; Danielson and Willgerodt 2018; Forstater et al. 2019; Konrad et al. 2017; Kutt et al. 2019; Madigosky et al. 2019; Mcquown et al. 2020; Stubbs et al. 2017).

Contributions of IPE programmes included in this study

The main findings identified across the various papers encompassed skill enhancement, including time management and conflict resolution, improved content knowledge and attitudes, the significance of patient-centred education, collaborative problem-solving within teams, establishment of clinical teams, institutional support acquisition, and overcoming obstacles to learning (Acquavita et al. 2019; Anderson et al. 2016a; Anderson et al. 2016b; Bhattacharya et al. 2021; Guilding et al. 2020; Heath et al. 2019; Ho et al. 2022; Krampe et al. 2022; Kutt et al. 2019; Mastel-Smith et al. 2020; Rajiah and Mari Kannan 2016; Safabakhsh et al. 2018; Van Gessel et al. 2018). Moreover, the results encompass enhanced professional identity, heightened understanding of the roles of diverse professions with increased respect and appreciation for them, enhanced communication skills, strengthened teamwork, values, and ethics, establishment of interprofessional networks, collaboration, and utilisation of theory and pedagogy (Bares et al. 2018; Branch-Mays et al. 2018; Browne et al. 2021; Cahn et al. 2018; Chan et al. 2017; Danielson and Willgerodt 2018; Fiske et al. 2021; Friedrich et al. 2021; Guilding et al. 2020; Heath et al. 2019; Ho et al. 2022; Ivarson et al. 2020; Konrad et al. 2017; Krampe et al. 2022; Kutt et al. 2019; Madigosky et al. 2019; Mcquown et al. 2020; Reed et al. 2021; Safabakhsh et al. 2018). Forstater et al. (2019, p.2) reported that patient safety improved and medical errors diminished through IPECP.

Discussion

We found that most of the studies were published in the USA (18) and the UK (6). Only one study was included from Africa, which was South Africa (Frantz and Rhoda 2017). This is not surprising as the high-income countries lead in a research capacity, funding and outputs reported in many studies. Scopus index papers were analysed from 102 countries and findings suggest that the USA and the UK accounted for more than half of the global IPECP publications (Erfanmanesh et al. 2017; Pandita and Singh 2022). While IPECP is on the rise in SA, its presence remains relatively limited, possibly due to the types of publications on IPECP in Africa. Although IPE is gaining traction in the South African context, it does not enjoy the same level of popularity as in countries like the USA or UK.

Moreover, numerous programmes drew guidance from established theories, enabling adaptation to contexts. Kolb's theory found application due to its alignment with the core IPE competencies, which emphasise learning through practical experience, an aspect central to Kolb's experiential learning theory. Theoretical frameworks such as experiential learning, TBL, CBL, PL, and community-based learning were commonly utilised in the development of IPE programmes. Furthermore, the approaches to IPE were diverse, with numerous studies integrating multiple learning methods into their programmes. Consequently, an IPE initiative could offer health professions students from various institutions exposure to a range of teaching and learning modalities. Among these, the most common methods included 'patient/scenario/mock-ups' and 'documents' (such as records, notes, journals, writings, and guidebooks). The prevalence of patient/scenario/mock-ups may be attributed to the crucial role of clinical components in health professions curricula, where engaging with clinical scenarios is vital for effective experiential learning activities. Poore et al. (2014, p.245) emphasised the use of real-life experiences to enhance collaborative and clinical skills. Students could readily apply their newfound knowledge and skills within an interprofessional team setting. Therefore, scenarios/mock-ups play a pivotal role in both IPE and student training. Ensuring appropriate evaluative measures, along with the use of suitable evaluation tools, is essential to gather feedback effectively. The evaluation methods used to gather feedback varied and included qualitative, quantitative, or mixed approaches. Quantitative assessments often utilised surveys such as the iRAT and tRAT, whereas qualitative evaluations predominantly involved student orientations, reflections, and discussions. Surveys through pre and post measures and discussions were found in mixed method evaluations. In their study, Reeves et al. (2015, p.603) outlined a selection of three evaluation designs: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, as was determined and acknowledged in this study.

The WHO *Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice* suggests making IPE programmes mandatory to address logistical hurdles and enhance collaborative effectiveness (WHO 2010). In terms of implementation timing, certain programmes were integrated into health curricula at a later stage, possibly due to curriculum constraints or the necessity for prerequisites like patient diagnosis. Conversely, in some institutions, IPE was initiated from introduced from the first and continued through to the final year. It is advisable to introduce IPE early in higher education to ensure students are accustomed to delivering healthcare services in an interprofessional and comprehensive manner upon graduation (WHO 2010). Delaying students' participation in an IPE programme until later stages of their undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate training may constrain the programme's intended impact and objectives (Aldriwesh et al. 2022). Finally, our findings underscored that most of the developed programmes were rooted in theory, highlighting the importance of educational theory in health professions education. We condensed the development process into ten comprehensive phases to provide guidance for institutions and academics in the development, implementation, and review of IPE programmes.

Conclusion

This scoping review examined IPE programmes worldwide, noting a predominance of articles from the USA, indicating a robust IPE landscape there. The nature of these programmes encompassed their goals, audience, and assessment methods. Programme development involved utilising models, frameworks, and theories, alongside phased approaches. While implementing IPE faced challenges such as garnering institutional support and accommodating busy student schedules, its short-term implementation showcased benefits in nurturing diverse skills crucial for effective healthcare. Collaboration within interprofessional teams consistently led to improved health outcomes, highlighting the value of IPE. Embedding IPE in health curricula is pivotal for preparing students to work across disciplines post-graduation. Tailoring IPE programmes to address specific national healthcare needs and ongoing evaluation for enhancements are imperative. To aid global IPE programme development, we distilled an evidence-based process, encouraging its adaptation by academics and institutions to foster collaborative learning among health professions students.

Table 1. Data matrix

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
1.	Acquavita et al. (2019) United States of America	Assessed outcomes of an IPE course spanning a semester focused on Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT).	200 students from: Undergraduate, senior/masters social work, medicine, Graduate pharmacy and Undergraduate or graduate nursing	The SBIRT detects risky substance use based on a public health model, is implemented in an interprofessional (IP) course using a hybrid model. It follows Kolb's experiential learning theory. Initially, asynchronous materials are completed, introducing SBIRT online through virtual simulations. These materials include PowerPoint slides, videos, readings, and interactive case studies for reflection and feedback. Synchronous components involve standardised patient encounters and clinical SBIRT experiences, where students actively participate, learn, and reflect. Weekly lessons and topics are followed by evaluations. SBIRT is practiced in various healthcare and civic intervention settings, such as food banks, homeless shelters, health centres, and campus hospitals. Throughout the course, screening methods are used, and pre- and post-tests are used to evaluate students' topic knowledge. Virtual patient simulations (VPSs) are used in assessments to allow students to practise using SBIRT techniques.	SBIRT Interprofessional Course (Week 1-14 and 30-day follow-up)	Students in health professions saw improvements in their ability to apply evidence-based practice because of the course. Content knowledge was delivered through online modules, while interprofessional education programmes' schedule constraints were mitigated by basic skills practice. Prior to using SBIRT procedures in actual clinical and community settings, further skill development was made possible through VPSs and encounters with standardised patients. Working in interprofessional pairs improved collaborative practice and improved students' attitudes towards patients and topic knowledge.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
2.	Anderson et al. (2016a) United Kingdom	Give students the opportunity to participate in and think about interprofessional learning. Learn about the dynamics that arise while working with multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary health and social care teams.	Undergraduate and graduate students	Constructivist learning theory guided the programme's design as well as its evaluation. Kolb's theory was included into the Leicester Model, which made it easier for students to participate in healthcare or community contexts. In accordance with predetermined learning objectives, students were given a pre-briefing before to interacting with in-patients who had complex needs. Students participated in reflective learning activities by accessing the notes and records of the patients. Thereafter, presentations and suggestions based on their evaluations were made. To promote cooperation between educators and practitioners and reduce stress during patient care, efforts were undertaken to train educators and facilitators in the maintenance of knowledge and skills. Using their knowledge and abilities particular to the profession, the students conducted assessments of holistic health and social care, obtaining data from the practice team. Assessments, reflections, conversations, and report writing sessions were frequently scheduled during the afternoons.	Leicester model (Short practice-based IPE) Total of four IPE days.	The importance of theoretical learning approaches cannot be overstated, as they emphasise the need for clinical teams to support students and patient-centred teaching. To effectively prepare students for patient care, the article also emphasises the significance of organisational structures, which include higher education institutions, health and social care organisations, administrative assistance, and student assessments.
3.	Anderson et al. (2016b) United Kingdom	Highlighted the value of longitudinal IPE by carrying out an extensive curriculum assessment to find discrepancies and improve comprehension of its applicability and underlying causes.	Undergraduate health and social care programmes of over 10 professions	The Biggs 3P Model, the Kirkpatrick typology of educational outcomes, and theories from cognitive constructivists were all integrated to create a framework. There were three separate strands that made up this structure. While the other two strands concentrated on practice-based learning, the first strand prioritised classroom instruction. Drawing from social learning theories, the first strand employed principles from sociology and psychology; the second included creating communities of practice; and the third integrated the Kolb learning cycle for student reflections. Students were required to complete and turn in Interprofessional Personal Portfolios after every IPL event. Student feedback, focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires were among the evaluation techniques used.	"Three strand Model" of IPL (Four days of IPL)	The evaluation focused on recurrent topics related to students' experiences, facilitator skill, and challenges faced during the training process. Solving these problems required putting theoretical ideas into practice to improve understanding and remove obstacles to learning.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
4.	Bares et al. (2018) United States of America	Didactic sessions offer an introduction to the principles and theory of IPE. 2) Opportunities for experiential learning are provided by clinical practice. Goals: 1) Inspire students to consider and express their opinions and beliefs regarding interprofessional care for HIV-positive people. 3) Develop the skills required to provide interprofessional care for patients with HIV. 4) Gain experience assessing the success of interprofessional care teams. 5) Learn basic IPE theory through didactic instruction and evaluation of online resources.	Second-year advanced practice nursing students, second and third-year medical students, and fourth-year pharmacy students rotating through the HIV clinic.	In an HIV clinic, theory and practical application were combined to help students change their perspectives, learn new information, improve their abilities, and acquire firsthand experience with IPE. The programme was divided into two parts: Didactics, which included IPE sessions, web resources, and didactic content; and Clinical, which included cross-training, patient care, team rounds, group note-taking, and case studies, as well as assessments and evaluations. The programme placed a strong emphasis on hands-on learning. Open-ended and multiple-choice questions were used as part of the assessment process, and informal debriefings were also used. Student assessments using the SAW-IT instrument were used to evaluate how well interprofessional team dynamics worked.	Foundations of Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration (FIPCC) (Clinical: 49.5 hours, didactic: 3.6 hours)	The curriculum placed a strong emphasis on experiential learning, which helped students gain a greater understanding of the roles that different professions play in providing care for HIV-positive patients. Students' assessments at the end of the rotation demonstrated that the rotation's goals had been successfully met. After the programme, self-reported feedback about the goal of interprofessional teams improved. All participants also pledged to continue practicing IPCP when the programme was over. The results demonstrated how well the clinic could be utilised to incorporate an IPE-focused curriculum, giving students the chance to see, practise, and assess the following: 1) the development of collaborative care plans; 2) the sharing of ideas and abilities; and 3) efficient teamwork. The course greatly increased the students' awareness of alternative careers and their desire to participate in IPCP after graduation.
5.	Bhattacharya et al. (2021) United States of America	Encourage preparedness for the job. Give pupils the tools they need to work together and handle common geriatric issues. Give students the option to participate in providing geriatric care. Establish a collaborative atmosphere to replicate real-life situations.	Participants included residents from Family Medicine programs, medical students undertaking clerkships in Family Medicine, Nurse Practitioner candidates specialising in Adult Gerontology and Family Nursing, graduate students in Social Welfare, Occupational Therapy, and Psychology, undergraduates in Dietetics, as well as doctoral candidates in Physical Therapy and Pharmacy.	The programme's main goal was to streamline geriatric care, and TBL was mostly used in IPE activities. The curriculum and programme were set in the first year, and then there was a 24-month curriculum. Teachers met once a month to maintain curriculum standards. Additionally, core faculty members recruited new members to the faculty to assist with curriculum development. After completing the pre-work, students did the iRAT and then the tRAT when class started.	Geriatrics Champions Programme 24-month programme repeated twice. Four 2 and a half hour sessions were held yearly.	Students exhibited improved performance, highlighting the advantages of collaboration. The size of the team and its total efficacy showed a clear positive link, indicating that larger teams produced better results. Additionally, participants indicated a discernible improvement in their comprehension of the subject matter, as seen by an increase in their knowledge levels. Furthermore, the students demonstrated advancement in their interprofessional geriatric abilities, highlighting the need of cooperative learning opportunities for the development of comprehensive skills.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
6.	Branch-Mays et al. (2018) United States of America	1) Roles & Responsibilities: Promoted awareness of the many skill sets that support real IPC teams. 2) Interprofessional Communication: Acquired expertise in interacting and conversing with communities, families, patients, and other medical professionals, cultivating gratitude for their input. 3) Teams and collaboration: Introduced core ideas of true collaboration between many professions, acknowledging the significance of dialogue. 4) Values/ Ethics in Interprofessional Practice: Examined the developing idea of professionalism and interprofessional ethics as essential components of IPCP.	First year students: dental hygiene, dental therapy, dentistry, dietetics, healthcare administration, medical lab science, medicine, nursing, nutrition, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, psychology, social work, speech-language-hearing, and veterinary medicine.	It is a required course for first-year students. Its learning objectives aligned with the IPCP core skills and included small group sessions led by course instructors. The programme concluded with an assessment using the ICCAS tool and facilitator and student assessments. The course's facilitator and student manual were indispensable.	Foundations of Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration (FIPCC) course (six two-hour sessions)	six subjects were covered: 1) The obligations and roles of healthcare professionals 2) Interactions and Health Systems 3) Collaboration and Interprofessional Teams 4) Health care workers' resilience and well-being 5) Professionalism and ethics 6) Empathy Phase I of a three-phase programme is represented by FIPCC. Following Phase I's orientation to IPE, students go to Phase II, where they acquire the necessary skills for Phase III's interprofessional experiential or clinical activities.
7.	Browne et al. (2021) United States of America	Examined the long-term impacts of two distinct approaches for giving IPE. compared the attitudes of students towards interprofessional cooperation over time and between groups that had varying exposure levels to IPE.	For the IPE symposium - graduate students from Health Service Administration (HAS), nursing, OT, and clinical psychology (i.e., Psy.D.), as well as undergraduate students from nursing and social work For the IPE course - graduate students from HSA, nursing, OT, counselling, clinical psychology (i.e., Psy.D.), and special education.	IPE was offered as a course for a semester as well as a symposium. Group 2 participated in both the symposium and the event. Group 1 attended the symposium. It was a given that the OT and HAS students used both approaches because of the nature of the approaches. CBL was the symposium's main topic. Before the symposia, students were assigned a case and required to devise a course of treatment and intervention for the patient. The conference, which focused on people with dementia, ran for five hours. The IPE course was an online, semester-long course that focused on CBL through simulated encounters. It was required for HAS and OT students and elective for everyone else. A pre-test, post-test, and follow-up were carried out for the symposia. Data were gathered using the Attitudes towards Health Care Teams Scale (ATHCTS).	IPE course and IPE symposium.	Engaging in both methods of instruction led to notable improvements in students' attitudes towards IPECP, highlighting the effectiveness of these approaches in fostering a collaborative mindset. Although the frequency of IPE activities rose, the effect on students' views was not statistically significant, indicating that the calibre of the learning process may matter more than its number. Students preferred in-person instruction over blended learning or online learning, demonstrating a preference for face-to-face engagement and experiential learning in IPE environments.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
8.	Cahn et al. (2018) United States of America	To describe the structure that an organisation uses to combine various interprofessional and IPL activity components into a cohesive whole.	Graduate students from: Nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, and speech-language pathology students	Students practicing IPEC competencies in a variety of contexts. There were five parts to the model: community, team, simulation, clinical, and classroom. During the first semester of the programme, students were separated into teams and introduced the central competences of IPEC in the classroom. As the semester progressed, students took part in and practiced with fictitious patients in simulation scenarios. To facilitate students' observation and reflection on collaborative care, an Interprofessional Dedicated Education Unit (IPDEU) was developed in a hospital for the clinical component. Students were given a novel with a sick protagonist as part of the community component. Discussions about the book and how an interprofessional team handled the illness took place at student orientation. In terms of the team component, the approach made it easier for various health centres to collaborate, giving students the opportunity to perform IPL and interprofessional care. Faculty in every academic programme customised their courses to include assignments that are appropriate for evaluating students' capacity to work together. They determined the most important performance indicators for improved interprofessional skills in each semester.	IMPACT Practice (Classroom: four times per term; two simulation scenarios; Clinical: two half day sessions)	A list of required and elective, theoretical, and practical IPE exercises was developed, enabling students to develop their comprehension of cooperative interprofessional practice. Additionally, it guarantees that IPE activities are applicable to various practice settings, allowing students to make real-world connections.

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9.	Chan et al. (2017) People's Republic of China	Described the creation and application of IPTBL in Hong Kong's medical education system. evaluated TBL's suitability for housing a sizable cohort of students participating in several undergraduate programmes in health and social care. revealed findings from a review that evaluated the programme's efficacy. What the students had to do was:1. Solving issues cooperatively. 2. Making roles, duties, and professional limits clear. 3. Exhibiting respect, exchanging viewpoints, and actively listening. 4. Assessing oneself critically to improve team chemistry. 5. Realising that improving patient care requires teamwork. 6. Being aware of one's own and other experts' points of view. 7. Recognising the importance of differing perspectives.	801 students from HKU, six undergraduate-entry health and social care programmes participated: biomedical sciences, Chinese medicine, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and social work. From PolyU, another six undergraduate-entry health and social care programmes took part: medical laboratory sciences, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, radiography, and social work	Students' preparedness for IPE was assessed using a quantitative method using a pre-test-post-test paradigm. Three TBL-centred instructional units (IUs) were introduced to students from a range of health and social care specialties in a clinical setting. Pre-class study, team appeals, iRAT, tRAT, feedback, in-class team application exercises, and online team application exercises were all included in the programme. Over time, an online platform was created and made available to all three IUs. Prior to in-person sessions, students had to go over a few materials and use the RIPLS to determine their level of IPE preparedness.	interprofessional team-based learning programme (IPTBL) – (three four-hour IUs)	Several difficulties surfaced during the creation and execution of the IPTBL programme, such as the challenge of integrating students from different programmes, the substantial time commitment needed for programme development, personalising the learning management system, and identifying appropriate locations for activities. The IPTBL programme demonstrated its viability as a teaching technique for IPE engaging many students despite these obstacles. Notably, all four of the RIPLS subscales showed a significant improvement, demonstrating the beneficial effects of the IPTBL programme in preparing students for collaborative practice.

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10.	Danielson and Willgerodt (2018) United States of America	Explained how a hypothetical framework for establishing and guiding curriculum design is evolving.	Pharmacy, social work, dentistry, physician assistant, nurse practitioners, nursing students	The first steps included developing a common IPL philosophy, lining up IPEC competences with the Kirkpatrick Model, and getting input from relevant parties. The next steps—contact, focus, integration, and training—were centred on student development with the goal of improving patient care and population health outcomes. Step 1: Developed a unified philosophy for the students' participation in and understanding of the IPL. A group of core faculty members with experience developing curricula came together to study IPE accreditation requirements and harmonise curricula across different health sciences programmes and institutions. Step 2: To promote the establishment of a common philosophy, common content elements were identified across health sciences curriculum and learning activities were devised to address these aspects. Step 3: Using the Kirkpatrick evaluation domains, which were modified from the Kirkpatrick programme evaluation model, the Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (IPEC sub-competencies) were mapped to provide a tangible framework based on the established philosophy. Step 4: To resolve discrepancies, an iterative process was used with biweekly meetings. This allowed for discussion on the methods and rationale for the integration of competences into the Kirkpatrick levels. Step 5: To guarantee alignment and efficacy, a comprehensive assessment of the framework was conducted with internal stakeholders.	The University of Washington's Health Sciences Curricular Framework for IPE includes three small group discussions in the second year (totalling six hours), shadowing activities (four hours), and three immersion experiences in the third year (totalling 12 hours).	Used pedagogy and learning theories as a basis to emphasise the value of IPE in developing thorough, effective, and meaningful curriculum, which guarantees that students are suitably equipped for teamwork in the delivery of healthcare.
11.	El-Awaisi et al. (2016) Qatar	Highlighted the importance of facilitation as the key component of interprofessional teaching and learning, with implications for faculty and student preparation.	N/A	Step 1: Get started Step 2: Define the term, principles, and values. Step 3: Create results. Step 4: Determine participation and choose faculty and students Step 5: Choose themes. Step 6: Work together to plan cases and activities and modify teaching strategies. Step 7: Adjust education to the context. Step 8: Encourage learning Step 9: Try to create a positive learning environment and set high standards. Step 10: Consider and consider suggestions Step 11: Evaluate the intervention. Step 12: Broadly communicate the experience.	N/A (12 steps to integrate IPE into the curricula)	The documents provided additional evidence that the successful implementation of interprofessional education courses depended on interprofessional student assessment and programme evaluation. A set of twelve guidelines was provided for incorporating IPE into the curriculum with the goal of improving practitioner and student education in the process of becoming skilled collaborators.

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12.	Fiske et al. (2021) United States of America	To give professionals the tools they need to treat patients with trauma awareness and manage exposure to trauma.	Graduate social work and undergraduate Nursing, and public health students	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) served as a framework for the development of the IPE course, which emphasises resilience as a dynamic process. A group of academics from several health schools worked together to develop the course, using an instructional design-based backward design methodology. With this method, assessments and outcomes are decided upon before any activities are created. For fifteen weeks, the course, which was worth three credit hours, met once a week in the late afternoon. It addressed issues such trauma prevention and care, ACEs and trauma evaluations, professional duties, and ethical requirements in the three professions, and self-care. As part of the course requirements, students worked together on group projects and wrote reflectively.	IPE for trauma-informed care (Semester-long course)	Students acquired valuable experiences conducive to working effectively in interprofessional teams. Throughout the training, students were able to put resilience methods to use. The training improved the pupils' abilities and knowledge.
13.	Friedrich et al. (2021) Germany	Students were supposed to be able to: - Recognise the functions of different vocations. - Share their thoughts and work together with experts in other fields. - Find and choose pertinent content for medical treatment.	Paediatric nursing trainees and medical students	A thirty-minute exercise was created using the peer teaching approach in a training ward environment. Two students from each profession took part in four sessions. Together, they chose a topic that was relevant to a clinical problem and developed a learning exercise that focused on elements unique to their respective fields. A mixed-method approach was employed to collect data, employing semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.	Speed InterprofESsional Peer Teaching PaediAtric (SIESTA)	Students' understanding of roles and responsibilities as well as the development of their interprofessional competences served as evidence of the programme's value.

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14.	Forstater et al. (2019) United States of America	Students will gain a variety of skills and information in this programme, including a comprehension of important patient safety and person-centred care concepts. They will gain the ability to spot chances to successfully use TeamSTEPPS® methods and resources in patient care environments. Furthermore, through simulated scenarios, students will acquire fundamental teamwork ideas and methods, readying them for collaborative practice in real-world healthcare environments.	554 students from medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physician assistant and radiologic sciences completed this programme	The flipped classroom approach and experiential learning techniques were combined in the Team SAFE curriculum, which was developed from the TeamSTEPPS® framework to train interprofessional learners in IPE. Initially, the students worked together in group online to develop pre-work abilities related to teamwork. Following three cases in which they used these skills to care for fictitious patients, each case was followed by debriefing sessions led by faculty members. Eight-item quantitative pre-post assessments were given out on paper following the course and online for the pre-work. The PACT-novice instrument was altered to gather information on how well students believed they could collaborate with others in a team, as well as how well they could manage tasks, communicate, resolve conflicts, lead, and integrate ideas and information into team tactics. To evaluate differences between professions at the pre- and post-levels, ANOVA tests were performed. Five quantitative and three qualitative questions measuring the course's efficacy, content relevance, and clinical experience were part of the post-assessment. Qualitative research asked students about their opinions of the course in a variety of areas.	Team SAFE (Simulation and Fearlessness Education) – (four simulation cases)	Students gained collaboration skills that may increase patient safety and advance their leadership potential. Important elements like teamwork, patient safety, and the reduction of medical errors were made possible by this skill development.
15.	Frantz and Rhoda (2017) South Africa	Addressed the issues of IPE and IPP in areas with limited resources, such as South Africa, concentrating on the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Faculty of Community and Health Sciences.	Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, dietetics, exercise science, nursing, psychology, natural medicine, and public health	Implementing Boyer's Scholarship Model (1997) and adopting the biopsychosocial approach to drive IPECP in the establishment of a Unified IPE Framework at UWC. Boyer's paradigm places a strong emphasis on teaching, learning, integration, and application. From Conceptualisation to Implementation: Using a biopsychosocial approach, collaborating, and utilising a variety of learning modalities while accepting different vocations within a same faculty. Creating a Critical Mass: Showcasing the benefits and proficiencies of IPE via cooperative learning, evaluation, and real-world implementation. Basic IPE concepts were included into modules and events like world cafes throughout the first year. The following year brought IPP and aided in the growth of IPE comprehension. Ultimately, the third-year incorporated research components and concentrated on strengthening IPP comprehension.	IPE AND IPP (Year one, two and three)	IPE and IPP were motivated by the same biopsychosocial approach, which was accepted by all faculty members, thus bringing their visions and objectives into alignment. The faculty used a scaffolded strategy based on the six skills of IPE and IPP—interprofessional conflict, interprofessional leadership, ethics, values, effective communication, role comprehension, teamwork, and responsibilities—to solve hurdles. To assist academics, clinical instructors, and service providers in overcoming obstacles and improving their comprehension of IPE and IPP, workshops were held.

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16.	Guilding et al. (2020) United Kingdom	The study's goal was to plan and assess an IPE conference to provide guidance for the future creation of interprofessional antimicrobial education initiatives. The study sought to explore several topics, such as the use of contact theory in the planning of IPE activities, the knowledge, and skills that participants acquire through workshop participation, the identification of learning facilitators and barriers in each workshop, along with recommendations for improvement, and the function of the conference in highlighting the benefits of collaborative practice.	Undergraduate pharmacy and medical students	Faculty from the departments of medicine and pharmacy oversaw the conference coordination. The conference's design was informed by contact theory, which shaped the format of three small-group workshops based around three main themes. The purpose of these seminars was to incorporate interprofessional tasks that would call for cooperation and knowledge from both professions. To cultivate a secure and cooperative atmosphere, facilitators received specialised training that emphasised these elements. A range of activities were part of the conference's educational strategy, which encouraged participants to actively learn. This method included two hours of CBL classes where students participated in discussions in groups. In addition, participants engaged in group video reflections and important event analysis for an hour, and then spent an additional hour using TBL techniques to create high-fidelity virtual simulations. Several frameworks, including the Biggs 3P model, contact theory, and the Kirkpatrick educational outcomes model, were used in the development and execution of the conference's educational components to guarantee their efficacy and compatibility with the intended learning objectives.	IPE conference	The students developed their critical evaluation and problem-solving skills as well as knowledge and skills related to infection control. Throughout the process, their understanding of various responsibilities improved. Students understood the critical role that good communication plays in patient safety as well as their own self-assurance in cooperative teamwork. They also emphasised the intrinsic benefits that come from working in a cooperative team setting.
17.	Heath et al. (2019) United States of America	The goal of this creative engagement project was to establish a link between IPE and clinical practice in underprivileged communities by means of an academic-clinical partnership with many health professions schools. The initiative created, incorporated, and assessed educational results from a new clinical service-learning endeavour with the goal of improving oral health instruction for primary school students while encouraging teamwork.	113 students from dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, social work and communications and information.	A trial programme was started to improve general wellbeing and oral health. As part of their clinical practicums, students visited communities to learn about available health options and then wrote about their experiences. Reports on interprofessional communication during orientations were followed by discussions and reflections on their experiences. Pre- and post-surveys were used to evaluate IPEC competency improvements. Students were initially divided into teams and sent to different towns to research economics-related and community-related issues. Following the completion of community evaluations, teams discussed and shared their results over a "pizza and present" event.	hCATS (Health Colleges Advancing Team Skills) to Appalachia (Two-and-a-half-day experience)	Students saw increases in their awareness of their own collaboration abilities and comprehension of community dynamics. Enrolment in the rural health clinic course improved interprofessional abilities. Effective clinical and collaborative practice can be facilitated by the learning environment that rural areas offer. It was noted that interprofessional communication plays a critical role in teamwork to ensure high-quality, comprehensive care. Furthermore, each team member's viewpoints, positions, and responsibilities were acknowledged, which promoted respect and an understanding of others' skills. Their knowledge of different health professions, the needs of the community, and how these affect patient care has increased because of the experience.

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18.	Herrera et al. (2019) United States of America	Promoted IPL based on IPEC competencies and provided additional acknowledgment to students who made contributions to the programme.	First and second year osteopathic medical, second year pharmacy and first year nursing students.	The programme's goal was to advance IPL with IPP-level competencies. To integrate IPE activities into their respective curricula, an interinstitutional task force was formed. The IPE certificate programme was developed because of the themes that were identified as enabling student participation. Participating in IPE engagement activities, volunteering with different health professions, early clinical experiences (ECEs), and a reflection piece recounting the interprofessional team experience were all part of the plan. The Programme was created by combining new course elements with existing requirements to lessen the workload for teachers, administrators, and scholars. Over the course of three years, the programme was delivered through cooperative, volunteer, clinical, and perceptive experiences. To coordinate the interinstitutional IPE efforts, each institution formed its own IPE group. Assessments were based on participation as well as rubrics developed around the learning objectives. An adjusted survey was used to gauge the knowledge and attitudes of the students, and a closing evaluation was used to evaluate the programme.	IPE Certificate Programme (offered over three years with eight volunteer hours).	Positive perceptions of the interprofessional field were identified. This model assisted institutions of community-based health professions seeking to incorporate IPE.
19.	Ho et al. (2022) People's Republic of China	Undergraduate students worked in teams to solve problems cooperatively. investigated the opinions of undergraduate students majoring in physiotherapy and nursing after they had taken part in interprofessional activities.	Undergraduate nursing and physiotherapy students	A qualitative study methodology was employed to investigate the efficacy of the IPTBL technique. Students received their study materials one week prior to the IPTBL session. Teams of students conducted the iRAT and tRAT tests throughout the session following a presentation on a clinical experience. After that, the students were interviewed one-on-one, and the information obtained from these conversations was transcribed. Several important topics emerged from the analysis of the interview data, including the interprofessional learning process, results particular to a profession, and outcomes pertaining to patients.	Interprofessional Team-Based Learning (IPTBL) course	Students were enthusiastic and enjoyed the interprofessional experience, which helped them to create meaningful relationships. Consequently, the course of interprofessional learning, profession-specific conclusions, and patient-related outcomes emerged as the three key themes from their experiences. Activities involving interprofessional teams and learning were very helpful because they improved learning through interactions with peers from various disciplines. Furthermore, the cooperative connections that were made throughout these exercises increased the students' self-assurance in exchanging information and cooperating to provide patients with superior treatment.
20.	Ivarson et al. (2020) Sweden	Observed how interprofessional learning was aided by the "Call the On-Call" activity.	Undergraduate medicine, nursing, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy students	Students worked together to complete training tasks in the wards. Students were divided into teams and the study used an ethnographic methodology during a two-week period. Three student teams would switch between the wards every two weeks. A nursing student would call a medical student during this period to seek advice on a medical matter. After that, the on-call medical student would re-join the group for a contemplative seminar about the Interprofessional Training Wards (IPTW). To facilitate human engagement, the exercise entailed telephone communication, and the call surgeon was observed. As part of the study, semi-structured interviews and observations were made.	Call the On-Call through the IPTW	Students acquired knowledge about new facets of professional tasks. Pupils valued open and sincere communication. Improved understanding of the difficulties that come with phone calls. enhanced comprehension of the responsibilities in structured communication.

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21.	Konrad et al. (2017) United States of America	improved the students' understanding of various roles and duties, put cooperation concepts into practice, refined their communication skills for individualised practice, and used knowledge cooperatively. gave faculty and student input on campus-based preclinical interprofessional education programmes to evaluate and improve their relevance and efficacy.	Intended for pre-clinical undergraduate and graduate-level scholars registered in health professions training programmes, with osteopathic medicine, physical therapy, dental hygiene, occupational therapy, social work, dental medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and physician assistant.	The programme design integrated constructivist and relational learning principles by incorporating numerous PBL models along with CBL. Case-based learning sessions, realistic scenarios, and team-building activities were among the instructional modalities used. Assessments were done both before and after the session to see how the attitudes and behaviours of the pupils had changed. Rapid cycle programme assessment was used to ensure that the programme was continuously improved, leveraging student feedback to improve the overall experience. There were five sessions in the programme: planning, orientation, two simulation sessions, and a poster session. There were three main parts to every session: learning activities, facilitator responsibilities, and purpose and objectives. The culmination of five consecutive small-group cooperative learning experiences was simulation sessions with standardised patients, which were followed by student presentations and supported debriefing sessions. Members of the local community were interviewed, chosen, and trained by IPTI faculty members to act out the scenarios. They had designated roles in each meeting and assisted as facilitators as well. Two surveys were used to gather data for the student learning outcomes: one was given out two weeks prior to the programme's start, and the other was given out on the last day of the programme.	interprofessional team immersion (IPTI) – (five sessions)	The training programme raised students' awareness of various careers, gave them confidence in their ability to operate as a team, and made it possible for them to collaborate at work. Responses to the programme assessment confirmed faculty participation value in IPE learning activities and small teams, collaborative learning. For transformative TBL experiences, the programme offered shared material, instructional strategies, and evaluation plans.
22.	Krampe et al. (2022) Germany	Evaluated Interpret2Improve's viability and looked at its consequences from the students' point of view.	Second- and third-year nursing and final year medical students	The Programme to Enhance Relational and Communication Skills served as the foundation for the curriculum's design (PERCS). Throughout the course, patients in simulations played the roles of both patients and family members. The intervention consisted of a three-hour session facilitated by a medical psychologist and a paediatrician teaching team. After a theoretical overview, students worked in groups and had discussions. A practical exercise or simulation followed this, and a debriefing with feedback came last. Notably, the patient spoke in a foreign language during the exercise. The Freiburg Questionnaire for Interprofessional Learning Evaluation (FILE) and PERCS assessment tools were used to evaluate the course's efficacy.	Interpret2Improve Three-hour course	The intervention worked as planned and was well received. After the course, there was a discernible improvement in the understanding of the importance of interprofessional cooperation. Moreover, there was a noticeable gain in the ability to overcome language barriers. Students showed that they could work well with interpreters and that they would be open to working with them in the future.

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23.	Kutt et al. (2019) Canada	Examined the effects of the CAM-stream IntD410 course on attitudes and education to determine whether it would be feasible to incorporate learning objectives for IPE and complementary therapies into the same course.	329 undergraduate students enrolled in the programme	The core Health Sciences Education and Research Commons facilitated the coordination of over one thousand students to create a course that included PE ponding treatment learning objectives. The course included discussions on complicated cases, field trips, CBL, assisted small group discussions, didactic lectures, and reflective writing assignments. Pre- and post-test questionnaires were used in the course evaluation, in addition to qualitative evaluations. Students' attitudes towards learning alongside different professions were assessed using the updated Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS). Furthermore, IEPS was used to evaluate IPE activities, and the HPCCPS, which is based on CanMEDs, was used to analyse the pre- and post-intervention data. The CHBQ was employed to evaluate viewpoints concerning the integration of therapy.	IntD410 CAM "Interprofessional Health Team Development" Complementary and Alternate Medicine (30-hour, 10-week course)	Qualitative results showed that students remained to be enthusiastic about studying and showed an improved grasp of aligned therapies. They emphasised their dedication to patient-centred treatment while acknowledging the value of cooperation and communication. Students also understood the importance of IPE and how it relates to therapy. They discovered that providing patient-centred care requires a strong sense of teamwork, and they listed certain team competencies that they felt were critical, including time management, conflict resolution, and team-based problem-solving. Students also emphasised the importance of teamwork, clear roles, and efficient communication in attaining the best possible outcomes for patients.
24.	Madigosky et al. (2019) United States of America	In terms of student outcomes, they covered several important topics: First, as members of an interprofessional team, the students showed mastery in values, integrity, teamwork, and guaranteeing quality and security. Second, they demonstrated strong teamwork and the related abilities and attitudes required for cooperative practice. Thirdly, the team's diverse healthcare professionals' unique tasks and duties were effectively recognised and valued by the students. Finally, they developed a common, interprofessional identity by identifying with the values and norms of healthcare professionals who provide collaborative care.	First year students from anaesthesiology assistant, dentistry, medicine, nursing baccalaureate, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant and public health programmes.	The Institute for Health Improvement (IHI) Open School, TeamSTEPPS®, and ethics all provided feedback on the course›s development. It contained iRAT and tRAT tests for assessment, and there were sixteen two-hour sessions total. In addition to introduction and debriefing sessions held following each session, facilitators received pre-training using the manuals that were supplied. Students received pre-work materials before the classes, and they had to complete assessments before and after. Students worked on application exercises, discussing moral dilemmas in case studies, and the sessions ended with a review and reflection time. The course's goal was to support efficient individual and group learning strategies through TBL.	Interprofessional Education and Development (IPED) – (15 TBL sessions of pre-work and 16 two-hour IPED sessions).	Improvements in interprofessional care, teamwork, acknowledging different roles and responsibilities, and developing a professional identity were all found in the study. The programme fostered the fundamental knowledge and abilities required for interprofessional practice, demonstrating the viability of implementing large-scale IPE within the framework of TBL.

