

Review

PUBLICATION OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL

VOL. 17 | NO. 3 | SEPTEMBER 2019

**POVERTY AND
INEQUALITY -
UNDERSTANDING
AND TACKLING
THE CHALLENGE**

**FALSE BELIEFS
DRIVE XENOPHOBIA
P3**

**PLACE-MAKING
IN OUR CITIES
P10-13**

**HOW HISTORY
SHAPED THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
P28**



EDITOR'S NOTE

More than 25 years since the transition to democracy, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world and is still battling widespread poverty.

The HSRC's latest book in its State of the Nation series, *Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses*, covers many of the structural and economic causes but the authors also look at the cultural and psychosocial dimensions of the problem.

Understanding the psychological impact of the country's history is a complicated field of work that social scientists should pay more attention to, also to inform new policy approaches, said HSRC CEO Prof Crain Soudien at the recent [launch](#) of the book in Stellenbosch.

In this edition of the *HSRC Review*, we feature several articles that relate directly or indirectly to some of the chapters in the book.

With a fresh spate of deadly xenophobic violence sweeping across the country over the last few months, the article on false beliefs that drive xenophobia is particularly relevant. Three out of four South Africans believe immigrants increase crime rates, steal jobs and spread disease, according to an HSRC study by Dr Steven Gordon using data from the *2014 South African Social Attitudes Survey*. The government needs to take the role of attitudes seriously and work to dispel disinformation, he says.

In an article focusing on the history of inequality, Prof Colin Bundy provides an overview of the key contributions of the colonial era and highlights how capitalism in 20th-century South Africa accommodated itself to apartheid's social divide, shaping contemporary inequality.

Summarising one of the more controversial chapters in the book, Prof Ingrid Woolard explores the possible role of wealth taxation in South Africa. Assets such as fixed property lend themselves to easy valuation for wealth tax, it is suggested, but taxing retirement funds should be excluded, as retirement is already underfunded in the country and taxing it may discourage saving.

Another book chapter covers "place-based" development around higher education institutions, specifically how inclusive development in and around

campus precincts can reduce inequality by boosting access to higher education and social mobility. The term "[place-making](#)" refers to an urban-design approach whereby public spaces are created to promote people's well-being and sense of belonging.

We feature an article on the HSRC's review of South Africa's state housing programmes in five cities. As these suburbs are often built on cheap land on the outskirts of cities, the inhabitants find themselves far from employment opportunities and many do not have the means to develop or maintain their starter houses. The HSRC is also working on a project to help Buffalo City to improve urban spaces in and around its higher education institutions.

Commenting on the sustainable development of South Africa's fast-expanding cities at the [eThekweni Research Symposium 2019](#), Soudien urged researchers and city officials to include communities in their efforts to find solutions to urban challenges. In many projects, the HSRC is already involving research subjects as active participants in research processes.

An article on the Botshelo Ba Trans study of transgender women shows how these women drove a research sampling process by recruiting participants via their social networks. They helped researchers to access knowledge that normally would have existed outside of academic spaces.

The need to consult people on the ground is also highlighted in an article about the unforeseen challenges Rwanda faced when trying to establish silk farming in a country where caterpillars are not valued as symbols of culture or wealth.

Other articles cover the 9th SA AIDS Conference, informal-sector innovation, language use in classrooms and secondary trauma experienced by researchers. We conclude with a report on the 2019 Annual ASSAf Humanities Lecture where Prof Crain Soudien looked at the history of social-science research as shaped by the University of Pretoria and the HSRC's predecessor organisations.

Please feel free to share your thoughts using the email addresses provided.

Antoinette

CONTENTS

False beliefs drive xenophobia in South Africa – and education only helps up to a point	3
Why 'pro-poor' policies on their own won't shift inequality in South Africa	6
The urban nexus: Putting people at the centre	8
As home spaces implode, place-making suffers	10
Place-making and the Buffalo City University-City Project	12
Unravelling Rwanda's silk dream: A fine line between flourishing and faltering	14
The 9th SA AIDS Conference 2019: Reigniting a sense of urgency	16
Transgender women network for research: Revealing community HIV and health risks	18
Multilingualism in classrooms: Drawing from a diverse language pool for greater understanding	20
Why South Africa should seriously consider taxing its wealthy citizens	22
Not the full picture: Rethinking innovation measurement in South Africa	24
Conducting research with traumatised populations: The cost of bearing witness	26
Lessons and legacies: How the early years of the HSRC and the University of Pretoria shaped the social sciences in South Africa	28
HSRC Press	31

Editor: Antoinette Oosthuizen
Correspondence: For feedback and questions, email aoosthuizen@hsrc.ac.za. An electronic version is available on www.hsrc.ac.za

Pretoria: Private Bag X41, Pretoria, South Africa 0001, Tel: +27 12 302 2000, Fax: +27 12 302 2001
Cape Town: Private Bag X9182, Cape Town, South Africa 8000, Tel: +27 21 466 8000, Fax: +27 21 466 8001
Durban: Private Bag X07, Dalbridge, South Africa 4014, Tel: +27 31 242 5400, Fax: +27 31 242 5401

Production: The *HSRC Review* is produced by the Communication and Stakeholder Relations Unit, HSRC.

Layout and design: Antonio Erasmus.

Cover: Depicted in the lower left part of our cover photo, is Kayamandi township. It sits at the top of a hill overlooking lush vineyards and some of the most valuable real estate in South Africa. Below the township to the right, is the town of Stellenbosch. Kayamandi was founded in the 1950s as an area for labourers who were working on the surrounding farms. As photographer Johnny Miller writes on his [blog](#), Stellenbosch is renowned throughout South Africa as the country's second-oldest city, an esteemed university town, and the centre of the wine industry. The stark reality of the thousands of impoverished people living just above the city centre is a woeful reminder of just how unequal South Africa really is, Miller says.
Photo: Johnny Miller

FALSE BELIEFS DRIVE XENO PHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA – AND EDUCATION ONLY HELPS UP TO A POINT

Elube Mwalwen, a Malawian national, surveys the damage done to the room she rents in the house in Rosettenville that was set alight during a vigilante attack (2017).

Photo: Ihsaan Haffejee/GroundUp

In September 2019, a fresh spate of deadly xenophobic violence swept Gauteng, just months after the government launched a national action plan to combat xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. While dissatisfaction with service delivery is often said to drive xenophobia, a recent HSRC study failed to find evidence to support this assertion. Instead, intolerance was most strongly linked to false beliefs about migrants. In some ways, this appears a truism. But the finding also contains important insights for how intolerance might best be tackled. *By Andrea Teagle.*

Three out of four South African adults agree that immigrants increase crime rates, steal jobs and spread disease, according to a recent HSRC study by Dr Steven Gordon using data from the *2014 South African Social Attitudes Survey*.

It is commonly believed that poor service delivery drives animosity towards immigrants – particularly in light of protests that devolve into the looting of foreign-owned shops and homes – and that xenophobia is concentrated among lower socioeconomic groups, among whom unemployment is rife. Yet, Gordon found that individuals reporting dissatisfaction with service delivery were no more likely to reject migrants than other participants.

Driven by fear

Unwelcoming attitudes appeared to be driven by false beliefs about the economic impacts of immigration. This suggests that intolerance is driven by fear, rather than experiences of deprivation for which migrants are often scapegoated.

To assess beliefs about migrants, the study created an immigration

consequence index, including questions about the economic effects of immigration, and whether participants agreed that immigrants bring needed skills and increase openness to new ideas and cultures. For the most part, they disagreed.

“The general South African public seems ill-informed about the diverse international immigrant population living in the country,” Gordon writes. He says popular discourse on this is informed by myths and misinformation. For example, the belief that immigrants (especially black immigrants) are a major cause of crime is often used to justify discrimination.

Gordon notes that there is little evidence that migrants are a source of any great social ills in the country. A 2018 [World Bank study](#) found that, contrary to beliefs, they have a positive impact on employment in South Africa, with each migrant generating two jobs, on average.

Gordon’s attitudinal study is the latest in a series of HSRC investigations seeking to understand the origin of anti-immigrant attitudes in South

Africa. Similar to results from earlier studies looking at attitudes between 2003 and 2012, a third of participants agreed that they generally do not welcome immigrants, while another third said they welcome some, but not all, immigrants. Only a quarter agreed that they welcome all immigrants.

The role of education

Interestingly, while education made rejecting all immigrants less likely, it did not increase the probability that an individual would welcome



all immigrants. The study notes that welcoming some immigrants is not necessarily a midpoint in a progression from “reject none” to “reject all” but rather should be considered as its own distinct category, possibly informed by different factors. More granular data would be needed to unpack this further, but it is possible, for example, that education might make individuals more welcoming towards skilled migrants, or migrants from certain parts of the world.

In a previous study, Gordon found that locals named Nigerians most frequently as the group they would least like to come and live in South Africa.

Service delivery?

The study did not explore whether dissatisfaction with service delivery – although it does not increase the likelihood that an individual rejects migrants – might increase the likelihood of that non-welcoming attitude manifesting in violence. However, previous research suggested that participants who previously partook in peaceful protests might be prompted to act violently under certain conditions.

“I have found that past and potential involvement in violent behaviour was

strongly correlated with previous experience with peaceful anti-immigrant activity,” says Gordon. He adds that, by analysing particular instances of collective violence, “this work demonstrates the importance of a geographical analysis of xenophobic behaviour.”

Responses to xenophobia often focus on the conditions under which it manifests itself violently. Law enforcement, for example, is emphasised in the government’s recently published *National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*. While this is important, it should be accompanied by efforts to investigate and tackle the root causes of attitudes that underlie xenophobic behaviour.

Psychology of violence

“A socially cohesive society is not maintained solely through the strong-arm of law and order...Psychology has made a significant contribution to understanding the determinants of violence,” says Gordon. “The role of attitudes in predicting participation in anti-immigrant violence, however, has been underappreciated.”

Some of the negative narratives about African migrants, in particular, have a long history. As the National

Action Plan acknowledges, “The many years of a racist and isolationist policy of apartheid have planted seeds of xenophobia, particularly towards Africans, undoing centuries of brotherhood and sisterhood among Africans in South Africa and those from other parts of the continent.”

Nation-building efforts post-apartheid may have had the unintended effect of cementing notions of “the other,” shifting the “us and them” narrative from within to outside our borders.

Gordon’s study points to media and government as particularly powerful channels for reproducing falsehoods about migrants – and could also be a means of debunking them. Political parties have been repeatedly criticised for failing to name and confront xenophobia, instead dismissing it as the work of ‘criminal elements’. And xenophobic rhetoric is often employed to score political points – particularly ahead of elections – and divert attention away from the root causes of poor service delivery.

The role of leaders

Critics are saying that comments such as those made by former health minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi last



November, blaming over-crowded hospitals on foreigners or those of President Cyril Ramaphosa in January about the need for border control to ensure public safety, perpetuate myths about the impacts of immigration.

In the HSRC's latest book in its State of the Nation series, *Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses*, Dr Temba Masilela and his colleagues highlight the paradoxical and fragmented nature of the government's policy stance on migrants, which emphasises tough border controls while contending that migration is "largely positive."

These paradoxes are further evident in government criticisms of human-rights organisations working to protect the rights of migrants.

Referring to the National Development Plan (2030), which aims to alleviate poverty and inequality, Masilela and his colleagues write, "national policies have failed to recognise the social and political value of migrants beyond their potential economic contribution." They add that meaningful narrative change at government level needs to incorporate the voices and representations of migrants, through art, performance and other media.

Gordon notes that, while the government's recent action plan is constructive – if somewhat vague – its references to a previous, unimplemented plan serves as a reminder that existing recommendations have yet to be followed.

"To me, it would appear that the most evident response to xenophobic activity in recent years is greater scrutiny of foreign nationals living/working in the country's townships," he says. There is an urgent need for the government to "take seriously the role of attitudes and work to dispel disinformation about the impacts of immigration on South Africa."

