From ideology to inequality: Examining the socialist effect on South Africa's pandemic politics

Demi Harmse
University of Johannesburg
Demi.harmse@gmail.com

Abstract

The BRICS grouping presents itself as a catalyst for global economic reform. As an inter-state association, the grouping is particularly concerned with transforming economic development in the Global South. However, global and national policy efforts to solve socio-economic inequality are hamstrung by the pervasive influence of rigid ideologically driven thinking. In light of the Great Reset and growing calls for economic reform centered on socialist principles, it remains imperative to test the efficacy and sustainability of the ideas responsible for our current socio-economic failures. Importantly, the complexity of our social contexts demands testing the validity of ideological claims before establishing them as uncontested truth. At present, the covid-19 pandemic presents the opportune moment to examine the socialist and social justice influence on South Africa's socio-economic policy architecture. Specifically, using a qualitative approach to investigate the ideological impact of socialism on misdiagnosing disparate socio-economic policy outcomes. To this end, an evaluation of human nature, the social contract and economic organization provide insights into the limitations of social justice as the primary policy response to inequality. This study makes the case that socio-economic inequality can be traced to policy issues where ideological assumptions have been prioritized over empirical evidence. The findings indicate the centrality of redistribution as the unanimous victor able to ensure roughly equal economic outcomes for all social groups. An assumption with disastrous and even counterproductive consequences. Since ideologies are largely closed systems of thought, they conceal socio-economic realities which can only be addressed when policy preferences are revisited and re-evaluated.

Keywords: inequality, socio-economic policymaking, ideology, social justice, socialism, South Africa

Introduction

History rehearses the uncomfortable reality that governments, not the market, are the protagonists in the suffering of mankind. Hence, the failure to consult history allows for the repetition of policy mistakes to persist without revolt. These have dire consequences on the civil liberties, economic growth and political stability their intellectual prowess claim to protect. Lack of testing ideas and interrogating their real-world applicability has thus enabled policymakers to betray the very people their ideas and policy prescriptions are meant to serve. Firstly, inequality is universal. Still, almost all forms of inequality are treated with suspicion. Having said that, this paper addresses the universal evil commonly known as socio-economic inequality. The persistence of inequality at the international and national levels is further exacerbated in the case of the covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, crises come to test the resilience of our existing economic systems and is often followed by a call to change the existing state of affairs. But before embarking on a radical reform agenda, it is important to assess the policies responsible for our current socio-economic failures. This paper will provide reasons to take seriously the role and nature of socialist ideology and social justice in misrepresenting and misdiagnosing socio-economic development in the case of South Africa.

Among the most popular calls to reform hail from social justice rhetoric and the new world order. The 'new world order', is simply a phrase used to describe normative principles that prescribe a socialist informed pattern of world affairs. The new world order is conceptually identified in the language of fairness, equity, inclusion and diversity. Hence, new language is used to explain the same

ineffective social justice strategy that substitutes elite control and government handouts for socio-economic development. Before considering the proposition to transform all existing institutions, laws and policies, one must evaluate the cause of institutional defilement and corruption. The demand for a response to inequality span regional and continental boundaries as seen in the rise of multilateral platforms from the global South. Specifically, the BRICS platform emerges as the most prominent. While any international grouping exists based on common values, it follows that individual members still pursue self-interested goals in the advancement of their national economic visions. A review of the dominant ideas behind the establishment of the BRICS grouping, reveals the importance of shifting power relations in the global political economy. Thakur (2014) notes that BRICS countries came to the global governance table with a mutually reinforcing sense of historical grievances and claims to represent the interests of all developing countries. While all the BRICS nations have experimented with socialism and Marxist-inspired economic visions, the case of South Africa is chosen to review the socialist and social justice effect on South Africa's socio-economic architecture and its policymaking preferences.

Socioeconomic inequality remains a consistent hindrance to humanity. Govender (2016) goes on to add that even South Africa's constitution and progressive policy interventions have not absolved the state from dealing with inequality. Govender qualifies the statement by linking the persistence of inequality to the legacy of apartheid whereas, Piketty (2014) advances the claim that inequality is a consequence of capitalism. Contrary to the above, history records an unfavourable recurrence of scarcity and inequality- a fact that politicians and even social scientists selectively ignore. It follows then that unmet needs, on account of scarcity, are increasingly susceptible to political prioritization. Once political prioritization occurs, polarization follows. This is especially evident when it stands in stark contradiction to what their proposed policies can achieve. Because ideologies have both functional and operative elements, their claims must be audited before they graduate into established economic policies (Seliger, 1976). Schwab and Malleret (2020) record that covid-19 (so far) in probabilistic terms, unlike previous pandemics, boasts a significantly lower lethality and mortality. The authors of the Great Reset, go on to add that post-June 2020, covid-19 has killed less than 0.006% of the world population. Now consider this in contrast to the Spanish flu which killed 2.7% of the world's population and HIV/AIDS 0.6%. Contextually then, this low figure brings into question the urgency through which economic, political and social reform should be sought by national governments. Notably, the covid-19 pandemic does not constitute an existential threat. Nevertheless, in the words of Schwab and Malleret (2020) 'the post-pandemic world will be preoccupied with the issue of fairness, stagnating real incomes and the redefinition of social contracts'. This viewpoint reflects the pervasiveness of egalitarianism and fairness espoused by social justice thinking. However, the practical consequences tend to violate the integrity of their proposed claims and assumptions.

Schwab and Malleret (2020) advance that the 'post-pandemic era will usher in a period of massive wealth redistribution, from the rich to the poor and from capital to labour'. He goes on to add that covid-19 is likely to sound the 'death knell of neoliberalism, a corpus of ideas and policies that can loosely be defined as favouring competition over solidarity, creative destruction over government intervention and economic growth over social welfare'. Note, the language used to define neo-liberal economic thought as though it has not substantially contributed to global poverty alleviation. These statements all echo with great fervency, the need for a fairer alternative. This thinking is deeply embedded in a socialist understanding of economics that emphasizes the government's role in the equal distribution of resource and economic outcomes. Amid both international and national calls for social justice and the growing favouritism of socialism, there is a need to dissect the assumptions, claims and functionality of the beloved ideology. Secondly, the impact of this type of thinking on policy visions of the African National Congress (ANC) will be examined. In particular, the psychology

behind South Africa's social justice driven socio-economic architecture. Among the key strategies which precede changed economic conditions is addressing the misdiagnosis of economic and social inequalities. South Africa is beset with economic and social crises. Inequality is more pervasive than ever. In light of the socialist proliferation of ideas in the policy space, it remains important to understand the origin and appetite for the call to social justice as the only morally justifiable answer to the 'great problem of South African inequality', in all its various forms. This paper explores the covid-19 crisis as an opportunity to identify the effect of progressive social politics on economic policy development. The success of this paper hinges on its ability to clearly distinguish facts from ideological fiction. Further, it accounts for the limitations and inadequacies of social justice as the primary policy response to socioeconomic inequality. To this end, section one focuses on the purpose of ideology; section two expands on methodology; section three identifies the role of ideology; section four then reviews alternate ideological responses to socio-economic inequality; section five goes on to identify the limitations associated with the social justice position on the social contract, social group identity and the mechanics of operation in a socialist economy. While most discussions recognize the faults of capitalism, this paper reveals the ideological limitations of socialist solutions to socioeconomic inequality. The research exclusively focuses on the role of socialist ideology within South Africa's socio-economic context and therefore, limits the application of its findings to other BRICS nations. The main claim is that much of the socio-economic problems in South Africa are a direct consequence of social justice policies such as the welfare system and affirmative action programs.