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25.	Mastel-Smith et al. (2020) United States of America	Examined how the training affected the students' knowledge, perspectives, self-assurance, empathy, and comprehension of those suffering with dementia. Through social engagement, explicit learning experiences, and reflection exercises, one can enhance their knowledge, attitudes, empathy, and confidence.	Occupational therapy assistant, psychiatric mental health nursing, psychology, and pharmacy students	The foundation of the college of pharmacy's Dementia Care Bootcamp was Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Following the formulation of study objectives and hypotheses, students were enlisted for the bootcamp. Students finished the iRAT and tRAT tests before the start of each session. During the bootcamp, team-building exercises like role plays and case studies were carried out. A variety of quantitative measures were used to measure the different outcomes, such as the Dementia Knowledge Assessment Tool Version 2 (DKAT2), the Confidence in Dementia Scale (CODE), the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), and the Dementia Attitudes Scale (DAS). A focus group was employed to gather qualitative data. Students participated in TBL exercises that combined theoretical knowledge with real-world application.	Dementia care boot-camp (16-hour team-based learning)	Improved attitudes, self-assurance, and dementia understanding were among the programme's outcomes, along with the growth of dementia care competencies. The training session effectively improved the attitudes, self-assurance, and dementia knowledge of the participants, which in turn helped them acquire the critical skills needed to deliver high-quality dementia care.
26.	Mcquown et al. (2020) United States of America	To develop an IPE programme to teach geriatric fall prevention to undergraduate, graduate, and specialty health care practitioners. To guarantee the programme's efficacy, an evaluation of its ability to serve various student types and any modifications made in accordance with the Plan-Do-Study-Act model should be recorded.	Undergraduate nursing, nurse practitioner graduate program, pharmacy, medicine, social work, physical therapy, nutrition, and pastoral care	The instructional and Fall Risk Reduction Clinic sessions were organised using the Plan-Do-Study-Act approach, which also served as the basis for the IPE session. The primary teamwork curriculum for the children taking part in the clinic was TeamSTEPPS®. Every once or twice a week, patients were scheduled for a half-day session called the Fall Risk Reduction Clinic (FRRC). During this session, patients were presented to a comprehensive IP team that created personalised fall prevention plans that included medication recommendations, home modifications, outpatient referrals, and community resource access. A follow-up with the patient was done after the session to make sure the preventative strategy was being followed through on and was working. Open communication and anonymous paper questionnaires were used for evaluations, which promoted openness and helpful criticism. The ISVS was used to perform pre- and post-surveys to evaluate the session's impact and results.	Geriatric IPE session and FRRC	Students understood how important it is to look after senior citizens. They learned from practitioners and derived value from seeing patients' presentations made by other students. Additionally, facilitators learned about each other's special talents and approaches, which helped students understand the advantages of working in a varied team.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
27.	Prast et al. (2016) United States of America	The university recorded the process of accomplishing the objective of introducing IPE in a college for health professions. Improve students' understanding of different responsibilities in a range of patient care settings, encourage the growth of communication, and support the development of interprofessional teamwork skills.	Occupational therapy, nursing, social work, athletic training, exercise science, and medical laboratory science	The model of IPEC domains was utilised as a structure and incorporated into several health education programmes. A range of simulated experiences and activities were developed with the intention of improving communication, teamwork, and role comprehension. To improve IPC core competences, one such engagement comprised a case conference centred on a fake patient. The students were assigned to create a care plan for the patient, and they also created simulations in which team members were evaluated and assigned duties. Debriefing meetings were held after the simulations were over to encourage conversation and introspection. In addition, instructors oversaw lab and classroom environments as well as resources to create several interprofessional simulations designed to improve students' capacity for productive teamwork.	Case conference and IPE simulations.	Sharing of principles and values, understanding of duties and responsibilities, ongoing improvement of interprofessional communication skills, and development of collaborative abilities are essential components of IPC patient care. The focus of IPE initiatives can be expanded to include population and community health. According to an evaluation of the IPE events and simulations, students were able to further refine their skills in practice as they were able to effectively reinforce the development of these competencies.
28.	Rajiah and Mari Kannan (2016) Malaysia	Students clarified their places within their professions by articulating and identifying their respective functions. They gave an example of the value of fundamental communication abilities. Students showed outstanding communication abilities by working together as a team. They explained different duties and used their IT expertise to organise data from diverse sources efficiently. As a team, the students developed strategies and plans, assessed, and used communication principles, and recognised and investigated challenges within scenarios.	Undergraduate medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and dentistry students	The IPL activities included a variety of strategies to help healthcare workers develop their ability to collaborate and communicate with one another. One of the goals of these activities was to improve students' communication and understanding of one another through scenario-based learning. Students were encouraged to cooperate and work together on challenging healthcare problems through PBL workshops. Simulation resources such as audio-visual materials and facilitator guides were used. Workshops emphasised the value of interprofessional collaboration in hospital environments. Controlled learning settings for students from many health disciplines were provided through the organisation of interprofessional active learning (IPAL) sessions. Initiatives for community-based education were vital in helping students develop their awareness of interprofessional clinical processes, the impact of cultural aspects on healthcare delivery, and team building and service learning. IPL seminars and practice sessions would be held where students would interact, learn about different roles and duties, and get helpful criticism from faculty members. To improve learning outcomes, collaborative activities like discussions, case studies, simulations, and problem-based learning exercises were also incorporated into the curriculum. These were followed by feedback sessions. Visits to the community were arranged, giving students the chance to work with specialists from many fields in real-world healthcare settings. The purpose of these trips was to increase students' understanding of interprofessional dynamics in healthcare practice and to provide them with practical insights.	Framework for IPL in India	To integrate IPCP into health sciences curricula, faculty members were expected to actively participate in IPE projects and hold conversations centred on collaborative practice with healthcare providers. The construction of a supportive climate, institutional backing, and the participation of academic personnel were critical to the development and upkeep of IPE initiatives across a range of health curricula.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
29.	Reed et al. (2021) Australia	Called for collaborative care approaches that would improve patient care and results by strengthening interdisciplinary communication and role comprehension.	Medicine, nursing, paramedicine, radiography, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy	Initiatives for rural interprofessional learning were incorporated into the curriculum; these initiatives included activities carried out in rural settings, including general practices, hospitals, and community settings. To replicate a patient's journey, students participated in simulated situations that showed several phases of patient care, from high- to low-intensity events, presented in a sequential manner. Students had group conversations after the facilitators created these scenarios. In the simulations, community members also performed as actors. A 15-minute semi-structured debriefing session employing a debriefing model was held after every simulation. A mixed-method assessment strategy was used, consisting of semi-structured focus group sessions and pre- and post-measures, to evaluate the efficacy of each learning event. Moreover, facilitators offered comments via post-surveys.	Rural Interprofessional Learning	Students showed that they had a better grasp of their own and other healthcare professionals' duties, which facilitated teamwork and clearer communication. The importance of collaboration in the provision of healthcare was acknowledged by acknowledging the combined influence of interdisciplinary teams on improving patient outcomes. Efficient communication was essential to enabling smooth collaboration between medical specialists. A significant focus on patient-centred care was noted by the participants, who recognised the value of include patients and carers in the decision-making process.
30.	Safabakhsh et al. (2018) Iran	Created a model for IP continuous education.	N/A	Three steps were involved in developing an interprofessional continuing education framework for another institution: conducting a systematic evaluation, interviewing specialists, and designing a model. The literature review and database searches that were conducted as part of the systematic review were used to find pre-existing models and extract pertinent data. Experts were then questioned to gain more information. Ultimately, the results of the systematic review and expert interviews were used to create the model. The interprofessional education programme's subject, objectives, content, learning methodologies, and evaluation strategies were among the many aspects that were integrated into the model. The interprofessional programme was divided into three primary parts: design, execution, and assessment.	Interprofessional education post-registration model	Key issues that were emphasised by experts included patient-centred care, community needs, learner requirements, responsiveness, and IPC. This strategy promoted the integration of IPE in clinical practice as well as educational settings.
31.	Schuller et al. (2017) United States of America	Improved understanding of students' experiences in a low-resource environment, promoting IPE and the recruitment and retention of medical professionals in marginalised areas.	Students from medical, psychology, dental, social work, nurse practitioner, and physician assistant professions with residents	Hands-on experiences in rural settings, students gained insights into the provision of interprofessional services in rural areas. Directed content analysis was used to examine 181 participant journals to find recurring themes. Three themes emerged: sensitivity to the needs of underserved and rural populations, knowledge of interprofessional collaborative dynamics, and comprehension of the healthcare issues in these places.	Health professions Students and Residents Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) – (four weeks)	Students could address healthcare problems in remote areas more fully and effectively through highly valued collaborative work. Students were able to report on the level of provider involvement in patient care because of their increased understanding of the many issues and shortcomings that exist in rural regions because of this experience.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
32.	Stubbs et al. (2017) United States of America	To assess the viability of incorporating IPE into modern environments and to improve students' collaboration and collaborative problem-solving abilities. It evaluated how a community-based programme affected students' capacity to participate in group problem-solving, adjust to team responsibilities, and acknowledge the importance of cooperation, especially while working with patients and other professionals.	30 students from dentistry, dietetics, divinity, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, public health, social work, and speech and hearing sciences.	The schedule included didactic lectures, warm-up exercises, and service-learning elements. A community organisation was paired with by six interprofessional student teams. Students took part in 11–14-hour training and team-building workshops throughout the preparatory phase. The 20–24-hour service-learning phase that followed comprised working directly with clients and solving problems together through focus groups, interviews, and conversations. Staff members worked together to build tools that addressed unmet requirements, and reflections and debriefings were held. Students' perceptions of group problem-solving, comfort in team-based tasks, and appreciation of teamwork were measured using the ISVS.	Community-based IPE programme – (didactic, preparatory, and service learning)	Initiatives in IPE that are rooted in the community may help improve cooperative and teamwork abilities. Students' perceptions of cooperation, comfort levels in roles involving teams, and capacity for cooperative problem-solving and decision-making were all improved by this programme. It was emphasised how crucial it is to train students in remote areas where they can gain experience in interprofessional learning while providing healthcare services.
33.	Teodorczuk et al. (2016) United Kingdom	Using Griffith's three-phase IP curriculum as a model, the authors suggested a useful manual for putting IPE into practice and laying its groundwork.	Students enrolled in nursing, clinical psychology, medicine, and social work programmes collaborated. Third-year medical students partnered with peers from various health disciplines, such as pharmacy, occupational therapy, exercise physiology, speech pathology, and dietetics.	Three-phase pedagogy, a framework consisting of three stages, was developed. The first part was learning about roles in different health professions and receiving theoretical instruction. CLEIMS (Clinical Learning via Extended Immersion in Multi-method Simulation) was used in the second round of workshops and simulations. In phase three, IPE ideas were put into practice in real-world contexts centred on patient care. There were two elements to the framework: box one dealt with CLEIMS, while box two provided guidelines for creating an IPE programme.	Griffith University framework of interprofessional education (IPE) activity	The framework provides a thorough how-to for creating an IPE curriculum. It highlights how crucial it is to set up an interprofessional advisory group, include IPE activities into current curriculum, define learning objectives, create realistic activities, supply helpful materials, train teachers, and carry out continuous evaluations. With this method, students are guaranteed to have engaging and productive interprofessional learning experiences, which will help them develop the cooperation, communication, and teamwork skills necessary for their future careers in healthcare.

No.	Author, Setting	Purpose/ Outcomes	Target Audience	Programme development	Programme Developed	Key results that relate to the scoping review question/s
34.	Van Gessel et al. (2018) Switzerland	A major advancement was the addition of a joint practice training plan, particularly through simulation. This three-module programme was carefully designed to accomplish several important goals. It sought to highlight the value of collaborative practice in healthcare delivery by giving students a thorough understanding of collaborative practice in a variety of healthcare settings, giving them useful tools for real-world application, and emphasising the impact of interprofessional skills on patient care and outcomes.	1400–1500 students (nutritionists, physiotherapists, midwives, nurses, technologists in medical radiology, physicians)	To improve collaboration, two universities collaborated to create a thorough three-module IPE training curriculum that largely relies on simulation. The training, which lasted 300 hours, was presented in modules. In-depth study of the healthcare system was provided in Module 1, which also gave students the collaborative tools they needed to successfully navigate collaborative practice. To provide students with useful tools for professional practice, Module 2 actively involved students in learning activities that promoted comprehension of various roles and cooperation abilities. Ten simulation workshops, which were included in Module 3, which focused on care quality and safety, allowed students to recognise the substantial influence that interprofessional abilities have on healthcare outcomes by integrating them with patient care in a seamless manner.	The actual 3 module-8 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) Interprofessional programme. Module 1: full week Module 2: takes place over two semesters. Module 3: Over one week	Thoughts regarding how to best develop interprofessional competencies at all educational levels, from baccalaureate to postgraduate, emphasise the value of seeing the "patient as a partner" in the process of making decisions.

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How Mockery Silences Voices: A Diagnostic Exploration of a Selected IsiXhosa Short Story "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" ("There Is No Pride in Another Person's Wound") (2011)

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Abstract

In this article, I diagnostically explore the influence of mockery and ridicule on personal and communal relationships, using "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" ("There Is No Pride in Another Person's Wound") (Magqashela, Ntwana and Nyuka 2011) as a literary piece of textual evidence through reader-response theory. The aim is to unearth the socio-cultural and psychological implications of celebrating another person's vulnerability. By definition, reader-response theory underlines that the meaning of a literary text emerges from the interaction between the text and the reader's experiences. Two key findings emerge. Firstly, I underscore that readers' socio-cultural backgrounds may significantly influence their understanding of mockery, unmasking its ability to fracture community bonds and corrode individual self-worth. Secondly, I underline readers' emotional resonance towards characters subjected to ridicule, intensifying their consciousness of the overarching social implications of such behaviour. These findings bring to the fore the participatory nature of reading modern isiXhosa literature and the imperative of cultural and psychological factors in literary interpretation. I then conclude by advocating for literary interpretation that embraces diverse philosophies, which not only solidify the discernment of literary texts but also cement empathy and solidarity in addressing the destructive impact of mockery in isiXhosa literature and beyond.

Keywords: mockery, isiXhosa short story, reader-response theory, textual meaning, vulnerability

Introduction

The act of celebrating another person's vulnerability is like planting seeds of discord in the garden of human relationships—a greatly entrenched behaviour that spans cultures and societies (Park 2006, p. 316). Whether driven by envy, rivalry, or a fleeting sense of vindication, this tendency to find joy in another person's misfortune is both ethically corrosive and socially toxic. In particular, revelling in the downfall of another woman, as reflected in "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" ("There Is No Pride in Another Person's Wound")

(Magqashela, Ntwana, and Nyuka 2011), becomes a double-edged sword that cuts into the collective transformation of women. It solidifies a culture of competition, comparison, and division, much like building walls within what should be a shared fortress of solidarity. This implies that by actively engaging in such behaviour, women risk dismantling the scaffolding of gender justice and mutual transformation that they have meticulously constructed over time (Joseph 1985, p.7). This mockery of another person's downfall fractures the foundation of community-based empowerment and undermines the critical significance of mutual support and advancement.

Even more insidious, celebrating a woman's downfall strengthens societal stereotypes and outdated expectations that women should constantly vie against each other for validation and success (Brem, Romero, Garner, Grigorian, and Stuart 2021). This behaviour not only cements the mythology of rivalry but also solidifies a hostile environment where women are encouraged to see each other as competitors rather than allies—a cycle that stifles unity and delays transformation. Therefore, if celebrating another person's defenselessness plants seeds of discord and entrenches cultural toxicity, should societies that fuel these behaviours truly claim progress in cultivating ethical relationships and communal solidarity, or are they merely harvesting the fruits of a division they have sown? At the same time, while women are urged to dismantle male-centric structures, does the act of revelling in another woman's downfall not paradoxically reconstruct these very boundaries, strengthening societal mythologies of rivalry and stagnating the collective transformation they seek to achieve?

With these views in mind, I contend that this behaviour fragments the unity that is the cornerstone of gender fairness, creating a ripple effect of insecurity and self-doubt among women. As Muberekwa and Nkomo (2016) put forward, when women undermine each other, they unwittingly fortify the very chains of marginalisation and oppression they seek to demystify. It is like fueling a fire they have been striving to extinguish. As a matter of reality, celebrating another person's vulnerability sows the seeds of destruction and discord, nurturing a damaging mentality steeped in toxicity. This mindset feeds on the downfalls of others, corroding the pillars of solidarity and empathy that underpin a thriving and equitable society. Instead of cementing a fertile ground for advancement, where mistakes are regarded as stepping stones to progress, this practice cultivates a barren culture of apprehension, stifling boldness and innovation. Considering these assertions, I argue that in a country like South Africa, where historical disparities and gender-based oppression remain pervasive, this behaviour compounds existing societal fractures, deterring the collective

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pursuit of gender fairness and transformation, hence the demand to critically explore African or isiXhosa literature in a bid to address this challenge.

By the same token, celebrating another person's helplessness is building a house of mirrors that reflects others' flaws while obscuring one's own. This elusive behaviour underlines an absence of self-reflection and personal growth (Brownhill 2022, p. 281). It diverts attention from one's imperfections, casting the spotlight on the failures of others as a means of avoiding introspection. As Mukorera (2020) proffers, this fixation on the setbacks of others blinds people to the mirrors of their own weaknesses, robbing them of valuable opportunities for development and self-improvement. This act of insensibility disregards the intricate tapestry of human experiences, reducing individuals to their shortcomings and denying them the opportunity for redemption and transformation.

Ubuntu (humanity to others), with its emphasis on interconnectedness and collective humanity, reminds one that "I am because we are," advocating for compassion and cohesion even in the face of others' struggles. To the same extent, Christianity echoes this ethos, teaching that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, New International Version 2011), underlining the universality of human fallibility and the redemptive power of grace. Therefore, it is my view that to celebrate another person's downfall, as evident in "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa", is to reject the intrinsic value of empathy, a cornerstone of both Ubuntu (humanity to others) and Christian doctrines. It propagates a cycle of judgement and exclusion, like a river flowing endlessly without offering its waters for renewal. Rather, embracing vulnerability—both ours and others'—advances mutual understanding and paves the way for collective healing and growth, a phenomenon in Africans' hearts.

Building on this background, this article seeks to navigate the intricate terrain of the psychological, social, and ethical repercussions of celebrating another's vulnerability, akin to sowing seeds of destruction in a field meant for unity. In this scholarly pursuit, by unmasking the corrosive effects of these actions on individuals and society, the aim is to ignite a critical interrogation of affinity, compassion, and the transformative power of nurturing a culture that uplifts rather than delights in others' wounds. To anchor my argument, the isiXhosa short story, "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa", literally translated as "There is no pride in another person's wound" from the anthology *Ubomi Ngumzamo* (Life is a Struggle) (Magqashela et al. 2011), serves as a pivotal viewpoint through which the earlier-mentioned themes are explored.

This short story—"Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa"—resonates vastly within an Africanist and Afrocentric framework, drawing attention to community-based values such as *Ubuntu* (humanity to others)—the belief in concerted humanity and interconnectedness. It underscores the moral obligation to reject behaviours that intensify a culture of viciousness, emotional damage, and empathy distortion. Of note, when vulnerabilities are mocked and ridiculed, as observable in the selected isiXhosa short story, it is akin to uprooting the roots of trust, fragmenting the cohesive links that fortify societies, and casting shadows over the dignity and security of individuals. These actions, established in a departure from Afrocentric principles of solidarity and mutual respect, obstruct the path towards a compassionate, supportive society. Owing to these indications, by uncovering "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (Magqashela et al. 2011), I contribute to the reimagining of a cultural ethos that aligns with African philosophies of interdependence and collective upliftment, cultivating a harvest of compassion and unity rather than division and harm. In any case, it is prudent to bear in mind that there are remarkable scholarly debates that pertain to isiXhosa short stories, hence the next section.

Literature Review: An Overview of IsiXhosa Short Stories

This literature review includes two key subsections that provide a comprehensive foundation for discerning this scholarly discourse. The first subsection explores the definition, scope, and evolution of isiXhosa short stories within the broader context of African literature, drawing attention to their cultural, linguistic, and thematic significance. The second subsection delves into the unique narrative techniques, stylistic elements, and structural patterns that distinguish isiXhosa short stories, which highlights their role in preserving oral traditions and reflecting socio-cultural realities. Together, these two subsections offer a multifaceted discernment of the genre, setting the stage for greater critical interaction.

Conceptualising IsiXhosa Short Stories

IsiXhosa short stories are the heartbeat of the amaXhosa people, pulsing with the rhythms of their culture, morality, and communal wisdom (Diko 2023, pp.278-281). Emerging from the fertile soil of the oral tradition, these literary narratives are concise yet profound, offering a moral compass, transmitting cultural values, and painting vivid portraits of daily life within the amaXhosa lifeline. While these short stories are now primarily inscribed on the canvas of written text, their origins in oral storytelling remain profoundly cemented, like the sturdy roots of an ancient tree that continue to nourish its modern branches. Traditionally, these stories were carried on the winds of spoken words, passed from generation to generation (Botha 1984, p.107; Sonkosi 1999, p.83). However, the arrival of modernity and globalisation has introduced the written form, which allows these stories to cross-temporal and spatial boundaries. Yet, it must be emphasised that the written word does not entirely erase the oral features of isiXhosa storytelling. Rather, these stories act as basins, preserving the echoes of oral traditions while accommodating new forms of expression. The written medium provides a stage for storytellers to weave their unique stylistics and interpretations, demonstrating the flexibility and enduring vitality of this genre.

Nevertheless, this evolution raises critical questions about the potential dilution of oral narrative essence in the written form. For example, some may argue that transcription risks homogenising the diverse voices and stylistics inherent in oral storytelling. However, I argue that written isiXhosa short stories do not merely record but also reimagine the oral tradition, much like a potter reshaping clay while honouring its original essence. Beyond their artistic merit, isiXhosa short stories serve as cultural reservoirs, safeguarding the legacy of amaXhosa. They pass down not only moral lessons and cultural values but also an impactful sense of individualism, binding the community together like threads in a rich tapestry (Sonkosi 1999, p.87). While some may question whether modern adaptations risk losing the "authenticity" of the original oral tradition, it must be acknowledged that these stories continue to inspire pride, intensify connection, and celebrate the fertile legacy of amaXhosa traditions.

In addition to these declarations, isiXhosa written short stories are like a mosaic, each piece representing a fragment of creativity and ingenuity drawn from the diverse landscapes, histories, and cultures of amaXhosa. While the sheer breadth of cultural and linguistic variety within these stories defies easy generalisation, certain thematic and stylistic currents run through them, binding the mosaic into a cohesive whole. These literary narratives continually serve as mirrors reflecting the intricate socio-political needlepoint of identity, post-colonial struggles, and cultural heritage (Zotwana 1993, p.44). They serve as chronicles of the aftermath of colonial rule, mapping the scars of oppression, the labour of decolonisation, and the interplay of cultural hybridity. This implies that by illuminating the varied experiences of amaXhosa and the overarching South African milieu, these short stories challenge monolithic accounts of history, offering counter-narratives that are as intricate and dynamic as the beadwork of traditional amaXhosa artistry. They invite readers into a dialogue with both the past and the present, providing textured philosophies into the human condition influenced by historical upheavals and contemporary realities (Tisani 2001; Mvanyashe 2024). On account of these submissions or views, I contend that the rich tapestry of isiXhosa short stories embarrasses colonial mentalities by recovering narrative authority and showcasing the ingenuity of amaXhosa cultural expression, thus defying misguided colonial efforts to marginalise isiXhosa literature.

At the same time, isiXhosa short stories serve as literary rivers, flowing from the fertile springs of oral storytelling traditions that have nourished African cultures for centuries (Moropa 2004, p.180; Dilayi and Madolo 2025, p.3). These stories draw sustenance from the rich soil of oral traditions, interweaving vibrant dialogue, vivid imagery, and rhythmic cadences that echo the communal fireside narratives of old. Like a master weaver, the oral storytelling heritage threads itself into the fabric of contemporary isiXhosa literary narratives, allowing for dynamic plots, multifaceted narrators, and the braiding of folklore, proverbs, idioms, and symbolism. However, this connection to orality is not without its complexities. Some argue that the shift from oral to written mediums risks distorting the immediacy and communal essence that oral storytelling inherently embodies (Montle 2021; Akingbe 2023; Daikh 2024).

Even more notable, isiXhosa short stories straddle two worlds, merging the grounded realism of everyday life with the delicate elements of magical realism and folklore (Pato 2023; Mvanyashe 2024). This literary narrative alchemy dissolves the boundaries between *reality* and the *supernatural*, crafting a literary domain where the visible and the invisible coexist. This blending, like a kaleidoscope of philosophies, illuminates spiritual dimensions, challenges the rigidity of linear time and space, and offers readers new windows through which to interpret human existence (Wali 1963; Chukwuemeka 2025). Nonetheless, I must caution that an overreliance on magical realism risks overshadowing the socio-political realities these short stories aim to address, potentially diverting attention from pressing contemporary concerns. Having said this, by navigating these literary narrative waters, isiXhosa writers revalidate the enduring vitality of oral traditions while charting innovative paths in the literary scenery. Their literary works invite readers to traverse worlds both familiar and fantastical, underscoring the profound interconnectedness of past, present, and future.

In the same vein, isiXhosa short stories are akin to intricately woven tapestries, their threads rich with dramatic imagery that captivates the senses and stirs the soul. They frequently employ metaphorical language, vibrant descriptive details, and powerful symbolic elements, drawing the reader into a vivid mental panorama that links imagination and reality (Pasco 1991, p.413). This masterful use of imagery not only transforms storytelling into an immersive experience but also serves as a prism through which intricate cultural nuances, emotional profundity, and philosophical ideas are refracted. These literary narratives channel the essence of amaXhosa heritage, linking past and present while unveiling the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of their philosophy. On the grounds of these claims, I argue that colonialism, in its arrogant dismissal of African literature, revealed an intellectual deprivation that failed to grasp the profound artistry embedded in indigenous narratives. In contrast to its reductionist tendencies, isiXhosa short stories

“...isiXhosa short stories are akin to intricately woven tapestries, their threads rich with dramatic imagery that captivates the senses and stirs the soul.”

emerge as dynamic reservoirs of cultural intensity, weaving dramatic imagery and metaphorical brilliance that far surpass the stifling confines of colonial literary frameworks. These short stories effortlessly embody a heritage too vast, complex, and spiritually profound for colonialism's limited ability to comprehend.

Furthermore, isiXhosa short stories function as cultural mirrors, reflecting societal norms and offering sharp social critiques. In other words, by addressing pressing challenges such as moral dilemmas, communal values, and systemic injustices, they become a stage upon which the amaXhosa community's traditions and challenges are performed. These stories are, in essence, both lanterns that represent societal truths and hammers that shatter outdated norms. Nevertheless, this focus on social commentary does not solely represent the community's flaws. Counter-narratives within these stories celebrate determination, unity, and progress, highlighting the triumphs of individuals and communities in the face of adversity. In addition to this assertion, these short stories serve as didactic tools, akin to guiding stars for their audiences. Through protagonists who grapple with moral intricacies and navigate turbulent waters, they impart wisdom, teach ethical lessons, and inspire thoughtful reflection. The audience, much like travellers drawing from a wellspring of knowledge, gains philosophy and moral clarity from these literary texts. Yet, it is fundamental to recognise that not all isiXhosa short stories adhere to didactic intentions. This is based on the premise that some may challenge the notion of definitive moral resolutions, instead offering open-ended narratives that provoke dialogue and invite diverse interpretations, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of amaXhosa life.

Structural Characteristics of IsiXhosa Short Stories

Besides the conceptualisation of isiXhosa short stories in the previous subsection, it is equally significant to observe that these short stories follow a certain structure, or are constructed and assembled in a particular way or method. This way or method of constructing and assembling isiXhosa short stories is characterised by the following features:

1. Concise length: IsiXhosa short stories are like snapshots in a photo album, capturing dramatic moments of life with precision and brevity. These literary narratives continually focus on a single event, character, or theme, and are designed to deliver a complete and impactful story within a confined frame, much like a well-crafted poem compared to a sprawling epic. They are shorter than novels or extended creative works, offering readers an instant yet meaningful immersion (Opland 2004). In comparison to essays, short stories resemble vibrant paintings, rich in imagery and emotion, whereas essays function more like detailed maps, guiding readers through analytical scenery.
2. Narrative focus: IsiXhosa short stories are well-crafted textiles, intricately woven around a central thread—a lone protagonist or a close-knit group of characters whose lives form the warp and weft of the narrative. These stories unfold with a deliberate rhythm, adhering to a familiar pattern: the foundation of exposition, the mounting tension of rising action, the dramatic crest of a climax, and the soothing resolution that ties loose threads. However, not all isiXhosa short stories walk this linear path. Some defy the conventional loom, crafting fragmented or cyclical narratives that resemble mosaic art, where the short story's essence emerges from the interface of scattered yet interdependent fragments.
3. Limited scope: Due to their brevity, isiXhosa short stories serve as tightly woven tapestries, capturing a single thread of life—a specific incident, fleeting moment, or singular theme. Much like a photograph freezes time, these narratives distil a character's principle or a central event, offering a striking snapshot rather than the sweeping panorama afforded by longer literary works. This conciseness need not be regarded as a limitation. Rather, it should be viewed as a keyhole, through which readers glimpse a world rich with unspoken depth and broader possibilities. What some may interpret as a restricted focus could, in fact, be an intentional artistic choice, evoking mystery and encouraging readers to imagine the untold stories that extend far beyond the frame (Kaschula 2003).
4. Character development: Although isiXhosa short stories may be brief in length, they possess the power to cultivate rich, multifaceted characters. Like a sculptor chiselling away at marble, literary authors use techniques such as dialogue, internal monologue, and vivid descriptions to unmask the intricate layers of their characters' inner worlds—exposing their ideologies, emotions, and motivations. These literary tools allow characters to bloom within the confines of limited space, which offers readers a picture of a larger, unfolding human experience. This being the case, one may argue that the conciseness of short stories sometimes leaves little room for the complexity of character arcs to comprehensively develop, potentially resulting in characters who feel more like sketches than fully realised individuals. Despite this reality, I need to underline that the concentrated intensity of a short story's narrative evokes a sense of profundity that is no less impactful than that found in longer literary works.
5. Theme and symbolism: In isiXhosa short stories, authors weave intricate layers of symbolism and themes to illuminate vaster truths, to reveal the richness of a landscape. Through meticulously selected objects, settings, or events, these writers engage in a silent dialogue with the reader, inviting them to explore broader societal challenges or reflect on universal human experiences. The themes that emerge from these short stories are as diverse as the hues of a rainbow, spanning love, loss, morality,

and social justice. However, while some may celebrate the ideal of social justice or reflect on the sanctity of love, others may offer a counter-narrative that challenges these very ideals—questioning societal structures or presenting the disillusionment that follows idealistic pursuits. These contrasting ideologies affirm that the stories do not simply echo dominant societal values but also confront and critique them, opening the door for profound reflection and the possibility of transformation.

6. The economy of language: In the constrained space of isiXhosa short stories, authors craft their narratives like skilled gardeners, planting seeds of meaning with precision. Every word is carefully chosen, which allows the story to bloom in the reader's mind with maximum impact despite its brevity. The use of proverbial, idiomatic, and metaphorical expressions functions as a pruning tool, trimming excess and perfecting the essence of the story, while evoking profound emotions with minimal words. Having said this, this economy of language sometimes leads to the underrepresentation of nuanced contexts or layered voices, where a longer narrative may allow for more intricate exploration of themes. Given this reality, while the brevity serves to perfect focus, it also limits the fullness of certain stories, leaving some emotions and subplots in the margins, like unfinished strokes on an artist's canvas.
7. Open-mindedness: IsiXhosa short stories frequently unfold like rivers that meander through landscapes of uncertainty, their conclusions open-ended or ambiguous, inviting the reader to step into the current and navigate their own interpretations. This narrative fluidity beckons reflection, discussion, and a rich multiplicity of philosophies, as readers become explorers in a terrain where the meaning or resolution is not fixed but rather driven by individual experience and insight. While this is the case, some may contend that such openness leaves the reader stranded in a sea of ambiguity, devoid of the closure that may anchor the story's thematic core, potentially dismissing its impact. Yet, even this uncertainty serves as fertile ground for vaster interaction, as it challenges the reader to actively participate in the story's unfolding, adding layers of meaning that a more definite conclusion may not allow.

In a nutshell, isiXhosa short stories provide a platform both for adherence to tradition and for audacious experimentation. While these short stories continue to showcase recurring characteristics tied to cultural identity, their form is not bound by unyielding rules. Literary authors wield their creative independence like sculptors, reshaping the raw material of language and literature to construct narratives that align with their unique visions. This artistic elasticity grants for the weaving of unconventional narrative threads, the forging of intricate, unpredictable plots, and the infusion of linguistic innovation that challenges the boundaries of tradition. Accordingly, this freedom is not without its tensions. Just as experimentation solidifies the genre, it also provokes debates about the distortion of traditional storytelling principles. Under these circumstances, critics may contend that too much deviation risks diluting the essence of isiXhosa literary heritage. However, the counterpoint is compelling: by bending the rules, literary authors breathe new life into the genre, ensuring its relevance in an evolving literary landscape. It is within this tension—between tradition and transformation—that isiXhosa short stories achieve their greatest triumph, captivating readers and keeping the genre vibrantly alive. Earlier in the genesis, it was stated that this article seeks to navigate the intricate terrain of the psychological, social, and ethical ramifications of celebrating another person's vulnerability, since it is clear that isiXhosa short stories convey messages. To achieve this aim, this scholarly discourse applies reader-response theory, hence the next section.

Reader-Response Theory

This article applies reader-response theory as a perspective to delve into the intricate tapestry of "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (Magqashela et al. 2011). Reader-response theory, much like a link between literary text and reader, underscores the dynamic chemistry where meaning is not merely unearthed but collaboratively forged. It shifts the focus from the author's solitary pen to the hands of the reader, who serves as both an interpreter and co-creator. According to Tselenti, Cardoso, and Carvalho (2023, p.7), the essence of a literary text emerges as a shared melody, harmonised through the dialogue between the reader's philosophy

> In the scholarly scrutiny of isiXhosa short stories, reader-response theory serves as a vibrant dance between the text and the reader's imagination.

and the literary text. This theory acknowledges that readers, carrying the unique cargo of their experiences, belief systems, and predispositions, serve as viewpoints that refract and reshape the light of the literary text, sculpting diverse and profound personal interpretations (Gopal and Lee 2023, p.550). The appropriateness of this theory lies in its boundless applicability, allowing each reader's unique philosophy to breathe new life into the literary text, making it a living, evolving dialogue.

In the scholarly scrutiny of isiXhosa short stories, reader-response theory serves as a vibrant dance between the text and the reader's imagination. This dynamic technique celebrates the multiplicity of interpretations and reactions that different readers bring to the same story, acknowledging that no two individuals will see the story's hues in exactly the same way. For this reason, I put forward that this theory invites readers to dive into the emotional currents of the narrative, forge connections with its characters, and weave meaning through the threads of their personal experiences, cultural legacy, and emotional landscapes. Like a co-creator, the reader breathes new life into the story, filling its silences, bridging its gaps, and layering it with their own philosophies. This direction, as Mqwebu (2024, p.27) explains, transforms the reading experience into an exhilarating exploration—an intellectual journey enriched by emotional resonance and the boundless creativity of the imagination. It is not just reading; it is crafting, shaping, and dancing with the literary text in a uniquely personal way.

Over and above these scholarly views, engaging in a reader-response journey is like embarking on a trip through the scenery of a story, where each reader's philosophy acts as a unique compass guiding their interpretation. This theoretical technique invites readers to pause and reflect on the emotional echoes, intellectual sparks, and intuitive reactions they experience while navigating the short story. It beckons them to interrogate their own prejudices, much like probing the window through which they view the world, and to delve into the undercurrents of meaning that influence their interpretations (Bagheri and Zare 2023). At the same time, it encourages readers to imagine how the literary text's waves ripple differently across various audiences, sparking rich dialogues that resemble a vibrant tapestry woven with diverse threads of thought (Moitra 2023; Mqwebu 2024). Therefore, by applying reader-response theory to isiXhosa short stories, such as "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011), readers uncover hidden chambers of meaning within the literary text, peeling back layers to reveal its intricate profundity. It becomes a dynamic interaction between the reader and the story, where individual experiences, whether direct or indirect, reveal the narrative in unexpected and exciting ways. This theory, therefore, celebrates the kaleidoscope of human perspectives, solidifying inclusivity and honouring the myriad voices that contribute to the interpretation of a literary masterpiece. Given that the theory of interpretation and discussion has now been explained, the next section concentrates on the thrust of this article.

Interpretation and Discussion

This short story's central narrative opens with Nomzwakhe posing a probing question to her friend Noamen: Why, at her advanced age, is she caring for or looking after her grandchild? This interaction, seemingly innocent, unravels layers of social and cultural tensions within their community. Nomzwakhe and Noamen, both elderly women and long-time residents of the same neighbourhood, are bound by community-based experiences yet separated by differing ideologies of grandparenting. Nomzwakhe's question, however, reveals a notable challenge—a lack of empathy and understanding of the intricate web of circumstances that compel some elders to step into the role of primary caregivers. Like the roots of an ancient tree intertwined with unseen networks beneath the soil, these reasons—whether poverty, parental loss, or family dynamics—are invisible to outsiders yet profoundly valid to those enmeshed in them. In any event, one may proffer that Nomzwakhe's inquisitiveness, though insensitive, stems from a valid frustration shared by some community members. To her, the burden of grandparenting seems like a generational imbalance, an unnatural reversal of roles.

Therefore, critical questions must be asked: Is Nomzwakhe's question a genuine inquiry into Noamen's circumstances, or does it reflect an overarching societal tendency to judge without understanding? How ironic is it that Nomzwakhe, herself part of a community relying on collective care, criticises the very practices that sustain it? The answer to these questions lies in the paradox of human judgement: Nomzwakhe's probing reflects not just ignorance but the internalised frustrations of a community grappling with systemic failures. Her critique, while seemingly directed at Noamen, exposes the broader irony of societal structures that burden the elderly with caregiving responsibilities while simultaneously distorting compassion for their struggles. This scenario underscores the fragile balance between collective care as a celebrated ideal and its harsh realities, where disproportionate pressure falls on the most vulnerable members.

This view, though flawed, raises a counterargument: Should society re-examine its structures to guarantee younger generations take full responsibility for their offspring, sparing the elderly this crushing weight? Even so, Nomzwakhe's failure to dig deeper into Noamen's reality, much like dismissing the intricate workings of a clock by focusing only on its face, renders her question less about genuine concern and more a reflection of her own ignorance or prejudice. In failing to seek understanding, Nomzwakhe overlooks a fundamental reality: caregiving, regardless of age, is not simply an act of duty but one of love, resilience, and necessity, driven by circumstances far beyond one's control.

Through reader-response theory, I contend that Noamen emerges not as a victim of societal imbalance but as a symbol of enduring strength, nurturing her grandchild in the face of life's relentless demands. From a reader-response point of view, I further argue "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011) illustrates that an expanded discernment of individuals' choices necessitates examining the underlying socio-economic and familial dynamic forces that influence their decisions, rather than relying on shallow judgements. Thus, I argue that caregiving by elders, recurrently driven by systemic challenges and personal determination, should be recognised as an adaptive response to societal imbalances rather than a deviation from generational norms. These declarations are observable in the following piece of textual evidence:

> Wathi akubona uNomzwakhe ukuba
> ayizimisele ukumxelela nto loo mazi,
> wancokola ndaba zimbi. Waqala ngokubuza
> ukuba uphi na unina womntwana
> sel'exakeke ngolo hlobo ngumntwana nje.
> ElikaNoamen ukuphendula loo mbuzo yaba
> lelithi, akakayazi na okanye ayikamveleli
> na yena into yokunyengezelwa umntwana
> engangoba engako nje?
> (Magqashela et al. 2011, p.21).

> *When Nomzwakhe saw that the woman*
> *did not intend to tell her anything, the*
> *conversation was redirected. She started by*
> *asking where the child's mother was when*
> *Noamen was so occupied with a child.*
> *Noamen's answer to that question was,*
> *does she not know or has not encountered*
> *the reality of being dumped with a child?*
> (Translation mine).

Therefore, it is my view that Nomzwakhe's ideology contradicts African values and belief systems, which emphasise community-based responsibility and the intergenerational care of children as a shared duty originated in Ubuntu (humanity to others)—recognising that "a person is a person through other people." Nomzwakhe's dismissive stance reflects an individualistic and shallow worldview, antithetical to the depth of African community-based ethos, as though she has forgotten the very roots that once nurtured her. Through the perspective of reader-response theory, the reasons compelling grandparents to assume the role of primary caregivers for their grandchildren unfold like a mosaic, inviting interpretations modelled by individual ideologies and personal experiences. For some readers, this scenario may resemble a weighty inheritance, laden with challenges that strain the ageing shoulders of grandparents (Mtshali 2015; Dolbin-MacNab and Yancura 2018). They may perceive it as symptomatic of broader societal fractures—absent parents, a collapse in familial support structures, or the grinding gears of economic hardship.

Such an interpretation may evoke concerns about the fairness of the situation, painting it as a double-edged sword that risks wounding both the grandparents and grandchildren. Given these circumstances, I am of the view that if Nomzwakhe's ideology dismisses Ubuntu (humanity to others), is she advocating for a "me first" principle in a continent built on a "we" principle? Could her stance, ironically framed as progressive, be the very antithesis of the communal values that sustain African resilience? Once more, the answer to these questions lies in recognising how Nomzwakhe's ideology embodies a paradox: while seemingly modern, it distorts the intergenerational solidarity foundational to African communities. This implies that by undermining these African principles, it risks alienating those whose sacrifices anchor communal survival, exposing the fragility of the very progress she may claim to champion.

Yet, a counterview emerges when one considers the determination inherent in these familial dynamic forces. To others, this caregiving arrangement is a testament to intergenerational solidarity, a traditional thread of progress weaving a protective tapestry against life's tempests. Far from a burden, it symbolises the enduring strength of familial ties, where the grandparents' nurturing hands provide stability and optimism in the face of adversity. Accordingly, "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011) becomes less about impartiality and more about the resilience and adaptability of human connections, remodelling what initially appears as a disadvantage into an act of profound love and responsibility. As this subject develops, the following excerpt becomes observable:

> Ndizele kaloku mfazi. Andazi nokuba awunamntwana na wena. Mhlawumbi ke abakho benza into ethandwa nguwe. Abam ke benza ethandwa ngabo, abasandiboneli ntweni mna. Ubunokuthini wena xa uvuka kukhala umntwana yedwa emandlalweni engavuki ndawo unina?' wayibuza yamininzi yanjalo imibuzo lo mfazi
>
> (Magqashela et al. 2011, p.23).

> *I gave birth. I do not even know if you have a child. Maybe they do not do what you like. Mine are doing what they like, they do not see me anymore. What would you say when you wake up to a child crying alone in bed without their mother?' She asked the woman so many questions*
>
> (Translation mine).

Applying the reader-response theory to this excerpt unveils two significant layers of meaning, each deserving thoughtful consideration. Firstly, some readers may step into the shoes of the old woman, Noamen, empathetically navigating the rocky terrain of her newly assumed responsibilities. In this consideration, readers may feel a tug of concern for both the child's welfare and the mounting burden placed upon her as the grandmother. This emotional response mirrors a great consciousness of the adversities that lie ahead, focusing on the fragile demands of the child and the profound ripple effects on the grandmother's life. Here, the child's welfare serves as the anchor in this short story, while the old woman's age emerges as a key factor, highlighting the delicate balance she must strike. Secondly, some readers may cast a critical eye on the daughter's actions, questioning her parental responsibilities and the potential long-term consequences of her neglect. In this context, the interpretation should probe the underlying factors for the daughter's decision to leave the child behind, seeking to unmask the chain of events and the far-reaching impact on both the child and the grandmother. I, therefore, submit that grandparenting underscores the burden placed on older family members in caregiving roles, particularly in the context of children's welfare, and highlights the detrimental consequences of neglectful parenting. This situation calls attention to the chemistry between familial responsibilities and the long-term implications for both the child's security and the caregiver's physical and emotional capacity. In the main, it becomes clear that the grandchild was left negligently by his mother:

> *Olu sana uVuyo yayingunyana wentombi encinci kaNoamen, egama linguDaniswa.*

Wayeluzimele walushiya lulele emandlalweni wemka nenye imoto kwezo wayehamba nazo.
(Magqashela et al. 2011, p.21).

