

**Journal of Education
No 84 (2021):
Special Issue on
Interlocking
Inequalities, Conflicts,
and Crises: COVID-19
and Education in the
Global South**

Editorial essay
“Crises and disruptions:
Educational reflections,
(re)imaginings, and
(re)vitalization”

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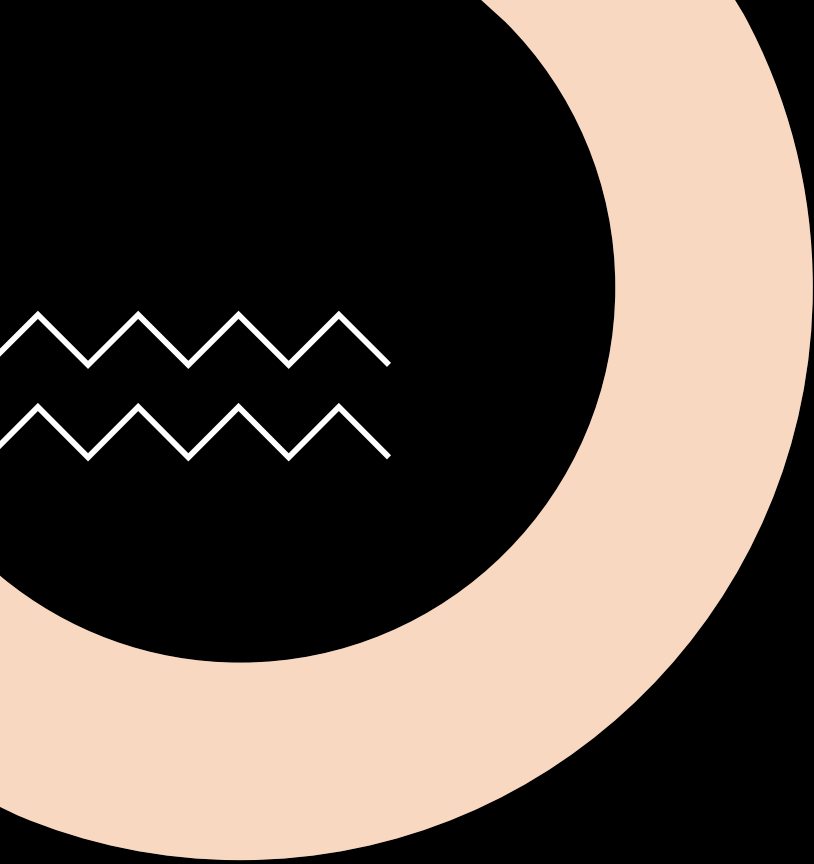
JoE No 84 (2021): Special Issue on Interlocking Inequalities, Conflicts, and Crises: COVID-19 and Education in the Global South

- [Interlocking inequalities, conflicts, and crises: COVID-19 and education in the Global South](#) , Vaughn M. John, Yusuf Sayed, Adam Cooper
- [Crises and disruptions: Educational reflections, \(re\)imaginings, and \(re\)vitalization](#) , Yusuf Sayed, Adam Cooper, Vaughn M. John
- [African female university students' experiences of online education at home during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) , Ansurie Pillay et al
- [Education lecturers' perceptions of organising systematic online teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic conditions in 2020 at two selected universities in South Africa](#) , Tanya Bekker, Nazir Carrim
- [21st Century competencies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Rhetoric and reality in the wake of a pandemic](#) , Joy Papier
- [Planning for freedom: From human capital to human capabilities](#) , Lesley Powell
- [Exploring how the national COVID-19 pandemic policy and its application exposed educational inequality](#) , Ronicka Mudaly, Vimolan Mudaly
- [Teacher support, preparedness and resilience during times of crises and uncertainty](#), Yusuf Sayed et al
- [Towards an e-learning ecologies approach to pedagogy in a post-COVID world](#) , Aslam Fataar, Najwa Norodien-Fataar
- [The crisis of COVID-19 and opportunities for reimagining education](#) , Crain Soudien, Jacqueline Harvey
- [Community-based learning in higher education...in the time of COVID-19](#) , Nompumelelo Thabethe, Sarasvathie Reddy
- [Early childhood teachers' and managers' lived experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) , Hasina Banu Ebrahim, Colwyn Martin, Lorayne Excell

