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The Thinker

A PAN-AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, COVID-19, & TECHNOLOGY:

South African Challenges and Opportunities for Reform

Guest edited by: **Bhaso Ndzendze and Gift Sonkqayi**

The Thinker

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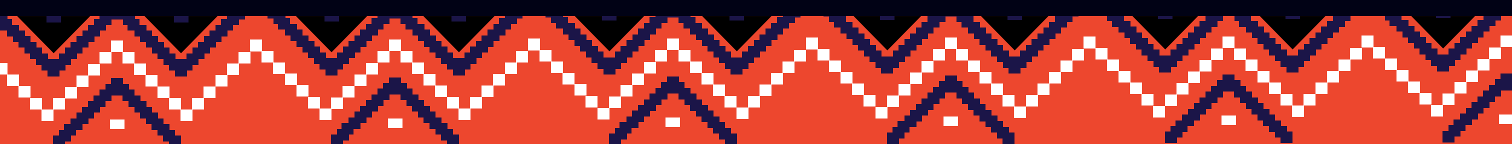

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Prof Ronit Frenkel

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

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RETHINK. REINVENT.

Introduction

By Bhaso Ndzendze and Gift Sonkqayi | Peer Review

Introduction

When we convened a workshop with several young scholars to work on diverse issues in 2018, we could not have foreseen the accentuation of the crises facing South Africa and the continent. The workstreams included identifying challenges and, more importantly, opportunities in the following areas:

- Economy and unemployment
- Education
- Land reform
- Migration
- The rise of new media and fake news

Since then, we have seen a series of seismic shifts, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the accelerated uptake of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies, and ever-widening unemployment. Alongside these shifts, there have been the continued fees protests in institutions of higher education and the 2021 looting of malls and other commercial and strategic sites. All of these have long-term significance, made more apparent when we consider that they mostly disproportionately impact the youth, even in the short term. When we began this project, the dominant theme was how to reverse stagnation.Today we are speaking of 'recovery' and 'reconstruction'. This shows the degrees to which our country and continent have been afflicted by the many onslaughts of the past few years. These occur at every level and every dimension. From a theoretical standpoint, this eclectic special issue hopes to contribute to the understanding of these challenges. At a practical level, we also hope to have showcased opportunities wherever possible.

Economy

At around 1% a year and not much higher, South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) growth had reached stagnation and a number of recessions even before the onset of Covid-19 (Stats SA, 2020). By almost all measures, South Africans have been just barely getting by for decades. Economic growth is an urgent and pressing issue – in lieu of which the country could find itself in dire straits. In addition to this, South Africa is one of the most economically divided countries in the world, an issue which is further compounded by the race-class correlation which remains pronounced even after 23 years of political transformation. There are also significant male-female and rural-urban dichotomies. With the then-new administration seeking solutions, the Jobs Summit seemed to modus operandi miss the mark and has resulted in very new practical ideas for resolving rampant joblessness. This problem, perhaps the most pressing in the country's socio-economic interface, could in time be the country's Achilles' heel. Three papers in this special issue seek to tackle this concern. In 'Development in South Africa: Bridging the Rural-Urban Gap,' Masenya takes a look at the country's attempts to close the gap between rural and urban development in economic activity generally, and more so in the wake of Covid-19. In 'Alleviating Unemployment in South Africa: Harnessing Comparative Advantage in the Services Sector,' Mzungulu and Ndzendze propose the alleviation of unemployment through the development of a niche in services as a response to the environment created by existing policies. Both these papers provide a rich understanding of the context and seek to draw lessons from other countries. There is also an appreciation of the difficulty in implementing these policies in the wake of the pandemic and '4IR' technologies.

'Intra-African Trade: Prospects and Challenges' by Hollington focuses on the promise and peril of growing intra-continental trade from the currently disappointing levels of 12% (Tayo, 2021). The article reviews the uneven landscape among the regions. It comes to some conclusions regarding non-tariff barriers that policymakers should focus on if the newly introduced continental free trade area is to gain traction and reverse the current state of affairs which is characterised by outward orientation on the part of Africa. It also fleshes out risks and opportunities from the free trade arrangement, especially for the youth demographic.

Education

Internationally competitive basic and higher education are widely recognised as the critical link to skills attainment and, therefore, economic growth in any given country (Canals, 2017). Yet, in both sectors, the South African education system is in need of considerable review (Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2020). At the primary and secondary levels, there continues to be a lagging behind in terms of: bridging the rural-urban as well as digital divides; improving teacher training; eliminating absenteeism by both learners and teachers; and a strong curriculum that prepares the youth for higher education as well as the workplace. Furthermore, in 2015 and 2016, the country saw a nationwide crisis sparked by a problem whose return continues to be a probability: student uprising in demand of free, quality, and decolonised university education. In 'The State of South African Education: A Critical Exploration of Distributive and Epistemic Injustices,' Sonkqayi asks crucial questions around this sector and makes some fresh observations at philosophical and policy levels.

Land Reform

South Africa stunned the world more than two decades ago by undergoing a peaceful transition from minority to majority rule – an almost unheard-of occurrence among the nations of the continent and the world as a whole. The modern practice of this ancient idea, sometimes referred to as the worst form of government except for all the other ones (Churchill, 1947), is loaded with problems and dilemmas implicative for a country's political and economic landscape. One such problem for South Africa is its 'land question'. How the country succeeds or fails in dealing with it will increasingly impact its social and economic dynamics. For this reason, it has become increasingly politicised. Matseke, in his article 'Land Reform in South Africa,' closely examines developments within the context of the land question, which has seemingly reopened with vigour as of early 2018. The article traces the recent literature and current dynamics and prognosticates

some implications and scenarios for South Africa going forward.

New Media and Fake News

'The Rise of Fake News' by Chirwa and Manyana takes us through the rise and impact of fake news, a phenomenon of immense consequence to every corner of the globe as it touches on the very fabric of how democracies and societies reproduce themselves: information. The phenomenon has become increasingly pronounced in the past five years, catalysed by the ascendance of Donald Trump to the US presidency. This poses a double-edged sword: as more people get access to means of distributing information, so too rises the risk of deliberate manipulation. Sophisticated algorithms seem designed precisely for this purpose. The outcome is political tribalism, as well as fractures along other faultlines. In a context in which truth is disputed, many risks abound, the article argues, and this needs to be mitigated. In this regard, the article offers some prescriptions to curb the proliferation of fake news and the erosion it has already visited upon political discourse.

Migration

'Addressing the Global Migration Crisis' by Nadine Hakizimana takes a look at the global migration crisis, which has had an incalculable impact on millions of lives, stemming from political and economic crises, and which has subsequently spawned numerous crises in other countries. The article takes stock of the severity of the crisis and proposes some measures to mitigate it through a combination of traditional and emerging technologies.

Book Reviews and Interview

The book reviews in this special issue largely dovetail with the themes detailed above. One consists of a book that ponders the future of youth participation in South African politics, while another delves into the nature of borders and their future. Our interview is an in-depth discussion with Ayabonga Cawe, the author of The Economy on Your Doorstep, a recently published book that has resonated for the richness with which it depicts and treats the complex nature of the South African economic landscape. The author fleshes out the themes of his work and his hopes for the country and its young people.

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Development in South Africa:

Bridging The Rural-Urban Gap

By Lesego Masenya | Peer Review

Abstract

South Africa is a highly unequal society with high levels of inequality, poverty, unemployment and other injustices that continue to affect the majority of the population. Although great strides have been made in addressing these challenges, there continues to exist a significant gap between the urban areas (usually over-developed) and the rural areas (usually under-developed), making it harder to bridge these parallel worlds. Worth noting is the report from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) which suggests that Covid-19 has further widened the gap between urban areas and rural areas. These disparities have always existed, but the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light a lot of challenges that have been ongoing, especially in the case of South Africa. To mitigate the urban-rural divide, agriculture in rural areas should be considered as a viable solution, with the support of technological platforms. The results of investing in rural economies will have spill-over effects, positively impacting on urban areas, while creating employment in the peripheries of the country. Now more than ever, it is crucial that we look into other alternatives which will not only benefit the country, but also bridge the gap between rural and urban areas.

Introduction

To live in one of the most unequal yet highly urbanised societies in the world means that there are high levels of inequality, poverty, unemployment, and other injustices that the majority of the population have to live with (Burger et al., 2017). This reality carries with it not only decades of discriminatory policies, but poverty-stricken livelihoods that cripple any chance of progress in a society where wealth has a strong racial correlation (Burger et al., 2017; Leibbrandt, Woolard, and Woolard, 2000). While South Africa is the most advanced and diversified economy in Africa, and the wealthiest in terms of GDP per capita, the country is still haunted by high levels of inequality. According to the 2018 World Bank Report, more than half of South Africa's population lives below the upper poverty line of R992 per month per person, by use of 2018 prices. These are the realities that we are faced with – this is in addition to being the leading country in the world in unequal income distribution, with a Gini index of 63.4, as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: The world's 10 most unequal countries

Ranking	Country	Gini Coefficient
1	South Africa	63.4
2	Namibia	61.3
3	Haiti	60.8
4	Botswana	60.5
5	Suriname	57.6
6	Zambia	57.1
7	Central African Republic	56.2
8	Lesotho	54.2
9	Belize	53.3
10	Swaziland	51.5

(Source: *World Atlas*, 2020)

Structural challenges and weak economic growth have undermined the progress in reducing poverty, which have been further heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic in the last year. According to the World Bank, Covid-19 has had a major impact on South Africa's economy resulting in a contraction of 7% in 2020. Additionally, this severe contraction is estimated to increase poverty levels by 2 million people. These are the challenges that will ultimately affect the ability to achieve progress in household welfare – an indicator that is severely constrained by rising unemployment.

> While South Africa is the most advanced and diversified economy in Africa, and the wealthiest in terms of GDP per capita, the country is still haunted by high levels of inequality. According to the 2018 World Bank Report, more than half of South Africa's population lives below the upper poverty line.

Although great strides have been made in targeting unemployment and economic growth, it is crucial to address these historical inequities adequately, in order to improve the quality of life for the majority of South Africans and to bridge the gap between these parallel worlds. Thus, this article will take measure of the nature of inequality and make an effort in advancing some routes which could potentially be taken to allay the present challenges.

Not a New Idea

The idea of bridging the gap between two parallel worlds is not one that is unheard of (Zhu, 2017). Asia, being the largest continental economy by gross domestic product (GDP), has also experienced rapid socio-economic development in recent years. A great example of this is China: since the late 1970s, the development of Chinese cities has not only attracted immense inflows, but has also been a key driving force for urban growth and development, with the 2010 census stating that 87% of China's 'floating' population migrated to cities and towns from villages. Zhu and his colleagues make use of in situ urbanisation, which refers to the process of rural settlements

and populations transforming themselves into urban or quasi-urban ones with little geographical relocation of the residents. This phenomenon has two dimensions whose development has played a key role in China's urban growth between the late 1970s and the late 1990s (Zhu, 2017). Of the two dimensions, one focuses on the creation of new industrialised centres, while the other refers to the practical and physical modifications of rural areas through the expansion of township and village enterprises (TVEs) (Zhu, 2017).

The experiences of developed countries propose that in the industrial period and post-industrial period, many individuals and their families move between and/or within cities numerous times due to changes in either employment status or housing needs, which are often caused by various life cycle events such as marriage and childbearing. This is the kind of urban-urban and intra-urban mobility that is often observed in many developed countries (Zhu, 2017).

From the case study mentioned above, we learn that incorporating migration along with *in situ* urbanisation will not only ensure that people residing in rural areas benefit from the prosperity of cities, but will also benefit from the resources and potential development that could occur in their hometowns (Zhu, 2017). Spatial links will need to be visualized and implemented at finer spatial levels, with 'a coordinated regional approach' that 'cuts through fragmented boundaries' in order to assist the movement of people between and/or within urban and rural spaces (Zhu, 2017). Additionally, more attention will need to be given to issues of various social security programs and public services, to safeguard so that migrants will not be disadvantaged by this migration (Zhu, 2017). Gopaul's (2009) paper based on the South African case also indicates that something needs to be done to assist people living in rural areas who live in extreme poverty, or else their standard of living will continue to worsen. He suggests that the solution lies in tourism: 'to accomplish rural development, there is a need to nurture a sense of willingness and enthusiasm amongst the poor communities to participate in rural development' (Gopaul, 2009).

The Evolution of Urban Development in South Africa

Rapid development and large scale rural-urban migration in South Africa were inspired by the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley, and that of gold in the Witwatersrand in the 1860s and 1880s respectively (Mabin, 1992; Turok, 2012). These economic activities brought some much-needed opportunities to rural communities, and transformed South Africa from an agricultural state to an industrialised nation (Moomaw and Shatter, 1996; Turok, 2012). An invasion of foreign investment in mining from De Beer, Anglo American and Consolidated Gold Fields was also witnessed in the late 1800s, and further generated the rapid growth of support industries and services that were supported by temporary migrant labour that was migrating to the cities (Turok, 2012). As a result, the developing world – including South Africa – has witnessed unprecedented growth in urbanisation rates in the last two decades (Cohen, 2006). Thus far, urbanisation in South Africa has been increasing by roughly 0.5% on a year-to-year basis, with technological innovation and employment in urban areas continuing to increase due to its ability to offer considerable socio-economic opportunities in comparison to rural areas. Behrens and Robert-Nicoud (2014) further argue that cities are not the only locus in which inequality materialises, but that they are hosts to instruments that contribute extensively to changes in that inequality. Thus, it is not surprising that individuals seem to migrate to economic hubs where more opportunities exist (Behrens and Robert-Nicoud, 2014; Ozler and Hoogeveen, 2005).

Having an urbanised economy or cities as economic powers while rural communities are under-developed is not an exclusively South African phenomenon – it happens all over the world because of several reasons, as seen in the case of Asia. Amongst the key reasons is that of economies of scale and rural-urban migration. As such, Fields (1972) referred to the rural-urban migration theory as an economic phenomenon in his paper. The theory hypothesises that workers compare the projected incomes in the urban sector with agricultural wage rates in the rural areas and migrate if the former exceeds the latter. In addition, rural-urban migration is often regarded as the adjustment mechanism that workers use to assign themselves between different labour markets, some of which are located in urban areas and some located in rural areas. Thus, rural-urban migration is the equilibrating force that connects rural and urban projected incomes and is regarded as a disequilibrium phenomenon (Fields, 1972).

Consequences of Urbanisation

To date, Africa and Asia are the only remaining continents where the rural population outnumbers the urban population. However, both continents are urbanising at unprecedented rates that can be thought of as a double-edged sword. While urbanisation spurs economic opportunities and often increases access to infrastructure, it is also widening inequalities in health and development (Feng, 2015). Worth noting is that while Asia's urban population is projected to surpass its rural population within five years, Africa is not expected to have a majority urban population for at least another 20 years (Feng, 2015).

Looking at South Africa, we have observed how urbanised the cities are, and how they continue to advance. The downsides of these advances have had destructive societal, economic, and environmental consequences (Turok, 2012). Meanwhile, rural areas continue to remain under-developed with high levels of deprivation with respect to sanitation, access to water and access to energy, high levels of unemployment, inadequate use of natural resources, insufficient access to socio-economic and cultural infrastructure, low skills levels, and insufficient literacy rates (Behrens and Robert-Nicoud, 2014; Burger et al., 2017; Gopaul, 2009; Krishman, 2016; Ozler and Hoogeveen, 2005).

Upon an analysis of international studies, Barro (2000) found that people living in rural areas might be using old technological methods, whereas urbanised areas employ more recent and advanced techniques in their daily undertakings. As such, we observe how large municipalities within the cities are deeply accommodative of additional commercial services and more advanced roles concerning finance as well as developmental projects, whereas smaller municipalities – which are mainly located on the peripheries of cities – are only able to accommodate a large portion of lower mandate facilities and industrial work (Behrens and Robert-Nicoud, 2014). In addition, these smaller municipalities are often under-resourced and are surrounded by areas that have high levels of poverty and deprivation.

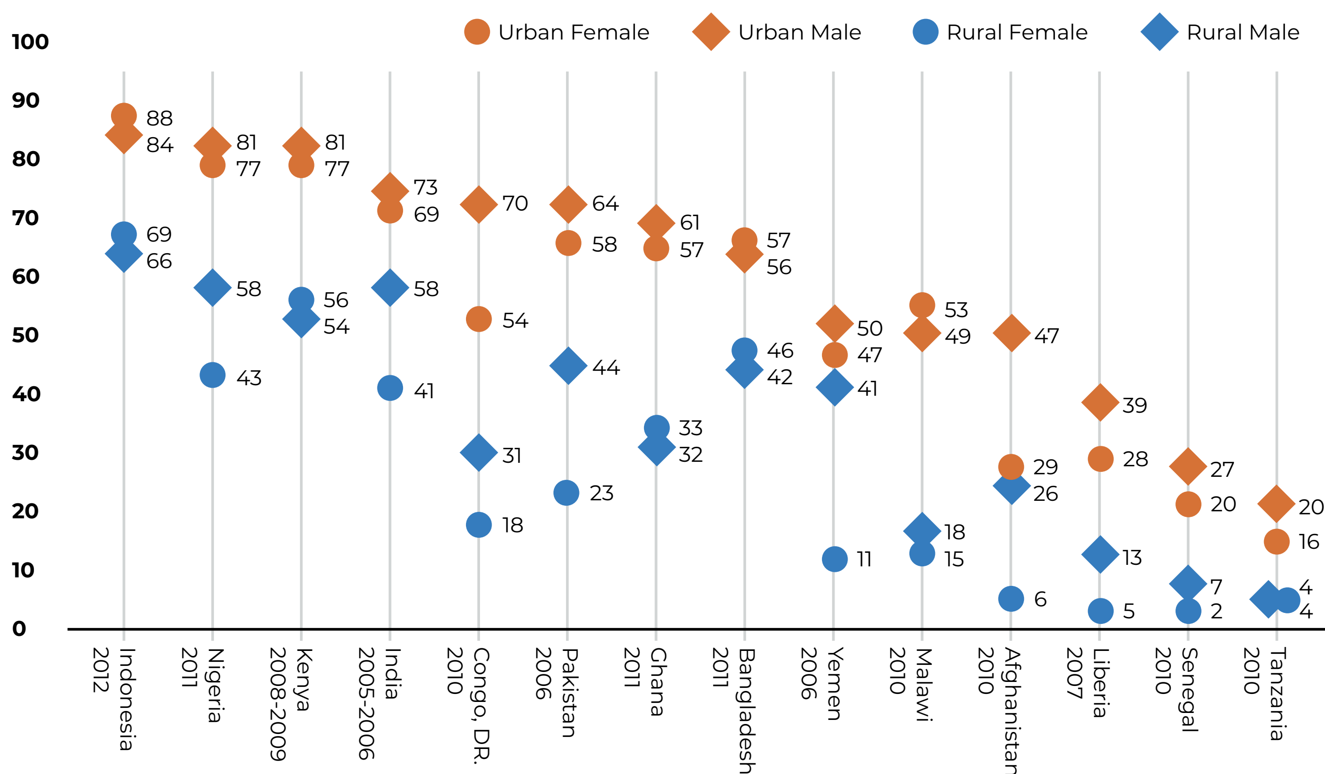
Currently, an approximate 66% of South Africans live in urban areas, with the expectation that eight in ten people will be living in urban areas by the year 2050. This not only means that the demand for infrastructure and housing will increase rapidly, but that the cost of living will also increase for the average South African. Though urbanisation is the most convenient instrument currently being used to accelerate the rate of growth in developing countries by means of (i) driving economic growth, (ii) sustaining larger and more productive populations, (iii) sourcing higher means of income, new and diversified engines of growth need to be considered. The results of having cities that are too urbanised may have negative externalities that may adversely affect rural economies, whose role is to provide economic sustainability and food security (Krishman, 2016). As such, other measures need to be considered if we are to sufficiently and effectively bridge the gap between rural economies and urban economies in order to ensure that growth takes place in a way that is beneficial to everyone.

Although cities are the dominant centres of economic activity and employment, and continue to attract maximum foreign investment, they are not performing to their potential or reaping the benefits of agglomeration due to prevailing shortages of energy and water infrastructure, transport congestion, and deficits in education and skills (Turok, 2012). This is in addition to creating poverty traps on the peripheries of cities, which results in favouritism for road-based transport: private cars and minibus taxis (Turok, 2012). To ensure that rural economies are not left behind in this fast-paced economy, we need to consider redeveloping rural areas into sustainable communities that can support themselves economically (Gopaul, 2009; Krishman, 2016).

Consequences of the Urban-Rural Divide on Youth

Young people who reside in the urban areas of developing countries are generally more likely to stay in school longer than those who reside in rural areas. In addition, there exists a significant gender divide, as young men (aged 15 to 24) are more likely to complete lower secondary school than women. Generally, women and girls who reside in rural areas are least likely to complete schooling. As seen in Figure 1 below, Malawi is an exception amongst African countries, in that more urban women than men are likely to have completed school.

Figure 1: Percentage of young people aged 15–24 who have completed lower secondary school



(Source: *New Security Beat* (Woodrow Wilson Centre for International Scholars), 2015

The urban-rural divide in the education space has always been evident in South Africa, mostly to the disadvantage of rural areas. However, the need to adopt online learning during Covid-19 further highlighted the lack of access to resources required to succeed. While some learners were fortunate enough to be able to access online learning platforms during lockdowns and school closures, others had to depend on government and private funders for smartphones, tablets or laptops and, in some instances, free data. Thus, providing the technological tools was and is a critical step in ensuring that learners do not fall behind. If a student or learner has never used the internet, or has not been taught the necessary skills to evaluate or create information, a technological tool meant to aid in the learning becomes one more obstacle in the learning process – an obstacle that many rural learners have had to face.

Consequences of the Urban-Rural Divide in Covid-19 Outcomes

A report from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) suggests that Covid-19 has widened the gap between cities and rural areas. The disparities between urban areas and rural areas have always existed, but Covid-19 has brought to light a lot of issues that have been ongoing and are now further exposed due to the need to vaccinate as many people as possible.

A study conducted at Oregon State University documented the disparity in outcomes during Covid-19 in terms of ethnic minorities, who are not only more likely to have died from the virus but have also suffered economic destitution. The two key findings that came from this study are: i) unequal outcomes and ii) high levels of vulnerability. The former found that people who reside in either mostly rural or completely rural settings are 15–26% more likely to die from Covid-19, as opposed to their peers residing in mostly urban environments; the latter found that minorities are usually on the lower end of the socio-economic status spectrum which may result in a need to work in occupations where there is contact with a lot of other people, ultimately putting them at a higher risk of contracting the virus.

In South Africa, the common challenges that both urban and rural settings have faced during the pandemic include stigma and misinformation with regards to the virus, high levels of fear among health care workers, and issues around oxygen provision in hospitals. Unfortunately, the differences far exceed the commonalities. Using the vaccine as an example, it is harder to implement vaccine rollouts in rural areas due to a lack of amenities such as good road networks, clinics and hospitals, and limited access to personal protective equipment. Other challenges include fewer health resources available and multi-layered governance systems, to name a few.

“Using the vaccine as an example, it is harder to implement vaccine rollouts in rural areas due to a lack of amenities such as good road networks, clinics and hospitals, and limited access to personal protective equipment. Other challenges include fewer health resources available and multi- layered governance systems, to name a few.”

What has been key in these under-resourced rural areas is the need to think out of the box, since strategies that work in urban areas are not always a good fit for rural areas. Additionally, strong partnerships will need to be formed at all levels of society. It is also key to have policies that prioritise rural health and the adequate distribution of health resources to meet the needs of minority populations, especially with the distribution of Covid-19 vaccinations.

Poverty and Inequality in Rural Areas

Households that have high levels of poverty and inequality are largely Black or coloured communities who tend to reside on the peripheries of cities. Thus, a high level of vulnerability is usually observed in areas that are remote and isolated from the main cities (Burger et al., 2017). High levels of unemployment are largely concentrated among poor people in rural areas and continue to remain a core challenge in the South African economy with a 238% growth from 1 703 863 in 1994 to 5 752 632 in 2016 (Dube et al., 2018; Quantec, 2018). According to Ozler and Hoogeveen (2005), South Africans are neither separate, nor are we equal in post-apartheid South Africa. The authors make this statement because the question of whether the economic inequalities of the apartheid era have faded remains, especially with the high levels of poverty and inequality that this country still faces in rural areas.

Poverty is at an all-time high in South Africa and is highly concentrated within the African race, women, rural areas, and the youth (Triegaardt, 2006; Woolard, 2012). Statistics show that Africans account for 95% of the poor population and a large percentage of them reside in former homelands, rural areas, and townships households (Woolard, 2012). It is also important to note that poverty is closely linked to an increased mortality. This stems from the fact that poor people have difficulties in accessing health care facilities as they do not have the basic income for transport services, nutrition, and clothing – further perpetuating high levels of inequality (Woolard, 2012). Consequently, unsatisfactory living conditions continue to intensify high poverty levels, which further exclude and marginalise poor people from participating in the economy (Triegaardt, 2006; Woolard, 2012). As such, agriculture presents opportunities for job creation, particularly in rural areas (Dube et al., 2018). As a labour-intensive and rural industry, agriculture makes a contribution of 10% to total employment. However, a slight decline has been observed between the period of 1994 and 2016 – from 12% to 6% (Dube et al., 2018).

How Can Agriculture Help Eliminate Poverty and Deprivation?

In rural areas all over the world, agriculture represents the principal land use and is a major element of the practicality of rural areas. Rural communities can be developed to increase their competitiveness in agriculture. The in situ urbanisation case mentions how rural areas have to transform themselves into urban or quasi-urban ones with little geographical relocation of residents; in the case of South Africa, this can be achieved through agriculture. Farming and related undertakings primarily encompass the basic fabric of rural life, contributing meaningfully to the overall state of rural areas by facilitating and creating employment, business prospects, infrastructure, and quality of the environment. This can be a driving force for economic growth and can have lasting impacts on the overall community.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector remains the dominant livelihood for many, more especially in Rwanda and Burkina Faso, with 79% and 85% respectively of the population relying on agriculture. In the case of South Africa, agriculture is a twofold production system that comprises of large-scale commercial farmers and small-scale farmers (Dube et al., 2018). As it stands, agricultural production remains concentrated on field crops given their prominence in determining national food security. However, the growth in South Africa's agriculture sector – the fruit sector and small-scale farmer participation in particular – is restricted by insufficient infrastructure: mainly ripening facilities, pack-houses, and cold storage facilities (Dube et al., 2018). This limitation causes costly delays, limits entry into the formal sector, and hinders expansion into export markets.

Government or private sector needs to intervene by initiating and constructing capabilities in agriculture and agro-processing if these small-scale manufacturers do not have the means to get their products to final consumers (Dube et al., 2018). What will ensure success in this initiative is linking farmers with large producer-exporting companies that already have access to infrastructure and international markets (Dube et al., 2018). The government can then incentivise large producer-exporting companies to collaborate with minor producers. In return for large-scale companies lengthening technical services and information on production and standards to small-scale farmers, the large companies can be offered tax breaks, grants for investments in storage and cold chain amenities, or support with raising funds. This initiative is one that not only benefits small-scale farmers, but also has the capability to have spill over effects that will benefit the whole economy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Rural areas undoubtedly have the potential to lead to great economic growth; however, this reality will only be possible if skills are uplifted and investment in research and development is prioritised. The results of investing in rural economies will have spill over effects and positively impact on urban areas, while creating employment in the peripheries of the country. With a highly urbanised country such as South Africa, it is crucial that we look into other alternatives which will not only benefit the country as a whole, but also have an undeniable impact that can bridge the gap between rural and urban areas.

Competitive agriculture in rural communities, particularly when supported by technological platforms, can drive economic growth. An example of this is the Khula farming app, founded by Karidas Tshintsholo with the aim of assisting emerging farmers to find their feet. To date, 175 farmers are currently using the app, and this has ensured that famers who were initially unable to access formal markets can connect with suppliers. The purpose of the app is not only to assist small-scale farmers, but to assist with alleviating poverty and ensuring that young entrepreneurs have an opportunity to make a decent living.

With such great innovations taking place in the country, the possibilities of the kind of development that can be fostered in rural areas are endless. Indeed, South Africa's developmental woes can only be resolved from within: through South African ingenuity, and through modulation of the experiences, technologies, and investments of external partners.