This baby, Vuyo, was the son of Noamen's youngest daughter, whose name is Daniswa. She fled and left it lying on the bed, and left with the other car she was regularly travelling with (Translation mine).

Through a reader-response theory, one potential peril is the immediate threat of physical harm a child may encounter when left unsupervised. Like a ship adrift without a captain, children and infants, unanchored by maturity or the necessary skills to ensure their safety, are adrift in a sea of potential dangers. This vulnerability exposes them to accidents, injuries, or hazardous situations, such as falls, ingestion of toxic substances, or encounters with harmful objects. In this context, I respond to these dangers, raising the alarm for the child's security and emphasising the urgent need to cultivate an environment that serves as a protective fortress. However, beyond the physical threats, the emotional and psychological toll of neglect or abandonment is equally devastating. A child left to their own devices potentially feels like a plant deprived of sunlight, withering in fear, anxiety, and insecurity. These emotional scars, as Aubel (2024, p.27) suggests, leave lasting imprints on a child's development, eroding their self-esteem and stunting their ability to form trusting relationships.

By the same token, I argue that in "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011), the character of Noamen serves as a symbol of mockery—a representation of the village's shame for her so-called "problematic" children, whose presence seems to amplify the fractures in the community's social fabric. Yet, one may question whether Noamen's situation is merely a reflection of an unjust social hierarchy, where the true danger lies not only in neglect, but in the collective judgement that further isolates and diminishes those already vulnerable. Is it not possible, therefore, that the village's condemnation of Noamen, much like a blade that wounds both the handler and the held, could be contributing to the very emotional and psychological consequences they so readily denounce? As the short story progresses, the next piece of textual evidence becomes notable for scholarly scrutiny:

Intombi enkulu, umafungwashe, wayebeleke usana Iwayo olunyanga mbini yaya apho kwazi yona. Unyana omkhulu welo khaya uMvuyisi wayeminyaka mibini ethothoza kwesimyama isisele, etsala isigwebo sokubetha de abulale umhlobokazi wakhe, kanti ithunjana lona, umninawa wakhe, onguZola, wayelele ngandletyananye esibhedlele, egcuma zizivubeko, echizisa amanxeba emvubu. Wayebethwe ngabahlali baloo lokishi yaseNgangelizwe eMthatha ngenxa yokudlwengula imveku eminyaka mithandathu. Wayesisigculelelo sokuhlekisa uNoamen kuyo yonke loo Ngangelizwe. Zazisithi ezinye iimazi abantwana bakhe benjalo nje kukuba ubafekethisa kakhulu. Akukho nenye mini ayikhumbulayo efekethisa abantwana bakhe uNoamen. Wayebangathi uyabakhuthaza ekwenzeni izinto ezingatshongo khona kubahlali. Yayilala ilihlwili imihla nezolo intliziyo yaloo ntombi yasemaTolweni. Babemgxeka kwangaloo nto yokugcinela iintombi zakhe ezihamba esithubeni abantwana. Babesithi uyazikhuthaza ngokwenjenjalo ukuba mazizale zizise abantwana ekhaya
(Magqashela et al. 2011, p.22-23).

The eldest daughter of Noamen, had given birth to a two-month-old baby, and disappeared. The eldest son of this family, Mvuyisi, was imprisoned in a dark cell for two years, serving a sentence of beating and killing his friend, while the youngest, his brother, Zola, was lying on his arm in the hospital, suffering from bruises and bleeding wounds. He was beaten by the residents of Ngangelizwe township in Mthatha for raping a six-year-old child. She (Noamen) was the laughing stock throughout the village. Others said that she knows her children are just like that because she embroiders them a lot. Noamen remembers not a single day embroidering her children. She was seen as if she was encouraging them to do things that were not expected by the residents. Her heart was in pain and sorrow, day and night. They (village people) were criticising

> *her for keeping children for his daughters who were roaming the streets. They said that she encourages them to give birth and bring children home* (Translation mine).

Drawing from this excerpt, it is clear that problematic and unruly behaviour in children exerts a heavy toll on parents, akin to a relentless storm battering a fragile shore. The crushing weight of constant stress, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy engulf parents (Mtshali 2015, p.77), leaving them emotionally drained and overwhelmed. The daily battle to manage challenging behaviours results in diminished parental well-being and emotional exhaustion, as proffered by Mohangi (2023, p.238). By the same token, the social stigma and judgement from others act like sharp thorns, solidifying the distress and sense of isolation that parents may already feel. In "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011), Noamen's plight is compounded by the ridicule of the community, who mock her struggles, deepening her feelings of shame and helplessness. This mockery becomes a harsh echo that intensifies her sense of isolation, creating an environment where support is scarce and comfort even more elusive. For these reasons, I put forward that external judgement feeds into a cycle of stress and disconnection, ultimately worsening the parent-child relationship and potentially accelerating the child's problematic behaviour.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge a counter-argument that suggests not all community reactions are destructive. In some cases, community involvement and support serve as a lifeline for struggling parents, offering empathy and concerted wisdom. Rather than isolating the parent, a supportive community could—and should—become a cushion against the crushing realities of parenting challenges, advancing a sense of collective responsibility and shared determination. In such contexts, the emotional burden could be lessened as parents find strength in knowing they are not alone in their struggles. This alternative philosophy underscores the potential for communal networks to cement welfare and augment the coping mechanisms of parents, helping to curb the negative spiral of stress and isolation.

With these arguments in mind, I further submit that driving mockery of parents who care for their grandchildren is not only unproductive but also undermines the fundamental African principles of Ubuntu (humanity to others), which draw attention to collective responsibility and community-based support. This mockery betrays the vastly ingrained cultural values of respect for elders and intergenerational care, which are core to maintaining social harmony and familial cohesion in African communities. This means that by belittling the efforts of these parents, society propagates an environment of neglect, effectively eroding the very foundation of communal solidarity that sustains African societies.

As the short story unfolds, a striking irony begins to emerge through the actions of MamNtshilibe, a neighbour of Noamen. Initially, MamNtshilibe takes pleasure in mocking and humiliating Noamen's struggles, seemingly oblivious to the complexities of human vulnerability. Nevertheless, the plot takes a turn when MamNtshilibe's own daughter, Thuliswa, becomes entangled in the perilous world of drug dealing. This turn of events underlines a crucial inconsistency in MamNtshilibe's behaviour—a disconnect between her harsh judgement of Noamen's situation and the turmoil now brewing within her own family. In this moment, the short story weaves a metaphorical tapestry of how one's own vulnerabilities, when overlooked or ridiculed by others, return like a shadow, revealing the profound truths of the human condition. In other words, by ridiculing Noamen's defenselessness, MamNtshilibe fails to see the mirrors reflecting her own struggles, especially those tied to the unpredictable nature of parenting. This dramatic irony intensifies as MamNtshilibe must now face the crushing weight of her own unspoken struggles. Yet, this irony is not just a cruel twist of fate—it should be interpreted as a mirror, inviting a sober reflection on the ways in which humanity frequently amplifies the defenselessness of others while concealing their own.

The counter-narrative here denotes that MamNtshilibe's mockery, rooted in societal judgement, is not only a reaction to Noamen's perceived weakness but also an unconscious attempt to distance herself from her own fears and insecurities, which have now manifested in her daughter's actions. On the grounds of these reasons, critical questions should be asked: How often do individuals, like MamNtshilibe, mock others as a shield to mask their own weaknesses, only to later confront those very frailties within themselves? Is it not profoundly ironic that the same societal judgements MamNtshilibe wields against Noamen ultimately reflect her own unexamined fears, now embodied in her daughter's struggles? Again, the answer to these questions lies in the short story's depiction of irony as a tool for exposing the cyclical nature of judgement and vulnerability. Within this framework, MamNtshilibe's ridicule of Noamen is a projection of her own insecurities, which resurfaces as a poignant reminder that no one is immune to the unpredictability of human fragility.

Given these scholarly observations, I contend that this experience underlines the discord between criticising someone's struggles while grappling with similar challenges themselves, highlighting a dissonance between their actions and personal experiences. It mirrors a failure to empathise with the complex realities of parenting—the turbulent seas of guiding children through their own emotional storms. This lack of empathy appears as both insensitive and hypocritical, as it mocks a situation they too are navigating, like a captain mocking the storm while sailing through it. Ironically, this behaviour not only expands the pain of the person being ridiculed but also contributes to a toxic environment, one that discourages others from seeking refuge or support in their own times of desperation. Instead of offering a lifeline of understanding, this humiliation intensifies vulnerability, cementing a negative cycle that stifles growth. A counter-argument to this ought to encourage an environment where vulnerability is met with compassion, turning humiliation into understanding. In "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011), recognising the irony of this behaviour becomes essential for advancing a culture of kindness and support in both parenting and broader community interactions. It calls for reflection on personal conduct and urges individuals to extend compassion, understanding that everyone's journey—especially through the turbulent waters of parenting—carries its own challenges and liabilities, deserving of solidarity rather than ridicule.

> "Close friends or relations, much like sculptors modelling clay, wield a profound influence on individuals' self-perception and self-esteem (Montle 2021)."

In contrast to these scholarly debates, I contend that it is crucial to accept that the behaviour of ridiculing others in this short story emerges from individuals who are within close proximity, as Magqashela et al. (2011, p.23) note. This scenario highlights how ridicule and humiliation from those closest to us strike a much greater emotional chord. Close relationships, akin to delicate threads woven with trust and weakness, carry an inherent promise of emotional safety. When these threads are torn by ridicule or belittlement, the betrayal of trust feels like a harsh storm disrupting what was once a calm, supportive refuge. The emotional aftermath of such a breach is not only one of disappointment and betrayal but also breeds feelings of confusion and sorrow, as the bond that is believed to be unshakeable now feels fragile and fractured.

Beyond this assertion, those in our inner circles are acutely aware of our personal insecurities and vulnerabilities, which are recurrently used as weapons in moments of mockery. This intimate knowledge makes their actions particularly damaging, for it feels as though they are attacking the very core of who we are. The sting is sharper because we expect these individuals—who know us best—to protect, not wound. However, it is also important to acknowledge the possibility of a counter-narrative: that close relationships are sometimes a site of growth, where ridicule may not always signal harm. In certain contexts, teasing among friends or loved ones, when grounded in mutual respect and understanding, serves as a means of challenging each other and fostering resistance. While it does not excuse outright humiliation, this alternative philosophy suggests that some instances of mockery are not attacks, but opportunities for strengthening the bond if *and, only if*, handled with care and empathy.

Close friends or relations, much like sculptors modelling clay, wield a profound influence on individuals' self-perception and self-esteem (Montle 2021). Their opinions and judgements serve as chisels that either refine and enhance a person's sense of self-worth or create cracks that expose weaknesses. When friends or close relations actively engage in humiliation, especially towards those they hold dear, they risk becoming unwitting architects of self-doubt, chiselling away at confidence and cementing the fissures of existing insecurities. This internalisation of negative remarks or actions blooms into emotional distress, manifesting as self-doubt, shame, or a diminished sense of identity like a sculpture left unfinished and fragmented.

In any event, the same sculptor may also create a masterpiece of support and validation. Encouraging words and genuine validation from close friends or relatives may act as a restorative touch, filling the cracks with gold, much like the Japanese art of kintsugi (gold seams). This then highlights the transformative power of human relations built on mutual respect and kindness, proving that close relationships should become sanctuaries of healing rather than sources of harm. Therefore, uncomfortable questions must be asked: How can those entrusted with nurturing self-worth become the very agents of its destruction? Is it not ironic that the same hands capable of mending cracks with kindness recurrently deepen them with ridicule? The answer to these questions lies in the duality of human relationships, where the same sculptor who chisels away at insecurities with ridicule may also restore dignity with affirmations, underscoring the necessity for relationships to serve as sanctuaries of healing rather than arenas of harm. Nonetheless, with these scholarly debates, the next final section presents some concluding remarks.

Concluding Remarks

The diagnostic exploration of "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011) uncovers the profound implications of mockery and ridicule on both individuals and communities. This means that by focusing on the socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of celebrating another person's vulnerability, the scholarly analysis herein proves that ridicule is more than an act of humiliation—it is a corrosive force that undermines solidarity and mutual respect. The emotional resonance readers experience when engaging with characters subjected to mockery underscores the cyclical nature of judgement and vulnerability, urging society to reconsider the ethical underpinnings of interpersonal interactions. Mockery, as depicted in the selected short story, not only fragments community cohesion but also propagates systemic disparities by intensifying distorted stereotypes and widening individual insecurities. Even more notable, this article underscores the imperative of African philosophies such as Ubuntu (humanity to others), which advocate for interconnectedness and collective upliftment. The rejection of these principles through acts of ridicule disrupts the moral fabric essential for societal progress. In other words, by robustly interacting with literary texts such as "Inxeba Lendoda Alihlekwa" (2011) through reader-response theory, readers are invited to critically reflect on their own behaviours and their impact on communal harmony. Ultimately, cementing empathy and compassion in interpersonal relations is essential to counter the destructive effects of mockery, transforming African communities into sanctuaries of healing and resilience.

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A Critical Appraisal of Zolani Mkiva's Biographical Details that Colour His Post-apartheid Poetry

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Abstract

The debate on the significance of an artist's biographical details on his or her aesthetic work continues to grow. Some scholars argue that the upbringing and life of an artist have little or no influence on the work they produce, while others warn against the danger of bias as a result of basing analysis on author's biographical details. In contrast, other scholars view biographical details as influencing authorial ideology, as art is not produced in a vacuum. Therefore, it was the aim of this article to examine the influence of Zolani Mkiva's biographical details on his aesthetic work in the post-apartheid era. In answering the question, does Mkiva's biographical details have an influence in his aesthetic works, the article analyses his post-apartheid poems. The results support the view that the artist's upbringing and life contributes to his authorial ideology on his other aesthetic work, and thus should be considered in the analysis of artist's work as they offer insights in understanding artist's work.

Keywords: Zolani Mkiva; authorial ideology; post-apartheid poety; imbongi; biography

Introduction

This article examines how the rich life of Zolani Mkiva colours his poetry. There is a growing debate on the significance of the artist's biographical details in his/her aesthetic works. New Criticism theory is among theories that encourages critics of literature to restrain themselves from the impact of author's life (Aail and Wisal 2019). This ideology is espoused by Ntuli (1984, p.1), who notes, "biographical notes do not always help in making a reliable evaluation of an artist's work. In fact, a critic may be prejudiced by his knowledge of the writer's life history and he may arrive at incorrect interpretation of the work under scrutiny." Similarly, Mkonto (1988, p.14) states that "biography alone should not be relied upon when one is attempting to understand the writer's ideal." In contrast, Qangule (1979, p.1), citing Kunene, states:

> While I agree with critics who assert that one's knowledge of the life of an author does not enhance one's appreciation of the author's writings, it seems to me that there is equally no doubt that the understanding of an author who is clearly dedicated to a campaign of social reform is enhanced by a knowledge of his social and cultural world, its effect upon him, and the effect upon him also of any factors which being external to this social milieu yet bombard it towards a forceful, even cataclysmic change.

Cutalele (2007) concurs with Kunene (1967) and Qangule, citing biographical details' importance in understanding the author's contribution to the issue at hand. Biographical details share experiences of the artist leading to his or her production of art. These practical experiences nurture the ideology of an artist within the dominant ideology of a certain era, as he interacts with his immediate and extended surroundings. Qangule (1979, p. 3) adds, "The home, the school and the church constitute a milieu that has a great influence in shaping up one's outlook." Furthermore, Mtumane (2000, p. 9) posit that biographical details "provides a mirror where one can access the author's philosophy and thought processes". Makhenyane (2022) further states that these details enhance understanding of the poet's stand on certain issues. Although Diko (2022) does not trace the biographical details of the poet he examines, he does make reference to a biographical detail of Anelisa Thengimfene in stating that she is umXhosa. This fact about Thengimfene gives an idea of her worldview, as reflected in her poetry. This article then adds to the current debate on the significance of the artist's biographical details in his/her aesthetic works by examining the impact of Mkiva's biographical details on his aesthetic work. In examining Mkiva's experiences of life, the article will note only those experiences that are relevant to his aesthetic work. Therefore, this article will examine the family influences and educational experiences, as well as community responsibilities, using biographical criticism as a theoretical framework.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This article uses biographical criticism as its primary theoretical framework. Biographical criticism dates back to the 1779 publication of Johnson's book, *Lives of the Poets*. Although met with many critiques, his thoughts on the significance of biography in understanding poet's work is foundational. It laid a firm foundation for biographical criticism, which spurned centuries to our day. Purba (2018, p. 19) describes biographical criticism as "the practice of analysing a piece of literary work through the lens of the author's experience." This theory takes into cognizant the artist's upbringing, race, age, family, formal and informal education, and the economic status that informs the artist's work. Biographical criticism asks two primary questions: How does the text reflect or does not reflect artist's life? Is this aesthetic work an extension of the author's position on issues in the artist's life? In answering these fundamental questions, the researcher must be careful not to reduce the theory into drawing parallels between the artist's life and his or her aesthetic work. Instead, biographical criticism is a study of artist's intention and audience. Biographical criticism relies on biographical information to illuminate deeper meaning of themes, ideologies "and literary allusions based on author's own concerns and conflicts" (Purba 2018, p.22). Mazwi (2019, p. 97) argues, "we need to understand what kind of life the author led, what was going on in his life during the time the work was written, and what was happening in the world around him at the time." Mazwi (2019) used biographical criticism in examining the works of Mqhayi and she noted that Mqhayi wrote of his childhood experiences of suppression and Frontier Wars during colonial times. In answering the research question, which asks, to what extent has Mkiva's life influenced his aesthetic, this article will examine the period in which Mkiva was born and how it influenced his authorial ideology. Furthermore, it will examine his education and work and how they are reflected in his poetry.

Methodology

Using a qualitative research approach, data for this article was collected from Mkiva's biographical accounts and his poems. Only poems produced in the post-apartheid era were used as data. These poems were chosen since the significance of biographical details in works produced during apartheid has been established. This article examines the influence of biographical details in the post-apartheid era. Mkiva's poems used in this study were collected as audio format from compact discs and digital platforms and transcribed into a written format. In the following section, textual analysis was used as a data analysis technique.

Following in the footsteps of his forebears

The Mkiva family, of the Miya clan, has a rich ancestry of iimbongi. Mkiva shares (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 133): "in my family, and especially my forebears, we have always had praise singers, *iimbongi*. We have had historians, that is, oral historians, who were recognised in their community and beyond. They played a role in my immediate community and the royal family. We have also had orators". This environment nurtured and cultured an imbongi of note in Mkiva as he grew to follow the example of his forebears. His voice of imbongi is recognised locally and abroad, commenting on socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic issues.

Mkiva (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p.137) further states:

> Poetry is in the bloodline of my family.... It's something that I picked up from my father. My father got it from his forefather. His forefather got it from his great-grandfather. His great-grandfather got it from his great-great-grandfather. So, it comes through that pipeline.... It's an inherited trait.

Mkiva describes his great-grandfather as "a very dynamic poet, a praise poet, and a historian" as well as "the main person who really polished and honed" his skill as a poet (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 133). He muses: "at a personal level, I was grateful and honoured to have had an opportunity to live with him. In a sense, therefore, I have understudied him. I have lived with my ancestor" (*Ibid.*). Mkiva's great-grandfather "was one of the founding members of the liberation movement. And he was a mine worker" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 133). Mkiva adds, "He played a very important role as an *imbongi* in motivating workers at work, and that gave him a theatre that is almost closer to the one I enjoy right now" (*Ibid.*). In the same breath, Mkiva is motivating his audience to action and encouraging them to liberate themselves and their minds. In the poem titled 'Mbambe Lubobo' (Recall Him Nation), he encourages the nation (*lubobo*) to recall a certain leader as Mkiva "was not happy with some of the things that were happening in the country, for instance, money was used on other things, like arms, instead of important issues like education" (Telephone Conversation 2010). Similarly, in 'Phambili Ngomanyano', he calls for South Africans to unite under one banner of the Rainbow Nation espoused by Nelson Mandela, and refrain from holding the grudges of the past. He closes the second stanza with complete parallelism that is followed by a refrain in saying:

> *Sithi, phambili ngoxolo, phambili!*
> *Sithi, phambili ngomanyano, phambili!*
>
> We say, forward with peace, forward!
> We say, forward with unity, forward!
>
> *Impinda: Phambili, phambili manyano (x2)*
> *Phambili ngomanyano (x5)*
>
> Refrain: Forward, forward unity (x2)
> Forward with unity (x5)

Mkiva follows in the footsteps of his forebears on a larger scale. His forebears were limited to the Xhosa nation. As a young boy, Mkiva had the privilege of accompanying his uncle to cultural events, where he was invited to perform his poetry. It is a custom among amaXhosa to have *imbongi* in cultural events like *imigidi* (the big day marking the coming home of the boys from initiation school), *imitshato* (weddings) and in gatherings at the Royal House. This privilege opened doors for young Mkiva as it led to his "first public performance in 1981" (Telephone Conversation 2010), at a tender age of nine. That exposure honed Mkiva for future performances on bigger stages like Mandela's inauguration as the President of South Africa, Parliament, and the African Union summit.

Therefore, the art of *ukubonga* is intrinsic to Mkiva. He possesses the traits that can be traced back to his forebears; he is dynamic in his praises and critiques, and his poetry is rich with historical facts. His poetry reflects his family values, beliefs, and ideologies and that of his nation. In his poetry, he is aware of the role he must play as modelled by those who bore the family name before him. This is not only evident in his poetry, but also in community projects he participates in as well as in the cultural circles he serves.

Education and Related Milieu

Childhood to High School

As alluded to, Mkiva's first form of education came from his family, more especially, from his great-grandfather, Pauzen Jacula Mkiva. The education he received from this legendary figure had a lasting effect on his mind. It was at the feet of this sage that he was first introduced to the importance of culture, activism, and a sense of social responsibility, as well as the art of *ukubonga*. In the same breath, he has taken the microphone and continued where his great-grandfather and other forbearers left off. He states: "coming from a heritage where in the family unit I have heard praising, I have actually inherited what belonged to my forebears and taken it from there and developed it according to modern times" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 134). It is clear from these words that Mkiva appreciates the education he received from his family, which nurtured what was already running in his veins.

Mkiva grew up tending to his father's herd with other boys on the plains of Bholothwa. He shares his experience in this manner:

> When I was growing up, I had to look after the livestock of my father. And in that process, like any other boy who comes from that kind of family, I used to sing praises of the cows that belonged to my father. In doing so, I would also sing my family names, my clan names, combining with praise that I would chant for the cows that belonged to my father (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p.134).

In the praises of revolutionary leaders such as Mandela, Castro, Mbeki, Zuma, Mkiva borrows from his experience of looking after his father's herd. He often uses the bull metaphor to compare leadership qualities to that of a bull, the leader of the herd. He praises Mandela as a bull that breaks down bulwarks without horns and as a bull that devours heads of other bulls. Furthermore, he borrows from his experience by weaving clan names in his poetry. The use of clan names in Mkiva's work is woven seamlessly into the theme of the poem. For example, in the poem, 'Maz' Enethole' (Mkiva 2001), he uses the clan names of Mandela to tie this leader to his roots and to remind him of his patriotic responsibility. He exclaims:

> *Goduka swayiba lezwemb' elide lakwaZondwa*
> *LakwaYem-yem, kwaVelabembhentsele...*
>
> Go home slender and tall one of Zondwa
> Of Yem-yem, of Velabembhentsele...

Similarly, in 'Inkunz' kaMbeki' (Mkiva, n.d.), he sings praises of the leadership qualities of Thabo Mbeki by employing his clan names to reveal where Mbeki learned his craft:

> *Yinkunz' emnyama ephuma kwiinkomo*
> *zikaFakade kaMbekisa;*
> *Phantsi kwamabandla kaJama,*
> *KaSjadu ziyamjejula ngejejana lajej' ijejana...*
>
> He is the black bull from the cattle of Fakade,
> of Mbekisa;
> Under the courts of Jama,
> Of Sjadu who is adorned in long red coat...

This aspect in Mkiva's poetry dates to his childhood while tending to his father's livestock. It also has its roots in orature.

In addition, as any village boy, Mkiva grew up playing the traditional game of stick fighting. In this game, there would be teams and each member of the team would take turns with the members of the opposing team. In an act of motivating his team, "the one who has the skill of singing the praises...will praise your team as it plays against the other", Mkiva reveals (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 134). He adds, "[in] that way you also generate and regenerate the skill of praising" (*Ibid.*). In 2000, he sang praises of motivation and warning while he accompanied South African boxer, Vuyani "The Beast" Bungu, to the ring to face Prince Naseem Hamed for a World Boxing Organisation title. In his praises, Mkiva mentioned the skill of Bungu in fighting and how he defeats his opponents and how he was going to beat Prince Naseem to a pulp that night. Although Bungu lost the fight, Mkiva's childhood education of praising stick-fighters was evident that night.

To his advantage, Mkiva's childhood education was capped by attending primary education at his grandmother's school (Brown and Kiguli 2006). The foundation received at this day-school prepared him for the future as he was to step into a generation of multilingualism and globalisation. In addition, it excited an appetite in him to entertain diversity in his life and helped him to be able to address audiences outside his own culture. For example, in a poem titled 'God Bless Africa' (Mkiva 2001), he uses both English and Swahili while in other poems he borrows phrases from other international languages. Had he failed to attend formal school, he would be limited to isiXhosa only as language and understanding of other foreign cultures was going to be a barrier.

Mkiva attended different post-primary schools around the former Transkei region. He did Standard 8 at Freemantle Boys High School, but he was expelled after performing a poem titled 'Paramount Thief' instead of Paramount Chief (Cutalele 2007). He then moved to St John's High School in Mthatha to do the final years of his high school until he matriculated in 1991 (www.poetofafrica.com). A former schoolmate at St John's, Nkululeko Mdingi, said that "Zolani used to perform his poems at the cultural functions at school where he displayed a great deal of skill" (Telephone Conversation 2010). Mdingi (*Ibid.*) further revealed that whenever there were protests and learners were still thinking of making their voice heard, Mkiva would just come out of nowhere and render a powerful poem that would voice out their concerns. This is his measure of creativity. As Mafeje (1967, p.196) suggest about poets, Mkiva would "represent the opinions of the ruled". Neethling (2001) argues that it was at St John's that Mkiva grew extensively as a poet.

It was while studying at St. John's that Mkiva came to the attention of the nation. Phosa (2002, p. 9) states that "a starry-eyed schoolboy was thrust into the national limelight in 1990 when he was given the honour of praising Nelson Mandela at a welcome home rally in the then Transkei". This event "became a fortune-changing experience" for Mkiva (*Ibid.*). The experience gained at that event prepared him for an international stage. Since that day, Mkiva's voice has traversed the globe: "today, Mkiva is a respected globetrotter whose invitations come from heads of state and custodians of culture in their respective countries" (Sibiya 2002, p.3).

Tertiary Education

According to Neethling (2003, p.200), "Mkiva pursued his studies at the University of the Western Cape between 1992 and 1995 where he finally graduated with an honours degree in Developmental Studies in 1995". His courses included "oral traditions, history and cultural studies, scholars of African Poetry and traditional music" (poetofafrica.com). The knowledge acquired at the University of the Western Cape equipped Mkiva with an extended resource to help him polish his skill, grow his audience and to affect more influence with his aesthetic work. He notes, "...my stay at the University of the Western Cape contributed a lot to my poetry" (Phosa 2002, p.5). Mkiva adds, "In 1994 I was approached by the inauguration committee to praise-sing Mandela [at his inauguration]" (*Ibid.*). There, he rendered a poem titled 'Ntengu-ntengu macetyana' (Mtuze 1996, p. 7), which led to "invitations from various Western countries, including America and Germany" (Phosa 2002, p. 5). This performance and many others about Mandela led into Mkiva being tagged The Presidential Praise Singer.

During his stay at the University of the Western Cape, Mkiva performed "at the graduation ceremonies... in 1995" (Neethling 2003, p.199). At these ceremonies, he "rendered six poems over eight days (a weekend came in between)" (Neethling, 2003: 200), and one of those poems was entitled 'UMbombayi'. After observing Mkiva perform, Neethling concludes: "Mkiva is clearly a gifted poet: he could have rendered the 'same' poem every night, given the context (a graduation ceremony) remained unchanged" (*Ibid.*). Neethling further observes that Mkiva addressed "a wider and more diversified audience" as he used "more than one language when performing" and "is not shy to be creative in another language" (2003, p. 203). This is evident in many of his poems, some of them cited in this paper.

Mkiva as Teacher

Mkiva has had an honour of being a "guest lecturer at both the University of the Western Cape and at Stellenbosch University" (poetofafrica.com). He has delivered "public lectures at schools with relevant topics on Patriotism and revival of our culture" (*Ibid.*). The following are themes he pivots on in educating the youth of South Africa: culture in general, African values and norms, South African history, struggle history, present challenges of the African continent, Oral poetry in Africa, African African royalty and traditional communities, languages and idiomatic expressions, lineages and genealogies, clan names and African Royal Houses (www.poetofafrica.com). This thematic range extends to his poetry as well.

Zolani Mkiva, the Poet

This section outlines Mkiva's idea of an *imbongi* and the role one fulfils as *imbongi*. In addition, it examines his source of inspiration, his affiliations to the Black Consciousness Movement and African Renaissance, ideas on oral tradition as well as the audience he addresses. These aspects form his ideology as a poet and help the researcher understand his aesthetic.

According to Mkiva, "the name "praise poet" is not a true translation of *imbongi*" (Brown & Kiguli 2006, p.136). He alludes to the fact that *imbongi* does not only praise, but also has to criticise. He emphasises that the "criticism from time to time has to be a constructive one" and it must not be anyhow (*Ibid*.). Although an *imbongi* has a "license to caution leadership", he must "criticise with passion and bring proposals" (Telephone Conversation 2013).

In the spirit of patriotism, in one of his poems, 'Guya' (Mkiva 2001), Mkiva uses constructive criticism to question traditional surgeons who circumcise young boys in the Eastern Cape, an act that has led to several needless deaths. He interrogates:

Hay'! Hay'! Hay'! Hayi!
Ndiyanqanda sizwe sikaKhushe;
Sekutheni namhlanje sekuseluk' iintsana?
Sekutheni namhlanje sekuseluk' iidyongo?

No! No! No! No!
I am stopping you, nation of Cush;
Why today, are children circumcised?
Why today, are young boys circumcised?

This poem can be compared to the praises he sings to the custom of *Intonjane* (girl initiation) in the poem entitled 'Incoyane' (Mkiva 2001) to ascertain the role of *imbongi* according to Mkiva. He exclaims:

Yavel' intonjane Ma-Afrika!
Ayithombang' ithunakele!
Khawukhangel' ubuhle beentombi zelilizwe;
Zihlom' iincebetha neenkciyo, madoda;
Zigaxel' izigcina nezicwinana.

Here comes intonjane, Africans!
Aroused by her initiation
Behold the beauty of women of this nation;
Covering their breasts and loins
Adorned in beaded necklaces and bracelets.

In both poems, Mkiva speaks with the voice of a patriot as he calls the Xhosa nation to uphold their sacred cultural practices.

Mkiva uses terms to define *imbongi*: "a spokesperson for a given community; a social commentator; historian; oral library; adjudicator; inter-mediator between leadership and people" (Telephone Conversation 2013). In addition, he refers to *imbongi* as a "custodian of language, someone who develops language and uses old and new idioms" (*Ibid*.). He further sees *iimbongi* as "the cultural activists, who have led the processes of transformation in our country" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p.136). Mkiva states: "the institution of imbongi in the African society is there to give recommendation for legislation to be passed, it is there during the time of conflict to act as a go-between between leadership and the rank-and-file people" (*Ibid*.). In a poem delivered at the opening of Parliament in 2010, Mkiva used an idiomatic expression to make a call to President Jacob Zuma to address poverty and unemployment in South Africa. He said:

Uzube ngundodl' inqilo, ndidl' igwangqa!

You must eat the cape longclaw and eat the light brown animal!

This was at the time when South Africa was feeling the effects of the global fiscal crisis (2008/9) politically. With this idiomatic expression, Mkiva advises the president to come up with the plan of equally sharing the wealth of the country with everyone who lives in it to thwart the effects of the global fiscal crisis on the poor. In mentioning that the English and the Afrikaners agreed and said yes (lines 24 and 25), Mkiva was encouraging the president to formulate and implement a policy that will favour everyone, that will balance the scales without hurting the rich. Their yes was a willingness to negotiate the way forward.

Mkiva also views *imbongi* as a seer, one who "actually pro[phesises] as to what will happen in the future" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 136). He outlines the contours of this role by stating that the prophecy a poet makes is "informed by what is happening in the present" (*Ibid*.). According to Mkiva, *imbongi* must be quick to notice and point out the consequences of the current actions of the people, whether good or bad. He must foresee the dangers or the victories that might emanate from what is being done. In the poem stated in the previous paragraph, Mkiva, in a muted protest, warned the President about repercussions of failing to formulate a plan to address the economic woes of the country. In years to follow, his presidency was disrupted by the Economic Freedom Fighters who accused him of misusing public funds in Nkandla renovations and he was later recalled as the President of the country.

Sources of Inspiration

Zolani Mkiva draws his inspiration from several sources. He declares, "the most fundamental source of inspiration is where I come from" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 137). His background, the environment he grew up in, his Africanism, and "the valleys, the hills, the rivers and the streams" (*Ibid*.), that are a pride of Africa and his great-grandfather, Pauzen Mkiva inspire his voice. Moreover, he reads to sharpen his thinking and to broaden the horizons of his knowledge and watches television in order "to be current about things that are happening around" him (*Ibid*.). He also relies on the feelings of the masses he is representing; he listens to their perceptions and desires and "polish[es] them into concise and precise poetic phrases" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 138), becoming true to his role of a spokesperson.

Mkiva on Black Consciousness and African Renaissance

Brown and Kiguli (2006, p. 140) note that in his poetry, Mkiva, "often alludes to the tenets of Black Consciousness or the African Renaissance without actually using the terms". They cite a poem entitled "Son of the Soil" where Mkiva uses couplets that define these African-born ideologies. He recites:

> I do not have perfumed lips,
> But I speak the truth.
>
> I do not have cat eyes,
> But I can see the true colours of the universe.
>
> I do not have donkey ears,
> But I can hear what makes sense and what is a nuisance.
>
> I do not have a dog nose,
> But I can smell and distinguish between carbon-monoxide and oxygen.
>
> I do not have a big heart,
> But I have passion for love and I love people.
>
> I do not have soft hands,
> But I can deliver my people from shame.
>
> I am the son of the soil!
> Like daughters of the land.

Mkiva's poetry is coloured by praises of African leaders, African idea of life and African customs. On the contrary, he criticises those African leaders who are doing disservice to the people of Africa and those who are careless with the African culture and thought. He encourages Africans to think for themselves, to make a difference for themselves and the continent of Africa. These ideas are the cornerstones of the Black Consciousness Movement and African Renaissance. In a poem delivered at the AU Summit, he called Africans to "be thinkers of great thoughts." Furthermore, he calls for a sense of pride and dignity in an African. Mkiva affirms: "the content of what I'm saying must work deep into the hearts and minds of my fellow Africans to say that we are people, we are fully fledged human beings and therefore we have got to have pride, we have got to have dignity in ourselves" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 140).

Mkiva and Oral Tradition

Mkiva is a firm believer in the oral tradition of poetry. He strongly believes that there will always be a place for oral traditions in the African community, "even if everyone can read and write" (Kaschula 2002, p. 100). His poetry is colour-coded with devices from oral renditions of old. He uses folktales, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, sayings, repetition, parallelism, metaphors, genealogies and clan names to paint a vivid picture of his message to challenge the conscience of his audience. Mkiva states: "It is my view that genealogy is a very important feature in Africa, that you can't talk about genealogy out of context, out of proportion.... When you talk of genealogy, you've got to give a message to the people as well that is going to educate them, that is going to conscientize people" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 139). He clarifies: "There's no point just reciting it for the sake of reciting it. You've got to give a message to the people that must ring a bell and that must tell them something- what has to be done" (*Ibid*.). Mkiva's ideology is evident in his poetry as his use of genealogy is interwoven seamlessly in his poetry. In praising Jacob Zuma at the State of the Nation Address in 2010, he said:

> *Yiyo leyo k' inkunz' emdwaydwa kaLugaju;*
> *Ithole leenkunzi zomgquba zakwaMatomela;*
>
> There is the bull of Lugaju;
> The calf of the bulls of the offspring of Matomela;

Mkiva used Zuma's genealogy in mentioning two of his forebears who were in leadership positions like Zuma. His main message in the poem was to call on President Zuma to balance the economic landscape of South Africa. In mentioning Chief Lugaju, who brought together the Zuma clan that was scattered (Ndlovu 2015), Mkiva was reminding President Zuma to follow in the footsteps of his forebears and bring together the nation under one economic banner. Therefore, Mkiva employs these devices to enhance the voice of the poet in his poetry.

Mkiva and His Audience

Mkiva views all people in the world as his audience. He states, "I am a human, I speak with human beings, and I believe my message is universal. It's a message that is born and bred in Africa, but it's for universal consumption" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 144). This kind of approach has led Mkiva to deliver his poetry in countries such as Uzbekistan, Colombia, Germany and Cuba. Mkiva's talent and creativity allow him to render his poetry in different languages. Although several of his poems are in isiXhosa and English, he has lines and stanzas in languages such as Swahili, Italian, French, Arabic languages. When he praised Nelson Mandela on his inauguration in 1994, Mkiva sang:

> Ndimvile kalok' uBoutros Boutros Ghali esithi:
> It will be *contra bonos mores* for the masses of South Africa not to liberate themselves.
> Ndimvil' uColonel Gaddafi esithi:
> *Karambanini, karambanini, akuya ta gayi ta kura*.
> Ha-a-yi, watheth' uSam Nujoma esithi:
> *Emangulekenengeesisili*
> Ha-a-ayi ziyatheth' izizwe,
> Ziyatheth' iinkokheli,
> *Vryheid of doodsoorwinning is gewis*.

Likewise, in the poem entitled 'Phambili Ngomanyano', Mkiva uses different languages to emphasise the theme of unity:

> Ndibavil' abeSuthu besithi:
> Kopano ke matla.
> Akhuluma namaZulu esithi:
> So nqoba simunye.
> Athetha namaBhulu esithi:
> Een drag maak maag.
> Batheth' abeLungu besithi:
> Unity is strength.
> Athethile namaTaliyane esithi:
> Ex unitate vires
> Atheth' amaXhosa esithi:
> Umanyano ngamandla.

Mkiva employs other languages in his poetry to reach a wider audience. He overlooks borders because he believes that they are artificial and must be undermined (Telephone Conversation 2013).

Mkiva at Work

Spoornet Railway Poetry

In 1996, Mkiva "joined Spoornet as a communications specialist" (Chikanga 2000, p. 13). One of his tasks was to collect poems by commuters who travelled daily by train in South Africa. He compiled these poems into an anthology entitled *Railway Poetry*. He shares, "Railway poetry has been written from the beginning of time by people from all walks of life" (*Ibid.*). He adds, "Railway Poetry is, in a way, a collection of history of railway travel in South Africa, capturing the mood and sentiments of both black and white communities whose life was intertwined with this mode of commuting" (*Ibid.*). People writing these poems write "from the premise of pain that they have undergone having worked in the railways, some people were writing out of happiness at seeing this amazing environment" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 145). Mkiva engaged in this project for a specific purpose. He observed "that we (the country) encourage the nation to read but are not encouraging the nation to write" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, p. 145). He adds: "for me, that's an imbalance. I'm saying, let's encourage the kids to write, and let's encourage them to read. Our history must be rewritten, yet how do you begin to prepare the rewriters of history when you don't encourage this kind of culture of writing?" (Brown and Kiguli 2006, pp. 145-146). Mkiva's message is that the nation must encourage people to tell their own stories and experiences in writing to preserve their history.