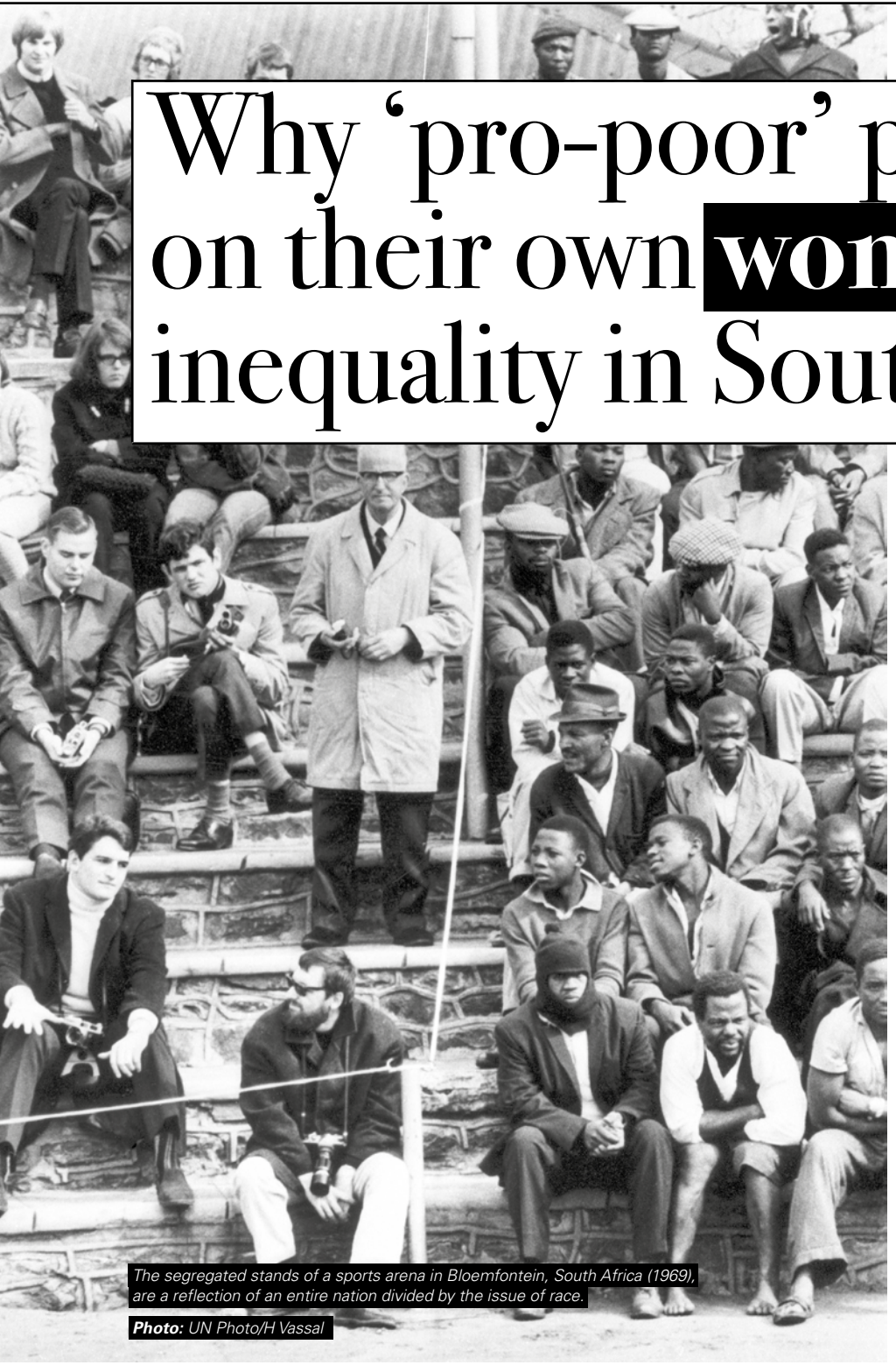
Author: Andrea Teagle, HSRC science writer
ateagle@hsrc.ac.za

Researcher: Dr Steven Gordon, senior researcher in the HSRC's Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery research programme
sgordon@hsrc.ac.za

Police released stun grenades and tear gas to disperse the crowds during an anti-immigrant march in Pretoria (2017).

Photo: Ihsaan Haffeejee/GroundUp

Why ‘pro-poor’ policies on their own won’t shift inequality in South Africa



The segregated stands of a sports arena in Bloemfontein, South Africa (1969), are a reflection of an entire nation divided by the issue of race.

Photo: UN Photo/H Vassal

Sociologist [Goran Therborn](#) has probably influenced the study of inequality more than any other scholar in recent years. Invited to locate inequality in South Africa in a global perspective, Therborn was [emphatic](#). In terms of income, it is “the most unequal country on earth.” He proposed that inequality in South

Africa (which he calls “extraordinary” and “unique”) [derives](#) from settler colonialism, its trajectory and its enduring legacy. I want to expand on what Therborn insisted was only a hypothesis, specifying some of the key contributions of the colonial era to the history of inequality. But I also argue that the specific

Inequality persists in post-apartheid South Africa, reflecting the distribution of power. Reversing this will require changing the social processes and relations that underpin it.
By *Prof Colin Bundy*



nature of capitalism in 20th-century South Africa, while profoundly shaped by [settler colonialism](#), is analytically distinct and equally important in shaping the contours of contemporary inequality.

Empire’s civilising mission

During 150 years of Dutch colonial rule, slavery left a deep imprint on poverty and inequality. Slaves and their descendants formed a distinct layer of the poor in the Western Cape. And as the colony expanded north and east, [Khoikhoi](#) communities lost their independence through military defeat, disease and the loss of their herds. Through the 18th century, the Khoikhoi were absorbed into the frontier economy as a captive workforce.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Britain shouldered aside the moribund [Dutch East India Company](#). British

colonial administrators were confident of the “civilising mission” of the empire; and the arrival from the 1820s of British settlers in the eastern Cape introduced a new economic, political and military dynamic. Imperial and settler troops waged a series of increasingly punitive wars against the Xhosa kingdoms.

The loss of land and livestock propelled Xhosa men, women and children into indentured labour. Twentieth-century historian and former president of Cornell University Cornelis Willem De Kiewiet – writing 75 years ago – went to the heart of the matter when he wrote: *The land wars were also labour wars.*

A crucial period from the 1860s to 1910 was decisively shaped by the mineral revolution and imperial interventions. The discovery of diamonds and then gold saw large mining houses create a labour force with a skilled (white) artisan base and a massive, migrant (black) workforce. British imperial policy sought to control access to the minerals and secure the labour supplies to extract them. A series of wars and annexations completed the conquest of African societies; and the defeat of the Boer republics in the South African War led to the creation of a single territory under British control.

In 1910, by an act passed in Westminster, South Africa became a British dominion. The Union inherited what became some of the essential institutions of 20th-century South Africa. These were the “native reserves”, large-scale migrant labour, segregated urban space, and an increasingly overt subordination of black people to white rule.

After 1910, the new state massively increased its capacities and the economy diversified. By 1948 manufacturing had outstripped both mining and agriculture in its contribution to the GDP. South Africa became a mid-ranking industrial power. But this history of economic development had a dark, singular twist. Alone among industrial powers, South Africa did not incorporate the bulk of its working class into its social and political institutions. Black South Africans were systematically excluded

from political, educational, legal and welfare systems.

Distinctive social divide

From 1910 to the 1970s - under segregation and apartheid - South African capitalism accommodated itself to this distinctive social divide, which became a key driver of inequality. The consequences are well known.

Until the 1970s, the real wages of African workers in mining and agriculture stagnated and at times actually fell. Farm workers were an exceptionally exploited group. An even larger proportion of the African population experienced poverty in the reserves (subsequently bantustans or homelands). Black city dwellers experienced less acute poverty than their rural cousins. The mass provision of township housing provided modest material and welfare gains, but created an insecure and violent environment.

Throughout these years, successive governments not only inhibited black economic advancement, but also buttressed white privileges. State services for white families – in education, healthcare and housing – widened racial disparities in income and wealth. During the heyday of apartheid – from 1948 to 1973 – a period of growth and stability saw white living standards rise dramatically.

By the 1970s, however, the apartheid project was in deep trouble, regionally, politically and economically. Growth stalled, inflation rose, an intense balance of payments crisis set in. From the OPEC crisis of 1973 to 1994, South Africa’s economic performance was dismal. Capital responded – it had to, given the stark failure of the existing low-wage, low-skills growth path. The real wages of black workers in manufacturing and mining rose sharply – but there was a strong shift to replace labour. Manufacturing, agriculture and mining all embraced mechanisation – and shed jobs.

An historic transition took place: a shift from labour shortages to a labour surplus, generating structural unemployment on a massive

scale. Between 1970 and 1980, unemployment spiralled tenfold: from about half a million to 5.1 million people. Among the jobless millions, those who were less educated, less skilled and less urbanised had scant prospects of finding work. Structural unemployment became a savage new source of inequality.

De-racialised affluence

Politically, 1994 was a watershed moment. But economically and socially there were significant continuities from the late apartheid years to the post-apartheid present. Social grants and the provision of housing and services to townships have reduced levels of income poverty. But inequality has actually increased since 1994.

Two factors have intensified inequality: increasingly concentrated income and wealth; and a sharp rise of inequality within the African population. In 1993 the wealthiest decile of the population earned 54% of national income; by 2008 their share had risen to over 58%. The poorer 50% of the population saw its share fall from 8.3% to 7.85%.

Wealth is even more unequally shared than income. Within the African population, the emergence of a well-to-do middle-class minority has been rapid and today about half of the wealthiest decile are black. In post-apartheid South Africa, affluence has been de-racialised; poverty and inequality have remained stubbornly racialised.

Inequality was forged by settler colonialism and racial capitalism; its persistence in such an acute form reflects the distribution of power (and the resources and opportunities conferred by power) in society.

Tackling inequality therefore involves more than “pro-poor” policies: it needs changing the social processes and relations that underpin it.

Author: By Prof Colin Bundy, Honorary Fellow of Green Templeton College, University of Oxford. This article first appeared in The Conversation and is based on a chapter, also authored by Bundy, in Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses, published by the HSRC.

THE URBAN NEXUS: PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE

About 60% of South Africans are living in urban areas, and by 2030, this is projected to rise to more than 70%, according to the [National Development Plan 2030](#). But cities are already struggling to keep up. Many communities have resorted to destructive protest action to express their dissatisfaction with housing, service delivery and access to economic opportunities. There is a need to restore communication and trust, HSRC CEO Prof Crain Soudien said at a recent symposium.

By Antoinette Oosthuizen

The integrated planning of housing, transport, and the management of energy, water and food resources are key to the long-term sustainable development of South Africa's fast-expanding cities. This needs to be based on quality data, but communities should be included in the research process. This is why the HSRC has used participatory action-based research approaches in several of its projects, CEO Prof Crain Soudien said at the recent [eThekweni Research Symposium 2019](#) in Durban.

Criticising a top-down service-delivery model, Soudien said that researchers, policymakers and service providers need to recognise that they can learn from people on the ground and build relationships with them.

"A lot of our service-delivery protests are about the breakdown in this relationship. Policy planning and implementation shouldn't be working with people as consumers but as partners. We have to find ways to involve people in co-creating our data and participating in the way that the data is used."

The theme of the symposium was The Urban Nexus: People and Data in the Centre, focusing on the nexus between urbanisation and service delivery. It was organised by a consortium of the eThekweni Metropolitan Council, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology, the University of South Africa, the University of Zululand, the HSRC and the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In his keynote address, Soudien highlighted two HSRC projects that followed a participatory action-research approach, where communities played a central role in how data was collected and used.

The Ikhaya Lami research project

The recent controversy around homeless people being fined in the City of Cape Town highlighted the chasm between researchers, policymakers and municipalities, and people on the ground. The city decided to enforce the provisions of existing by-laws that prohibit certain behaviour and the erection of

structures that block public spaces. A City spokesperson told [News24](#) that 85% of the homeless people refused assistance offered by reintegration workers and many did not want to live in shelters. It was reported that some street-dwellers were fined R200 – R800. But how can people living in extreme poverty pay such fines? And why won't they accept help?

The challenge is not unique to Cape Town. A decade ago, the HSRC estimated the total number of homeless people in the country at between 100 000 and 200 000, but exact numbers are not known.

In 2015-2016, HSRC researchers conducted a mixed-methods participatory action-research study to explore the plight of street-and shelter-living people in central Durban. The Ikhaya Lami research project was a partnership between the HSRC and the eThekweni Metro.

The researchers first set out to build a relationship with homeless people who were the subjects of the research. "You can imagine how difficult that was. How do you begin with someone who is almost

inherently distrustful of anybody looking vaguely bureaucratic?" Soudien said.

In the second phase, the researchers needed to find ways to talk to them to develop a database. "We had to ask them really difficult questions about violence, access to employment, about drug abuse, about their basic sense of well-being. This was a crucial phase in trying to put the evidence on the table."