Abstract

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COVID-19... as a crisis, it is not exceptional in its effect on education. We...situate the crisis in its historical, economic, and political contexts, illustrating how crisis and violence intersect as structural conditions of late modernity, capitalism, and their education systems...This lays the foundation to analyse how it has been interpreted through three sets of policy imaginaries: learning loss, building back better and by solutions primarily based on techno-education... we present, in the final section, an alternative radical vision that calls on a sociology of possibilities and pedagogies of hope that we see to be central to a new people-centred education imaginary to disrupt current inequalities...



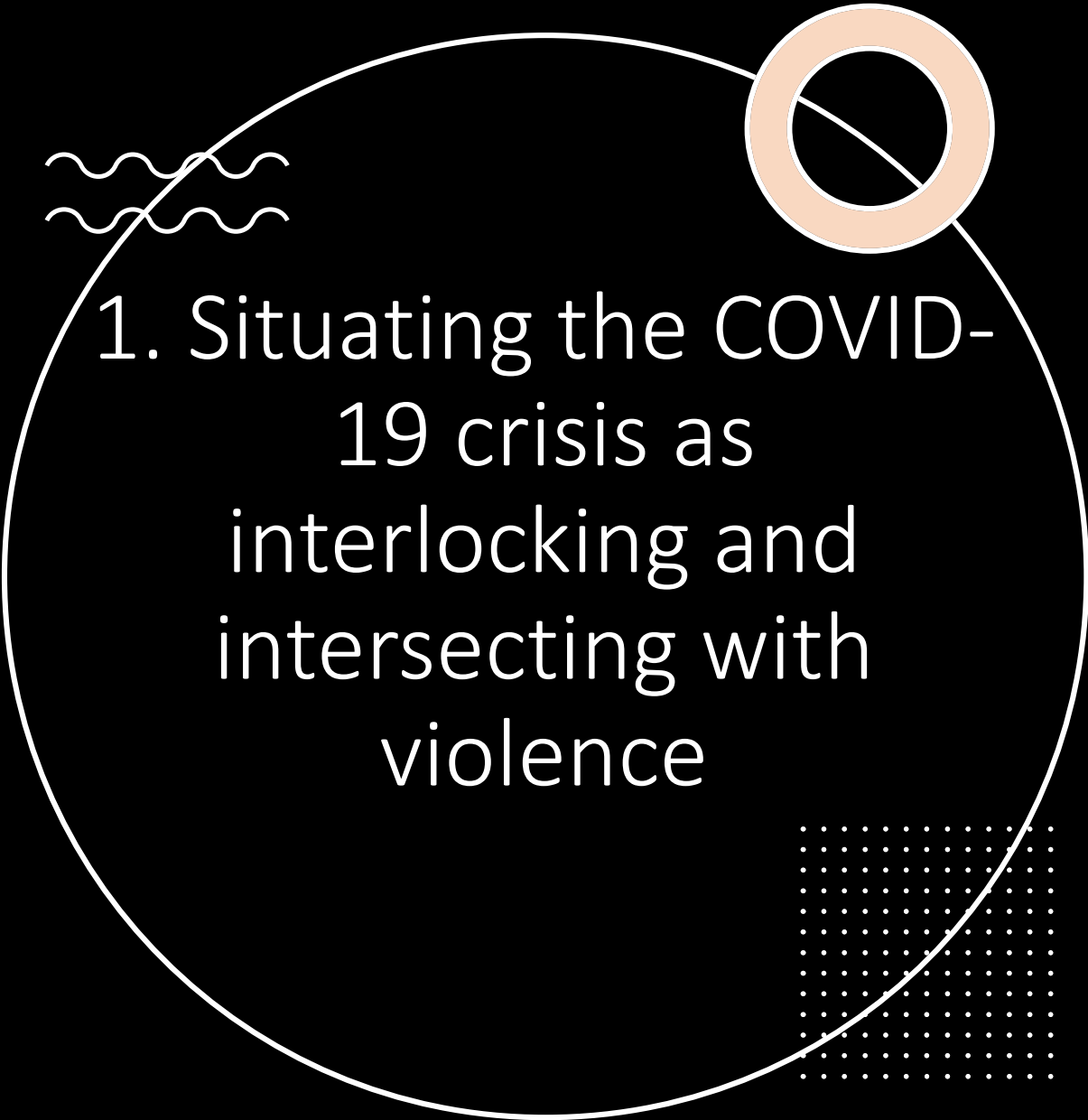
...An essay in
four parts...