Mkiva's Humanitarian Foundation

In 1999, forty years after the death of his grandfather, Richard Mkhenke Mkiva, Zolani and his father "founded Mkiva Humanitarian Foundation in honour of [his] grandfather" (Telephone Conversation 2013). Mkiva describes his grandfather as someone who "was strong on

African-centred education and education at large" (*Ibid.*). This is also evident in the aesthetic works of Mkiva as one of his burdens is to educate the youth on the importance of culture and education. He encourages the youth in one of his poems entitled 'Mbambe Lubobo' (Mkiva 2001) with these words:

> *Uthethil' umntwana kandlu zimanqugwala;*
> *Esith' imfundo ngumth' odubul' umthi wasentwasa-hlobo;*
> *Udubul' utyatyambe njengenyibiba...*
> *Itsho ke yon' inkunzi kaMakhonya*
> *Isithi 'fundani bafundi de nizijonge zigqobhok' iincwadi.*

> The son from the hut has spoken;
> Saying: Education is the tree that buds the tree of spring;
> That buds and shoots like the lily...
> Thus saith the leader of Makhonya
> Saying: Learners, read your books until they grow holes.

The imagery of spring emphasises that education is the first step in the journey to success. This is the motivation needed in the country, especially among the Black youth, who tend to drop out of school. According to Mkiva, "the Foundation focuses on education, promotion and preservation of culture, things my grandfather believed in. It also encourages humanitarian and philanthropic work" (Telephone Conversation 2013). He works as a field worker where he "helps the rural people on a number of issues relating to education, development of arts and culture, welfare and education" (poetofafrica.com). As an educated poet, he ploughs back what he learned in his own journey.

Xhosa Royal Council

Mkiva serves as an "admin head of the kingdom of amaXhosa" whose role includes "strategic planning as well as encouraging visibility of the kingdom to the people" (Telephone Conversation 2013). Likewise, he also reigned as the "Chief Executive Officer of the Xhosa Royal Council which looks after the interests of His Majesty, King Xolilizwe Sigcawu and the entire Xhosa royal family" (poetofafrica.com). These positions prepared Mkiva to serve at a National level.

Other Responsibilities

Mkiva has recently been "appointed as the Head of Presidency of Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa" (poetofafrica.com). He has been a Chairman of the National Delphic Council of South Africa since 2003 and in 1996 he was asked by Making Music Productions to be Chairman of African Reconnection, a project which sought to "reconnect South African artists with the rest of Africa's Divas" (*Ibid.*). According to *The Citizen* (2018), Mkiva is the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the National Arts Council of South Africa. He assumed his duties on the 25th of September 2018. Mkiva was quoted by the newspaper saying, "The arts play a critical role in advancing social cohesion, and it is incumbent on the National Arts Council to develop and promote our artists." He is now serving as a Member of National Parliament.

Conclusion

In tracing the life of Zolani Mkiva as a poet, it becomes evident that he was born an *imbongi*. He inherited this trait from a rich line of renowned poets and orators in his family and he polished this skill by observing his forebears closely, especially his great-grandfather, Pauzen Jacula Mkiva. This form of education was later supplemented by formal education that helped him to reach a wider audience. Mkiva graduated from the University of the Western Cape with an Honour's degree in Developmental studies. He has grown to be a renowned poet in his own right, with his own style that has been influenced by his upbringing as well as ideologies like Black Consciousness and the African Renaissance. His involvement in the community and workplace further explains his ideals in life and helps with understanding his work. As I have shown here, his biographical details can be traced in his poetry, revealing the significance of these details in the works of Mkiva. Although biographical details of an artist are not the only framework for analysis, they offer insights in understanding artist's work and are thus worth considering in relation to the work itself.

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Exploring the Quadruple Helix Model for Strengthening Community Engagement in Innovation

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Abstract

This research investigated the potential for increased community engagement in both the triple and quadruple helix models of industrial development as a tool to achieve better innovation results, using the East London Industrial Development Zone and Science and Technology Park case study. The study was qualitative in nature and employed the non-probability sampling technique. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 key informants, which included five industrialists, four business executives, four ex-factory workers, and 40 residents living close to and around the three industrial parks. This was augmented by an in-depth analysis of literature as part of desktop data. The study found that greater community involvement would result in innovations that are tailored to local requirements and circumstances, maximising their potential for adoption and dissemination. Partnerships with communities could also act as a feedback mechanism. The study concludes that the quadruple-helix model offers a sounder community engagement dimension for harnessing the socio-economic potential of innovations and recommends more innovative partnerships with local communities that can see more meaningful implementation and adoption of innovations.

Introduction

Innovation can be a critical anchor for stimulating local economic growth, creating employment, and rolling back poverty. Innovative economies are more productive, more resilient, more adaptable to change, and better able to support higher living standards (OECD 2015). Innovation has become an imperative for effectively addressing inequality. Yet, innovation ecosystems are complex and comprise numerous stakeholders with multiple interlinking, and sometimes competing, interests. However, the breakthroughs that development practitioners seek require new approaches, and the urgently needed results cannot be found by simply making incremental changes to current approaches. Working harder alone is not enough; therefore, it is important to strengthen community involvement in innovation (Cheuy 2019).

Economic stagnation, joblessness, and inequality continue to be a reality for the previously marginalised groups after 22 years of the East London Industrial Development Zone (ELIDZ) and the growth of innovative start-up companies at the Science and Technology Park (STP) (Masiwa 2021). Massive unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation followed the collapse of the old industrial parks at the beginning of the democratic dispensation in 1994.

The IDZ strategy came as a response to the need for a robust catalyst for sustainable regional economic development and industrial diversification to create meaningful employment opportunities in the country, especially in economically lagging regions such as the Eastern Cape and as a response to the demise of the old parks. It was meant to become the main vehicle for job creation, local innovation, and global competitiveness and was supposed to provide customised solutions for various industries, including automotive, agro-processing, and aquaculture. To date, the organisation has secured 42 investors with an investment value of over R8 billion. Of these investors, 36% are foreign-owned, 28% are locally owned, 23% are 100% black-owned, and 49% are BBBEE-compliant.

The entity creates most of its jobs through infrastructure delivery projects that created about 510 direct construction employment opportunities in 2020 (ELIDZ 2020), and the ELIDZ is generally acknowledged as an employer in the community. It has been on a drive to forge collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders, yet ordinary people had a negative perception of the innovations the entity housed and felt alienated from its programmes.

This paper is a contribution to the literature on advancing the role of the fourth helix in the quadruple helix model in South Africa. The fourth helix is relevant to stakeholder engagement, a

“Economic stagnation, joblessness, and inequality continue to be a reality for the previously marginalised groups after 22 years of the East London Industrial Development Zone Science and Technology Park...”

modification that is absent in the triple helix model in a step towards looking outside proven systems to explore new, solutions that are meaningful to intended beneficiaries. More community engagement would mean that innovations are adapted to local needs and circumstances, which would optimise the potential for their adoption and diffusion.

The Industrial Development Zone was supposed to promote innovation and entrepreneurship to stimulate economic growth and global competitiveness. The STP component of the ELIDZ was thus established to contribute to increasing the competitive and comparative advantages of the zone as an investment destination, through effective innovation (ELIDZ 2018).

According to Livingstone (2000), one of the main attributes of innovation is that it is applicable to the public good, not-for-profit, and commercial ventures that are supposed to provide ‘novel solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the local communities’ (Smith 2016). Since their inception in 2014, however, the ELIDZ innovations have not significantly improved the situation of the people of East London or met their needs.

Despite the many interactions between the ELIDZ STP and its partners, including several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), there appeared to be neither convincing partnerships with communities nor acknowledgement of their important role in the local innovation ecosystem. This inherent failure to acknowledge the criticalness of the cultures that are built around very well-defined ideas about "who we are," "where we come from," and "how things are done around here" points to a missed opportunity to further innovation-led socio-economic impact. (Antorini and Muñiz 2015).

The implication is that the ELIDZ STP strategy could be mapped onto the triple helix model. In this model, the main actors (University-Industry-Government relations) in the triple helix model (and most of the literature of its proponents) regard local communities essentially as labour pools in the innovation ecosystem and not bona fide stakeholders in the ecosystem. The quadruple helix model of industrial development that emphasises participatory engagement has not been fully explored as a tool for achieving better innovation outcomes and local economic development.

The aim of the study was to investigate the potential for increased community engagement in both the triple and quadruple helix models of industrial development as a tool for achieving better innovation results using the ELIDZ and STP case study. This article starts with a review of the literature that explores the triple helix model before discussing a place-based approach to innovation. It then discusses the quadruple helix model, how it deals with the community and the place and how it integrates with the other three helices. The second half of the paper deliberates the outcomes and analysis of the outcomes and contribution to knowledge.

Literature review

1. The triple helix model

At the turn of the century, Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff consolidated the triple helix concept through collaborative works (e.g., Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1995, 2000) to explain the dynamic interactions between the three strands of the model: academia, industry, and government in fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth in a knowledge-based economy (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000). The triple helix model is conceptually different from the National Systems of Innovation (NSI) approach (Lundvall 1988), which considers the firm as having the leading role in innovation. Most literature on the triple helix model has tended to neglect the importance of community, civil society, and political actors in the innovation ecosystem. As much as there has been new literature that acknowledges ordinary communities as key stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem, this school of thought is only emerging with literature that mainly focuses on Europe.

The ethos behind the triple helix model is that in exploring the potential for innovation and economic development in a knowledge-based economy, the university, the private sector, and the government play significant roles in generating new institutional and social formats for the production, transfer, and application of knowledge (Etzkowitz et al. 2007; Champenois and Etzkowitz 2018). The triple helix model contains the idea of multi-centeredness: in addition to firms, universities and national and regional governments can take on leading roles in innovation ecosystems.

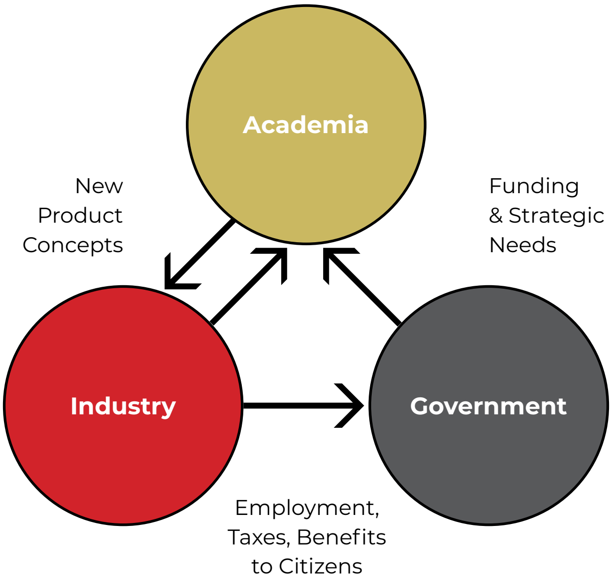

Figure 1. The Triple Helix Model
Source: CNR (2023)

The "Triple Helix" thesis suggests that the university can play an enhanced role in innovation in increasingly knowledge-based societies. Some of the literature looks at how the university interacts with the state and industry within the triple helix model of interaction. Barber et al. (2013) promotes a return to the idea that universities play a crucial developmental role in society and the economy and must be repositioned in society so that they have a role to play in city and regional development. The main part of the literature, so far, agrees that it is important to extend the triple helix model to a fourth helix that extends beyond University-Industry-Government relations, but there is some confusion regarding what this fourth helix could consist of (Carayannis and Rakhmatullin 2014; Nordberg 2015).

What is clear, however, is that the triple helix model has not been effective as a tool for deepening local economic development as it does not put local communities at the heart of economic development, and hence the outcomes are often far removed from the immediate needs of the local community. More attention, therefore, needs to be paid to the role of communities in innovation through strengthening the fourth helix in the quadruple helix model to enhance innovation outcomes.

2. The role of the community in innovation outcomes

Community innovation is about bringing people together to improve community services and support to enable better lives for community members (Horan 2024). In exploring the quadruple helix as a useful model for strengthening community engagement in innovation, it is critical to reflect on the concept of community innovation. Community innovation is a particular form of social innovation that is place-based, within the specific geography of a community. Canada has been a pioneer in the field of social innovation, defined as "both a destination – the resolution of complex social and environmental challenges – and a journey – devising new approaches that engage all stakeholders, leveraging their competencies and creativity to design novel solutions" (Cheuy 2019). As dynamic 'living labs', communities offer the perfect container for innovation. To be effective, innovation requires an appreciation of both the issue one is hoping to address and a deep understanding of the unique characteristics of the community, the place and the people within it, where the innovation will be implemented. Innovations that have proven successful in one community can, at best, serve as a source of inspiration for another, but they must be adapted and modified if they are to maximise the strengths and assets of the community where they hope to be replicated (Cheuy 2019).

When working with community innovation, it is more meaningful to respond pragmatically to contexts: specific situations call for specific measures and include local grassroots organisations whenever possible. This will ease implementation plans and the mining of data for future reflection and innovation. Some contexts may require more independent organisations or direct involvement, as there is need to understand which contexts call for incremental improvements and which contexts are out with the old and in with the new.

Local ownership and partnership are important conditions for the long-term sustainability of an innovation (Cheuy 2019). For example, the uncommercialised STP Twerly prototype innovation (an innovative streetlight powered by green energy (ELIDZ 2017)) is a renewable energy source that is powered by a vertical axis wind turbine and PVA panel that generates electricity 'off the grid'. The Twerly can be used as a streetlight, a WI-FI hotspot or to house a surveillance camera for use in the security industry. This unimplemented innovation could have been rolled out by the STP in partnership with communities and the Buffalo City Municipal Metro (BCMM) in different settings to assess its potential impact. Grassroots organisations have the advantage of knowing the people, culture, and political environment to take the innovation and better implement it on the ground (Cheuy 2019). Working with responsible grassroots organisations can be a major asset to innovators and their innovations to get the best raw and accurate data on how to pilot a project from the user communities.

According to Cheuy (2019), the design of promising innovations to solve vexing community problems begins by shifting the relationship between those experiencing the problem and those who see it as their role to try and fix it. Investing time to build an evidence-informed view of the system that reflects a diversity of perspectives ensures that the issue – and not the proposed intervention – remains at the centre of thinking and action. Projects backed by local organisations can quickly gain momentum on the local level because they are generally enacted by local actors. Moreover, larger organisations could benefit from local grassroots initiatives that are directly connected to the issues and the people living in need (Bettencourt 2017). One respondent in a study in the literature noted:

> I am worried that technologies developed by a small number of people will affect us all. It's all about a dialogue between the scientific community and the public. When they let us know what they're doing it won't be a secret anymore and will be unregulated. That's how people see it sometimes. Or they think something dangerous is being developed while they are supposed to just stand there without a say. (Schulz et al 2019)

This suggests that increased attention to public preferences should lead to more welcome innovations and thus benefit the scientific community as well. First to introduce the terms "context" and "content" experts, Zimmerman (2015) described the two essential actors in the community change process "content experts" are the professionals, staff in the organisation, service providers, and leaders with formal power who have knowledge, tools, and resources to address the issue; and "context experts" are the people with lived experience of the situation. Also, most sustainable improvements in communities occur when citizens discover their own power to act, stop waiting for professionals or elected leadership to do something and decide they can reclaim what they have delegated to others (Block 2009).

Public sector involvement of context experts is an essential element of effective community change because of the unique "knowledge based on personal experience of situations of poverty and social exclusion" they have and which those embracing this approach have found accelerates the collective ability of the group to "identify the problems and needs of people in situations of poverty." (Cheuy 2019). Partnerships can prove to be fruitful when people and context experts come together to address a need and context since people understand the multifaceted contexts and issues that could deter progress or stall innovative solutions while also creating a sense of trust in a community by authenticating the potential benefits of an innovation as well as identifying flaws, and iterations required (Bettencourt 2017).

However, Schütz et al (2019) identify two major challenges to incorporating laypersons into the innovation process:

> *Firstly, the methodological challenge of individuals can effectively introduce their (public) perspective? And how can actors from academia, business, and government benefit from society's knowledge? Second, what is the functional role of the community as the fourth actor in collaborative innovation processes, and what should they contribute?*

A study by Antorini and Muñiz (2015) demonstrated the benefits gained by LEGO when they accessed their innovation user community found that the firm could utilise the deep knowledge that users had accumulated and use the feedback to improve their innovations to create more relevant products after listening to complaints. This community involvement is for both the innovator and the intended beneficiary. Therefore, the multi-stakeholder approach is also crucial in determining how Local Economic Development projects end up and how they impact communities at the grass roots level. Every setting, however, has attributes that are specific to that context and place, and communities add very place specific value to the interactions at play in the innovation-mix. The 'place,' therefore, is a crucial element of this 'mix' in which stakeholder interactions in the fourth helix are key to enhancing innovation participatory outcomes.

3. Place-based innovation

Place-based development has been defined as "a holistic approach" that utilises and enhances the natural and human assets of a particular place to strengthen local capacity to adapt (Avis 2019). The South African New Growth Path Framework (2011) places great emphasis on developing an innovation-led service and knowledge economy in cities (Bank, 2018). Industrial growth and development are understood in a much more place-specific context and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 (2012) proposes driving growth in new industrial sectors and in manufacturing, decreasing the dependence on primary products, while at the same time creating incentives for new industrial hubs to emerge through place-based planning. The NDP (2012) visualises special industrial development zones established in places such as East London, where the state felt that place-based incentives could spark industrial economic growth (Harrison et al. 2007).

While the state has operated with an understanding of the place-based opportunities for industrial growth, there has been little discussion or analysis of the role of local communities in innovation-led, industrialisation and knowledge economy in which IDZs are located while the triple helix model was not taking advantage of the place-based embeddedness of the webs of relations in which people existed. However, the role of community involvement in innovation must be recognised as city-building and an agent for regional development and redress (equity). Roman et al. (2020) note that the regional innovation systems (RIS) approach emphasises the importance of regions as key drivers of innovation (Asheim et al. 2011) and that innovation is viewed as the outcome of interaction between a multitude of actors distributed over many different institutions and locations (Doloreux 2002).

4. The quadruple helix model

The quadruple helix model can be seen as an enhancement of the triple helix perspective that not only focuses on the actors from academia, government, and industry, but also recognises the increased role played by civil society (Leydesdorff 2012). Roman et al (2020) note that despite the strong emphasis on the quadruple helix model in European regional innovation policy, civil society participation in regions' design and implementation of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) through the participatory entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) remains low, which means that the potential for quadruple helix innovation has remained largely untapped in RIS3. Carayannis and Campbell (2012) in Hasche et al (2019), conceptualise the fourth helix as media, culture, and civil society and integrate the importance of place and community, arguing that the fourth helix is human-centered, focuses on democratic knowledge, and in favour of arts, artistic research, and arts-based innovation (Carayannis and Campbell 2014). Similarly, Kriz, Bankins, and Molloy (2018) take an end user perspective of the fourth helix including, for example, public members embedded in the artistic and cultural fabric of a community. Höglund and Linton (2018) argue that the fourth helix should not only be viewed as a separate helix but also as a context of society as a whole and civil societal goals.

However, Carayannis and Campbell (2009), open up the possible sources of innovation and argue that in an emerging glocalising, globalising and localising world (Carayannis and von Zedwitz 2005; Carayannis and Alexander 2006), the frontier of converging systems, networks, and sectors of innovation that is driven by increasingly complex, non-linear, and dynamic processes of knowledge creation, diffusion, and use, confronts us with the need to re-conceptualise, if not to re-invent, the ways and means that knowledge production, utilisation and renewal take place in the context of the knowledge economy and society. This effectively means that innovation and sources of knowledge creation are unlimited. Therefore, Carayannis (2009) developed what he called Mode 3 Innovation Ecosystem which allows and emphasises the co-existence and co-evolution of different knowledge and innovation paradigms: The competitiveness and superiority of a knowledge system is highly determined by its adaptive capacity to combine and integrate different knowledge and innovation modes via co-evolution, co-specialisation and co-opetition knowledge stock and flow dynamics. The 'quadruple helix' emphasises the importance of also integrating the perspectives of the media-based and culture-based public.

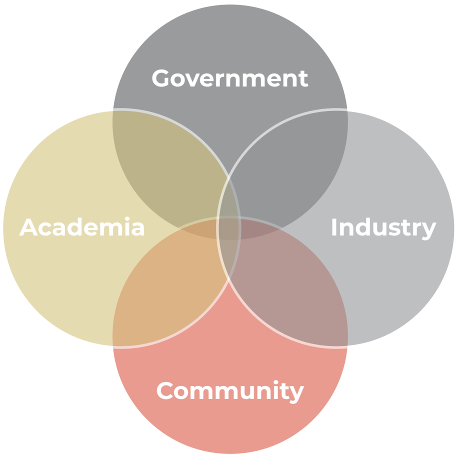

Figure 2. The Quadruple Helix Model
Source: GRRIP (2020)

Therefore, the quadruple helix model is seen as playing an important role in fostering the shift from technical to social innovations (Carayannis and Rakhmatullin 2014; Foray et al. 2012) and strengthening democracy in the decision making of regional research and innovation strategies (Cavallini et al. 2016). Innovation networks: are real and virtual infra-structures and technologies that serve to nurture creativity, trigger invention, and catalyse innovation in a public and/or private domain context (for instance, Government-University-Industry public-private research and technology development competitive partnerships (Carayannis and Alexander 2004; Carayannis and Alexander 1999). Crucial is the idea that an advanced knowledge system may integrate different knowledge modes. Florida's (2004) ideas of the 'creative class' find true resonance in the idea of the quadruple helix, as the 'fourth helix'. A new society must be able to 'tap the full creative capabilities of every human being' to answer the question as to what makes economic communities tick (Florida 2002).

Many studies have focused on the actors, often from a triple helix perspective, that make a distinction between actors from (1) academia/universities, (2) government, and (3) industry (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000; Leydesdorff 2016) or from a quadruple helix perspective that also includes a fourth helix of the users and civil society (McAdam et al. 2012). When it comes to the quadruple helix model, the inclusion of users and civil society has been highlighted as critical for the development of a RIS (Kriz et al. 2018).

Theodokpolous and Harabayimye (2019) focus on innovation co-creation and how transformative change can be achieved through co-learning between living lab researchers and user communities. They argue that the amount of knowledge available in each society plays an essential role in its economic development and its importance is now widely considered critical for growth and competitiveness (Chen and Dahlman 2004; Hanushek and Kimko 2000).

Furthermore, Schumpeter (1949) rejected the extreme reduction of the economy to abstract mathematical models, with total disregard for institutional analysis, empirical studies, and history. There are other phenomena of nature that are not necessarily quantitative but impact economic development. To Schumpeter, economic development was endogenous and driven by the creation of 'new combinations' including new products, new production methods or processes, new organisational forms, new markets, and new sources of raw materials and inputs.

It is therefore important to explore the interactions of these actors in the innovation ecosystem. This study therefore aims to address the gap in literature that explores the development of the role of more community engagement as part of the fourth helix in the quadruple helix model, which would mean that innovations would be adapted to local needs and circumstances, which would optimise the potential for their adoption and diffusion.

Methodology

This research investigated the potential for increased community engagement via the quadruple helix model's stakeholder engagement focus as a tool for achieving better innovation results than traditional systems of community engagement (e.g., triple helix model). The study was qualitative in nature, and it relied on in-depth, semi-structured key Informant interviews and participant observation to collect the data. The study employed the non-probability sampling technique. A total of 40 community respondents and 13 key informants (KI) were interviewed using the purposive sampling technique.

Ex-factory workers and residents living close to and around the industrial parks were targeted. These helped understand the demise of the old industrial parks and the extent to which the ELIDZ had played a role in innovation and local economic development. Most of the in-depth interviews with community members were carried out in the townships of Dimbaza and Mdantsane, with mostly female participants (who formed most ex-textile workers) on site or at their homes. The researcher snowballed using details emerging from the interviews conducted i.e., names of people or places and common themes, which helped the interviewer decide who to interview next. Respondents also suggested other relevant people to talk to. The interviewees remained anonymous, and interviews were coded.

This group of respondents was chosen because of their knowledge of and association with the ELIDZ, STP, and the old industrial parks to provide a richer collection of data that would make it possible to deepen the analysis. The interviewees remained anonymous, and interviews were coded as KI 1 to KI 13 after the signing of a consent form.

All respondents' identities were protected using codes. For example, key informant interviews were coded KI 1 to KI 13 and community respondents from the different sites were systematically coded with site identifiable codes such as, for example, DMB, 1-25 for interviews conducted at Dimbaza (a place that desperately needs investment after serious de-industrialisation) and EL 1 – 13 for interviews conducted in the East London area. The semi-structured in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to be flexible in the approach to different interviews and allowed the interviewer to probe more into unforeseen but valuable data that emerged during the interviews.

The key informant interviews provided very rich data on industrialisation and confirmed some data that had been collected from secondary sources or from community members. The background case studies of collapsed industrial zones in the cases of Dimbaza, Wilsonia and Fort Jackson were valuable in providing a comparative perspective for the study. They provided the researcher with a solid foundation and a firm understanding of the evolution of industrialisation in the city of East London and painted a clear 'from then to now' picture. The researcher snowballed from there using interview guides at the 3 sites.

Key informants (KIs) included ELIDZ Industrialists and Business Executives that were tenants at the ELIDZ, BCMM and Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA) Officials and ELIDZ STP Executives. Semi structured interview-guides were developed for each designated group of interviewees and all interviews were conducted face to face recorded and transcribed.

Findings

There was conceptual confusion about innovation in the community and among stakeholders that participated in the study. Many of the respondents from the grassroots were not very familiar with the word innovation and were not aware of the innovation flagships at the ELIDZ and the role they could play in stimulating the economy and raising the standards of living in their locality. They however, regarded the ELIDZ more as a potential employer in the locality and were therefore more concerned with labour issues in their responses as evidenced by Respondent EL, 35 who stated, 'People are not employed permanently and there is the involvement of agents, and the labour broker gets a certain percentage from your salary.' When asked about her knowledge of the innovation flagships at the ELIDZ and the community participation in them, another community leader (KI 11) added:

> No comrade, the community is not part of that, even for recruitment the community is not involved. It's not clear how the IDZ recruits and the procedure they are using is not clear to the community. We have never seen a single post advertised in the *Daily Despatch*.

Respondent EL, 9 added, 'The poor have no access to the IDZ.' Respondent EL, 23 didn't see the role of his community in innovation in partnership with the IDZ retorted:

> The blue collar on the ground does not even have time to focus on economic growth, you see. They are just exploited. There is no economic growth for them. Economic growth is only shared by the elite, those that are connected to those that have ownership and control (In-depth interview, EL, 9).

Quite interesting and most relevant was the response of Respondent KI, 2 EL, a Ward Councillor at BCMM who stated:

> Innovation applies to ways that seek to achieve a certain objective through certain strategies and tactics. The innovation at the (EL) IDZ is focussed on exports. How many people can afford a Mercedes Benz? I don't think it translates into pro poor. It is far removed from the day to day needs of the communities at large and does not find expression to us as a poor community. Furthermore, we import food, and my view is that the Eastern Cape is an agricultural province so you would want to start with the things that you consume in terms of

making sure that you have innovative ways of creating jobs. We must start by making sure that what we consume, we produce.
(In-depth interview KI, 2 EL).

The idea that the ELIDZ was an enclave that was elitist was shared by a significant number of community respondents who did not see it as a catalyst for local sustainable development. However, Respondent KI, 14, ELIDZ, a member of a business network responded by saying, 'From my own understanding it is about creative destruction, but I do not see much creative destruction taking place there (at the ELIDZ).'

Respondent EL 1, a Wilsonia ex-factory worker, noted that the ELIDZ was not innovative because they did not have easy access to it and that most of its employees were not from the locality, interestingly associating innovation with accessibility. Respondent EL 18 stated; How can we talk about innovation at the IDZ, yet we struggle to even gain access to it? Yet a Business Executive Respondent (KI 3) noted that innovation sustains a company and is driven by the market:

Innovation sustains a company. The market drives it (innovation). Don't sell what you make but make what you sell. Go to the marketplace and find out first if they will buy the product. You must respond to the market needs and produce them. For example, ILB Helios is remodelling their business completely in response to the market. They brought in new machinery and are going to make new generation PV panels. (In-depth interview KI, 3 ELIDZ).

The understandings of innovation and its role in local economic development among interviewees were diverging and varying. Some Respondents suggested that innovation must always be accompanied by a strong component of research and development (R&D), and Respondent KI, 6 ELIDZ highlighted the aspect of project delivery under stringent global competition in a rapidly changing and IT driven world. Some participants understood the need for innovation as going beyond just the creation of jobs and growing the economy but as also being about finding solutions to society's problems as observed by Respondent KI, 4 EL:

I am an innovator for social and economic change, so whatever I come up with in terms of innovation must address a particular problem which means already when you innovate that thing you have a consumer at the end of that value chain because that product or service needs to be used by someone and address a particular need. It's pointless to come up with a nice rocket of spaceship or whatever it is if it's not going to contribute to any change in society or in the economy so that's where the entrepreneurship part comes in.
(In-depth interview 2018).

There were significant interactions between the three elements in the triple helix model (University-Industry-Government relations) that explored and forged partnerships with the ELIDZ and STP. These interactions were generally captured in MoUs with local and regional government agencies, authorities, and business chambers aimed at harnessing local knowledge from local academic institutions and the extent to which these MoUs were utilised to advance innovation at the ELIDZ and STP. The ELIDZ STP had MoUs with institutions such as the University of Fort Hare (UFH), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), and BCMM. The ELIDZ STP dealt with the technology stations that are located at all institutions of higher learning. Respondent KI, 11 ELIDZ from the STP:

Institutions of higher learning have technology transfer offices with a team that looks at the research and development that comes out of the university with the purpose of turning it into commercialised products. So, they work with Technology and Innovation Agency and the National Research Foundation to take these post-grad research and see if they have commercial value and turn them into actual enterprises (In-depth interview, KI, 13 ELIDZ).

The ELIDZ STP has MoUs with institutions such as the UFH, WSU and BCMM via its Design Centre. The STP also collaborated with CAMDI Lab, the Rapid Product Development Association of South Africa (RABDASA), the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), the Office of the Premier and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). The ELIDZ's MoU with the BCMM partly read 'The forum will serve as a mechanism to further extend and enhance relations and communication between both organisations on matters of common interest.'

Respondent KI, 13 ELIDZ an ELIDZ official added:

> The STP partners with the ELIDZ and its investors to develop solutions for their innovative needs. It also partners with academic institutions like WSU whose engineering department feeds into the work that the STP does.

The University of Fort Hare (UFH) had partnered with the ELIDZ STP and AET Africa (a start-up company that was incubated at the STP) on running quality tests of the company's Hotspot innovation (referred to below) while the government through the STP provided the funding through the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) and TIA for the prototype from concept to commercialisation. A Key Informant, an innovator with successful start-up story to tell after commercialising their innovation, had this to say as a demonstration of how partnerships were being utilised to impact positively:

> We appointed the UFH to do research on the energy performance of the device (Hotspot) because we wanted to get an independent researcher, so the Institute of Technology appointed the UFH to do the energy verification and the pilot lab test at their site in Alice and they assisted me in residential testing. I have been working with the UFH since October 2016. (In-depth interview, KI, 4 ELIDZ).

Furthermore, AET Africa had partnered with the Institute of Plumbing South Africa (IOPSA) through which they would not only market their Hotspot innovation but also utilise the plumbers' networks to install and maintain the Hotspot device in geysers in both residential and industrial areas. This was a clear example of how partnerships between the various stakeholders, such as academic institutions and professional bodies, impacted innovation and entrepreneurship positively. However, some respondents felt there were insufficient collaborations between the relevant stakeholders in the city of East London's innovation ecosystem in a way that would dent poverty and inequality, as Respondent KI, 2 EL noted:

Locally the guys do share knowledge, but it's limited. They say I can get everything also, so I don't need to collaborate...A lack of experience is evident as is a lack of fresh thinking. We are not yet using virtual collaboration platforms hence there is a gap with converting from research to commercialisation. (In-depth interview, KI, 2 EL).

Partnerships in prototype testing

The ELIDZ also partnered with other industrialists such as the Master Artisans Association of South Africa (MAASA) in prototype testing. "There are currently various renewable energy prototypes that have or are in the process of being developed within the ELIDZ STP and our students are involved in the monitoring and data collection process for some of the residential testing of prototypes. This, according to Gresse the CEO of MAASA, also allows for collaboration with other players within the park. The study also found that other local players such as the Border Kei Chamber of Business (BKCB) were involved in prototype testing at their office which was said to be the only '100% green driven office in the country. They use us as their 'guinea pigs' if you like. The gel battery and the lights that use censors all come from other manufacturers and they come to check on them from time to time' (Respondent KI 2 ELIDZ).

Yet collaborations and partnerships must be centred around particular social, economic, and/or environmental issues, and driven by the imperative to provide benefits to the wider community (such as infrastructure, health, and education) rather than solely advance individual interests (Hazlewood 2016). The ELIDZ's technology-and-innovation-related collaborations can go beyond partnerships for the funding, testing, and marketing of innovations but can be effective in addressing socio-economic challenges.

Inasmuch as the involvement of the three actors in a triple helix approach can impact sustainability in communities positively, the effective rolling out of the innovations from the ELIDZ STP will change the lives of the poor for the better i.e., partnerships employing new technologies for job creation and social good.

Nonetheless, despite the MoUs, the stakeholders were not speaking the same language. The BCMM complained that the local universities were not producing the required skills to further stimulate innovation and economic growth and the UFH did not have an Engineering faculty whose skills and research output would have contributed through partnerships, to the work being done at the ELIDZ and STP.

Also, the BCMM's MoUs with the city's key economic development stakeholders were just negotiated, signed, and filed but never implemented. Business, on the other hand, is generally driven by profits first and the rest of the social or economic justice issues or concerns are secondary unless commercial firms stand to benefit profitably from the interactions (Masiwa, 2021).

This could make it seem like business is concerned less about reducing inequality in the country, the model suggests that they seem to put profits first and community engagement would become essential if it offered direct benefits for actors in the triple helix. Working with context experts can improve the quality of people's lives by helping shape and adopt impactful innovations.

Missing in these important interactions, however, was the crucial voice of local communities. Respondent KI 12 EL had their take on the same subject stating:

> There is need to be innovative and flexible in terms of how they (participants in the innovation ecosystem) do their business– we can't sit there and think I am the sheriff – I am the chief and I call the shots! It's about coalitions – it's about joint ventures so that is why I am saying we need to work together yes. (In-depth interview, KI 10 ELIDZ).

Respondent KI 7 a community leader weighed in:

> If the IDZ can embark on the relevant industrial manner, if they can openly understand good governance within their own industrial space, they could form a very good industrial chain where the locals have access to training...it all starts from leadership, management.

Discussion

This study acknowledges the most recent level of engagement and conceptualisation of sustainable development (SD) in which countries and agencies have recognised the degree of global interconnectedness of today's economies, industries, and societies, as well as the natural environment. The study therefore also accepts the interconnectedness of the industries and the communities, and that industry-led growth must bring about shared prosperity and partnerships with communities. Ironically the broader East London community did not feel connected to the ELIDZ. Yet, innovation is not achieved until ideas have been transformed into tangible outcomes applicable to public good, not-for-profit, and commercial ventures and emphasis on the indivisible, mutual importance of good science and good business practices (Livingstone 2000). Sadly, most of the prototypes at the ELIDZ STP were not adopted in a meaningful way hence their failure to realise the tangible good of far-reaching socio-economic impact.

“Yet, innovation is not achieved until ideas have been transformed into tangible outcomes applicable to public good, not-for-profit, and commercial ventures and emphasis on the indivisible, mutual importance of good science and good business practices (Livingstone 2000).”

The way big business perceives and relates to the ELIDZ is different from the way communities would like to perceive the ELIDZ. For example, business' understanding of the role of ordinary citizens at the ELIDZ was that of providing labour so that industries at the Zone could boost exports as captured in the following quotation by Respondent KI 1, a Businessman in East London: 'If you used to work in the old industrial parks but have no technical skills, you are of no use to us.' The community, on the other hand, saw the ELIDZ as an opportunity to address socio-economic challenges like feeding and employing people from the surrounding poor communities.

This paper, however, argues that for meaningful innovation to occur, there ought to be more cooperation than competition among all the stakeholders, including communities, with the state facilitating these interactions, including the enactment of the relevant policies that will allow for further embedding innovation in the 'place' (context). This paper therefore advances the quadruple model as a more useful approach to harnessing the socio-economic potential of the innovations through the participation of the target communities. However, the ELIDZ seemed to ignore the relevance of the place and was not taking advantage of the place-based embeddedness of the webs of relations in which people existed. Respondent EL, 8 from Duncan Village expressed:

> Black people cannot do nothing. Our black space is only the union – especially at the industrial space like the IDZ, and then when you join a union you become a member of the management ...that is the black home on the industrial landscape, the union. The coloured people are the only ones that have a home at the industrial space...So you must understand Afrikaans – that will make it easier for you to rise to the other levels. (In-depth interview 2018).

The ELIDZ STP innovations' socio-economic impact potential had not gone far in solving the challenges the local community was facing. For example, socio-economic benefit potential had been lost by the failure to roll out the Twerly prototype which came with a fitted camera, a solar powered streetlight, and an in-built camera (that uses solar and wind energy to provide electricity and a Wi-Fi hotspot (off grid)). Not only was the Twerly needed in the city of East London, but it would have had far reaching socio-economic impact had it been rolled out in rural schools in the broader Eastern Cape Province, where there continued to be a lack of basic infrastructure like electricity for lighting the streets and for powering cell phone networks.

Also, if commercialised and rolled out the 'Safe Pass' (an ICT based innovation aimed at reducing road fatalities due to motor vehicle accidents especially collisions with oncoming vehicles. The prototype consists of a small device installed on a vehicle that uses an app that has been developed to allow the driver of a car that intends to overtake another vehicle to see what lies ahead of that vehicle so that they can pass safely) would assist in saving lives at the grassroots levels as it will make it safer for drivers to overtake in a province where road accidents continued to claim many lives. What lacked was the engagement of the communities who would have been instrumental in meaningful adoption of the innovation through the utilisation of the fourth helix of the quadruple helix model, which recognises four major actors in the innovation system: science, policy, industry, and community (Schütz 2019).

Harnessing the developmental potential of innovation requires more than MoUs between formal stakeholders but involves consulting all actors in the innovation ecosystem including the knowledge of target user communities. The amount of knowledge available in each society plays an essential role in its economic development, and its importance is now widely considered critical for growth and competitiveness (Chen and Dahlman 2004). If innovations are supposed to generate solutions for sustainable development and improve livelihoods, they cannot be implemented successfully without involvement of the locals.

Embracing a 'place-based' rather than 'issue-based' approach enables the work of innovation to unfold within the boundaries of a particular geography and generates results that are context specific. Locals are a valuable resource in the innovation ecosystem as 'context experts' not just potential employees. There seemed to be an inherent failure to acknowledge the importance of the cultures that are built around very well-defined ideas about "who we are," "where we come from," and "how things are done around here" which spells out a missed opportunity to further innovation-led socio-economic impact. (Antorini and Muñiz 2015).

The partnerships that were forged by the relevant actors under the triple helix model of industrial development (i.e., industrialists, academic institutions, and the state), who together were effectively leveraging to promote industrialisation, localisation and job creation as demonstrated by the multitudes of trainings targeting students from poor and marginalised communities have however not produced the rolling out of the innovations from the STP.

They have not positively impacted the lives of the poor by using the innovations to stimulate job creation and social good. That is because opportunities were missed to involve the communities in the rollout of innovations as the triple helix model does not create sufficient room to bring communities on board. However, the quadruple helix model offers increased opportunities for participatory engagement. The involvement of communities would make innovation more effective as they would bring better appreciation of the issue being addressed and a deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of the community and participatory engagement would inform further R&D that would improve innovation outcomes.

However, under this triple helix model, a key aspect of innovation, the community, is excluded. Yet, according to the ELIDZ, the Zone is specially developed for innovation and efficiency for growth-oriented manufacturers in search of ultimate global competitiveness focusing on streamlining business operations and engineering operational efficiencies for located industries (ELIDZ 2015). There was room to push for putting innovation at the heart of local economic development at ELIDZ.

Contribution to knowledge

The study has contributed literature on the evolution of the role of the fourth helix in the quadruple helix model in South Africa. It has demonstrated how the triple helix model has not unlocked the full innovation potential and contribution of user communities as community engagement has not been at the heart of innovation during the interactions between – academia, industry, and government in the case of the ELIDZ STP.

The quadruple helix model offers opportunity for more effective community engagement in innovation instead as failure to engage context experts by content experts can impact innovation negatively as the socio-economic potential of innovation is lost when innovations are not piloted in the relevant communities and adopted more broadly.

'New combinations' (including new methods or processes, new organisational forms are essential for innovation. These 'new combinations' evidenced by the multitudes of interactions at the ELIDZ STP must go further to include more communities in stimulating innovation and highlight the importance of the 'place' when it comes to strengthening innovation outcomes. Greater community involvement would result in innovations that are tailored to local requirements and circumstances, maximising their potential for adoption and dissemination.

> Harnessing the developmental potential of innovation requires more than MoUs between formal stakeholders but involves consulting all actors in the innovation ecosystem including the knowledge of target user communities.