The researchers built an important database for the city. The data was analysed and discussed at roundtables and used to develop a policy brief. A total of 3933 homeless people were counted in February 2016, half of them sleeping in formal shelters and the rest on the streets, in parks or other places outside. Many had become homeless after coming to seek employment in the city (36% and 40%), family trauma (20%), substance abuse (11% and 4%), the death of a family member (9%) or simply because they had "nowhere else to go" (6% and 13%). The majority believed that finding employment would help them overcome homelessness.

Community Scorecard project

Interactions around service-delivery challenges in South Africa are often characterised by conflict and high levels of mistrust between communities and officials. This is where the Community Scorecard project in the City of Cape Town came into play. HSRC researchers, city officials and residents of Nyanga, a marginalised area, worked together on this project.

"Nyanga has been described as the crime capital of South Africa," said Soudien. "Preparation was crucial. We needed to understand the context into which we were moving and the needs of the residents."

Researchers involved the residents in developing a scorecard with indicators of progress. "It is really difficult to do that, because people will start at the extreme end and say they want a house, but you have to put measurements in the scorecard that are realistic and will help monitor

a sense of progress. This process required building trust."

The HSRC researchers found that poor communication, and a lack of understanding of how city processes and services worked, contributed to this conflict. With regards to water provision, the researchers learned that pipe infrastructure in the area was insufficient for the growing population. This resulted in frequent breakdowns, witnessed on the scorecard day when community members and officials walked the sites together. Access to maintenance sites was hindered by criminal activities, which included vandalism and city officials being threatened.

Putting people first

Resource constraints and other challenges may lead to some research reports ending up on shelves. Soudien cautioned that a perception of no response may lead to communities becoming disillusioned and not eager to participate when new groups of researchers and officials attempt to work with them. Communities should be respected, he said, even if it means giving disappointing feedback about the challenges encountered to implement research findings and recommendations.

He urged researchers and cities to communicate more effectively, be more pragmatic and put the interests of the people first.

Legitimacy

Soudien emphasised that communities need to trust the standards and benchmarks that researchers and policymakers come up with. "For example, if we tell people a reasonable benchmark is that every household should have access to 200 litres of water a day, we have to be able to back it with research to convince people it is a reasonable offer, that it is not arbitrary, but practical and affordable. People should realise the data is not made up by bureaucrats and imposed on them, but realistic."

Communities need to view institutions as legitimate. They need to see that science is in their interest, that it will serve their needs and it is not only

intended for the elite. "This is what is going to stop our communities from destroying that very tap that is being used to provide those 200 litres of water ... that tap must be a symbol that represents their own 200 litres and something they want to defend."

The way forward

The HSRC has the scientific resources to support cities, but some research efforts have been duplicated. "The City of eThekweni has done a wonderful survey on public perceptions and the premier's office has done a satisfaction survey, but the HSRC conducts an annual attitudes survey too. Unfortunately, our datasets don't relate to each other sufficiently." Soudien suggested that research institutions and administrative entities partner to find practical solutions to collaborate on, rather than compete. During the visit, the HSRC renewed its memorandum of understanding with the eThekweni Metro.



HSRC CEO Prof Crain Soudien and Sipho Nzuza (eThekweni City Manager) signing a renewed memorandum of understanding.
Photo: Antonio Erasmus

AS HOME SPACES IMplode, place-making suffers

In the current review of housing policy in South Africa, the HSRC was asked to investigate whether low-cost housing policies had increased “access to the city” for the poor over the past 25 years. The researchers found that state-led, pro-poor suburbanisation projects have imploded, due to re-urbanisation and adverse residential involution that has dire consequences for the formation of sustainable, place-based communities. *By Prof Leslie Bank, Ndipiwe Mkuzo and Tim Hart*

In 2018, the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) asked the HSRC to do a national review of the role that state housing programmes played in access to cities and their offerings, for poor beneficiaries. The purpose of this assignment was to inform the human settlement policy for the future and it was conducted by a research group that focuses on place-making and development in the HSRC’s Economic Performance and Development programme.

The study reviewed conditions in five cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Mangaung, Buffalo City and eThekweni. It involved a combination of literature reviews and ethnographic research into specific RDP housing and informal settlements.

While most theories about the city emphasised the role of private capital investment in settlement formation in cities, the state had played a critical role in South Africa – delivering more than four million houses since 1995.

Low-income houses in Philippi, a settlement on the periphery of Cape Town.
Photo: Antonio Erasmus

Next to China, South Africa has made the largest investment. However, unlike the high-rise modernist model of China, the South African model has been based on a low-slung suburban model and has involved the construction of RDP houses at scale as well as the upgrading of informal settlements. These two strategies are often followed by residents' own additions to RDP houses and shacks of two to three storeys, which we call *re-urbanisation*. Depending on which city you are looking at, this low-slung suburbia is a colourful collage of brick and mortar housing, shacks of multiple materials and shipping containers. The further away from the city, the less dense the settlement.

Far from employment

In South Africa, the suburban landscape has not emerged as a demand-driven process, whereby families with jobs buy into suburbs to improve their lifestyles, after they have acquired cars and improved their levels of affordability. Instead, the new basic suburbs, in the form of RDP housing, have been provided by the state as a supply-side intervention, on cheap land on the outskirts of cities, to families that do not have the means to either develop their starter houses or to cover the costs of transportation into the city on a daily basis. Pro-poor suburbia has its limitations, but together with extensive, albeit often fractured, service delivery, it is the main product of the post-apartheid democratic regime. Access to an RDP house is seen as a basic right, and everyone feels that this is the very least they should be afforded to symbolise the attainment of freedom. Ideally, the house should be fully serviced and there is an expectation that the state should provide access to employment too. The RDP design did not anticipate that housing beneficiaries would struggle with employment, because no provision was generally made for local entrepreneurship in the planning of high streets with retail frontage, settlement-level small business parks, or shopping centres. The imagined RDP model was of the classic old blue-collar dormitory suburb, where shopping and livelihood

happened elsewhere. The idea that a large number of those in the RDP housing might not find jobs and have to try to make a living in their own neighbourhoods, backyards or streets never occurred to the planners.

Urban involution

In reality, there is jobless growth, little expansion or improvement in public transport in cities (which has become worse), very poor results from basic education, and fragmented service delivery. The promise of the state-led suburban dream is collapsing. The result is widespread urban involution. In other words, people do not have the means to support themselves, so the only thing they do have to work with is the land granted to them by the state (and their houses). Using anthropological perspectives on gifting, the report unpacks the social lives that RDP houses follow as they evolve into other types of places or home spaces. Densification and re-urbanisation (informalisation) is a common outcome in well-located, state-led RDP housing projects in cities. The consequences of this are problematic for local authorities in their ability to maintain services and also for the mandate of providing access to the city through housing. Internal stratification in these settlements leads to winners and losers as the RDP beneficiaries draw rent from new arrivals, who are overcharged for access to very poor-quality places. On the outskirts of the cities, the RDP settlements do not densify but are deserted during the week as beneficiaries find alternative accommodation closer to the city centre or places of employment. A system of weekly commuting occurs, which is not very conducive to urban stability or investment. For those who are fortunate enough to find employment, much of their income is redirected to the rural communities from which they hail. Little local reinvestment of this income occurs.

Double-rootedness continues

There are three main consequences that we need to note: (1) the new evolutionary process of urban place-making, where starter communities evolve into orderly larger non-racial

urban communities or neighbourhoods with good schools, sports facilities, social tolerance, social cohesion and local civic associations, as imagined in the policy, are few and far between. Instead we have overcrowded or under-serviced and poorly planned neighbourhoods which are full of violence, xenophobia and social dysfunction; (2) the inadequacy of new urban settlements as places where people can literally come to live and die, as the American urbanist Lewis Mumford famously described suburbs, has encouraged ongoing double-rootedness in South Africa cities, which is stimulated not only as a legacy of apartheid but as a response to the failure of place-making in the cities. The current policy applications are not delivering the conditions for urban stability and growth. Urban migration now provides for continued investment in rural housing rather than only investment in cattle and agriculture; (3) the policy of providing easy access to the city is becoming undermined by the usurious rents that are now being charged across the cities for backyard accommodation. Modest access to the yard used to be a way in which close relatives could access the city through family as a form of shared poverty but is now being commodified for profit, making the cities more dangerous and inequalitarian at the margins. The HSRC report provides the Department of Human Settlements with much to consider as they revise and update the old RDP housing policy.

Authors: Prof Leslie Bank, deputy executive director, Ndipive Mkuzo, master intern, and Tim Hart, senior research project manager of the HSRC's Economic Performance and Development Programme

lbank@hsrc.ac.za
nmkuzo@hsrc.ac.za
thart@hsrc.ac.za

Note: This synopsis draws on a report, [*Evaluating interventions by the Department of Human Settlements to facilitate access to the city by the poor*](#), by Leslie Bank, Mark Paterson, Tim Hart, Catherine Ndinda, Justin Visagie, Nina Botha, Esther Makhetha, Liezel Blomerus, Jessica Thornton, Francis Sibanda and Ndipive Mkuzo, with financial support from the DHS.

PLACE-MAKING AND THE BUFFALO CITY UNIVERSITY-CITY PROJECT

East London is situated in the Eastern Cape's Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality and is home to at least four higher education institutions. But is it truly a university city? The HSRC is working with the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency to find ways to transform it into a space where people have a strong sense of belonging, a sense of place. By *Prof Leslie Bank*

Place-making is a new buzzword in the global urban development industry, especially in large, former industrial cities. Its ascendancy has been linked to ongoing processes of de-industrialisation in the global north and the associated need for spatial, economic and social restructuring to revitalise depressed industrial and suburban neighbourhoods. However, given that these cities are often not just crumbling at the fringes, but hollowing out at the core, inner-city renewal has become critical for big-city place-making and smart-city growth.

A dedicated HSRC research group has developed a research and engagement agenda for place-making and development at various levels in South Africa. It is engaged in township heritage and tourism projects; human settlements formation and housing-delivery projects; and urban-precinct development projects. It has also embarked on a major effort to understand current migration and settlement dynamics through a place-making perspective, in a new book, *Migrant Labour After Apartheid* (HSRC Press, forthcoming).

In relation to precinct development, the group has focused primarily on

the city-campus axis as a potential site for urban renewal, smart growth and inclusive development. In 2018 and 2019, the theme group published two books in this field, *Anchored in Place: Rethinking Universities and Development* (African Minds, 2018) and *City of Broken Dreams* (HSRC Press, 2019), which explore the complex relationship between universities and city building in South Africa. The group has also written regularly in the media advocating the transformation of "town and gown" relations to better align the activities of South African universities with the growth and development agendas of neighbourhoods, cities and regions across the country.

Approached by Buffalo City

As a result of this research and advocacy work, the CEO of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency (BCMDA), Bulumko Nelana, approached the HSRC to assist the agency in turning Buffalo City into more of a university city. Nelana expressed the concern that the presence and concentration of higher education in the city did not seem to be playing a catalytic role in the growth and development of the urban economy there. In fact, he noted, persistent disruptions associated with #FeesMustFall

protests in the inner city had negatively affected the municipality's image as an attractive place of investment.

In the book *Anchored in Place*, the researchers showed that, although quite a lot of activity was already happening informally to connect campuses and city neighbourhoods, most of it had taken the form of real-estate projects driven by the private sector and the "enlightened" self-interest of universities seeking third-stream income. One of the missing links in the emerging efforts was leadership and guidance from the municipal authorities in developing the place-making agenda.

Through a series of meetings, it was agreed that the overall goal of the project should be to define what a place-based university-city project would mean in practice and what interventions might be made to bring it to fruition on the ground. The first phase of work involved broad consultation with stakeholders, which included a meeting convened by the local development agency and the HSRC in East London in November 2018 with potential triple-helix partners in business, government and the higher education sector, as well as from civil-society forums and professional organisations. At

the meeting, various government agencies, including National Treasury and the Housing Development Agency, made presentations and committed themselves to support the university-city development initiative.

The HSRC team then assessed how the BCMDA's idea of "university-city" development could be operationalised. The team scanned a wide range of approaches and projects internationally in the context of the specific issues, opportunities and challenges faced in East London, particularly in the inner city where most of the knowledge institutions were located.