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Alleviating Unemployment in South Africa:

Harnessing Comparative Advantage in the Services Sector

By Anelisa Mzungulu and Bhaso Ndzendze | Peer Review

Abstract

This article reviews the trajectory of employment in South Africa before and during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Thereafter, we propose measures for the alleviation of unemployment through the development of a comparative advantage in services as a response to the environment created by existing policies and multiple crises. The policy is the best response to the consequences of existing measures in place. Threats – in the form of the pandemic, advances in Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies, online retail, and the July 2021 lootings – present the need for strategic investment and further protections for this sector.

Introduction

In 1994, the newly democratically elected government of South Africa received an economy that had been systematically geared towards the marginalisation of the majority of the population. That is to say that for nearly half a century, the African population had been deliberately subjected to second-class education, labour laws that stifled their economic and political advancement, a business regulatory framework that criminalised forms of firm ownership, and zoning restrictions that kept the black majority outside the metropolitan that served as the focal point of commerce (Levinsohn, 2007). However, the supply of labour grew virtually exponentially in the aftermath of apartheid. In particular, the post-apartheid economy of South Africa witnessed an unprecedented influx of African women into its labour market. On the whole, due to previous marginalisation, the new entrants were relatively unskilled. Simultaneously, while witnessing new entrants, the South African labour market experienced a negative shock in overall labour demand. In particular, the demand for unskilled labour in the mining and agricultural sectors declined. Additionally, the inclination of the economy towards skilled labour contributed as a technical change towards the decline in demand for unskilled labour (Banerjee et al., 2008). Years later in post-apartheid South Africa, with virtually all restrictions of the apartheid system lifted and erased from the law, unemployment over the same period has about doubled, and the same group that bore the brunt of apartheid now disproportionately bears the brunt of unemployment.

There are various reasons for the increase in unemployment in post-apartheid South Africa. The growth of the labour force is highly concentrated in the African population. In an eight-year period, after the fall of apartheid, the African women labour force participation rate rose by 15% and the African men labour force participation rose by 5%. The increases were partly due to the removal of apartheid restrictions that prevented movements into urban areas, signalling new possibilities of employment within these areas for the African population. These perceived employment opportunities and expected returns to employment were held superior in contrast to what was previously opened to non-white groups. Educational levels are relatively higher and participation rates traditionally increase with the improvement in educational levels, particularly for women. The much larger increase in the African women labour force participation rate, relative to the African men labour force participation rate, is as a result of the decline in the access of African women to African men's income, who had traditionally served as breadwinners. HIV/AIDS has had enormous impact in creating single parent households and increasing incidences of female headship. Additionally, the South African labour market has suffered as a result of not being spared, like other countries, of skill-biased technological change. The consequence of all these factors is increased labour supply and declining labour demand that has led to a decline in wage rates. These wage rates have been found unacceptable by society and, as a result, there has been substantial unemployment.

The socio-economic costs of high unemployment in South Africa present a three-pronged threat. Firstly, unemployed South Africans of working age represent potential output that could be earning, if the majority of the working age population was put to use. Secondly, South Africa's high unemployment captures the dynamism of unemployment. Those who are not acquiring the experience and skills are necessarily unemployed and will be incapable of contributing to their own productivity in the future. Thus, the costs of unemployment are amplified over time. A chief consequence of this is the foregone future growth. Furthermore, the dynamics involved, as will be shown by the data available for unemployment, is such that unemployment is not self-correcting as a problem. Lastly, and hard to measure but very important, is that unemployment accelerates the social ills that engender a sense of hopelessness. On top of the list is crime, disengagement with the political process, and a lack of interest in one's future wellbeing. Because unemployment is prevalent amongst the youth, their disillusionment with post-apartheid South Africa has implications for the country's future (Levinsohn, 2007).

For all the reasons above and more, unemployment is clamouring for attention as a challenge facing South Africa. This article proposes the alleviation of unemployment through the development of a comparative advantage in the services sector as a response to the environment created by existing policies. The policy is the best response to the consequences of existing policies in place.

Table 1: Participation, employment, and unemployment rates by year and gender (%)

Survey Year	Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
WOMEN			
2012	48.3	34.83	27.88
2013	49.58	36.13	27.2
2014	50.68	36.65	27.2
2015	52.1	37.68	27.7
2016	52.25	36.98	29.15
2017	53.6	37.73	29.6
MEN			
Survey Year	**Participation Rate**	**Employment Rate**	**Unemployment Rate**
2012	61.68	47.55	22.9
2013	62.18	47.85	23.08
2014	63.8	48.85	23.33
2015	65.1	49.88	23.38
2016	65.35	49.2	24.73
2017	66.13	49.15	25.7

(Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2012–2017))

The South African Labour Market

Table 1 reflects the labour force participation rate and the unemployment rate over time. Here, and in subsequent tables, the 'narrow' definition of unemployment is utilised to define the participation rate and the unemployment rate, but one could have easily used the 'broad' definition. The unemployment rate in the South African labour market is high regardless of whether the 'broad' or 'narrow' definition is used (quotable). The dichotomy between the 'narrow' and 'broad' definitions of unemployment is that the former does not factor in individuals who have not actively searched for work in the past four weeks, while the latter factors in those who have simply stated that they are available for work, notwithstanding whether or not search activity has been conducted in the past four weeks.

In dealing with Table 1, some definitions are useful. Defining those who are employed with *N*, those who are unemployed with *U* and those who are economically inactive as *NE*, the labour force participation rate is given by

$$\frac{N + U}{N + NE + U}$$

the employment rate is given by

$$\frac{N}{N + NE + U}$$

and the unemployment rate is given by

$$\frac{U}{N + NE + U}$$

Table 1 depicts three key points. Firstly, and relative to international standards, the labour force participation rates are low; however, the labour force participation rates have sustained growth over the past six years from 2012 to 2017 (before declining for women in 2018 (53.17%) and rebounding to 59.57% in 2019). The labour force participation rate for women has risen from 48.3% in 2012 to 53.6% in 2017, a positive change of 5.3% in the six years between 2012 and 2017. The labour force participation rate for men has risen from 61.68% in 2012 to 66.13% in 2017, a positive change of 4.45%. This was reversed to 65.62% in 2018 and a slight rebound in 2019 (still below 2017 levels) at 65.8%. Although the increase in the labour force participation rate for women was larger than the labour force participation rate for men over the same period, there are signs that the increases in the labour force participation rate for women are smaller relative to the increases in the labour force participation rate for women experienced after the lifting of apartheid restrictions in the early 90s. The lifting of apartheid restrictions, creating perceived employment opportunities, resulted in an unprecedented influx of relatively unskilled women into the labour market (Banerjee et al., 2008). In the period between 1997 and 2005, the labour force participation rate increased by a larger change of 15% (Levinsohn, 2007).

Secondly, employment rates are quite low, with only 48.02% of men having been employed in the last quarter of 2020 (StatsSA, 2020: 25). Only close to a half of the male labour force is employed and only 37.73% of women work by 2017. According to the narrow definition, the women labour force is still far out from 50% of its labour force being utilised. Thirdly, before the Covid-19 pandemic, unemployment rates continued to rise for both men and women over time, as the figures in Table 2 stress. Unemployment had stubbornly increased and will likely not retreat on its own. In light of this, the requirement is that it should be addressed by government policy.

Table 2: Unemployment Rate (%) by age and educational level in 2018.

	Other Tertiary	Graduate	Matric	Less Than Matric	Total
Youth (15-34)	28.8	11.9	39.1	44.1	38.8
Adult (35-64)	8.2	4.4	16.1	23.4	17.9

(Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2018)

Table 2 shows unemployment rates for the youth (ages 15–34 years old) and adults (ages 35–64 years old) according to levels of education. Evidently, adults performed relatively better than the youth at 17.9% unemployment rate compared to the youth's unemployment rate of 38.8%. Most notably, the unemployment rate for the youth is higher relatively to that of adults, notwithstanding the level of educational attainment. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate is mitigated as the level of education increases. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, StatsSA (2020: 10) observes that:

> [O]f those who continued to receive pay during the lockdown, some had a reduction in their pay/salary during the lockdown. There seems to be some relationship between the level of education and reduction in pay/salary. Those with higher levels of education had higher chances of receiving a full salary than those with lower levels of education in both Q3: 2020 and Q4: 2020. About 9 in every 10 employed graduates (90,2%) continued to receive full salaries, compared to 81,2% of those with less than matric as their highest level of education in Q4: 2020.

Table 2 divides the aggregate figures in Table 1 into policy relevant slices, by dividing them into educational level and age cohort. What we can decipher from the two is that unemployment is concentrated in individuals with matric or less. For the youth between ages 15 and 34, the unemployment rate for those with matric is 39.1% and 44.1% for those with less than a matric. For adults between the ages of 35 and 64, the unemployment rate for those with matriculation is 16.1% and even higher for those without a matric at 23.4%. Evidently, the completion of school is not sufficient to guarantee entry into the labour market. However, as stated previously, the rate of unemployment is mitigated by educational attainment: unemployment rates decline with a post-matric qualification to 28.8% for the youth and 8.2% for adults and even further for graduates to 11.9% for the youth and 4.4% for adults – a relatively minimal unemployment rate compared to those with matric or less.

"Evidently, adults performed relatively better than the youth at 17.9% unemployment rate compared to the youth's unemployment rate of 38.8%. Most notably, the unemployment rate for the youth is higher relatively to that of adults, notwithstanding the level of educational attainment. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate is mitigated as the level of education increases."

Table 3: Participation, employment, and unemployment rates by age group (%).

Age Group	Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
15–24	25.60	12.20	52.40
25–34	73.80	49.40	33.00
35–44	80.90	64.00	20.90
45–54	74.00	62.10	16.10
55–64	45.80	41.80	8.90

(Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2018)

Table 3 captures the trajectory of employment and labour force participation. There is a large jump (48.2%) in the labour force rate from ages 15–24 (25.60%) to ages 25–34 (73.80%). This captures the results of the 15–24 age cohort leaving school and entering the labour force market. At a staggering 52.4% rate of unemployment, the age cohort between 15–24 years experiences the highest concentration of unemployment. Relative to this age cohort, the unemployment rate declines to 32% for the age cohort of 25–34 years, declines further to 20.9% for the age cohort of 35–44 years, and ultimately experiences modest figures of 16.1% for the age cohort of 45–54 years and 8.9% for the age cohort of 55–64 years respectively.

Table 4: Employment by industries.

Industry	Q2 2017	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Total	16 100	16 288	16 313	14 148
Agriculture	835	843	842	799
Mining	434	435	381	373
Manufacturing	1799	1744	1789	1456
Utilities	148	161	151	113
Construction	1395	1476	1363	1066
Trade	3265	3219	3429	2946
Transport	954	1014	983	885
Finance and other business services	2395	2399	2495	2234
Community and social services	3560	3692	3622	3244
Private households	1311	1296	1251	1005

(Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (figures are in the thousands))

Table 4 shows that between the periods of Q2 2017 and Q2 2019, the South African industries experienced the shedding and creation of jobs. There was a net gain of a total of 213,000 jobs across all industries. This was reversed by the onset of Covid-19. In the first months of the 'hard lockdown', 2.2 million people lost their jobs (Smit, 2021). The majority of the job losses are concentrated in the trade sector at 483,000, followed by the community and services industry shedding a total of 378,000 jobs. The manufacturing industry closely trails with 330,000 jobs and manufacturing with 297,000 jobs.

Tables 5 and 6 depict labour market transitions, a moving picture of the labour market, as opposed to the previous tables which were a view of the economy at a point in time. Tables 5 and 6 isolate the school to work transitions, and are therefore only reflective of youth aged 15–34. Table 5 presents transition rates for cohorts aged 15– 34, and Table 6 presents transition rates for those with at least a matric qualification.

Table 5: Transition matrix of employment status for all youth.

	N	NEA	Discouraged	Searching	Informal	Formal	Total
NEA	1281796	63.87	15.30	13.32	3.32	6.20	100
Discouraged	769545	20.85	37.08	28.71	5.36	10.01	100
Searching	928749	19.19	19..8	43.97	5.63	12.26	100
Informal	362967	10.71	9.68	16.37	53.83	28.10	100
Formal	1361128	6.58	4.62	8.48	4.38	67.44	100
Total	4735162	27.88	15.53	29.29	8.88	38.22	100

(Source: September 2017 and March 2018 Quarterly Labour Force Survey panel)

Table 6: Transition matrix of employment status for all youth with at least a matric.

	N	NEA	Discouraged	Searching	Informal	Formal	Total
NEA	276587	55.21	11.10	15.67	2.23	18.03	100
Discouraged	222856	18.93	47.78	35.73	4.51	8.35	100
Searching	347550	19.08	15.98	45.82	3.84	17.28	100
Informal	94883	8.56	5.85	18.04	30.70	25.76	100
Formal	651888	7.57	2.82	6.35	5.74	81.69	100
Total	1654954	19.18	11.99	22.38	5.97	43.46	100

(Source: September 2017 and March 2018 Quarterly Labour Force Survey panel)

The rows represent the state of the individual in September 2017, while the columns represent the state of the individual six months later in March 2018. The rows indicate the labour market state of the candidate in September 2017, while the columns indicate the status six months later in March 2018. For example, in Table 5, of those in active search for employment in September 2017, 43.9% were still engaged in search activity six months later, while 15.98% grew discouraged and ceased searching for employment. Only 12.26% landed employment in the formal industry. Together, Table 5 and Table 6 show three key points. Firstly, movement between formal industries and informal industries is quite rare, but being in possession of a matric improves the likelihood. Secondly, once one has landed employment in formal industries, one has the tendency to hold onto work (not the same job, however) in the formal industries. The retention rates are quite high (67.44%) for those aged 18–35, and almost 81.69% for those who have at least a matric. Lastly, there is less likelihood (30.70%) of having a job in the informal industries six months later, which indicates barriers to entry in the informal industries.

Lessons from India and China

Some useful lessons can be learnt from the development paths of China and India. In 1978, China and India were two developing countries, experiencing low levels of per capita GDP growth and diametrically opposed political, economic, and social institutions. The real GDP per capita income in 1980 stood at $556 and $917 in China and India respectively (Alm, 2008). The Chinese and Indian economies were characteristic of Gerschenkronian 'latecomer countries' experiencing an infinitesimal industrialisation pace, with an inability to extract meaningful value from their relative economic backwardness (Saccone, 2009). In the Gerschenkronian sense, the typical situation in a backward country prior to the initiation of considerable industrialisation is the antagonism between the actual state of economic activities and existing obstacles to industrial development, and the great promise inherent in such a development. However, the extent of opportunities intrinsic in industrialisation varies between countries and is predicated on each country's endowment of natural resources. Furthermore, industrialisation in China and India seemed virtually impossible due to the formidable institutional obstacles that remained (Alm, 2008). China was toiling under a communist yoke and India emphasised labour-intensive agricultural farming (Alm, 2008). Additionally, both countries were lacking in, in the stable sense of the word, a reliable, disciplined industrial labour force that has been detached from the land and has become suitable for utilisation in factories or factory-like environments. India, with its legacy of British colonial rule, possessed a large number of English-speaking workers and familiarity with the West. India also offered an ample supply of educated workers, many of them college graduates available at a fraction of what they could earn in the U.S and other advanced economies (Alm, 2008). China was the opposite: in 1978, the Chinese labour force still applied their trade in the agrarian economy, with 70.5% of the labour force and 28.8% of GDP in agriculture, forestry and fishing (Alm, 2008). The primary catalyst for growth in both economies was the retracting of the government in favour of relative free-markets, which led to a substantial dependence of export-led growth (Alm, 2008). China and India have espoused different development paths.

Development Paths

An observation of data reveals the emergence of two different development paths in India and China, as stated above. The Chinese development path, after the loosening of the communist yoke, took on an industrialisation production trajectory from 1978 onwards. Achieving notable success in production of input goods and finished goods, a comprehensive list is as reflected in Table 7 below:

Table 7: China's Goods Output Soars.

[Note: In 1978, China produced 28,000 refrigerators, 200 ACs, 400 washing machines and 3,800 colour TVs.

Types of Goods	1978	1990	2006	Units (Millions)
Chemical fibre	.3	1.7	20.7	tons
Cloth	11030.0	18880.0	59855.0	meters
Paper	4.4	13.7	68.6	tons
Plastics	.7	12.3	26.0	tons
Electricity	256.6	621.2	2865.7	1000kwh
Coal	618.0	1080.0	2373.0	tons
Pig iron	34.8	62.4	412.5	tons
Steel	31.8	66.4	419.1	tons
Steel products	22.1	51.5	468.9	tons

Types of Goods	1978	1990	2006	Units (Millions)
Cement	65.2	209.7	1236.8	tons
Plate glass	17.8	80.7	465.7	weight (cases)
Refrigerators	0	68.5	35.3	units
Room ACs	0	2	68.5	units
Washing machines	0	6.6	35.6	units
Colour TVs	0	10.3	83.8	units
Motor vehicles	.1	.5	7.3	units
Microcomputers	0	.1	93.4	units
Integrated circuits	30.4	108.4	33575.0	units
Mobile phones	0	0	480.1	units

(Source: September 2017 and March 2018 Quarterly Labour Force Survey panel)

Additionally, China's goods output as a proportion of gross domestic product exceeds the average of nations with similar per capita income by about 12 percentage points, serving as evidence of China's predilection for goods production (Alm, 2008). Furthermore, this proportion of goods output of domestic production is the equivalence of the country's lag in the world average. Comparatively, China has outstripped India in industrial building-up: by the same measure of goods output as a percentage of domestic production and relatively to the world, India trails the world average by approximately 8 percentage points (Alm, 2008). This is despite India's own pursuit of goods manufacturing within a predominately services-based development model. It is not true that while China has focused on goods production and India on services, India is morphing into 'the office of the world' and China into 'the factory of the world' (Saccone, 2009). The growth of Indian industries accelerated, in a relatively inferior and lagging fashion to growth rates that emerged in China. Table 8 below shows a list of such industries. This adds to any conclusion that development paths are not necessarily unique or that they espouse absolute autonomy in their ideas. Development paths may be a healthy fusion of different developmental emphases or trajectories. Irma Adelman, in a paper titled 'The Fallacies in Development Theory and Their Implications for Policy' concluded that:

Economic development is a highly non-linear, multifaceted, path dependent, dynamic process involving systematically shifting interaction patterns among different aspects of development and therefore requiring predictably changing policies and institutions over time. The Bank (and Fund) must learn to accept this fact of life. They must start delivering a more state-specific, differentiated message to their clients, difficult as it might be. The cookie-cutter approach to policy is likely to be incorrect or irrelevant at least as often as it is right (Adelman, 1999).

“Some useful lessons can be learnt from the development paths of China and India. In 1978, China and India were two developing countries, experiencing low levels of per capita GDP growth and diametrically opposed political, economic, and social institutions. The real GDP per capita income in 1980 stood at $556 and $917 in China and India respectively (Alm, 2008).”

Table 8: Output index for the manufacturing industry in India

(base 1993–4 = 100; weights* industry = 100)

Industry and Weight	2004-05	2006-07
Beverages, tobacco and related 12. 38 products	192.1	444.5
2 Transport equipment and parts 3.98Machinery and equipment 39.57 other than transport equipment	194.1	367.7
4 Non-metallic mineral products 4.4	182.5	357.1
5 Other manufacturing industries 2.56 Textile products (including 62.54 wearing apparel) Basic chemicals and chemical	220.8	305.8
7 products (except products of 14.0 petroleum & coal)	142.5	298.4
8 Basic metal and alloy industries 7.45 Wool, silk and man-made fibre	156.1	285.0
92.26 textiles Paper and paper products and 115.73 coal products	164.6	283.4
10 printing, publishing, and allied 2.65 industries Rubber, plastic petroleum and	1469	278.9
115.73 coal products	146.9	268.4
12 Food products 9.08 Metal products and parts	197.8	248.6
13 (except machinery and 2.81 equipment)	180.5	226.3
14 Cotton textiles 5.52 Leather and leather and fur	137.2	185.2

India, repelled by the strength of China in the production of goods, wisely adopted a services strategy (Alm, 2008). This development path was cushioned by India's advantage in communications technology, language, and cultural compatibility (Alm, 2008). Despite China's impressive dominance in the manufacturing of goods, it was particularly overwhelmed by and has lagged behind India's ability to deliver services. Thus, it was relegated to an inferior position in services, just as India was relegated to an inferior position in the manufacturing of goods (Alm, 2008). India has taken advantage of cheap transaction costs (specifically transport costs) in the advent of the internet and as such is able to deliver cheap services around the world, but predominately to the U.S and Britain (Alm, 2008). In the past decade, India's services have grown aggressively, shooting up 18 percentage points of all exports to 38 percentage points of all exports. In the process, India has surpassed 30 percentage of all exports of the U.S, the largest providers of services in the global market place (Alm, 2008). As evidence of the fact that development does not unfold in a linear fashion and often takes different development paths: China has experienced a 5% decline in services sales. In China, services went from 15 percentage points of all exports to 8 percentage points of all exports (Alm, 2008). The development paths of China and India are also evidence of a Gerschenkronian development process that is characterised by initial endowments that determine the trajectory that a country undertakes in pursuit of escaping economic backwardness.

The Economic Argument for the Alleviation of Unemployment through Development of a Comparative Advantage in Services

In order to understand what this article is proposing it is important to draw a distinction between the informal and formal economies, which can also be referred to as the formal and informal sectors. The formal sector consists of South Africa's heavy industries (for example, the mining sector and the metals sector), in addition to commercial agriculture and financial services. The informal sector differs in the sense that it consists of subsistence agriculture, lighter manufacturing, for example food and clothing, and a substantial share of trade and transport services (Davies, 2009). Some are of the view that the informal sector is an ever-evolving sector with the ability to lead to job creation, and lead to economy-wide growth in output. The distinction between formal and informal activities is that informal sectors are largely unregistered firms. Thus, the consequences of policy are largely varying for the informal sector and formal sector.

According to the developmental history of China and India, it is crucial for a country to pick a developmental path suitable for the capabilities of its labour force and economic conditions. South Africa, institutionally and economically, adopted the free market principle of trade liberalisation in the early 1990s. Simultaneously, unemployment and labour force participation rate grew rapidly. Trade liberalisation led to a reduction in tariffs charged on imports into South Africa. Consequently, this lowered the import prices and led to the improvement of the demand for imported products. A look at the initial tariff rates and collections in 2002 reveals that the highest tariffs stemmed from clothing and textiles. Therefore, the textiles industry was the most adversely affected and faced unprecedented import competition which led to the production of textiles and clothing declining by 4.7% (Davies, 2009). That is to say neither the informal nor formal sector were spared the assault brought on by cheap imports. However, the challenge of cheaper substitutes was avoided in the formal sector, for example in processed foods and other manufactured goods. Whereas formal sector production increased in some industries due to access to cheaper imports, production declined for informal producers, who face higher import competition without access to foreign export markets. Thus, trade liberalisation caused employment to fall, despite an overall increase in production. There is great reason to believe that jobs have continued to be lost in this fashion in the manufacturing industry. According to the statistical section above, the majority of the job losses, as has been the trend in recent years, are concentrated in the manufacturing industry, which accounted for 108,000 job losses in 2018. In comparison to 2017, manufacturing persisted in job losses with 55,000 jobs lost. However, these national results hide the different outcomes for the formal and informal sectors. The true consequences have been that informal sector production drops significantly, leading to a virtually equal decline in informal employment. However, the formal sector workers and producers make gains, especially in services as a result of improved access to foreign markets. Consequently, there is a shift away

from the informal sector to the formal sector, which has contributed to the disproportionate smallness informal sector in South Africa (Davies, 2009). Thus evidently, the informal sector, as well as the formal sector, can gain from specialisation in services in the face of cheaper goods from Asian Economies because trade liberalisation significantly reduces informal employment by increasing import competition without providing additional opportunities through the access of foreign markets.

The government can create access to foreign markets by specialising in services and promoting a services-oriented economy, ancillary to the natural resources competitive and dependent economy. Whereas the government has opted for trade liberalisation, the best complement to that policy would be a focus on services, following a similar growth path as that of India. The assessment of the South African labour market statistical section found that the South African labour market is strongly dominated by a relatively unskilled labour force of African women and youth. The majority of the men and women have at least a matric qualification. Therefore, the development of the services comparative advantage should be done through a services provider who will utilise divisions of labour such that those involved in services in South Africa can upskill themselves and progressively gain the necessary skills. However, it will have to be a move away from production.

It is worth noting the nature of the South African formal sector. The formal sector in South Africa is characterised by the same qualities of the formal sector of middle-income countries. However, the informal sector has those of a poor, less developed country. Like middle income countries rich in minerals and competitive in capital and labour intensiveness, it simply cannot compete with East Asian economies in low wage, unskilled labour-intensive manufacturing. Above that, any successful labour-intensive manufacturing will conclude in formalisation, working backwards. As shown in the South African labour market statistical section, South Africa has experienced, since apartheid, an increase in relatively unskilled female labour force and the hope to get these women into employment is stifled by a virtually disappearing low wage unskilled labour-intensive manufacturing that has relocated to Asia. Thus, it becomes paramount to upskill this labour force through services where we can carve out a market for services produced, including those ancillary services to the manufacturing process. The idea, and indeed the only hope, is to upskill the labour force through a creation of a comparative advantage in services where they participate through the divisions of labour.

It was also shown in the statistical section that the youth is largely unemployed and encounter barriers to entry in the informal sector but are likely to hold a job (not necessarily the same job) in the formal sector. However, we saw through the developmental path of India that the advantage of the services sector is that there are minimal transportation costs, if at all. The barriers to entry in the informal sector in the form of transportation costs can be relaxed if the informal activity undertaken is the production of services and the government is serving as patron to such informal firms. This can create entrepreneurial tendencies amongst the youth. Thus, a focus on services can go a long way to reducing the barriers of entry in the informal sector and to creating employment opportunities.

To be sure, the services sector faces numerous threats. Two have become pronounced over 2020 and 2021: one structural and another contingent but possibly recurrent in the long term. Firstly, the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which threatens to bring automation and online retail to the expense of job-creating brick-and-mortar stores, makes informed investment in this sector that much more imperative. Secondly, the looting which took place in July 2021, in the wake of the arrest of former president Jacob Zuma, evinces the need to provide security to the retail sector.

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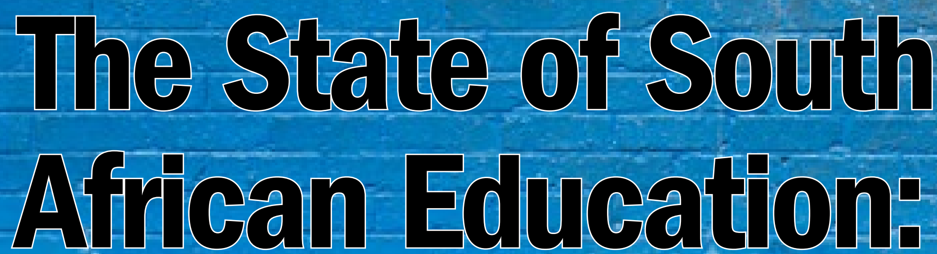

The State of South African Education:

A Critical Exploration of Distributive and Epistemic Injustices

By Gift Sonkqayi | Peer Review

Abstract

The quest for a just education has, since the existence of education systems, been a part of humanity's central concerns. The impetus for this is due to the fact that schools and many other institutions of learning exist as miniature societies which mirror that which happens in broader communities. Educationists have, in many ways, been preoccupied with the question of whether institutions of learning are engaged in the 'undesirable' process of reproducing inequalities. This has further resulted in the question of whether such inequalities are a by-product of systemic injustices or are mandated by our natural abilities (i.e. how the world is in and of itself). In this article, I provide a historical account of education in the context of apartheid and its legacies. I further argue that attempts to address distributive injustices are not subject to 'extreme' contestations, while attempts to unravel epistemic injustices are dominated by innumerable incongruities. Thus, I maintain that only knowledge that is rooted in mind-independent truth stands to liberate future citizens.