Conclusion

The triple helix model has not been effective as a tool for deepening local economic development, as it does not put local communities at the heart of economic development and hence the outcomes are often far removed from the immediate needs of local communities. Developing what Schumpeter termed 'new combinations' means looking beyond traditional systems such as the triple helix model to evolve new innovative solutions that are meaningful to the community. This should be at the heart of the innovation agenda. This would necessitate innovative thinking about how to strengthen the fourth helix of the quadruple helix model of innovation engagement.

The interactions of the three elements of the triple helix model, in this study identified adequate and meaningful community involvement as the missing element in the innovation mix for the socio-economic impact of innovations at ELIDZ STP. The quadruple-helix model offers a better alternative with a stronger community engagement dimension and opportunity for a more locally embedded innovation landscape.

That would mean that innovations are adapted to local needs and circumstances (context), which would optimise the potential for their adoption and diffusion. Communities are still being regarded as a source of labour and not yet as context experts, and partnerships are mostly viewed as a highly technical process that does not involve user communities within the triple helix model. Therefore, prototype innovations (Twerly, and 'Safe Pass') with great potential for addressing socio-economic challenges affecting the poor were yet to launch. Local communities were supposed to act as feedback mechanisms in the identification of a need and market for the innovation bringing a better appreciation of both the issue one is hoping to address, and a deep understanding of the exceptional characteristics of the community – the place and the people within it – where the innovation will be implemented.

The literature has demonstrated that the deep knowledge that users have accumulated and embedded in their innovations to create more relevant products by engaging communities under the fourth helix of the quadruple helix approach as a sustainable solution.

Implications and recommendations for policy

Even though actors under the triple helix model might have competing interests in innovation, more meaningful consultations within the fourth helix of the quadruple helix model would bring better appreciation of both the issues one is hoping to address as well as a deep understanding of the unique characteristics of the place (context) – the place and the people within it – where the innovation will be implemented. The missing link, however, was inadequate partnerships with communities that could have seen the meaningful piloting or implementation of innovations.

As a step in the right direction, and to overcome the difficulties of the top-down approach, the South African government has promoted the user-centred approach to innovation inherent in the Living Lab (LL) methodology as a more robust policy model that can be applied to stimulate inclusive rural innovation aimed at achieving a structural transformation that promotes co-learning as part of its strategic approach to foster inclusive development (Habiyaremye 2019).

As much as the current policy framework acknowledges the importance of the multitudes of interactions of the various actors (including the communities), roles, responsibilities and an implementation strategy are still not spelled out clearly in the White Paper of Science, Technology, and Innovation (2021) that must foster and promote the embeddedness of innovation systems.

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Effects of Non-Tariff Measures on Agricultural Export Performance in COMESA

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Abstract

Both classical and neo-classical economists have long held the convention that free trade is a significant generator of welfare of nations. Despite, the exploitation and discriminatory application of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) as some form of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), which are an alternative to tariffs, has substantially expanded and is persistently constraining the path towards absolute free trade. This growing incidence has invoked the recognition of the compelling need to enhance the transparency of existing NTMs and promote research on their impact in developing countries as well as within and outside regional groupings such as COMESA. This study employs the gravity model to study the effects of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures on intra-COMESA exports. The findings indicate that NTMs have diverse effects on exports within the COMESA region. On one end, SPS measures are export enhancing whilst TBT measures negatively affect intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes. Given the results of this research, COMESA members are encouraged to reduce the application of TBT measures in order to stimulate exports within the bloc, and to expand the application of SPS measures so as to promote the trade in agricultural products.

Keywords: COMESA; free trade; gravity model; non-technical measures; NTMs; TBT; technical measures; SPS.

Introduction

The convention that free trade is a significant generator of the welfare of nations has long been upheld by both classical and neo-classical economists. Although the trade liberalisation developments in the existing international trading environment have not ushered in absolute free trade, they have been radical and progressive. In fact, the multiple multilateral trade negotiation rounds under the auspices of the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), coupled with the proliferation of trade agreements of regional, bilateral, plurilateral and unilateral nature has led to significant reductions in tariffs globally (Cadot, Gourdon, and Tongeren 2018). The initial multilateral negotiation rounds dealt primarily with the reduction of tariffs on goods, but other concerns such as Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and anti-dumping were incorporated in later rounds following the inception of the WTO in 1995 (Krugman et al. 2012).

Despite these remarkable milestones and while tariff barriers continue to decline at both multilateral and bilateral level, the surge in the exploitation and discriminatory application of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) in the form of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), which are an alternative to tariffs, has ostensibly constrained the path towards absolute free trade. NTMs are defined by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2022) as trade policy measures, other than tariffs, that can potentially affect the international trade in merchandise, altering traded volumes, or traded values or both. NTBs, on the other hand, refer to restrictions that emanate from prohibitions, conditions, or explicit market necessities that make the importation or exportation of products challenging and/or expensive.

The notion of NTMs is impartial and does not infer a direction of impact (Pritchett 1996). Hence, since the focus of this study is on NTMs, it is important to make a distinction between NTMs and NTBs. NTBs, also commonly known as Non-Tariff Costs (NTCs), are a constituent of NTMs, which hold a discriminatory or trade inhibiting effect (Kinzius et al. 2019). An explanatory example can be the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) under the WTO SPS agreement, which covers NTMs that serve to protect human or animal health from foodborne risks and diseases carried by animals or plants; and animals and plants from pests or diseases (UNCTAD 2019). Nonetheless, if the measures adopted under the SPS agreement surpasses the elementary precept of safeguarding animal and plant life and are, therefore, disproportionately onerous in conforming to the detailed standard, it can be construed as an NTB. In fact, all technical NTMs can emerge to be trade barriers if they are unjustified and discriminatory in their application.

Irrespective of the surge in the application of NTMs in regulating international trade, their incidence and consequences are still yet to be well-comprehended and are frequently challenging to evaluate (De Melo and Nicita 2018). Unlike tariffs, which are transparent and accessible through the customs authority of each country, NTMs are often concealed. Moreover, there are concerns with the definition and/or classification of NTMs (Bora 2005). Hence, it is in this regard that significant efforts are being led by the World Bank (WB), UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC) to develop a standard categorisation of NTMs, as an instrument of trade policy to facilitate evaluations and country to country comparisons.

Considering the above, the UNCTAD Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) classifies NTMs into two broad categories, as shown in Table 1, namely import measures and export measures (UNCTAD 2019).

Import measures (Chapter A to O in Table 1) indicate the requirements of the importing country on its imports, while export measures (Chapter P) refer to requirements imposed solely by the exporting country on its own exports. Import measures are further classified under the following two broad measures: (i) technical measures (Chapter A and B), which refer to the application of some scientific process or tests such as labelling and other measures intended to protect humans, animals and the environment; and (ii) non-technical measures (Chapter C to O), which refer to those measures conventionally utilised as instruments of mercantile policy (e.g. quotas, price control, export restrictions, and other behind-the-border measures such as government procurement).

NTMs can impose heavy burdens on producers and consumers. For producers, NTMs raise production cost through adjustment of production technology or sourcing for better-quality inputs. Moreover, producers also need to bear the procedural costs to conform with the regulations. For consumers, NTMs can result in more expensive consumption goods or narrower product choice. Conversely, NTMs can serve legitimate purposes. Unlike tariffs which are unambiguously trade distorting and welfare reducing, NTMs are designed to correct several market failures, particularly to protect consumers' health and safety and to preserve the environment. From that perspective, NTMs are not necessarily NTBs, and their elimination thereof cannot be an alternative for the elimination of NTBs.

Table 1: UNCTAD NTMs classification
Source: Adapted from UNCTAD (2019)

IMPORT MEASURES			
Technical Measures		**Non-Technical Measures**	
Measure	**Chapter**	**Measure**	**Chapter**
Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures	A	Contingent Trade-Protective Measures	D
Technical Barriers to Trade	B	Non-Automatic Licensing, Quotas, Prohibitions and Quantity-Control Measures other than for SPS or TBT Reasons	E
Pre-shipment inspection and other formalities	C	Price-Control Measures, Including Additional Taxes and Charges	F
		Finance Measures	G
		Measures Affecting Competition	H
		Trade-Related Investment Measures	I
		Distribution Restrictions	J
		Restrictions on Post-Sales Services	K
		Subsidies	L
		Government Procurement Restrictions	M
		Intellectual Property	N
		Rules of Origin	O
		Finance Measures	G
EXPORT MEASURES			
Measure			**Chapter**
Export-Related Measures			P

The complexity of NTMs as a regulatory tool poses considerable challenge to policymakers. Moreover, the expansion of global value chains further magnifies the impact of NTMs on trade and competitiveness.

The key issue, however, is comprehending the mechanism through which these NTMs affect international trade and absolute freer trade in general. In this regard, trade costs are singled out as the key mechanism by which NTMs affect foreign trade. In fact, trade costs provide an important signal on resource allocation. Generally, the ability of firms to gain market access opportunities and to benefit from them, increasingly depends on compliance with NTMs which have rampantly become drivers of contemporary trade policy. It is apparent in Table 1 that NTMs, though prima facie construed as trade barriers, have non-trade objectives such as the protection of public health or the environment. Even though, these non-trade objectives represent a major challenge for exporters, importers and policymakers.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, in particular, is not immune to the challenges posed by the application of NTMs. In fact, the large incidence of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures are of concern to many developing countries (Fugazza 2013) and more especially to the COMESA region, which have witnessed a substantial expansion in their application. The sustenance of this trend will eventually undermine intra-COMESA agricultural exports as well as the bloc's trade in general, and this has compelled COMESA member states to collectively direct their efforts towards the elimination of potentially trade impeding NTMs.

Despite this growing incidence of NTMs in international trade and the ensuing protracted political discussions surrounding their (possible) misuse as protectionist implements that functions to erode the economic gains of previous reductions in tariff rates, research on NTMs, mostly for developing countries including COMESA countries, is limited due to data paucity. This has invoked the recognition of the compelling need to enhance the transparency of existing NTMs and promote research on their impact in developing countries as well as within and outside regional groupings such as COMESA. In addition, the use of NTMs is escalating within the COMESA community.

Given the steadily rising number of various types of NTMs and their application in international trading activities at both bilateral and regional level, the current research primarily aims at enhancing the understanding of NTMs and examine their resulting impact on agricultural exports within the COMESA regional bloc. In achieving the primary objective, the following secondary objectives relating to technical measures policy inferences are also met: (i) examining the effect of SPS on intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes; and (ii) examining the effect of TBT on agricultural exports in the COMESA region.

The rest of the research is outlined as follows: Section 2 presents information on non-tariff measures and agricultural exports in the COMESA region; a review of theoretical and empirical literature relating to the relationship between NTMs and exports is provided in Section 3; the research methodology applied in this study to enhance the understanding of NTMs and examine their resulting impact on agricultural exports within the COMESA regional bloc is provided in Section 4; the empirical results obtained in this research are presented and analysed in Section 5; and lastly the conclusions reached and the proposals for both the policymakers of the respective COMESA member states and future research, along with the limitations encountered in this research, are provided in Section 6.

> "The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, in particular, is not immune to the challenges posed by the application of NTMs."

Information on non-tariff measures and agricultural exports in the COMESA region

Non-tariff measures (as construed to be a component of NTBs) has been increasing in COMESA following the adoption of free trade in the region (Nsubuga and Musengele 2014). In fact, NTBs are now used as a trade protectionist measure to substitute the ever-decreasing tariffs. Thus, to tame the unjustifiable use of NTBs in regulating trade, COMESA member states agreed that countries should establish entry points that will necessitate invoking Article 50 of the COMESA treaty which deals specifically with NTBs. Besides, the entry points shall: inform the COMESA Secretariat of reported NTBs through the application of a common form to be used by exporters and importers; provide clear guidelines to the business community on the areas identified as NTBs; sensitize stakeholders on the monitoring and evaluation and reporting tool; facilitate access to information, including the electronic transmission of information to the business; and track and monitor NTBs affecting intra-COMESA trade.

All these efforts are to provide checks and balances on the use of NTBs to influence international trade. The efforts of the COMESA region in dealing with NTBs were buttressed by the formation of a tripartite forum with the Eastern African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) with a specific purpose of implementing a NTB reporting and monitoring mechanism, which incorporates concrete timelines for the removal of NTBs.

Since the implementation of these initiatives, the number of NTBs that have been reported has been resolved. Specifically, the NTB resolution rate stood at 95% in 2020. Nonetheless, there are some existing NTBs which remains unsolved dating back to the 2000s. In terms of the composition of NTBs, it is reported that 82% of them are operational and are easy to monitor[1]. The remaining 18% constitute the behind the border barriers which are deemed to be complex. Interestingly, the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic saw an escalation in the use of NTBs in regulating trade[2].

An analysis of the aggregate intra-COMESA agricultural exports reveals an increase from US$2.5 billion in 2015 to US$2.8 billion in 2018 before declining to US$2.7 billion in 2019. The sectoral dynamics in Figure 1 shows that the most traded HS2 sectors over the five-year period from 2015 to 2019 are: 17 – sugars and

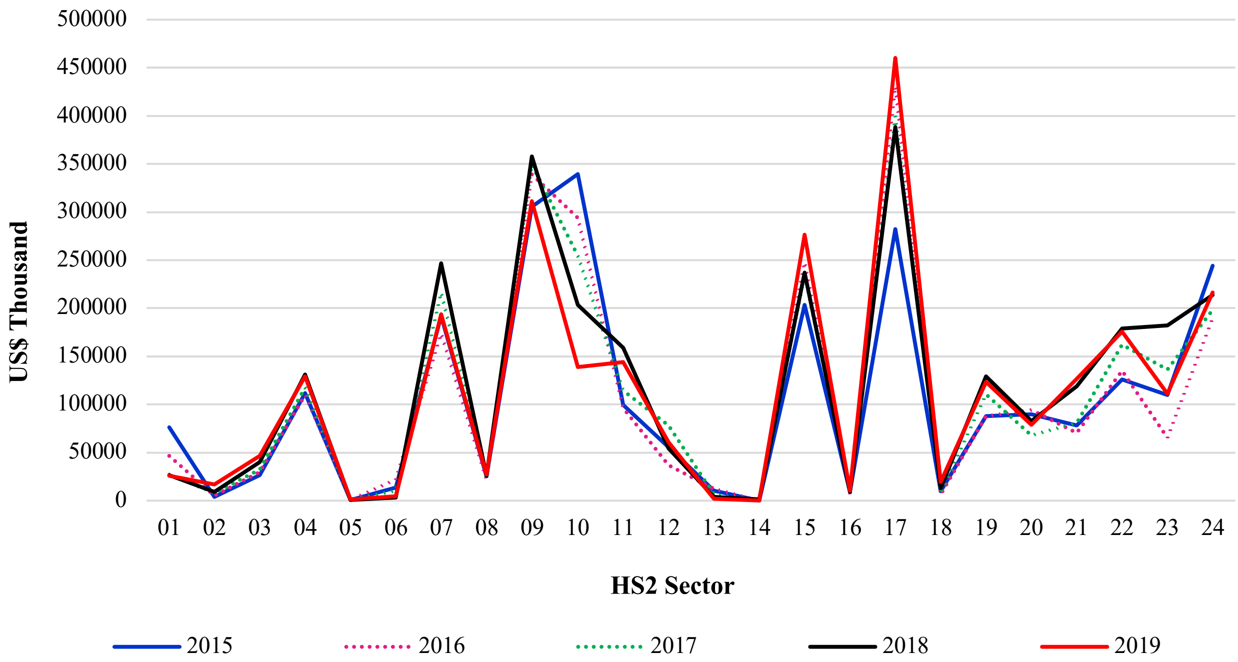

Figure 1: Intra-COMESA agricultural exports from 2015 to 2019
Source: Authors' own illustration

sugar confectionery (averaging US$392.2 million); 09 – coffee, tea, maté and spices (US$332.9 million); 10 – cereals (US$246.0 million); 15 – animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products (US$240.1 million); 24 – tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (US$212.5 million); and 07 – edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers (US$204.4 million).

Sectors such as 14 – vegetable plaiting materials and vegetable products not elsewhere specified or included, and 04 – products of animal origin not elsewhere specified or included are minimally traded within COMESA and have an average export value under US$1 million over the five-year period.

Literature Review

There is vast literature dedicated to the study of the relationship between NTMs and export expansion. However, the extant literature is abstruse in ascertaining the ultimate effects of NTMs in international trading activities. This ambiguity stems from the existence of a weak theoretical framework linking NTMs and export expansion. On the empirical side, the variations in the effects of NTMs on export expansion emanates from differences in methodologies, nature of NTMs, and the level of product aggregation. This section proceeds by discussing the theoretical literature linking NTMs to export expansion, followed by a review of empirical literature on the same.

1. Theoretical Literature

The Melitz (2003) heterogeneous firms' model is used to relate NTMs to export growth. In the Melitz model, only the most productive firms export. Thus, in the case of increase in export costs, this model predicts a reduction in the number of exporters and, hence, the number of products exported. On the contrary, a decrease in NTMs, which is akin to a reduction in trade costs, leads to an increase in the number of exporters and the number of products being exported. At the same time, existing exporters will increase their export volumes. In other words, trade liberalisation forces least productive firms to exit the export market and reallocates market share towards productive exporting firms. The theoretical model is formally presented as follows:

Considering a three regions model consisting of Home (*H*), Foreign (*F*) and Rest of the World (*W*) as in Chaney (2008) and assuming that there is one sector, producing a single homogeneous good and a second sector producing a continuum of goods, the utility is given by the constant elasticity of substitution utility function in Equation 1.

$$U = q_0^{\mu}\left(\int_{\Omega} q\left(w\right)\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}dw\right)^{(1-\mu)\frac{\sigma}{\sigma-1}} \qquad (1)$$

Where q_0 is the quantity of the homogeneous good consumed, is the consumption of each differentiated product variety $w \in \Omega$, μ and (1 – μ) are the respective consumption weights of the two sectors, and σ is the elasticity of substitution among varieties within the differentiated goods sector. Production in the homogeneous sector is subject to constant returns to scale, with one unit of labour input in region $i \in \{F;W\}$ producing $\overline{Y}$ units of output, while one unit of labour in region H produces $\underline{Y}$ units of output. Assuming that H is a low productivity region, while F and W are high productivity regions, this implies that $\overline{Y} > \underline{Y}$. The price of the homogeneous good is normalized to unity and trade is costless, which means that the wage in H is $\underline{Y}$ and the wage in F and W it is $\overline{Y}$.

In the differentiated goods sector, the cost c of producing q units in region i and selling them in region j is:

$$c_{ij}(q) = \frac{Y_i}{\varphi} + f_{ij} \tag{2}$$

Where f_{ij} is the fixed cost of accessing the market in region j for firms in region i. The fixed costs are conceptualised here as the design and retooling costs a firm in region i must pay to satisfy product standards in j thereby gaining access to its market. Given that the focus of this research is on the intensive margin, the assumption is that there are no variable costs. Firms are heterogeneous in productivity and size (φ), which is drawn from a pareto distribution with support [1,+∞], shape parameter $\gamma > \sigma - 1$, and a cumulative density function $g(\varphi) = 1 - \varphi^{-\gamma}$

Assuming also that labour is the only factor of production, and each region is endowed with L_i units, the model does not assume free entry and it assumes that the mass of potential entrants in each region is fixed and proportional to $Y_i L_i$. Total expenditure in each region E_i is the sum of labour income $Y_i L_i$ and redistributed profits $Y_i L_i \mathrm{p}$, where p is the dividend per share of a global mutual fund owned by labour (Y_i shares per worker). Under standard assumptions, firms' export from region i to region j are equal to:

$$x_{ij}(\varphi) = (1-\mu) E_j \left(\frac{P_{ij}(\varphi)}{P_j} \right)^{1-\sigma} \tag{3}$$

Where $P_{ij}(\varphi) = \left(\frac{\sigma}{\sigma - 1} \right) \left(\frac{Y_i \tau_{ij}}{\varphi} \right)$ is the firm's optimal price and P_j is the constant elasticity of substitution price index of region j. Net firm profits from producing in region i and selling in region j are:

$$\pi_{ij}(\varphi) = \left[P_{ij}(\varphi) - c_{ij}(\varphi) \right] q_{ij}(\varphi) - f_{ij} \tag{4}$$

Chaney (2008) provides the full solution of this model and its equilibrium properties. The most important result for the purposes of this study is that firms self-select into markets based on productivity. In equilibrium, zero profit conditions of the type $\pi_{ij}(\overline{\varphi}_{ij}) = 0$ implicitly define a productivity cut-off condition. The equilibrium cut-off $\overline{\varphi}_{ij}$ represents the minimum level of firm productivity consistent with profitably exporting from i to j. Firms with $\varphi < \overline{\varphi}_{ij}$ become exporters, while those with $\varphi > \overline{\varphi}_{ij}$ do not. An increase in fixed costs of compliance means that relatively lower productivity exporters are pushed out of the market while high productivity firms can continue exporting thereby affecting the extensive margin.

NTMs simultaneously affect trade flows and market structure. According to Ing et al. (2016), the costs imposed by NTMs on businesses can be decomposed into three broad classes, namely enforcement costs, sourcing costs, and process-adaptation costs. Enforcement costs relate to the effort that private companies must expend to show compliance with NTMs. This may involve staff devoted to paperwork, inspection by officials from enforcement agents or efforts to encourage certification of foreign suppliers under national standards. Because these costs are largely fixed, they weigh heavily on small firms than larger ones. They might also weigh more heavily on foreign firms less familiar with local administrative process, although foreign firms tend to purchase legal/consulting assistance locally. Accordingly, through enforcement costs, NTMs may discriminately affect local and foreign firms (Ing et al. 2016).

Sourcing costs are costs generated by switching from low grade intermediate sources to high grade ones in order to meet NTM standards. A given standard can have different effects depending on products and users. Sourcing costs are essentially variable costs as they affect every unit produced. If the standard is not discriminatory, they affect domestic firms and importers in the same manner. However, intermediate producers from different countries may have unequal abilities to comply with NTMs due to variations in the effectiveness of national regulations and the quality of infrastructure.

Consequently, an NTM may affect sourcing patterns with complex effects. For instance, Mauritian regulation on payments used in paints forced domestic producers to switch from their traditional supply sources to more expensive German made pigments. In general, Disdier et al. (2015) show that harmonization clauses in North-South agreement which typically mean stiffening of standards for the southern partners tend to reduce South-South trade. This 'shutting door' effect on imports from Southern third-party suppliers may also be so large as to raise profitability of home intermediate producers as was the case in Morocco after harmonization with European Union (EU) standards (Augier et al. 2016).

Process adaptation costs relate to changes in capital equipment needed to meet NTM standards. For instance, dairy standards force farmers to buy expensive equipment to ensure that milk is not contaminated by bacteria before being pumped into tank trunks. Investment in compliant capital equipment also requires the upgrading of operator skills. These costs are similar to the costs typically incurred by firms when they essentially involve the hiring of white-collar workers and engineers and most importantly higher skill levels in every occupation (Verhoogen 2008; Bustor 2011). Process adaptation costs are essentially fixed costs and, therefore, affect small firms more than larger ones and in the process affect market structure.

The market structure effect can interact in subtle ways with traditional rent-shifting effects. In fact, an increase in fixed costs induces the exit of firms. This extensive margin effect alters the market's structure. However, even if the exit movement is large, the effect on trade flows is small because the exiting firms represent a small fraction of the aggregate flow. By contrast, an increase in variable costs affects all firms. Thus, the market structure does not change as all firms reduce their flows proportionately. However, aggregate flows change markedly. This argument has important implications for the empirical analysis of NTMs and its policy implications.

In terms of the market structure effect and considering a world with symmetric firms and transport costs, firms sell systematically smaller volumes on their export markets than on their home markets because of transport costs. Supposing now that each country sets a particular (different) standard, then firms spread country-specific process-adaptation costs on smaller volumes on their export markets than on their home markets. It is as if home firms were always larger than foreign ones, in spite of the initial symmetry. In that case, NTMs mechanically generate a home bias even if they are not *de jure* discriminatory. The picture becomes more complex with heterogeneous firms as process-adaptation costs induce the exit of the smallest foreign and domestic firms, allowing larger foreign and domestic firms to expand market shares.

Accordingly, foreign firms may find themselves better-off, a conjecture that is documented empirically by Asprilla et al. (2016). If quality upgrading takes place on a sufficiently large scale in the economy (say, because a wave of new NTMs is adopted following a trade agreement) the complementarity between recent-vintage capital and skills can raise the skill premium in the whole economy, resulting in a widening of wage inequalities between educated and non-educated workers. This effect, documented in the case of an expansion of export opportunities by Bustos (2011), can induce a sorting of firms, with the largest upgrading and expanding, while the smallest are forced to exit, squeezed by the NTM's requirements and the rising cost of skilled manpower. While the scale of these effects varies across contexts and is not widely documented yet, a good rule of thumb is that variable costs matter for aggregate trade flows, while fixed costs matter for market structure.

2. Empirical Literature

There is an existence of a number of studies in extant literature that have interrogated the effects of NTMs on export market participation, export values and export growth at both firm-level (Chen, Otsuki and Wilson 2006; Otsuki 2011; Fontagne et al. 2015; El-Enbaby, Hendy and Zaki 2016; Timini and Conesa 2019) and country-level (Disdier, Fontagné and Mimouni 2008; Devadason and Chenayah 2014; Shepotylo 2016; Orefice 2017; Bratt 2017). However, these studies have not precisely examined the impact of NTMs on export diversification and the survival of export initiatives.

At the firm-level, Fontagne et al. (2015) examined the effects of SPS on trade using the data of French exporting firms. Using the gravity model, the study findings strengthen the hypothesis of the heterogeneous trade models that large and productive firms can accommodate escalations in fixed costs and maintain their exports, while small exporting firms suffer the brunt of SPS measures. The results further revealed that, in terms of export market participation, invoking an SPS measure negatively affect the behaviour of French exporting firms. Like Fontagne et al. (2015), an estimation by El-Enbaby et al. (2016) of the impact of

SPS measures notified to the WTO on Egyptian firms' exports of agricultural products established a statistically significant effect on the export value of Egyptian firms. However, El-Enbaby et al. (2016) find that SPS measures reduce the probability of a firm exporting to a market that has instituted the SPS measure.

Another firm-level study by Chen et al. (2006) examined the effects of standards and technical regulation on trade using a database of 619 firms from 17 developing countries. As with Fontagne et al. (2015) and El-Enbaby et al. (2016), the study of Chen et al. (2006) asserts that developed countries' standards and technical regulations deter developing firms' participation in export markets. Further, the standards and technical regulations affect the export market diversification of developing firms. Explicitly, the study establishes that standards and technical regulations affect the propensity of exporting to at least three markets by 7%.

Through the utilisation of a gravity model at country-level, Disdier et al. (2008) found that SPS and TBT measures have significant trade impeding impact on the exports of developing countries, but no effect on the exports of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Similarly, by utilising a gravity model, Devadason and Chenayah, (2014) argues that China's TBTs are trade reducing for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. In fact, China's TBT measures have negative effects from the ASEAN perspective. However, at the sectoral level, the effects are dichotomic even in TBT intensive products.

Another country-level study by Bratt (2017) found that NTMs have varying trade effects across import-export pairs. The results indicate that many NTMs can facilitate trade for some import-export pairs and can be trade impeding for others. Hence, when conditioned on trading partners and products, Bratt (2017) establishes that NTMs can have different and even opposite effects across countries.

Research Methodology

1. Data

In this study, cross-sectional trade data for 10 COMESA member states in 2019 is explored. The period was selected based on the availability of the COMESA countries data for TBT and SPS measures. The importer country coverage (see Table A.1 in appendix) was also based on the availability of the data for technical NTMs.

The variables employed in this research are itemised and described in Table 2. Annual data on intra-COMESA agricultural trade at the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) level were retrieved from the World Integrated Trade Solution database of the World Bank (WB, 2022a) and the research utilised the import data in 11 COMESA importing countries and their 20 COMESA partners.

Table 2: Description of variables

Variables	Symbol	Measurement	Sources
Imports	Imports	Annual intra-COMESA import value in US$000.	WB (2020a)
Exporter's GDP	GDP_o	Annual exporter GDP at constant 2010 US$.	WB (2020b)
Importer's GDP	GDP_d	Annual importer GDP at constant 2010 US$.	WB (2020b)
Exporters population	POP_o	Number of people in the exporting country	CEPII (2020)
Importers population	POP_d	Number of people in the importing country	CEPII (2020)
Distance	Dist	Distance between the importer and the exporter.	CEPII (2020)
Contiguity	Contig	Dummy: = 1, if the importer is landlocked; = 0, if otherwise.	CEPII (2020)
Language	Lang	Dummy: = 1, if the exporter shares a common language with the importer; = 0, if otherwise.	CEPII (2020)
SPS	SPS	Number of active SPS measures, notified to the WTO, applied in the agricultural sector.	WTO (2022)
TBT	TBT	Number of active TBT measures, notified to the WTO, applied in the agricultural sector.	WTO (2022)

CEPII, *Centre d'Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales*; COMESA, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; GDP, Gross Domestic Product; SPS, Sanitary and Phytosanitary; TBT, Technical Barriers to Trade; WB, World Bank; WDI, World Development Indicators. Source: Authors' compilation.

The data for TBT and SPS measures was drawn from the Integrated Trade Intelligence Portal (I-TIP) database of the WTO (2022). The data for the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of COMESA countries was retrieved from the World Development Indicators (WDI) database of the WB (2022b), while the data for the other traditional gravity model variables was accessed from the *Centre d'Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales* (CEPII 2020).

2. Model Specification

To examine the effects of technical NTMs on intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes, this research employs the gravity model in a cross-sectional framework. Therefore, to test the hypotheses that SPS and TBTs affect intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes depending on the import-exporter bias, the estimated standard gravity model is specified as in Bratt (2014) and Fugazza (2013) as follows:

$$M_{ij} = \delta_0 + \delta_1 LGDP_i + \delta_2 LGDP_j + \delta_3 LPOP_i + \delta_4 POP_j + \delta_5 LDist + \delta_6 Contig + \delta_7 Lang + \delta_8 SPS_i + \delta_9 TBT_i + fe + \varepsilon_{ij} \tag{5}$$

Where M_{ij} the import volume, i is the importing country, j is the exporting country, t is the time period, and fe are different sets of fixed effects controlled for, which include exporter fixed effects, sector fixed effects, and time fixed effects.

The standard gravity model specified in Equation 5 was estimated using the Poisson Pseudo-Maximum Likelihood (PPML) method suggested by Silva and Tenreyro (2006). The PPML approach permits the utilisation of information from zero trade flows and to correct for potential bias in the estimation. Moreover, to avoid biased estimation results, diagnostic tests were conducted initially to determine and correct the presence of multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and serial correlation amongst the variables before any statistical inferences were drawn from the estimated results.

Presentation and Discussions of Results

The presentation of the results of this study begins with the descriptive statistics of the variables included in this research. It is clear in Table 3 that there are 208 observations, and the standard deviations of non-dichotomous variables are relatively high pointing to widely spread data suggesting that the utilisation of an estimation technique that minimises standard errors would be appropriate.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Imports	208	2510.22	9369.23	0.00	92469.60
GDP_o	208	27806.32	53372.52	709.11	249751.08
GDP_d	208	16938.57	31651.77	421.94	249751.08
POP_o	208	25757105.00	27014819.00	1186873.00	98423595.00
POP_d	208	18967747.00	23474864.00	81131.00	109200000.00
Dist	208	3000.86	1729.57	162.18	7990.13
Contig	208	0.09	0.28	0.00	1.00
Lang	208	0.57	0.50	0.00	1.00
SPS	208	14.98	17.91	1.00	52.00
TBT	208	36.63	53.44	0.00	148.00

The correlation matrix in Table A.2 shows that there is a relatively high correlation among the GDP_o and POP_o (0.67), GDP_d and POP_d (0.67), SPS and TBT (0.85). This infers the presence of multicollinearity. Hence, the affected variables were isolated and their impacts on intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes were estimated in solitude.

The PPML results of the baseline gravity model estimation are shown in Table 4. The canonical Ramsey Reset Test was used to examine the qualitative nature of the regression model. The results confirmed that the model was a parsimonious model in the estimation of the effects of NTMs on agricultural exports in the COMESA region. To examine the impact of technical NTMs (i.e. TBT and SPS) on intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes, this research took natural logarithms of SPS and TBT measures, which are the variables of interest. The coefficients of both SPS and TBT are found to be significant at 1% and 5% level, correspondingly. However, only the coefficient of TBT had the expected negative sign, while that of SPS is positive contrary to the theoretically anticipated trade impeding effects of NTMs. As such, a percentage increase in active applied SPS measures results in a 0.10% increase in intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes, whereas a percentage increase in active applied TBT measures reduces intra-COMESA agricultural export volumes by 0.02%.

Table 4: PPML regression results of the Impact of technical NTMs on intra-COMESA agricultural exports

Imports	LGDP_o	LGDP_d	LPOP_o	LPOP_d	Ldist	Contig	Lang	SPS	TBT
Coefficient	0.694**	0.009	-1.182***	0.047	-0.839**	0.979	-0.289	0.102***	-0.023**
Standard error	0.310	0.274	0.290	0.332	0.369	0.633	0.390	0.038	0.010
T-value	2.240	0.030	-4.080	0.140	-2.270	1.550	-0.740	2.700	-2.380
Pseudo R-squared	0.332								
Ramsey Reset (p-value)	0.124								
Observations	208								

Significant at the: 10% level (*), 5% level (**), 1% level (***)

In terms of the traditional gravity model variables, the coefficient of GDP for the exporting country has the expected positive sign which is statistically significant. A one percent increase in the GDP of the exporting country leads to a 0.69 percent increase in intra-COMESA agricultural exports. The population of the exporting country has a corresponding negative coefficient that is highly significant. An increase in the population of the exporting country leads to an increase in the demand of the domestically produced goods which is matched by a decrease in exports. A one percent increase in population in the exporting country results in a 1.18% decrease in the volume of intra-COMESA agricultural exports.

As theoretically expected, the coefficient of the distance is negative. An increase in the distance (a proxy for trade cost) causes a decrease in the volume of bilateral imports. In this research, it has been found that a one percent increase in distance leads to a 0.84% reduction in the volume of imports. Other variables (i.e. GDP of the importer, population of the importer, contiguity and language) were all found to be statistically insignificant and, therefore, do not have an impact on intra-COMESA agricultural exports.

The gravity model results provide evidence on the effects of SPS and TBT measures on intra-COMESA agricultural exports. They show that SPS measures promotes intra-COMESA agricultural exports whereas TBT measures reduce the volume of intra-COMESA agricultural exports. With respect to TBT measures, TBT measures are construed as barriers to trade in this study, a finding which is supported by empirical evidence.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Both classical and neo-classical economists have long held the convention that free trade is a significant generator of welfare of nations. Despite this widely sustained belief and the progress attributed to multilateral negotiations, under the auspices of the 1947 GATT and the WTO, that has seen substantial universal reductions in tariffs, the exploitation and discriminatory application of NTMs as some form of NTBs, which are an alternative to tariffs, has substantially expanded and is persistently constraining the path towards absolute free trade. This growing incidence of NTMs in international trade along with the ensuing protracted political discussions surrounding their (potential) misuse as protectionist implements that functions to erode the economic gains of previous reductions in tariff rates has invoked the recognition of the compelling need to enhance the transparency of existing NTMs and promote research on their impact in developing countries as well as within and outside regional groupings such as the COMESA.

In the framework of the above, this research examined the impact of technical NTMs (i.e. SPS and TBT) on intra-COMESA agricultural exports. The gravity model results from the PPML estimation method shows that TBT measures affect intra-COMESA agricultural exports, while SPS measures promotes intra-COMESA agricultural exports. The results support both views of the effect of NTMs on trade. The negative effect of TBTs on intra-COMESA agricultural exports supports the view of NTMs as a barrier to trade, while the positive effect of SPS on intra-COMESA agricultural exports support the trade enhancing effect of NTMs.

In terms of other traditional gravity model variables, the GDP and the population of the exporting country were found to be significant in explaining intra-COMESA agricultural exports. An increase in the exporting country GDP by a percentage point leads to a 0.69% expansion in intra-COMESA agricultural exports, while a 1% increase in the population of the exporting country results in a 1.18% decrease in the volume of intra-COMESA agricultural exports. Distance is also as theoretically expected and its increase by a percentage point significantly leads to a 0.84% reduction in the volume of intra-COMESA agricultural exports. Other variables such as the GDP of the importer, population of the importer, contiguity and language were all found to be statistically insignificant and, therefore, do not have an impact on intra-COMESA agricultural exports.

Informed by the results of this research, the following policy implications can be made: first, COMESA countries need to reduce the application of TBT measures to stimulate trade within the regional trading bloc; and second, COMESA countries should also promote the application of SPS measures to promote the trade of agricultural products. Given the data constraints encountered in this research, future research activities can be directed towards an analysis which covers all the COMESA member states conditional upon the imminent availability of technical NTMs data. Within this framework, COMESA need to develop and maintain its own NTMs database as regional grouping. Future analysis of the impact of NTMs within COMESA can also be spread to other non-technical NTMs not covered in the current research.

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Notes

1 https://www.comesa.int/82-of-ntbs-in-comesa-are-operational-and-easy-to-monitor-but-behind-the-border-type-of-ntbs-are-more-complex/

2 https://www.comesa.int/new-regional-forum-established-to-deal-with-escalation-of-ntbs/

Appendix: COMESA Countries Covered in The Study and Supplementary Tables

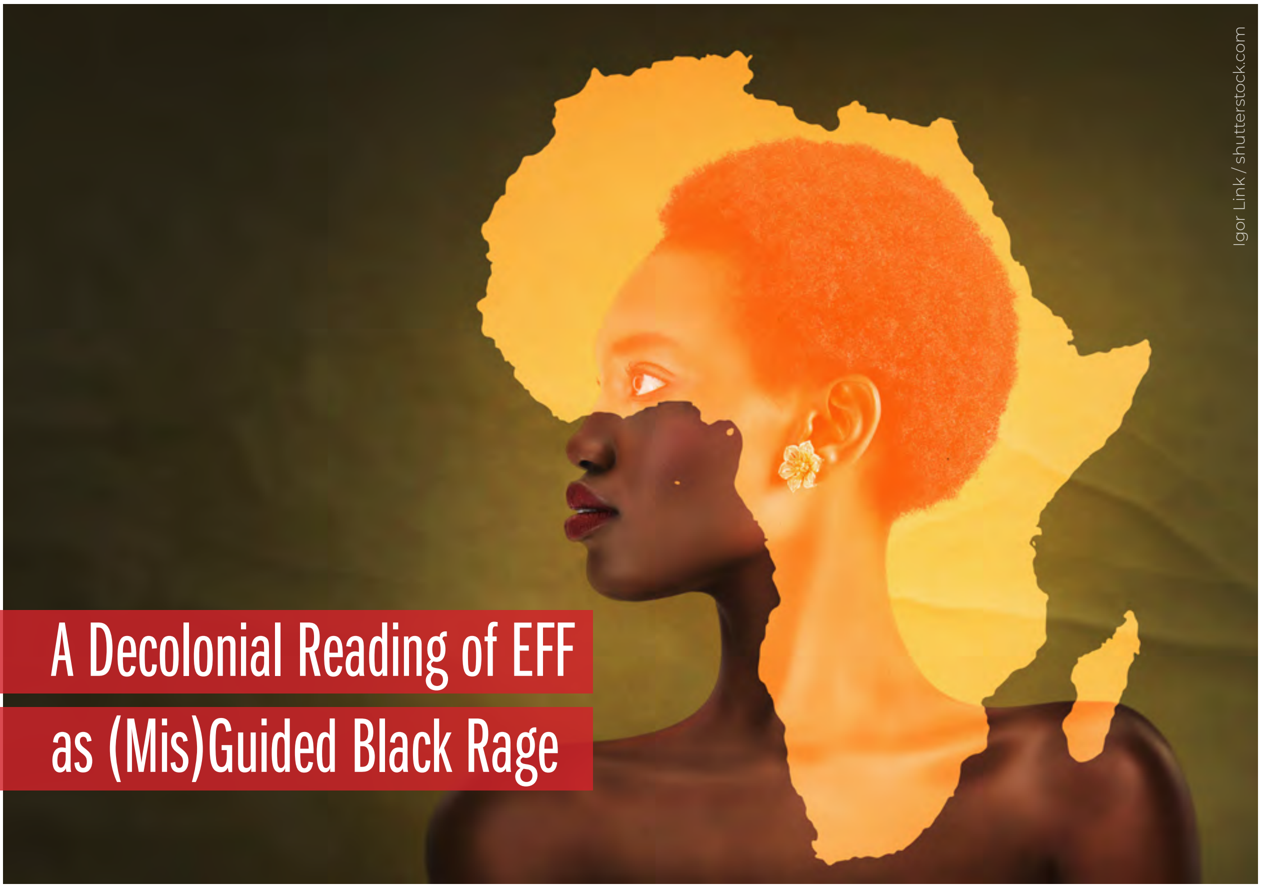
Table A.1: COMESA countries covered in the study

Importers Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo; Egypt; Eswatini; Kenya; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Rwanda; Tunisia; and Uganda.
Exporters Burundi; Comoros; Democratic Republic of Congo; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Eswatini; Ethiopia; Kenya; Libya; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Rwanda; Seychelles; Somalia; Sudan; Tunisia; Uganda; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

Notes: The importers were selected based on the availability of the technical NTMs (i.e. TBT and SPS) data.