Approach

This study uses a qualitative framework to fully grasp the ideas, motivations and behaviours associated with ideologies. Mair (1996) provides a synoptic review of the tradeoff between the level of abstraction and the scope of countries. Despite efforts to provide clear measuring instruments, methods are blurred based on research specifications and contextual environments. Sartori (1970) points out that many single-country studies embed their studies in a comparative context in addition to using concepts that apply in other countries irrespective of the political system. Simply put, the use of concepts applicable to more than the specific country under investigation qualifies the study as comparative (Lichbach and Zuckerman, 1997). Moreover, it is plausible to have a single-country study with many observations thus providing comparative credence. Similarly, it can be said that a given relationship can be demonstrated to exist with a greater degree of certainty. In sum, qualitative analysis demands a resource-rich archive of information that tracks history, making it significantly more difficult to synthesize. Hence, the plethora of socio-economic development indicators spotlights the consequent problems of validity. Variables in political science are a function of real-world politics and therefore, difficult to control owing to social, political and even cultural specificities. The interactions between variables themselves, present a further challenge to correlation and causation efforts. Finally, multicausality rehearses the uncomfortable truth that in the real world, there is no single and easy answer to fluctuating socio-economic problems.

Locating ideology as the root cause of the socio-economic struggle

The previous section set out to trace the growing popularity of socialism and social justice reforms as the most appropriate response to socioeconomic inequality. Note, the perceived focus on moral superiority as opposed to economic viability. Next, the nature and purpose of ideology will be discussed, before contrasting opposing ideological frameworks. Attacks abound concerning capitalism and its inadequacies; however, social justice remains relatively unscathed despite its growing economic influence on policymaking today.

Foucalt (1991) advances that ideologies contain a claim to uncover the truth and can thus be described as 'regimes of truth'. By extension, they provide a language of political discourse, a set of assumptions and presuppositions about how society does and should work. It follows that when articulated in this context, ideologies maintain a strong connection to power. Power unrestrained by moral principles corrupts. Evidently, in a complex international system, where it is natural to have competing values and theories, ideologies concentrate on value prioritization and invest in legitimizing certain sets of meanings and concepts. For this reason, postmodernism posits the argument that certainty is non-existent. It argues that universal truth is a mere representation of pretence and bias. Instead, the focus is diverted to the role of discourse and debate in giving consequent expression to the existence of reality. To put it succinctly, postmodernism argues that knowledge is completely shackled by subjectivity. Saad (2020) terms postmodernism, 'anti-science and anti-foundationalist, because it refuses to accept that sensory knowledge when triangulated prove that an objective reality exists. The presumption of truth impresses the idea that it is inessential, if not altogether illogical, to qualify a statement with empirical evidence, non-contradiction and relevance. This is problematic because of the postmodern understanding of ontology and epistemology. On the whole, the impracticality of ideas that emanate from the social sciences (because of the dismissal of reality and its imposed consequences), are fundamentally limited in their ability to affect change.

Examining the impact of postmodernism on ideology formation is significant, as these ideological claims often manifest in policymaking. Investigating the properties of ideology informs that there is an amicable attempt to simplify complex phenomena. This births political discourse able to give linguistic substance to world politics. The common dialogue created further contributes to the unity of thought and action (Siegler, 1967). Ultimately, the binding nature of language serves to cement ideological claims as irrevocable. Although ideology represents early efforts to understand political relationships and phenomena, there is significant danger in the oversimplification of multivariate challenges. A persistent fault associated with ideological discourse is the tendency to reduce multifaceted phenomena to a single issue upon. This responsibility cannot be sustained by regimes of truth that are untouched by the complexity of reality. Owing to the reductionist nature of ideological formation, it follows that misrepresentation of the nature and pervasiveness of socio-economic phenomena are likely to occur.

Popper (1945) among other scholars have been more reserved in their application of the term ideology owing to its designation as a closed system of thought. Further, this view holds that 'ideologies claim a monopoly of truth, indignant of rival beliefs' (Freeden, 2006). In this way, ideologies are more accurately synonymized with 'secular religions'; possessing a totalizing character and serving as instruments of social control, compliance and subordination. Because ideologies create oneness between ideological thought and action, its postmodern origins blur the lines between fact and fiction. This means that policymaking intended to improve the material living standards of the public refused to account for the complexities of the real world. Heywood (2017) notes that for ideologies to be measured against an objective standard of truth is irrelevant. Simply put, ideologies embody values, dreams and aspirations making it unsusceptible to scientific inquiry. But because ideologies are both idea and action-oriented- meaning that it finds expression in policy frameworks, it is extremely dangerous to concretize socio-economic policy based solely on 'aspirations, dreams and hopes'. At the same time, ideologies are free to roam the academic space as they attempt to answer the questions which arise in a given political and economic environment. Albeit, in light of their operational dimension, individuals are now mobilized to champion policy positions not based on or verified by empirical evidence. Policymaking affects the livelihoods and the standard of living of citizens. Therefore, their economic fate cannot rest in an ideological disposition that is not consistent with economic principles and their realities. If this is the case, politicians, policymakers and activists are absolved of all accountability because they simply could not have known the outcome…. Despite

the blatant policy failure or the counterproductive outcomes produced, reminding of racism will continue to exonerate political parties from the consequences of their ideologically based socio-economic policies. This way, the majority of its voter base will excuse performance results and vote based on the intention of the promise and not the results thereof. A social justice driven understanding of inequality creates the impression of despondency. Previously disadvantaged groups and blacks in particular, are dissuaded from taking action in solving their economic problems simply because the issue of inequality will forever be tormented by the enormity of its historical legacy. Definitional dilemmas surrounding structural racism and the ghost of apartheid as a persistent hindrance to socio-economic equality today, must be evaluated. Of course history has consequences, still, the assertion that every socio-economic inequality is due to the inequity currently taking place, must be verified by a factual analysis. This vicious cycle that can only be countered by correct information, critical thinking and demanding evidence for proposed policy measures. Next, taking seriously the weightiness of the evidence must be at the forefront of guiding socio-economic policymaking.

A review of alternate ideological positions causes and remedies of socio-economic inequality

Research abounds as it relates to the degree of economic inequality and interethnic differences in income and economic outcomes. Usually this happens without understanding the multivariate nature of these issues. To address current socio-economic outcomes, it is useful to study trends in socio-economic thinking responsible for creating those conditions. The consequences of socialist thinking on economic realities will be explored below.

Acknowledging that while different ideological and otherwise theoretical positions exist, there seems to be a common critique- a joint rejection and hatred of capitalism. To grasp the growing national and international disdain, it is useful to interrogate the merit of the critiques as well as the feasibility of their proposed alternatives. Trends in socio-economic thinking and social policy reveal the preeminence of, and even aggressive push towards welfare as the only 'sustainable' solution able to reduce inequality (World Bank, 2016). World-renowned international figures from both the United Nations (UN) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), espouse the expansion of the welfare state as the champion of 'shared prosperity for all'. Principally, this notion depends on 'rethinking capitalism'.