- 1. Situating the Covid 19 crisis as interlocking and intersecting with violence
- 2. Imaginings and the narration of crisis
- 3. Crisis and international aid: Rethinking the education and development paradigm
- 4. Crises and an alternative policy imaginary



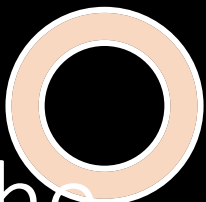

1. Situating the COVID-19 crisis as interlocking and intersecting with violence

“the Corona crisis...has become a signifier of the absences, silences, and marginality of other chronic endemic crises. Ignoring its interlocking, inter-relational, and intersectional character may result in poorly conceived policy choices... In acknowledging the COVID-19 pandemic as a polyvalent crisis requires providing voice to multiple actors and civil society organisations in policymaking.”




1. Situating the COVID-19 crisis as interlocking and intersecting with violence

- Koselleck and Richter (2006): early medical use of “crisis” = moment that leads either to death or recovery; this “either or” logic ignores the set of intersecting forces
- Marxist reading of crisis: endemic to capitalism; particular modes and relations of production structurally prone to negative rupturing events and cyclical instability.
- Crisis in a capitalist social formation cleaves societal strata through market-based public goods eg health and education... Klein (2007): “shock doctrine” - crises commodify public goods.
- “Crises become the vector of, and portal to, particular policy imaginaries that are ideologically driven” ...Presented as a natural thrust...the only viable emergency response.



1. Situating the COVID-19 crisis as interlocking and intersecting with violence


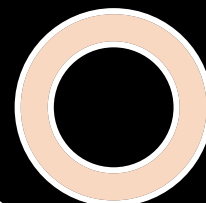
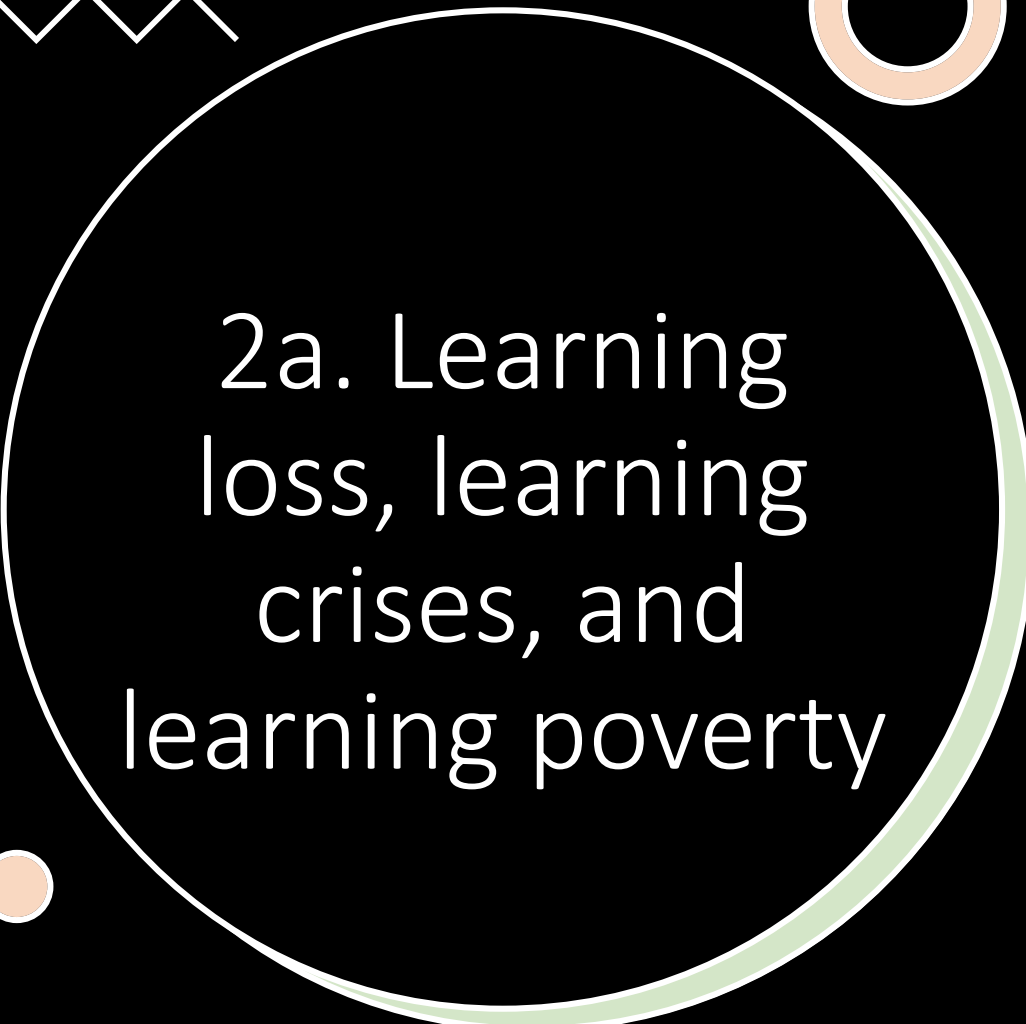