Table A.2: Correlation matrix

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) imports	1.000									
(2) LGDP_o	0.182	1.000								
(3) LGDP_d	0.045	0.089	1.000							
(4) LPOP_o	0.027	**0.668**	0.055	1.000						
(5) LPOP_d	0.044	0.003	**0.677**	-0.008	1.000					
(6) Ldist	-0.101	0.139	0.124	-0.102	-0.097	1.000				
(7) Lcontig	0.154	0.055	0.085	0.151	0.178	-0.528	1.000			
(8) Lang	0.041	-0.130	-0.272	-0.222	-0.204	-0.215	0.165	1.000		
(9) SPS	0.123	0.476	-0.025	0.579	-0.021	-0.151	0.078	-0.086	1.000	
(10) TBT	0.044	0.173	-0.023	0.360	-0.017	-0.282	0.142	0.040	**0.854**	1.000



A Decolonial Reading of EFF as (Mis)Guided Black Rage

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Abstract

Examining two sets of protests by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) between 2018 and 2021 that reflect on the persistent problem of racism in post-apartheid South Africa, this article teases out the operations of Black rage within the EFF and on the Black body more broadly. It applies affect as theory and method to understand the party's rage on the manifestation of racism as simultaneously an expression of what I call 'misguided black rage' and as an expression of self-love. I argue that since its formation in 2013, the EFF, amongst others, has been looking at racism and white-owned South Africa media as the objects of its rage. It must be said, however, that the EFF's rage has been about more than racism and white media ownership as exemplified by the party's powerful rage directed against former President Jacob Zuma through its campaign "Bring Back the Money". Consequently, this article theorises the EFF through Black rage, the lens of affect. In her song, *Black Rage*, Lauren Hill says Black Rage can manifest itself in many forms. Listening to her song is a poignant reminder of the politics of Black rage. This article shows that Black rage in the EFF can be retrogressive and advances violence towards journalists and sexism and misogyny specifically towards women journalists. On the other hand, rage in the party can be perceived as progressive in challenging discriminatory practices such as ways in which black women hair is depicted.

Keywords: EFF, Black rage, double consciousness, misguided black rage, self-love, potentiated Black rage

> In the context of South Africa, Black bodies have been the site of rage for centuries from the regimes of slavery, colonialism, racism and apartheid.

Introduction

This is an affective and decolonial reading of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) as (mis) guided Black rage. There has been a notable large body of scholarly work conducted on the EFF and the impact it has had in the South African polity since its formation in 2013 (see Mbete, 2015; Nieftagodien, 2015; Satgar, 2019; Yende, 2021). Yet there exists an opportunity in understanding and theorising the party as through the affective tool of Black rage. According to Canham (2018), rage is under-theorised in South Africa. I contend that this absence of rage in the analysis of political parties, social movements and organisations is more pervasive in the South African academy. For Canham, this is remarkable oversight since the country has a reputation of being the world's epicentre of protest action. In the context of South Africa, Black bodies have been the site of rage for centuries from the regimes of slavery, colonialism, racism and apartheid. According to Mpofu (2021), to be Black in South Africa is to be a problem and in a state of rage. Here Black rage is seen through W.E.B. Du Bois's (1904) concept of double consciousness in order to reveal the double dimension of rage, which can be both destructive and liberatory. The strength of such a view lies in channelling Black rage and 'render it discursively legible' (Canham, 2017: 427). Describing it as a peculiar sensation, Du Bois says double consciousness is "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (2009: 9). In order to foreground the duality of Black rage in-depth, I first scrutinise how the EFF deployed misguided black rage to harass and violently attack women journalists in their line of duty (*Mail & Guardian*, 2018; Boswell, 2020; News24, 2021). Second, I investigate how the party deployed what is termed here 'potentiated Black rage' as an expression of self-love when thousands of its members took to Clicks stores countrywide in 2020 in protests spurred on by the beauty chain outlet's racist advert against black women hair.

The year 2015 has been touted as the year of significant rage (Canham, 2018). For Canham, "this period has witnessed the greatest intensity of protest action within the post-apartheid period" (2018: 319). That year witnessed two of the biggest protest marches in post-apartheid South Africa's history, namely, the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. Although it might be debatable to what extent students aligned to the EFF influenced both campaigns; clearly, the party played a significant role. Mbete argues that the EFF has since used protests by poor communities, students, and workers to 'establish itself as a revolutionary party' (2020: 249). There is consensus, among commentators and critics alike, that the EFF has significantly altered the political landscape in the post-1994 period. Authors like Sagtar (2019) have argued that the EFF is a 'black neofascist party' or 'a case of hype over substance' (Friedman, 2014) and or 'an empty rhetoric captured in the politics of spectacle' (Fakir, 2014). While such an analysis has been concerned about the character of the party, I posit that Black rage has the potential to advance a richer and critical understanding of the EFF. I argue that by centering racism struggles, the party offers Black people 'emancipatory potential' (McCann, 2013). Black rage, a tool used by African existential philosopher, Steve Bantu Biko (1987) against the oppressive system of apartheid, often revolves around the association between left politics and the agency of rage. Writing on the subject of Black rage, Biko contends that for a long time Black people had been 'looking at the governing party and not so much at the whole power structure as the object of their rage' (1987: 63). Canham explains that anti-apartheid activists used rage as a weapon to channel their anger against an oppressive racial system of apartheid. It is my contention that the EFF deploys rage as a political tool to fight against present and current forms of oppression and dehumanisation. Furthermore, the party also employs rage as a weapon against those the party perceives as its opponents or enemies, especially against the media. In doing so, this article seeks to recentre the concept of Black rage as an analytical lens to understand the post-apartheid South Africa democratic settlement as an 'unfinished project of decolonisation' (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 244).

The EFF in Post-apartheid South Africa

The EFF was established in 2013 after Julius Sello Malema, the former president of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and his deputy, Floyd Nyiko Shivambu, were expelled from the African National Congress (ANC) and its youth wing. It can be argued that the genealogy of the EFF can be traced directly to the ANCYL and can be said to be the extension of it, outside the ANC. Yende (2021) notes that EFF manifestos are always centred around their commitment to "economic freedom in our lifetime" – something, Yende argues, is not different from what Malema and Shivambu advocated for while they were still in the ANCYL. Even the posture adopted by the EFF in doing politics cannot be easily divorced from the radicalised and militantized ANCYL of the early 1940s and the subsequent generations that included Peter Mokaba and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The EFF under Malema has claimed the legacies of these two mentors when they were alive and also in death. The political discourse in the post-apartheid South Africa has dramatically changed since the arrival of the EFF onto the political scene in 2013 (Nieftagodien, 2015). This article maintains that the party has brought with it an unsettling, radical black political voice in the country's body polity. It contends that the EFF or its leader Malema may never be able to shake off the 'populist' label, however, I argue that the contribution of the party to our political discourse is much broader than that. According to Mabogo (2017), there is a stark resurgence of interest in Frantz Fanon in what he terms the 'post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa'. The formation of the EFF also marked the relaunching of Madikizela-Mandela, Malema's mentor, into active politics and a rekindling of the politics of Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko among the party's student ranks.

Both Fanon and Biko directly and indirectly influenced the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements respectively. Fanon's ideas have found expression in EFF's founding manifesto. In similar fashion to the EFF, Biko also grounded his Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy in the 1970s on Fanon's ideas (Gibson, 2011). Consequently, the party's 'generative potential of embodied Black rage' (Canham, 2014: 442) has been the turning point in the South African political landscape whenever it appears wherever conditions of racism, oppression and socioeconomic inequality prevail in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. I argue in this article that a close reading of the EFF reveals its intense concerns 'about and engagement with the South African situation: a concern expressed through a classical and most lucid phenomenological description of apartheid qua colonial and racist situation par excellence' (Mabogo, 2017: 128). Other commentators, including Mbete (2020), have observed that the EFF has successfully challenged the post-apartheid South African democratic settlement and increasingly sets the agenda of national and local politics. Batsane-Ncube goes further arguing that there's evidence of the influence of the EFF's 'direct casual contribution' on the ANC policy shift on land reform and 'indirect influence' on ANC policy on higher education (Batsane-Ncube, 2021: 199).

Theoretical Framing: Double Consciousness and Black rage

Black rage must be understood historically in the sense that to be Black is to be in a state of rage (Baldwin, 1962). As human beings we all have our own lived experiences of rage. However, Black rage operates in a unique and specific manner as a response to continued forms of humiliation, dehumanisation and degradation. In similar vein, Stoute states

> Black rage exists in a specific dynamic equilibrium as a compromise formation that is a functional adaptation of the oppressed people of colour who suffer racial trauma and racial degradation, an adaptation that can be mobilized for the purpose of defense or psychic growth. (Stoute, 2021: 259).

According to Stoute, it is not possible for a politicised Black rage to exist without linking it to forms of oppression and dehumanisation that are socially embedded in it. To understand Stoute's theoretical formulation of Black rage as the 'psychic force', one also needs to bring into conversation issues of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, class, the social surround, and historical context. In this article, I emphasise W.E.B. Du Bois's (1904) concept of double consciousness and its relevance in theorising rage. I focus specifically on the significance of Du Bois's concept in striving to locate the double dimension of rage in the EFF that is both destructive and liberatory. I argue that the EFF has articulated Black rage in a manner that is unprecedented in South African politics. Before turning to explore each gaze of Black rage, it is important to make a note on the concept of double consciousness. Du Bois defines double consciousness as, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others' (1989: 7). I argue that it is Black political subjects who can articulate Du Bois' double consciousness and Anna Jane Gordon's rearticulated notion of 'potentiated double consciousness'. J. Gordon insists that double consciousness is more than a 'vivid description of the existential predicament of disenfranchisement' (2007: 144). It is argued here that double consciousness moves us closer to an understanding that Black rage has both a negative and a positive (or potentiated) dimension within it: the doubling of an affect in ways that bring the image of the Black subjects into better focus. Both an understanding of negative dimension of Black rage and its more redemptive other half, which I call "potentiated Black rage," are useful in this study in order to elucidate how the EFF has deployed rage to "chart possible avenues of liberation from the yoke of dehumanisation" (Melonas, 2016: 5). Just like double consciousness, I suggest that Black rage can be read in two ways. It can function as a negative moment. The ontological problem of misguided black rage is that knowing who we are may also require an understanding on how the white gaze sees black rage and generally anger from the people who are oppressed. However, Black rage can also function as response to the first, negative formulation of rage that is yoked in destruction. This kind of potentiated Black rage is dialectical and transformational. The positive as a synthesis advances an epistemic and ontological agenda of EFF that claims a space of agency, "an ontology and epistemology of giving voice to those who still live on the other side of the abyssal lives" (de Sousa Santos and Meneses, 2020: xxix). The theoretical contribution advanced by this study is that there is a dialectical relationship between Black rage, Biko's BC and Du Boisian double consciousness, which when properly harnessed, results in potentiated Black rage. The study also seeks to foreground that it would be dangerous to romanticise or fetishise Black rage, hence, the thesis makes a clear distinction between negative and positive aspects of Black rage. McCann provides cogent insights on the double dimension of Black rage and posits that an affective politics of Black rage "should include both a healthy scepticism of the norms of democratic culture, as well as a sober recognition that the deployment of rage is fraught with danger" (2013: 415). McCann argues that theorising Black rage this way by seeking to highlight both its negative and positive effects "avoid many of the essentialist entanglements associated with earlier scholarship on the concept" (2018: 408). In addition to advancing a richer critical understanding of Black rage through the lens of BC and Du Boisian Double Consciousness, this study also centres EFF's misogynistic and racial tendencies towards some journalists and certain media houses, as the negative side of rage, that is, what is disguised as legitimate rage can be articulated in misogynistic and racial unimaginable ways. Also, through BC and 'potentiated double consciousness' (Jane Anna Gordon, 2007), the restoration of rage as a form of radical love is, in this conceptual frame, deployed to understand EFF's rage as a form of political action and responsibility towards continued forms of discrimination, injustice and dehumanisation that still continue to define black life in post-apartheid South Africa.

Tracing rage in the EFF through Fanon and Biko

Canham (2018) laments the fact that Black rage is under-theorised in South Africa. Canham says rage is intimately tied to discourses of decolonisation. He argues that Black rage has had a "dual influence" within the working-class communities as well as the "conscientisation that they [protests] obtain within the university" (p. 321). Communities and student protesters resort to the deployment of rage since "efforts at using formal structures to be heard have not yielded positive results" (Ibid). I argue that the lack of theorising Black rage is more pronounced in political scholarship, which has broad implications for political theory. Among them is the advancement of Black rage as a form of political theory, or one in which it is brought as better attuned to addressing salient political problems in Post-apartheid South Africa thrown open by the complexity of human institutions of power. Canham rightly observed that this is a "remarkable oversight since we have gained infamy as the world's epicentre of protest action" (2018: 319). In its founding manifesto, the EFF states that it "draws inspiration from the broad Marxist-Leninist tradition and Fanonian schools of thought in their analyses of the state, imperialism, culture and class contradictions in every society" (EFF Founding Manifesto, 2013: 7). It is Fanon's connection to the EFF which is the concern of this section. Fanon opens *Black Skin, White Masks* with a confession that there was "fire" or rage in him. His brother Jobi, in Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon: "Black Skin, White Masks"* (1997), mentions how a faculty member at Lyon described Fanon as "Fireworks on the outside, fireworks on the inside!" This motif of fiery can be found in EFF leader Malema, including his mentors, Peter Mokaba and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Throughout his speeches, Malema struggles to hold "fire" at bay, the result of which are ongoing court battles that Malema, and his party, have had to face on allegations of hate speech. The student protest actions which took place in 2015 and onwards remind us that there are certain unsettled matters in the Post-apartheid South Africa. African existential philosopher More (2018) rightly observed the relevance of Fanon in Post-apartheid South Africa. It is compelling to quote him at length:

> There is a noticeable re-emergence and an upsurge of interest in Frantz Fanon in post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa, and this for good reasons. The resurgence is not accidental at all but a consequence of the events and the shape and form which the country has assumed and followed since the installation of Nelson Mandela as first black president in 1994. No philosopher, political theorist, or radical and revolutionary thinker could have approximated Fanon's insightful and prophetic vision of South Africa as a post-colonial state. Indeed, most observers of post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa are agreed on the prescience, preciseness and relevance of Fanon's work in the country. (2018: 127)

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon used expressions such as "rage in the mouth" to describe life in the colonial world. For Fanon, living in the colonial world meant a situation that "keeps the colonized in a state of rage" (2004: 17). Today the affinity between the EFF and rage is generally called into question, however, Fanon's "fire" seems to have found a home in the party. More (2018) maintains that Fanon's impacted the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and through it the 1976 Soweto High School students' revolution, marking a turning point in history of political events in the 70s. Gibson (2011) attests to Fanon's influence: "The aim here is…to recreate Fanon's philosophy of liberation in a new situation [post-apartheid South Africa]. This is exactly what Steve Biko did in the early 1970s when he found in Fanon's philosophy the ground for Black Consciousness" (2011: x-xi). Fanon, therefore, has not only been a major player in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid formations in South Africa but also influenced the formation of EFF in 2013 and inspired the 2015 student protests in South African universities. Hence, it is not surprising that in contemporary South African politics, the EFF uses rage to bring and locate Fanon within Post-apartheid South African identity. For the EFF, as it was for Fanon and Biko, Black rage is a necessary political tool for embodied and dehumanised voices all fighting to be heard.

Political speech as EFF's existential articulation of Black rage

This section critically examines why speech or voice is essential to politics. It does so by revisiting contemporary discussions of political speech in the writings of Biko (1978), Fanon (1952/1967) and Lewis Gordon (2008, 2021), among others, to illuminate what it means for the EFF to speak politically and how the party uses rage in its speech or voice as the requirement for it to be heard. This is in the light of the many individuals and various groups of civil society organisations who brought hate speech court cases against the EFF since its formation in 2013 (Sanef v. EFF: Setting the record straight, *Daily Maverick*, 2019). However, it is this article's contention that a legalistic definition of hate speech does not help us fully grasp the importance of political speech or voice in politics. Therefore, I contend that the intersection between political speech and hate speech deserves further research and interrogation through the lens of political theory. For the purposes of this section, the focus is on how the EFF creatively uses speech to challenge existing hegemonic and colonised forms of politics and how it creates a space for the articulation of its own ways of speaking in the South African political world. This should be hardly surprising as Gordon (2021) informs us that the "Left" (I add, the EFF) tends to focus on protest and other activities of speech. In this paper, the focus is on the importance of speech and how the EFF uses it "for a Black existential articulation of a liberatory social world" (Chevannes, 2018: 5). Specifically, it is suggested here that the party uses political speech to articulate a "humanistic voice that occasions an agential philosophical anthropology, one that is attuned to hearing the existential cries of who Frantz Fanon dubs *Les Damnés de la Terre (The Damned of the Earth)"*(Ibid). The central aim of this article is to build my own theoretical exposition upon Biko, Fanon and Gordon's work: that is, to map political speech on Black rage episteme. It is also to further theorise EFF speech as 'coerced speech' because "we know we have to speak to make the world anew for the benefit of all who live in it" (Seti, 2019: xiv). By using the so-called "hate speech", the EFF is engaged in a political form of epistemic disobedience, doing politics from the position of what Fanon would call the "damned".

Disruptive speech against all forms of silencing

It is contended here that EFF's speech can be characterised as disruptive speech whose locus of enunciation is thinking from, within and beyond blackness. In the writings of Biko, there

is a thorough going message that grounds political speech as a key feature of what it means to be political or what Fanon calls being *actional*. Anti-apartheid revolutionary Biko creatively deployed political speeches through his *nom de plume*, Frank Talk, and used his writings, according to Chevannes, as "a signature of his ontological orientation and epistemic anchor" (2019: 12). In

> "...to illuminate what it means for the EFF to speak politically and how the party uses rage in its speech or voice as the requirement for it to be heard."

this study, I advance the notion that speech is a crucial feature of doing politics in post-apartheid South Africa. It is what facilitates political voice and political appearance and also enables rage without war (Gordon, 2021). Accordingly, Biko understood that apartheid was fundamentally against political speech, hence, the banning of all liberation parties and movements in the early 60s in South Africa. For the EFF, "the power of speech in the production of power through which human beings are able to govern their existence" (Gordon, 2021: 21). Through court action, EFF's political speech "is muted and what would be required to make it audible"? (Chevannes, 2019: 18). I argue that Black rage facilitates the conditions to make EFF speech audible. For Fanon, "to speak means ... above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon 2008, 1). But what ensues when speech itself becomes co- opted into registers of hate speech? Here it is argued that the EFF's fight against hate speech court cases mounted against it signifies a refusal by the party to hold political speech hostage. My argument in this line of inquiry is whether a case can be made that losses accrue in doing politics when political speech is reduced to hate speech. Biko, and in extension the EFF, understand that "to speak politically is to turn away from voicelessness and in so doing, to challenge prevailing discursive boundaries which are also political boundaries" (Chevannes, 2019: 12). Gordon asks: "Why was the response to [Biko], as the embodiment of speech, the brutal assertion of the state"? (Gordon, 2002: 88). Gordon believes that Biko's assassination was part of efforts to silence him, "to muzzle Black speech" (Chevannes, 2019: 13) so to speak. I argue that it is not possible to agree on what constitutes hate speech, especially for different ideologies. The question, as posed by Biko, is the role of political speech in doing politics. In other words, what should one do when political speech is policed through our courts? I have argued here that the EFF exemplifies the radical rejection of post-apartheid political settlement in South Africa and uses political speech, if necessary, as a violent confrontation with the prevailing status quo. In that way, it justifies the deployment of Black rage in an unfinished political project such as South Africa. I conclude this section by stressing that a legalistic definition of speech does not fully grapple with politics since speech silencing through court actions becomes "a war on politics" (Gordon, 2002: 88).

Misguided Black rage: the EFF and the media

However, the treatment of journalists with intimidation and harassment by the EFF leaders and party supporters has a long history dating back to the days when its leader, Julius Malema, was still the president of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The connection between *City Press* newspaper and Malema can be traced back to an incident in 2011 when former Sowetan columnist Eric Miyeni published a column titled "Haffajee does it for white masters", which was written in the wake of a number of stories published in the *City Press* newspaper questioning Malema's lifestyle and finances. Since then, the relationship between the EFF and the media has been fraught with conflict (News24, 2018). The *City Press* had published a series of stories on Malema and his lavish lifestyle allegedly bankrolled by his Ratanang Family Trust (News24, 2011). Haffajee was then the editor-in-chief at *City Press*. Miyeni had described Haffajee as a "black snake in the grass," a comment that led to his column being discontinued. However, the point of this article is not to focus on that incident but on how the Eff has generally treated the media in lieu of several allegations of intimidation, harassment and physical violence committed by party leaders and supporters against some journalists. This study, therefore, seeks to theorise some of the EFF's actions against some journalists as narcistic rage or what I call "misguided black rage". It will do this by highlighting three incidences in which EFF leaders and supporters were allegedly involved in mistreating some journalists. In 2020, eNCA journalist Nobesuthu Hejana was covering EFF protests outside Clicks stores when a group of party supporters, mostly men, manhandled her and "put their hands on her" (Boswell, 2020). Tellingly, women journalists have overwhelmingly become the face of EFF's intimidation and harassment as they are among the most affected. A tweet by the former party spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi reacting to Hejana's alleged intimidation and harassment drew outrage from the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) and certain sections of the South Africa society (EWN, 2020). Ndlozi had tweeted, "I really do not see harassment here. Merely touching her is not harassment. The touch has to be violent, invasive, or harmful to become harassment." (*@MbuyiseniNdlozi*

Reflecting on Ndlozi's misogynistic statement, Boswell (2020) observed that the "EFF has been one of the main harassers of women journalists and public figures with voices who dare to speak out against them." Sanef and other commentators have cogent reasons to challenge EFF's misguided rage against some journalists and certain media houses, including its (and Ndlozi's) troubling framing of the problems confronting women in South Africa through gender-based violence. The second incident that exemplifies the party's

"Tellingly, women journalists have overwhelmingly become the face of EFF's intimidation and harassment as they are among the most affected."

misguided rageoccurred in 2018 when EFF deputy president and Member of Parliament, Floyd Shivambu manhandled Netwerk24's journalist, Adrian de Kock outside parliament (TimesLive, 2018). Adopting an agonistic orientation towards the media in a democratic South Africa may be a strategy adopted by the EFF, however, violence against journalists when doing their work is an aberration that must be condemned as misguided and narcissistic rage. Perhaps most importantly, the party must be exposed in order to explode the fiction that journalists working in white-owned media houses are agents of the so-called white monopoly capital. Lastly, in 2021 a group of party supporters harassed and threatened two eNCA journalists, Ayesha Ismail and Mario Pedro, during the party's anti-racism protest in Cape Town (*Daily Maverick*, 2021). According to media reports, one party supporter, brandishing a stick, tells the journalists: "We are going to teach you a lesson; come forward here, I am going to teach you a lesson." I contend that the South African media has become the object of EFF's violence or a mixture of hatred and fear, and violence is unacceptable in a country that guarantees freedom of speech, including media freedom. There is a romantic representation of the way the EFF treats some journalists and media houses with misguided rage. As these examples attest, a nuanced reading of EFF's misguided rage reveals a party with a story of ongoing violence against the media. The EFF's abuse against journalists requires a society committed to safeguarding media freedom.

Research Methodology

The methodological approach adopted in this paper is a combination of the empirical evidence obtained through the discourse analysis of Twitter feeds of EFF members and leaders over the Clicks' debacle and a conceptual one through the concept of Black rage. The 2020 Clicks debacle followed after a Black South African woman, Zozibini Tunzi, won the Miss Universe in her natural black hair and its Afro-textual hair. Instead, Clicks post adverts of hair products that depicted black natural hair as "Dry & Damaged Hair" and white, blonde hair as "Fine & Flat Hair". People and leaders of the EFF took to Twitter to bemoan the racist and discriminatory depiction of natural black hair. The EFF organised nationwide protests against the racist advert which resulted in the closing down of almost 500 Clicks stores. This study uses media articles from various media outlets and feeds from Twitter on how the EFF mistreated some journalists during the Clicks protests and also how it deployed Black rage to violently fight against all forms of racism and discrimination against natural black hair. This multi-methodological approach worked well to flesh out the different dimensions of the research question pertaining to the notion of how black voices have been politicised in the post-apartheid South Africa. The tweets were purposively selected based on their engagement with the question of Black rage as radical love in post-apartheid South Africa's dehumanising and discriminatory struggles against black women hair. The tweets were extracted and analysed based on whether they articulated Black rage as a form of radical love. Six Twitter accounts of EFF activists and supporters were chosen to analyse. While this research cannot make a claim to be completely representative of the views, opinions and comments that emanated from the EFF vis-à-vis Clicks debacle on Black Twitter, it provides indications and pointers on how discrimination against black women hair still forms an important political struggle for many black women in post-apartheid South Africa. The following Twitter handles were chosen and their tweets analysed:

@Sebenzi47745801
@lolacele
@SneKhumaloSA
@Tshepiso_Sa
@SixolileGcilishe

Rage as self-love: EFF and black hair struggles

Let us now focus on how the EFF deployed rage as a symbol of radical love or what Chela Sandoval calls "decolonial love" against racial and discriminatory practices with regard to the portrayal of black women hair in South Africa. Moore argues that iterations of Black love must be grounded in some form of collective ethical care and observes that "love continue to be unacknowledged, under-theorized, and understood as less than radical potentials" (2018: 327). Moore thus defines radical love as a collective of care:

> Collective care and radical love are strategies: they shape our political orientations, and

> they bring life to our organizing approaches. The way we treat people; our willingness or unwillingness to engage others; our care; our love is as crucial and political as anything else, because Black radical love not only anticipates liberatory Black futures, but also leans into such futures, after all. We seize Black futures now and forever. (2018: 328)

I argue that the EFF harnesses Black radical love as a collective ethic of care as "crucial and political as anything else" (Moore, 2018: 328) and uses it as a political subjectivity to fight all forms of dehumanisation and oppression directed towards black people. The theoretical explication of radical love provided here has interesting connections to Freire's notion of love as "an act of courage, not fear .... a commitment to others....to the total cause of 'liberation' (1970: 64, 78).

In 2016, young black women at Pretoria Girls High School stoked outrage when they protested against their school for its racist practices towards black girls' natural hair (*Mail & Guardian*, 2016). Black girls in that school were not allowed to wear their natural hair and were, in effect, forced to straighten their hair. According to Lekgotla laga Ramoupi (2016), the protest at Pretoria Girls High School was not just about black, natural hair but about making a point about "our humanness: for them to be accepted, they do not have to mimic their white peers". The EFF immediately issued a statement after the Pretoria Girls High School protest condemning the incident as "suppressing blackness" (EFF Statement, 2016). The Pretoria Girls High School is a salutary example of how the struggle against black hair can transform into collective rage, which is emancipatory and positive symbolising what I call "potentiated Black rage". In 2020, thousands of EFF members and supporters took to Clicks stores nationwide after health and beauty chain outlet had posted a racist advertisement on its website. The Clicks advert contained images of African hair labelled as "dry, dull and damaged," while white hairwas portrayed as "fine and flat" (BBC, 2020). According to Canham (2017), Biko understood that black people under the system of apartheid had no option but to rage against the system if they truly loved themselves. The EFF protests against the racist Clicks advert, in a Bikonian sense, was a demonstration that being alive had to be accomplished with love. In his own words, Biko stated that as a black person, "you are either alive and proud or you are dead" (2004: 173). The party's rage against the discrimination of black women hair raised a pertinent question: can we see the feverish protests against the discrimination of black hair in some South African schools as "produced in the cocktail of dread and rage in the context of pervasive anti-blackness"? (Canham, 2021: 300). It also raises the question whether we might see the EFF protests against the discrimination of black hair as a humanising pathway. The protests were accompanied by acts of violence and vandalism in some of the Clicks stores. However, Canham (2017) points out that when critics condemn violence, they do so to portray those who commit violent acts as "unthinking instruments." For these critics and proponents of peaceful protests and appropriate forms of protesting, rage is not a legitimate and necessary response to ongoing racism and discrimination. Feminist scholar Rachel Flowers (2015) observed that decolonial rage, or what I call "potentiated

"The EFF protests against the racist Clicks advert, in a Bikonian sense, was a demonstration that being alive had to be accomplished with love. In his own words, Biko stated that as a black person, "you are either alive and proud or you are dead" (2004: 173)."

Black rage," must not be viewed as irrational or as all-encompassing but through the vectors that brought that rage into being in the first place. Flowers is instructive here:

> to disregard anger and resentment as destructive emotions is an uncritical move to absolve the unforgiven, whereby blame is placed on the injured party, who is seen as an irrational 'blockage' blinded by their rage compared to the 'reasonable' apologist (2015: 42).

Fanon's instructive anecdote below is the clearest example of reading double consciousness through rage and the arrival at self-affirmation:

> What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been begged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an inborn complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known (Fanon, 1986: 87).

The need for violence without valorizing it

For Fanon, to disregard violence in fighting violence serves no purpose in the context of the struggle against all forms of oppression and dehumanisation. Fanon was clear on the question of violence without valorising it. As Fanon puts it:

> Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organised and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of trumpets. (1967: 118)

In some way, Fanon located the birthplace or conceptions of Black rage in many forms of the dehumanisation of the African body. In a study titled, *Black Hair Politics: The Representation of African Women on True Love Magazine Front Covers and Hair Advertisements*, Madlela (2018) found that women attached different meanings to their hair and embraced both the Western-centric and Afrocentric styles. Madlela argues that African hair struggles must be viewed in the context that "African hair holds political power because it shapes black people's consciousness about broader social, cultural, religious, and economic issues" (2018: 3). In similar vein, Zimitri Erasmus (1997) appreciates the importance of hair and its complex politics. In the article, *"Oe! My Hare Gaan Huis Toe": Hair-styling as Black Cultural Practice*, Erasmus pays attention to the ways in which natural black hair is stigmatised through Eurocentric understandings and standards of beauty. She draws on her lived experience as a Coloured woman growing up in apartheid South Africa, concluding that the "racial hierarchies and values of colonial racism have left a deep mark on our conceptions of beauty" (1997: 12). Erasmus states that straightening one's hair should not be simply read as "aspiring towards whiteness" because this has the potential of denying black hair "the complexity of cultural practice".

Black Body is Political

In *Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa,* Erasmus (2017) reveals that the black body and its categories such as 'looks' is a marker for racial classification or "knowing" race. She goes on to argue that the appearance of the black body in the social world is not sufficient to affirm and legitimise its humanity, instead, it was "dependent on routine judgement of class, social standing and culture" (Erasmus, 2017: 89). In this way, "race actively worked as the reorganizing principle" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 104). The Clicks advert shows that black women's hair continues to face unfair discrimination in Post-apartheid South Africa. Black women are awakened to the truth that their position in society has remained unchanged due to systemic exclusion, racism and disenfranchisement. This awakening is closely tied to their being attuned to Black Consciousness philosophy and renewed desire to express decolonial love and justified potentiated Black rage.

> *@SneKhumaloSA*
> *"Racism make people believe we have "hard, strong unruly" hair when we actually have delicate, fragile, sensitive Afro hair that needs to be babied. So sensitive we have to wrap it in silk at night, and leave it untouched for it to grow. Black hair is political.*

Signaling some fragility at play, @SneKhumaloSA's tweet points out the amount of care needed to nurture natural black hair. Then she hones-in on a Black Consciousness explication when she says 'Black hair is political'. There is some truth in this but there is something more. The topic of black hair lends itself to so much to the core of Black Consciousness thought. Biko's Black Consciousness project was always political. Realising the contradictions produced by a racist society that make black natural hair into a problem, @SneKhumaloSA's critical reflection challenges the presupposition of black hair as "hard, strong and unruly" and the result is the subversion of false universality of black women hair. She does this by unmasking its actual particularity by painting a descriptive picture of black natural hair as "delicate, fragile and sensitive". Her statement does not only challenge the epistemic claims about black natural hair, but also the normative claims of whiteness.

In his recent book, *Fear of Black Consciousness*, Lewis Gordon (2022) points out that in settler societies there is always a fear of Blackness rising. In fact, the fear of black hair rising as pointed out by @lolacele in the tweet above is a very real concern in white communities.

> @lolacele
> *"I can"t believe that big companies like Clicks (a beauty store) do not think Black is beautiful, let alone black hair! I wear my crown with pride. Black hair must rise!*

Gordon asks, "So what happened to Black people under the weight of Black bodies"? (2022: 36). We must equally ask, so what happened to black people under the weight of black hair? Gordon's question points us to the historical fact that black bodies and their hair have been in conflict because they have been constructed by the first negative stage of double consciousness, that is, as an obstacle to the possibility of full personhood. @ lolacele's assertion, "I wear my crown with pride," points to a liberatory moment of understanding that black people can creatively affirm their beauty. It is a critical consciousness but also a decolonial love and life affirming one. According to Dougan (2016), the fear of black hair rising and the policing thereof begins at a very young age long before schooling. Below she narrates her own struggles of black, natural hair:

> The thickness and texture of my black hair was under constant scrutiny when I was a child. My aunt used to call me *bossiekop* (from the Afrikaans, meaning bushy head). The kids at school would use terms like *Goema hare* (candyfloss hair) and *kroeskop* (fuzzy head). My cousin would joke: "You can't even put a comb through your hair." (Dougan, 2016)

Dougan posits that every black woman has their own racist struggles about their natural hair, "their curls and societies endless need to tame, manage and straighten whether at school, in the home, or both". She argues that the Pretoria Girls High School protest sent a clear message that this generation will no longer tolerate the "racist frameworks, formal and informal, that teach them self-hate".

Concluding Reflections

By theorising the EFF through the lens of Black rage and analysing instances where the party justifiable deployed rage, this study has demonstrated that Black rage has a Du-Boisian Double Consciousness dimension, which reveals bot negative and positive effects. The negative dimension of EFF's Black rage has thus been conceptualised herein as "misguided black rage" whilst the positive element of it has thus been theorised as "potentiated Black rage" and as "decolonial love". It has been found that the EFF simultaneously deploys rage both in a destructive and liberatory manner. Here, Black rage is seen as misguided or narcissistic rage whenever EFF leaders and supporters harass and intimidate, and sometimes use violence, against journalists when doing their work. The EFF is also theorised as potentiated Black rage whenever the party fights against continued forms of racism, discrimination and oppression as exemplified by its use of Black rage to fight against racism, discrimination and the dehumanisation of the black body and black hair. By theorising Black rage as self-love, this study adopts a drive towards Black Consciousness in order to surface the productive potential of rage. The duality/dialectic conceptualisation of Black rage as both negative and positive has been explained further to foreground the ontological problem of the negative (read misguided black rage) and the political transformation potential and political subjectivity of the positive (read potentiated Black rage) and how issues of radical love and collective ethics of care and responsibility intersects with these.

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Patriotic history and anti-corruption activism in Zimbabwe: A case study of Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of patriotic history to silence anti-corruption activists in Zimbabwe. The paper uses Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono as case studies to achieve this. The paper arose from a lack of literature examining how discourses are used to dismiss, and silence anti-corruption activists. To contribute to the literature on discourses, corruption, and anti-corruption activism, the paper uses the patriotic history discourse to understand how it has been used to silence activists in Zimbabwe. Patriotic history proclaims the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) as the alpha and omega of Zimbabwe's past, present, and future. Zimbabweans are encouraged to be "patriotic", which means supporting ZANU-PF, and anything short of this is considered "unpatriotic". Methodologically, the paper draws from qualitative methodology where a discourse analysis of newspapers, politicians' speeches, grey literature, and academic books and articles was employed. The paper argues that patriotic history especially its elements of separating patriots and sellouts and the anti-Western rhetoric were used to discredit and dismiss Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono's anti-corruption activism. The paper has also found that while Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism happened during the Mugabe era and Hopewell Chin'ono's was/is happening in the Mnangagwa regime, patriotic history has been used consistently. The paper concludes that in Zimbabwe those who engage in patriotic acts of fighting corruption are seen as sellouts while those who loot public funds are arguably patriots as long as they support the ruling party.

Keywords: Patriotic history, patriots, sellouts, corruption, Zimbabwe, anti-corruption, discourse.

Introduction

This paper examines how discourses have been used by the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government officials in Zimbabwe to respond to anti-corruption activists like Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono. In this regard, the paper argues that patriotic history especially the separation between patriots and sellouts and anti-western rhetoric has been central in how the ruling party and government officials have responded to anti-corruption activism. The use of Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono as case studies not only allows us to draw a comparison in how the two were handled but also how the Mugabe and Mnangagwa regimes have used patriotic history to respond to anti-corruption activism. This is so given that Pastor Evan Mawarire was more active in the Mugabe era while Hopewell Chin'ono is vocal in the Mnangagwa era.

Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism can be traced to 2015 after he recorded a video holding the Zimbabwean flag and quizzing the flag for the failure of the ruling party in fulfilling its promises. Among the issues that Pastor Evan Mawarire lamented and where his activism revolved around was corruption. His activism culminated in a movement called #ThisFlag while Hopewell Chin'ono is not affiliated with any movement. Hopewell Chin'ono's work primarily focuses on denouncing corruption and the mismanagement of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Both activists rely on social media platforms like *X*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *LinkedIn* to expose and criticize government official's role in corruption. The centrality of social media is confirmed by Gukurume (2017) who observed that Pastor Evan Mawarire's *Facebook* page developed into a space of citizen dissent where people articulated their displeasure with the ZANU-PF rule. In the same vein, Makombe (2022) examined Hopewell Chin'ono's *Facebook* page and concluded that it can be read as a counter archive that records the experiences of ordinary Zimbabweans and contests hegemonic narratives of the state.

Corruption in Zimbabwe is endemic and institutionalized – consisting of petty and political corruption and it is one of Zimbabwe's major developmental challenges. Zimbabwe scored 24 points out of 100 and ranked 157 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (Mundopa 2021). The 2017 ouster of President Robert Mugabe, who had ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years, resulted in higher expectations that corruption would be dealt with decisively. The late former President Robert Mugabe acknowledged that corruption existed in Zimbabwe because at some moment he claimed that Zimbabwe had lost $15 billion in diamond revenue. Similarly, President Mnangagwa has on several occasions acknowledged that corruption exists. For instance, while speaking at the Zimbabwe Local Government Association "All Councillors Indaba" in Harare on 26 November 2024, President Mnangagwa stated that corruption was a major impediment to development. He added that:

> I am deeply concerned by cases of corruption in the local government space and the entire society. This government is engulfed by corruption, and it must stop. Those perpetrating such acts must face full wrath of our country's law. No one, including local authorities, will be spared. Let us root out this menace from our society (The Zimbabwe Mail 2024).

"Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism can be traced to 2015 after he recorded a video holding the Zimbabwean flag and quizzing the flag for the failure of the ruling party in fulfilling its promises."

This acknowledgment of corruption by both the Mugabe and Mnangagwa regimes and pledges to combat it has yielded nothing, and a lack of political will might arguably be the reason why corruption has remained a challenge. This lack of political will is aided by patriotic history which both the Mugabe and Mnangagwa regimes seem to be relying heavily on. Patriotic history proclaims ZANU-PF as the alpha and omega of Zimbabwe's past, present, and future. Zimbabweans are encouraged to be "patriotic", which means supporting ZANU-PF, and anything short of this is considered "unpatriotic" (Tendi 2008, p.379). Thus, when it comes to issues of corruption anyone who has opposed and criticized the ruling party's hand in looting such as Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono has often been seen as unpatriotic citizens and sellouts. This branding of anti-corruption activists is not only motivated by greed and the need to plunder the country's resources. It is also motivated by fear that corruption can be used as a mass mobilisation to get ZANU-PF out of power especially given that it has faced strong opposition since 1999 with the formation of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Existing literature on corruption in Zimbabwe looks at the link between the human factor and the fight against corruption (Zinyama 2021); and challenges, and prospects of corruption courts (Mundopa 2021). Some literature focuses on addressing corruption under transitional justice mechanisms (Maguchu and Maja 2019), and the influence of the state-society relationship on anti-corruption management (Moyo 2014). These studies do not look at how discourses are deployed as mechanisms of repressing and discrediting anti-corruption activists. This paper closes this gap by looking at how the discourse of patriotic history has been used to repress and discredit activists like Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono. To make this exploration this paper is guided by the following research questions.

— How has the discourse of patriotic history been used to respond to anti-corruption activists in Zimbabwe?
— What are the similarities and differences between the Mugabe and Mnangagwa regimes' use of discourses to respond to anti-corruption activists?