Introduction

> 'The crisis in South African schooling is not new. It predates the achievement of democracy in 1994 and has been an ongoing refrain in public discourse since 1994. What is new is the emerging consensus on its dimensions and causes. Since the 1990s, both the government and donors have invested substantial resources in understanding what exactly the problems may be.' (Chisolm, 2011: 50)

It is well encapsulated in this extract that it remains a fundamental conundrum to divorce the education defies faced by the post-apartheid South African government from the effects of colonial and apartheid edifices, despite their official wrap-ups. The impetus for this is that both colonisation and apartheid are to blame for setting up Black people for failure, as this article will later elaborate. This also brings us to the question of not only distributive but epistemic injustice, as often argued against by the proponents of indigenous knowledge systems (e.g. Odora-Hoppers, 2005; Green, 2008; Le Grange, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Since the beginning of democracy, a number of debates on whether *knowledge* depends on who is in power have surfaced in different academic disciplines. This has led to *knowledge* being perceived as a social construct, resulting in questions such as:

> 'how much of knowledge can be ascribed to sociological influences and whether this applies to all disciplines equally: are mathematics and science 'human constructs in the same sense as the legal apparatus is a human construct?'... Not everything can be ascribed to the 'social distribution of power' since reality places constraints on the human freedom to construct an explanation.' (Wrigley, 2017: 6)

This delineation conspicuously depicts that not all knowledge can be assumed to be a by-product of social factors. In essence, true knowledge is capable of emancipating the knower since it describes the world as it is and not necessarily how it is thought to be. Simply put, true knowledge or knowledge *that* is rooted in the mind-independent reality allows the knower to not conflate ontological entities (i.e. the world as it is) with how human beings have come to epistemologically conceptualise such entities. Thus, universal knowledge, secular knowledge, or scientific knowledge is necessary in cultivating democratic citizens who ought to shape democratic processes (see Gutmann, 1987). Furthermore, universal and/or propositional knowledge allows individuals to be critical thinkers and meaningfully participate in their respective capacities as constituents. It is against this backdrop that this paper contends that, outside of distributive justice, there needs to be a strict focus on how knowledge in the context of education is decolonised. The impetus for this is because some forms of epistemic decolonisation are not redemptive and are potentially damaging since they tend to turn indigenous people/communities into immutable localities. Therefore, education that is not rooted in the universal conception of knowledge should be deemed oppressive since its recipients would be indoctrinated into thinking that the world is as it is thought to be as opposed to it being what it is independent of our thinking of it. In addressing both distributive (resources) and epistemic injustices, this paper is structured as follows. First, I recapture the South African education from the apartheid era as well as in post-apartheid South Africa. Then, I locate the crisis in South African education within Kuhn's notion of *paradigm shift*. Last, I set out an argument on what should constitute knowledge for decolonisation (i.e. epistemic injustice).

South African Education in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Eras

In his article entitled *Bantu Education*, Hartshorne (1974) articulates that education exists to serve the social, political, and economic structures of different regimes. In the context of Bantu education, education was driven by the aim of politically separate governments (Hartshorne, 1974). Further, there are seven pivotal axioms framing Hartshorne's explication of the state of Bantu education between 1955 and 1973, namely: primary education, secondary education, teacher training, Trade, Technical and Vocational Education, population growth, compulsory education, and finance. In noting many ways in which Bantu Education can be beheld, three points are worth reiterating in Hartshorne's argument:

- First, in its conservative component, education is rooted in that which makes up the broader community and this includes the traditions and cultures of the population it serves. A practical

example was the use of mother-tongue, social studies, the study of the environment, etc;

- Then, education needs to be progressive by aiming to address the needs and desires of people to aid in preparing them to take up their place in the contemporary world. Thus, in its imaginative component, education is principally occupied with opportunity, training, adaptation. In concrete terms, this comprises the teaching of subjects such as commerce, mathematics, science, and technical education;

- Last, education is ethically obliged to provide a platform for self-actualisation. The impetus for this is to allow the individual to make use of their potential and become a 'whole man'.

Hartshorne further used the aforementioned seven axioms to show that, when the Bantu Education Act came into effect, the apartheid government took charge of what was a dual mission/provincially controlled system in 1955. This means that the apartheid government was in charge of 5,700 schools, 21,000 teachers, and 86,9000 pupils. Hartshorne posits that their initial target was that all children should have access to four years of education. However, this proved to be infeasible despite the fact that enrolment increased to almost 3–4 million. The failure to reach their target was due to population growth. Hartshorne further noted that in secondary schools in 1965 onwards 'successful candidates qualifying for university entrance increased from 1 013 in 1970 to nearly 1 800 in 1972 – a further 1 100 gained Senior Certificate passes' (1974: 2518). In addition, there was also an increase in terms of the number of teachers:

> Respondents interviewed for the case studies discussed how the storytelling process had increased their levels of empathy and supported greater levels of understanding, which helped to resolve negative emotions and even improve relationships at work. Church members observed that WYS was an 'eye-opener' in changing their perceptions about other people.

'about 4 100 primary school teachers qualified at the end of 1972, over 4 500 at the end of 1973, and 5 500 will qualify at the end of 1974. The long-term target for 1980 is 8 000 per year' (Hartshorne, 1974: 2518).

There was also an increase in the number of applications for Trade, Technical and Vocational Education. Compulsory attendance was deferred particularly because of the view that countries with compulsory education were mostly those who were able to manage their population and this is something that South Africa was grappling with. In terms of literacy rate, it was stated that 'our statistics show that ± 60% of the Black population below the age of 45 years is literate…as schooling increases, therefore, problems with the younger workers in this field should be very limited' (Hartshorne, 1974: 2519). Additionally, 'in the 1973/4 financial year a total of R109 million is being spent by the State on the education of the Blacks: an average of R32 per year for every Black child in school, and twice the figure for 1969' (Hartshorne, 1974: 2519). Despite some of the aforesaid positives, I will later highlight some of the challenges which are historically traceable to the advent of apartheid (or even before) and the enactment of the divisive Bantu Education Act. Hence, according to the Bantu Education Act:

The Minister may from time to time make regulations—

> (*d*) prescribing courses of training or instruction in Government Bantu schools and the fees, if any payable in respect of such courses or any examination held by or under the supervision or control of the department;
>
> (*e*) prescribing the medium of instruction in Government Bantu Schools;
>
> (*g*) relating to the admission of pupils or students to, the control, and the treatment of pupils or students at, and the discharge of pupils or students from, any Government Bantu school (Bantu Education Act of 1953: 272).

It was in light of the detailed Bantu Education Act commanding guidelines that the apartheid regime took it upon itself to ensure that people of colour received an inferior education which placed them at the bottom of the ladder (Christies and Collins,

1986). According to Naicker (2000) education during the apartheid era was designed to reproduce racial, class, gender and ethnic inequalities. I note that this was done at the expense of perceiving the individual as a sovereign being or a centre for suffering and responsibility. In a way, people suffered and prospered not because of their capabilities but because of their identification with a certain race, gender, or class. Furthermore, it is important to highlight 'the fiscal allocation in terms of race, where 'white' education enjoyed more funding...This included: quality of teacher training, level of teacher training, resources at schools, location of schools, support materials and almost every aspect of educational service delivery' (Naicker, 2000: 1). It is worth putting it forward that the Bantu Education Act was an aspect of many other apartheid laws of which some are mentioned in the following table.

Table 1.1: Timeline of Apartheid Legislation

1950: The Immorality Amendment Act: Extends 1927 Immorality Act, this act made it illegal for people of all races to have sexual relations with other races, especially with white people.
1950: Population Registration Act: A central register was developed which separated the population into White, Native or Coloured (subdivided into Indian, Griqua, Cape Malay and Chinese).
1950: The Group Areas Act: The entire population had to live in separate residential areas
1953: Separate Amenities Act: Separation of whites and non-whites in all public places and vehicles – which need not be equal.
1959: Extension of University Act: Which segregated tertiary education. Repealed 1988.
1970: Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act: Africans were not regarded as citizens of South Africa since their citizenship was legally tied to their homelands.

(Source: Glücksmann, 2010)

As with many other forms of injustices, the apartheid laws and regulations did not manage to create a complete generation of docile citizens within the Black community. Consequently, marginalised students and their communities were engaged in countless protests rejecting the imposed colonial-apartheid education which aimed at nothing but cultivating them into menial labourers (Christies and Collins, 1986). In tertiary education, the apartheid government created separate institutions of learning. The impetus for this was to cement its ideology of racial segregation with white people at the very top while Africans had to battle for the crumbs at the bottom (Christies and Collins, 1986). This was done through the 1959 Extension of University Education Act which, in many ways, paved the way for the apartheid government to unequally distribute resources and content (Beale, 1992). Indubitably, these disparities amongst universities had severe consequences and some, if not most, of these are still evident even in the post-apartheid era. As Keswell (2005: 1–2) succinctly puts it: 'the social engineering via race and language that occurred in the sphere of public education, with the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953... sought to prescribe differential access to education based on race'.

I now turn to education in post-apartheid South Africa. Notwithstanding character wars through the enactment of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, the ramifications of apartheid policies and laws are yet to be overhauled. For instance, more than 50% of South Africans are yet to have access to clean water – the majority of whom continue to languish in the unbearable conditions of informal settlements (World Bank, 2018). In a 2018 World Bank report titled *Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: An Assessment of Drivers, Constraints and Opportunities*, it was detailed that:

> 'black South Africans consistently exhibit the highest poverty rates. In 2015, 47 percent of the households headed by black South Africans were poor. This was very high compared to 23 percent for those in households headed by a person of mixed race (colored), a little more than one percent for the population in households headed by an Indian/Asian South African, and less than one percent among those in households headed by white South Africans' (2018: 13).

These numbers depict a structural puzzle which is yet to be solved by existing forces of power or, in extreme *avant-garde* cases, the marginalised majority themselves. Such unorthodox methods of inequality would, as already pointed out, be mandated by the mind-independent reality of a high rate of inequality.

The said inequalities and legacies of apartheid laws and policies are mirrored in the post-apartheid education system, which is imbued with inequalities. A comprehensive report on the discontents of post-apartheid education by Amnesty International (2020) highlights the following:

- Corruption, as evidenced through the Zondo commission on State Capture and Corruption, affected the availability of resources in government.
- Communities and their relationship continue to suffer from political and economic hindsight of decisions made during the apartheid era.
- It was put to the fore that not less than 60% of teachers work in schools that have more than 10% of learners whose first language is not that of instruction, compared to 21% whose mother-tongue is English.
- Learners in the top 200 schools attain more distinctions in mathematics than children in the last 6,600 schools combined.
- More than 75% of children who are in the 4th Grade (9-year-olds) cannot read for meaning. In provinces such as Limpopo this is as high as 91% while this is just about 85% in the Eastern Cape.
- More than 9 million learners (77%) benefit from school-based feeding-schemes.
- Out of 100 learners who start school, 50–60 will make it to the 12th Grade, while 40–50 will pass, and only 14 will further their studies in university.

What explains such tragically unequal educational outcomes? There is a multitude of underlying reasons that serve as the impetus for inequalities in education. Most schools lack the necessary infrastructure and this, unfortunately, impacts negatively on educational outcomes. For instance, according to the Amnesty International report (2020), South Africa has about 23,471 public schools: 86% of these schools did not have any laboratory; more than 77% did not have a library; 72% were with no internet access; 42% did not have sports facilities; 19% were still using or had illegal pit latrines for sanitation; and at least 37 schools did not have sanitation facilities. The Amnesty International report (2020) further noted that, in South Africa, most learners tend to walk longer distances and this impacts negatively on their studies (not less than 230 000 in KwaZulu Natal alone). Therefore, some learners may be too tired to study or even concentrate. Correspondingly, 239 did not have electricity. There is also an increase of violence (e.g. gangsterism and burglary) within and outside the schooling context (Amnesty International, 2020). This was further compounded by teacher absenteeism, as well as unfilled teaching posts in provinces such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (Amnesty International, 2020). Such failures by the South African government do not only impede the immediately realisable right to basic education under section 29 (1) of the South African post-apartheid constitution, but also the right to life, equality, a safe and clean environment, as well as section 28 (2) which stipulates that the interests of the child are of paramount importance. It is against this backdrop of legal imperatives (and many others, such as the South African Act of 1996), that the issues of distributive injustice become less contentious when compared to epistemological deliberations.

In tertiary institutions, due to historical injustices, a large number of Black students leave immediately after their first degree, since they need to provide for their families. As a result, this leads to a shortage of Black South African academics and even those who are left behind are poorly remunerated as compared with their white counterparts (see Higher Education South Africa, 2014). The number of learners from public schools reaching institutions of higher education has increased since the advent of the democratic government. Nevertheless, the ratio of success is still a cause for concern when compared to those who matriculated in affluent private schools, as this paper will later show. I now turn to Kuhn's notion of *paradigm shift*. I will now focus on indigenous knowledge. This is not to ignore the distributive injustice question, as it has been fairly addressed in the subsequent sections and by a number of scholars (e.g. Fleisch, 1995; Chisolm, 2011; Ramdass, 2009).

Locating the Crisis in South African Education within Kuhn's Notion of Paradigm Shift

In the context of decolonisation, it is worth locating the crisis of South African education within Thomas

Kuhn's (1962) notion of *paradigm shift*. Kuhn, an American philosopher of science, argued that there are two conflicting segments in the history of science: *normal science* and the *scientific revolution*. This already suggests the idea that science always goes through different phases. Moreover, Kuhn believed that normal science refers to a form of knowledge that is initiated for the purpose of supporting certain theories. Kuhn further highlighted that *anomalies* may arise within normal science, leading to a challenge in the paradigm and thus leading to the emergence of new ideas, propositions, and theoretical frameworks. What this means is that: 'In the course of normal new phenomena may be discovered that cannot be explained using resources of the paradigm such problems are anomalies' (Kuhn cited in Bird, 2000: 24). Bird noted that this process is known as a scientific revolution or a paradigm shift. Kuhn contended that science is not a stable acquisition of knowledge; instead, it is a sequence of passive intervals interrupted by violent revolutions whereby one conceptual framework is defeated by another.

Kuhn refers to these views as 'paradigms' which can be demarcated as theoretical frameworks of any type. Irez and Han (2011: 253) highlight that 'one important aspect of Kuhn's paradigms is that the paradigms are incommensurable—that is, it is not possible to understand one paradigm through the conceptual framework and terminology of another rival paradigm'. What can be inferred from this quote is that as one worldview is overthrown, it then becomes impossible for anyone to use that particular paradigm at the same time with a new paradigm. In short, opposing paradigms describe the world inversely. Kuhn maintains that 'normal scientists' are often faced with confusion when the internalised paradigm gets dethroned. Thus, they decide to lean on what they have learned despite evidence pointing otherwise. It can also be argued that educational reforms that are often introduced at a larger scale can be perceived to resemble scientific revolution (Irez and Han, 2011). In this case, the proposed change in African education by Dei (2008) will be interrogated.

Dei contends that African education is experiencing challenges due to it being stuck in a colonial paradigm of what constitutes education. In other words, African education has failed to *redefine* itself on its own terms. Challenges in the current paradigm of education can then be referred to as anomalies according to the Kuhnian lexicon. What this means is that, due to the colonial foundation, African education is unable to meet the needs of its own people. In line with this, Dei believes that:

> 'education is about equipping learners with knowledge, skill, and resources that allow them to improve their own conditions and to contribute to building healthy, sustainable communities. As a community we are successful in these undertakings because we believe in the existence of quality education' (2008: 230).

It is clear that Dei is of the view that education should serve the needs of Africans in order to sustain African communities. Dei further posits that African education and Western education seem to be in disagreement. In simple terms, African education struggles to achieve its goals while it remains stuck in a Western paradigm of defining education. This can be summed according to Kuhn's notion of incommensurability: one paradigm cannot coexist with the other since they are underpinned by different conceptual understandings. Thus, Dei is of the view that African education cannot coexist with Western education. In short, Kuhn's notion of incommensurability shows that reconciling African education with Western education is an impossible task, as argued by Dei. The two education systems differ significantly in terms of understandings of what constitutes education or makes schooling.

To further drive this discussion, in line with Kuhn's notion of *paradigm shift*, Dei is of the view that there is necessity to move from the system of education (paradigm shift) that is Eurocentric since it tyrannises, eliminates, and marginalises African children in education. Dei believes that the prevalent Eurocentric education system is responsible for societal inequalities. Additionally, Dei believes that the educational crisis is due to being in an education system that creates racial and class separations which aid the marginalisation of local people. To put this into context, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena, and Palane, 2016) showed that literacy tests of about 13,000 South African leaners displayed that almost 78% of leaners in the fourth grade were unable to read for comprehension in any language tested.

Thus, South Africa was the lowest out of 50 countries that were part of the test. In addition, it was reported in 2015 by the Department of Higher Education (2015) that 47.7% of students in universities dropped out and that Black students were leading in terms of dropping out. Only 5% of African and coloured youth in South Africa completed tertiary education (with Africans having the lowest success rate) (Department of Higher Education, 2013). This implies that the South African education system is in crisis, as pointed out by Dei. What this means is that the colonial paradigm fails to bridge the gap between race and class. Dei articulated that the colonial paradigm of education is not in line with the experiences of African people and thus it portrays an incorrect and inconsistent image of the African identity. Dei clearly demonstrated that African education is trapped in a paradigm shift, since learners are taught in one paradigm only to live another.

Dei believes that 'transforming' or 'reforming' education will not solve the crisis – rather, a *paradigm shift* needs to occur. However, Dei highlights that:

- There is a need to think and theorize first.
- We need to look deep into our own forms of education as Africans in line with our lived experiences.
- Indigenous knowledge promotes valid African experience by validating African ways of knowing.
- There is the need to recognise the plurality of human experience.

It is not clear whether Dei is only using Kuhnian language or subscribes to the Kuhnian ideas as well. Nevertheless, I do not agree with his line of argument. Therefore, it is noteworthy that as in a paradigm shift, education reforms that are done at larger scale are often accompanied by new objectives and views on how individuals acquire knowledge, which demands the adaption to new teaching and learning strategies, materials, etc. (see Irez and Han, 2011). This means that a new paradigm, as proposed by Dei, will mean that teachers will have to forsake all that they already know and embrace African education. Irez and Han (2011) further noted that in implementing any educational reform, it would be expected that teachers understand and reflect the new prerequisites of the reformed education. However, numerous teachers who are educated within the theoretical frameworks and standards of the defeated paradigm would, like a normal scientist who worked with an old paradigm, debunk the paradigm shift. This 'cannot be expected from an experienced teacher, just as the normal scientist experiencing a paradigm shift, to comprehend and adapt himself/herself to the new world that is introduced by the educational reform' (Irez and Han, 2011: 253). Gage notes that:

> 'in the natural sciences, because the results of research in those sciences were unambiguous enough, consistent enough, and stable enough to compel the surrender of one paradigm community to another. But in the human sciences the results were not that unambiguous, consistent, and stable.' (1989: 9)

Here, Gage acknowledges that in the social sciences we are directly dealing with people's attitudes. Consequently, it becomes a challenge to have a paradigm shift. In addition, Kuhn's (in Stemhagen, 2014) notion has been critiqued for the failure to acknowledge the fact that science can converge on the truth. For the purpose of this paper, the reconciliation of what is assumed to be a different paradigm is attempted in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011) whereby both what is presumed to be Western scientific and indigenous knowledges are assumed to be working together to enhance learner understanding. Nonetheless, Sonkqayi (2020) rejects such presumptions on the basis that it confuses indigenous knowledge with knowledge that is true only to indigenous people. I will return to this discussion of Western or indigenous knowledge in the following section.

The argument made by Dei which assumes that Western scientific education leads to racial and class segregation actually falls into the trap of ethno-philosophy (see Hountondji, 1983). In essence, Dei regards Africans as a collective singular, undermining the fact that differences are also evident in African communities too. In other words, African education as proposed by Dei will not lead to equality as he had thought. Le Grange (2007), Horsthemke (2015) and Horsthemke and Enslin (2008) have continuously

argued that universal knowledge (true knowledge) that includes some elements of what is assumed to be indigenous knowledge is possible. Due to enormous debates on epistemic decolonisation, it therefore becomes necessary for the following section to engage with the notion of indigenous knowledge as a tool for the decolonisation of education in South Africa. Additionally, I will critically explore how this would take place, provided that it is underpinned by the ideals of democratic education.

Indigenous Knowledge (Everyday Knowledge) vs Western/Scientific Knowledge

Horsthemke (2004) posits that indigenous knowledge is often perceived as knowledge that is local and the opposite of Western knowledge, which is assumed to dominate South African and African education in general. Horsthemke (2004: 21) further mapped out a distinction between three kinds of 'knowledge':

- knowledge-that or factual knowledge,
- knowledge-how or practical knowledge; and
- knowledge of persons, places, or things or knowledge by acquaintance.

On the basis of the above, Horsthemke argues that indigenous knowledge cannot be indigenous and factual at the same time. More to the point, he contends that it can only make sense if it aligns itself with the second and third tenets of knowledge. Knowledge is underpinned by: 'Justification, knowledge is necessarily valid, legitimate, warranted. There simply could be no other knowledge, i.e. knowledge that is invalid, illegitimate or unwarranted. It would not be knowledge then' (Horsthemke, 2004: 25). By contrast, Green (2008) acknowledges that it is difficult to define what makes indigenous knowledge indigenous. She does not concur with Horsthemke's (2010) universalistic approach to knowledge; rather, she opts for knowledge diversity in order to advance understanding. Green (2008) is of the view that the failure of scholarship to provide clarity on what makes indigenous knowledge indigenous does not mean it does not exist. More to this, she argues that people differ in how they see the world depending on the purpose at hand and indigenous knowledge should not be looked at from a strictly realist position, since it can help advance understanding. For example, how an astronaut and solar scientist look at the sun is not the same since their purposes differ. Furthermore, Green contends that there should not be a line drawn between knowledge and beliefs when it comes to indigenous knowledge since it is not dependent on Western knowledge.

Horsthemke (2010) argues that it is almost impossible for anyone to gain an understanding of anything without the necessary evidence of truth. He further suggests that knowledge cannot exist without truth. He rejects the idea of diverse knowledge systems since it insinuates that there is a diversity of 'truths':

> 'according to Green, 'all knowledge, including Newtonian physics and Palikur astronomy, is produced with relevance to specific contexts and questions, and it is within those contexts of use that knowledge, along with the cognitive devices such as models, laws, narratives and metaphors, must be evaluated' (Horsthemke, 2010: 329).

Horsthemke (2010: 329) counters the above avowal by Green by arguing that 'all knowledge claims are made within specific contexts. Truth itself is not context-dependent'. What this means is that knowledge is underpinned by facts which are backed up with evidence and scope (Elgin, 2004: 12; cited in Horsthemke, 2010). It is against this backdrop that I argue that multiple forms of factually true knowledge systems as explained previously are not liberating. Simply put, any education that suppresses the voices of the learner or knowledge that is produced by indigenous communities (not referring to mere beliefs about the world) is not redemptive or liberating. This includes both formal and informal education. I maintain that for any education to be considered emancipatory, it be borne into universal knowledge which is rooted in the mind-independent truth. The idea of a mind-independent truth can be summed up as follows:

> 'although the relevant notion of mind-independence is tricky to make out, I shall suppose that it comes to something like this: objects or properties of objects are mind-independent just in case they are what they are independently of how we take them to be. Alternatively, a truth, *T*, is mind-independent just in case *T* is logically (or

conceptually) independent of our believing (or more generally, taking) to be the case' (Heil, 1998: 69).

In this case, the truth about the world is not a matter of our construct or how we come to think or believe about such a world. Instead, it is that which is the case independent of our thinking of it. Thus, for Heil (1998: 69) the view that there is a mind-independent reality also means that 'truths about minds and their contents are to count as mind-independent: there being a mind, *M*, need not depend logically or conceptually on anyone's taking it to be the case that there is a mind, *M*'. Therefore, the existence of the assumed mind-independent world is not mandated by our thinking of it. This is because our thinking of or about such a world can be wrong. Consequently, it makes logical sense to assume that the mind and its content are mind-independent since it is not only the content of the mind that can be wrong, but the mind itself can be incorrect about its ontological existence and presuppositions. It is for this reason that I argue that universal knowledge is necessary in intellectually capacitating future citizens. Moreover, according to Charlot (2009), schools do not exist to teach learners about their reality as it is experienced. Instead, schools exist in order to cultivate the learner's intellectual capacity. For this reason, dwelling only on practical knowledge in the context of education can be detrimental to the intellectual development of future citizens since such knowledge does not guarantee cognitive development.

Conclusion

This article first provided a synopsis of how education was (in terms of distributive justice) during the apartheid regime. I also highlighted the intended ramifications of structuring of education on the basis of race. The severe racial disparities in South Africa, as postulated in the first section, were inherited by the African National Congress which continues to grapple with them even today. In short, inequalities in education predate the current democratic dispensation. I further showed, explicitly and implicitly, that the South African education system which was once imbued by racialised philosophies of education is yet to solve such pervasive distributive and epistemic enigmas. Hence, I also engaged with Kuhn's notion of paradigm shift. The author contended that the paradigm (epistemic) shift (as proposed by Dei, 2008) is not ideal since it is founded on a false dichotomy and sense of identity. It is intellectually detrimental to the development of future citizens. The assumed false dichotomy stands to obfuscate the fundamental aim or existence of schools. Lastly, I also engaged with the question of knowledge and how the decolonisation of education in South Africa would take place provided that it is underpinned by the ideals of the mind-independent truth.

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Land Reform in South Africa

By Charles Matseke | Peer Review

Abstract

For the past two to three decades, since the transition to democracy, policy orientation in South Africa has predominantly been centred on redressing the inequalities and legacies of the apartheid regime. This was broadly defined as social justice, with the land question often treated as a highly state-centric matter reserved for government, until Julius Malema became president of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and then leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). This article explores some of the dominant narratives around the land question in post-apartheid South Africa and presents some recommendations on how the issue of land should be dealt with in the immediate future.

Introduction

When the African National Congress (ANC) came into power in 1994, one of its immediate undertakings was to resolve the disparities which the Black masses were subjected to. However, to this day, the spotty efficacy of the ANC's land redistribution efforts have seen barely a quarter of the land in question restored to Black farmers, according to AgriSA. During the 2019 general elections, the debate around the redistribution of land became more pronounced. Fast forward to the 2021 upcoming municipal elections: the renewed promise of meaningful and long-overdue land redistribution is at the top of the ANC's to-do list and represents a significant political juncture. The country's failure to address the land question reflects not only on the various disparities Black South Africans are facing, from poor economic growth to spiralling unemployment, but also on the broader inability to introduce practical solutions that would create a just society in which the backdrop of apartheid's legacy is addressed. The question of land reform, particularly the taking of land from white farmers, has become widespread not only in South Africa but has also reached the shores of Canada, Britain, and the United States. Unfortunately for the majority of South Africa, the question of land redistribution is a complex one, characterised by a long history of failed state policies such as the RDP, GEAR, and ASGISA. This is also coupled with rampant corruption and a lack of political will that spans successive cabinets. In the debate's most recent incarnation, the ANC proposed a constitutional amendment that would allow government to seize unused private land without compensation – a process popularly known as the expropriation of land without compensation – widely echoed by EFF Commander in Chief, Julius Malema. Through this popular agenda, the ANC continues to convey vague promises that this would have far reaching economic benefits. Yet, it still remains unclear how the ANC's proposed policies would be implemented. Moreover, its draft legislation also provides no clear guidance for dealing with customary and communal forms of land ownership. This chapter explores some of the dominant narratives around the land question in post-apartheid South Africa. For decades, many South Africans have continued to live in poverty and have hoped that things would turn one day through their democratic right to vote. The first section of this paper will provide an overview and background of the land question. The next section will subsequently follow some of the new debates around the land question and, finally, some recommendations will be provided on how the question of land should be dealt with in the immediate future.

Background and Contextualisation

Post-colonial societies must immediately address the question of redress because the dis-location and dis-ownership of land from a conquered people is a key feature of any colonial conquest. The indigenous people of South Africa are no exception to this historical injustice. One of the core functions of the colonial project is the justification of the interests of the occupying force. In South Africa particularly, the British utilised race, lineage, and development to fully implement the colonial project. However, the official use of race for discriminatory purposes has become obsolete. Race on its own is no longer the primary, definable, and explicit instrument that it was during the 19th century. Yet, its footprints – racism and racial discrimination – still stand. Access to property is significantly determined by culture and structural racism. One of the founding constitutional mandates of post-apartheid South Africa is redress. The redress of property relations, the land in particular, was a key issue during the transitional negotiations into a post-apartheid and democratic society.