- The Inherent violence in capitalism accompanied by physical violence.
- Crises also reflect a violence against the social values and bonds that bind citizens and nation states.
- Crises interlock both with existing frailties and coalitions and intersect with existing challenges against colonialism, subjugation, and marginalisation.
- KwaZulu Natal 2021
- Violence: COVID-19 policy attention displaced and marginalised other pre-existing crises, TB programmes, child vaccination programmes and school feeding programmes.



2. Imaginings and the narration of crisis

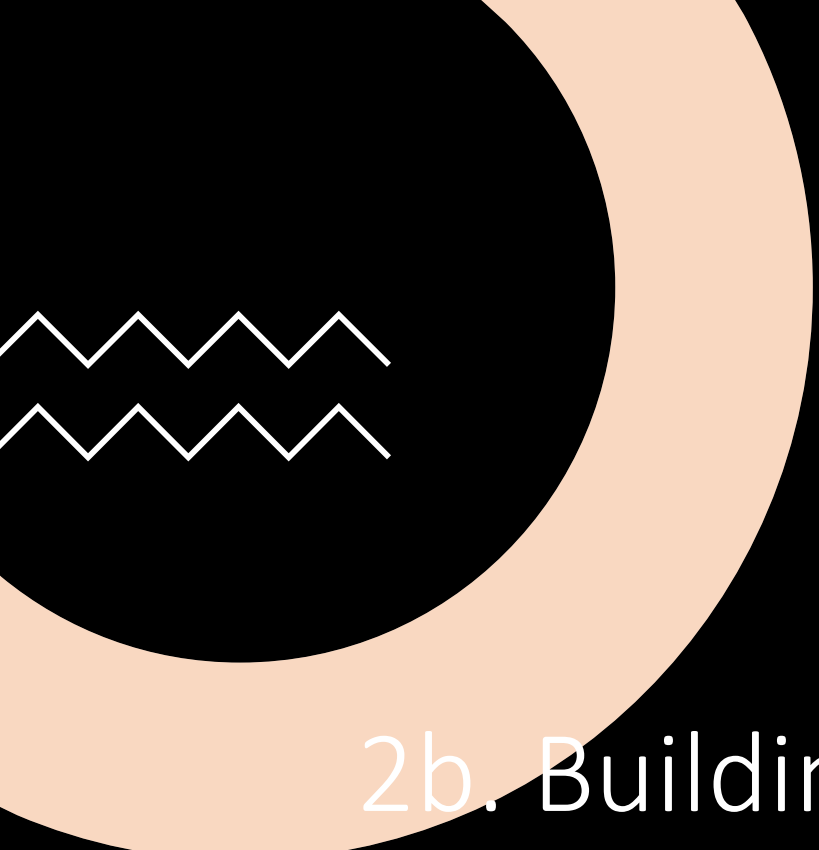
1. Learning loss, learning crises, and learning poverty
2. Building back better, coping with the new normal, and resetting
3. Solutions to the crisis: technology driven alternatives