This paper used a qualitative methodology where data was collected from online media sources and grey literature and analyzed through discourse analysis. Foucault (1980) argues that discourse is any text or language that carries any form of knowledge that is seen as the truth in a specific context. Van Dijk (1996, p.110) notes that "the study of news reports in the press is one of the major tasks of discourse-analytical media research". In this paper, discourse analysis allowed the reading of media texts and political speeches within the Zimbabwean context of political corruption they were produced. Therefore, discourses that "expresses, establishes, confirms or emphasizes a self-interested group opinion, perspective or position, especially in a broader socio-political context of social struggle" (Van Dijk 1995, p.23) must be scrutinized. To this end, patriotic history discourse serves to legitimize ZANU-PF's dominance and justify its abuse of power. Thus, this paper shows how ZANU-PF political texts related to anti-corruption and patriotic history discourse sought to silence, dismiss, and demonize activists.

In exploring the use of patriotic history discourse this paper is structured as follows. It will start with an overview of patriotic history discourse, followed by a presentation of Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism, followed by Hopewell Chin'ono's activism before concluding the paper.

An overview of patriotic history

The discourse of patriotic history can be traced to the political division characterized by coercion of the opposition, state propaganda, a dwindling democratic space, and the emergence of MDC (Ranger 2004). Patriotic history has its origins in the liberation struggle especially in 1963 when the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) broke. The ZANU splinter group of Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe, Leopold Takawira, Enos Nkala, and Morton Malianga were criticized and labeled as '"stooges" who had "sold the country to Americans" by the ZAPU leaders Joshua Nkomo, George Nyandoro and Joseph Msika (Tendi 2008). A stooge or puppet:

> belongs to a party in competition with yours. It has nothing to do with being a stooge or selling out in the real meaning of the word.

> The more threatening the competition from the new party, the more vicious the response. Witness ZAPU's response to the formation of ZANU in 1963; witness the Patriotic Front's response to the internal settlement politicians in the late 1970s; now witness ZANU-PF's response to the formation of the MDC. The greater the stakes the wilder the allegations. Just as Sithole, Takawira, Mugabe, et al. wanted to sell the country to Americans in 1963 then Tsvangirai and the MDC wanted the British and Rhodies to rule this country once more in 2000 (Tendi 2008).

This paper notes that the narrow use of the term sellout above has been used to refer to anti-corruption activists. The content of patriotic history is narrow (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012; Tendi 2010, 2008; Kriger 2006; Ranger 2004). Patriots have privileges and rights, while sell-outs do not (Kriger 2006). Tendi (2010) noted that patriotic history covered four themes, namely land, race, sell-outs versus patriots, and anti-Western rhetoric. In this paper, two of these themes namely sellouts vs patriots and anti-Western rhetoric will be used. In addition, patriotic history embraces race essentialism by arguing that Africa is for Black Africans and Zimbabwe is for black Zimbabweans; whites cannot be African or Zimbabwean (Tendi 2008). The importance of race and the references to past Western ills of colonization and slavery allows ZANU-PF to dismiss any form of criticism from whites as "racist" (Tendi 2008).

> "The ZANU splinter group of Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe, Leopold Takawira, Enos Nkala, and Morton Malianga were criticized and labeled as ""stooges" who had "sold the country to Americans" by the ZAPU leaders Joshua Nkomo, George Nyandoro and Joseph Msika (Tendi 2008)."

Furthermore, patriotic history also played a key role in the clash between human rights and sovereignty. Human rights are seen as "Western" and a type of "moral imperialism" just like the past pretexts, such as 'the white man's burden for Western Europe's colonial machinations' (Tendi 2008, p.379). The ruling party considers sovereignty as reverse colonialism and a weapon of self-defense against interferences by foreign players that are suspiciously viewed due to the country's history of colonial exploitation by white settlers. Therefore, patriotic history uses the negative legacy of colonization to disapprove of any outside intervention (Tendi 2008).

The content of the patriotic history discourse is inclusionary and exclusionary as it excludes any form of opposition (sell-outs) and includes anyone who supports ZANU-PF (patriots) based on a narrow definition provided by ZANU-PF. This resonates well with Foucault (1978) who argued that discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said. The narrow definition of patriots, traitors, and sell-outs confirms Whisnant's (2012) view that discourse generates knowledge and "truth" and that some discourses in each context can persuade people to recognize them as true. Whisnant (2012) adds that a discourse's authority is not linked to the objective correctness of the statement. Thus, this paper notes that the correctness of the meaning and content of patriotic history discourse is questionable, yet the discourse is heavily relied on in dealing with anti-corruption activists in Zimbabwe.

This paper demonstrates that patriotic history was used to label Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono as sellouts, while anti-Western rhetoric was used to defend any foreign powers that supported them.

Pastor Evan Mawarire's anti-corruption activism and the #ThisFlag movement

Pastor Evan Mawarire came to the spotlight after posting a personal video on his *Facebook* page on 22 April 2016 (Pipkin 2022). In the video, Pastor Evan Mawarire had the Zimbabwean national flag wrapped around his neck, and he quizzed values fixed to the flag (Gukurume 2017). He moved from one symbol of the flag to another, criticizing the government for deceiving the masses by its failure to address issues of corruption, economic crises, unemployment, poor governance, and police brutality (Gukurume 2017). Below is part of a transcript of the video:

> This flag, this (shaking the flag), this beautiful flag, they tell me that eh the green, the green is for the vegetation and for the crops, I don't, I don't see any crops in my country, hanzi (they say) the yellow, hanzi (they say) the yellow is for the minerals goridhe (gold), diamonds, platinum, chrome, I don't know how much of it is left and I don't know who they sold it to and how much they got for it. The red, the red, the red, the red they say that that it's the blood; it's the blood that was shed to secure freedom for me and I am so thankful for that I just don't know that if they were here, if they were here they that shed their blood and saw the way that this country is that they would demand their blood be brought back. This Flag! They, they tell me that the black, the black is for-is for the majority, people like me! And yet for some reason, I don't feel like I am a part of it (Matsilele 2019).

This emotional video accuses those in power of engaging in corruption and it questions their patriotism. The video also shows disappointment in the unmet promises of the liberation struggle and claims that patriots who lost their lives have done so in vain because the masses are not enjoying the liberation gains. Pastor Evan Mawarire claimed that he recorded the video due to the challenges he was facing which included failing to look after his family and raising school fees for his children (Pipkin 2022). When the video was posted online, it went viral, and in a day, it scored over 10,000 views, and in a week it had around 200,000 viewership (Gukurume 2017). Inspired by the success of his first video, Pastor Evan Mawarire initiated a five-day campaign where he mobilized citizens to buy and move around wearing their flags as a means of calling the government to heed and address their grievances (Gukurume 2017). This five-day campaign stretched to a 25-day campaign owing to the support it received from the citizens through social media (Gukurume 2017).

Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism culminated in a movement called #ThisFlag. On its Facebook account, the #ThisFlag movement states its vision as, "Our vision is a Zimbabwe where citizens are emboldened to speak out, ask questions and act against corruption, injustice and poverty" and its mission as "Speak, Ask, Act". This shows that anti-corruption activism was central to Pastor Evan Mawarire and his movement. To this end, they held several anti-corruption protests in 2016-2017, including a petition to have the then Minister of Energy Power and Development, Samuel Undenge fired and arrested for corruption (Langa 2016). Concerning the petition against Undenge, Pastor Evan Mawarire said:

> We have realized that as people we are being shortchanged and it's our future that is being damaged. So we have started to identify ministries that are inundated with corruption and mismanagement of public funds and we are now driving citizens around such issues. So part of our job is to bring awareness to the citizens so that they know their rights...... (Langa 2016).

On 6 July 2016, Pastor Evan Mawarire called for a national stay-away called the Shutdown Zimbabwe campaign (SZC), aimed at forcing the government to take their grievances seriously (Tarusarira and Chitando 2019). Many Harare residents heeded Pastor Evan Mawarire's call and did not go to work and business owners closed their shops in protest. A week after the SZC, Pastor Evan Mawarire called for a second two-day national shutdown to send a clear message to the government to address their grievances (Gukurume 2017). In reaction, the state panicked and arrested Pastor Evan Mawarire. He was initially charged with inciting public violence but during his hearing at the magistrate court, the charge changed to a case of treason (Tarusarira and Chitando 2019). The charge of treason meant that Pastor Evan Mawarire was a sellout planning to overthrow a constitutionally elected government. This was meant to discourage people from following him and his movement. However, the arrest seems to have achieved the opposite as it has arguably helped to "sensationalize and strengthen the support of the movement" (Gukurume 2017, p.57). This was evidenced by the thousands of followers who came to the magistrate's court in solidarity with Pastor Evan Mawarire during his trial on 13 July 2016 (Voice of Africa 2016). After being denied entry into the courtroom, people spent the whole day outside the court with flags hung on their necks, singing church hymns and revolutionary songs dancing, joking, laughing, and praying as they waited for the court ruling.

The judge delayed the case hoping that people would go away, but the people increased with each passing hour, soldiering in the heat and the hefty presence of armed police officers (Gukurume 2017). Detecting the anger and pressure from Pastor Evan Mawarire's supporters, the judge at around 19:30 adjourned the court and dismissed the charges releasing him to his jubilant followers (The Gaurdian 2016). Gukurume (2017) noted that there was ululation and singing fitting a hero as Pastor Evan Mawarire made his way out of the courtroom to address his followers. This shows that while the ruling party saw Pastor Evan Mawarire as a sellout because of his anti-corruption activism, citizens saw him as a patriot worthy to follow and support during his arrest. The then President Robert Mugabe responded to Pastor Evan Mawarire's anti-corruption activism by accusing him of inciting violent protests. During a state funeral of Dr. Utete at the National Heroes Acre, Mugabe used the platform to intimidate Pastor Evan Mawarire in line with patriotic history discourse by calling him an agent of the West and a sellout. He was quoted saying,

> The Mawarire's … I don't even know him, and those who believe in that way of living, well, are not part of us in thinking, they are not part of us as we try to live together. If they don't want to live with us they should go to those countries that are sponsoring them. You can't urge people to adopt violence, or violent demonstrations as the way of life, or a way of solving grievances, no. We will say no, forever no; find another environment if you are a pastor. I don't know if he is a man of religion. A man of religion will speak the biblical truth … beware these men of God, not all of them are preachers of the Bible. I don't know whether they are serving God or they spell G.O.D. in reverse (*Mail & Guardian* 2016).

In this quote, Mugabe framed Pastor Evan Mawarire as a traitor, sell-out, and foreign-funded agent of regime change, and questioned his citizenship, belonging, and identity as a pastor. By doing this, Mugabe invoked the patriotic history element of separating patriots from sell-outs when he said Pastor Evan Mawarire did not deserve to be a Zimbabwean. Similarly, he invoked his anti-Western rhetoric by accusing him of being sponsored by other countries. Prof Jonathan Moyo, the then Zimbabwe Minister of Higher Education, mocked the #ThisFlag movement on his *Twitter* handle by saying, 'Oh. Very revealing. So #ThisFlag thing is a pastor's fart. How stinking!' (Allison 2016). #ThisFlag activists responded to the minister's post and the debates turned into a *Twitter* cold war against Prof Jonathan Moyo who cynically called the movement 'Nameless and faceless trolls' (Allison 2016). However, the movement's support base notably grew with time, and this forced Prof Jonathan Moyo to create his counter hashtag campaign which he called #OurFlag. Moyo then tweeted saying, 'It's #OurFlag, the #People's Flag versus #ThisFlag campaign founded and funded by the #US and #EU Ambassadors. Handei tione (Let's get it on)' (Gukurume 2017, p. 61). The idea of associating Pastor Evan Mawarire and his movement with the United States (US) and European Union (EU) aligns with the patriotic history element of anti-Western rhetoric and here it was meant to question Pastor Evan Mawarire's intentions and motives. By associating him with the West, this would justify arresting him as a means of punishing him for selling out.

State media branded Pastor Evan Mawarire and other activists as dissidents and cyber terrorists (Buchanan 2016). This politicized patriotic history discourse takes anti-government activists as dissidents and enemies of the state which shows intolerance of dissenting voices that are not in harmony with ZANU-PF rhetoric of patriotism. The Central Intelligence Organisation, the army, and the police, also took part in shaping patriotic history-inspired anti-corruption activism discourses. For example, the then Army Commander Lieutenant-General Philip Valerio Sibanda, said the army would deploy what he termed cyber troops on social media and other internet platforms to counter the #ThisFlag campaign because social media was now a risk to national security and sovereignty (Gambanga 2016). The idea of painting Pastor Evan Mawarire and his movement as threats to national security aligns well with patriotic history which is closely tied with issues of sovereignty. More so, numerous government officials branded citizens utilizing social media to mobilize protests as cyber terrorists an act that can only be done by unpatriotic citizens. This ignores the patriotic work of denouncing corruption that Pastor Evan Mawarire and his followers were doing and this suggests that for one to be a patriot he/she must not fight or expose the corruption done by the ruling party and government officials.

After facing multiple arrests and threats, Pastor Evan Mawarire went into exile in the U.S. for safety. The #ThisFlag movement lost momentum after his departure as state repression intensified. However, the movement inspired later activism, including the 2019 protests and movements like #ZimbabweanLivesMatter. Pastor Evan Mawarire remains vocal about Zimbabwean issues from abroad but is no longer as central to domestic activism compared to the 2016 – 2017 period.

> “After facing multiple arrests and threats, Pastor Evan Mawarire went into exile in the U.S. for safety.”

Hopewell Chin’ono’s anti-corruption activism and whistleblowing

Hopewell Chin’ono’s anti-corruption activism came to light in June 2020, after exposing a case of corruption involving the former Minister of Health Obadiah Moyo who awarded contracts to pharmaceutical companies that were selling COVID-19 medical supplies at inflated prices. Hopewell Chin’ono reported that Drax International had invoiced the government US$28 for disposable masks whose wholesale price was under US$4 from reputable local suppliers (Kudzayi 2020). The inflated invoice triggered public outrage forcing the government to act. The scandal was worsened because Drax, which was initially said to be registered in Switzerland, and then in the United Arab Emirates, was a fraud allegedly orchestrated by Delish Nguwaya (Kudzayi, 2020). Hopewell Chin’ono’s reporting on this COVID-19 procurement fraud led to the arrest and sacking of Obadiah Moyo by President Emmerson Mnangagwa for “inappropriate conduct” (BBC 2020). However, some believed that Moyo took the fall for persons closer to the president than him. This was so after Hopewell Chin’ono posted pictures showing Nguwaya with the president, his wife, and one of their sons (BBC 2020). Patrick Chinamasa, the ZANU-PF spokesperson responded to Hopewell Chin’ono’s posts on social media that linked the president’s family with Drax by saying the first family was a victim of a smear campaign. Below is what Chinamasa said.

> We have noted the systematic targeted attacks on the first family members by unscrupulous characters like Hopewell Chin’ono targeting the president’s son. The false reports that claim the president’s son has an interest in Drax International have not been backed by any evidence. We are warning the public and those writing these lies to stop. We wish to advise false reporters and our detractors to desist from perpetrating desperate character assassination (Nyathi 2020).

Chinamasa’s acts of questioning Hopewell Chin’ono’s character and seeing him as a character assassinator paint him as an unpatriotic citizen and a sellout who has no good intentions for the country. By doing so, it was Chinamasa himself who was assassinating Hopewell Chin’ono’s patriotic acts by downplaying and equating them to those of assassinators.

Following the arrest of Obadiah Moyo, his case died a natural death in no time while Hopewell Chin'ono was arrested and detained on several occasions. On July 20, 2020, the police raided Hopewell Chin'ono's home in Harare and took him away, charging him with "incitement to participate in a gathering with intent to promote public violence, breaches of peace or bigotry" (Muronzi 2020). He was eventually charged with tweeting against corruption, and the charge sheet said that the tweets would lead to the removal of the government (Chin'ono 2024). Hopewell Chin'ono was denied bail three times, and he spent 45 days in prison (Chin'ono 2024). While in prison, he fell sick with COVID-19 and was denied access to proper medical care because the prison hospital did not have medication or basic equipment (Chin'ono 2024). This idea of charging both Pastor Evan and Hopewell Chin'ono with charges of treason shows the government's fear that anti-corruption activism may be used to agitate the masses and push the government out of power. Being charged with overthrowing a government means one is a traitor who wants to unconstitutionally remove a sitting president and, in this regard, Hopewell Chin'ono was seen as a sellout. Moreso putting him in prison was a move meant to discipline and punish him for his 'sellout' activities. This demonstrates a case of the narrow use of patriotic history in that Hopewell Chin'ono who did patriotic acts of speaking against corruption was viewed as a 'sellout' while Obadiah Moyo who looted public funds was treated as a patriot because Obadiah's case died a natural death.

Hopewell Chin'ono was released from prison in September 2020 after his fourth attempt to get bail. Three weeks after his release from prison, the president's niece was caught trying to smuggle six kilograms of Gold to Dubai (Chin'ono 2024). This resulted in a plan to give her bail unopposed, and an insider informed Hopewell Chin'ono who exposed it using his *X* handle @daddyhope. As a result, Hopewell Chin'ono was arrested again and charged with interfering with a pending case before the courts yet there was no pending case before the courts (Chin'ono 2024). This was an excuse to punish him for exposing the corrupt arrangement to give bail to the president's niece. During his arrest, Hopewell Chin'ono claims to have spent most of his time speaking to prisoners who saw him as a hero and protected him from unsavory criminal characters (Chin'ono 2024). He also noted that most prison officers treated him well and shared with him how they were suffering living on paltry salaries. The treatment given to Hopewell Chin'ono by prisoners and prison officers which is befitting of a hero shows that they saw him as a patriot – which contradicts the ruling party and government officials' narrow view of patriots as they saw him as a sellout.

The arrest of Hopewell Chin'ono generated various responses from the US embassy, the EU, and the ruling party officials. After Hopewell Chin'ono was arrested the US embassy, said it was concerned by the threats against him. The EU also commented that corruption had the potential to derail Zimbabwe's COVID-19 response, undermine development, reinforce inequalities, and destroy confidence in those in power (Nyathi 2020). These responses prompted the Zimbabwean government to lash out at these foreign powers. Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa stated that the reaction of the US to Hopewell Chin'ono's arrests showed that they were behind his activities. She noted that Western countries were funding the protests to access Zimbabwe's resources. Mutsvagwa's utterances best explain the use of anti-Western rhetoric by linking government critics to the West. Mutsvangwa described the US and her allies as 'evil and doom-mongers' when she claimed that:

> Hopewell Chin'ono and .... belong to that camp of evil wishers. It's cruel self-enrichment from the resources that they seek. Please why can't you give Africa a break? In Zimbabwe, we are saying: 'We can't breathe'. The role of foreign powers in this plot to instigate an illegal regime change in Zimbabwe is made apparent by a set of events and statements that followed the police operation. President Mnangagwa and his government are fully apprised of this evil agenda and devilish machinations (Matenga 2020).

These claims show ZANU-PF's denial of responsibility for the suffering of the people by using anti-West rhetoric and labeling critics as regime change agents (sellouts). However, Mutsvangwa's position also highlights that some countries – particularly in Africa are often compelled to adopt such positions to safeguard their interests. For instance, since

1994, Paul Kagame has used nationalist narratives to promote unity and economic self-reliance while resisting Western political influence (Reyntjens 2019). According to Reyntjens (2019), Rwanda has refused Western aid conditionalities and has framed criticisms of human rights issues as efforts to undermine its sovereignty.

In an interview, Nick Mangwana, Zimbabwe's information secretary, dismissed Hopewell Chin'ono's claims of persecution for speaking about corrupt officials. Mangwana stated that.

> Everybody talks about corruption. Open any paper, people are talking about corruption. He knows he is breaking the law. Not speaking about corruption. We acknowledge that there is corruption in Zimbabwe, that's why we have ZACC because we acknowledge that there is corruption. So he is talking nonsense (Mavhunga 2021).

Apart from labeling Hopewell Chin'ono as a sellout and a danger to society, the ruling party moved to enact a Patriotic Bill. While the Patriotic Bill has been circulating in Zimbabwe since its initial drafting in 2020 and the presentation of its motion in Parliament on 2 March 2021, Hopewell Chin'ono's activities also facilitated the speeding and reintroduction of this Bill. The ruling party's reintroduction of the Bill in 2022 occurred a week after Hopewell Chin'ono delivered a speech at a human rights summit in Geneva, highlighting the government's human rights abuses, and corruption (Mandell 2022). Hon Togarepi and Hon Mpofu who were pushing a motion for the Patriotic Bill highlighted people that the "Patriotic Act" should target, and proposed its content as follows:

> The imposition of sanctions was a result of lobbying by certain individuals. Some deliberately went to ask for the people of Zimbabwe to be killed by way of denying us access to health, in other words, you are saying we should die. These are citizens of Zimbabwe, what are we doing as a country to ensure that such people pay for exposing the people of Zimbabwe, we need to do something, and it should be done now. Civic organizations that in their activities deviate from their core business and start advancing activities that destabilize the people of Zimbabwe … people come to this country, and they tell us that they are social welfare organizations yet they have political agendas … if you have campaigned against Zimbabwe, the law should bar you from getting into any public office because you will have killed the people that you want to look after. If you attack the leader of this country that has an effect when that leader goes out there to source business for this country. Nobody wants to do business with a person who from his country is called so many names. So it is very important that the media, politicians, business people, and all citizens of this country understand that they are the people of Zimbabwe first before their political and business interests. We are one and it is a law that we can put down today in this House on this land that will defend the interest of Zimbabwe (Veritas 2021).

This shows that the Patriotic Bill was to be enacted to force people like Hopewell Chin'ono to speak well about the country which is legislating patriotic history. The move to enact a patriotic bill was backed up by ZANU-PF supporters who were angered by Hopewell Chin'ono's address at the human rights summit in Geneva. A pro-Mnangagwa organization called Varakashi4ED (Destroyers for the President) petitioned Attorney General Prince Machaya to expedite the drafting of the Bill. The petition read:

> As Varakashi4ED, we are outraged and concerned that despite the destructive effect of the sanctions on Zimbabwe being so obvious and so acknowledged by most of the international community, there are some Zimbabweans who have proved to be unpatriotic malcontents, hell-bent on begging for the sanctions to stay on. We, therefore, call upon your (Machaya's) esteemed office to do its part pronto and assist the Government of Zimbabwe in enacting the Patriotic Act, which should be equivalent to the US's Logan Act, which in essence prohibits and criminalizes Zimbabwean citizens and residents from engaging in unauthorized foreign negotiations, parallel diplomacy, foreign lobbying, sanctions incitement and

foreign political and economic relations with countries in dispute with Zimbabwe or hostile to Zimbabwe (Masau and Muromo 2022).

This shows that the address by Hopewell Chin'ono at a summit in Geneva was seen as short of patriotism and had the potential to attract sanctions which warranted a law that would deal with people like him. This also shows that the ruling party was denying its role in corruption by using sanctions from the West as an excuse and the sole cause of citizens' misery. More so, citing the Laws from the US was a way of self-insulating the ruling party against the US criticism of this draconian Act, and this aligns with anti-western rhetoric.

While the section above noted that Mawarire and his movement have lost momentum, patriotic history and multiple arrests have failed to stop Chin'ono from exposing government corruption because currently, he is actively using social media and international platforms to challenge state corruption and repression.

"This paper examined how the patriotic history discourse has been used to dismiss anti-corruption activists in Zimbabwe."

Conclusion

This paper examined how the patriotic history discourse has been used to dismiss anti-corruption activists in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, the paper has used Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono as case studies. The paper has argued that patriotic history especially its elements of separating patriots and sellouts and the anti-Western rhetoric were consistently used to discredit and dismiss Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono's anti-corruption activism. The paper has also found that while Pastor Evan Mawarire's activism happened during the Mugabe era and Hopewell Chin'ono's was/is happening in the Mnangagwa regime, patriotic history has been used consistently. This suggests that there is no difference in how both regimes view anti-corruption activists and deploy patriotic history against them. For instance, both activists were charged with inciting violence and later with attempting to subvert a constitutionally elected government. The arrests and charges of treason against Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono also point to the government's fear that corruption could be used for mass mobilisation to achieve the outstanding unresolved political contestation between ZANU-PF and the opposition parties in Zimbabwe, especially during that period of the MDC-T. This highlights the intersection of anti-corruption activism, state narratives of patriotism, and the enduring political contestations in Zimbabwe.

The paper has also demonstrated that ZANU-PF viewed both activists in a manner consistent with patriotic history by framing them as dissidents, cyber terrorists, sellouts, and Western-funded and founded. The hope was that these labels would prompt Pastor Evan Mawarire and Hopewell Chin'ono to self-sensor and behave in ways that escape such labels. The labels also sought to demobilize those who followed them and saw them as heroes which seems to have failed because the paper showed that some sections of the society viewed both activists as heroes and patriotic citizens. This shows the contested nature of the meaning of patriotism in Zimbabwe specifically between the ruling party and its critics. To this end, the paper concludes that in the Zimbabwean context, those who engage in patriotic acts of fighting corruption are seen as sellouts which implies that those who loot patriotic funds are patriots.

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Civil Society under Democracy: An Overview of Non-Governmental Organisation Activity in Supporting South African Whistleblowers

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Abstract

During apartheid, the act of disclosing wrongdoing was not a common occurrence in South Africa. With the transition to democratic rule, blowing the whistle on wrongdoing became relatively prominent. However, along with this positive democratic advancement, the South African whistleblower became victim to retaliation. A significant factor contributing to the frequent occurrence of retaliation is the lack of adequate legislative protection for whistleblowers. It is in this context that civil society, which is the voluntary participation of individuals organised around formal and informal associations that are concerned with the advancement of public interests, came forward to support South African whistleblowers. Civil society is, of course, a crucial component for a functional democracy. Non-governmental organisations form the backbone of civil society. To examine the role of non-governmental organisations in supporting South African whistleblowers, this study employed a qualitative approach. Two qualitative research methods were utilised, namely document analysis which served as the dominant source of data, and semi-structured interviews which were used to supplement the data emerging from the document analysis. The findings indicated that throughout South Africa's democratic history, non-governmental organisations have advocated for whistleblowers' rights. They have often aided whistleblowers by providing them legal support, and have made practical tools publicly available to whistleblowers (current and future) to help them better deal with their disclosure experiences. The paper ends with a key recommendation – that non-governmental organisations should better coordinate their efforts to provide whistleblowers more comprehensive support.

Introduction

With the transition to democracy, several societal freedoms emerged in South Africa. One of those was the freedom to engage in the act of whistleblowing. Near and Miceli's (1985, p.4) long established definition for whistleblowing understands it as the act of disclosing information about perceived organisational wrongdoing to others who may be able to effect action. During apartheid, blowing the whistle on corruption and organisational wrongdoing was an uncommon occurrence (Uys 2022, p.49). Whistleblowing only became a prominent act in South Africa with instatement of democracy (Uys 2022, p.49). South African whistleblowers have been instrumental in exposing wrongdoing in the democratic South Africa, acting as change agents in the advancement of the country's democracy (Radulovic 2023c). They have, however, been subjected to significant reprisals, leaving them powerless, abandoned and facing social, work-related, legal and physical retaliation (Radulovic 2023b).

However, South African whistleblower protection legislation, which is intended to safeguard whistleblowers, has been the subject of criticism, offering inadequate protection (Lewis and Uys 2007, p.85; Radulovic 2023a). Without adequate legislative provisions to protect whistleblowers, these individuals seek out, and welcome, agents external to the state that attempt to provide support and coping mechanisms to assist them in their disclosures. In South Africa, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have had a long-standing role in active citizenry, particularly concerning critical issues such as citizen's rights. NGOs that support whistleblowers contribute to strengthening democracy and accountability, as they attempt to aid whistleblowers in exposing the acts of wrongdoers to the public whilst, to some extent, also holding the wrongdoers to account.

NGOs constitute one of the integral elements of civil society, which itself is a key component of an effective democracy. This article seeks to detail the activities of NGOs in supporting South African whistleblowers throughout the country's democratic existence. In accomplishing this, the article departs by presenting why civil society is crucial in advancing democracy.

“During apartheid, blowing the whistle on corruption and organisational wrongdoing was an uncommon occurrence. Whistleblowing only became a prominent act in South Africa with instatement of democracy (Uys 2022, p.49)”

Civil society as an agent to advance democracy

A harmonious society is a democratic one, with rule of law, equality, morality, empathy and justice being present as part of the democracy (Li 2006, p.18). Civil society constitutes one of the key components which are essential for a functional democracy (O'Connell 2000, p.477), and thus a society operating in harmony. Critical theorists, such as Jürgen Habermas, present the argument that a healthy civil society is directed by its members using shared meanings which are democratically constructed via communication in the public sphere (Edwards 2009, p.9).

Civil society entails the voluntary participation of individuals organised around formal and informal associations that are concerned with the advancement of public interests (Dunn 1996, p.27; Kligman 1990, p.420). The functionalist approach furthers this notion by arguing that civil society is the arena "between the state, market, and family where citizens advance their interests" (Heinrich 2005, p.217). Civil society is civic in the sense that citizens can take responsibility to change aspects of their society, provided that they are willing to engage as active participants (Cox 1995, p.4).

It has become a particularly important societal element since the emergence of capitalism which emphasises a clear distinction between public and private sectors, thus pushing towards the emergence of a new ethical backdrop – one that provides a resolution to reconcile and protect both the public and private sectors (Seligman 1992, p.31).

Civil society has the capacity to create both collaborative and adversarial relationships with the state which can assist, and compel, the state to fulfil its duties towards its citizens (Habib 2005, p.688). It also has the capacity to complement, reform, or oppose the state (Clark 1991, pp.75-76). This can be actuated through civil society's principles of inclusion, fairness, mutual respect, and collective deliberation (DeLue and Dale 2017). Thus, through civil society's advocacy for plurality and diversity, "the consolidation of democracy in South Africa" can be achieved (Habib 2005, p.689).

However, as civil society does not constitute a component of the state, civil society organisations often have inadequate resources to execute their actions. Thus, civil society organisations tend to be limited with their capacity to engage with effective advocacy, particularly when the actions of civil society create adversarial relationships with the state. Such adversarial relationships are commonplace when whistleblowers' acts expose corruption and state capture in the state, and when civil society supports those whistleblowers. Therefore, those in government become less willing to protect those that expose wrongdoing whilst also being less willing to collaborate with civil society organisations that support whistleblowers.

> "A harmonious society is a democratic one, with rule of law, equality, morality, empathy and justice being present as part of the democracy (Li 2006, p.18)."

Since civil society is a network of independent associations binding citizens out of a common concern for good, non-governmental organisations qualify for inclusion within the grouping. Non-governmental organisations are "organizations that serve the public interest, are independent of government, and have humanitarian objectives", with the nature of their activities varying widely in scope (Claiborne 2004, p.207). The United Nations (2011, p.1) identifies the more prominent of these activities as "information dissemination, awareness raising, development education, policy advocacy, joint operational projects, participation in intergovernmental processes and in the contribution of services and technical expertise".

The activity of advocacy is particularly important for this paper, with a specific type of advocacy NGOs being identified. An advocacy NGO's primary focus "is to defend or promote a specific cause" (Malena 1995, p.14). Herein, it could entail advancing the message of the whistleblower and supporting the whistleblower. NGO advocacy for whistleblowers in democratic South Africa has a rich history, for which descriptive data needed to be gathered in order to present an adequate overview. The following section presents the method used to gather the said data.

Methodology

In presenting an adequate overview of NGO activity pertaining to whistleblower support in democratic South Africa, a qualitative research methodology was employed. Two qualitative research methods were used to gather the data. Firstly, documents were used as the dominant source of data. To provide a simple understanding of the documents that were used as sources of data, would entail stipulating that these are any documents that can be read, have not been produced for the specific purpose of social research, are readily available for analysis, and are relevant to the topic being researched (Bryman 2012, p.523). This paper relied specifically on digital and print news articles, books produced by whistleblowers, civil society organisations or authors documenting disclosures, and documents intended to aid whistleblowers throughout their disclosures.

Secondly, document analysis was supplemented with semi-structured interviews. The interviews conducted with three whistleblowers, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an NGO, and a journalist proved useful in adding further detail to the data extracted from the documents. Purposive sampling was used to gain access to the participants, as all five participants were easily identifiable through their activities in exposing corruption, writing on whistleblowers and their activities, and publicly advocating for whistleblowers. The participants were open to be interviewed for an academic study, thus securing their participation was relatively easy. The use of two qualitative research methods served as a valuable tool in acquiring a comprehensive picture of NGO whistleblower support activity since South Africa entered into a state of democracy. The following section discusses these activities.

Whistleblowing-related NGO activity in a democratic South Africa

The NGOs that advocated for South African whistleblowers throughout the country's democratic history, and assisted whistleblowers in bringing their voice to the fore, also highlighted themselves as important structures in revealing wrongdoing. Their actions emphasised the importance of civil society in addressing major societal issues. NGOs have also offered myriad forms of support to whistleblowers in South Africa, namely: legal support; financial support; security measures; the protection of whistleblowers' identities; the provision of informal counselling; reassuring whistleblowers; getting journalists interested in whistleblowers' narratives; raising public support for whistleblowers; creating mitigating strategies in anticipation of retaliation; and mediating between whistleblowers and official commissions of inquiry (Radulovic 2022, pp.166-174). The following findings emerge from the documents used as sources of data in this study. They are not concerned with the forms of support offered to South African whistleblowers by NGOs, but rather present an overview of whistleblowing-related NGO activity in democratic South Africa.

1. Open Democracy Advice Centre

The Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC), launched in 1999, was the first NGO that advocated for whistleblowers' rights in South Africa. It was the brainchild of Richard Calland (who was at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa) and Lala Camerer (who served at the Institute for Security Studies). Camerer sought to establish the conceptual link between whistleblowing and access to information. Calland wanted to implement the Protected Disclosures Act (PDA)[1] and the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA)[2] into practice[3], both of which he had lobbied for. This lobbying was done through the Open Democracy Campaign Group (ODCG), a coalition of ten civil society organisations. ODAC registered as a law centre, a legal entity separate from the ODCG. ODAC declared that its mission was to "promote transparent democracy, foster a culture of corporate and government accountability and assist people in South Africa to realise their human right" (Tilley and Stober 2004, pp.187-188).

ODAC's project was ambitious at the time. It initiated a campaign to raise awareness about whistleblowing and to educate people regarding the concept (Tilley and Stober 2004, p.190). Its staff, occupying the role of 'trainers', assisted private sector companies in implementing their whistleblowing policies. Expecting that these newly implemented whistleblowing policies would cause a surge in requests for advice on making a disclosure, ODAC offered free confidential legal guidance on how to blow the whistle. The next logical step was that some whistleblowers would end up in court to receive the necessary protection, with the development of jurisprudence. ODAC "would monitor this jurisprudence and analyse it" (Tilley and Stober 2004, p.190). What was particularly ground-breaking was that ODAC was able to launch a whistleblower helpline. This helpline greatly contributed to the "understanding of how whistleblowing is experienced by ordinary South Africans" (Tilley and Stober 2004, p.191). This data helped them determine that numerous South Africans were afraid to blow the whistle due to a fear of retaliation and that many of the callers were not covered by the protections of the PDA. With all of this acquired knowledge and experience, ODAC expected to eventually make recommendations regarding whistleblower legislation (Tilley and Stober 2004, pp.191-192).

Unfortunately, ODAC's recommendations were not as eagerly received as they predicted them to be. A shift to democratic governance along with a newly implemented Constitution (1996) was, naturally, accompanied by an overwhelming number of new acts for the public and private sectors. As private and public organisations were flooded with these acts, they sought to meet only the minimum requirements. Whistleblowing recommendations were particularly met with antipathy. By 2004, ODAC was still determined to contribute to the progress of whistleblower rights in South Africa (Tilley and Stober 2004, pp.192-194).

In 2010, ODAC published Patricia Martin's (2010) *The Status of Whistleblowing in South Africa: Taking Stock*. It was a very useful tool that delineated South African progress in terms of legislative protection offered to whistleblowers, while also examining the extent to which South African society advanced in its receptivity towards whistleblowers. With the amendment of the PDA, by way of the Protected Disclosures Amendment Act no. 5 of 2017, the book is in need of a new iteration. This is problematic as ODAC has since dissipated, with their website domain and activities being inactive.

2. Right2Know Campaign

In 2010, a new NGO was founded – the Right2Know Campaign. It is "centred on freedom of expression and access to information" (Right2Know Campaign 2022). The Right2Know Campaign truly rose to prominence six years after it was established. In May of 2016, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) "banned the broadcasting on violent protests on [their] platforms" (Basson and du Toit 2017, pp.129). In response to the SABC's new policy, the Right2Know campaign organised protests in front of the SABC offices petitioning the ban. These protests grew and became known as the Right2Know marches. Journalists were told not to cover these marches, and those that did were suspended (Basson and du Toit 2017, p.130). Eventually the censorship against covering violent protests was relaxed, partly due to Right2Know's marches. In March 2017, then-President Jacob Zuma removed Pravin Gordhan from the position of Minister of Finance. What ensued were a series of nationwide protests, by South African

> … a new NGO was founded – the Right2Know Campaign. It is "centred on freedom of expression and access to information"…

citizens from all walks of life, against the actions of the Zuma regime. It was at the African National Congress' (ANC) national policy conference in June that the party officials announced that they would be investigating these protests, likening them to the instigation of a revolution akin to that of Libya and Ukraine. As a response, Right2Know publicly demanded evidence for these claims, failing which the ANC was to never use this rhetoric again (Basson and du Toit, 2017, p.192). To date, no evidence pertaining to the claims of attempted 'regime change' has been presented by the ANC.

As Right2Know addressed issues of corruption, they advocated for those exposing it – the whistleblowers. They have gone on public record to appeal against the unfair dismissals of whistleblowers, while also publicly rejecting the victimisation of whistleblowers (Mtabane 2017). Most recently, Right2Know has engaged in the public support of whistleblowers in South Africa. They commended Judge Raymond Zondo[4] acknowledging the importance of whistleblowers in exposing state capture. Furthermore, they have rallied in support of the financial incentivising of whistleblowers calling on the private sector, the public sector, and civil society to endorse this. Aside from incentivisation, Right2Know is lobbying for adequate whistleblower protection (Nkosi 2022). The Right2Know Campaign continues to advocate for whistleblowers, along with lobbying for government transparency.

3. Corruption Watch

Corruption Watch, an NGO that uses "reports as an important source of information to fight corruption and hold leaders accountable for their actions", was established in January 2012 (Corruption Watch 2022a). Their aim is "to ensure that the custodians of public resources act responsibly to advance the interests of the public", whilst safeguarding the state from corrupt relationships (Corruption Watch 2022b). They accomplish this by pursuing litigation against wrongdoers, organising public education events regarding corruption, investigating reports of corruption, organising corruption awareness campaigns, publishing research on corruption, and promoting good governance. They advocate for those people who have fallen victim to corruption, and are involved in submitting recommendations for legislative improvements, with a particular focus on the Protected Disclosures Amendment Act (Corruption Watch 2022a). Their claims were confirmed when they initiated civil litigation in 2015 against then-President Jacob Zuma (Basson and du Toit 2017, p.84).

In terms of active involvement in aiding whistleblowers, Corruption Watch published *The Whistleblower's Handbook* (Erasmus 2014). It is a useful tool for prospective whistleblowers and is freely available on Corruption Watch's website. It provides an explanation for what whistleblowing entails and why it is important in advancing corrective action. Also presented is a practical illustration of how one can engage in the act of disclosure, whilst placing a warning that one might not be thanked for doing so. Availed are also the narratives of whistleblowers that shed light on what one might experience. A description of all the South African legislative frameworks that protect a whistleblower, along with a list of "useful contacts" in the event of a disclosure can be found in this handbook (Erasmus 2014, pp.2-25). Besides the handbook, Corruption Watch actively maintains a whistleblower archive on their website containing whistleblowing cases, developments, and advice (Corruption Watch 2022c). Corruption Watch is still actively involved in monitoring and exposing corruption involving public resources in South Africa, thereby also being involved in monitoring new whistleblowing developments in the country.

4. Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse

Another NGO began supporting whistleblowers approximately four years after Corruption Watch's establishment. OUTA was initially formed as the Opposition to Urban Tolling Alliance in February 2012, but changed its name to Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse in 2016 to cover more comprehensive civil activism (which would grow to comprise supporting whistleblowers) (Duvenage and Serrao 2015, p.xviii). Wayne Duvenage has served as OUTA's CEO since its inception.

Initially, OUTA's civil activism arose out of the opposition to the e-tolling system (Duvenage and Serrao 2015). The e-tolling system is a highly contested electronic toll collection infrastructure which was implemented in 2013, only in the province of Gauteng, by the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL). Many citizens of Gauteng felt that it was an unjust and expensive implementation, as the electronic toll collection gantries were added on already existing road networks, and users had previously utilised these road networks without these additional charges. OUTA had organised in opposition to this, and Wayne Duvenage, who was interviewed for this study, was the driving force behind this NGO. He was the chairman of the Southern African Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (SAVRALA) at the time.