In this setting, the entrenchment of property rights as an unqualified right is reaffirmed. The Constitution thus provides for the creation of property rights to be underpinned by a need to transform the relations of the indigenous people to their ancestral land. A number of elements in the Constitution's property clause, which legislate for these intentions, include the explicit power of the state to expropriate land without compensation in the interest of public benefit, the right to land restitution for the victims of forced removals, and the right to equitably access land. Given that the art of politics, war, and economic power has been used to decide the fate of the native people, new laws can be introduced and enacted under the constitutional democracy. In this regard, the first item was land, the formalisation of conquest. At the time, it was unlawful for native people to register land in their own names.

With the enactment of the Native Land Act of 1913, native people were formally restricted into small and overcrowded native reserves. Apartheid as a state policy was implemented in 1948. Those supporting this policy referred to it as the diplomacy of separate developments. This policy perpetrated racial segregation and the balkanization of the country into various homelands from 1963 onwards, with the Transkei being the first ever Bantustan created. The struggle for freedom was thus a struggle for land to be returned to its rightful owners. During the 1980s, the apartheid regime started to be unpopular and thus felt pressure, both internally and externally, which ultimately led to its collapse. A new promise for the land to be returned thus emanated. However, it came with different conditions, as opposed to those that underpinned the struggle for freedom. A new kind of struggle erupted: one that would be led by the principles of constitutional supremacy. For example, land was one of the most contested issues at the Lancaster House when Zimbabwe negotiated for its independence in 1979. The questions under discussion included: Should the land taken from the native people during colonisation be returned? If so, on what conditions should this land be returned? This happened because the Constitution's property clause protected the white population of Zimbabwe, allowing them to retain all the land stolen during the colonial era. Nevertheless, the democratic state could forcibly take the land it needed for public benefit, which included the resettlement of persons without land. Twenty years later, after some trials and error, the model collapsed, with the failure of the central government to utilise the legal instruments available to them constitutionally. Ironically, when the late Robert Mugabe's administration established a draft property clause in 2000, it failed to overrule the Lancaster House agreement, meaning that the country's land reform would largely follow a market fundamentalist approach. Since then, the return of land to the native people remains a shattered dream.

A new struggle awaits, not controlled from the centre but arising from the ground itself, posing some difficult questions regarding the unfinished business of the liberation struggle. Until and unless there is a confrontation with the negotiated settlement of the transitional period, it is impossible to speak of freedom, equality, and dignity, the most cherished of values, during the negotiations. Property relations were at the centre of the transition talks. Nonetheless, in retrospect, it can be deducted that neither Zimbabwe's nor Namibia's governments' constitution schemes allowed for land reform rights. The return of ancestral land has since been watered down into a farfetched dream. A new quest, accompanied by quibbles about the definitions of who is entitled to the land, seems to dominate the debate about land reform and land expropriation without compensation. Commercial and agricultural land remains in the hands of the white minority group in South Africa.

The Road to 2021

On the road to the 2021 municipal elections, both the EFF and the ANC have the front seat in leading the debate around the implementation of the expropriation without compensation bill. Subsequently, the ANC adopted the policy of expropriation without compensation, together with parliament contemplating the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution in order to expropriate without compensation. As one can imagine and understand, property rights are indeed one of the pillars of our developing economy. South Africa finds herself in a peculiar and self-perpetuated status quo, with the highest rates of service delivery protests (predominantly related to housing), a widely vast gap between the rich and the poor, and staggeringly high rates of youth unemployment which escalated to 26.7% during the first quarter of 2018 (Stats SA, 2018).

The expropriation of land without compensation for the poor majority seems like a tailor-made answer for the masses. The recent illegal land grabs around South Africa can perhaps resemble the thorn of desperation that people have to bear, at least in their own sense. There are a number of possible consequences that the expropriation of land without compensation bill could bring, including but not limited to: food insecurity, job loss, communal violence (potentially along ethnic lines), and an economic meltdown. Meanwhile, the Land Summit that took place in Boksburg in May 2018 and the subsequent parliamentary hearings on how to go about crafting the bill, as well as discussions around whether the Constitution needs to be amended, did very little to map out what the implications could be for a democratic developmental state within a market system and for a globally traded currency and an import-oriented consumer base such as South Africa.

In July 2018, after the intentions to expropriate without compensation made their rounds in the media and parliament, Property24 listed about 4,840 farms for sale in Gauteng, 998 in Kwa-Zulu Natal, and about 1,544 in the Free State. One may question if the leadership could have a legitimate justification for putting an already fragile economy at considerable risk in pursuit of political mileage and populism? It could perhaps be blamed on the momentum gained from the socio-political system, which has once again brought identity politics to the fore.

As President, Cyril Ramaphosa is faced with an array of complex issues, ranging from effectively curbing the spread of Covid-19, to redressing the government's failures in dealing with institutional corruption and nepotism. On the other hand, attracting investor confidence and growing the economy is particularly challenging under the dark cloud of a party divided by factionalism, populism, and a winners-take-all attitude. The lineage of these painstaking issues can be found in the Zuma rogue administration, with their populist mantras such as targeting 'white monopoly capital,' and enacting 'radical economic transformation' under the pursuit of 'inclusive growth'. With the 2021 municipal elections only a few months away, both the EFF and the ANC have seen the land question as a benchmark of transformation and political discourse. The EFF has mounted pressure that will either force the ANC to amend Section 25 of the Constitution, or be exposed as disingenuous and grandstanding and even in cahoots with the minority.

Generally, the land question has invoked identity politics, which in turn has seen the rise of hostility between Black Africans and minority white and Afrikaner communities (Riaan, 2018: 42). This has at times resulted in racially sparked tensions, going so far as to reach the farmers, as well as civil unrest, particularly in the North West province and the Free State, mainly due to land issues and equal access to service delivery. Therefore, the real question is: how seriously do the ANC and the EFF take the land question as a policy issue? And how can its intended and unintended consequences be mitigated? For a moment's pause, we may try to envisage a scenario entertained by an ordinary South African living below the poverty line. How are they to comprehend and interpret statements made by prominent figures such as Julius Malema, encouraging the illegal occupation of land? Could such a person be expected to realise that they are being used as bait to pursue electioneering and political grandstanding?

These critiques are still making their rounds even within the divided ANC itself. While the masses, or at least those who claim to be the voice of the poor, support land expropriation without compensation, the elites still believe in moderating the current systems without any detriment to the stability of the economy. To take a short detour on the two-fold nature of the ANC: the South African media seems to be overwhelmingly conveying the narrative that figures such as Jacob Zuma are designed to divide the ANC by introducing factions and using populist ideals to set the course for today's political climate. The present analysis argues otherwise, however. These figures are given too much credit. A history often shied away from is the fact that in 1912, when the ANC was launched, the likes of Alfred Mangena, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, and George Montsioa fought for the accommodation of 'Black intellectuals' into the newly created Union of South Africa.

These were mostly Cambridge- and Oxford-trained lawyers. We can thank Henry Sylvester Williams for his influence and rigour in founding Pan-Africanism. Towards the mid 1900s, the mass character of the ANC arose, especially after 1948 with South Africa adopting apartheid as a state ideology and policy. Well, growth is not always good, is it? Throughout history, we have seen companies and organisations that have collapsed after merging with others and thus expanding. For some, like the ANC, it took almost a century to fully realise the two-fold character deeply embedded in the face of the movement. The mass character, plus the structures and systems of the electoral systems and party structures, have naturally given the masses an upper hand over the elites. Even amongst Black South Africans themselves, the poor and destitute outnumber the few Black middle class and elites. Therefore, the evidence seems to point overwhelmingly to the fact that the ANC has always been divided and that factionalism is just a side effect of this origins story of the liberation- movement-turned-government.

As one would imagine, if the land expropriation without compensation is translated into policy action, the government will have to revive the Department of

Rural Development and Land Reform and substantially increase the budget and invest in research and policy development to improve the land bank and their long-failed ineffective systems. This is the type of rhetoric and process that the government of the day and their consultants grapple with, but history always has more to say. Take the land expropriation without compensation programs in Namibia. When this tune was being sung at the height of electioneering in 1989, the people resonated with it; it was the right thing to talk about and believe in. But years later, the masses are confronted with a harsh reality. Government has finally introduced the criteria for how it will distribute the land it expropriated and, unfortunately, the poor do not make the cut (Eyewitness News, 2018). The beneficiaries of the land until the present day remain those in the Black elite and upper-middle classes; the same happened in Zimbabwe (Clara, 2018: 37).

South Africa has also flexed with her abilities to follow Namibia and Zimbabwe. Remember the Dairy Farm in the Free State that was lawfully expropriated for the so-called common good? Well, that land landed in the hands of the controversial Gupta-Zuma axis. For those who live in faith, land expropriation in South Africa will mean two things: economic freedom and the end of poverty, even though the people of Namibia and Zimbabwe would beg to differ. For the pragmatists and the level-minded, this may also mean two things: economic suicide and civil unrest. Needless to say, perhaps for the politicians the land question is just the right dosage of euphoria to gain popularity and relevance in contemporary political discourse.

The Future of Land Reform in South Africa

This section zooms into the future of land reform in South Africa and considers how best the state can move forward. The lineages, cultures, traditions, and racial complexions of the people from which the land was taken have changed over time. With regard to the structural transformation of the economy, it is not clear if the significance of land has remained constant. In the case of South Africa, the Constitution serves as the catalyst for change in land relations. The first step in understanding its role would be to examine how best the land can be returned to the hands of the rightful beneficiaries. The notion of expropriation of land without compensation has gained momentum in the public imagination recently. At its 54th National Conference in December 2017, the ANC adopted the idea of expropriation without compensation as amongst the key tools for land redress and redistribution. This prompted a Parliamentary Committee which held public hearings on the possibility of amending the Constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation. The focus is on how to handle any expropriation proportionally and without imposing any undue hardships. Those who are against this constitutional amendment have thus far relied on a combination of the slow pace of land reform, high prices of land, entrenched and racialised poverty, and historical land dispossession. Also under consideration is the text of the Constitution that refers to the amount of compensation in the current quest for expropriation.

However, to begin with this process, a distinction must be drawn between expropriation and the deprivation of rights over land. A deprivation of rights is defined by two elements: a substantial interference in or limitation of the rights of a person to access or exploit their property and for that limitation to exceed the standard regulations of property use and enjoyment of freedom in a democratic society. Expropriation, on the other hand, is a subset of deprivation, although different in scope and magnitude. In the case of expropriated land, the owner loses the right of ownership completely to the state. Common law provides for the deprivation of property without compensation only for the benefit of the people. During the 1915 Appellate Division, the then-high court of appeal granted that parliament could pass laws to restrict any persons of their property without compensation, even though it ruled that there was a presumption against it.

The former Chief Justice Ismail Mahomed once wrote that a Constitution reflects the shared aspirations of a nation and the values that bind its people (see Ngcukaitobi, 2021: 3–7). He went on to say that in the case of South Africa, the Constitution is a rejection of the past that arbitrarily denied citizens, on the grounds of race and colour, the right to access and acquire land. The future should be founded by the values of democracy, universalism, care, and aspiration towards an egalitarian society. Under normal circumstances, the primary focus of a constitutional change is the courts, as they develop the law to reflect the nuances of the needs of a society.

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While the text of the Constitution serves as a departure point for interpreting the law, it is never an end point on its own. The end point is primarily indeterminable; interpreting a statute is never truly the dogmatic approach of precedent, but rather an exercise in imagination.

Legal experts often argue that the Constitution, like any other law, is not beyond change. Of the 17 constitutional amendments that took place in the past 25 years, no proposed amendment stood out more than the inaptly named Property Clause in Section 25 of the Constitution of South Africa 1996. This was largely because the dispossession of land from Africans by Westerners was a key feature of the colonial quest. The struggle for freedom was underpinned by a quest to alter the inherent unequal access to property relations. As the Constitution was being negotiated during the transition into post-apartheid South Africa, the key focus of the previously dispossessed people was changes to the unequal access to landholding. When looking at the state of politics and transition in South Africa, one should keep in mind that the present format of the Constitution was not the result of a consensus: it was in fact heavily contested, even when it was adopted in 1996. The position of the ANC during the negotiations, as reflected in its 1991 Draft Bill of Rights, was rigid on the right to own property (Ngcukaitobi, 2021: 21). The Draft Bill reads as follows: 'All men and women, lawfully constituted bodies, are entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, including the right to acquire, own or dispose of property in any part of the country without distinction based on colour, language, lineage or creed'. The Bill also provides for the payment of compensation in the cases of rights to property, including land that has been deprived.

Compensation should be just, taking into account the need to establish a balance between the public interest and the interests of those affected. Disputes over compensation should be resolved independently by tribunals or courts. Furthermore, going ahead, the purpose of land reform should be to reconcile three main issues: addressing the injustices of history, confronting the continued inequalities to land access, and securing an equity based future for all those who live in South Africa. The programme for land restitution by the state has been in disarray since its introduction. Instead of providing a rational anchor around which previous land dispossessions could be excused, the cut-off date of 19 June 1913 has aggravated the prevailing dispossession. The inefficiencies of the law to address the land question is thus exposed by the continued struggle for access to landholding. Those who believe in the historical legitimacy of their claims were disappointed to find out that their claims, according to law, are not valid because their forefathers lost their land before 19 June 1913. Furthermore, applicants believe that they were a community at the time of their dispossession, in which 'community' was defined differently. Despite the public's dissatisfaction about government's inability to reform land, a directionless situation arises within the bureaucracy. The overlapping and concurrent mandates, inefficient institutions, and a lack of community support organisations have exacerbated the decline in implementing the law (Ngcukaitobi, 2021: 77).

Conclusion

The 2019 general elections have added value to the land debate thus far, and it is likely that it will be yet again a major issue in the local government elections of 2021. The EFF appears to be in full gear, particularly in terms of its firm stance on the land question. On the other hand, the ANC is at war with itself: the toxic environment that Jacob Zuma left for Cyril Ramaphosa still has a long way to go towards the elections, and to rub salt into the wounds is the court battles by the ANC Provincial Electoral Commissions and, most notably, the political killings in the embattled Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces. One would assume that South Africa is yet to face the worst political violence since the 2019 general elections on a

nation-wide scale. The South African government will thus be tasked with the major duty of first reviving the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform, should this debate be transformed into policy action. The history of tribalism as a troublesome factor is unfortunately deeply rooted within the ANC itself and will thus not come as a surprise should there be any transfer of land after the 2019 general elections. The people of South Africa have not only lost hope in government itself, but also in the institutions that are supposed to mirror a commitment and a people-centred user service delivery network. This is to say that there is a lot that must be done to government institutions and processes by government before a challenge as major as land transfer can be trialled and tested.

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The AfCFTA and the Promise of Intra-Continental Trade in Africa

By Marcus Hollington | Peer Review

Abstract

This article takes stock of the state of intra-continental trade in Africa by reviewing trends in the continent's five sub-regional trading blocs in terms of their strengths and shortcomings, in order to assess the continent's trade efficiency on an intra-regional level ahead of the rollout of a continent-wide free trade area. Thereafter, the article assesses trade indicators seen over the past decade to illustrate the amount of goods traded to prognosticate the future of intra-continental trade on the continent in the wake of discussing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Implications for youth are cast in the wider imperatives of the continent's developmental agenda and post-Covid-19 economic recovery.

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent in the world after Asia, with a land mass of 30,37 million km² and a population of just over 1.2 billion and growing. Its economic output, however, is amongst the lowest in the world. Over the past few decades, the continent has in good faith been working towards rectifying its poor economic performance by developing five notable fully-functional sub-regional trading blocs, namely: Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC) and Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). The rationale herein has been to increase African trade on an intra-regional level. However, though positive, this proliferation of exclusive trading blocs has not been efficient in creating meaningful trade gains for Africa as the continent registers the lowest intra-continental trade globally at 18%, behind the likes of Europe which registers at 70%, North America at 55%, Asia at 45%, and Latin America at 35%. Globally, the continent accounts 3% of total world trade. This under-performance can largely be attributed to the fragmented nature of the continent's trading system.

Nonetheless, the continent's trajectory towards a path of intra-continental trade is promising, as highlighted in the recently enacted (operational as of 1 January 2021) Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), projected to be the largest trade area in the world with significant economic potential once in effect.

This article seeks to synthesise the state of intra-continental trade in Africa by discussing the aforementioned five sub-regional trading blocs and their strengths and shortcomings, in an effort to assess the continent's trade efficiency on an intra-regional level to gauge the efficiency of the continent's intra-trade. Where possible, it will provide trade statistics to illustrate the amount of goods traded in monetary terms. Thereafter, it will discuss the future of intra-continental trade in Africa by discussing the AfCFTA and its implications on Africa's intra-continental trade and overall development agenda.

Strengths and Shortcomings of Intra-Regional Trade in Africa

SADC

SADC consists of 15 member states, namely: Angola, Botswana, Comoros the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), eSwatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The trading bloc has been driven by the need to enhance trade and economic development in Southern Africa. To this end, the intra-regional trading bloc has implemented several policies and programmes to advance its course. Among these is the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), approved in 2003 and implemented in 2005, to run over a 15-year time period. The development plan has managed to develop a Free Trade Area (FTA) in the region with two of its 15 member states being exempt from the FTA, namely the DRC and Angola, which recently announced the decision to join the FTA by 2019 (Angola Press, 2018; UNECA, 2018). The main intra-trade items include agricultural products, energy, clothing, textiles, and petroleum. Among its shortcomings has been a failure to establish a Custom Union with blanket external tariffs by 2010, the establishment of a Common Market by 2015, and the creation of a Monetary Union by 2016, due to capacity constraints by the SADC Secretariat.

Additional constraints include the overlapping of intra-regional trading bloc memberships wherein states such as Zambia, Swaziland, Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Malawi, DRC, Angola, and Zimbabwe have memberships in COMESA which makes it difficult for them to simultaneously meet their multiple intra-regional trading bloc commitments, subsequently curbing trade in SADC. Intra-regional trade in SADC is currently 10%, an insignificant figure as it shows that trade integration in the region has been gradual and far from impressive as 90% of its trade is external to the intra-regional trading bloc (Chidede, 2017). Contributing to this intra-regional gradual growth in trade is the presence of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) such as import and export quotas that restrict trade among member states which conflicts with SADC's Protocol on Trade that requires beneficiary states to put in

place measures that eliminate NTBs and to desist from adding new ones (Protocol of Trade 1996, Article 3).

However, promising is the region's efforts to promote enhanced trade in Africa by signing the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), a trade agreement launched in 2015 and set to amalgamate SADC, COMESA, and EAC into a singular trading bloc. Unfortunately, the TFTA has not yet come into effect due to the complexities of uniformly liberalising tariffs across three distinct intra-regional trade groups that are attempting to integrate themselves into a singular trading entity, as well as the difficulty of acquiring 14 ratifications to make the agreement enter into force. Currently, only three countries have ratified the agreement, namely: Kenya, which quite recently ratified the treaty in June 2018, Egypt, and Uganda. South Africa has stated that its parliament has approved the agreement for ratification, but that the actual ratification has not transpired as of yet (Oruko, 2018; DTI, 2018: 2). The gradual ratification of the aforementioned trade agreements signals both hesitation and an unwillingness by prospective beneficiaries to liberalise their borders for trade, contradicting their agenda to maximise trade intra-regionally. Nonetheless, the agreement is most likely to be replaced by the earlier mentioned AfCFTA as it shows much potential and has sparked the interest of a significant number of African states, as shall be discussed later in the article. Table 1 below illustrates contemporary intra-SADC trade variations.

Table 1: Intra-SADC trade 2011–2015

[N.B. It should be noted that the 2015 statistics exclude intra-trade data from DRC and Lesotho which are not available in the 2015 SADC Statistics Yearbook suggesting integration flaws within the trading bloc as such official intra-regional organs should be in possession of such statistics.]

Year	Exports (billions)	Growth Rate (%)	Imports (billions)	Growth Rate (%)	BoT (billions)
2011	$38.29	0	$38.23	0	$0.06
2012	$41.51	8	$39.72	4	$1.79
2013	$43.16	4	$41.74	5	$1.42
2014	$37.97	-12	$36.47	-13	$1.50
2015	$32.52	-14	$30.60	-16	$1.92
Aggregate	$193.45	N/A	$186.76	N/A	$6.69

(Source: Tralac & SADC)

> "Since its entry into force in 1994, COMESA has grown into a robust economic network of states unified in their goal of enhancing the trade of goods and services and facilitating investment. The intra-regional trading bloc consists of 19 member states, namely: Burundi, the Comoros, the DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe."

Table 1 shows an upward export trend in intra-SADC trade. In 2012 and 2013, export growth in the region was 8% and 4% respectively, followed by a decline of 12% and 14% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Conversely, import growth rates in the region followed suit with an upward trend: in 2012 and 2013, imports registered growths of 4% and 5% respectively, followed by a decline of 13% and 16% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The balance of trade (BoT) throughout the time period of analysis reveals a trade surplus, implying a somewhat even trade playing field, as the SADC region boasts relatively good and even levels of development.

COMESA

Since its entry into force in 1994, COMESA has grown into a robust economic network of states unified in their goal of enhancing the trade of goods and services and facilitating investment. The intra-regional trading bloc consists of 19 member states, namely: Burundi, the Comoros, the DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It has managed to increase its internal trade output from $1.5 billion in 2000 to $20 billion in 2017 with researchers stating that with greater capacity and integration the trading bloc could more than quadruple its output in trade, identifying capacity constraints as a limiting factor of intra-regional trade enhancement in Africa, a trend that has also been identified under SADC (COMESA, 2017: 13). It has been proactive in its approach to solving NTBs having managed to eliminate 199 of 204 NTBs since 2008 facilitated by the Tripartite NTB Online Reporting Mechanism implemented in 2008 and the recent short messaging system used to report NTBs in the TFTA equating to a 98% NTB resolution success rate in COMESA (Tralac, 2018).

Additionally, COMESA has an intra-regional trade of 8%, meaning that some 92% of trade is external to the trading bloc, signalling a deficit in trade integration. Similar to SADC, COMESA has an FTA that grants a 0 to 10% tariff preference to members with 4 of 19 of its member states being exempt from the area, namely: eSwatini, which is highly unlikely to join due to its South African Customs Union membership; the DRC, a SADC member; Eritrea; and Ethiopia, notorious for its exorbitantly high customs duties, which range from 0 to 35% and average at 17%, which has vocalised its interest to become a full FTA member in COMESA in the future (Export.gov, 2017). This fragmentation in FTA membership hinders intra-trade growth within the trading bloc as members do not operate with a uniform trade agenda, hence its failure to create a holistically functional Custom Union and Common Market. The trade fluctuations presented in Table 2 below attest to the aforementioned.

Table 2: Intra-COMESA trade 2011–2015

Year	Exports (billions)	Growth Rate (%)	Imports (billions)	Growth Rate (%)	BoT (billions)
2011	$9.23	0	$14.82	0	-$5.59
2012	$9.75	6	$15.68	6	-$5.93
2013	$10.78	11	$18.14	16	-$7.36
2014	$7.72	-28	$17.48	-4	-$9.76
2015	$7.57	-2	$8.23	-53	-$0.66
Aggregate	$45.05	N/A	$74.35	N/A	-$29.30

(Source: ITC & COMSTAT Database)

Table 2 shows a positive upward trend in intra-COMESA exports, with export growth rates of 6% and 11% in 2012 and 2013 respectively, followed by a downward trend in subsequent years, with export growth declines of 28% and 2% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Conversely, intra-COMESA imports also show a positive upward trend: in 2012 and 2013, import growth in the region rose 6% and 16% respectively, followed by a decline of 4 and 53% respectively in 2014 and 2015. The BoT throughout the time period of analysis reveals a trade deficit within the intra-regional trading bloc, implying an uneven trade playing field linked to the levels of development of member states, with better developed states such as Kenya and Egypt enjoying high levels of trade due to their availability of resources and less capacity constraints in contrast to their counterparts in the trading bloc.

ECOWAS

Similar to SADC, ECOWAS consists of 15 member states, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. It was established with the purpose of creating a common trade market as well as to facilitate investment and industrialisation in the region to fast-track development. To this end, it adopted the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) as a framework to address the liberalised movement of goods under an FTA, in conjunction with the Customs and Connectivity programme, which seeks to facilitate the aforementioned movement of goods within the region (ETLS, n.d). Yet, despite these trade boosting mechanisms, intra-ECOWAS trade stands at 12%, a statistic that is highly insignificant and insinuates that a bulk of ECOWAS trade, 88%, transpires external of the trading bloc, meaning that it has not been fully successful in increasing trade within its membership.

Contributing to this low intra-trade output is the presence of tariffs and NTBs that presents financial burdens to members and increases customs clearing times and the dis-harmonization of customs practices (Ayamgha, 2016; Xu and Choi, 2015: 3–4). For example, many countries in the region generally impose seasonal import restrictions to protect local producers (mostly farmers) and industries conflicting with ECOWAS' custom external tariffs (CETs) and overall attempts to liberalise trade (Amadala, 2018). Other NTBs revolve around public health concerns such as bird flu, although they often remain in force long after the threat has been neutralised, suggesting trade protectionism within the region (Torres and Seters, 2016: 34). Bribes, unofficial customs practices and road harassments also characterise the nature of trade in ECOWAS and curb the movement of goods in the region resulting in costly delays and undocumented merchandise data curbing efforts to register up-to-date intra-regional trade statistics (Torres and Seters, 2016: 35–41).

Table 3 shows an 11% decline in intra-ECOWAS exports in 2012, followed by a 3% increase in 2013, and a downward trend in exports in 2014 and 2015, with export growth declines of 9% and 23% respectively. In 2016, exports within the region increase by 23%.

Table 3: Intra-ECOWAS trade exports 2011–2016

Year	Exports (billions)	Growth Rate (%)
2011	$15.35	0
2012	$13.62	-11
2013	$13.97	3
2014	$12.72	-9
2015	$9.81	-23
2016	$12.02	23
Aggregate	$77.49	N/A

(Source: Tralac, 2017)

EAC

EAC compromises of six member states, namely: Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan that joined the trading bloc in 2016. The treaty that facilitated its establishment was ratified in 2000 with the purpose of deepening integration in the region by enhancing the Customs Union into a common market by liberalising intra-regional trade to boost trade and investment in the region in a mutually beneficially manner (EAC, n.d; Simukoko, 2017). To this end, the trading bloc has not found much success in its trade agenda as its overall trade has been relatively low with annual trade figures of less than $6 billion though some improvement has been identified over the past few years with trade increasing from $4.48 billion in 2011 to $5.80 billion in 2013, followed by continuous decline in subsequent years leading up to 2016 as illustrated by Table 3. Contributing to these fluctuations and overall poor trade output has been a failure by member states to reach a consensus on trade liberalisation and integration (a factor that has stalled the establishment of EAC's Monetary Union since 2012) resulting in the erosion of Custom Union and Common Market benefits (Simukoko, 2017). For example, Kenya and Tanzania have over the years been involved in trade disputes that have seen Kenya ban wheat flour and liquefied petroleum gas from Tanzania, while the latter has retaliated by banning cigarettes and dairy products from Kenya (Anyanzwa, 2017). The two trade partners only quite recently

settled their long-running trade dispute in a bilateral meeting, though the ramifications of the dispute were felt far and wide as Tanzania is Kenya's second largest market and cost both parties much needed trade.

Such disputes are not unique to the aforementioned countries, but also among other member states that choose to operate independent of EAC's Customs Union Protocol by imposing NTBs and trade protectionist measures such as double taxation for firms operating in two or more EAC states hindering not only the movement of goods but business development as well as identified by the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (Anyanzwa, 2016). In the context of capital flow, Tanzania and Burundi have been identified as the most difficult countries in the region to move capital, a factor that has also hindered intra-trade growth in the region (The East African, 2017). It is due to these trade obstacles that intra-regional trade in the region is 9.4%, suggesting that the majority of EAC trade is carried out external of the trading bloc, a trend identified throughout the article and driven by the dis-harmonisation of trade policies by intra-regional trading blocs (Anyanzwa, 2017). Intra-regional trade, not only in EAC but in the rest of the continent's trading blocs, could easily be boosted should uniformity be practiced by all member states per trading bloc.