Notably, considerable attention should be apportioned to the linguistic preferences used in articulating the nature and accuracy of economic conditions and outcomes. Politicizing language is an ideological technique able to impress specific meanings to concepts detached from their (objective) mainstream understanding (Freeden et al, 2015). Because of socialism's conceptual rigidity, difference in political thought reached by members of the same social group is not permitted. Moreover, the difference in thought about the economy and government responses to inequality is demonized. Even more so, the difference in opinion is both weaponized and militarized. Simultaneously, it is used as a measuring stick to determine one's allegiance to their ethnicity or sexuality. Socialist inroads into liberal democracy then, violate the sanctity of democratic values such as the freedom of expression. Certainly, the UN, WB and WF are insistent on using morality to explain and understand economic behavior and organization. Why? Morality evokes an undeniable emotive dimension in human beings. Wherever morality is discussed, emotion emerges as the transcendent force to whom there is no rival in sight. Similarly, the World Bank's campaign towards 'a world free of poverty' is based upon two goals. This includes 'ending extreme poverty by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity' (World Bank, 2015a). Overall, the language used, remind of an inclination toward socialism as the moral superior. The presumed moral superiority promises the eradication of all inequality, especially in the socio-economic context. Terms such as 'shared prosperity for all' and

'fairer', are used to express economic goals and misrepresent economic realities. Further, these terms perpetuate the cycle of delusion regarding what slogans and policy measures can achieve.

Similarly, Rawls (1970) argues that social justice is resource equity and is achieved through the redistribution of resources by those who have unjustly gained them. All who have, are assumed to have unjustly gained them, provided they are a member of a historically marginalized group. Again, the goal is redistribution of resources, decision-making and power. Sowell (2001) elaborates by stating that cosmic justice presents resource redistribution as the only way to address income inequalities. This view refuses to accept that scarcity is a consistent feature of economic life and not a cleverly devised linguistic technique to protect the wealth of the 'rich'. Among the many failings of this rhetoric is the obsessive focus on income distribution as opposed to wealth creation and income earned which will be discussed later. So, the pursuit of substantive equality is more complicated if the focus is on equality of outcomes as opposed to equality of opportunity (Gelb, 2003). When referring to substantive equality, the focus is on eliminating what can be termed institutional impediments that limit social and economic equality. Diamond and Morlino (2004) argue that these limitations affects 'the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the state'. Although equality is rightfully entrenched in the legal culture in most societies today, the problem of implementation as it relates to economic equality persists. Given the operation of economic principles, irrespective of the type of economic system at play, perhaps it is plausible that substantive equality is not compatible with economic realities. This paper argues that the fundamental issue with administering equal outcomes is not necessarily institutional capacity. Alternatively, it is the moral and legal limits embedded in the human experience. Sil and Katzenstein (2010) argue that it is necessary to go beyond academic and ideological systems to grasp political realities that are increasingly multifaceted and multidimensional. Clearly, no ideology, on its own, can- with a degree of certainty, explain the infinitely complex realities it purports to disclose.

Mills (2014) advances that racism and white supremacy – as outlined in Critical Race Theory (CRT), argue that race continues to be the dominant organizing principle of society. Further espoused is that institutions are created to suppress the development and success of historically marginalized groups. In concurrence with Mills, the United Nations (UN), opines that racism is the chief reason given to explain differences in economic outcomes among different ethnicities. Owing to South Africa's racial experience, it remains important to distinguish between correlation and causation in explaining disparate economic outcomes for different groups in society. If racism is the organizing principle of society and is structurally embedded in institutions, then it follows that direct and indirect violence emerges (Galtung, 1996). The only appropriate solution, at least morally speaking, socialism argues, is redistribution. The problem with the Marxist ideological stance is its intolerance of other explanatory alternatives. Most commonly, this occurs when insights transcend the bounds of the socialist trinity- race, sex and class. In accounting for disparate economic outcomes then, social justice refuses to acknowledge education, skills development and attitude as worthy avenues for self-development and wealth creation. Perhaps, championing personal development and agency is refused since it potentially reduces historically marginalized groups' dependence on political parties and politicians to solve their problems. What if true transformation is an 'inside job'?

Therefore, any and most importantly, all disparities in- group interethnic outcomes are due to racist systems. Closely tied to this CRT doctrine is the issue of systemic racism which expands on the view that differences in outcome are always due to systemic biases (Shapiro, 2021). An attribution of group differences to vague 'systems' imposed by others can only be remedied by a forcible redistribution of public and private goods. As a derivative of Marxism, social justice focuses on group outcomes by reframing certain political demands as universal moral imperatives (Bankston, 2010).

Then, equity deals with equality of outcomes as well as reparations. Considering the constitutionality of this position, it violates equality before the law. If the historical argument for reparations holds weight, it would mean that the social justice doctrine of fairness attributes the generational transfer of guilt and punishment for acts committed by a specific ancestry. A most unfair attribution. Individuals today have no control over the behavior and decisions taken by members of the same social group centuries prior. Moreover, social justice argues in favor of the state's management of society by redistributing resources, opportunity and access (O'Neill, 2020). Textual tension persists in social justice philosophy which argues that discrimination alone prevents social groups from rising economically. Contrastingly, the assertion is refuted by numerous historical examples where different ethnic groups have endured discrimination and nonetheless managed to rise higher than indigenous groups. It follows that measuring socio-economic improvement on a group basis tends to misrepresent the economic progress and realities of historically marginalized groups. Irrespective of the attempts to legislate 'away' discrimination by policymakers and intellectuals, it is impossible to minimize the flaws of mankind inherent in human nature. The conceptual elasticity of human nature as understood by socialists, argues that all pain and suffering are institutionally imposed. Rather, this study looks at suffering as the consequence of an inherently unfair world inhabited by flawed and limited individuals. Sowell (2002) recalls that the prevailing social vision dominating political discourse, functions on the premise that human nature is malleable. Therefore, the right leaders with the right policies and the right laws can completely erase the social evils of socio-economic inequality, discrimination and racism. Notably, the inability to recognize the flaws inherent in the human experience is the ultimate restraining factor to the intention of 'well-meaning' policies. Misunderstanding this reality- irrespective of legislation and institutional reform, enable the successive repetition of policy failure to persist without revolt.

Concretized policies must succeed the prism of optical impressiveness and be assessed based on its functional capacity. The following question must be answered: is social justice the most effective vehicle used to drive social change? Of thematic priority then, is explaining the thinking driving social justice reforms as the primary vehicle for socio-economic improvement. Because political thought translates into organized political practice, there is a need to test ideological claims. Testing must precede implementation. Hence, avoiding their premature integration as indispensable components of South Africa's socio-economic policy architecture. As indicated, the perpetuation of policy measures unable to deliver on their promised objectives, is mostly due to them having little to no tangential relationship to reality.

Defining features of the socialist influence on socio-economic policymaking

All ideologies are flawed. Having this statement in mind, it follows then to investigate the degree to which each ideology is flawed. This is followed by an analysis of the proposed attempts to mitigate the consequent suffering and shortcomings. Capitalism is no stranger to criticism, nor should it be in the trade of meaning in the intellectual marketplace. It is simply not enough for the reiteration of an idea to echo its supposed significance. There is no substitute for providing evidence for an idea's alleged factual superiority. Contrary to popular belief, the world has gotten richer as more people have been born because brainpower exceeds consumption (Riddley, 2012). This fact comes as a surprise to early economists and social theorists who initially thought that population growth would affect resource abundance. Hence, the dominating influence of scarcity thinking elucidating that population reduction is a necessary safeguard against human consumption. But, human beings are both consumers and creators of resources. Therefore, innovation increases production. Humans produce ideas that result in innovation. This includes the production of tangible and intangible goods and services. At its most basic level, capitalism facilitates the free exchange of goods and services by rational beings. Still, in light of this knowledge, institutions such as the World Economic

Forum (WEF) have made plain their disgust for capitalism and its imposed constraints of scarcity, inequality and greed. The attribution of blame to capitalism for conditions of inequality, greed and discrimination, entrenches the need to consult the nature of socialist ideology in arriving at these critiques. Infused in the social justice objections to capitalism lie the amalgamation of ideas about human nature and the role of government in the structure of the economy. A summative view on the alternate modus operandi for international economic development, is none other than socialism. The rising preference for a socialist economy demand that the origin, assumptions, and consequences implicit in this manner of governing, be subject to study.