The role of anchors

By January 2019, the team came up with a clear "anchor-plus" proposal. The proposal took the form of a model, adapted from the work of the [Brookings Institution](#) in Washington on inner-city renewal and precinct development, in which universities and hospitals in the inner-city precincts serve as catalysts for urban regeneration by playing the role of "anchors".

In downtown East London, the team subsequently identified four higher education institutions – the Buffalo City Technical and Vocational Education and Training College and satellite campuses of the University of Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu University and the University of South Africa – and three hospitals – Frere Hospital, Life St Dominic's Hospital and Life East London Private Hospital – as anchor-catalysts for an inner-city, place-based university-city precinct. It was agreed that the district chosen as the knowledge and innovation hub in the city should be promoted through a city improvement district programme of place-making development interventions.

The "plus factor" in this case would be the high-profile, proposed re-development of a so-called "sleeper site", a 13-hectare empty tract of former Transnet land in the city centre, as a key part of the potential innovation district. It made sense to integrate the new university-city project with the plans for the "sleeper site", which included a potential

university-business-government (triple-helix) technology park and other smart-city interventions.

The developmental and physical scope of the project had to be defined and registered as part of Buffalo City's Built Environment and Performance Plan for 2019-2020. This involved a new set of engagements with the city planning office, at which the existing plans for inner-city regeneration had to be adjusted to accommodate the plans for the BCMDA university-city knowledge and innovation district and the city improvement district project.

Based on collaboration

After several meetings, an agreement was reached on the nature of the intervention for 2019/2020 and it was sent on for budgetary allocations. In line with place-making development methodology, the inner city-campus development initiative was not framed as a master plan to be rolled out in a top-down way; it was framed as a set of guiding principles and a model for implementation, structured around values that form the basis of partnerships and collaborations for place-based development.

A steering committee of representatives of all the inner-city anchor institutions, together with business representatives and the leaders of the various line departments in the city, was charged with taking the project forward, under the guidance of the BCMDA. The methodology also entailed constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure that strategic targets are

met, budgets are spent appropriately and mutually agreed projects are delivered.

Having laid the foundation for the transformation of the inner city, the BCMDA and the HSRC are currently engaged in discussions on how to take the project forward. This engagement provides an example of how the HSRC is using world-class research and analysis of development best practice to influence and shape new, innovative development projects at the local level in South African cities and regions.

University-city precincts as quality places

University-city precincts should be places that people care about and want to be in, but which are not exclusive and exclusionary. They must become places that have a strong and identifiable *sense of place*. Most people feel that way about their homes. In this regard, places with a strong sense of place may be described as *quality places*. These are places where people, students, lecturers, doctors and businesses want to be. They are vibrant, unique locations, which are interesting and visually attractive, often featuring public arts and creative activities. They are people-friendly, safe and walkable with mixed uses; the dimensions of the built environment in these places are comfortable relative to the street and feature quality façades.

Author: Prof Leslie Bank, acting executive director of the HSRC's Economic Performance and Development research programme

lbank@hsrc.ac.za



The old Wool Exchange Building was the centre of the wool trade in the Eastern Cape from 1930, when it was built, until 1981, when wool trading was moved down the coast to Port Elizabeth. In 1982 it was purchased by Rhodes University to serve as a satellite campus. It currently serves as the East London campus of Fort Hare University. **Photo:** Bfluff

UNRAVELLING RWANDA'S SILK DREAM: A fine line between flourishing and faltering

In 2003, silk production was earmarked as a huge potential contributor to Rwanda's economy. A recent HSRC study determined that the industry has alleviated poverty to some extent. Yet, by 2013, the diffusion of sericulture, the process of silk production, had begun to falter. The HSRC's Dr Alexis Habiyaemye explores some of the unforeseen challenges of introducing a new type of industry to a country that is entrenched in its traditional culture and how these might be overcome.

By *Andrea Teagle*



Cocoons ready for processing
Photo: Gilberto Mello, Pixabay

What do you do with thousands of demobilised soldiers? This was the question confronting Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, after scores of Rwandan troops returned home from the bloody war in neighbouring Congo in 2003. The question was particularly pressing given the fragile stability of a country that had experienced a genocide less than a decade earlier. Despite significant economic growth, poverty remained rife, and most of the population depended on subsistence farming.

The solution that Kagame settled on – the inspiration of Indian textile technologist, Raj-Rajendran, who had been tasked with closing down an ailing textile factory – was not an obvious one. Together with farmers, the war veterans would command one of the most luxurious textiles in the world: silk. The shimmering material might not be gold or cobalt, but it does fetch a consistently high price on the international market. And, unlike precious metals, it grows on trees – or at least, its creators do.

The business case

Rwanda's temperate climate conditions are kind to crops; however,

its hilly landscapes, dotted with villages and prone to soil erosion, do not provide the large sweeps of farmland that can achieve economies of scale. But silk has a high value-to-volume ratio, meaning that even a small amount could be exported for a significant profit.

According to 2012 estimates, the annual profit potential of silk per hectare of mulberry plantation is 65% higher than that of cassava, the starchy tuberous root of a tropical tree, which is Rwanda's most profitable traditional crop (about \$2861.40 compared with \$1729,60). Mulberry trees were even pegged as being environmentally friendly, using little water, guarding against erosion, and providing green cover.

Sericulture – the entire process of silk production from mulberry farming to spinning silk – is labour intensive, and has successfully absorbed workers in countries like India, where labour is a competitive advantage. Silk could thus be used as a long-term tool for poverty alleviation, creating employment and raising incomes.

For the tiny, landlocked country, it seemed like a godsend: shimmering, lightweight silver. In 2003, sericulture

was officially introduced. Mulberry trees imported from India began to shade the hills, and Rwanda even reportedly supplied silk ties to Barack Obama's first presidential campaign.

The Ministry of Silk unravels

In 2013, some 10 years after its inception, HSRC economic development researcher Dr Alexis Habiyaemye set about investigating whether the lofty goals of Rwanda's silk industry had been achieved.

The study, published in 2019, comprised 1343 randomly selected households in districts where sericulture had been introduced. Of these households, 413 had adopted sericulture. How had they fared? Average income could not simply be compared across the groups, since sericulture may have attracted farmers who, for other reasons, were more likely to earn more in any case.

To account for external influences on income discrepancies, Habiyaemye calculated the probability that each household would adopt sericulture based on factors such as income, education, size of land, geographical location, access to infrastructure, social capital etc. Then, in an analysis method known as 'propensity score matching', he matched each silk-producing household with its "twin" – the non-silk household with the closest score.

What he found was that farmers who had opted in to the new industry, earned on average about 25% more income that could be attributed to sericulture. However, the study warned that the findings may have been biased, due to the small sample of sericulture adopters.

This profit differential was smaller than the government's predictions back in 2003. But it was remarkable that any higher income had been achieved at all, given that, 10 years after its introduction, diffusion of the innovation had mostly stalled.

The Ministry of Defence's silk dream had rapidly unravelled, and when short-run profits were not forthcoming, it withdrew its backing. What had gone wrong?

Spinning a yarn

It may once have been a currency akin to gold, but, unlike precious metals, silk did not have cultural capital in Rwanda. It had no history, and the laborious process was not a respected intergenerational craft. In a foreign context, the rather strange reality of silk was laid bare: tending to caterpillars to collect thread secreted from their salivary ducts – killing them in the process – and then painstakingly transforming the thread into shiny fabric that no one in Rwanda actually wanted. So, despite some efforts to cultivate internal demand for silk, the industry was primarily aimed at international markets.

Most Rwandans would rather have a cow, says Habiyaemye. Despite the promised magical profits of silk, trading cows for caterpillars seemed the wrong way around, like a Cinderella coach exchanged for a pumpkin.

Silk was, in essence, a foreign, rural innovation that was introduced top down, without adequate training to equip farmers with the skills and perception shift necessary to embrace the industry. Growing mulberry trees was promoted as an easy activity. But, in reality, sericulture – rearing silkworms, softening the cocoons, unwinding the fibres and spinning them into silk strands (3 to 10 fibres make one strand) – comprised complex activities requiring a degree of technology and expertise that was underestimated.

And the new industry was introduced with two narratives: short-run profit, to appease the veterans, and long-term poverty alleviation. As Habiyaemye writes, these narratives were at odds with one another. "The eagerness to quickly generate profits and ensure employment to Kagame's war veterans led to... a series of miscalculations regarding the timing and coordination of the various activities."

For example, not enough land was put aside to produce enough silk for a reeling factory. As a result, reeling was done by hand-operated looms, and critical economies of scale were lost.

A bureaucratic burden

Farmers were expected to switch over to the new, apparently profitable farming, but they were not consulted, and nor were they empowered to drive the process. The mulberry farms were organised into collectives. Heavy state direction put a great bureaucratic burden on farmers and public interest in the industry declined.

"Because of the way the economy is structured, farmers could only see one part of the value chain," Habiyaemye explains. "Either they are just cultivating the mulberry trees... or they're rearing the silkworms or harvesting the cocoons." The whole system is controlled, and the political leadership decides how the benefits are distributed, leading to little farmer buy-in. These challenges point to the advantages of innovations informed and driven by the intended beneficiaries.

Despite these stumbling blocks, Rwanda is not done with its silken experiment. In January this year, the opening of a new silk factory was announced, and Habiyaemye's study suggests that silk could still be spun into a working industry, if a long-term view is taken.

It will start by empowering farmers to make decisions and by setting up an incentive system to encourage participation. "The government should subsidise knowledge, rather than subsidise the physical assets," says Habiyaemye.

Author: Andrea Teagle
ateagle@hsrc.ac.za

Researcher: Dr Alexis Habiyaemye
ahabiyaemye@hsrc.ac.za



Villagers clear land for farming in rural north-western Rwanda (July 2019). Rwanda's soil and weather conditions are ideal for mulberry plantations. Photo: Javan Mfitumukiza



The 9th SA AIDS CONFERENCE 2019:

Reigniting a sense of urgency

As a South African, the chances that you are living with, or affected by HIV are high. Many of us who are old enough have witnessed first-hand the tragedy the pandemic unleashed over the last 40 years. In the last decade, we have observed great strides in our public-health response to HIV/AIDS. However, recent data show that prevalence in South Africa is still on the rise, with young people bearing the brunt of new infections. Held in June, the 9th SA AIDS conference was a call to action and challenged the growing complacency towards a decades-old pandemic. By Andrea Teagle

In South Africa, 7.9 million people live with HIV, and the number increases daily. Young people between 15 and 24 account for over a third (38%) of new infections: every day, 1000 adolescent girls and young women are infected. These were some of the findings from the recently launched SABSSM 5 report: The 5th South African National HIV, Behaviour and Communication Survey, presented by the HSRC's Prof Heidi van Rooyen at the 9th SA AIDS conference 2019.

"Without aggressive action to reduce the rate of new infections in young people, HIV will continue to take a tremendous toll on the country for years and generations to come," warned Van Rooyen, whose research explores the social determinants of HIV vulnerability.

The danger of complacency

Fifteen years ago, being infected with HIV was a death sentence for many South Africans. Despite widespread

global scientific consensus on the link between HIV and Aids, the influence of HIV denialists on individuals in government delayed the rollout of antiretroviral therapy (ART).

A stellar civil-society and media response, led by the Treatment Action Campaign, was instrumental in the roll-out of a national ART programme in 2004.

Today, South Africa has the biggest antiretroviral programme in the world, with 62.3% of people living with HIV on treatment. This amounts to approximately 4.4 million people, a figure that has doubled since 2012, according to the SABSSM 5 report. With massive national awareness campaigns and outreach testing and counselling programmes, the survey found that two-thirds of South Africans reported having tested for HIV in the previous year.