Table 4: Intra-EAC trade 2011–2014

Year	Exports (billions)	GR (%)	Imports (billions)	GR (%)	BoT
2011	$2.59	0	$2.03	0	$0.56
2012	$2.88	11	$2.65	31	$0.23
2013	$2.81	-2	$1.92	-28	$0.89
2014	$1.33	-53	$1.33	-31	$0.00
Agg.	$9.61	N/A	$7.93	N/A	$1.68

(Source: EAC, 2015 and Nakaweesi, 2017)

Table 4 shows an overall disappointing intra-EAC export performance with export growth recorded only in 2012 at 11%, followed by export growth declines of 2% and 53% respectively in 2013 and 2014. Conversely, intra-EAC imports follow a similar trend with the only growth recorded being in 2012 at 31%, followed by declines of 28 and 31% respectively in 2013 and 2014. The BoT, throughout the time period of analyses, reveals a trade surplus illustrating a healthy intra-regional trade relationship, however, the intra-trade output is disheartening as total trade (exports plus imports) is the lowest at $17.54 billion in contrast to the earlier assessed intra-regional trading blocs statistics suggesting inefficiency caused by the earlier-mentioned NTBs which need to be addressed immediately to enhance trade in the region and foster trade induced development.

CEMAC

CEMAC is an intra-regional trade bloc consisting of six countries, namely: Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the DRC. CEMAC came into effect in 1999 with the purpose of enhancing integration within its membership, particularly in areas of trade. To this end, the trading bloc has not fully succeeded in facilitating and increasing trade among its members despite setting up several institutions and bodies to establish itself into a fully functional Customs Union and FTA. Among these is the Central African Economic Union, Central African Monetary Union, Conference of CEMAC Heads of State, Council of Ministers, Bank of Central African States, and the Development Bank of Central African States to mention a few (WTO, 2013: 7). Its most notable success has been the adoption of the CFA franc pegged to the euro which makes trade among states somewhat fluid as there is no need for currency conversations. Unfortunately, nothing more worth noting can be said in the context of its success, as intra-regional trade has been recorded to be less than 5%, making it the most disintegrated trading bloc in Africa, with some 95% of its trade being carried out external of the bloc (McAllister, 2016).

Contributing to these low levels of intra-trade is a poor capacity by the aforementioned banks and broader financial sector to foster industrial development in CEMAC member states to boost trade due to risk factors aligned to geopolitical tensions and a decline in commodity prices. Moreover, as with trends among intra-regional trade blocs in Africa, factors impeding intra-trade in CEMAC are NTBs such as the over taxation of commodities, arbitrary checkpoints along the highway and corridors deteriorating in condition,

as well as a distortion in common external tariffs. In the context of tariffs, it should be noted that in theory, all CEMAC tariffs have been removed though they have not been fully implemented as member states still pay tariffs when they trade among themselves (Nchinda, 2017; WTO, 2013: 7–8). However, almost exclusive to the bloc is the presence of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region and civil unrest in the CAR that has impaired not only intra-trade in the region but external trade as a significant amount of CEMAC trade revolves around the external exportation of crude petroleum, a resource abundant in the region and constituting approximately 84% of merchandise exports implying a resource curse due to the relatively poor nature of the member states, despite their abundant oil resources which has not improved as a result of the security threat posed by the aforementioned (Meyer, 2015: 3–4; IMF, 2018: 3).

The Future of Intra-Continental Trade Under AfCFTA

The future of intra-continental trade in Africa is undoubtedly embedded in the ambitious AfCFTA, a supra-regional trade agreement which, once in effect, will liberalise and integrate not only the trade of goods and services but also intellectual property rights, competition policy, and the facilitation of investment in Africa (AfCFTA, 2018, Article 4). It does not seek to do away with the current intra-regional trading blocs, but rather to improve and facilitate trade where shortcomings may be present:

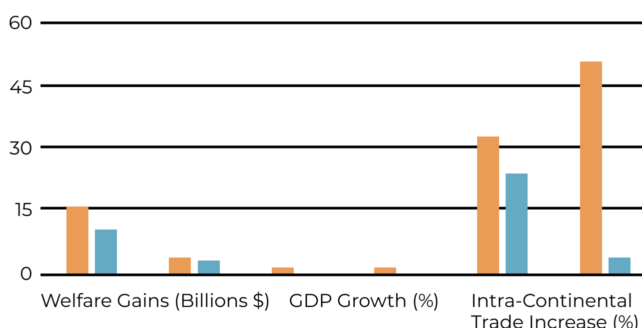
'State Parties that are members of other regional economic communities, regional trading arrangements and custom unions, which have attained among themselves higher levels of regional integration than under this Agreement, shall maintain such higher levels among themselves' (AfCFTA, 2018, Article 19: 2)

Currently, 54 African Union member states have signed the AfCFTA treaty to develop the globe's most robust single market and FTA since the development of the World Trade Organisation (APA News, 2018; African Union, 2018, 1; Infomineo, 2018). It has been ratified by 36 countries and has been in effect since 1 January 2021. Moreover, its ratification by over 15 countries has enabled the protocol on human migration, right of residence, and establishment to come into effect (AFCFTA, 2018, Article 23; APA News, 2018).

Benefits

The AfCFTA wields within it an array of benefits. However, the majority of these can only be realised long term. A study carried out by Saygili, Peters, and Knebel (2017: 12–13) utilised the Global Trade Analysis Project computable general equilibrium model to estimate the quantitative effects of the trade agreement with a two-scenario approach, one in which the agreement would eliminate all tariffs under an FTA, and the other wherein tariffs would be eliminated on a Special Product Category (SPC) basis. The findings are summarised in Figure 1 below.

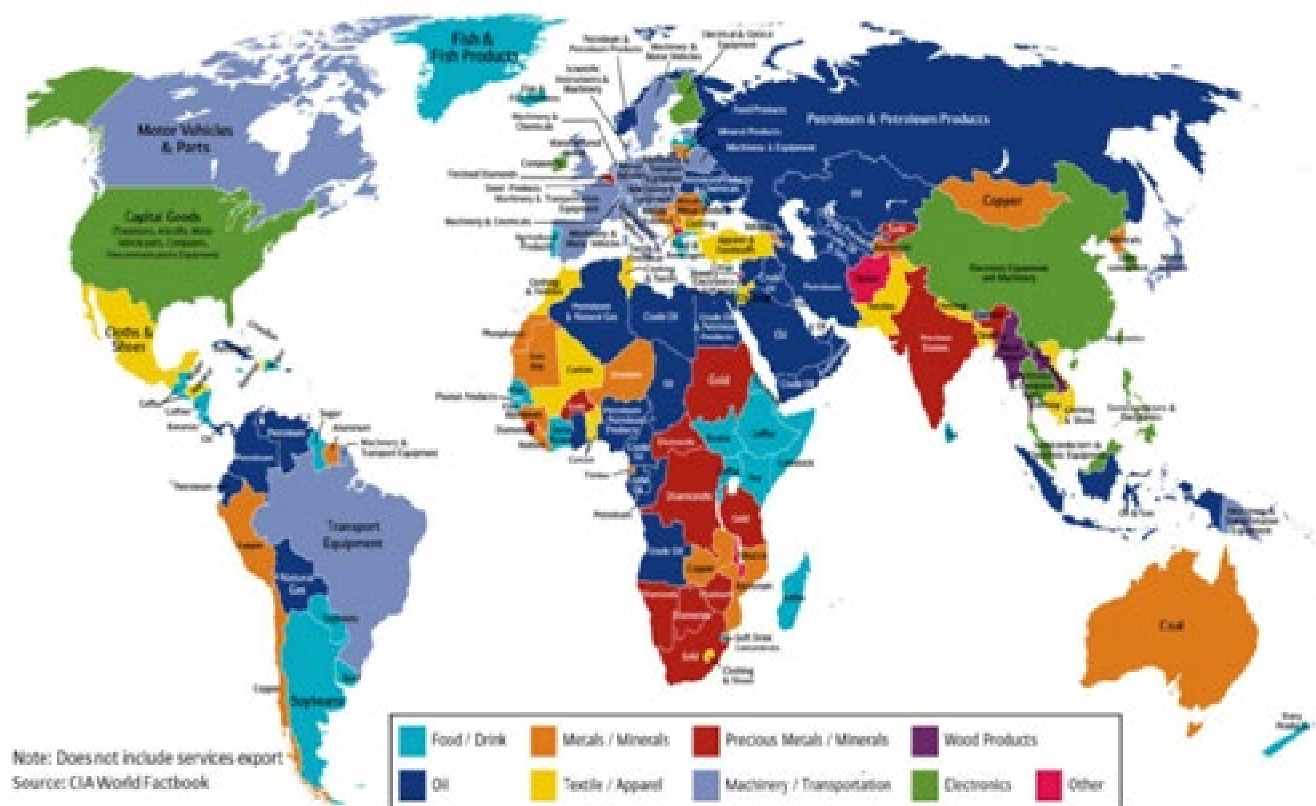
Figure 1: Quantitative impact estimates for the AfCFTA



(Source: UNCTAD, 2017)

In the first category, the model revealed estimated welfare gains of $16.1 billion long-term with a loss of $4.1 billion in tariff revenues, an amount gained over threefold in welfare gains. This would result in a continental GDP increase of 0.97% and an employment increase of 1.17% upon fully eradicating tariffs. Intra-continental trade would grow at an estimated 33% and Africa's trade deficit would decline by 50.9%. In contrast, the SPC scenario revealed welfare gains of $10.7 billion long-term with expected tariff revenue losses of $3.2 billion and continental GDP and employment increases of 0.3% and 0.35% respectively. Intra-continental trade is predicted to grow to less than the first scenario at 24%, while the continent's trade deficit is expected to decline by a mere 3.8%. In the context of the earlier mentioned protocol on human migration, right of residence and establishment, the trade agreement will facilitate ease of doing business for African citizens and prospectively boost the continent's economy and curb unemployment.

Additionally, in the context of boosting economic performance in the continent, the trade agreement will boost intra-continental trade by making available a market of 1.2 billion consumers to beneficiaries and a cumulative Gross Domestic Product of $2.5 trillion, which will enhance exports and industry competitiveness through scale production facilitated by continental market access. Another benefit of the AfCFTA is that it will result in the diversification of the continent's trade portfolio and subsequent reduction of extractive resource trade, that is the trade of commodities such as oil, timber and minerals which have predominantly accounted for most of the continent's exports (See Figure 2), promoting a more sustainable trade profile.



(Source: CIA World Factbook, 2014)

However, trade liberalisation will occur on a reciprocal basis, to help eliminate unfair trade practices such as dis-uniformity in tariffs and arbitrary road blocks among other trade hindrances that impede on the continent's trade performance as identified earlier in the article (AfCFTA, 2018, Article 18: 1). Additionally, given the numerous levels of development among African states, the AfCFTA will act as a catalyst for technology and skills transfer among African states and facilitate the structural transformation of lesser developed states into knowledge-based economies whose trade portfolios are diverse and not resource-dependent for growth. Lastly, the AfCFTA can act as a stimulus recovery package and drive much needed economic growth across the continent following the disastrous economic impact of Covid-19.

Disadvantages

In order for beneficiaries to enjoy the aforementioned benefits, certain adjustments will have to be made and losses incurred during the transition period which could transpire over a short-term period depending on the economic capacity of participating economies and their will to see the transition through for the greater good of their economies. Given that the agreement will require compromises to be made in tariff eliminations, beneficiaries will experience tariff revenue losses, though countered by revenues incurred in the short to medium term or longer term through enhanced market access and exports, depending on participants' level of development, industrialisation, competitive, and comparative advantages among other determinants. These determinants will decide the level at which

beneficiaries will be able to exploit trade opportunities presented by the trade agreement.

Additionally, vulnerable industries and sectors – such as agriculture, which employs a majority of the continent's populace, textiles, and other overall underdeveloped sectors in Africa – run the risk of enduring financial shortfalls and, in a worst-case scenario, the possibility of becoming obsolete in the presence of fierce competition from better equipped/industrialised economies if they do not have the appropriate mechanisms in place to improve their competitive advantages. As such, not all countries will benefit equally from the trade agreement. According to estimates by Saygili, Peters, and Knebel (2017: 15), some economies are expected to grow at over 3% at both a full FTA and SPC basis, while others are expected to regress. However, this is to be expected as African economies vary in levels of development determining their capacity to exploit as mentioned earlier.

In order to adjust, beneficiaries will have to reallocate their resources to sectors with the highest prospects for efficiency, which may take time depending on the aforementioned determinants, as well as on the political will to make such resources available and the strategic allocation thereof. In sum, though the AfCFTA presents several noteworthy disadvantages, these do not outweigh its benefits as the disadvantages are only short term and are manageable with the political-economic determination of participating countries.

Impact on youth

It is important to realise that the single amalgamated intra-African market under the guise of the AfCFTA will address many of the continent's challenges if implemented well. It has been asserted that the FTA has the potential to lift 30 million people out of poverty and raise the income of 68 million Africans currently living on less than $5,5 per day (Ayieko, 2021). Additionally, the earlier-mentioned protocol on human migration, right of residence and establishment will facilitate ease of doing business and intra-Africa migration for many of the continent's youth and prospectively boost the continent's economy and further curb unemployment which currently stands at 60%. The FTA might see the development of innovative financing solutions for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly in areas of exports, e-commerce and fintech to satisfy orders. This can be achieved by launching cross-border crowdfunding hubs to fund youth. However, to attain this, Africa has to enhance youth access to education as that will equip them with the necessary skills to thrive in a single African market. Moreover, information pertaining to what the AfCFTA is must be marketed to the youth, enabling them to take full advantage of the intra-Africa export opportunities embedded therein. This comes after a study by Chepkwony and Vuuren (2019) revealed that many of Africa's youth are still unaware of the existence of the AfCFTA.

Potential overlaps and conflict of interests between the TFTA and AfCFTA

As noted earlier, the TFTA seeks to amalgamate SADC, COMESA, and EAC into a singular trading bloc of members who are also participating in the AfCFTA and have ratified it. The repercussion thereof is an overlap in memberships. To better understand the relationship between the two trade agreements one has to assess Article 19 of the AfCFTA which posits that: 'State Parties that are members of other regional economic communities, regional trading arrangements and custom unions, which have attained among themselves higher levels of regional integration than under this Agreement, shall maintain such higher levels among themselves'.

To date, only eight countries, namely: Namibia, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, Botswana, and Burundi have ratified the TFTA of the 14 countries needed to implement the agreement. Seven countries, namely: Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Comoros, Sudan, Zambia, and Eswatini are in the advanced stages of their ratification processes. It is projected that these will be finalised by 2022 (Gakunga, 2021). Once in force, these will fall under the regional trade agreements discussed in the article. In theory, the TFTA will co-exist with the AfCFTA and the latter should be able to advance its interests. However, the practical co-existence of the aforementioned trade agreements could prove complicated. This is because trade agreements of any nature revolve around preferences and benefits which mainly revolve around preference for exported goods and services

from member states which are remunerated through reciprocal trade exchanges with partner states.

The downside of overlapping memberships comes with the exorbitant costs associated with implementation. Moreover, each trade agreement comes with its own unique set of rules and regulations. Thus, overlapping memberships in the TFTA and the AfCFTA could witness a duplication in compliancy and potential conflicts of interests embedded in rules of origin. For example, merchandise that is trans-shipped from a third-party as predetermined by a trade agreement will be barred from accessing any preferential treatment. Article 3 of the AfCFTA alludes to the resolution of overlapping memberships by encouraging states to: '[R]esolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration processes.'

However, the article fails to elucidate how the aforementioned will be achieved and could potentially drive conflicts of interests due to deficits in explanations. Nonetheless, the launch of the AfCFTA is a tremendous fit for intra-trade in Africa, even though certain factors are still not clearly defined, such as overlapping intra-Africa trading bloc memberships. These will remain in place and continue to implement and govern their respective agendas and arguably prolong the low-levels of intra-Africa trade until the issue of overlapping memberships and other outstanding areas are resolved (AfCFTA, Article 5 (b)). This is highlighted in Article 7 of the AfCFTA's rendezvous clause in which member states are to continue negotiating to address outstanding areas.

Conclusion

It is clear that Africa has made commendable efforts in its attempt to boost intra-continental trade by creating intra-regional trading blocs such as SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA, EAC, and CEMAC. However, it has not been able to create meaningful trade gains as it registers the lowest intra-continental trade globally at 18%. Several factors contributing to this intra-trade inefficiency were identified, including: the presence of NTBs such as import and export tariffs, arbitrary road checks, increases in customs clearing times, the dis-harmonisation of custom practices which curb the fluidity of trade, unnecessary public health regulations, post threat containment, and complex/discriminatory rules of origin. The inability by member states within their respective intra-regional trading blocs to adhere to the recommended blanket tariffs curbs trade and sometimes results in trade disputes among states. Additionally, the article identified the overlap of intra-regional trading bloc memberships by African states which makes it difficult for them to simultaneously meet multiple intra-regional trading bloc obligations, subsequently curbing intra-continental trade on an intra-regional trading bloc level.

Nonetheless, promising is the realisation of the aforementioned trade and integration shortcomings by the continent that has driven it to finally launch supra-regional trade under the banner of the AfCFTA to boost intra-continental trade by amalgamating the continent's numerous markets into one singular entity that seeks to promote the fluidity of trade with minimal to zero barriers. To gauge the implications of the agreement, the article carried out a prospective benefit and disadvantage analysis wherein the benefits were found to outweigh the disadvantages which are transition-related and short term should beneficiaries garner enough political will and resources to facilitate a smooth trade transition. Among the benefits identified by the article were access to a continental consumer base of over 1.2 billion people and a cumulative Gross Domestic Product of $2.5 trillion projected to enhance exports and competitiveness among states. Moreover, the analysis found the trade agreement to be quantitatively beneficial on both a full FTA and SPC basis though more on the former than the latter. It also found the trade agreement to be a catalyst for technology and skills transfer among African states, facilitating the structural transformation of lesser developed states into knowledge-based economies whose trade portfolios are diverse and not resource-dependent for growth.

In sum, though current intra-regional trade in Africa has not near reached its full potential and efficiency, the continent's current trajectory towards intra-continental trade under the AfCFTA is promising and could soon see Africa's intra-trade increase and its developmental agenda advanced, as illustrated in the article. However, this can only be realised should an additional 16 African countries ratify the trade agreement enabling it to come into effect as African countries are known to be hesitant and gradual

in ratifying intra-Africa trade agreements despite their need to enhance intra-continental trade. It is advisable that the trade agreement be ratified with haste to better equip the continent in sustaining itself and thriving in the presence of America's trade war and curb non-reciprocal trade and aid dependency on China among many other developmental constraints that hover across the continent as a result of its poor economic performance.

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The Rise of Fake News:

Surveying the Effects of Social Media on Informed Democracy

By Candice Chirwa and Zimkhitha Manyana | Peer Review

Abstract

Scholarly research has shown that the role of media and information (a crucial variable in the success of democracy) has been eroded by misinformation, propaganda, and controversy. This paper observes that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are critical agents for disseminating news from various news outlets, including the spreading of popular opinion on political discourse. In hindsight, these platforms inform the basis of true freedom of speech, freedom of information, and political participation. However, influential political leaders, such as former United States president Donald Trump, have abused this privilege by pronouncing unfiltered 'fake news' that have led to topical incidences such as the invasion of the Capitol. Terrorist groups have turned what could have been an activist and liberation platform (considering the online Arab spring revolution) into a mechanism to conduct propaganda and recruitment campaigns. This article aims to explain 'fake news' and the effects it can have on democratic society post-Covid-19. The research was conducted by gathering data from popular press outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC News, CNN, and BuzzFeed. It considers some solutions to mitigate fake news: critical to these is the need for a well-informed society to distinguish facts from falsities and ambiguities. This paper also argues for improving fact-check initiatives in global social networks and for a change in social media value systems from being content- to quality-based.

Introduction

Democracy is widely and correctly understood as a political system that stipulates that the levers of power should rest with the *demos* and that government ought to be of the people, for the people, and by the people (Britannica, 2021). In this manner, functional democracies depend to a large extent on an attentive and active civil society and 'the last decade or so has seen an explosion of interest in the question of civil society and the role of media and information in democratic politics' (Jacobs, 2011: 1; Graham, 2015: 83). The question is how far this goal is from being achieved through social media; implied in this is the sub-question of whether Facebook and Twitter provide reliable platforms to convey accurate information to their users. Social media has become a dominant source for both spreading information and shaping opinions worldwide. In our fast-paced world, where information is received by the mere tap of a button, there has been a rise of content that intends to distort information or opinion for partisan or financial gains. This phenomenon is termed 'fake news'. Despite the lack of extensive academic research on the phenomenon in its present form, fake news is a real and present threat to democracies worldwide because of its impact on political discourse. The problem arises when massive newsworthy stories like the 6 January 2021 United States (US) Capitol invasion, which stands alongside 9/11 (both wars act against American democracy), are widely covered by numerous news outlets. These stories are either over-covered before unveiling the facts around the story or under-covered when those facts are revealed (The Independent, 2021). Debatably, the US media reports on the invasion might have heightened the actual event and contributed to the spread of 'fake news', sparking animosity and distress. However, this does not ignore the main instigator – former president Donald Trump, who falsely claimed an early election victory to a crowd who was already convinced that his defeat was unfair. This statement fuelled a day of chaos, violence, and an unprecedented loss of lives. In protest mode, pro-Trump supporters unlawfully invaded the Capitol, hallmarking the seemingly wild accusation of an American 'democratic malaise' and luring threats of backsliding into an autocracy (The Washington Post, 2020; AP NEWS, 2021). Therefore, this paper aims to explain the features of fake news and the fake implications news can have on society. Subsequently, it will consider some solutions to mitigate fake news.

Researching Fake News

While fake news has been prevalent for several years before the 2016 US presidential election, the topic only recently became interesting to broader scholarly research because it was not pervasive in the political and print news realm before the election. Research into fake news at the academic level is quickly rising and deepening in the wake of the successive elections in the US. Even though the research is expanding and will reach a substantial level in the coming years, this article has in some sense been completed at only the infancy of the new research. The research was gathered from popular press such as *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and *BuzzFeed*. Press sites such as *BuzzFeed* News, which were often considered clickbait websites, have been an invaluable source of statistics on fake news, its propagation, and identifying how it functions.

Defining Fake News

'Your organisation is terrible,' said president-elect Donald J. Trump, addressing Jim Acosta of CNN. 'You,' the president-elect said, as Mr Acosta and other stunned journalists looked on, 'are fake news' (Grynbaum, 2017). Fake news is a complicated term. Since former US President Donald Trump utilised the term, society has agreed that he used this term for his personal use to malign reputable news organisations that he did not agree with. In a matter of weeks, the term 'fake news' went from an ill-defined term to one with two opposite meanings in the media landscape: pro-Trump and anti-Trump. A writer for the *Columbia Journal Review* in February 2017 declared the term dead. He wrote: 'Fake news, a term for a specific brand of media fabrication…died on Monday. It was less than a year old' (Uberti, 2017). This statement came days after Trump called leaks about his campaign's contact with Russia 'fake news'. Gladstone and Garfield (2017) suggest that the term is still in play. However, scholars and journalists seem to struggle to find a concrete definition for the term. The earliest scholarly definition of fake news post-2016 came from two Economics professors at Stanford University for

their work on its effect on the election. Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow define fake news as 'stories that have no factual basis but are presented as facts' (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). *Politifact* defined fake news as 'made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word' (Holan, 2016). Finally, *The New York Times* 'narrowly defined' fake news as 'a made-up story to deceive, often geared toward getting clicks' (Tavernise, 2016). All these definitions have several differences. All agree on a basic definition that conceives fake news as including made-up content. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017), additionally, make the definition include deception or manipulation instead of only lies presented as facts.

Additionally, *Politifact* and *The New York Times* limit fake news to online settings when it clearly can exist in other mediums. A feature of fake news not included in any of these definitions is fake news in hyper-partisan publications. Fake news has been dominant on Facebook pages that are incredibly biased towards one political ideology and pass off opinion pieces and fake news as real news. The goal of these pages is to play one side of the spectrum and enrage followers enough to share their content. Their secondary goal is to provoke a reader to click on the link, and their primary goal is to grow their audience and dominate newsfeeds with purely ideological headlines often based on little fact (Herrman, 2016).

It is important to note that fake news is not new. It has existed at least since before the Middle Ages. Utilised in the 13th century, the *Donation of Constantine* is a well-known ruse of the Middle Ages that included a forged declaration from the Roman Emperor Constantine giving Pope Sylvester I spiritual power over all the churches, control of their property, and control of the Western Roman Empire (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009). In the 21st century, the life of fake news is tied closely with the media standard of objectivity and fact-based reporting. Before objectivity and factual reporting, fake news was commonly spread in partisan publications. The Internet has significantly lowered the resources a person needs to create a news outlet. Newspapers and magazines need expensive printing presses and delivery methods. Radio needs the broadcasting rights to one of a limited number of stations, and television needs cameras, the technology to broadcast, and a channel. However, on the Internet, potential news outlets need very few resources. If the outlet uses a pre-existing web publishing platform like WordPress, the only cost is the labour necessary to write and post pieces and a cheap custom domain. With virtually non-existent financial barriers to entry, any outlet can publish content on the Internet where readers can consume it within minutes.

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Fake news directly affects political discourse because it expands the debate by demanding responses to rumours, conspiracies, and lies. Fake news can easily affect anyone. After the Arab Spring of 2011, social media was perceived as a valuable and powerful device for mass activism and liberation movements (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). However, this enthusiasm took a left turn five years later when Donald Trump became president of the US (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). The challenge here was with his obsession with publicising baseless or wildly exaggerated numbers on Twitter. The former president publicly claimed that 700 000 manufacturing jobs had been created during his term, whereas a *Politifact* fact-check found that the number was instead closer to 450 00 before the pandemic and a net loss of 237 00 owing to the pandemic-generated recession (CNN, 2020).

Furthermore, Trump spread an erroneous and risky claim that 99% of Covid-19 cases are 'totally harmless'. He topped this with an unsubstantiated tweet on mail-in voting, falsely claiming that foreign countries would print these ballots (The MIT Press Reader, 2020). During his term, Trump openly unleashed a torrent of misinformation, and dismally his supporters undoubtedly believed in his lies.

Fake News in Democratic Society Post-Covid-19

It has been argued, then, that social media and mainstream media post-Covid-19 can be politically biased, distort facts, and misinform the public to tap into the public mood at that time. This is especially true when influential leaders use this space to inform on pertinent state issues. Deliberative democracies require informed citizens who can distinguish between facts and falsehoods. Friedman (2010: 117) maintains that:

> [T]he quality of democracy is, therefore, closely bound up with civil society's prospects. The more citizens are able, through organisations that are independent of government, to voice their needs and beliefs to other citizens and public decision-makers, the more public decisions are likely to become a consequence of a process in which the outcome reflects the voice of the majority that flows from that contest.

Otherwise, it becomes difficult to hold political leaders accountable for their actions and decision-making processes. Social media has possibly compromised actual reporting on real issues by publicising snippets of news from several accredited sources, interpreted and portrayed inaccurately (Wilding, Molitorisz, and McKewon, 2018). Since vast numbers of individuals in modern society have easy access to the Internet, social media has become a platform for many people to get updated with current news across the globe. In a survey conducted in Canada, two-fifths of respondents received their news from social media, specifically Facebook, whilst one-fifth of them collected their daily news from other non-traditional sources (Shearer and Matsa, 2018). The Pew Research Center (2021) reported that Facebook stands out as the number one news source for about a third of Americans. Furthermore, about half of the US adults from this survey said they got news from other social media outlets. This has proven problematic, considering the misleading information on these platforms about the recent 2020 election and the Covid-19 pandemic. What is more worrisome is that many Americans continue to rely on these sites for news (Shearer and Mitchell, 2021).

False news campaigns on social media are visible in the US, but they are on the rise in Europe and across the developing world (Vaidyanathan, 2018). In the African context, these spaces have been criticised for undermining democracy during the two dozen national elections held in 2019 in the region. In Nigeria, candidate Atiku Abubakar was reported by Lauretta Onochie, an aide to President Buhari, for allegedly handing out cash and food boxes at a political rally – 'Keep them in poverty, then give them handouts,' she wrote (BBC Africa, 2019). The photo was found to be two years old and was taken at an event organised by the Kokun Foundation. Facebook has arguably been a catalyst for coordinated misinformation campaigns. However, Facebook itself called out rival disinformation campaigns by the French and Russians to mislead and influence users in the Central African Republic ahead of the 2020–21 election (The Guardian, 2020). Facebook subsequently suspended several networks connected to organised fake misconduct.