Policymakers, academics, politicians and interest groups are all heralding the same thing: for us to see improvement and progress globally, everything needs to change. What precisely is everything? Firstly, it depends on the frame of reference used to analyze achievement or regression. For the most part, both the cost of living and cars are cheaper relative to wages twenty years ago (Bailey and Tupy, 2020). Similarly, both access to healthcare and education has significantly improved. Shockingly, if we are not careful, we could be undoing economic progress.

5.1 Socialism and the economy

Sowell (2014) refers to an economy as a system of producing goods and services and distributing them. Economics, then, is the study of the use of scarce resources which have alternate uses as elaborated by Dobbins. This involves both rationing and competition which are inherent in these circumstances. Moreover, competition in the market is not a matter of choice, it is implicit within the paradigm of economic thinking. Subsequently, the only choice policymakers have is how the competition is carried out (Sowell, 2014). Similarly, rationing is inherent whether under socialism, capitalism or feudalism. Accordingly, various economies are just different institutional ways of making trade-offs that are unavoidable in any economy. Now that one has an understanding of what an economy is and what the discipline of economics aims to achieve, it is necessary to highlight the main socialist observations concerning economic organization. Next, the relevance and reliability of social justice propositions regarding the remedy of inequality will be examined. Key to testing the reliability of an idea involves assessing its logical consistency, empirical relevance and the predictability of outcomes across time.

The socialist and social justice economic observations as seen in the case of South Africa include:

- Scarcity exists because the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer (the rich are overwhelmingly white while the black population remains poor)
- Political institutions can be restructured to overcome inequality and ensure equal economic outcomes (affirmative action programs, employment equity and the welfare state)
- If it were not for apartheid, all social groups would have something roughly equal economically speaking
- Racism and discrimination must be held liable for every difference in interethnic economic outcomes

According to social justice, the only appropriate policy strategy able to address and unequal interethnic economic outcomes, is resource redistribution. However, a redistributive framework cannot contribute toward economic growth or sustainable development. Notably, resource redistribution has no economic growth proposition. Most ideas of western origins such as capitalism are discussed in terms of their tradeoffs with little to no mention of their positive economic consequences.

Socialism on the other hand, though tried and tested, with far more devastating consequences, is praised for the moral superiority of its goals. Hence, the imminent danger in unilateral thinking and comprehension espoused by ideology (Peterson, 2018). Importantly, the centrality of scarcity in the discipline of economics does not imply a zero-sum game. However, Marxist and socialist ideologies have interpreted individual wealth as robbing someone else of what 'rightfully' belongs to them. Socialism then, automatically equates commodification to exploitation. In socialist circles, it follows that the commodification of labour makes all labour exploitive. Therefore, it regards the profit motive as incentivizing corruption and exploitive behaviour in the workplace. However, both public and private institutions have faced numerous corruption scandals, suggesting that perhaps it is not the 'inherent evil of a profit-motive' behind social ills. Instead, it is the understanding of human nature as flawed, imperfect and fundamentally constrained by the moral and intellectual limitations of human beings. Considering socialism as an alternative economic system then, suggests that it can guarantee production efficiency using incentives other than profit. Seeing that its foremost critique of capitalism is its immoral tendencies, socialism opines that individuals are instead, ethically persuaded (Sassoon, 2013). Again, morality and causation are not the same. As such, socialism as an ideological lens misrepresents economic realities.

Nye (2008) notes that public diplomacy impresses the need for governments to engage both national and international audiences to influence public dialogue. Via the media, image cultivation and common ideological rhetoric, governments successfully gauge the public with the intent of relationship building. The oneness of language is essential to building the public's partnership with the state. Notably, both the media and the government are guilty of misrepresenting economic realities to the public. Facts sadly do not command the attention of the majority. After all, the framing of most economic conditions within the oppressor and the oppressed narrative certainly does. Hence, the rise and appeal of socialism and its unrivalled uni-dimensionality that allows competing arguments to be exclusively accountable for all adversarial conditions. Understanding perception bias and the human proclivity toward negative bias, make it easier for the media to benefit from human beings' threat susceptibility. Specifically, this includes the retention of bad news owing to its emotional and behavioral potency. For instance, it is widely published that capitalism is to blame for nearly all problems experienced in the world today. The lack of economic literacy foregoes the fact that the condition of scarcity is itself, among the primary motivations behind the need to economize. Evidence of this misrepresentation is seen in blaming global hunger and individual greed on capitalism. On the contrary, both scarcity and hunger have persisted as long as human history has been recorded. Note, the statement of fact does not negate the implicit moral condition of fairness. Put plainly, life is simply not fair and politicians' repeated attempts to make it fairer, has dire economic and social consequences. An uncomfortable truth, but a truth, nonetheless.

Hakizimana and Geyer (2014) expand that poverty's racial dimension must be studied to determine whether correlation or causation solves disparate economic outcomes in South Africa. The idea that cultural relativism blocks the transfer of working socio-economic principles centered on understanding the economy must be confronted. Importantly, problems persist when moral judgments are assigned to empirical phenomena in economic analysis. Discarding economic principles in favor of the ideological interpretation of free market realities and conditions of scarcity, rationing and competition tends to misrepresent interethnic economic outcomes. While economic conditions change based on different contexts, trends endure. And knowing the value of economic principles aids the correct interpretation of actors and their behaviour. Irrespective of culture, ethnicity and nationality, wherever socialism is applied, and social justice manifests itself in policy reform agendas, conditions of extreme inequality, increased poverty, unemployment and racial tension prevails.

Holmes (2017) expands that in 1917 Lenin's Bolsheviks overthrew the Russian government and established a communist dictatorship. In the wake of this new regime, Pipes estimates that 9 million people died, whereas Concrete estimates at least 20 to 30 million were killed in the Great Terror. This mass genocide is exceeded only by another communist dictatorship, Maoist China which destroyed between 44.5 – 72 million lives (Holmes, 2017). So, the Bolsheviks sought to modernize their societies through force- the gun and the central planning office. For the most part, both individual and societal freedoms are not a priority to a socialist run government. On that account, it is the ideal model for government control and the re-engineering of society. Wherever socialism and social justice policies have been enacted, poverty and human misery soon followed. The index of economic freedom notes that communists, former communists or some variation of a socialist economy, are among the poorest and most corrupt nations today. This is no coincidence. It takes a skillful ideologue to strip socialism of the atrocities committed in its name and defense. Socialism undressed is simply language redefinition in pursuit of a utopian vision that is willing to violate human rights to conform society into its image and likeness.