But these gains in awareness might also have bred complacency. With so many on treatment, it might seem

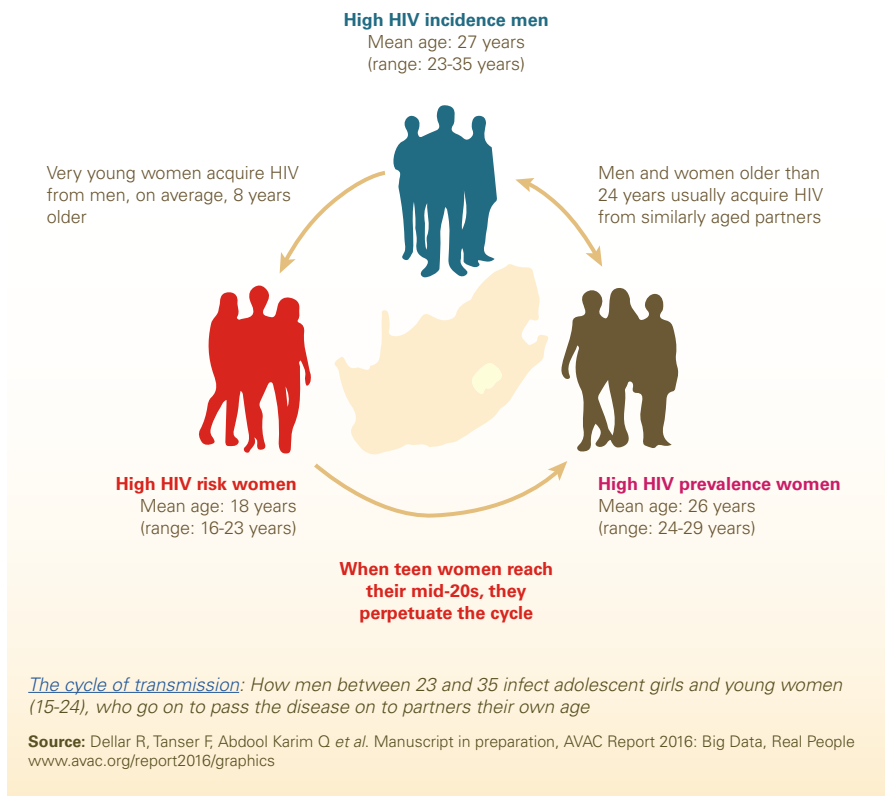
that the worst is behind us. The results of the recent survey paint a different picture.

Also speaking at the conference, Prof Khangelani Zuma, the executive director of the HSRC's Social Aspects of Public Health research programme, said that between 2012 and 2017 the number of new infections (incidence) declined by 44%. However, he noted that at 0.48%, which translates to 231 000 new infections annually, it remains high enough to sustain HIV prevalence.

More positively, the climbing prevalence also reflects the fact that thanks to ART, fewer people are dying from AIDS-related illness – although the drop in mortality has plateaued in the last five years.

Breaking the cycle

For men between 15 and 24 years old, the rate of new infections has increased by 11%. Despite this, and the fact that incidence has dropped



26% among young women, young women still face a three times greater risk for infection. By their mid-to-late thirties, almost 4 in 10 women in South Africa are living with HIV.

Researchers and public-health experts have been speaking about the need to focus on adolescent girls and young women for years. What is working, and what isn't?

"Although many organisations and government departments target adolescent girls and young women, action has often been piecemeal, resulting in duplication of effort, funds not allocated strategically and limited impact," Van Rooyen explained, after the conference.

Interventions that have been shown to be effective at reducing incidence include reaching young women and, critically, [their partners](#), with information and resources to make safer choices, and improving access to youth-friendly reproductive health services.

An effective scale-up of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) – a preventative daily medication that reduces the risk of acquiring HIV – could be a critical component of a youth-targeted intervention. In

line with a new drive to amplify voices of young people in devising interventions, HSRC researchers are engaging with young people to identify how best to make PrEP accessible.

While prevention options are important, Van Rooyen emphasised that sustained behaviour change will only be achieved by addressing the factors that predispose young women to HIV, including poverty, education insecurity and gender-based violence.

"For young women growing up in such communities with a high HIV prevalence, there is a fatalistic feeling that getting infected with HIV is inevitable. This speaks to the many social determinants of HIV and the need to adopt a holistic approach – a combination effort – when addressing HIV."

The eThekweni Declaration

A major challenge, raised by the Treatment Action Campaign, is the frequent occurrence of ARV stockouts at major healthcare facilities. In a 2015 national PLOS survey published in [the journal PLOS1](#) this year, 1 in 5 healthcare facilities reported a current stockout of a least one HIV or TB drug; and 1 in 3 reported a

stockout in the last 3 months.

Retaining people in care remains a pressing concern: 1 in 4 people who initiate ART are no longer on treatment after a year. In total, 3.5 million people (44%) are not yet receiving treatment. This underscores the importance of engaging with target groups, including young people—among whom viral suppression is worryingly low — in identifying and addressing barriers to initiating and staying on treatment.

Dr Sizulu Moyo, a research director at the HSRC, pointed to the growing challenge of the emergence and spread of HIV mutations. Among HIV-positive individuals who are virally unsuppressed, [over a quarter](#) (27%) have drug-resistant strains.

Transgender women are disproportionately affected by HIV, new HSRC research shows, and, while sex work remains criminalised, sex workers face higher risks and reduced access to health services. Finally, funding is declining, threatening to stall the progress South Africa has made towards halting the epidemic.

All of these issues require an ongoing sense of urgency in investigation and response. To this end, delegates at the conference — including local and international scientists, public and private-sector representatives NGOs and faith-based organisations — signed the eThekweni Declaration, received by Deputy President David Mabuza.

The declaration called for a rejuvenated, synergised, community-oriented response that positions young people at the centre of devising interventions to meet their HIV needs, and that addresses inequalities and empowers young women and girls.

To read more and show your support, [click here](#). Millions of South Africans are at risk for infection right now. Millions more are at risk for not receiving the treatment they need. We can't afford to become complacent.

Author: Andrea Teagle, HSRC science writer
ateagle@hsrc.ac.za



TRANSGENDER WOMEN NETWORK FOR RESEARCH: Revealing community HIV and health risks

A pioneering study conducted in collaboration with South African transgender women revealed the advantages of community-driven research in asking the right questions and accessing knowledge that exists outside of academic spaces. Based in three metro-municipalities, the study revealed that the high HIV risk faced by transgender women occurs in a confluence of public-health problems, including homelessness, poverty, substance use, violence, victimisation and discrimination.

By Andrea Teagle and Dr Allanise Cloete

Transgender women in three South African metro municipalities face a disproportionately higher HIV risk than the general population.

This was one of the key findings of the Botshelo Ba Trans study, which lead researcher Dr Allanise Cloete, from the HSRC's Social Aspects of Public Health (SAPH) unit, presented at the SA AIDS conference earlier this year.

The study, which involved 888 transgender women, found that 45.5% of participants in the City of Cape Town and 46.1% of those in the Buffalo City metropolitan area were living with HIV. In the Johannesburg metropolitan area, this figure was 63.4%. The HIV prevalence for the general adult population in the Johannesburg area was 12.9%, according to 2017 estimates.

The higher HIV risk faced by the participants in the study points to wider challenges faced by this often overlooked and marginalised group. One in four transgender women reported having experienced stigma, and about the same percentage (23%) reported having experienced violence due to their transgender status. In addition, while many had completed matric, some had not completed their schooling. In Johannesburg, 14.5% of participants reported having lost a home due to their gender identity.

One transgender woman said, "Some of [my trans sisters who are sex workers] have been on their own since a young age. Nobody accepted them for who they are." Other interviews with key informants revealed that for some transgender women, sex work provided a rare space where they could express their identities positively.

A new approach

The findings of Botshelo Ba Trans are critical to improving access to health care and reproductive and human-rights services for transgender women. But the study also has wider implications, as a torch bearer of a new model of



Leigh Ann van der Merwe, a transgender woman and an activist, speaking at the launch of the Botshelo Ba Trans study.
Photo: Antonio Erasmus

research that positions participants as knowledge holders in their own right.

“The meaningful involvement of civil society in the research study itself had significant implications in creating ownership of the study, for community mobilisation and data collection,” Cloete said.

Before the study, little was known about the HIV risk profile of transgender women in South Africa. Reaching them to take part in the study was always going to be a challenge. From the start, the study’s success relied on the participants to mobilise other transgender women, in a chain-referral process called respondent-driven sampling.

Gaining the trust of a widely stigmatised community was a slow process. Together with co-investigator Leigh Ann van der Merwe, a transgender woman and an activist, Cloete worked with civil society organisations to build relationships with the community over a period of around eight months.

With the help of Social, Health, Empowerment (S.H.E.), Feminist Collective of Transgender Women in Africa based in East London, Sex Workers’ Advocacy and Education Taskforce (SWEAT), Gender Dynamix (GDX) and Access Chapter 2 (AC2), the team recruited “seed” individuals from each geographical area to start the chain-referral process. To be included in the study, participants had to have been assigned male at birth, identify as female, or trans, or “other” than male.

The participants were engaged at each stage of the process, say Cloete and Van der Merwe. The write-up of the findings was a collaborative effort involving transgender women activists, programme implementers, funders, academia and participants, culminating in a five-day writing workshop.

“Several small discussion groups were conducted with transgender women to share lessons learnt across the duration of the study,” Van der Merwe said, adding that the inclusion and leadership of transgender women were central tenets of the effort.

In traditional research, there is a clear separation between researchers and participants. “We’ve never worked with communities from the start, [asking them] ‘You tell me what I need to focus on,’” Cloete said. “It’s a challenge for us because it’s power relations. You know, [assuming] ‘I know best’. And that’s not true. We’re doing this work for the community. So why not engage in an equal way with the community?”

Becoming visible

According to Van der Merwe, the study was a chance for transgender women in South Africa to be seen and heard. At the 2018 [launch of the study](#), she said, “For too long our reality as transgender women has been invisible to society.”

She says, while the majority of transgender women reported living as a woman in the past six months, most have not applied for a change in gender marker. Rights organisations like S.H.E, of which Van der Merwe is the founder, work with transgender women to help them navigate the legal system. “From the transgender women who access our services, we know that there is a strong desire by transgender women to make a change in their gender markers,” said Van der Merwe.

The waiting list for gender-affirming surgeries at the two hospitals in South Africa that offer them is about 20 years, Van der Merwe said. Only about 5% to 12% of transgender women across the three metros surveyed had made use of gender-affirming hormone treatment.

This, Van der Merwe notes, is not evidence of a lack of desire to

undergo the treatment, but of a lack of knowledge about accessing it.

The study also highlighted the diversity of the transgender women and the challenges they face, between and within cities. For example, half of the sample from the Buffalo City metropolitan area reported that they were students (with a similar, and probably largely overlapping proportion indicating that they were aged 18-24); while about 40% reported being unemployed. In the Buffalo City and Cape Town metros, 13.9% and 13.2% respectively reported ever engaging in sex work. In the Johannesburg metro, the proportion was 38.3%, reflecting the likelihood that sex workers gravitate to bigger cities to find work.

The particular makeup of the samples in the three metros also would have been influenced by respondent-driven sampling that recruits via social networks (i.e. friends, sex partners, acquaintances, family members etc.).

One encouraging finding was the widespread knowledge of HIV, with over 75% of participants in every metro, and almost 90% in Johannesburg, reporting having tested for HIV in the past year.

Cloete and Van der Merwe hope that the study will seed new research to empower transgender women in South Africa in other ways. “What I found with the study – the one thing that remains consistent, despite a multitude of social and public-health problems – is that transgender women are resilient and for any future programmes, this resilience of transgender women has to be drawn upon,” says Cloete.



Olwethu Sigenu interviewing a transgender woman as part of the HSRC's Botshelo Ba Trans study.
Photo: Antonio Erasmus



Learners in Randburg Library playing a game called Little Alchemy, which teaches them about chemical elements. A study has found that children may gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts if they are allowed to engage on a subject in their local language, rather than English only.
Photo: Matete Lesele, Wikimedia Commons

MULTILINGUALISM IN CLASSROOMS: DRAWING FROM A DIVERSE LANGUAGE POOL FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Research shows that bilingualism and multilingualism have beneficial impacts on the developing mind. In addition, when multilingual learners are allowed to draw freely from their repertoire of language to communicate – a practice called translanguaging – they achieve a better conceptual understanding. At an HSRC [seminar](#) earlier this year, Dr Robyn Tyler argued that the ideology of single language use in South Africa was blinding us to better ways of teaching. By *Andrea Teagle*

High-school students Thandile and Yonela sat opposite each other, animatedly discussing the chemistry of water, while language in education researcher Robyn Tyler, who was conducting research through the University of Cape Town, looked on. The two switched fluidly between isiXhosa and English, sometimes employing both languages within a single sentence. While Thandile stated that H_2O is water, Yonela countered that a molecule of water is conceptually distinct from water as a substance.