In South Africa, 'fake news' has disturbed vaccination rollout: for example, Minister Blade Nzimande said, 'what complicates the fight against COVID-19 is that while people are facing the real threat of losing lives, fake news and misinformation are causing them to be paranoid, and to doubt the usefulness of vaccines and other public health interventions' (SA News, 2021). He urged South Africans to educate themselves more about the virus and avoid tagging along with 5G myths that have led to the destruction of cell phone towers in other parts of the country. As a result of these trends, Nanjira Sambuli, from the World Wide Web Foundation, argued that 'democracies are at risk on this continent, and unfortunately, social media platforms are fast becoming the sites of aggravation' (Madawo, 2019: 1; BBC News, 2019: 1).

On the one hand, the introduction of social media in Africa has brought many economic and political benefits. On the other, it has equipped terrorist groups with an instrument for recruitment and propaganda (Menkhaus, 2013; Cox, Marcellino, Bellasio, Ward, Galai, Meranto, Paoli, 2018). This is a challenge found hard to untangle because the opportunities brought by the digital age are commendable, particularly when it comes to intensifying citizen engagement in the political arena. The question is: how can these positives be reconciled with the unavoidable concept of 'digital authoritarianism'? For instance, Uganda was suddenly put under a complete Internet shutdown ahead of the East African nation's election in January

2021, Chad was restricted to a sixteen-month social media ban from March 2018 (Global Risk Insight, 2021), and only 11 of Africa's 54 states were classified as 'free' by Freedom House in 2018. The conceivable argument for such harsh regulations is to prevent the spread of 'fake news' and misinformation ahead of an election. Yet, freedom of speech, media and information is compromised.

African governments have often prohibited the media from reporting on the mismanagement of crises in the region. It is widely known that several African states have been struggling to handle the Covid-19 pandemic. The reasons stem from a lack of adequate medical equipment, under-developed healthcare facilities, and other financial strains. Similarly, it can be argued that the media and civil society have been silenced from reporting on the spread of the virus and governments' capacities to deal with it. In some governments' defence, it is possible to deliberately label legitimate news coverage on the coronavirus as 'fake news'. The alarming fact is that criminal charges have been laid against reporters asking critical questions about governments' handling of Covid-19 in some of these countries (Democracy Works Foundation, 2020).

Fake news, propaganda, and disinformation go against the true nature of civic popular participation and journalism in a democracy. The role of media and information contributes significantly to the sustainability of a good quality democracy, a political system that 'presents a stable institutional structure that realises the liberty and equality of citizens and that strives to satisfy citizen expectations through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms' (Morlino, 2004: 12; 2011: 195; Graham, 2015: 62). Fundamentally to the latter is an 'independent and pluralistic media of communication, and a vigorous network of voluntary associations of all kinds, through which citizens can act to manage their affairs and influence public policy' (Beetham, Carvalho, Landman, and Weir, 2008). These act as crucial agents to ensure the responsiveness of government policy and public oversight on service delivery, particularly in the peripheral areas of society.

Since its origin, journalism was created to serve people, to be a tool through which the populace could be aware of facts and be informed participants in the political process. According to the American Press Institute, the purpose of journalism is to 'provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments' (Dean, 2013). The academic and activism spaces advocate for news literacy and generally go against sources outside the main networks (CNN, SkyNews, News24, eNCA, BBC, Al-Jazeera), prominent newspapers, and a few websites. However, former President Trump once posted a tweet exclaiming:

> 'I have asked Secretary of State @SecPompeo to closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers. 'South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers.'' (ABC News, 2018: 1)

Reading this tweet astounded most South Africans whilst thousands of users agreed that white farmers were indeed under attack. Less than 150 characters posted on social media coming from the president of the US account gave 'truth' to the lie that South Africa's white farmers have been facing genocide at the hands of South Africa's Black government: a lie that has become a rallying cry for the far-right, racists, and white nationalists worldwide. However, this is a debate for future research. The fact of the matter is that fake news is incredibly easy to spread on social media. The discussion on land expropriation is a minor issue in the grand scheme of things. To be sure, fake news is not only present in America and South Africa; it exists around the world.

In 2017, French voters were deluged with fake news stories on their social media feed just ahead of their presidential election. Interestingly enough, studies show that fake news in France came from sources exposed to Russian influences (Farand, 2017). Likewise, the German government was concerned that the then-upcoming elections were under threat due to the presence of fake news by 'a man who lives in Crimea' (Beuth, Brost, Dausend, Dobbert and Hamann, 2017). Fake news is a real threat to democracies, and it seems that it could potentially be used as a political weapon.

However, measures have been put in place to counter misinformation in various countries. In Asian states, spreading false news, especially false news related to

the Covid-19 pandemic, has been criminalised. The World Health Organisation enforced the EPIN-WIN fact-checking service and a health alert on WhatsApp and a chatbot on Facebook Messenger. The United Nations (UN) is also quite adamant about cutting down on 'fake news', and the union's development plan supports the #CoronaVirusFacts Alliance, which consists of 100 fact-checkers from over 45 countries in the International Fact-Checking Network (The Conversation, 2020).

Some Suggested Solutions

There are several ways to mitigate fake news. Initially, Mark Zuckerberg, Founder and CEO of Facebook, asserted that fake news on Facebook did not affect the 2016 US presidential election (Zuckerberg, 2016). However, Facebook subsequently began tackling the problem. Facebook started asking users to rate the truthfulness of content (Robertson, 2016). Google has also taken similar steps to label search results and provides details on the fact check, unlike Facebook (Mantzarlis, 2017). Both implementations seem to be successful since they put the onus for fact-checking on other sources and do not remove fake news stories.

The news media can also take steps to mitigate fake news. An easy step for the media to implement would be to run a side-by-side news analysis. Adding another analysis with a different (and perhaps opposing) viewpoint could make sceptical consumers trust reputable news sources more as they could find something they agreed with. A significant obstacle to tackle is that even though Google and Facebook can block fake news websites, and the news media can run side-by-side analysis, neither can definitively reduce fake news. Most people do not have the training to be sceptical of fake news. Education has to teach students news literacy as well as critical thinking skills. It is essential that consumers of media can recognise the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors. Consumers must scrutinise the news that they consume on social media. Younger generations especially, considered digital natives, should be experts in using the Internet and social media. If we do not educate students on news literacy, the fake news problem will only get worse: digital natives will, in the coming decades, make up a majority of the voting population. Social media platforms (news corporations, opinion leaders, influencers) should revise their systems approach, and instead of promoting the viral effect of unworthy content (to create monetised traffic) through social sharing and click-through rate, these platforms should promote content quality. The quality of content shared and engaged on should be incentivised more than viral and often untrue content. If this space follows this route, it could quickly spread the awareness of 'fake news' and share devices on how to spot misleading information. This same space can also gather independent professional reviewers who can make up a global digital fact-check network which can assist with labelling and sharing identified 'fake news' (alerting users to avoid content of a specific nature) and mainly focusing on breaking news on a global scale.

Conclusion

Democracy not only requires but demands informed voters. Without literate news consumers, informed voters would not exist. Fake news went viral during the 2016 US presidential election because of social media and the Internet's lack of gatekeeping measures. These factors have made fake news a real danger to democracies because of its ability to impact debate. More research is needed to tie these specific theories and effects to fake news, but the connections are clear. Despite that, there are some early and asymmetrical but practical solutions; the most crucial of them is educating students in news literacy to help the future voting generation fight fake news. This will win the real oncoming battle before it begins.

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Addressing the Global Migration Crisis in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Nadine Hakizimana | Peer Review

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated pre-existing vulnerabilities faced by asylum seekers, refugees, and forcibly displaced persons. The topic of international migration has long been at the centre of global attention because of the extreme loss of life while crossing borders and the difficulty of managing large numbers of asylum seekers. International migration is arguably one of the most pressing issues of our time because of its transnational characteristic, which affects all countries across the world. Despite some concerted efforts, the international community has largely failed to provide solidarity and collective action to address the protracted global migration crisis. This article explores how the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent health and safety measures have complicated an already vulnerable refugee system. The article also considers where some windows of opportunity for progress in the multilateral refugee protection system may lie as the international community designs efforts to build back better in a post-Covid-19 world.

Introduction

The global migration crisis has been intensified by the ongoing global health crisis and now governments are faced with the challenge of finding a balance between protecting their citizens and the humanitarian imperative of protecting asylum seekers and refugees. This article explores some of the vulnerabilities that asylum seekers and refugees face, which have been worsened by the health and safety measures imposed to limit the spread of the virus. It then considers the varied responses from the international community on the compounded crises. Thereafter, the article discusses what 'building back better' after Covid-19 may entail and how the refugee protection system may be better enhanced to address the protracted global migration crisis.

C'est la Galère: No Escape from Harm's Way Due to Covid-19 Restrictions

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, migration routes have reduced considerably due to restrictions on travel in countries across the world. As countries take drastic measures to fight Covid-19, the restrictions have challenged the most foundational principles for refugee protection, like the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement. These principles recognise that asylum seekers have a right to seek protection at international borders and cannot be sent back to a country where they are facing danger (UN General Assembly, 1951). These and other provisions in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the UNHCR Charter are widely accepted international human rights, humanitarian, and customary laws.

Unfortunately, over the years, these internationally accepted principles have started to unravel. Even before the pandemic, as asylum seekers arrived in boats on Mediterranean shores, they have many times not been allowed to disembark, and ports have been closed on them. Since the recent onset of the pandemic, such deviations from international norms persist. In 2020, for instance, roughly 400 Rohingya asylum seekers were denied access at a port in Malaysia (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020). The boat was left to drift in the Indian sea for a very long time; many died of starvation, and were unable to exercise their right to seek asylum. Some countries have been externalising their legal protection, opting to spend large sums of money to send refugees off to other countries that are often already financially strained and have poor legal and health systems, putting asylum seekers in an even more vulnerable position than they already were. These countries deliberately violate the principle of non-refoulement on deportation and forced returns.

Further exacerbating the situation is the fact that lawyers and legal aids have been obliged to work from home as a health and safety measure against Covid-19. Because of this, refugees and asylum seekers have been unable to access trustworthy legal representation and may now seek help from smugglers and traffickers as their desperation increases. At the end of 2019, UNHCR reported that there were 79.5 million asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons (UNHCR, 2020). These people are particularly vulnerable, as they face the threat of Covid-19 infection in addition to their struggles to seek refuge. The crowded environments they are forced to be in, whether while fleeing danger or while in detention, undermine their ability to follow health and safety measures like social distancing, curfews, and proper sanitation, putting them at greater risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

The restrictions that countries impose have been justified by governments as emergency measures that will stop once a sustainable solution is found. However, based on past examples of temporary solutions, there is the possibility that some countries may seek to maintain these restrictive measures and that they could be mainstreamed even after the pandemic has ended. For this reason, it is important to closely watch national responses to the pandemic and call for flexibilities where needed in order to ensure the protection of refugees. While Covid-19 has indiscriminately affected both rich and poor in a devastating way, the impacts on those seeking asylum are most concerning and may be long lasting. Below, I identify a number of geopolitical events in past years that can provide some context to the responses to migration seen today and that may persist in the future, depending on the progression of the Covid-19 pandemic.

How Did Migration Become an International Crisis?

A number of key events have been identified as an answer to the question of how migration became an international crisis. These events served as catalysts to the migration crisis that has been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic today. Firstly, while the influx of migrants into Europe through the Mediterranean had been a challenge to European countries for many years, it is only after the disaster in 2015, where roughly 700 migrants were involved in a tragic accident in the Mediterranean, that European countries started to address the issue with a sense of urgency and seriousness (Kingsley, Bonomolo and Kirchgaessner, 2015). The year 2015 is argued to be the point where migration became a crisis. Secondly, referring to the prediction made by former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, that the collapse of Libya would create a migration crisis in Europe (Davidson, 2017), the weakening institutions in North African states that have corrupted border patrols between African borders can be identified as a contributor to the crisis. This has made it easy for organised crime groups and terrorists to cross their borders (Zogg, 2018). The Sahel region is also a strategic area as it is a bridge between Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. In this region, Libya is said to be the site through which many migrants enter Europe illegally (Bialasiewicz, 2012: 843). Weak state institutions make it easy for people to pass through these countries without proper documentation. The lack of documentation of migrants presents a major threat to global security because it allows those who commit crimes to avoid culpability (Weiner, 2018: 95). More and more people are becoming stateless as they are displaced and are unwanted by the countries they flee to. The Sahel region is a good example of what can go wrong when there are large numbers of uncaptured people. Countries like Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad all have large geographical spaces (Raleigh, 2010: 68–98). In these countries, politics are largely constrained around the capital cities and there is an absence of state institutions in the majority of the Sahel, even though there are small functioning communities. Uncaptured territories often become sites of organised crime and terrorism.

Additionally, the consequences of the 2011 Arab Spring Uprisings in North Africa also contributed to the extreme influx of migrants into Europe, which is now regarded as an international crisis (Joffe, 2011: 507). Food riots in heavily populated urban societies were an important element and indicator of extreme famine, which resulted in the forced migration of North African populations (Joffe, 2011: 514). The ongoing conflict in the Middle East, most notably in Syria, has also become part of the global migration crisis. The conflict that led to the refugee issue in Syria started with the uprisings against oppressive regimes known as the Arab Spring in 2011 (Joffe, 2011: 514) but has since deteriorated into disaster. The Syrian refugee crisis is important to the international community because it has overflowed into numerous neighbouring countries.

Lastly, the presence of migrants in host countries became viewed as a global crisis after violent events in Europe were characterised as terrorist attacks in Paris, London, Manchester, Brussels, Berlin, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. The event that managed to get largescale global attention was the Charlie Hebdo shootings in January 2015 (Silva, 2018: 838–850). As a result of these terrorist attacks, the discourses around migration shifted towards a focus on extremism that warrants a securitized rather than a humanitarian or developmental approach to migrants. New policy and legislative changes were made to further restrict entry for migrants and to also complicate citizenship requirements, making it more difficult for migrants, whether refugees or economic migrants, to obtain citizenship (Princen, 2018: 535–551). These terrorist attacks also heightened prejudices against Muslim communities (Princen, 2018: 535).

All these events and several others from across the world have contributed to migration being perceived

“A number of key events have been identified as an answer to the question of how migration became an international crisis. These events served as catalysts to the migration crisis that has been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic today.”

as an international crisis. Now with the onset of a new crisis, which United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declared as a global health crisis unlike any other in the 75-year history of the UN (Guterres, 2020), a major cause for concern is that the global migration crisis could become less of a global priority as the world struggles to address the Covid-19 pandemic. The next section will consider how the pandemic has impacted vulnerabilities that asylum seekers, refugees, and forcibly displaced persons already experienced.

New Crisis, Same Old Vulnerabilities

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, relief workers and governments have been confronted with the responsibility of developing procurement strategies to provide items like personal protective equipment, access to sanitation, and basic public health – but none of these essential items needed for refugees, asylum seekers, and forcefully displaced persons are new. As the Covid-19 crisis develops, a lot of pre-existing trends have become reinforced and old vulnerabilities faced by people on the move persist. Border governance is something that has been discussed internationally for quite some time, long before international borders ever closed. The 2018 UN agreement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, for instance, is premised on facilitating migration but also has the objective of monitoring borders, mobility, and cooperation between states over the movement of people to better manage migration flows (Global Compact for Migration, 2018). Two clearly distinct approaches can be seen in this document – one to open borders and the other to tighten borders, which reflects the different aspirations of member states and their stance on migration. Today, these opposing stances persist and there are big questions about how countries will respond going forward.

The transnational nature of migration, which obliges some form of international cooperation, raises concern about whether the idea of state sovereignty is diminishing (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 753–774). With the fear of people on the move spreading Covid-19 in the present day, this is not the case at all. In fact, during the global pandemic, there has been a general tilt towards a desire to protect the state. Regardless of any organisational agreements, nation states have the ultimate authority over the status of migrants in their country. Thus, the current global migration crisis in the context of Covid-19 is a good example of how the idea of the nation state as a sovereign governing entity has been reasserted, and this assertion of statehood may render certain categories of people stateless. Under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, statelessness is prohibited in Article 15 (United Nations, 1948). It is specified that all people have the right to nationality. Thus far, the enforcement of these laws is weak as they are not binding and there is no entity that has the authority to hold states to account when they fail to offer asylum, refugee, and citizenship status (Edwards, 2005: 330).

Also, the use of detention for asylum seekers during this time has become more and more common and thought of as a temporary condition while administrative processes get sorted out and while solutions to Covid-19 are developed. This idea of refugee situations being temporary is problematic since the average duration refugees spend in refugee camps across the world today is between 10 to 20 years (UNHCR, 2018). For many, this means the majority of their lives will be spent in a protracted situation waiting for their status to be determined. This issue predates the pandemic as large numbers of migrants over several years have ended up in detention centres in different countries across the world. The existence of detention centres for asylum seekers and the increased military presence at borders suggests a shift in the normative, humanitarian United Nations approach to forced migration. This shift is best articulated in a study conducted by Howard Adelman (2001: 7–32) which provides an analysis of the UNHCR and finds that refugees are no longer treated as victims of oppression but rather as threats to one's security. Adelman emphasises that approaches to migration have shifted towards a security dimension. The UNHCR is more involved in procedural operations in refugee camps, like determining who can stay and who should be deported, rather than undertaking humanitarian actions like creating humane environments for asylum seekers to be housed (Adelman, 2001: 7–32). The major shortcoming of the UNHCR is that it does not have the jurisdiction to legally punish those found to be responsible for refugee crises, nor does it have the ability to sufficiently rescue all refugees.

Australia has had an offshore detention policy which sees them paying off neighbouring countries and

islands to house asylum seekers, preventing them from entering Australia (Dickson, 2015: 437–454). One such detention centre is in the South Pacific Island of Nauru and is called the Nauru Regional Processing Centre. Another is found on the Manus Island and is known as the Manus Regional Processing Centre (Dickson, 2015: 437–454). Such detention centres are managed as criminal facilities (Dickson, 2015: 437–454). This criminalised detention of undocumented persons is becoming more and more common despite it being illegal under international law. In Greece and Italy, for example, hotspot detention camps were used to hold asylum seekers, who were then forced to live in sub-standard conditions and under constant watch (Kaniadakis, 2021). Such highly securitised conditions and restrictions that are meant to be temporary for asylum seekers and refugees may become long-lasting given international responses to the pandemic.

There are already examples of how 'temporary' treatment for asylum seekers has become the status quo and threatens to continue post-pandemic. Both the UNHCR and IOM suspended their resettlement programs in 2020 due to the closing of international borders, creating extended delays in the processing of refugee status and leaving many stranded (OECD, 2020). Thereafter, some countries like Hungary and Poland have simply refused to accept asylum seekers and have rather offered to contribute financially towards the upkeep of detention centres and repatriation back to home countries (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The problem with this is that the process of repatriation can be rather complex and take a lot of time and there is a risk that people may end up staying in detention centres for extended periods of time. The willingness of EU countries to assist asylum seekers has not been high for several years and countries like Italy, Greece, and Malta have been in the frontline bearing the brunt of this responsibility to protect. However, these countries may become increasingly reluctant to continue if there is no political will to support this endeavour from other EU countries.

Another concern that predates the pandemic is the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) which has worsened during the pandemic. According to UN Women, there has been a rise in the number of cases of GBV around the world as families face strain when their breadwinner loses their job due to the global economic downturn and imposed lockdowns as a measure to combat the pandemic (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2020). This issue has been particularly concerning for refugees who are on the move while facing the same challenges. Refugee screening data from the Bangladesh district of Cox's Bazar revealed that one in four Rohingya women and girls were victims of GBV and that 80% of them did not seek help (Cone, 2020). This creates a helpless situation for relief workers who are unaware of the severity of the danger these female refugees are in. Responses to this issue require innovative approaches to encourage victims to speak up.

Ultimately, past and present trends have demonstrated the failure of the international community to address longstanding vulnerabilities. In times of crisis like the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the international community is given an opportunity to rethink previous responses and start designing ways to build back better. The following section explores some of these international responses to the global migration crisis in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

International Responses to the Global Migration Crisis

International migration, compounded by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, is changing the way that countries behave, but states are not responding unilaterally. Some countries have used the pandemic as an opportunity to tighten their borders, while others are attempting to create systems of inclusion for asylum seekers. These responses can be narrowed down to a dichotomy of criminalisation versus assimilation or integration, which each offer different realities. This is the tension that will be discussed below while drawing on several examples of how different states and non-state actors have responded to the global migration crisis before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 1995, following the signing of the Barcelona Process, the European Union's response to migrant influxes was based on principles of inclusion and integration (Attina, 2003: 181). This agreement involved 28 EU member states and 15 non-EU states. This agreement provides European countries with trade links in the Middle East in exchange for entrance into the European market and the possibility to migrate to European countries (Attina, 2003: 181). The Barcelona

Process took effect in 2010 when boats filled with Middle Eastern and North African migrants started to enter European territory in large numbers (Pace, 2012: 4–24).

Subsequently, in 2015, the immediate response to the loss of lives in the Mediterranean Sea was a robust determination by European countries to save lives. This humanitarian sentiment was evident on 23 April 2015, when a special meeting of the European Council was held (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, and Guild, 2015). Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, was reported to say: 'Saving the lives of innocent people is the number one priority for us. The discussions in the meeting will be about readiness to sacrifice some national interests for the common good' (Aamann, 2015).

Thereafter, attention shifted towards how to manage the people who find themselves on European territory. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the responsibility of processing and accepting asylum seekers lies with the country in which the asylum seeker first arrived – known as the concept of 'first safe country' (UNHCR, 1991). However, in the European response to the asylum influx, a joint distribution or burden sharing strategy was forged on a voluntary basis. Refugee camps known as 'hot spots' were set up across the different European countries who accepted the burden of the migrant influx (Carrera et al., 2015). At these hot spots, undocumented migrants would be required to register for asylum and eventual refugee status and, if their claim was deemed unfounded, they would risk being sent back to their country of origin where they may face danger (Carrera et al., 2015: 7).

> "In recent times, the Covid-19 pandemic has been used by some countries to justify inaction for asylum seeker protection. While recognising the seriousness of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is irresponsible to neglect the international principle to protect those facing threat to their lives. In late 2020, the EU proposed a migration pact which requires countries who do not wish to accept refugees to contribute financially."

Not all countries have taken such a harsh stance on migration. Among the Scandinavian countries, Sweden has been the most open to accepting large numbers of refugees and even offering citizenship by naturalization (Stokes-Dupass, 2017: 40–60). Sweden's open-door policy ultimately affects all Nordic countries. This is because of the Nordic Cross-Border Cooperation which allows citizens from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland to move freely across the region's borders (Nordic Council, 2015: 19). Therefore, once a migrant is granted Swedish citizenship, they are allowed entry into other Nordic countries based on the Nordic regional agreements, despite their decision to abstain from accepting large numbers of refugees. In this way, Sweden acts as a backdoor entry point for migrants and asylum seekers into Scandinavia. For this reason, there has been increased pressure on Sweden to tighten its immigration policy (Stokes-Dupass, 2017: 40–60). There has also been pressure from other Nordic countries and Nordic civil society for Sweden to focus its immigration policy on assimilation, rather than integration, in order to preserve Nordic identity and culture (Stokes-Dupass, 2017: 40). This is a good example of the intolerance of Nordic countries to accept plurality of culture and identity.

In recent times, the Covid-19 pandemic has been used by some countries to justify inaction for asylum seeker protection. While recognising the seriousness of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is irresponsible to neglect the international principle to protect those facing threat to their lives. In late 2020, the EU proposed a migration pact which requires countries who do not wish to accept refugees to contribute financially to the upkeep of reception centres or to take on the responsibility of deporting people whose asylum claims were rejected to their home countries (Dempster and Anita, 2020: 1). This migration pact demonstrates that the EU is reasserting its tough stance on migration and leaving a major gap in the system of multilateralism in which Europe is a dominant region which millions of asylum seekers risk their lives to reach. During the pandemic, Malta returned people to Libyan refugee detention centres – which have been known to have extremely harsh conditions. This kind of approach has undermined the fundamental principles of human rights and the principle of non-refoulement which was mentioned earlier. Greece is another country that started to harden its borders – strengthening

border security patrols and building fences to prevent refugees in Turkey from entering the country. Now, in 2021, Turkey has been under great pressure to support these refugees (McKernan, 2021). While the UN supports the temporary closing of borders by countries to contain the spread of coronavirus and protect their citizens, those measures ought to be non-discriminatory, necessary, proportionate, and reasonable in all instances – which is not the case in Greece.

Conversely, Canada provides some hope as the Minister of Immigration has provided pathways to citizenship for a selected few asylum seekers and refugees, in exchange for their essential work during the pandemic – particularly in health-care facilities (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2020). Similarly, some countries have made efforts to include refugees in their national programs – granting temporary work permits, resident permits, and fast-tracked access to citizenship. France is an example as the Minister of Agriculture called for incentives to attract seasonal workers and mitigate shortages in their agricultural work force when roughly 2,000 of them – mostly refugees and migrants from Tunisia, Morocco, Poland, and Romania – were forced to remain in their countries as part of national efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 (ILO, 2020). This approach allows people who are already in the country to be documented in order to gain access to basic needs but also to vaccinations and other health and safety measures necessary to combat the pandemic. It seems as though countries are more inclined to include refugees in their health programs as a way of minimizing the risk of spreading the virus. In this regard, perhaps the pandemic could provide a greater opportunity to make progress on longstanding migration challenges if the imperative to protect refugees is presented to developed countries as an issue of the global commons that affects all people and all countries.

Paving a Way Forward

As countries start to think about post-Covid-19 recovery, there is a need to draw on pertinent lessons from the past but also to design new pathways of international response to mitigate risks, optimise opportunities, and enable societies to build back better as the crisis regresses. The international community must reconcile the role that they can play to steer progress in the right direction. Addressing the global migration crisis in the context of Covid-19 requires a 'whole of society' approach where governments work with different stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, academia, or technical communities to create a safe migration system. To do this, there needs to be a more rigorous effort to address the root causes of migration, rather than responding to the outcomes when people are already in harm's way. This means that humanitarian responses need to go hand-in-hand with social and economic development.

In trying to imagine and prepare for what the international system of refugee protection will look like in the post-Covid-19 period, one can draw inspiration from refugees themselves. Long before the pandemic, refugees have been forced to be self-reliant and resourceful – as a result, there is a large body of knowledge and innovations that can be leveraged by the multilateral system to address the global migration crisis, especially when relief workers have limited mobility to access those in need. Also, as a way of respecting Covid-19 safety measures, legal representatives, humanitarian workers, and GBV counsellors could continue their activities in person while being careful to do so in small groups and maintaining social distance.

There are also some promising prospects of research and innovation, especially in biotechnology with the development of vaccines and the roll-out of vaccination programs in some countries around the world. With this advancement, showing proof of vaccination could become a way to screen migrants in the near future. Currently there are talks in some countries about the possibility of having vaccine passports for international travel: for instance, Denmark in early 2021 reported that they are working on their own vaccine passport for Danish travellers (Murray, 2021). While this could eliminate the excuse that many developed countries have used to tighten borders based on the need to protect citizens from Covid-19, it may also create new challenges if people cannot access vaccinations, especially those on the move. For this reason, there is a need to strongly advocate for a waiver on restrictive intellectual property rights enshrined in the WTO TRIPS agreement in order to ensure inclusivity for new essential scientific developments, particularly during the current health crisis which is compounding

other vulnerabilities faced by asylum seekers and refugees. Developing countries like South Africa and India have taken leadership on this IP waiver issue in collaboration with other developing countries. Going forward, more leaders from developing countries need to be present at negotiation tables where governance issues around intellectual property and access to essential innovations like vaccines are being discussed. If a more robust approach to IP policy had been taken before the pandemic, developing countries would be in a much better position to secure the waiver much faster. As we have seen during the pandemic, time is really of the essence. The sooner the world's populations can get access to vaccines, the sooner we can reach herd immunity and reduce the number of deaths from Covid-19 globally. Since the proposed waiver would only be temporary, developing countries need to take a long-term view and consider how to secure vaccines even after herd immunity has been reached. Government subsidies, patent pools, or increased assistance to enhance production capacity and knowledge commercialization could help to secure access not only to Covid-19 vaccines but also to other life-saving treatment for future infectious disease outbreaks, not only for citizens but also for undocumented asylum seekers and other marginalised people.