Capitalism, notorious for its negative publicity, should learn from its socialist alternative which has successfully managed to evade policy accountability despite its grotesque legacy of starvation, oppression and death. The Russian experience with socialism was willing to sacrifice millions of lives in pursuit of a classless utopian vision. Govender (2016) suggests that South Africa mirror the Latin American experience of government-led programs and expand its social security net. Similarly, Venezuela is praised in academic circles for its promises of free health care, free education, spreading the wealth, and defunding the police, all the while people are dying of starvation. Why is socialism stalked by extreme poverty, inequality and human misery? Again, the idea that 'the government knows best' and can act as a neutral arbitrator focused on ensuring 'prosperity for all', is a promise no government has been able to keep. No development can occur when its people are entrapped by a system that discourages productivity, innovation and individual autonomy. Data produced by Statistics SA (2014) informs that social assistance in South Africa continues to expand from about 3 million grants to 15 million by 2001. Reasons provided for the rapid increase in grants include child support grants which increased from about 150,000 recipients in 2000 to over 10 million in 2011. Gossel and Koelble (2020) present that now the fiscal problem that the Republic is faced with is that the 'number of grant recipients has increased from 4.2 million beneficiaries in 2002 to over 18 million in 2020'. Evidently, the social justice solution enacted to alleviate poverty has given rise to even more poverty. It remains useful to consider the extent to which the welfare system has financed the dissolution of the black family structure and facilitated the economic breakdown of the black family. In sum, social assistance is presented as a poverty reduction strategy, although it has been disastrously unsuccessful in this endeavor. The major reason for its colossal failure is the celebration of the imagined policy intentions of the welfare system rather than the results. Moreover, the consequences and expansion thereof, demand a critical evaluation of the thinking, methodologies and tradeoffs responsible for the counterproductive economic outcomes produced.

Socialists offer a progressive view of history as the scope for social development. Marens (2007) elaborates that Marxists believe that class conflict propels history forward and that a classless communist society is history's determinant endpoint. Problematic about this assertion is the value of class as a reliable instrument of measurement. Is it relevant to group people in class terms when individuals rarely stay in the same income bracket for longer than a decade? Moreover, class, as a variable can obscure economic progress among historically marginalized groups by not taking factors such as age, location, fertility into consideration (Sowell, 1978). Additionally, why is the class struggle tied exclusively to economics? Why is it likened to capitalism as opposed to a fundamental existentialist problem? Human beings struggle on multiple plains, not chiefly economically. Although the capitalist market has demonstrated efficiency, it cannot be said that this form of economic

organization has treated all social classes alike/equally. Who is to blame? Capitalism as a system, political institutions or discrimination? Marxism anchors itself to the presumption that differences in wealth were due to capitalists growing rich by keeping the workers poor, through 'exploitation' (Sowell, 2016). Subsequently, unequal economic outcomes are always attributed to the adverse treatment of the less fortunate as opposed to the level of value created, offered and rewarded by the market. To put it succinctly, the less fortunate are branded as victims affirming that Marxism relies on the oppressor versus oppressed framework to interpret human relationships. Primarily, this framework illustrates the relationship between the worker and the employer. Marxism appeals to basic human moral intuitions about fairness and equity which exclusively understands and interprets relationships using the hermeneutical lens of power. This thinking prevails in ANC policy provisions, especially the welfare state and the growing popularity of social justice as the dominant response to inequality. Subsequently, socialism, as an ideological lens misrepresents economic realities.

Therefore, the extent to which coloniality strong-arms the Global South today represents the inability of the African decolonized intelligentsia to escape the restricted pathways of consumerism. The reliance on an external actor to produce what we need, without an appreciation for trade specialization, is a recipe for unsustainable dependence. Sowell (2016) specifically cautions against sensationalized inequality, where academics and economists consistently 'ignore the source of income inequality: wealth production'. It is not enough to think for ourselves if we are unwilling to do for ourselves. Sustainability cannot be found nor pursued without self-production. And there is no sustainable way to maintain the demands of an ever-increasing welfare state.

Socialism and the government: a new social contract

According to Zondi (2021), the covid-19 pandemic is reversing the neoliberal limitations on the state's role in social services and the economy. The global weakening of democracy begs the question of whether there exists an intellectual, economic or moral import able to take its place on the pending reform agenda. This section will show how an understanding of the social contract between the government and its people explains the South African governments' socio-economic policy preferences. In short, political theory gives expression to the relationship between the people and the government in what is known as the social contract. According to Schwab and Malleret (2020), the cause of decay in the value of the social contract is captured in the conjoined influence of inequality and unfairness. Further, socialism accepts the role of the state as arbiter and administer of resources and opportunities – but based on what expertise? It is useful to consider the illusion of impartiality surrounding the role of state intervention in ensuring equal economic outcomes for all social groups. Marxists believe that the state is an agent of class oppression. Liberals, however, contend that the state is a neutral actor. Therefore, the primary contestation lies in the role of the state as the general personification of the will of the people or a self-existing entity driven by its own interests.

Sowell (2019) remarks 'Politics is not useful in improving the economic conditions of disadvantaged groups'. At first glance, the abovementioned quote provokes initial confusion and perhaps even rage, depending on your position on the political spectrum. If politics is unable to provide an avenue for the practical realization of social and economic goals, what purpose does this institution serve? In this context, politics refers to the procedural aspects of attaining government. Firstly, one should locate the origin of government dependence. Second, one must decipher when individual autonomy was deemed incapable of delivering transformation to both individual and societal realities. Gelb (2003) comments that the waning relevance of individual autonomy can be traced to the suppression of individual and ethnic groups during the apartheid era. First and foremost, empirically speaking, social groups which compete openly do not end up with the same results. By extension, unequal

outcomes are automatically assumed to be a result of discrimination as espoused by social justice rhetoric. Sowell (2019) records that Jews in South East Asia, the Indians in East Africa and the Cubans in America have enjoyed greater economic prosperity than indigenous groups in the land. Simply put, you cannot confiscate the source of physical wealth which is a product of human capital, knowledge, skills, talents and other qualities. Because these qualities exist in the mind of people, they cannot be redistributed. Redistribution is temporary. It offers remedial prospects at best, therefore, cannot be the singular or dominant means through which development and economic progress can be fostered.

The first faulty bureaucratic assumption is that historical redress is possible and practically achievable. Born out of this assumption is the welfare system, affirmative action and employment equity programs. Gossel and Koelble (2020) note that among the main policies designed to reverse inequality, poverty, and exclusion were employment equity (EE), broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) and the establishment of an expansive welfare system. Often these programs are championed with great enthusiasm, despite the counterproductive socio-economic outcomes produced as a result. Notably, the only legitimation for such policies is the transfer of historical guilt. Historical redress is among the main reasons behind the social justice informed socio-economic policy response in South Africa. This makes the socio-economic policymaking process contentious and susceptible to emotional manipulation. It is important to ask what the time frames given are to ensure equal representation in all sectors and who decides when the historical debt has been paid? Simply because of the biological continuity of generations, it is impossible for temporary quotas and preferences although instituted in the name of historical redress, to ever reach their prescribed target. Put plainly, no individual, institution or policy can satisfy the insatiable appetite of historical redress. In essence, there is a difference between redress and national racial representation. Socialist discourse orbits around the government's pre- planning of economic outcomes. Even more outrageous about affirmative action policies, is the audacity to prescribe actual outcomes and end-results. That is to overestimate institutional capacity and go beyond what is controllable and what policymakers can achieve. Wherever human beings are involved, provision must be made for human error. Imperfection is inherent in the human experience. Factors such as age, education, interest, individuality, attitude, geographic location and marriage all affect ones socio-economic condition. Resultantly, this makes its pre-planned outcomes elusive and far-reaching. Sowell (2008) puts it this way, 'that different ethnic groups rely on different mobility ladders'. Ideologues, academics, advocates and policymakers operate as social engineers who believe that it is possible to re-engineer society to a zero inequality basis. According to socialists, both policies and institutions can be restructured to remedy the flaws of humanity and human nature. Instead of individuals exercising choice from different options, if the government can limit the options available, they can 'control' the outcomes. A socialist utopia and the extent to which governments will go to violate human rights to ensure that its citizens conform to new ideas, attitudes and behaviours are seen in the tragedies of Maoist China and Communist Russia.