Had the teens been forced to use only English, this conceptual grappling would not have been possible, says Tyler. It may not have been possible in isiXhosa either, as both languages

informed the thinking of these multilingual children. Their “[mother tongue](#)” was translanguaging: a seamless, urban mesh of English and isiXhosa variously referred to as ‘isigingqi’ (language of the local area), ‘tsotsitaal’ (gangster’s language), ‘Capetonian Xhosa’, and ‘ekasi Xhosa’ (isiXhosa of the township).

Speaking at the HSRC’s [Context and language practices that work](#) seminar in April, Tyler said that the assumption of languages as silos that are not – and should not – be mixed is a Western ideology that does not reflect how people actually use language in thought and speech, and that may be limiting learning in South African schools.

A third space

To explore the possible learning benefits of multilingualism at a school in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, Tyler set up a “third space” outside the classroom where kids were encouraged to engage with schoolwork (taught in English) using whatever linguistic tools they had at their disposal – a practice known as translanguaging. The study by Tyler and her colleague, Associate Professor Carolyn McKinney of the University of Cape Town’s School of Education, was published in 2018 in the journal [Language and Education](#).

Pupils in Tyler’s intervention group were given learning materials in isiXhosa and asked to translate them into English. When they commented that the isiXhosa texts were written



in a formal version of the language, or “deep Xhosa”, that was foreign to them, she encouraged them to translate the concepts into their everyday speech. Through this process, the pupils arrived at more nuanced understandings and more confidently identified as knowledge holders when debating meanings in their own vernacular.

“That they cannot be said to be speaking ‘English’ nor ‘isiXhosa’; neither ‘pure Science’, nor ‘pure everyday language’ urges us to look beyond the debates around ‘mother tongue’ or English-only language policies in schools and to examine what it is that students of Science are doing with language,” McKinney and Tyler write.

Debating meanings of subject-specific English words in their everyday speech allowed Thandile, Yonela and their classmates to engage critically with the material, and also with both languages. Although the impact of the two approaches was not quantified, Tyler said that kids in the English-only classroom displayed surface-level understanding, whereas the meanings arrived at in the study group were more flexible, reflecting deeper conceptual understanding. The results reflected those of a similar study, published in 2017 in the [International Journal of Scientific Education](#), exploring the use of translanguaging in a science classroom in Sweden.

A mental juggle

Tyler’s case study challenges the common view of languages, and particularly South African indigenous languages, as bounded objects that exist separately in the minds of people who speak them. Indeed, recent studies suggest that even when bilinguals converse or read in one language, both languages [remain active](#), pointing to an impressive feat of mental juggling.

South Africa’s 1997 Language in Education Policy allows for any official language to be used as a medium of instruction throughout schooling. However, Tyler said, the underlying assumption is that from grade 4 onwards, children will be taught in English. This is despite only having

2-3 hours of English tuition a week for the first three years of school.

Because language was used as a barrier to quality education during Apartheid, for many, English-medium instruction today symbolises educational equality. In reality, however, English-only instruction serves to perpetuate inequality, disadvantaging the majority of South African children.

Teachers often prohibit children from switching between languages, or “code-switching”, to speed up English learning. While translanguaging is a relatively new field of study, a large body of research supports traditional bilingual education programmes, suggesting that enforcing second-language-only instruction in fact truncates conceptual and linguistic understanding.

Summarising 30 years’ worth of longitudinal studies (1985 to 2017) of bilingual education programmes in the United States, Dr Virginia Collier and Dr Wayne Thomas of George Mason University write, “English-only and transitional bilingual programmes of short duration only close about half of the achievement gap between English learners and native English speakers, while high quality long-term bilingual programmes close all of the gap after 5-6 years of schooling.”

Identity

In South Africa, the lower status afforded to home languages may undermine the child’s sense of cultural identity as well as their academic confidence. In some instances, teachers’ own limited English further constrains critical engagement. As part of a larger study on mother-tongue education, Prof Vuyokazi Nomlomo, dean of language education at the University of the Western Cape, found that children taught in isiXhosa, with English as a second language, [performed better](#) in science and expressed themselves more creatively. The children also showed greater self-esteem and expressed greater confidence in their use of English.

In the general schooling system, Nomlomo argues that the total switch

to English amounts to [subtractive bilingualism](#), where the net impact is often neither proficiency in English, nor development or even full retention of the child’s first language.

Unable to use their linguistic resources to grapple with new concepts, many pupils simply disengage – and are thereby deprived not only of academic markers of success but also the full stimulation of the classroom environment.

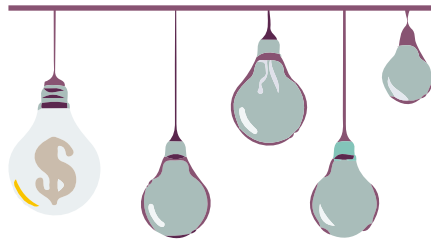
Speaking at a follow-on [seminar](#), HSRC CEO Crain Soudien argued that the forced switch to English during developmental years might comprise a distinct neurological event, with long-term consequences for learners’ development. “We hypothesise that the switch induces a moment of cognitive crisis.”

As the recent student protests highlight, inequality of language carries through to tertiary education. A [2017 study](#) evaluating a translanguaging module at the University of Cape Town found that the overall response was mostly positive. The authors write: “students found their languages valued and legitimised within the academic space; they were no longer silenced or considered inferior.” They note that those who benefited were the most disadvantaged.

Tyler conceded that a model that creatively embraces translanguaging, and allows for it in a testing environment, will require financial resources.

However, she said, the inability to challenge English as the lingua franca reflects Anglo-normativity, the deeply ingrained ideology that expects that people should be able to speak English, implying that those who cannot are somehow deficient. English-only learning and assessment conventions in South African schools are optimal for only a tiny fraction of students. In the long run, this is surely far more costly.

Contact: Dr Robyn Tyler, Centre for Multilingualism and Diversities Research, University of the Western Cape
robynlytler@gmail.com



WHY SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER TAXING ITS WEALTHY CITIZENS



Prof Ingrid Woolard

Wealth inequality in South Africa is intolerably high and not reducing. Is there a role for wealth taxation to reduce this inequality? Prof Ingrid Woolard asks this in an edited extract from a chapter in *Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses*, which she co-wrote with Samson Mbebe and Dennis Davis.

It's well-established that South Africa has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. Despite significant efforts by the State to stimulate inclusive growth, the income gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen in post-apartheid South Africa.

A less explored topic is that of wealth inequality and, relatedly, the potential use of wealth taxation to reduce wealth inequality while also further diversifying the sources of much-needed government revenue.

An important consequence of a highly unequal distribution of wealth in society is the undermining of social, political and economic norms. For instance, high wealth inequality creates an imbalance of political power between citizens as the wealthy can potentially influence the political process unfairly. This can, in turn, reduce the optimum workings of a democracy.

At the same time, the concentration of a society's wealth in the hands of a few reduces

the mobility of wealth. This, in turn, limits its productive use in society.

Given that there are direct benefits from the holding of wealth (over and above the income streams which it generates and which are already taxed via the income tax system), we argue that wealth is a legitimate tax base in its own right.

Why a wealth tax

Wealth inequality in South Africa is not only intolerably high, with Gini coefficients of 0.93 in 2010/11 and 0.94 in 2014/15, it is also not reducing. Wealth inequality is much higher than income inequality (which has a Gini coefficient of about 0.67) and significantly higher than global wealth inequality.

In 2015, the wealthiest 10% of South Africa's population owned more than 90% of the total wealth in the country while 80% owned almost no wealth. These findings resonate with more recent findings documented in reports produced by Oxfam (2018) and the World Bank (2018).

There's a clear racial dimension to this inequality with an average African household holding less than 4% of the wealth held by an average white household.

It's a challenge to economic development when the bottom 80% of the population own no wealth, especially when a vibrant middle-class is a key ingredient in economic progression, as evidenced in advanced economies.

Thomas Piketty in his book *Capital in the 21st Century* [indicates](#) that much of the economic success experienced in advanced economies in the 20th century has been as a result of increased ownership of assets among the middle-class. This is certainly not the case in South Africa.

Piketty also stresses that wealth inequality is by no means an accident but a product of patrimonial capitalism.

The case of South Africa is unique. In addition to patrimonial capitalism, the prevailing extreme levels of wealth inequality and low intergenerational mobility of wealth are also a result of the structural inequities created by apartheid. These disparities are being passed down from generation to generation.

Evidently, effective measures of redress would strongly warrant the intervention of the state.

We therefore propose that the South African government consider creating an annual net wealth tax with three objectives. The first would be to collect reliable wealth data. This will reveal what people own and enhance the integrity of the income tax system by allowing SARS to compare people's income and wealth. The second would be to contribute towards curbing wealth inequality, albeit imperfectly. The third would be to generate government revenue, though we stress that international evidence suggests this is generally low.

The how

The process of creating a net wealth tax in South Africa should ideally begin with a simple form of an annual net wealth tax. We would suggest that the net wealth tax rate should initially be at a low rate (possibly even zero).

This will allow an assessment of who owns what by making wealth disclosure mandatory for all citizens. This will create an environment of transparency and over time will provide a much clearer picture of the net wealth tax base in South Africa. It would also allow further analysis to help set an effective wealth tax rate that does not promote tax migration and capital flight.

If a non-zero wealth tax rate were to be applied, it should be progressive in nature, for example, by providing a high threshold below which no tax is payable. In turn, this data would provide the South African Revenue Service with improved data to test whether high-net-worth individuals are being taxed correctly within the income tax system.

The valuation of assets has often ranked high among the list of challenges when creating an effective net wealth tax that keeps costs low. In fact, net wealth taxes have been ineffective in many countries. This has been due to poor or

complex methods of valuation, or simply the high costs of administration.

Assets which lend themselves to easy valuation and which could be taxed under a net wealth tax include fixed property. This is already taxed at local government level but could attract an additional national tax. The OECD also supports the idea of taxing property because taxing property has less distortionary effects when compared to other wealth taxes.

Municipal valuations (albeit of varying quality) already exist to provide a good starting point for a national property tax. A national property tax would require a concerted effort to improve the quality of valuation rolls across all municipalities and district councils to avoid the horizontal equity legal challenges seen in other countries (as was the case in Germany).

Cash and some financial assets such as defined contribution retirement funds are easy to value and are thus an easy target for a wealth tax. We would suggest, however, that in an initial net wealth tax, retirement funds should be excluded because of possible distortionary pressures on savings. Currently, the retirement of many South Africans is severely underfunded. In addition, it would be inequitable to tax defined-contribution pension funds but not defined-benefit funds (such as the Government Employees Pension Fund).

We would also suggest that personal assets such as luxury vehicles, works of art and jewellery be excluded because of valuation difficulties. Worldwide, such assets are under-reported, undervalued and/or hidden.

Conclusion

It's evident that economic inequality is rife in South Africa. Income and consumption inequalities are high and wealth inequality is even higher – much higher than global wealth inequality. Persistent high wealth inequality has the potential to undermine social, economic and democratic values.

A net wealth tax imposed in a society with notorious levels of inequality and a pattern of class overlaid with race may not be a panacea for the need to generate sufficient revenue to reduce the deficit before borrowing. However, apart from the revenue collected, it would add considerable legitimacy to the overall tax system. Such a tax policy should accommodate a revenue-neutral shift from taxes on employment to taxes on capital and investment income.

It is not our argument that tax is the only available instrument to address the inequities of income and wealth. Other methods of redress include land reform, the provision of infrastructure and increased access to quality health and education.

Note: This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) and is based on a chapter in [Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses](#), published by the HSRC. Prof Ingrid Woolard, dean of Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, summarises the chapter that she co-wrote with Samson Mbewe and Dennis Davis.

NOT THE FULL PICTURE: Rethinking innovation measurement in South Africa

A key challenge for researchers and policymakers in South Africa is to find suitable ways to capture and measure innovation activities, including in the informal sector. A policy [seminar](#) held in Sweetwaters, a semi-rural area in KwaZulu-Natal on 27 March 2019, highlighted the complexity of responding to this challenge. *Dr Il-haam Petersen* reports.

The [2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation \(STI\)](#) places renewed emphasis on promoting innovation for, by and with marginalised groups, to enable inclusive development.

Critically, it prioritises the needs of those who have been traditionally marginalised from the formal national system of innovation, the formal economy and the decision-making processes.

At the Sweetwaters seminar, delegates discussed the suitability of traditional approaches and methods for understanding, measuring and promoting innovation that enables inclusiveness and transformative change.