Moreover, with the increased reliance on the internet as a result of working and studying at home in the era of Covid-19, digital technology also offers some promising prospects for the future. The innovative use of digital technology has managed to find its way into migration governance as there has been a trend towards a smart-border approach in which contactless and multi-sensory biometric scanners assist in identification and are used to manage migration flows in an orderly way (Jones, 2020). Another example of technology being harnessed for refugee protection can be seen in Syria, where caseworkers are unable to physically reach refugees but are now using text-messaging, video-conferencing, and call centre lines to service refugees (Cone, 2020). Going forward, digital technology and ICTs could offer opportunities to avoid keeping asylum seekers detained for long periods of time. Instead, administrative case processing and interviewing can be done virtually – which would make the process faster and safer too.

Overall, paving a way forward in a sustainable and just way would require countries to find a balance between protecting citizens from the pandemic while also fulfilling their obligation to protect refugees. What is needed more than ever is international solidarity and political will to share the responsibility to protect those in need. There is a window of opportunity to demonstrate the power of the multilateral system if the international community successfully harnesses collective action to address the ongoing migration and health crises. If done properly, the lessons learnt could also encourage the demand for collective response for future crises.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Covid-19 pandemic has driven the international community to act fast in their efforts to combat the spread of the virus. Some of these fast responses have led to decisions that deviate from the international principle of non-refoulement and the right to seek asylum. Responses to migration have shifted towards more securitised measures like increasing militarized border patrols, refusals to disembark boats carrying refugees, and deportation back to unsafe countries. We have also seen that in some developed countries, there seems to be a greater willingness to spend money on keeping people outside of their borders. While these decisions in recent times have been justified as exceptional cases to quickly combat an international health emergency, it is important to recognise that harsh short-term solutions can have long-lasting impacts and may persist for many years to come. This was demonstrated by the temporary solutions to house refugees in sub-standard conditions while waiting for administrative processes to determine their status, which end up taking an average of 20 years to be done.

We have highlighted here the need to establish a more inclusive and sustainable approach to addressing the international migration crisis. This will require increased multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and the political will to share the responsibility to protect. New and innovative approaches are emerging that could change longstanding vulnerabilities. The increased reliance on technology during the Covid-19 pandemic has offered new opportunities for innovative uses of technology to expedite the administrative processes

of refugee status determination where international relief workers are constrained by limitations on their mobility. If properly managed, the next generation could be able to use advanced technology and other innovative systems to effectively respond to the security threats caused by forced migration.

In a post-Covid-19 world, there are a number of developments we can expect related to the mobility of people. We may anticipate increased monitoring of movement, not only that of asylum seekers but of all people – especially if vaccination passports become mandatory for travel. However, the future of global migration is bleak if widespread attention is not given to advocating for a balance between implementing Covid-19 restrictions and the responsibility to protect asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons.

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Book Interview

The Economy On Your Doorstep

By Ayabonga Cawe | Books

AYABONGA CAWE

THE ECONOMY ON YOUR DOORSTEP

The political economy that explains why the South African economy 'misfires' and what we can do about it

Gift Sonkqayi and Bhaso Ndzendze talk to Ayabonga Cawe about his book ***The Economy On Your Doorstep: The political economy that explains why the South African economy 'misfires' and what we can do about it*** *(2021, Tracey McDonald Publishers)*

Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell us about your work?

Igama lam ngu [My name is] Ayabonga Cawe. I am a 31-year-old South African. I operate in a wide array of spaces and environments, all in the pursuit of assisting in the completion of the unfinished tasks of the South African revolution. I guess that's the bigger thing because I have an interest in the resolution of that national question. I work in the policy space and I work in broadcasting. I'm a cultural worker. I write. I also work in the start-up environment to try and seed different initiatives. Our business, Xesibe Holdings, turns five this year.

I'm also a sessional lecturer at Wits School of Economics and Finance, which is also my *alma mater*. I was there from 2009 to around 2014, and I ended up with a Masters in Development and Policy. I now teach on the Applied Development of Economics Honours programme, which covers a wide array of issues – some of which I discuss in my book, such as issues of local government, and the crisis of social reproduction. The creation under specific conditions of a capitalist mode of production in South Africa is a critical part of what I look at because, in many ways, it frames what is possible in the current moment: to deal with the massive challenges that face our people, especially in the places that we come from.

I'm also part of a generation of people in the student movement who were very intentional, even across party politics or ideological formations, about building and fomenting unity amongst students, in particular working-class students, and the working-class in the university space. In multiple shapes or forms, I was involved in the Wits Worker Solidarity Committee. So, I come from a tradition of – not only in the university space, but even *nekhaya endivela kulo* [the home where I come from] – of people who are very interested in the ability of collective action to change lived realities. [Amilcar] Cabral says we are not looking to win certain things in people's minds, we are looking to win very basic things. The Panther says: bread, land. And I think, when we think of it in that kind of context, I am in no way unique to many of the people in my own generation because they are also an outcome of this South Africa and the struggles that it has thrown up. So, that's where I operate and I try and write as much as I can. I think that's what we probably want to talk about today.

In your preface, you mention that when you first arrived at Wits University you did not see the images of economists such as Rosa Luxemburg, Joan Robinson, and Alice Amsden (including African women and Black men, except in the case of Arthur Lewis) in the staircase of the New Commerce Building. Why do these specific individuals and the groups they belong to matter to you, and what possible questions emanated from such observable omissions?

I think a bit of context is important. So, I get to Wits in 2009, probably 18 months into the global financial crisis after the Lehman Brothers. But the global financial crisis also coincides with the end of high school: what many people might say is the start of the idealistic phase in many people, where you start to say there's something wrong with society. You want to change it and sometimes it's very adventurous and you are politically immature at times. But there was that sense and so, coming into the university, I had certain expectations, knowing that people who look like me have made contributions to philosophy, and to knowledge. By the time I got to Wits I already knew that. I had already read Biko, Freire, and some of Arundhati Roy's work. So, a lot of the work from the third world type of thinkers and intellectuals suggested to me that there was already a sense that we've made some contributions to the world in some shape or form. Now, if I think back: some of the people who went to West Campus will tell you that West Campus after 2010/2011 had some of the best artworks in the entire university and it wasn't even

the Art Faculty. You see Cecil Skotnes there. You see Ephraim Ngatane. You see all manner of artists and some of their massive work, very expensive work in that part of the building. But when I get to Wits that hasn't happened yet. That happens around 2010, *yabo ngelaxesha le World Cup* [during the time of the World Cup]. That's when all of that happens. In a way, that was the old Wits.

So, if you think about the Accounting School: it was being built in 2009, there were still parts of the old building but it was still being built at that time. Similarly, in the new commerce building there were still some renovations yet to be done on the basic floor, but when you went up to the admin block, there were very nice pictures to say this is Thomas Malthus, renowned for his theory on population limits to growth. This is Karl Marx, renowned for the labour theory of value, and he was there with his big beard and then you walk around and you are like, 'nooo man, there's something wrong!' On one basis, the only person who is an African who was there had to win a Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences and there were other economists there where, in hindsight, some of your work was very dodgy.

Moreover, there were no females and yet there was a very strong tradition in the left of female economists who were thinking about these issues who might not have called themselves economists. I mean, if you think about the work of somebody like Ruth First in the South African context. [She] was as a journalist but some of her exposés were very micro level and incisive views about what was happening in the broader political economy of South Africa. She was not on that list. Neither were Ales Amsden or Joan Robinson or Rosa Luxemburg. So many other people who one would have thought would have been on that list were not there. A lot of people don't know about Rosa Luxemburg and the work she did, including a thorough case study of South Africa around the Anglo-Boer War and what she saw as the early stages of capitalism. A lot of what she says in that piece actually was sort of borne out.

So, at a primary level, I felt that there were certain things that were not being said because certain people were not at the table, particularly Africans and African women. What it also suggested to me was that who is at the table also frames what is worthy of inquiry.

> And I think, when we think of it in that kind of context, I am in no way unique to many of the people in my own generation because they are also an outcome of this South Africa and the struggles that it has thrown up. So, that's where I operate and I try and write as much as I can. I think that's what we probably want to talk about today.

It frames what is worthy of looking at and trying to understand. And so, my concern was that if all these people are bespectacled white men, then the basis of their inquiry, and by extension what I am taught here, is going to be from their outlook and worldview. So, in a way, it won't be able to explain what Mafika Gwala saw as an *okapi* drawn under Umnqadodo bridge out of solving squabbles from a factory life. It won't be able to speak from that vantage point because the people who sit there, African working-class people, are not there. And similarly, that is why my book starts with a Black woman being shot. It starts with that type of situation, in the context I know, in the streets that I have known, in the streets that I have walked, at a particular moment before I was born, of course. A woman who came from the funeral of her grandfather and was shot in her thighs and was effectively maimed for life. That for me is more relatable, because that is the type of South Africa that we live in, rather than the nice South Africa that you might see on TV. So, that's what matters to me. And that is why my book starts with the shooting of a woman by the police. That's a more realistic scene than what other people in political economy might be interested in.

Can you please expand on the ideas concerning the 'Glen Grey Act and the resolution of the Native labour challenge'? In particular, the idea 'of being sent to the labour bureau to come and ask to be provided with masters'? What economic basis did this serve? A hundred years down the line, as you note in your book, are there any changes?

You know, for me, when I was writing this, I don't how to put it from a perspective of analytical understanding. But when I read it, so many things

started to pop out for me and I talk about that in the chapter *Khawundenze* [make me human] and around how we can't think of the role of the Glen Grey Act and Cecil John Rhodes in the contemporary sense without thinking about *#RhodesMustFall*, for instance, and why that matters to even the decolonial project – which I think is something you want to touch on at some stage as well. But, for me, the Glen Grey Act is what frames, at the legislative and political level, the type of reality that I grew up around. So, the Glen Grey Act is critical because what it does is that it paves the way for the use of legal and fiscal instruments to codify the primitive accumulation project of early capitalism. It's not a surprise that it comes after the discovery of gold and diamonds. And not before. Because you would remember, and I think that's why I say if you are an Economics student, you have to be a student of History. Because then you are not going to be able to explain some of the things that you are seeing now without going back there.

Think about the start of the 19th century in the Eastern Cape. You've got a situation where you still have a continuation of some of the wars of dispossession. You've got the Nongqawuse episode. You've got the end of slavery in the British empire, which effectively now creates a labour shortage, for farmers at that, and the discovery of gold and diamonds makes that challenge even worse. But it makes that challenge arrive on people who are obviously enunciated, desperate and effectively their political spirit is killed off by the resolution of the war, the Nongqawuse episode, and of course the scorched-earth policies in that part of the Eastern Cape. Remember also the 1820 settlers from the British working class who came to South Africa and certain zones were created for them. So, Port Elizabeth to East London. *Umhlaba wabantu bakwa Ndlambe* [the people of Ndlambe]. That land is then set as a buffer zone, barring the entire city centre from some of the natives who are on the other side, and now you have all of these people who say, well I come from England and I am not going to come in and work for somebody else here, I will also come here and be part of the bourgeoisie. Rather, a person who has been chucked out by steaming ahead of the industrial revolution out in England.

I say this to paint a picture of how we arrive at 1894 in the Cape Parliament where Cecil John Rhodes says that there are a few issues. One of the issues is that we've got a grouping of Black African people who refuse to work because they have alternatives. I can go and till my own land, I can go and till my own allotment that I have been given by *Usibonda* [headmen], if you know the social institutions of the places that we come from. In that context, the history suggests to us that you already have an emerging middle-peasant layer, like a middle class of peasants, who are already integrated into agricultural markets of the pre-Union and even in the early stages of the Union of South Africa. Now, this layer of course exists with other classes in the society but it's an effective threat to the expansion of industrial desires of Cecil John Rhodes. And it's at that point where I speak, for instance, about his specific reference to Indwe. Now Indwe is part of the northern parts of the Eastern Cape. Really not known to many, I still want to maybe go there, might be a further work. I think there are some coal deposits but it is one of the earliest places in that part of the Eastern Cape that had a rail line and the rail line went straight to those coal fields that were ran by De Beers at that time.

So, it's not surprising that Cecil John Rhodes, in 1894, would speak about Indwe because he speaks about it in the context of his class to accumulate. In a way, that seals off cheap labour for the mines and for the farms primarily and later on for secondary industries. So, the Glen Grey Act is the first example of that primitive accumulation. I think the second one is this creation of social institutions to repress the alternatives I was talking about. *Abantu babengafuni ukusebenza* [people did not want to work] because they had alternatives. They had other livelihood alternatives. *Ndinemfuyo ndingalima* [I have livestock and land to tend] –that kind of thing. Now, if you want people to work for you on a cheap labour basis, the starting point is that you've got to dispossess them of that. And Marx speaks about this divorcing of producers from the means of production and a process written in *Letters of Blood and Fire*. And we know that in South Africa, he was writing maybe from England, but we know that in a very particular way here in South Africa. I think for me that experience is foundational to everything else that comes after. It is this sense that this process has steamed ahead and we are reaching a point now where we need labour. I mean even in the early 1900s, the Chamber of Mines could easily come out and say we are in a massive labour shortage. That is why, for instance,

> "And you vote with your feet to go to a Harrismith that built water infrastructure for a small white population that never intended for Africans to get running water or electricity and we don't build onto that infrastructure and when it collapses, we are shocked. It's all of these things that if your starting point is 1913 or 1994 you get to very problematic conclusions because you don't understand the pivotal features of South African capitalism."

Africans from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and other parts – Lesotho, Swaziland – ended up creating this system of an additional layer because the issue was that while you wanted to have the Native Land Act come into effect and the effect of taking people off of the land, there were still enclaves of people who were self-sufficient in some shape or form and so your needs as commodity prices rises because you wanted to benefit from those prices. Your needs for that labour required you to go beyond your border. Which is why they to go to Mozambique and strike deals with the Portuguese to have labour type of contracts. And that sort of shapes Mozambique and the Mozambican revolution in very particular ways right through to the moment of Frelimo. I say all of this because I want to show that at the end of our struggle, for example, which was around or through dispossession through political means. The second phase of our diplomatic struggle coincided with how the Cecil John Rhodes of the world had already created the native '*reservification*' of our society and you see it in very tangible ways. [This] might sound like a high-level theory but why is it that in Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia you find the same four-roomed match box houses which were designed in South Africa in 1951 with different alterations but it's the same design. It is only found in highly densified areas where African people live, that are seen as reserves in some shape or form. In South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia. It's not by coincidence. You must check on Twitter, I put out there a thread on it. That matchbox house turns 70 this year.

Part of our decolonial project, we might not agree on its economic terms, but part of it has to be about starting where the ANC Youth League in 1944 said study the reserves, study the production and economic system there so that you are able to make decisions around the economic programme that is about a clear sort of mapping, a motive for those parts of the world because we are not going to resolve the South African question if you don't deal with that. I think in a way, even our avoidance of that question is hitting up on our discussion on dysfunction, some people might say we've seen deep municipal dysfunction in South Africa. Where are these dysfunctional municipalities? Look at every one of them: it is either close to or alongside what was formally TBVC [Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei] state. Go to Harrismith in the Free State, right next door *ke* [it's] Phuthaditjhaba and Qwaqwa which used to be an old homeland. You go to Komani right next to Transkei, Ciskei. King William's Town, similar thing. You go to North West Lichtenburg and even in Mpumalanga Standerton. All those places were part or closer to the native reserve. Now, after 1994, I want to live a better life, I am going to leave. I am going to vote with my feet. And you vote with your feet to go to a Harrismith that built water infrastructure for a small white population that never intended for Africans to get running water or electricity and we don't build onto that infrastructure and when it collapses, we are shocked. It's all of these things that if your starting point is 1913 or 1994 you get to very problematic conclusions because you don't understand the pivotal features of South African capitalism.

The last point which I think is critical on Cecil Rhodes: capitalism works on the basis of expanding surplus value of profit and maximizing that, and that is seen by Marxists as the vehicle that contributes to the trending of capitalism and its forward advance, but one of the things that especially male lefties don't talk about is the role of capitalism in pursuing primitive accumulation within the home. So, this idea of externalising the costs of reproducing successive waves of the work force. So, it is not unsurprising *xa usiye* [when you go to] Vaalbank to hear somebody say my grandfather worked at Welkom at the mines, when the mines started my father worked at Welkom, I then worked at Harmony at Welkom and some of my brothers are still there. So, I am saying now mining contributed to making sure *indawo ezifana ne* [places like] Vaalbank are even habitable to produce successive waves of the workforce and I am arguing that, that responsibility, for multiple generations to

this day, now rests with the African women but in a very particular sense. If you look at our households *ezilalini* [in the villages] it's a lopsided structure *kukhu makhulu nabantwana* [there's a grandmother and grandchildren] and the middle layer is gone. And I am saying capitalism in the city continues to use those reserves as functional reproductive places without contributing to their development. So, industries from eKapa [Cape Town] for instance benefit from the cheap labour basis of having those squalid conditions in the townships. But that's not where the benefits end. The benefits end in them knowing that there are successive generations of that cheap labour, *ngapha eVaalbank, kuTshembeyi, Engonyama, eQoqodala* [that side in Vaalbank, Tshemebeyi and in Qoqodala] and those places. And I think that's still there. But we don't talk about it, we don't interrogate it in that kind of way. And I argue that Rhodes' bill, that he put before parliament, was about putting the building blocks of externalising the cost of social reproduction to the same reserves where people are densely populated and effectively with little life chances of survival or even thriving.

You were asking about this story of the labour bureau? Last when I was writing this book I spent about a week or so *kwi* [in] the Labour Centre of the industrial Johannesburg, so Krugersdorp, Roodeport. The West side though, and I tell you that when Achille Mbembe says the drama of yesterday was about overcoming exploitation and the drama of now is about finding someone to exploit you. Go to a Labour Centre and you will see it. At the time when Covid-19 hit. So, if you look at the references I make in the book to historical accounts, they happen during the Great Depression, which is a similar time of a knock to African people, and if I look at what I heard and I saw in those Labour Centres, and also one here in Randburg, what we have now is an inversion of that process. The first process was about trying to take land away and trying to get Black people into one space. The challenge is about saying how do you, having put Black people into those spaces where they can't produce anything for themselves, how now do you get them to economically participate? At a time when capitalism doesn't need warm bodies to accumulate? It needed it when Rhodes was there because your technological development and your development of your productive forces weren't at a stage where you could produce and accumulate without needing warm bodies. You are at a point now where those warm bodies need work but your production forces have advanced to a point where you no longer need to employ people. And I think that's the contradiction, you see it spilling over in youth unemployment numbers, you see it spilling over in lumpen patriarchy, gangsterism, gender-based violence, substance abuse, all of the issues that we see in our communities. Because it's largely because capitalism has moved in a certain direction but, in a way, you have left so many you have put into reserves and decided that your citizenship is in relation to whether or not you can work. And then now put them in a context where they can't work and it just becomes a bit awkward.

A great story of how teachers and other professionals found themselves in massive debt, beyond financial structures. What lessons can be extrapolated in this story concerning the agency of most South Africans? Is it even possible to act in your capacity as a rational being independent of the said financial structures and historical legacies of highly racialized capitalism?

I am a materialist. I am not interested in the morality. I think I even say it in the book. I am not interested in whether people are exercising agency and choices in economic interests in a particular way. My interest is in seeing how our psychosocial compulsion for consumption feeds capitalist accumulation and our continued dispossession in particular ways. I am interested in this idea that buying a nice *Gomma Gomma* couch gives you a certain level of social capital and signals social upward mobility. How that psychosocial need effectively meets an accumulation project that has a historical basis in dispossessing you and that continues to do so, taking much-needed resources away from productive investment in the real economy to investment in the financial sector, financial intermediation, real estate, and many of what we call the fire sector. That's what I'm interested in. Both my parents were teachers. Both of them poster children of the credit boom of the early 2000s, credit *yayifumaneka* [debt was contracted] and you could buy all these nice durable consumer goods.

What is interesting to me is to reveal what might not be apparent: that this system creates a perversion of what banks and financial institutions should be doing in a society that is in transition and that has certain

reconstruction tasks to undertake. So, let me give you an example: you have nurses and teachers in this country, who are members of the largest pension fund in South Africa and maybe on the continent, the GEPF [Government Employees Pension Fund]. Yet many of them live in backyards, renting. So now, you must be able to explain this paradox. Why do you have this massive financial performance, a massive investor that can invest anywhere on the continent, and yet many of the owners of that capital aren't even able to build themselves a house? Similarly, South Africa, I was on a call earlier with people from the financial sector and many of them say before 2014, South Africa had some of the best performing stock markets, and I was like, oh nice! What did that do to inequality, what did that do to the situation where people, nearly half of your population, live below the poverty line? And I am saying that the consumptive activities of certain layers in our society, wittingly or unwittingly, feeds that machine and I even make examples of the furniture stores themselves.

Take Lewis, for example. A lot of people will tell you that Lewis is probably more of a financial services firm than people who make and sell furniture, just because of how their operational model has financialised. Same with the banks: historically, we were told in Economics 1 that banks are there to facilitate credit to households and to firms and that's their job. We know in South Africa that South African banks make more than 40%, some of the big ones, in non-interest income. Bank fees, that airtime advance that you take, the insurance they give you, the financial services they give you: it's all of those layers. Now they have become what I call mobile virtual network operators. So, they sell phones and they sell you airtime and internet as a bank. Now, you are then surprised when the same banks are given responsibility to fund, in a credit guarantee scheme, businesses and they fumble it because for the last two decades their job was not really to fund businesses, be it that it's a start business or businesses in their medium sized segment of our society. Their job is to make more money and they no longer need to finance other businesses to make that money. And I think that's the lesson there on financialization. That reality at a household level, at a firm level, and even at the level of a non-financial firm influences the direction of economic policy. It influences the terrain of the debates, for instance, around the mandate of the central bank in South Africa, its instrument independence, and how that is used. And even the role of developmental finance institutions who sometimes charge higher interest rates than even the commercial banks. And when you ask them, they will say we don't get money at concessional terms and so we can't lend on concessional terms. But where is the central bank to come in and say, look guys, we'll give you at prime minus 4 or give you at 1.5% so that you can go and lend to entrepreneurs at prime minus 2 or something like that.

Can you possibly expand on the idea that '*to consume is to be free*' and its link with the notion of *Khawundenze Umntu* – Make me a human?

Let me say this straight. I use a term that I know people are familiar with because *yinto ethethwayo* [it's something that is being said] as an entry into a bigger philosophical and economic question. Maybe start with the consumer boycott *yaseMlungisi ngo* [of Mlungisi in] 1985. The condition in urban or peri-urban settlements in the townships for African people was one of temporary spatial presence, if I can put it that way. Much similar to how we treat people who don't come from South Africa now: your Zimbabweans, Mozambican immigrants, that kind of thing. This idea that you are here at our behest and you are here temporarily so. And this will never be home. Apartheid thought the same way of us because it said your home is not in Mlungisi in Queenstown, your home is in Transkei in Vaalbank in the homelands because that's where you, as a tribalized native, come from. And you need to have a lodger's permit to live here and you need to carry a pass that says you are employed by Mr Smith, and that Mr Smith has employed you since 1971. And it's even in the legislation, where you are not a citizen in the Republic or you have no right to live in the Republic unless you meet the outlines of Section 10 of the Bantu Authorities Act. And that's why *xa ufike eKapa abantu bathi hayi ndiyi* [when you get to Cape Town people say they are a] Section 10 Bantu *omnye uvele emaXhoseni* [that the other is from the homelands of Xhosa people]. It comes from that thing. Where the Section 10 says, look, you must be in 15 years of continuous employment with one employer to be able to get a house *elokshini* [in the township]. You must be working for somebody and be able to show, as requested, that you are working for somebody.

Now, that does something, in the mindset of people, across generations. It says to you that your legitimate claim to be in the Republic of South Africa, as opposed to in the homelands, is intimately linked to whether you are employed. Now that's premise number 1, premise number 2, in as far as you are employed, the one social signal, and we are social beings, that you are employed is on the basis of your basket of consumption and *siyabazi uba basekhona nangoku abantu abanjalo. Undibona uba ndiyasebenza ngotywala endibuthengayo. Undibona ubandiyasebenza ngempahla endiyinxibayo* [We know that such people still exist, you see that I am working through the alcohol I buy, you see that I am working through the clothes I am wearing].

So, these two premises lead you to a conclusion that then says, freedom – if it meant the ability for South Africa as a unitary state to belong to all of us and for all of us to have claim to it, we can have a debate about that, I mean you know – had to be about 'I can live wherever I want'. So *ungakwazi uhambe eNgonyama uhambe uyohlala eNomzamo, uhambe uyohlala kwenye indawo* [you can leave the Ngonyama village for the township of Nomzamo, you can leave for elsewhere] *without* any restrictions on your movement. But implied in that was that to be free is to have the capacity to consume because the objective constraint is that *Akukho misebenzi ngoku. Akukho misebenzi* [there are no jobs] that will give me the income to consume the basket that signals that *ndiqeshiwe nhoko nam ndingumntu* [I am employed now; I am a human being]. Irrespective of whether at that point we had citizenship, because we didn't. And I argue that this issue of finance, this issue of strategic perspective of the democratic state post-apartheid, has been about overcoming discontinuities in consumption as a way to material effect to liberation. So, this idea that *ungahlala ezilalini even if awunanto awulimanga awanakati awunankukhu* [you can live in the villages despite not having much to depend on] that at least there is some income that you will get from *urhulumente wethu* [our government]. And I think that's progressive. But what it does is that it creates a certain mindset *ethi* [which says] freedom is now no longer just about where I can move towards, but freedom is also about going beyond the green barcoded ID and joining a community in consumption because neoliberalism is about that. It is about creating this rational utility maximizing insatiable *'akaneli'* [never satisfied] type of person who consumes, consumes, consumes; because the mass production in the real economy is about feeding that consumption.

Ideologically, that plays itself out in a context that says to be free is to consume and, unsurprisingly, people maximize consumption and even *nabo* [those] that get money by means fair or foul, the first thing they do is to go to a dealership to buy something that signals *ubandikhululekil*e [I am free]. I am also free to consume. Among the community, people express their citizenship through consumption. And you can't blame people when there's no citizenship in production in South Africa. The productive structure remains white. The productive structure remains male. So, on what basis can we expect people to call or even lay claim to citizenship in production or even in distribution? When the only possibilities, channelled through debt in the context of declining employment and declining wage share of national income, is consumption through grants and through credit. You can't blame *abantu* [people] for that and that's why I come to the point that I made earlier: I am not interested in the ethics; I am interested in revealing what might not seem apparent. What is not apparent is that people are unable to relate the temporal citizenship of apartheid and their inclination now for what is called conspicuous consumption.

Now, conspicuous consumption is different from *lento yoba ndihambe ndiyoxhela inkomo kwami ndenze zonke ezizinto ndingabonwa* [slaughtering a cow behind the scenes]. Conspicuous consumption is about consuming so that people see you. Because *awaundiboni mos, andikhululekanga* [you don't see me, therefore I am not free]. I am *persona* invisible, if I can't consume in ways that signals that. And it's clear in every social space you go to: political parties, churches, taverns, everywhere. This sense that I am, Thabo Mbeki says in our current moment, is really not about the intangible gift of what you are but really about this idea of what you have and how that is a marker of certain value and I go even into the music where this is not unique to South Africa. Hip-hop allows us to make those transatlantic links to say that African communities in the United States are facing the same challenges that African communities are facing here in negotiating the spaces made possible by the financialization of capitalism and the neoliberal

restructuring of our society.

In the context of increasing unemployment, especially amongst South African youth, would you mind reiterating some of the lessons you took from India on cheap data and how that can help or assist with economic growth within the South African context?