The Bolshevik revolution was among the first to mobilize mass violence in the name of revolution. Basically, South Africa's social revolts are not new but borrowed revolutionary tactics from its socialist mentors. Holmes (2017) adds that irrespective of the type of revolution albeit fascist or communist, the use of terror to revolutionize society is a historical precedent established by the Bolsheviks and French revolutionaries. Fundamentally, Russia's communist revolution set the precedent for the acceptance of violence to any detectable inequality. So, the socialist response to socio-economic inequality is not concerned with empowering historically marginalized groups but inciting division, envy, resentment and later violence. As noted earlier, socialism deals in the domain of absolutes. This means that there is limited room for debate and discussion. In this way, socialism takes on a totalizing culture, resembling that of a secular religion. These claims are assumed to be

true at all times. Notably, Communist China under Mao killed one hundred million people, followed by Stalin who starved six million during the Ukraine famine. Surprisingly, these facts are often disassociated with the regimes which pledged undoubtable allegiance to socialism. In spite of the penned amicable goals socialism aims to achieve, what accounts for the counter-productive results produced, warrants further investigation. Holistically, this discrepancy demands the studying of claims included in proposed policy positions used to 'empower and unify' social groups. Among the prevailing themes featured in socialist rhetoric is its rhetorical commitment to a common humanity. From this vantage point, it's supposed moral superiority is celebrated, unlike its ideological enemy, economic liberalism. Shockingly, more individuals died in Communist Russia than in both the First and Second World Wars. Sowell (2002) comments that socialism assumes that the government is absolved from the incentives and constraints that affect the average human being. Hence, the erroneous idea that there is no limit to what politicians and institutions can accomplish if elected. Put plainly then, politicians are not all-powerful, all-knowing beings able to make our economic problems disappear with the whisk of a wand? So, by penning a policy proposal, the constraints which impede implementation in every other domain prevail, except in the political? On the whole, politics and government decide how income is distributed not generated. The acknowledgement of this simple statement reveals the problem with socialized socio-economic development. In this way, the welfare system has become like a business - where the goal is to have permanent customers. The absence of self-production always makes the borrower a slave to the lender. Social assistance does not alleviate poverty, unproductivity or unemployment, it simply subsidizes it. Emphasized in this context, is the antithetical impact of social justice policies. Despite their quest to solve socio-economic inequality, social justice policies have created an entirely new set of problems, far worse than the initial condition. For instance, over-regulated sectors of economic development discourage innovation and productivity. Not only academics but politicians have skillfully used rhetoric to create an environment where fairness emerges as the moral antidote to socio-economic inequality. Riddley (2012) points out that innovation depends on the freedom of speech as well as the free exchange of ideas and criticism. Whereas government regulation drowns creativity by limiting the expression of disagreeable commentary, openness, on the other hand, governs creativity (Bailey and Tuby, 2020). Consequently, innovation follows deregulated spaces. In short, better products and services are produced because of the freedom of communication. The socio-economic policy process must therefore, be open to monitoring and evaluation processes. Ultimately, evidence-based decision making requires the devastation of popularly held socialist-inspired socio-economic beliefs. Importantly, every individual possesses the capability of learning from new evidence. As a result, you can change your mind.

Socialism, social groups and individual autonomy

First and foremost, the principle of basic equality takes precedence, which allows for different hierarchies to be created. From this vantage point, nature itself is not a stable hierarchical system. When consulting geographic determinism, for instance, nature develops from within. Based on socialist tenants, socio-economic divisions are esteemed as the most destructive obstacles to cohesion and unity. This viewpoint assumes an egalitarian character that presumes governments, institutions and policymakers can prescribe economic outcomes for all social groups. The only reason socialism deems difference in value production by different social groups as destructive, is because it automatically synonymizes inequality with discrimination. Inequality manifests on multiple plains. It is not a consequence of capitalism, but rather of imperfect human beings inhabiting an imperfect world. Socialism and social justice assassinate values of self-reliance and ownership. Resultantly, it rejects the inherent capacity of an individual to change their value production based on the reception, retention and application of new information. Further, externally induced and internally confirmed insecurities are key informants of low self-esteem and self-worth. These inferiority

complexes accompany the legacy of spiritual poverty, as termed by Steve Biko. One's external and tangible value production capacity is derived from an internal confirmation and assurance of value. As such, the reconstruction of the human mind remains among the most difficult tasks. Furthermore, without the human will – the ability to choose and thereby exercise agency, mankind is doomed to misery by repetition.

Biko (2004) makes the case that spiritual poverty is the biggest hindrance to the economic progress of black people. He goes on to add that the apartheid government was strategic in its quest to dehumanize the black man. Material poverty was a mere consequence of the dehumanization agenda. Generally, the goal of oppression always transcends material deprivation to normalize the depersonalization of the black human being. In other words, you are the total of everything you have been conditioned to think. Interestingly, lies and untruths concerning individual potential, purpose and production capacity, function under the guise of truth when they are believed. Indeed, because the sub-conscience mind has no rationalization capacity, it simply believes what it is told- regardless of factual accuracy. In short, the goal of oppression is a broken spirit. The image of who the oppressor said you are is magnified in your understanding. So, despite the removal of external racial barriers, historically marginalized groups become hamstrung to a consciousness of self-doubt and dependence on any source except themselves. Now, self-identification is based on the interpretation of the oppressor. Again, the persistence of external conditions of poverty are only to solidify the internal condition of lack, self-doubt and even self-hatred. Academics and politicians, despite presumed intentions, continue to remind historically marginalized groups and blacks in particular, of their oppression. Having said that, there are no racial barriers to success today in comparison to the apartheid era. Contrary, a careful examination of the language used by the intellectual community, seem intent on recreating an atmospheric impression of racism as an inescapable reality. Not only this, but positioning racism as a perennial barrier to the economic progress of indigenous groups. Overall, collective potential is realized when historically marginalized groups begin to assume responsibility for their consciousness, self-actualization, awakening to self-determination and self-production capacity.

Language produces culture and culture legitimates certain attitudes, thinking patterns and behaviors. Thus language has ties to cultural identity. What makes socialist ideas difficult to divorce from the socio-economic policy process is that it has cemented itself as an indispensable component of social group identity. Thus, socialism derives its knowledge legitimacy based on belonging to a social group designation, in this case, race. Then, it proceeds to discount other explanations for disparate socio-economic outcomes irrespective of its truthfulness, intellectual merit and solution efficacy. Consequently, socialist' ideology is employed as an instrument of control and compliance used to silence and even excommunicate those who refuse to adhere to its sacred tenants. Hence, the imminent danger of a single factor analysis empowering South Africa's socio-economic architecture. As such, the victim consciousness perpetuated by the welfare system undermines the efforts of renowned political thinkers who championed self-reliance as the ultimate form of liberation. Biko (2004), for instance, persistently advanced the doctrine of black consciousness and self-reliance. Additionally, both the intelligentsia together with politicians, tends to excuse the reasons for previously marginalized groups to be productive and innovative- among the chief factors responsible for wealth creation. Rather than developing competence within historically marginalized groups, it is more beneficial for social justice programs to subsidize ignorance. Notably, there are no racial barriers to economic success in South Africa today compared to the Apartheid era, yet generational poverty seems to persist among historically marginalized groups. This paper suggests that the overlooked yet enduring legacy of spiritual poverty is key to the economic liberation of the black man. Remarkably, wealth creation capacity is not a racially exclusive enterprise. Similarly, the 2015 World Development Report: Mind, Society, and Behavior (World Bank, 2015b) recommends that

development interventions consider the twin impact of psychological and anthropological research. For certain, these insights inform that poverty can affect the mental model through which the poor view themselves.