2a. Learning loss, learning crises, and learning poverty

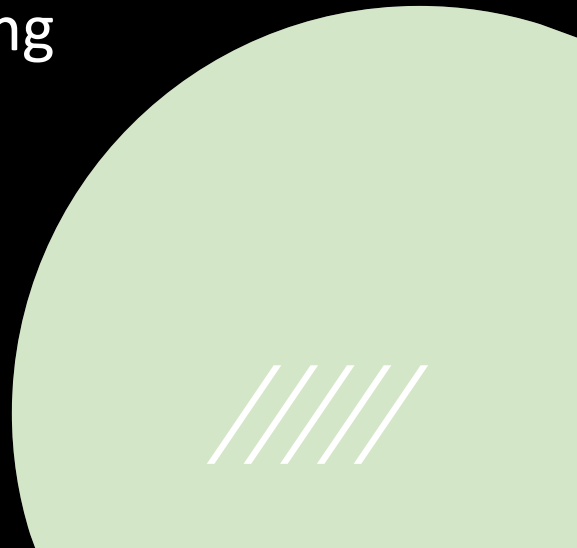
- Accumulating deficits in curriculum coverage and benchmarked learning outcomes.
- Focuses the education enterprise as one of learning content and this crisis has rendered this difficult to implement as intended and designed.
- Narrow range of policy prescriptions; focuses on a recovery mode that privileges cognitive learning, curriculum coverage.





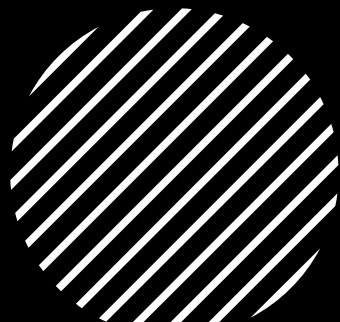
2b. Building back better, coping with the new normal, and resetting

- These voluntaristic imaginings suggest a rupture or break from the past and present that is conceived of as failing and riven by weaknesses.
- Yet it is never fully articulated what these exact weaknesses are, what is being reset, what defines the new normal, and what building back better looks like.


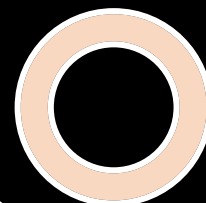






2c. Solutions to the crisis: technology driven alternatives




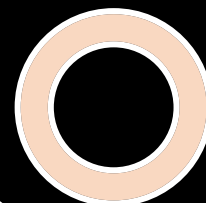


- These primarily privilege technology-driven learning alternatives
- Pandemic aligned to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR): technologisation and digitalisation of teaching and learning.
- Advocate the flipped classroom and hybrid/blended/hy-flex learning as vital future modalities of education
- Techno-education as a solution to the crisis is evident across all contexts
- Rarely speak of the deep-seated inequality of 4IR.
- Exacerbate education inequalities and render silent and absent a particular economic order being proposed (Chowdury & Jomo, 2020).
- Ongoing privatisation creep: undermines education as a common public good.
- Techno-education reflects neo-colonialism in the Global South: dependent relationship with technologies during the pandemic, digital colonisation (see Kwet, 2021)



3. Crisis and international aid: Rethinking the education and development paradigm

- The pandemic reveals inequities between and within nation states and fault lines of international development: Global North cutting back on aid and retreating into chauvinistic nationalism, including through vaccine nationalism, for example (Khoo, 2020).
- Current crisis part of neoliberal privatisation of social sectors, growing inequalities, emphasis on individual not collective solidarity.
- The pandemic reveals “unknowing”: development as “Northern knowledge” and competence versus “Southern lack of knowledge or incompetence” (Khoo, 2020).
- Pandemic calls new understandings of development: not only geographical boundary of rich and poor and North and South, but also production, governance, relational inequality.