After broadening their mandate in 2016, OUTA began tackling various issues impeding on South Africa's democracy together with the name change. The mandate expansion was motivated by a need to be further involved in civil society by combatting corruption and maladministration in the South African Government and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (BusinessTech 2016). This is the point at which OUTA began supporting whistleblowers in South Africa. Because of this, they had to broaden their team and add litigation and research sections. OUTA began challenging SOEs such as Eskom, South African Airways (SAA), and SABC, along with taking government to court and engaging in lawfare. One of their most significant victories was Dudu Myeni, the former chairperson of SAA, being declared a delinquent director[5]. This was a significant victory not only for OUTA, but also for a whistleblower interviewed for this study – Cynthia Stimpel, whose disclosure detailed improprieties within SAA while Myeni was in charge.

> Paul O'Sullivan was trying to identify parties that advanced state capture. He attempted to establish a trail of economic wrongdoing committed by Dudu Myeni at SAA.

The first line of support provided by OUTA to whistleblowers is a platform for complaint. It typically comes into use when an organisation's internal whistleblowing processes have failed the whistleblower. After the internal whistleblowing system had failed Cynthia, she contacted Corruption Watch via their website where she typed a brief summary of a dubious deal transpiring at SAA along with the amount SAA was set to lose. Corruption Watch never responded to her (Stimpel 2021, p.140). She, then, contacted OUTA because she was advised to do so by a friend of hers that served as moral support. Wayne Duvenage said that when an NGO receives a disclosure of such a nature, it becomes important for the NGO to decipher whether the disclosure is a legitimate one. In the case of Cynthia Stimpel, OUTA needed to have more information regarding the nature of her disclosure. The reason for this is that they face a danger as civil activists of being misled or following the incorrect path.

Duvenage used the case of Paul O'Sullivan[6] to illustrate why this can be problematic for civil activists. Paul O'Sullivan was trying to identify parties that advanced state capture. He attempted to establish a trail of economic wrongdoing committed by Dudu Myeni at SAA. Wayne shared that Paul O'Sullivan "got a false bank statement sent to him which showed a nice big deposit" into Myeni's account. Once it was publicly disclosed that this was a fake, it worked against O'Sullivan, as he was known for his ability to weaponise information and emails. As a by-product, O'Sullivan had to apologise, and Wayne said that this is an example of "damage done" to a civil activist. According to Wayne, this is the way in which "retractors can set you up", and, therefore, they had to set up a process to ensure that they are dealing with substantive facts. With regards to Cynthia Stimpel's disclosure, the information was, of course, factual.

After establishing the disclosure information as factual, the NGO receiving the whistleblower's disclosure must take the disclosure seriously. Only once an organisation has broken down and understood the full scope of the allegations, can they react swiftly. Wayne recalled that, in Cynthia Stimpel's case, OUTA compiled their paperwork quickly – within one week. OUTA wrote an affidavit (a statement written under oath), based on their consultation with Cynthia, and filed that affidavit with the aid of an attorney. OUTA, then, confronted SAA and requested that they cancel the dubious deal with a dodgy service provider, or face being taken to court. With an inadequate response from SAA, OUTA sought an urgent interdict. Subsequently, SAA lawyers called OUTA and stated that they had cancelled the agreement that was under scrutiny, with the R256 million deal being abandoned.

Resource power ended up being a key asset in OUTA combatting SAA with regards to the dubious financial transaction. Wayne supported this notion, because if OUTA "didn't have money", they "couldn't build the papers and interdict quickly". OUTA's ability to access to considerable financial resources was of crucial importance in this instance. According to Wayne, very few organisations possess this resource. As of late 2024, OUTA continues its primary work as a civil action organisation focusing on exposing government corruption and the abuse of taxes and public funds.

5. Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa

The Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF)[7] is a French NGO that appears to possess expansive monetary resources. It was started in 2017 by lawyers, anti-corruption campaigners, and investigative journalists. One of its co-founders, French lawyer William Bourdon, represented the likes of Edward Snowden and Julian Assange (Dalby 2020). PPLAAF's purpose is "to defend whistleblowers, as well as strategically litigate and advocate on their behalf where their disclosures speak to the public interest of African citizens" (Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa 2022). PPLAAF has represented many prominent African whistleblowers.

Mosilo Mothepu, a whistleblower interviewed for this study who blew the whistle on state capture-linked Trillian, credited PPLAAF as one of the few organisations that came to her aid. PPLAAF had read about Mosilo in the South African *Mail & Guardian* newspaper and, thereafter, reached out to assist her. She already had knowledge that PPLAAF (together with various other networks) supported Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, which instilled in her a confidence of their abilities. Simphiwe Mayisela, another whistleblower interviewed for this study who exposed improprieties within the Public Investment Corporation, was also supported by PPLAAF, with him crediting them with creating "a shield of protection around" him. Bianca Goodson's (whose disclosure supported Mosilo's allegations regarding Trillian) experience was much the same with PPLAAF, with their support changing the way she thought about her disclosure experience as they gave her the "confidence to do the right thing" (Wiener 2020, p.266).

Mandy Wiener, a famous South African journalist interviewed for this study, even argued that Mosilo Mothepu, Simphiwe Mayisela and Bianca Goodson were "saved by PPLAAF" (Wiener 2020, p.302). Wiener's well-constructed *The Whistleblowers* (2020) offers a detailed examination of South African whistleblower's experiences. When interviewing Wiener, she acknowledged that OUTA and Corruption Watch played a prominent role in supporting whistleblowers. However, her impression was that the most financial support that facilitated whistleblowers in going public came from the PPLAAF. The whistleblowers that Wiener had contact with, questioned as to why such significant support came from abroad and not from within South Africa. Wiener argued was that this "highlights the lack of support" for whistleblowers in South Africa. PPLAAF continues to support whistleblowers across Africa, thus maintaining an active role in South Africa.

6. The Whistleblower House

A new South African NGO, The Whistleblower House, was launched on 22 February 2022 (McCain 2022). Its sole focus is on supporting South African whistleblowers. This has signalled a significant emergence of support for whistleblowers from within the country. One of the founding members is Bianca Goodson, whilst Cynthia Stimpel and the former chief operating officer of OUTA formed part of their team. It has been developed as "a non-profit, public benefit organisation that facilitates access to support services for whistle-blowers", and generates awareness about the whistleblower's predicament (O'Regan 2022). Aside from actively supporting South African whistleblowers, The Whistleblower House also alerts the public to abuses of power, directs attention of law enforcement toward to criminal acts, and disrupts corrupt networks across a variety of institutions (Whistleblower House 2024a).

The "library" centre on The Whistleblower House's webpage offers a variety of useful tools, namely: a free handbook, free guidebooks and toolkits, and links for the purchase of books that offer narratives of several South African whistleblowers; with these resources being useful for both whistleblowers and those aiding a whistleblower (Whistleblower House 2024b). Corruption Watch's *The Whistleblower's Handbook* is freely available on the webpage along with two new crucial resources – the *Whistleblowing Management Handbook*, and the *Whistleblowing First Responder Guide*. The *Whistleblowing Management Handbook* provides "practical guidance to persons in ethics, governance and management positions who have some form of responsibility" associated to whistleblowing (Groenewald 2020, p.1), while the *Whistleblowing First Responder Guide* is a guide for those individuals to whom a disclosure is made (Groenewald 2023). The *Whistleblowing First Responder Guide* is an innovative tool for effective (and safe) cooperation with a whistleblower.

By October 2022, The Whistleblower House had already assisted 91 whistleblowers (The Citizen 2022). A post on their LinkedIn page, on 7 August 2024, had indicated that The Whistleblowers House had a repository of 310 whistleblowers. This means that The Whistleblower House had supported all 310 whistleblowers, in some form, up to that point in time. According to the LinkedIn post, the varying forms of support have entailed providing legal services, psychological aid, financial aid, and safety and security aid to these whistleblowers. No further public data was available regarding the scope of support provided by The Whistleblower House, likely due to the sensitivity of the data handled by the NGO (with it emanating from disclosures). The growth in the number of whistleblowers supported by The Whistleblower House, in a relatively short period of time, is commendable.

Conclusion

With South Africa's transition to democracy in the early 1990s, the emergence of whistleblowing as a response to unethical and illegal behaviours accentuated the need for an active civil society capable of supporting whistleblowers. In this context, civil society has been predominantly represented by NGOs that have played an essential role in offering support to whistleblowers. This paper illustrated how various NGOs have actively advocated for whistleblowers and their rights, while also providing essential tools and resources to support them. In the absence of comprehensive and effective governmental whistleblower protection legislation, the support offered by NGOs has been particularly vital. Thirty years into South Africa's egalitarian rule, it is evident that civil society, through its support of whistleblowers, has contributed to the advancement of the country's democracy. However, frequent reprisals faced by whistleblowers indicate that both whistleblowers and those supporting them continue to face an uphill battle. Thus, despite the considerable efforts exerted by civil society, much work is still required to ensure the empowerment of whistleblowers, which would inevitably result in reinforcing the integrity and accountability of South Africa's democratic institutions.

Importantly, there has been some degree of collaboration among NGOs in South Africa, as evidenced by partnerships such as that between The Whistleblower House and Corruption Watch. These organisations jointly offer the Whistleblowing Management Handbook as a valuable resource on their website, exemplifying the potential of collaborative efforts. There has recently also been an undertaking by The Whistleblower House, PPLAAF, Corruption Watch, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and others. The coordinated effort has been established under an initiative titled Whistleblower Support Platform for Reform (WSPR). As of mid-2025, WSPR collaborates with several stakeholders in improving the whistleblower system, with regular meetings and various initiatives forming part of their activities.

This is a step in the right direction, because to provide fully effective whistleblower support it is imperative that NGOs (and other stakeholders) wholly coordinate their initiatives within a cohesive and non-fragmented framework. Such coordination could entail not only the pooling of financial resources, but also be focused on the exchange of knowledge and networks. Networks centred around legal practitioners with experience and knowledge concerning whistleblowing cases could be shared. Furthermore, access to resources such as whistleblowing toolkits and handbooks could be disseminated amongst the various NGOs involved in supporting whistleblowers. This would ensure that all NGOs are in possession of the necessary information resources crucial for the support of a whistleblower. It would, however, be necessary to include all NGOs involved in supporting whistleblowers, leaving no organisations excluded from the network.

To this end, the establishment of an independent central state institution could prove beneficial. Such an institution would not only further coordinate efforts and pool resources but would also ensure a unified front in supporting whistleblowers. Crucially, such an institution must be insulated from political interference to maintain its integrity and efficacy. Recommendations for such an organisation have gone as far as to suggest the formation of a Chapter 9 institution, an independent state institution implemented to safeguard democracy, focusing on either broader anti-corruption efforts or focusing exclusively on whistleblowing.

Accompanying the creation of this central body, there is a pressing need for the development of new governmental policies, particularly those focused on revising and strengthening whistleblower protection legislation. Provisions for enhancing whistleblower protection legislation could be taken from tried-and-tested instruments such as the Serbian *Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers* (2014) along with consulting Transparency International's *A Best Practice Guide for Whistleblowing Legislation* (2018), and compensatory provisions present in Australian and various United States laws could also be used to make necessary reforms for whistleblower compensation. Enhanced legislative frameworks, coupled with coordinated civil society efforts, would provide whistleblowers with more robust support (and protection) and better equip them to handle potential retaliation. In conclusion, even with a long and pronounced democratic history of whistleblower support, additional efforts will need to be exerted by civil society to ensure that South African whistleblowers are afforded the opportunity to adequately cope with their disclosure experiences.

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Endnotes

1 The Protected Disclosures Act no. 26 of 2000, designed to protect whistleblowers from reprisals.

2 The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) grants every citizen "the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights" (Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000: 2).

3 Both of the laws were new at the time, as the PAIA was gazetted on 3 February 2000 and the PDA was gazetted on 7 August 2000.

4 Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo was the chairperson of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State.

5 According to Section 162 of the South African Companies Act 71 of 2008, a delinquent director is an individual that has been proven to have acted as grossly negligent or reckless. This affords organisations protection against such a director.

6 Paul O'Sullivan is an Irish born South African forensic investigator who was instrumental in the conviction of former South African Chief of Police Jackie Selebi. Acting as a private individual, he has played many key roles in uncovering financial crimes and corruption in South Africa.

7 In French, PPLAAF is an acronym for Plateforme de Protection des Lanceurs d'Alerte en Afrique. The English translation is Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa.

"We are not blind researchers": Entering and negotiating power and privilege in schools for the blind as sighted researchers

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Abstract

Our community engagement project aimed to capacitate secondary school teachers of visually impaired learners to use anatomically correct models during their comprehensive sexuality education lessons. Given that the beneficiaries of this project were ultimately visually impaired learners, as sighted researchers, we approached entry into schools for the blind with the need to acknowledge our privilege as able-bodied researchers. With the principle of "nothing about us, without us", we further relied on two blind professors both locally and internationally as experts to guide our community praxis (i.e., how to position ourselves and manage possible resistance due to being outsiders). However, upon entering this space, we not only found that most staff (e.g., teachers) working with visually impaired learners were sighted. More importantly, our engagement within this space led us to realize that preoccupation with privilege tended to essentialize the powerlessness of people with disabilities (PwDs) more broadly. Moving from the decolonial project, we found that seeing ourselves as 'privileged' reproduced a charity model where PwDs are viewed as objects of pity, reliant on their able-bodied counterparts to be included in society. We found that the acknowledgement of power was a catharsis for us with limited benefit methodologically but with its own caveats.

Key words: catharsis; charity model; community engagement; people with disabilities; power; privilege

Introduction

Myths and misconceptions about the sexuality of people with disabilities (PwDs) are deeply rooted in societal prejudices (Bolarinwa, Odimegwu and Adebisi 2024; Chappell 2019; Neille, McEwen, and de Andrade 2024). These misconceptions often lead to the sexual needs and rights of PwDs being overlooked, both in South Africa and globally. PwDs are frequently perceived as either asexual or overly sexualized, resulting in their exclusion from comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) (Davis et al. 2024; Kumar 2014; McRuer 2006). Despite the integral role of CSE in school curricula (Chappell 2015, 2016, 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b), teachers often struggle to deliver this content effectively and confidently (Kelly and Kapperman 2021; Rohleder et al. 2009; Wild et al. 2019). This challenge is particularly acute in schools for children with disabilities (CwDs). This includes where teachers encountering barriers such as personal discomfort, cultural and religious beliefs, and potential opposition from parents (Kapperman and Kelly 2014; Krupa and Esmail 2010; Author-Anonymous 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b). Additionally, the lack of specialized teacher education and appropriate classroom resources further hampers the delivery of accessible and meaningful CSE for CwDs (Kelly and Kapperman 2021; Rohleder et al. 2009; Wild et al. 2019).

Kapperman and Kelly (2021), Krupa and Esmail (2010), as well as Author-Anonymous (2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c) have for example demonstrated that learners with visual impairments (LVI) often lack accurate knowledge about anatomy. For instance, Hicks (1980) described a blind boy who mistakenly believed that the vagina was located underneath the breast. This gap in anatomical understanding can lead to misinformation about their own bodies and potentially result in unwanted or uninformed sexual practices (Kapperman and Kelly 2013). LVI require tactile resources that they can touch and feel to effectively grasp and connect with the information presented. In this case, verbal explanations alone are insufficient (Krupa and Esmail 2010). To address this need, scholars recommend integrating anatomically correct models (ACMs) into CSE lessons (Kapperman and Kelly 2013; Krupa and Esmail 2010; Ubisi and Tsabedze 2024). ACMs are three-dimensional educational tools that accurately represent human genitalia and are specifically designed for teaching purposes (Kapperman and Kelly 2013; Krupa and Esmail 2010; Author-Anonymous 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). Unlike dildos, vibrators, and masturbators, which are primarily intended for personal sexual pleasure, ACMs are used solely for educational purposes (Naphtali et al. 2009; Peta 2018; Taylor 2011).

“This gap in anatomical understanding can lead to misinformation about their own bodies and potentially result in unwanted or uninformed sexual practices (Kapperman and Kelly 2013).”

Our community engagement project aimed to evaluate the readiness and train secondary[1] schoolteachers of LVI to use ACMs in their CSE lessons across four secondary SFB. Inspired by reflexivity literature, we sought to be mindful and reflective researchers, carefully balancing our personal and professional positionalities while addressing potential resistance (Idahosa and Bradbury 2020; Le Bourdon 2022; Sultana 2007). As Le Bourdon (2022) notes, reflexivity is essential when working with groups to which one does not belong personally or has personal connections. This includes our role as academics engaging with teachers in SFB. We aimed to use our reflections to critically assess how our sighted and professional positions influenced power dynamics, research methods, interpretations, as well as the knowledge production process (Sultana 2007). Guided by the principle of "Nothing about us, without us," we strived to ensure that our approach was inclusive, advocative, and representative of PwDs. This includes acknowledging our multiple privileges as able-bodied researchers.

The paper starts off by exploring the activist slogan on, "Nothing about us, without us" and its implication on disability studies work. The paper traces the socio-cultural and medical discourses about the sexuality of people with disabilities globally and locally. This is to provide a historical background of the intersection of disability and sexuality. The paper further discusses South African teachers' views of teaching comprehensive sexuality education to children with disabilities to contextualize the potential impact of our community engagement project. Then, the methodology, process of data collection, data analysis, study findings, and practical implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

The "Nothing about us, without us" slogan

As allies in Disability Studies, we initially reviewed literature on the slogan "Nothing about us, without us" to understand and address our positionality. This slogan, adopted by the disability rights movement, asserts that no policy or practice affecting PwDs should exist without their direct involvement in decision-making (Barbour 2024; Stiker 2019; Withers 2024). It emphasizes the necessity for self-representation and autonomy for PwDs, rejecting paternalistic approaches that exclude their input and guidance (Barbour 2024; Stiker 2019; Withers 2024). Charlton (1998) argues that this slogan shifts the perception of disability from a purely medical issue to a political and social identity. This includes compelling systems to integrate the voices and experiences of disabled individuals into decision-making processes. Inckle, Brighton, and Sparkes (2023) highlight the slogan's political origins, noting its emergence from activism by PwDs and its focus on control and voice in resisting oppression. Therefore, "Nothing about us, without us" signifies a move from a charity model to a social and rights-based model. This includes tracing oppression and exclusion of disability as a societal phenomenon instead of a result of an individual disability. From this framework, PwDs assert their right to equal participation and recognition across all areas of life, including the negotiation of sexual rights and needs (Barbour 2024; Stiker 2019; Withers 2024).

Socio-cultural and medical discourses about the sexuality of people with disabilities

Children and adolescents with disabilities, like all individuals, undergo sexual development as they mature into adulthood (Author-Anonymous 2020). Sexuality is a fundamental aspect of human identity, evolving through interactions with the social environment, with elements such as age, gender, and race being relatively fixed while personal qualities are shaped through these interactions (Chappell 2015). However, negative assumptions about the sexuality of PwDs often lead to the suppression and marginalization of their sexual experiences (Bolarinwa et al. 2024; Chappell 2019; Neille et al. 2024). Societal myths frequently portray PwDs as either asexual or incapable of controlling their sexual desires (Chappell 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b).

> "This lack of appropriate education heightens their vulnerability to sexual assault, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancies, contributing to anxiety and hindering the development of positive sexual identities (Ubisi and Tsabedze 2024)."

These stereotypes infantilize PwDs, portraying them as needing constant protection due to a fear of stigma. Barriers such as discrimination and inaccessibility further complicate access to healthcare and communication about sexual health needs. This lack of appropriate education heightens their vulnerability to sexual assault, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancies, contributing to anxiety and hindering the development of positive sexual identities (Ubisi and Tsabedze 2024). To counter these issues, a proactive approach to sexuality education and fostering a sense of autonomy are crucial for PwDs to experience their bodies as capable of sexual expression (Chappell 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b). Empowering teachers to deliver CSE effectively and confidently is essential for supporting the sexual development of both children and adults with disabilities (Chappell 2019).

South African teachers' views of teaching comprehensive sexuality education to children with disabilities

Education is a crucial means of empowering individuals within any society. CSE is designed to provide young people with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values necessary to promote their health, well-being, and dignity (Kelly and Kapperman 2021; Rohleder et al. 2009; Wild et al. 2019). Teachers play a central role in using CSE to enhance sexual health access for CwDs (Chappell 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b). However, teachers require thorough professional preparation and ongoing training in CSE. This includes acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to teach CSE (Author-Anonymous 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). For instance, a review by Author-Anonymous (2023c) highlighted the lack of literature in South Africa confirming that teachers of LVI receive training to use ACMs in their CSE lessons. This gap suggests that practical, meaningful demonstrations—such as illustrating the difference between a flaccid and erect penis using ACMs—are often overlooked (Ubisi and Tsabedze 2024). Furthermore, South Africa's diverse racial, cultural, and religious landscape presents additional challenges. Teachers who wish to promote CSE may face resistance from religious and cultural groups who argue that CSE 'sexualizes' learners (Chappell 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b). Such resistance can undermine teachers' confidence and competence in delivering CSE. Despite this, it is important for dissenting parents and organizations to recognize that sexuality is an integral part of young people's identities. CSE aims to equip all learners, including LVI, with the information needed to make informed, healthy choices about their growing psychosexual development (Chappell 2019; Davies et al. 2024; Hanass-Hancock et al. 2018a, 2018b).

Research methodology

Project description

This paper forms part of a larger funded project to develop a CSE curriculum for LVI. The project members consisted of academics from various departments such as psychology, psychology of education, development studies, health studies, and industrial engineering with one administrative staff member from the University of South Africa. We consulted both a local and international blind professor to build awareness of our bias and manage potential resistance from the schools. Official permission to conduct research in schools was obtained from 3 Heads of Provincial Education Departments. Soon after, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Committee with clearance number: 22/04/13/90352025/02/AM in agreement to abide to written informed consent, ensuring privacy of identifying information, voluntary participation, as well as no negative consequences following decline to participate in the study at any time. No financial incentive was offered to participate in this study.

Sampling

Teachers were conveniently sampling, with a total of 30 teachers (2 males and 28 females) from 5 South African SFB. The principal investigator sent an invitation email to school principals, which included the following attachments: permission letters from Heads of Provincial Education Departments, institutional ethical clearance documents, participant information sheets, informed consent forms, and a set of interview questions for teachers interested in the study. In response, the school principals provided a list of teachers who expressed interest in participating, categorized by their teaching or personal experience in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). The teachers were listed according to their educational phase: foundation (Grades R-3), intermediate (Grades 4-6), senior (Grades 7-9), and further education (Grades 10-12). Below, Table 1 below for participants' characteristics.

Table 1: Teachers' characteristics

Type of school	Number of teachers	Male	Female	School phase
SFB1 (Primary & Secondary)	**4**		4	1 Foundation phase, 2 Intermediate phase, 1 Senior phase
SFB2 (Primary)	**6**	2	4	5 Foundation phase, 1 Intermediate phase
SFB3 (Secondary)	**5**		5	5 Senior phase
SFB4 (Primary)	**8**		8	6 Foundation phase, 2 Intermediate phase
SFB5 (Primary & Secondary)	**7**		7	2 Foundation phase, 3 Intermediate phase, 2 Senior phase
Total	**30 teachers**	**2 males**	**28 females**	

Data collection methods

The study employed a qualitative, exploratory, multiple case study design for data generation and analysis (Babbie and Mouton 2001). Data were collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) facilitated by an unstructured interview guide. Each FGD lasted between 1 and 2 hours, with breaks provided as necessary. In total, 5 FGDs were conducted, accommodating both English and participants' preferred languages. The development of the interview guide was informed by findings from the broader project and a review of relevant local and international literature (Babbie and Mouton 2001).

Data management and analysis

Audio recordings from the FGDs were transcribed to ensure accuracy (Babbie and Mouton 2001). The raw data, including these audio recordings, were stored in a Google Drive folder with restricted access limited to the principal investigator and the research team involved in the broader project. In this study however, we rely on our fieldnotes as a rich data source for researcher reflexivity (Babbie and Mouton 2001). In accordance with the <contains author identifying information> Research Ethics Committee guidelines, these recordings will be destroyed after 3-5 years. Participants were assigned codes to safeguard their identities. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the data: (1) Reading and re-reading the data to immerse oneself in it; (2) Generating emerging codes; (3) Identifying potential themes; (4) Reviewing themes in relation to research question and existing literature; (5) Defining and explaining these themes; and (6) Writing up the report.

Engaging with our community praxis

We chose teachers as participants for this project because our focus was on enhancing teaching methodologies and resources, directly impacting the educators rather than the LVI themselves. However, our next phase will prioritize incorporating the voices of LVI. Initially guided by decolonial principles, we aimed to critically re-examine our practices and be mindful of the intersections between disability and sexuality, particularly how sexuality is often marginalized for PwDs. Below, we reflect on our journey from our initial entry as sighted researchers into SFB to our evolved understanding and perspectives upon leaving.

Reflections on ethics

Ethics are fundamental in research, especially when engaging with visually impaired individuals and other gatekeepers. In our study, we needed to collaborate with key figures—such as school principals, teachers, and Heads of Provincial Education Departments—to access visually impaired learners (LVI). We carefully considered privacy dynamics and the potential impact of the research on participants' daily lives. For instance, we scheduled the study to avoid disrupting teachers' classes, conducting it towards the end of the term break when there was no teaching.

Creating a safe and trusting environment was crucial, as teachers relied on the protection of their personal information and job security. Teachers expressed interest in participating by responding to an invitation email sent by their school principal. Recognizing the power differentials involved, we were concerned that the principal's role might influence voluntary participation. To address this, we ensured that principals did not participate in focus group discussions (FGDs). The principal investigator spoke with each principal before the study began, emphasizing that no teacher should feel pressured to participate.

During the FGDs, I clearly communicated to teachers that their anonymity could not be fully guaranteed. Prior to the discussions, I explained the study's purpose, voluntariness, risks, benefits, and data usage in their preferred language. I assured participants that they were free to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions or disclosure to the school principal. I also requested that teachers refrain from sharing any information revealed during the FGDs outside the discussions, especially if it could be traced back to individuals or specific schools. To further protect participants' identities, we used codes to anonymize their data and ensure confidentiality.

Reflections about entering schools for the blind as sighted researchers

Our reflections began with an examination of our own identities and the perspectives we brought to the research process. These discussions took place during our weekly meetings, where we shared our fears, hopes, and potential challenges. Initially, we naively believed that conducting research in SFB required a unique understanding of blindness, or that our commitment to the subject might be questioned because none of us had severe visual impairments or lived with someone who does. For example, one project member expressed concern, saying, "I have never had a conversation with a blind person… What would we need to do to fit in? We are not blind researchers" (Thanda). This discomfort highlighted our awareness of the privilege of being sighted individuals. Feeling this growing apprehension, we decided to delve into these feelings by asking ourselves several critical questions: What are our perceptions and expectations of teachers of LVI? How do these perceptions differ from those of teachers in special needs or mainstream schools? Through this process, we sought to better understand and address our discomfort, aiming to engage more thoughtfully and sensitively with our research context.

Reflections on the dynamics of interaction

We had a series of FGDs in different schools. Because of the noted discomfort, we took great care to make sure that our praxis was to lessen possible resistance resulting from our outsider status. For instance, one of the comments from one of the project members from the first FGDs was, "I am not sure if I consistently used the politically correct term of people with disabilities instead of disabled people" (Muzi). Our reflections focused more on how we can negotiate and mitigate these dynamics and interpersonal reflections on our experience. These observations of protocol made us reflect on our outsider status. As an example, when we went to the first SFB, we noticed that some teachers were not fully comfortable forming a partnership with us. During our reflection sessions, we came to the mutual conclusion that teachers and principals in schools for the blind might be very protective. One of the reasons for this was how one of the joint school for deaf and blind learners we visited was previously in the news for the wrong reasons such as learners receiving poor nutrition (Matlhabe 2021a), sexual misconduct involving educators (South African Government News Agency 2012), and learners demanding that sexual abuse be taken seriously within the school (Matlhabe 2021b).

However, our encounters with the teachers revealed a deeper layer of complexity, such as

> "I thought that we would actually find more blind teachers in these schools… I mean isn't that what you would expect?"

what is the difference between us and them as most teachers and staff in most SFB were also sighted? We acknowledged that they have a much closer relation to the LVI and understanding of how visual impairment affects various aspects of their lives, including their growing psychosexual development. It troubled our preconceptions about the kind of space we had imagined and emphasized diverse experiences within the community. With our engagements with teachers in this setting, our encounters led us to question our preoccupation of power and able-bodiedness within this context were given that we came where there were already other sighted individuals occupying this space (i.e., teachers, school managers, hostel caretakers, cooks, cleaners, school administrators, and security guards). For instance, one of the project members commented after meeting the one and only blind teacher we encountered during data collection that, "I thought that we would actually find more blind teachers in these schools…I mean isn't that what you would expect?" Matimu said during the interview.

Upon further reflection, we became aware of the need and implication of our constant acknowledgement of our privilege. As the principal researcher stated, "If most of the individuals in these learners' daily interactions are like us (sighted individuals), why should we feel any different in their space?" It brought into sharp reflection the subtle aspects of special education and the multitudinous gazes on issues around inclusion and empowerment. We recognized that this positionality reinforced the charity model where PwDs are often placed as passive subjects of philanthropy, rather than active change-makers (Chappell 2019). It was a point of realization to reframe our approach from one of relationship rather than hierarchy. That is, acknowledging our privilege as sighted researchers was cathartic for attempting to deal with our bias, and underscored that we need deeper, broader, system-level change in how we pursue research. Our assertion perhaps results from the fact that the study did not engage with visually impaired learners directly, but their teachers. We felt no need to take active steps to blend in. Speaking to the insiders made us feel closer to the person of enquiry, although the focus of this study was to improve the teaching and learning of CSE for teachers of LVI, and not on the psychosexual experiences of people with visual impairment.

Essentializing the powerlessness of people with disabilities more broadly

At the same time, we became increasingly aware of the cautionary advice from disability scholars such as Barbour (2024), Chappell (2019), and Withers (2024), who warn against overlooking the inclusion of PwDs in disability research. By focusing on teachers rather than the LVI, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of this community engagement project, we risk neglecting a crucial aspect of PwDs' experiences and perspectives. This approach, while practical, misses the essential narrative and voice of those directly affected by the issues at hand. As one of the project members noted in her journal: "are we assuming that they (LVI) cannot speak for themselves? Why? Because we are authority figures? Very presumptive and othering" (Nonhlanhla).

This reflection led us to address why LVI were not included in our project thus far. Although our research involved sensitive topics—such as discussions about sexuality, sexual anatomy, and related issues—we recognized the importance of including LVI in our study. Engaging them with age-appropriate questions about their needs in CSE could have provided invaluable insights. We, however, agreed that our decision to exclude LVI stemmed partly from ethical concerns and our apprehensions about conducting research with children. Ethical review boards rigorously scrutinize research involving vulnerable populations, such as children, to ensure their protection, which is crucial. We collectively agreed that conducting research with children presents complex challenges and preferred to prioritize safety in our approach.

Ultimately, despite our initial fears, we recognized the necessity of conducting this research. Our concerns about being able-bodied researchers and the implications of researcher privilege offered us valuable insights that we wish to share with others undertaking research in spaces where their characteristics differ from those of their participants. We found that blending into this unfamiliar environment was facilitated by identifying commonalities with other sighted individuals working there. We learned that it is not essential to be a member of the community being studied, but allyship is crucial. Our preoccupation with researcher privilege initially seemed to reinforce the perceived powerlessness of PwDs, as viewing ourselves as powerful inadvertently diminished the perceived agency of the other (i.e. PwDs). However, by diligently acknowledging our researcher privilege, we gained deeper insights into the power dynamics at play. This reflection allowed us to continue the decolonial project by uncovering and addressing hidden power structures in sensitive research contexts, particularly those involving subjects who are indirectly affected by the research.

On becoming, and contributions to the decolonial project

The implications of our study are multi-dimensional. Primarily, it underscores the critical importance of including the voices of PwDs at every stage of the research process, in line with the principle: "Nothing about us, without us." This approach is not only ethical but essential for ensuring the validity and relevance of research findings. Engaging with PwDs directly enhances the empirical value of the research and reflects their lived experiences more accurately. Our project also highlights the necessity of ongoing reflection and adaptation in community engagement projects, especially when navigating spaces with significant power imbalances. Addressing these power imbalances is crucial for tackling systemic issues that contribute to the marginalization of PwDs. Recognizing privilege is an important first step, but meaningful progress requires concrete actions to dismantle the structures that perpetuate it. This includes advocating for policy changes that promote inclusive practices and ensuring that research outcomes translate into tangible benefits for the communities involved.

Le Bourdon (2022) argues that decolonizing the field of learning requires ongoing reflection and adaptation, achieved through conversation, writing, and taking actionable steps. Our study aligns with this view, revealing how discrimination and exclusion operate at structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels. We echo the sentiments of Idahosa and Bradbury (2020), Le Bourdon (2022), and Sultana (2007), who assert that addressing these factors is a shared responsibility. Adhering to the principle "Nothing about us, without us" helps in identifying and addressing the complex dynamics of power and privilege that perpetuate the invisibility and powerlessness of marginalized groups such as PwDs. This approach ensures that the voices of those directly affected are integral to the research and policy-making processes. Moreover, while reflexivity can be a personal, challenging, and often uncomfortable process, it is essential for effective community engagement. It provides valuable insights and contributes significantly to the decolonial project by helping to move marginalized voices closer to the center of discourse. The continuous cycle of learning, unlearning, reflecting, and listening ultimately fosters a more inclusive and equitable approach to research and practice (Idahosa and Bradbury 2020; Le Bourdon 2022; Sultana 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our community engagement project highlighted the complexities of working within spaces dedicated to visually impaired learners while navigating our own positionality as sighted, able-bodied researchers. Initially, our approach was guided by an awareness of our privilege and the principle of "Nothing about us, without us," involving blind experts to shape our praxis. However, our experience revealed that this focus on privilege could inadvertently perpetuate a charity model, where people with disabilities are seen as passive recipients of support rather than active participants in their own empowerment. This realization underscored the need to move beyond simplistic notions of privilege and power, emphasizing a more nuanced understanding that recognizes the agency of visually impaired individuals while avoiding the pitfalls of tokenism and essentialization. Our reflection on power dynamics proved cathartic and informative, though it also highlighted the limitations and potential drawbacks of such an approach in methodological terms. One of the immediate limitations of this study is having no engagement with visually impaired learners. Direct engagement with visually impaired learners may have limited our understanding of their specific needs and preferences in sexuality education. We suggest that future research is needed, including and by PwDs themselves, to account for their own needs in sexuality education. We further encourage curriculum developers, training institutions, as well as school managers to invest in teacher training to empower teachers with knowledge, skills, and resources such as the use of anatomically correct in their CSE lessons. Furthermore, perhaps more longitudinal studies within these contexts would better provide comparative and detailed findings for monitoring and evaluation.

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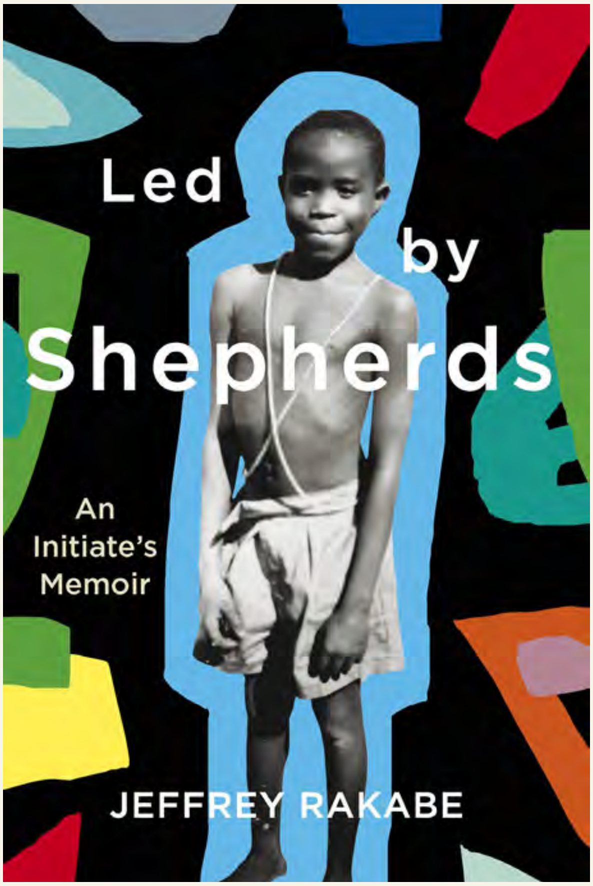
Endnote

1 We focused on teachers of visually impaired learners in Grades 10-12, ages 16-18 because literature in South Africa suggests that the sexual debut of most visually impaired is 16 (Grade 10) and in some cases even lesser than 16 (Kelly et al., 2002). It should also be stated that most visually impaired learners start school at a much later age, in some cases a 20-year-old learner could be in for example Grade 10 (Kelly et al., 2002).



Confronting Toxic Masculinity in South African Society: A Review of Jeffery Rakabe's *Led by Shepherds: An Initiate's Memoir* (Jacana Media 2025)

By Lerato Lechesa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

As South Africans, we have all wondered what lessons are imparted during initiation; how do they help boys become men? While it is common lore to protect the challenges that young boys face, the protection means that it also gets clouded in silence, making it difficult to interrogate its effectiveness.

Jeffery Rakabe's gripping memoir, *Led by Shepherds* changes that. Rakabe invites readers into the visceral world of male initiation, called Koma which is seen for its austerity and immense contribution to toxic masculinity. He recounts his experience as a 12-year-old who embarks on the journey of transitioning from boyhood to manhood. While he initially desired the experience, he finds it brutal and marked by pain and harmful lessons about the oppression of women. He vividly recounts his journey to the mountain, led by a shepherd named Eric, who builds fear and curiosity through stories during their journey. Rakabe uses evocative language, vivid description and a conversational narrative style to question this process of 'the making of a man'. Beyond the initiation, Rakabe also covers his later move to Johannesburg for university where he explores the experiences of navigating the city with the help of his supportive partner.

Although the initiation transforms him into a man that society wishes him to be, and whom he had once desired to be, Rakabe recounts how, in hindsight, he is disappointed by the lingering effects of initiation. As a young boy, he recalls dealing with the physical trials of a painful circumcision procedure and the struggle to ward off cold, hunger and thirst. Rakabe details the strict rules and peculiar language needed to prove one's manhood. Central to the narrative is the fear of being labelled a 'leshoboro' – a coward or weakling – a social pressure that fuels the struggle to endure. Rakabe acknowledges that traditional circumcision is a powerful symbol and not merely a physical act, but he also highlights how it contributes to the stripping of identity. As a 12-year-old at that time, with no rigid or set character, he explores how it contributed to how he saw life afterwards. As an adult, he explores how manhood is essentially about survival, about enduring pain and fitting in, with no genuine growth. He describes it as an inimical process that is emotionally taxing and enforces a narrow definition of manhood that is based on stoicism and control.

Rakabe thus questions whether initiation, intended to shape boys into men, inadvertently teaches dominance and perpetuates toxic traits, particularly concerning the treatment of women, which is evident in the crude and demeaning chants and attitudes encountered in the lodge, asking if these rituals feed the cycle of violence against women. Rakabe reflects on how the so-called "lessons" he received reinforces a restrictive model of masculinity—one that demands emotional suppression and equates vulnerability with weakness. This rigid framework rejects traits perceived as feminine, such as expressing pain or shedding tears, positioning them as signs of fragility rather than legitimate human experiences. Hence, more than just a personal memoir, the book makes a powerful connection between these traditional experiences and broader societal issues of masculinity and violence. Rakabe challenges the casual jokes that diminish women, recognising their role in reinforcing gender-based violence in society. He expresses how deeply these attitudes, alongside the crisis of femicide, have affected him. Through his reflections, he urges men to unlearn harmful behaviors and dismantle toxic masculinity. By confronting these ingrained norms, he challenges the idea that masculinity must be built on endurance at the cost of emotional authenticity. His reflection underscores the harm such conditioning inflicts—not only on individuals who struggle to express themselves but also on broader societal dynamics that normalise detachment and emotional repression. Through Rakabe's memoir we see that many young men find themselves having to honour the cultural traditions which do not benefit them and feel as though they are navigating two worlds.

Rakabe's willingness to confront uncomfortable truths shows bravery and personal growth and makes this a compelling and necessary read that leaves one questioning our current cultural expectations and their social effects. *Led by Shepherds* is an insightful narrative that challenges readers to look beyond tradition and question the very definition of manhood. His mental and psychological turmoil suggests that the rite of passage which he was supposed to feel safe in, significantly contributed to personal trauma, but also a learning curve which he gets to share with others as an act of resistance against the pressure to conform to the harmful standards. It is a call to parents to not conform to practices of which they are not fully unaware. This memoir serves as a poignant example of the need to question traditional customs and their impact, to question the lesson and their effectiveness, to decenter toxicity which initiation perpetuates. ■