It starts with policy

Nonhlanhla Mkhize, who directs the Innovation for Inclusive Development unit at the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), said that reviews of STI policy in South Africa raised concerns about whether policy was geared towards making a desired impact, considering the key developmental concerns in the country.

Mkhize pointed to important ways in which the new White Paper on STI aims to address this concern, such as promoting innovative service delivery and grassroots innovation.

One of the challenges is to find ways to assess progress towards enabling access to, and participation in, the system of innovation.

Addressing complex social challenges, including inequalities in access to basic services and high levels of unemployment, requires change that is transformative and systemic.

Prof Alejandra Boni of the Polytechnic University of Valencia in Spain described an emerging approach to transformative innovation policy, which promotes a formative monitoring and evaluation framework that places greater emphasis on the participation of a wider range of stakeholders, particularly the intended beneficiaries of STI interventions, from the start.

Such a framework foregrounds process, reflexivity, learning, participation and “fine-grained contextual narratives”, she said.

Boni is a member of an international consortium, the Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium, which is led by the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom in collaboration with other partners including the DSI and universities in South Africa.

In response to the need for new and more appropriate sets of innovation indicators and measures, the HSRC’s [Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators \(CeSTII\)](#) is working with the DSI to develop indicators and measures that are appropriate in a South African context, incorporating human development and economic growth, said Dr Glenda Kruss, the head of CeSTII.

These will complement the current key indicators that are based on global standardised measures by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which focus on measuring South Africa’s research and development investment and innovation in the formal sector.

A key purpose of this work is to develop a network of researchers and practitioners to contribute towards



Researchers interviewing a shopkeeper at Sweetwaters as part of CeSTII's baseline survey of innovation in the informal sector
Photo: Antonio Erasmus

building a sound evidence base, said Kruss.

New measures and indicators

One of CeSTII's new projects focuses on understanding and measuring innovation in the informal sector, particularly how we can promote innovation that facilitates learning and upgrading by informal businesses. CeSTII is currently conducting a baseline survey on innovation in the informal sector in Sweetwaters.

Producing indicators on the formal sector alone misses a lot, said Dr Nazeem Mustapha who leads the project.

Reflecting on his experience in researching economic activities in townships, Anthony Muteti of the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation explained that businesses unique to townships such as 'spaza shops' and 'shisanyamas' – a township word meaning to braai or cook meat over an open fire – reflect the history of townships, are part of the social fabric, and contribute to the livelihoods of millions in South Africa.

The foundation, through several years of experience in studying townships across the country, has pioneered the 'small area census' approach, a mixed-methods participatory methodology for producing comprehensive and robust data on business activities in township areas.

The research is conducted in a small and defined geographical area and in collaboration with the community, but it is not low-tech or lacking in rigour.

Muteti explained how the foundation's research has changed over the years, moving from fieldworkers carrying loads of paper questionnaires and pens, to collecting data through tablet technology and GPS devices. This digitalised data collection improves accuracy and allows for innovative spatial mapping that can be combined with the survey and qualitative data to show the complexity and dynamism of township economies.

Informal businesses play a significant role in socio-economic development in South Africa. Mhlengi Ngubane,

of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, explained that since 2010, the attitude of local government towards the informal sector has changed and local municipalities have begun to introduce initiatives such as an informal economy chamber and e-licensing to help "graduate businesses to become formal".

At this stage, the initiatives are experimental and will need to be evaluated.

"It is not easy to measure innovation in the formal sector, and it is even more difficult in the informal sector," Mustapha said.

CeSTII has collaborated with the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation in experimenting with digital storytelling as a novel method in the measurement space. The aim is to build a database of innovative informal businesses all over the country and record some of their stories.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF INNOVATION MEASUREMENT

How suitable are our research tools, measures and indicators for promoting innovation that is inclusive and transformative?

How can we develop innovation indicators and measures that are appropriate for addressing key social challenges, are inclusive, and are grounded in the lived realities of South Africans?

How do we capture and measure innovation in such a complex and dynamic local setting?

Links to the YouTube videos of the seminar:

[Participatory innovation CESTII](#)
[New digital technologies](#)

Author: Dr Il-haam Petersen is a senior research specialist at the HSRC's CeSTII and leader of a National Research Foundation-funded project investigating the capabilities of universities and science councils to generate useful knowledge and the capabilities in communities to use formal knowledge to improve their living conditions.

ipetersen@hsrc.ac.za

CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH TRAUMATISED POPULATIONS: THE COST OF BEARING WITNESS



Research on the impact of conducting qualitative research with traumatised populations is rare. In this article, *Dr Cyril Adonis* reflects on the challenges he encountered and the lessons he learnt from researching intergenerational trauma among families that suffered gross human-rights violations under apartheid.

Being exposed to a disturbing first-hand account of someone else's trauma can lead to secondary trauma, typically experienced by witnesses such as therapists and journalists. However, research on this phenomenon among researchers, especially those conducting qualitative research with traumatised populations, is rare. This is despite the fact that emotional and psychological engagement is an integral part of qualitative research. Furthermore, researchers have found that institutional ethics policies or research training programmes may not provide sufficient guidance on how to deal with the emotional and psychological challenges encountered when doing this type of work.

I encountered these challenges throughout my research career, but particularly when I conducted research for my doctoral dissertation. It focused on intergenerational trauma among adult descendants of black South Africans who had suffered gross human-rights violations under apartheid. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) defined gross human-rights violations as killings, abductions, torture, and severe ill-treatment of any person. In this article, I share some of the lessons I learnt that have enabled me to sustain my scholarly engagement with the field of intergenerational trauma. I believe that these could be instructive, especially to early-career researchers, so that they are better able to navigate the emotional and psychological minefield that is inherent in conducting research with trauma content.

Guilt

Research suggests that feelings of guilt and privilege invariably become part of the research process, notwithstanding the fact that ethical requirements had been met. This is especially so when the researcher identifies with the group being studied. Feelings of guilt and privilege often lead to a corresponding sense of obligation. A number of factors exacerbated my own feeling of guilt as I engaged with my participants and their families. One was research fatigue, when individuals or groups tire of engaging in research, resisting further participation. A gatekeeper that facilitated my access to participants made the following comment:

"The problem is that you guys come and you go, and we stay behind and nothing has changed for us. We have many people coming from overseas wanting to do research with our members on the same issue. You take our stories, write your books, and then it's finished. We understand that research is important, but people want to see things happen that will change their lives for the better."

Many participants had participated in prior TRC-related research, much of which did not bring them any material benefits or changes in their living conditions. I asked them to participate in yet another research project when they had more pressing concerns, also expecting them to recount extremely painful and horrific experiences. One participant's older brother had disappeared, along with nine fellow student activists aged 15 to 19 years, in 1986. Six former policemen applied for amnesty at the TRC in connection with their abduction and killing. Speaking about TRC hearing, he said:

"I didn't go there (to the TRC), I couldn't. My mother just went there. I saw on TV that my mother was in pain, too much pain. It makes me feel bad, very, very bad. She always asked: 'where is he? Where is he?' It affected me a lot emotionally."

Based on the policemen's testimony, the National Prosecuting Authority's Missing Persons Task Team was able to exhume the remains of nine of the youths, including the participant's brother, in 2005. Delays in the forensic identification process, however, meant that the remains could only be handed over to the families in 2008, after which the youths were buried in a mass grave.

My acute awareness that I would likely become what anthropologist, Sofia A. Villenas refers to as a "tourist to their troubles," was often unbearable. I would finish my degree, make use of the material and other benefits that a doctoral degree offers, while their existential realities would likely remain unchanged. That I was going to be getting without giving and essentially being exploitative, compounded my feelings of guilt.

Emotional distress

Often, the emotionally disturbing events become embedded in a researcher's consciousness. I directly engaged with the participants' traumatic experiences through heart-wrenching interviews, reliving these through engaging with fieldwork notes, and repeatedly listening to their stories during the transcription of recorded interviews. My emotional reactions oscillated between anger,

depression and sadness. At times, the intensity of these emotions had a debilitating effect on me. The following entry is from my fieldwork notes:

"The emotions I experienced today were overwhelming and frightening. Intense anger, even vengeful ideation; what if this changes me? Why should we promote forgiveness in a world that is at best indifferent to the suffering of others?"

Also emotionally taxing, was the overwhelming sense of helplessness that I experienced as a result of my inability to change the material conditions of people with whom I had developed close personal relationships. [Research](#) suggests that the work of the trauma researcher could potentially be more traumatising than that of the trauma clinician, like a psychologist or a social worker, because of an inability to help the victim. Feeling helpless is one of the defining features of secondary trauma, potentially eroding a researcher's enthusiasm and motivation. Indeed, I began to question the significance and impact of my work.

Loneliness and isolation

At times, I experienced intense feelings of loneliness and isolation. My community of practice was relatively small, and there was much scepticism around the salience of intergenerational trauma in post-apartheid South Africa. I was unable to share my experiences with family and friends, who failed to understand the personal impact my research had on me, and to appreciate how emotionally invested I had become in the well-being of my participants and their families. Inevitably, my research experience also altered my political and ideological outlook significantly. Rather than risking the sharing of my experiences being greeted with insensitivity or hostility, I limited my social interactions.

Dealing with the trauma

While the World Health Organization's Ethical and Safety Recommendations, and the Social Research Association's Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers provide guidance for the physical safety of researchers,

they give relatively little attention to the emotional impact that conducting research could have on researchers.

Over the years, I have learnt valuable lessons that have enabled me to deal with the challenges I encountered in my research. I now realise the importance of harnessing, rather than dismissing these seemingly negative emotions, such that I am able to draw conclusions that are bound to produce more meaningful scholarship. In this regard, the importance of preparation, particularly within the context of research with trauma-exposed populations, cannot be overstated.

A good starting point is to become familiar with the available literature on the impact that conducting trauma research can have on researchers. Part of preparation is also about being realistic about what one can achieve and in what timeframes. Doctoral students, in particular, generally want to complete their degrees in the shortest possible time. However, the emotionally laden nature of trauma research could become overwhelming. This requires one to occasionally step back and properly process one's experiences so that one can re-energise and recommit.

I found becoming comfortable with loneliness and isolation to be an important coping mechanism. Drawing on the guidance, support and experiences of research supervisors and colleagues could offset the negative impact of isolation. Furthermore, embracing rather than resisting vulnerability and emotionality can enable you to strengthen your resolve and become an advocate for social justice. In contrast to relying on the support of family, friends and colleagues, debriefing provides a more professional outlet to deal with the distressing aspects of trauma research.

Author: Dr Cyril Adonis, a research specialist in the HSRC's Research Use and Impact Assessment programme
cadonis@hsrc.ac.za

Lessons and legacies: HOW THE EARLY YEARS OF THE HSRC AND THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA SHAPED THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African social scientists Dr Ernst Malherbe and Prof Geoff Cronjé were both, ostensibly, committed to the scientific method and the pursuit of truth. Yet the thread of their work was coloured by Afrikaner nationalism, and Cronjé ultimately arrived at a belief in the defensibility of total apartheid. Speaking at the 2019 Annual ASSAf Humanities Lecture, HSRC CEO Prof Crain Soudien charted the beginnings of social science research in South Africa, acknowledging that the University of Pretoria and the predecessor organisations of the HSRC were “messy places” with complex legacies. By *Andrea Teagle*.

Prof Himla Soodyall, executive officer of the Academy of Science of South Africa presenting Prof Crain Soudien with a gift at the 2019 Annual ASSAf Humanities Lecture in Pretoria
Photo: Antonio Erasmus



Prof Geoff Cronjé, a sociology professor at the University of Pretoria, who pleaded for the establishment of a council for human sciences research in the 1960s. But he also believed that people of different races had to be separated in all walks of life.

Photo: Mens en Gemeenskap, 1969



Ninety years ago, Dr Ernst Gideon Malherbe headed the National Bureau of Education, which contributed to the educational research leg of Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South Africa (1928 – 1932).

Photo: HSRC

At a recent event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the University of Pretoria (UP), the 90th anniversary of the HSRC’s forerunner, the National Bureau of Education (1929), and the 50th anniversary of the HSRC, the HSRC’s CEO Prof Crain Soudien argued that the formative years of the two parallel institutions were critical to understanding the social sciences in South Africa today. Key figures during this 50-year period (1920s -1970s), were Dr Ernst Malherbe, who headed the National Bureau of Education, and Prof Geoff Cronjé, a sociology professor at UP.