3. Crisis and international aid: Rethinking the education and development paradigm

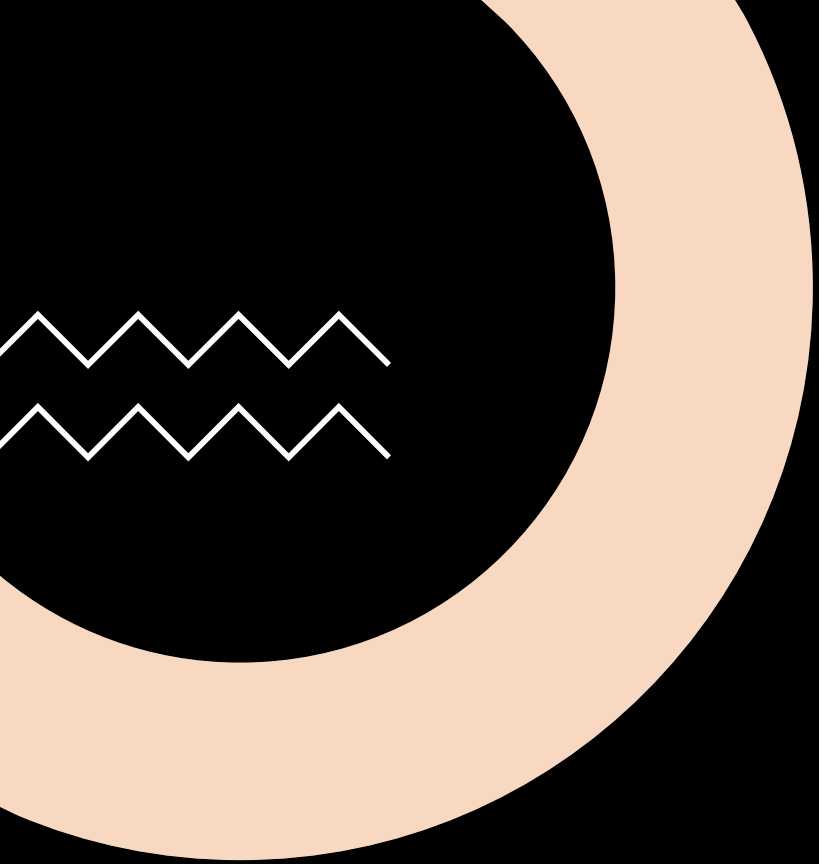
Yet... the pandemic reveals an alternative progressive imaginary:

- Cuban health responses: personnel and vaccine
- Crisis Recovery Facility of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB): \$13bn of financing for recovery
- Vietnam and India- Kerala state (Chowdury & Jomo, 2020).

Alternative framing of knowing and doing development...ie not linear trajectory and crises as minor to major road bumps in modernity thesis.

Alternative development imaginaries rooted in and based on the voices of the marginal, those on the global periphery





4. Crises and an alternative policy imaginary

- A humble form of unknowing...
- Requires a social justice pedagogy that supports learning to nurture social consciousness and develop global solidarity; knowledge, skills, and dispositions to understand multiple injustices.
- Education integral to all human activity through the lifespan: Adult learning and education (ALE) has received very little attention in COVID-19
- Reinvent divisions between homes and schools to foster inter-connected educational ecologies that build vibrant democratic participation





4. Crises and an alternative policy imaginary

- An alternative to neoliberal choice discourses, education logics that promote competition and conflict: must foster empathy, care, affective learning.
- Create empathy rather than hostility towards teachers, a group too often characterised as lazy, uninterested, reason for poor quality
- Teachers as autonomous agents hints at a form of meaningful democratic participation that should extend to policymaking.