For socialism to succeed, the individual must have seized to exist, becoming one with the respective social group (Sassoon, 2013). Precisely, it is the group distinction that makes society more manageable and therefore, amenable to government control. Ultimately, this creates the impression that the government knows best (uniformity and conformity created by social groups). Note, the increasing intolerance for individuality because it breeds the politics of difference. The acknowledgement of different interests leading to different value systems means that conflict is inevitable. Given this scenario, conflict can be prevented, managed, or resolved through peaceful processes. Strict allegiance to the state as demanded by socialist ideology must not be underestimated. The assumption that the government can deliver pre-planned economic outcomes represents an insidious attempt to instill self-doubt in an individual's capacity for self-production. By creating a deficiency in competency, individuals are dissuaded and unable to make decisions concerning their welfare, development, and even their health. This is demonstrated in the public health crisis today. While it can be appreciated that the government is trying to curb the spread of covid-19, does this crisis warrant that constitutional rights and freedoms be abated? Discrimination has consequences that are either benign or malevolent. Becker et al (1982) considers the act of making a distinction as the prerequisite to engaging in discriminatory practice against all non-preferred things. Discrimination defines individuality. It is perhaps the very act of choice that is despised by policymakers who desire to engineer and re-engineer society based on their socialist visions. There is an urgency to implement specific visions able to generate and guarantee specific outcomes. Fundamentally, acts of discrimination or preference are of more than superficial interest since they define the limits of individuality (Becker et al, 1982).

Implications

The stench of communist Russia seldom finds its way into current political discourse as a powerful reminder of the tradeoffs associated with socialism in practice. Importantly, the emotive attraction of socialist ideology creates oneness with the idea (Mclellan, 2007). Now, a critique lodged against the factual correctness of an idea metamorphosis into an attack on personhood. Political correctness, social media's cancel culture and Big Tech censorship stimulates one of the most crafty forms of oppression, self-censorship. Self-censorship is among the most abominable forms of entitlement and control that should not find South Africa's democracy commonplace. Fast forward, should the ANC's management of the covid-19 pandemic permit the state to suspend individual constitutional freedoms and ethics in the name of safety? Notably, the public remains largely unaware of distinguishing between a factual and ideological statement. Vaccine hesitancy is no small feat. Having said that, the growing effect of socialism lends further insight into the ANC's vaccine rollout agenda and campaign. Basically, socialism discourages individual autonomy and in doing so, reduces the individual to a member of a social group. The growing depreciation for the exercise of individual rights attests to the pervasive influence of socialist rhetoric. In simple terms, human rights are still inalienable, indestructible and indivisible (Sen, 2005). Moreover, human rights are not based on good behaviour. So, the idea that human rights are being held hostage if citizens do not comply with a strongly advocated for vaccine policy, is deeply disturbing. At its core, it is insulting to the bloodshed of men and women who sacrificed their lives for the hope of a free and democratic South Africa.

Socio-economic development requires partnership. And partnership, is incompatible with a redistribution focused paradigm. Simply put, without individual participation in the development

agenda, the individual or social group is unable to transition from a recipient to a partner. Ake (1996) concurs that the people must be the means and ends of their development. Partnership thus invokes the expectation of reciprocity. If you do not expect anything in return, you are a recipient and not a participant. Development in the absence of partnership and participation is assisted oppression. As long as the state assumes a socio-economic strategy informed by social justice rhetoric, consulting the cause of unproductive behaviour. This will trap historically marginalized groups in cycles of poverty and unemployment for the foreseeable generations. Lastly, a rapidly expanding welfare system cannot sustain an economically viable, prosperous and peaceful South Africa.

Tyrannical leadership tendencies and policy positions witnessed during South Africa's management of the covid-19 pandemic, if not contested, will exceed being tolerated and will accelerate. Oppression does not come dressed as oppression. It comes dressed as an angel of light. It is subtle, gradual and manifested in the incremental sacrificing of values and choice spurred on by the seizing of individual autonomy to state control. If an individual is understood to be the microcosm of society and can exercise choice – a society comprised of individuals is said to be free. To limit that freedom that accompanies the recognition of the individual's ability to make a decision, socialism, seeks to reduce the choices available- outside of government. The thinking follows that if choices available are reduced, then 'freedom', can be managed and controlled. Therefore, increased bureaucratic hold over the management of society. Social justice goes further to decide who should be given preference. In most cases, socialist's language masks true revolutionary intentions. And for the socialist project to work – academics, the media and politicians have to re-engineer how mankind thinks. His thoughts, belief system and attitude become the playground for intellectual and emotional manipulation. The highest form of oppression is to control what someone thinks or says. Restrictions on speech are restrictions on individual sovereignty and rationalization. And in a culture that rehearses the tolerance mantra, it conveniently restricts its conceptual expression to those who display uniformity of thought. Hence, the rise of political correctness and cancel culture which reserves the cultural right to excommunicate anyone who dares to disagree.

To socialize an economy is to set institutional (government-sanctioned) limits and not only insult but restrict value production. It represents the erroneous assumption that politicians and academics can draft economic outcomes outside the bounds of rationality, biology, morality and individuality. The idea that these variables are amenable to change represents the speed at which society will begin to descend into lunacy. Socialism legitimates suffering in the name of ideological allegiance to the racially inspired decolonization agenda. Poverty today, is a policy choice. What social justice teaches is that social groups that have suffered historical oppression are too oppressed to produce items of value. Because of their generational oppression- their value has been stolen, rendering them unable and incapable of producing value for themselves in the form of goods and services. Therefore, the only means to ensure 'equity' is to redistribute what someone else has produced. Social justice rhetoric leads to misunderstanding the value of productivity and the production of value itself. Correcting false assumptions based on the market appropriation of value, misleads previously disadvantaged groups from alternative avenues which foster the creation of wealth through problem-solving. Hard work and more education does not automatically result in greater wealth creation capacity. Additionally, physical and managerial labour have a market cap on the income generated, however, the levels of imagination and innovation possess unlimited wealth creation capacity. The mind continues to be the greatest asset in wealth creation. The mind. Not the race. Not the ethnicity. And not the sex. Not affirmative action, but the mind. The education sector is key in championing the change from an ideologically driven public mind to a critical thinking and problem solving.