One of the enduring contributions of Malherbe and Cronjé to the South African policy landscape is the idea of evidence-based research, Soudien said. Perhaps another contribution is the reminder that, as much as they might believe themselves objective, researchers bring their own worldviews, biases and blindspots to their work.

The lecture took place at the [Future Africa campus](#) of the University of Pretoria, which emphatically embraces a transdisciplinary approach to specifically local problems, casting the net wider for different voices and sources of knowledge. The more people wielding science’s tools, the less likely the resultant knowledge will be fashioned by prejudice.

Problems require complex approaches

“The idea here is to create a platform and an infrastructure and a space where people come together to co-create knowledge,” UP Vice-Chancellor Prof Tawana Kupe said at the event. “Problems do not come packaged in disciplines...They come as complex as you like, and they require complex approaches.”

A century ago, however, approaching social problems through scientific research was itself a new idea in South Africa. In the late 1920s, Soudien said, a young, USA-educated Malherbe made the argument that the policy-making process in South Africa was deeply flawed, suffering from a lack of “genuine science”. In response to his plea for the establishment of research institutes, the minister of education, DF Malan set up the National Bureau of Education in 1929.

At the helm of the bureau, Malherbe was responsible for ushering in the scientific methodology of [positivism](#), the view that human behaviour was subject to the same laws of cause and effect as natural science. Critically, Soudien argued, this positivism was able to hide within it and obscure the ideology of race.

“Positivism arrived in South Africa as it was grappling with the

question of building a nation after the establishment of the [Union](#) [of South Africa in 1910].” The Afrikaner leadership was concerned with the creation and preservation of white, and particularly Afrikaner identity. This preoccupation would direct the nascent social sciences field for the coming decades. As is often the case, the question of identity was framed in relation to “the other”.

“Framing the question was at one level a struggle about Englishness over a sense of what it meant to be Afrikaans and Afrikaner, and, at another level, about the relationship of white people with black people,” Soudien said.

Setting a discursive agenda

One of the bureau’s most important research activities was contributing to the educational research which formed part of a country-wide survey among poor whites, financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (1928 – 1932).

The Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South Africa, set the tone for the social sciences to feed directly into policy making; what might once have been the moral turf of the church was now the practical question of social scientists. The report concluded that white poverty, “in the midst of

the native population," could be explained by psychological, sociological, educational and health factors. "Malherbe helped to set the discursive agenda for sociology, psychology, philosophy, criminology, anthropology and a whole range of disciplines and fields of study"

In 1934, the bureau was renamed the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research and Malherbe was appointed as its first director. It received more funding from the government and the Carnegie Corporation and focused on national educational and social problems. It helped organise conferences, compiled statistics on education and child welfare and established a division for psychological research that worked on the standardisation of individual and group intelligence testing and the application thereof on all population groups.

During the latter part of the 50-year period, Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals became increasingly politically influential. A central figure in these circles was Prof Geoff Cronjé, Chair of Sociology at the University of Pretoria from 1936. According to Soudien, "as an interlocutor, he was absolutely formidable... He took the detached 'facts' of Malherbe and vested them with a soul that his political peers were yearning for"

Having been a [postgraduate student](#) in 1930s Germany, Cronjé was concerned with maintaining the purity of the white race, and was later to oversee the blueprint for state [censorship](#) to guard against moral degeneration and 'undesirable influences' on white culture.

Expounding theories on racial disparities

As Prof Ivan Evans, a sociology lecturer at Eleanor Roosevelt College, [writes](#), Cronjé maintained that the only way to spare South Africa from "miscegenation and racial conflict" was complete separation in all walks of life. This "solution" set Afrikaners up as the guardians of black people. While the Carnegie Commission pointed to environmental factors to explain "poor whiteism," [Cronjé presented](#) racial disparities in intelligence test scores as proof of innate white superiority.

Cronjé's racial arguments, which distilled some essential theories of apartheid, were, [according to historian Saul Dubow](#), "highly derivative, and his style is direct and crude". However, the supposed "neutrality" of science then, as

now, was a particularly powerful tool in the hands of those who wielded it.

"Controversially, seen from the present, [Cronjé] could lay claim to being the HSRC's progenitor," Soudien said, referencing the archival work of the HSRC's Astrid Schwenke. "In 1968, the HSRC was established for the purpose of doing social science research in the national interest."

Growing resistance and academic rigour


Even at a time when the HSRC was most intermeshed with the state, Soudien noted, there were some academics who "resisted being hand-maidens to the apartheid state," and whose commitment to academic rigour stood in opposition to racial ideology. This opposition gradually grew, reaching an historical climax with the 1985 release of the HSRC's report into intergroup relations. The report, which sparked news articles across the country, concluded that racial ordering under the apartheid state had reached an impasse and warned of "catastrophic consequences" in the event of a delay in addressing the issue.

The influence of positivism, stripped of racial ideology, still informs South Africa's research environment. Commenting on the continuity of thought in academic spaces, an audience member at the event said, "As black individuals, we need to think about the fact that we haven't really established a new understanding of ourselves – a new way of thinking." Her point illustrated the importance of understanding even painful history in order to illuminate current ways of doing things that perhaps seem inevitable or natural, but which may not be.

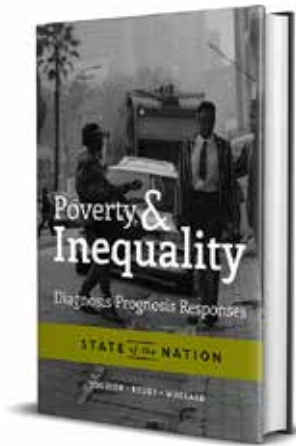
Today, as then, we need as many voices as possible to critically engage and interrogate the viewpoints that today may seem inarguable and tomorrow indefensible, and, as envisioned in Future Africa, imagine new methods of solving enduring problems.

Further reading

The books, Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa by [Ivan Thomas Evans](#); and Intellectual Traditions in South Africa: Ideas, Individuals and Institutions by [Peter CJ Vale](#), [Lawrence Hamilton](#) and [Estelle H Prinsloo](#)



In the early years, the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research was located at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.
Photo: HSRC



Price **R295,00**

Poverty and Inequality

Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses

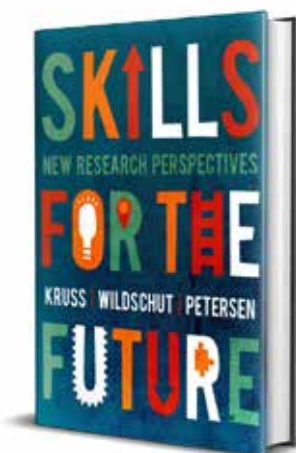
Volume editors:	Crain Soudien, Vasu Reddy and Ingrid Woolard
Pub month and year:	March 2018
ISBN soft cover:	978-0-7969-2442-1
ISBN (pdf):	978-0-7969-2435-3
Format:	240 mm x 168 mm
Extent:	352

About the book

While the world has seen a decline in absolute poverty, it has also seen a simultaneous rise in economic inequality. This is the case in all of the major economies as well as in emerging ones, including South Africa.

Is there a South African explanation of poverty and inequality that is distinctive and different from that which would be used in other contexts and countries? What are the familiar constants that characterise the interdependence of this ubiquitous pairing? How can the discussion on poverty and inequality be taken forward? Is wealth taxation a viable instrument to reduce wealth inequality in South Africa?

In *Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses*, the authors explore these and many other gritty questions as they analyse the complexity of poverty and inequality beyond an over-determination of these concepts by the economic or the wealth index in South Africa.



Price **R195,00**

Skills for the future

New research perspectives

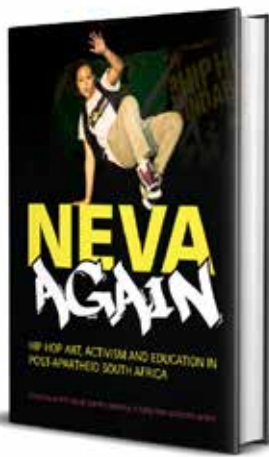
Volume editors:	Glenda Kruss, Angelique Wildschut and Il-haam Petersen
Pub month and year:	March 2019
ISBN soft cover:	978-0-7969-2436-0
ISBN (PDF):	978-0-7969-2573-2
Format:	240 mm x 168 mm
Extent:	184

About the book

How do actors in the educational field respond to the changing skills demands of the future? Research teams from the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) undertook a set of experimental and innovative case studies to improve understanding of how current research intersects with a rapidly changing future. The chapters in *Skills for the Future: New Research Perspectives* are based on this research. The book provides fresh evidence of the changing face of work in different sectors in South Africa, how this change reflects shifting global patterns, how it has an impact on the skills required by new forms of occupation and profession, and how it affects on post-school education and training institutions.

'*Skills for the Future: New Research Perspectives* presents innovative research that makes a contribution to knowledge in an important and poorly understood area. The main thread that runs through the book is the movement from macro to meso and micro levels, and what this can reveal to identify targeted incentive mechanisms and interventions that may be significant for wider use in the post-school education and training sub-system.'

– Professor Stephanie Allais, director of the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL), School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand



Price **R320,00**

Neva Again

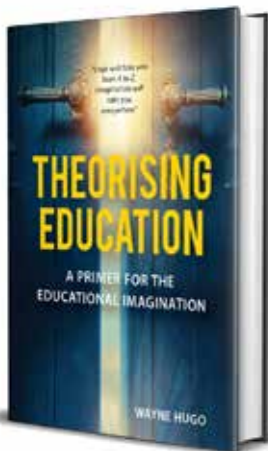
Hip Hop Art, Activism and Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Edited by:	Adam Haupt, Quentin Williams, H Samy Alim and Emile Jansen
Pub month and year:	May 2019
ISBN soft cover:	978-0-7969-2445-2
Format:	248 mm x 184 mm
Extent:	545

About the book

Neva Again: Hip Hop Art, Activism and Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa is the culmination of decades of work on hip hop culture and hip hop activism in South Africa. It explores the emergence and development of a unique style of hip hop activism in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape of South Africa.

Neva Again draws on the contributions of hip hop scholars, artists and activists. Weaving together the varied and rich voices of South Africa's dynamic hip hop scene, it presents a powerful vision of the potential of youth art, culture, music, language and identities to shape our politics and understand our world.



Price **R195,00**

Theorising Education

A primer for the educational imagination

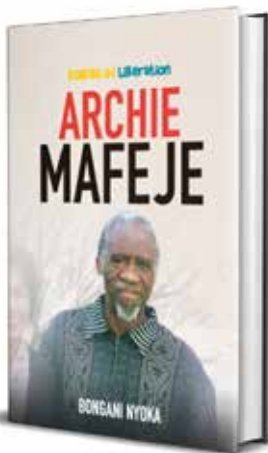
Author:	Wayne Hugo
Pub month and year:	March 2019
ISBN soft cover:	978-0-7969-2468-1
Format:	240 mm x 168 mm
Extent:	224

About the book

Theorising Education is a step-by-step approach to learning how to theorise. The author sets out five theoretical tools for the educational imagination:

- how to break down an educational situation into separate variables and then work with how these variables can be usefully combined;
- how to think about different ethical principles and conscientiously regulate how and why we educate the way we do;
- how to actively track the process of conceptual integration that is at the heart of pedagogy;
- how to theorise levels in education; and
- how to work with change in education.

The first book of its kind, *Theorising Education: A Primer for the Educational Imagination* is an essential guide for education researchers, academics and postgraduate students who want to analyse curriculum and pedagogy in an active, imaginative and systematic way.



Price **R280,00**

Voices of Liberation: Archie Mafeje

Edited by:	Bongani Nyoka
Pub month and year:	March 2019
ISBN soft cover:	978-0-7969-2564-0
Format:	210 mm x 148 mm
Extent:	288

About the book

Archie Mafeje's scholarship can be categorised into three broad areas: a critique of epistemological and methodological issues in the social sciences; the land and agrarian question in sub-Saharan Africa; and revolutionary theory and politics including questions of development and democracy. Noted for his brilliant intellect, academic prowess, incomparable wit and unfailing commitment to the liberation of his nation and greater Africa, Mafeje was hailed as a 'giant', not only in the intellectual sense but as a human being.

Voices of Liberation: Archie Mafeje locates Mafeje and his work within the broader African intellectual and political environments. It explores Mafeje's intellectual and political influences, contextualises his major writings and reflects on his lasting intellectual legacy.

As the first comprehensive engagement with the entire body of Mafeje's scholarship, this book is a unique contribution to South Africa's social history and biographical studies.