I think India has one billion people. So that's the first difference. But I think you can't run away from the fact that ubiquitous access to cheap internet has effectively gifted India 50 million jobs. You can't run away from that. I mean, some of the data that was shared with us was mind blowing. And the distribution of jobs has allowed the digital space in that country, because of the investment from entities in making the internet and smartphones freely available. In leapfrogging certain stages of capitalist modernization, especially *kwilali* [in villages], because they also have a massive rural population. I was surprised that an e-commerce company can say to us, in 2019 at that time, they get the bulk of their sales from rural areas. It just didn't make sense to me. In South Africa, I don't see Takealot delivering stuff eVaalbank. Nor do I see the demand coming. I don't see it happening because *eyokuqala* [firstly], the internet is unreliable *pha* [there]. Number two, smartphone penetration is weak in the rural areas. Number three, there's no access beyond very expensive data.

So, this is really something I am passionate about and we are even running a pilot out in Chris Hani so *sise* [we are in] Mlungisi, *sise* [we are in] Cofimvaba, and we also out in town in Komani and we are trying to say, how do you introduce internet that's free? That somebody knows if I go to that place every day *ndizawufumana* [I will get] 30 minutes of free internet and then after I will get a gig for R10. And what does that do to the pricing behaviour of some of the bigger players and that's our research question. We are now nearly a year into it and next month will be a year and we still haven't answered that question. But we are willing to say, let's take the risk, because we know that is the next frontier of digitizing capitalism. But we also know that is the next frontier of pervasive inequality, which will be made worse and it's already starting to be made worse by digitization. Look at the educational experiences of children: *thatha umntana wase* [take a learner from] Nzimankulu and compare them with a learner who is in Orange Farm. *Ndenza nje umzekelo* [I am just making an example], urban-rural. There's a higher likelihood that that child in Orange Farm will be able to engage in digital learning, even though the incomes might be the same at the household level.

With the 'globalised role of finance in shaping the accumulation path of many parts of the post-colonial world' (p. 214), will South Africa ever achieve true decolonization and be able to impart policies that speak to its contingent needs and interests?

I think at the tail end of my experience at Wits, having been in the student movement in some shape or form, of the things I learnt very quickly is that we did not have the economic tools to be able to craft our own aspirations in a way that is conversant with a policy and bureaucratic framework that says, OK, model this thing, what is this going to mean, and all that kind of stuff. Which is problematic but I think it's the nature of the game at the moment. Now, when we speak about decolonization, my understanding is that it's an antithesis to the colonial project. We can have a discussion about its role in nationalist discourse, its framing, be it on the side of ama'Afrika, or the side of the chatters. My understanding is that it's about subverting the colonial character of not just social relations but economic relations as well. Are there prospects there for that type? I definitely remain optimistic that we can decolonize our economy. And one part of decolonizing the economy is confronting and subverting the old economy of the native reserve, a big part of what this book is about, because the native reserve and the colonial arrangement of society, or what some might call colonialism of the special type, is a critical feature or is the flywheel as uThabatha from the unity movement says. It's the flywheel of the economic structure of South Africa. A starting point about decolonizing the economy is about subverting those economic relations. It's about creating the conditions that are not just about saying *hayi qinisekisa uba abantu mabahlale ezilalini* [people should remain in the villages]. It's about creating the conditions that subvert the concentration of economic activity in certain parts of our country.

So, what stops us from creating economic, knowledge-driven, scientific, productive, and commercial activities *kwezalali zethu* [in our villages]? There are

a few issues that you have to deal with. One of the things I would advise people, if there was a reading list coming with this book, is to go out and read Govan Mbeki's work. Govan Mbeki says something so fundamental. He says even if you try and take industries to our areas, *uzawudealsh'a nezinto eziconcrete* [you will deal with concrete challenges] like le-internet *besithethe ngayo* [we talked about earlier on]. *Akukho zindlela ziright* [there are no proper roads], there's no rail infrastructure. There's no interconnecting infrastructure. So, let me give you an example, *jongi indlela* [look at the roads] in our villages, where are the roads? The roads link to the nodes that take people out and in. There are very few roads that *link lalali yoHebhe, kuthwa kuseNtshindeni and links to elapisini or eNgonyama* [there are not many roads linking different villages]. *Ayikho*, it's not there. Because there was never an expectation that there must be economic relations between *ababantu* [these people] that are in this area. It's the same with the railway lines, which end a few 100 metres into the Transkei territory. Because the idea is that *mawuthathe abantu kwezalali zabo and bahambe bakhwele ekomani uhambe ubaserhawutini* [take people from their villages so that they can catch the train to Gauteng in town].

I grew up in Queenstown. On my way to school, everyday just above *isporo* [the railway line], so every day before we go back home sometimes, we would cross the bridge, without fail every day, *kwakukho abantu ababeme kwisporo belinde ukhweli itrain* [there were people who were always waiting for the train in the railway line]. And primarily it's the train that goes to Jo'burg. There is no train that links eJojweni and maybe kuTshembyi or Bunkies or the other side in the same proximity. Because remember the moment you start to produce things, the moment you start to have economic relations among *ababantu balapha* [the people who live there] you are going to need to build that infrastructure. And the first lesson is that *amabhulu* [the Boers] never intended those places for that, so the starting point has to be about saying how do I build access roads that help *umdlane ohlelipha* [the brick maker] to go and *ezatena azitshisayo pha ahambe ayozithngisela omnye umntu kwenye ilali* [sell his/her bricks in another village] because *kuzawufuneka awele imilambo* [he or she will have to cross rivers] sometimes. *Awele intaba* [cross mountains] to even get customers in that village. I am not even talking about the Jo'burg economy. I am talking about *kwezindawu'skuzo* [the places we live in] because it's a design question. And the problem is that our people would want to fight back against design, rightfully so. Because when it was imposed, you know if you read about how it was imposed, if you read about the surveying of Transkei villages, run by *Ibhunga* at that time eMthatha Om Gov at that time is part of the Transkei territorial council *Ibhunga* at that and he writes very eloquently about how *abantu* resisted that *emaMpondweni* [Pondoland] *ngapha ngase* [as well as in] Lady Freire and many other places. Because they were saying that you are imposing a certain organization of our social and economic life and we would like to have a say in that. And I think that does not mean we must not come back to that conversation but on terms of our own making. To say *ubangoku usibonda uzawusika, kuyasikwa mos ezilalini* [the headmen will allocate land, because pieces of allocated land in villages in] ngo-December. If there's going to be an allocation process. We must agree *Sbonda* that there are certain parts of our village that needs to remain *intsimi* [farming land]. *Eyasekhaya intsimi kokhiwe pha kukho abantu abokhileyo* [they have built a house in our family farming land] but I can't blame them because *asiyilimi* [we are not ploughing on it anymore]. But there's no way for us as intellectuals who come from the urban core, *akhonto isinqandayo* [there's nothing stopping us] to go back and say to our people, comrades *ndizawuza nomntu oyisurveyor apha ake asincedise* [I will come with someone who is a surveyor]. *Ngowenye ilali ndizawuza naye nguGxarha* [he or she comes from another village] and explain how *imihlabi ethile* [some land] must be productive land and *sizawabuyela lomasimi imihlaba ethile* [we will fence such farming land] must be grazing land and *sizobuyela ezonkampi* [we will fence that grazing land]. And effectively densify *ezindawu abantu abahlala kuzo* [the places people stay in].

So, you can't run away from the fact that *izindlu zethu siqelelene* [houses are dispersed]. You need to densify those places so that you are able to bring services in a cost-effective manner. Running water, electricity, and all of those things. Once you have done that, create a basis but not in the frame of a capitalist type of village but a frame that is built on cooperation. You know I make an example in the book about SASSA

grants. One of the ways to decolonize is to take away power from the mainstream food system. We celebrate *ukufika kwe* [the arrival of] shopping malls *kwindawo zethu* [in our places]. So, we went when we were doing research *ngapha* [in] *emaXesibeni*. *Ufika pha oShoprite* [You get there and companies such as Shoprite] have built malls. Now you're going to be shocked *xakuthwa kukho ipeyi* [on the day of social grant payment]. *Kukho ipeyi namhlanje* [there's a social grant payment in] Eastern Cape for instance. *Ababantu bapeya kwaBoxer bazawuphuma straight bayothenga kwaBoxer Lamntu uyothengi i2kg or itop notch eshiye umhlaba apha that if umntu angaqini is'bindi or siqine is'bindi siyilali* [people get paid at Boxer and proceed to buy grocery items from the very same shop but if were to be brave as a village] we could create certain projects that produce so that uyazi *ubangalamini uyolanda ipeyi uhambe neproduce, uyayazi mos ababantu kukhona abazawufuni imbewu abanye bafune amanapkeni or iparrafin* [you know that on the day of social payments you come with your own produce, you know that there will be people who will want seeds, others will want things such as napkins and paraffin]. You give that produce to a municipal aggregator and that aggregator sells it to *ababantu barholi* [people who earn social grants] as cashless vouchers so *ufika phayana* [you get there] with R150 cashless voucher and get those things that are commensurate to R150, in addition to your grant because that is a stimulus to *abantu bethu* [our people] to start to produce knowing that *urhulumente* [the government] will be a buyer of last resort and not *lento yobandizawufika ndilim ihabile or umbona* [this thing of planting something] and not being able to sell because I don't have a market. I can't go to the Boers in Dodetrecht. They will say *hayisuka ufunantoni apha* [what do you want there?] There is a need now to think a bit differently about not just consumption so *ndilwa oko nabantu. Kukho ceba phakwilali yami abathi bafuni imall* [I fight all the time with such, the local councillor who in my village wants a mall] because my view is that we can't bring a mall as a tertiary type of activity *singaka* [before] resolving our primary and secondary questions of what do we produce, what do we add value to, and where do we sell it? That's the primary question *ekufuneke siyibuzile* [we must ask] if we are interested in youth unemployment. Dealing with those questions. *Kulokishi kulolali* [in the township or in that village] what are you going to produce, what value are you going to add to it, and who are you going to sell it to? There are massive pieces of land where we come from, but there is no level organization to fix the reality. You've got young people, but issue *yabo* [their issue] is that we need a mechanism to value that and remunerate it. *Sithathe ezicommunity works programs zabo* [we must take these community works programs to their villages]. *Sithi lena icommunity wors programme izwauhamba iyemasimini* [this community works programme will go to communal farming]. Then *sizakwenzi coop nivumelane* [we form a Coop]. *Lomveliso niyivelisa* [with what you produce] you [first] fix the household food insecurity *kuqala*. And then whatever is left you sell.

What are your concluding thoughts on youth activism, unemployment, and education (including free and decolonized education)?

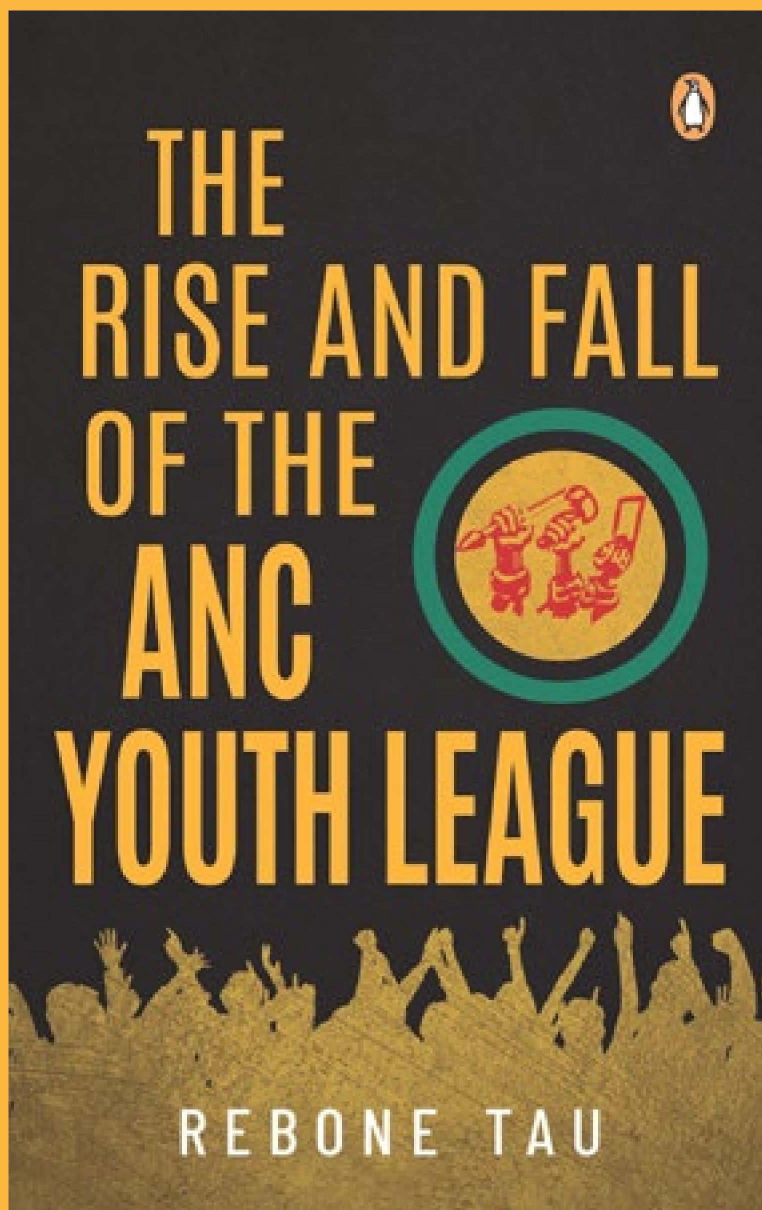
There is a need for critical pedagogy. You know uLwazi [Lushaba] used to say when he was still at Wits that you need an education that enthuses us to go and confront *ingxaki abantu bethu abajongane nazo* [the problems our people are faced with]. Not an education *ezandenza ndinxibi suit ndihambe ndiyohlale Sandton* [that will make me wear a suit and work in Sandton]. We need an education *ezawundenza ndithi, yabona ngoku? Ndiphekiwe* [that will make me feel confident in my knowledge and skills] and I am going to go and resolve a particular challenge in our society. Because *sidinga abobantu ngoku* [we need such people now]. We are in that phase of our struggle. And that stage of our struggle requires economic activists who are armed not with theory, but with an appreciation of the strategic and technical choices that have to be made to achieve the total liberation of *abantu bethu* [our people] and for me. In the context of decolonization, that project is incomplete outside a reckoning even amongst ourselves as nationalists of what does that look like. My view is that it has to look like socialism. It has to look like something that breaks away from the tyranny of the markets that take away people's ability to survive and to participate in labour. *Umntu akumelanga abenexhala lokuba kubengasebsenzi umntanakhe akazufunda* [a parent shouldn't be worried that since they are not employed, their child will not be able to attain higher education]. And for me those are the elements of socialism that we need to entrench, that we need to consolidate and institutionalise in our

society. Because socialism is not an event, you build socialism now in the intestines of capitalism. And my view is that is the task. It has to be a socialism that is not a Russian socialism, but a socialism grounded in the African context and in the political social reality that we live in here.

Book Review

The Rise and Fall of the ANC Youth League

– By Rebone Tau



By Emmanuel Matambo | Books

[2020. Cape Town: Penguin Books. 146 pp. R184.00]

In The Rise and Fall of the ANC Youth League, the author intends to revive the activism of South Africa's African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and end 'the perception that the organisation is a get-rich-quick scheme'. The book is a commendable effort to tell the story of the dying organisation and is written by an insider (the author is a former member of the ANCYL National Task Team). The ANCYL has an illustrious history, having been founded by such ANC luminaries as Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, and Oliver Tambo in 1944. Buoyed by youthful militancy, one of the founding impulses of the Youth League was to make the ANC more accessible to ordinary South Africans who felt, more keenly and direly, the racial injustices that preceded apartheid and were codified into law after 1948.

The ANC was initially an organisation of learned gentlemen and men of the cloth. By virtue of being dominated by this demographic, the organisation was more accustomed to diplomatic and less so militant means of protest against colonial and white supremacist rule by Pretoria and London. Thirty-two years of the ANC's existence (from 1912 to 1944) had shown that successive white governments were impervious to this brand of activism. After the Nationalist Party won the 1948 election and formally adopted apartheid as national policy, the ANCYL pushed a forceful Programme of Action in 1949 that indicted the ANC's methods of struggle up to that time and championed a more militant approach that included civil disobedience, boycotts, strikes, and defiance campaigns. The President of the ANC at the time, Alfred Bitini Xuma, rejected the policy out of hand. By this action, he sealed his fate as ANC President.

James Moroka, Xuma's successor, owed his ANC presidency largely to the ANCYL. He gained the ANCYL's support mainly because he endorsed the Programme of Action. The ANCYL's influence on the 1949 Elective Conference was so breathtaking that they succeeded in getting Moroka elected despite him signing up for ANC 'membership at the venue of the conference'. In *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC* (2005), William Gumede offers insight into how unfamiliar Moroka was with the ANC, which he persisted in referring to as the African National *Council* rather than *Congress* (Gumede, 2005). His election, despite these daunting odds, illustrates just how much influence the ANCYL wielded at that conference. The election of Walter Sisulu, a founding member of the ANCYL, to the powerful position of Secretary-General of the ANC further confirmed the success of the League at the conference. Even when the ANC leadership was in exile, the Youth League continued to be an influential voice for the youth.

From such a rich background, Tau looks at the Youth League's historical performance from the unbanning of the ANC, the formation of the post-apartheid order in 1994, to the current irrelevance of the ANCYL in ANC and broader South African politics. The author is right in highlighting that education played a seminal role in establishing the 1944 ANCYL as an influential body in the ANC. For this reason, the author rightly regrets the ANCYL's indifference and, even worse, its opposition to the 2015/16 #FeesMustFall movement by South African youth in tertiary education institutions. By its stance on the matter, the ANCYL sided with a long-established educational system, whose prohibitive fees were detrimental to the long-suffering (mainly Black) South African youth seeking access to higher education. What the ANCYL did during this time should not have come as a surprise. From the high drama that characterised the movement during the presidency of the populist, highly charismatic, and ultimately expelled Julius Malema, the ANCYL was a craven addendum to the ANC, failing to recapture its mission, relevance, and lustre.

The author deserves commendation for candour. Books that are written by insiders often reveal the intricacies of internal dynamics that outsiders have no access to. Their blemish, however, is often the possibility that analysing organisational dynamics as an insider is difficult due to the usual lack of objectivity and the difficult admission of personal culpability when movements fail. Tau has not foresworn responsibility; she decided to make the book an impersonal narrative of a once-glorious movement that her generation has successfully managed to drive almost into oblivion.

Despite the importance and virtue of the book, it has shortcomings. One of them is extolling the Communist Party of Cuba and the Communist Party of China, two organisations whose youth structures are not altogether very visible or prominent and whose democratic moorings are almost non-existent. The book's overall argument is beset by a contradiction that the author falls into and does not resolve: Should South African youth depend on organisations such as the ANCYL and the youthful Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) to champion their cause? Or should they, like the #FeesMustFall activists, embark on activism that is not tethered to organisational strictures? As a book aimed at sounding an alarm to the ANC and the ANCYL, *The Rise and Fall of the ANC Youth League* is resourceful and meticulously researched. However, in the larger scheme of South African politics and the place of the youth therein, the book is a partisan and unhelpful call for action that might discourage spontaneous activism among young people who do not belong to organised politics.

References

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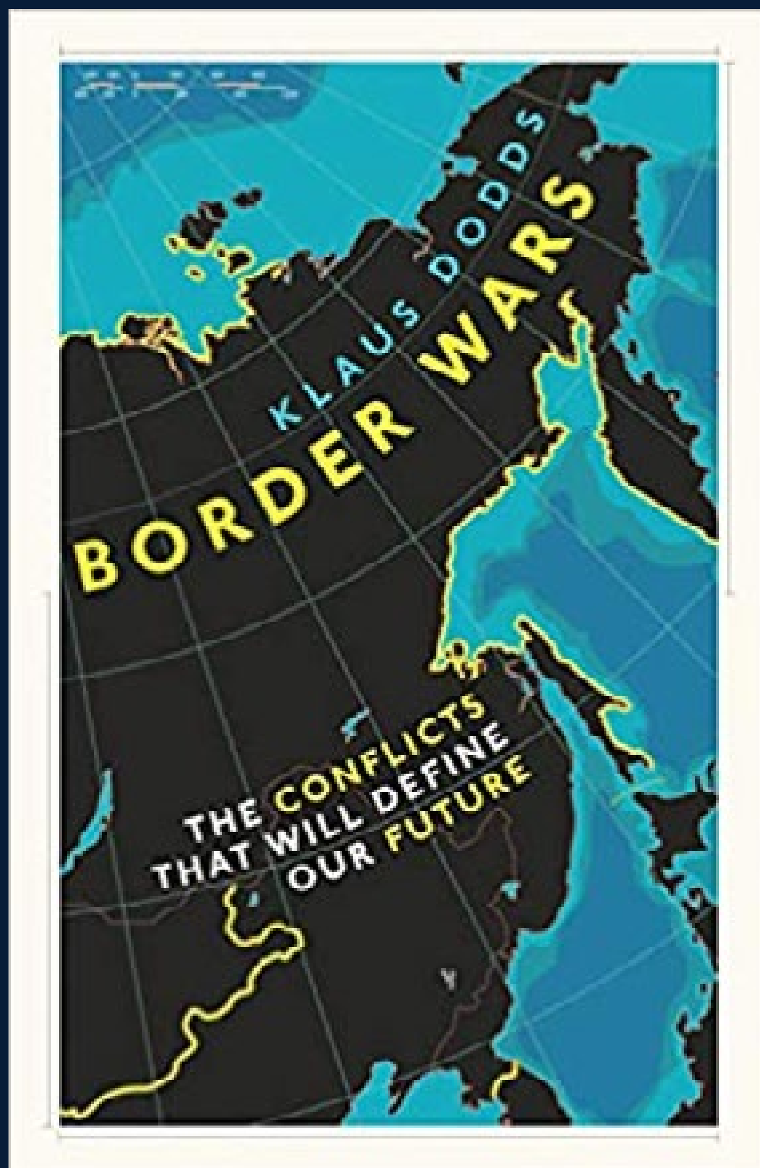
Book Review

The New Border Wars: The Conflicts That Will Define Our Future

– By Klaus Dodds

By Miguel dos Santos | Books



[2021. New York: Diversion Books. 320 pp. R280.00]

Upon first inspection of *The New Border Wars*, the reader is introduced at breakneck speed to the multitude of topic areas that Professor Dodds aims to address in this work and how they are all connected to those enigmatic objects known as 'borders'. For the overwhelming majority of humanity, borders are far-away things, lines on a map. They appear to be naturally assumed boundaries that place people into categories of 'us', 'them' and 'elsewhere', with little impact on people's everyday lives. It is this basic assumption that The New Border Wars breaks down, immediately showing the reader from the introduction that borders have always been malleable tools for the powers that be to use, and often abuse, for legal, political, and (more often in our world today) financial gains.

Professor Dodds' writing style is eclectic, jumping from one aspect of the central topic to another. Sections can start with a discussion on the most recent border trends. These include developments such as the US-Mexico border, the management of refugees and migrants across the European Union (EU), India and Pakistan's disputed borders, and conflicting claims over islands between China and Japan. These self-same sections then present the reader with the difficult-to-answer questions of how to manage sea-bed mining, fishing rights in the far-off polar regions, and the fact that nature doesn't conform to human designs. Changing mountains, glaciers, and rivers once thought static and secure have shifted. Dodds also deals with the uncomfortable truth that a multi-billion-dollar industry has grown around border security and infrastructure that forces the courageous and desperate into increasingly dangerous routes to access more affluent and stable parts of the world.

It is a testament to Professor Dodds' research and narrative ability that this writing style never feels jarring, as each example and jump of perspective is a logical follow-through of the points made along the way. The structure of *The New Border Wars* helps a great deal as well. It presents focused chapters that look at specific elements of borders and their complicated interactions with the states, people, environments, and legal frameworks that often make border spaces at one time a static object, ignored for decades at a time, to a political or humanitarian crisis that could ignite at a moment's notice.

Chapters 5 and 6, the former being 'No Man's Land' and the latter being 'Unrecognised Borders,' exemplifies this focused but eclectic writing style. 'No Man's Land' opens with a confrontation of the basic assumption that the lines on a map mean total control is exercised across the length and breadth of a border system. This assumption is proven false with historic evidence going as far back as the fourteenth-century border between Scotland and England's 'grey-zone' of opportunistic cattle raiding, to the deliberate stalling of change in regards to the 'High Seas' which cover half the planet's surface, to the current 'tragedy of the commons' setting, and to a more unified and regulated stewardship for the good of all. The chapter goes further, exploring a hypothesis that the future will see an increase in 'grey-zones' appearing around the world. These 'grey-zones' will be spontaneous occurrences, such as that which occurred in 2019 when both the Mexican and Guatemalan governments decided to close off their river borders along the banks of the 'River Suchiate' to a group of Central American migrants. This created a No Man's Land (or *Tierra de Nadie*) as the migrants themselves described it, where neither state took accountability for the migrants but also ensured that they could not move onwards or backwards in their journey.

In contrast to Chapter 5, Chapter 6 – 'Unrecognised Borders' – opens not only with the very real legal and political aspects of borders and how their recognition is vital to the current global system, but also with how *not* recognising a border provides states and other parties options and advantages that more often than not perpetuate tensions. The most striking example presented is the complications surrounding Western Sahara, a formally recognised 'Non-Self-Governing Territory' by the United Nations. It is an illegally occupied territory under the control of the Moroccan government that must be allowed self-determination under a referendum on full independence. But the reality is that none of the major world powers (the US, Russia, China, or the EU) recognise Western Sahara. This provides little to no pressure for Morocco to change its behaviour or stance. Such circumstances leave the people of Western Sahara in a situation where their state is divided in half and under the illegal control of a neighbouring power. They have little to no ability to deal with the international community or change the circumstances on the ground. This is a particularly jarring reality when the reader is presented with the fact that despite European Court of Justice rulings and European Parliamentary resolutions, the EU continues to broker trade deals with Morocco and coordinate immigration and security efforts while only applying what amounts to 'lip service' in regards to the political situation and the future of Western Sahara.

The weakest part of *The New Border Wars* is its more speculative Chapter 8, titled 'Out of This World.' It is here where the new frontier of borders is being formed with pioneering technologies and the involvement of new state and private actors. There is a growing reliance on orbital infrastructure for both military and civilian needs, and the uncomfortable reality of orbital congestion makes space a new theatre

> It highlights how unimaginable and unbelievable things can persist for years or decades and then suddenly spark a raging calamity that endangers our safety, politics, and even our humanity. In the final analysis, borders are not natural, omnipresent realities; they are human creations that require our constant effort, or lack thereof, to work as they do.

of growing global concern. The 2000 'International Charter on Space and Major Disasters', the 1979 'Moon Treaty', and the 1967 'Outer Space Treaty' are the foremost internationally recognised frameworks for managing space. But as with all new 'frontiers', whether technological, social, or political, the facts and realities on the ground (in this case, space) are few and far between. This makes hinting at future issues and surveying clear opportunities or threats difficult. The anaemic information environment leads Professor Dodds to repeat the information he *does* have throughout the chapter quite often.

'Out of This World' asks many questions of the reader and of researchers. For example, how will states and the world react to someone declaring themselves President of the Moon? Or what will happen if a state or corporation declares a part of the Moon, Mars, or any other celestial body a 'research zone' with limited access to others while they themselves are mining the resources found there? These questions and others are first presented to the reader from the various realms of science-fiction and some of them are still only possible in that genre. But all these questions, and more, need to be answered, at least theoretically. Peace in orbit and space, in general, is an agreeable norm today, much like Mutually Assured Destruction was an agreeable norm during the Cold War. But both are concepts that can change at a moment's notice and yield disastrous consequences for the entire planet.

Overall, *The New Border Wars* is a fascinating piece of work that achieves its ambition of answering and highlighting the sheer multitude of areas, factors, and elements that borders influence in our world today. The reader will see how these literal and figurative boundaries are often the frontiers for technologies and policies that would not be accepted if they were aimed at normal citizens. But because they are targeted at immigrants, foreigners and others first, they are gradually introduced to citizens, eventually becoming an accepted norm in everyday life.

The book dives into the deep end of an aspect of our international system that does not get the attention it deserves. It highlights how unimaginable and unbelievable things can persist for years or decades and then suddenly spark a raging calamity that endangers our safety, politics, and even our humanity. In the final analysis, borders are not natural, omnipresent realities; they are human creations that require our constant effort, or lack thereof, to work as they do.