Conclusion

The global resurgence of social justice as a policy response to remedy inequality appears to be somewhat of a new and untested means capable of ensuring roughly equal economic outcomes for different ethnic groups in society. In politics, however, understanding is itself a commodity that is exploited in the intellectual marketplace of meaning. It follows then that the nature of socialist ideology has caused academia, policymakers and the public to be appalled by the simplicity of truth. Even more alarming than the simplicity of truth is the postmodern forsaking of truth entirely. Moreover, there is a danger in disallowing questions concerning policy failure which both cripples the public mind and produces numb thinkers. The absolute status apportioned to certain concepts and values provides abstaining power from the burden of proving its carefully articulated assertions. More pointedly, every ideology has tradeoffs. Refusal to acknowledge these socialist tradeoffs, result in much public confusion and discontentment with the pace of change or lack thereof entirely. Careful analysis of the socio-economic policy process in South Africa reveals the need to dethrone socialist and social justice assumptions parading as universal truth. Inequality, in general, is deeper than a mere consequence of an economic system but is tied to an existentialist origin. Social justice is predicated on the assumption that all inequality can be traced to an institutional root. Thus, if not for socialization forces, everyone has equal potential. This implies that socialization can produce equal socioeconomic outcomes. However, racial representation is not a substitute for historical redress, nor can race account for 'overly represented sectors'. Socialism refuses to acknowledge that certain social evils are not institutionally imposed but a mere consequence of human nature and the inescapable flaws which accompany it. These ideas coincide with substantive egalitarianism, where governments and institutions believe that equal outcomes for different social groups are possible. In short, demographic diversity has taken precedence over the diversity of thought. Therefore, any serious inquiry into developing historically marginalized groups must shift from wealth redistribution as the primary framework to administer long-term economic gains. On the whole, social justice-informed socio-economic strategies are devoid of empowerment prospects. A further consequence is the downplayed understanding of the effect of spiritual poverty on productivity levels and the production of value in the market by historically marginalized groups. Overall, empirical evidence in favour of ideological persuasion and rhetoric- irrespective of its counter-productive policy results- reflects the extent to which politicians would go to preserve their intellectual ego. Lastly, scholars must not bypass the process of testing ideological claims and supplementing ideological arguments with evidence. The pursuit of factuality and truthfulness should be at the forefront in leading and guiding research that informs socio-economic policy and law-making.

References

Ake, C. (1996). Development and democracy in Africa. *Washington, DC: Brookings Institution*.

Bailey, R., & Tupy, M. L. (2020). *Ten Global Trends Every Smart Person Should Know: And Many Others You Will Find Interesting*. Cato Institute.

Bankston, C. L. (2010). Social justice: Cultural origins of a perspective and a theory. *The Independent Review*, *15*(2), 165-178.

Becker, G. S., Block, W., Fraser Institute (Vancouver, C.-B.), Sowell, T., & Vonnegut, K. (1982). *Discrimination, affirmative action, and equal opportunity*. Fraser Institute.

Biko, S. (2004). *I Write What I Like*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Diamond, L., & Morlino, L. (2004). The quality of democracy: An overview. *Journal of democracy*, *15*(4), 20-31. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2004.0060

Freeden, M. (2006). Ideology and political theory. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *11*(1), 3-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310500395834

Freeden, M. (2015). *Liberalism: A very short introduction*. OUP Oxford.

Galtung, J. (1996). On the Social Costs of Modernization. Social Disintegration, Atomie/Anomie and Social Development. *Development and Change*, *27*(2), 379-413. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1996.tb00596.x

Gelb, S. (2003). *Inequality in South Africa: Nature, causes and responses*. Johannesburg: Edge Institute

Gossel, S and Koelble, T. (2020). Why South Africa should adopt democratic socialism. Retrieved from *https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2020-12-11-why-south-africa-should-adopt-democratic-socialism*

Govender, J. (2016). Social justice in South Africa. *Civitas-Revista de Ciências Sociais*, *16*, 237-258. https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2016.2.23076

Hakizimana, J. M., & Geyer, H. (2014). Socio-economic inequality in South Africa according to different disparity indices.

Heywood, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60604-4

Holmes, K. (2017, October 31). Communism: A Hundred Years After the Russian Revolution, it Lives on More Than You Think. The Heritage Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/communism-hundred-years-after-the-russian-revolution-it-lives-more-you

Mair, P. (1996). Party systems and structures of competition. *Comparing Democracies–Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. London: Sage Publications.

Marens, R. (2007). Returning to Rawls: Social contracting, social justice, and transcending the limitations of Locke. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *75*(1), 63-76. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9238-7

Marta, J. (2010). The rational Optimist: How Prosperity evolves. *Regional Business*, 71.

McLellan, D. (1995). *The thought of Karl Marx: an introduction*. United Kingdom: Pan Books Limited. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-14140-1

Mills, C. W. (2014). (Ed). *The racial contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Nye Jr, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, *616*(1), 94-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699

O'Neill, M. (2020). Social justice and economic systems: On Rawls, democratic socialism, and alternatives to capitalism. *Philosophical Topics*. https://doi.org/10.5840/philtopics202048219

Peterson, J. B. (2018). *12 rules for life: An antidote to chaos*. United Kingdom: Penguin.

Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674369542

Popper, K. (1945). The poverty of historicism, III. *Economica*, *12*(46), 69-89. https://doi.org/10.2307/2549898

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674042605

Ridley, M. (1997). *The origins of virtue*. United Kingdom: Penguin. https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v21i2.280

Ridley, M. (2012). The rational optimist: How prosperity evolves. *Brock Education Journal*, *21*(2).

Ross, M. H., Lichbach, M. I., & Zuckerman, A. S. (1997). (Ed). Comparative politics: Rationality, culture, and structure. *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*.

Saad, G. (2020). *The parasitic mind: How infectious ideas are killing common sense*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.

Sartori, G. (1970). Concept misformation in comparative politics. *American political science review*, *64*(4), 1033-1053. https://doi.org/10.2307/1958356

Sassoon, D. (2013). *One hundred years of socialism: The West European left in the twentieth century*. London, United Kingdom: IB Tauris.

Schwab, K., & Malleret, T. (2020). The Great Reset. In *World Economic Forum: Geneva, Switzerland*.

Seliger, M. (1979). *The Marxist conception of ideology: A critical essay*. Cambridge University Press.

Seliger, M. (2019). *Ideology and politics*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429284779

Sen, A. (2005). Human rights and capabilities. *Journal of human development*, *6*(2), 151-166. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649880500120491

Shapiro, B. (2021). *The authoritarian moment: how the left weaponized America's institutions against dissent*. New York, United States: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

Sil, R., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2010). Analytic eclecticism in the study of world politics: Reconfiguring problems and mechanisms across research traditions. *Perspectives on Politics*, *8*(2), 411-431. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001179

Sowell, T. (1978). Ethnicity in a changing America. *Daedalus*, 213-237.

Sowell, T. (2001). *The quest for cosmic justice*. Simon and Schuster.

Sowell, T. (2002). *A conflict of visions: Ideological origins of political struggles*. New York: Basic Books.

Sowell, T. (2008). *Affirmative action around the world*. Yale University Press.

Sowell, T. (2011). *Economic facts and fallacies*. New York: Basic Books.

Sowell, T. (2014). *Basic economics*. Hachette UK.

Sowell, T. (2016). *Wealth, poverty and politics*. Hachette UK.

Sowell, T. (2019). *Discrimination and disparities*. Revised and enlarged edition. New York: Basic Books.

Thakur, R. (2014). How representative are BRICS?. *Third World Quarterly*, *35*(10), 1791-1808. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2014.971594

Wendt, A. E. (1987). The agent-structure problem in international relations theory. *International organization*, *41*(3), 335-370. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830002751X

World Bank. (2015a). Ending extreme poverty and sharing prosperity: progress and policies. Washington: Policy Research Note/15/03, 2015.

World Bank. (2015b) World Development Report: mind, society and behaviour, 2015.

World Bank. (2016). Poverty and shared prosperity 2016: taking on inequality.

Zondi, S. (2021). Covid-19 and the Return of the State in Africa. *Politikon*, *48*(2), 190-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2021.1913805