ALTERNATION

Multi-lateral Geopolitical and Decolonial Epistemic Considerations

United Nations

Multilateralism, and by implication the commitment to a rules-based, just, and equitable international order, remains a focal point of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa was one of the original 51 founding members of the United Nations (UN), which came into existence on 24 October 1945.

Guest Editors
Johannes A. Smit, Anand Singh, Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa,
and *Denzil Chetty*

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*Alter*nation

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Southern Africa

ARTICLES

Russia, China & India through African Lenses

Decolonial Epistemic Considerations

❧ Contributors ❧

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Editorial: Multi-lateral Geopolitical and Decolonial Epistemic Considerations

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This issue of *Alter*nation is titled ***Multi-lateral Geopolitical and Decolonial Epistemic Considerations***. It opens a space for collaborative and regional, continental and international multi-lateral scholarship capacity development and knowledge generation. It brings together a few seminal scholarly contributions that each identifies some nodal points for further study and research.

The existing as well as potential epistemic scholarly capacity in South Africa, Africa and the African diaspora is immense, yet, unrecognised, untapped and not mobilised, activated nor organised. Due to their own intellectual and academic resources, universities need to provide leadership in global and local scholarly and research capacity development as well as multi-national relational connections with collaborating global regions and countries. Benefits should be mutual and multilateral, impacting growth, stability, and the responsible and enabling use of resources. Our current ever-increasing globally unstable world, has also become increasingly vulnerable to opportunism and populism as well as immoral and asocial and repressive technocracy. In the interests of the upscaling of knowledge and skills for self-governance, decolonised epistemic systems are the drivers for the discursive and empirical Africa-focused epistemicising of the wellbeing and prosperity of our people.

This volume's diverse yet interconnected set of scholarly contributions

study and interrogate the realities, focuses and opportunities for multi-lateral collaboration. Anchored in the intertwined realities of global geopolitics and local epistemologies, the issue foregrounds Africa not as a passive recipient of external influence but as a dynamic site of negotiation, resistance, and inno-vation. The collection is organised into two distinct but dialogically related sec-tions. The first, *Russia, China & India through African Lenses*, examines the strategic re-emergence of post-socialist and postcolonial powers on the African stage, critically analysing the economic, political, and ideological entangle-ments that define contemporary South - South relations. The second, *Decoloni-al Epistemic Considerations*, pivots toward inward reflection, engaging the urgent project of epistemic decolonisation and academic renewal within Afri-can institutions and communities. Together, these sections offer a rich discur-sive framework of perspectives that illuminate the complex ways in which Africa is both shaped by and shapes global and local orders in the 21ˢᵗ century.

As usual, we provide the edited abstracts of the volume for easy access to readers.

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Russia, China & India through African Lenses

The first four papers in this Special Issue of *Alter*nation are written as glimpses of the realities that are faced in the world.

The role of the economically and militarily powerful countries in 21ˢᵗ century Africa reflects the constantly shifting geopolitical interests. While Africa, like other continents of the world, served as a battleground between the ideological pursuits of the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), for nearly 45 years, it continued to remain marginalised while being simultaneously exploited for its natural resources. The USA used to be Africa's biggest direct foreign investor until 2014. By this year, American foreign direct investment reached a figure just under 70 billion US\$. In the years that followed up to 2021, it dropped more than 30 per cent to 47.5 billion US\$. Europe's most powerful economic country, Germany, invested barely 1 per cent of its total FDI abroad in Africa. Germany has chosen to invest in Asia and Eastern Europe, where the labour force is considered to be more stable and better trained than their African counterparts. Negative perceptions of HIV-AIDs and other infectious diseases also tend to play a role in investment decisions in Africa. This proportion of German FDI in Africa has remained stagnant for several decades. Other European economic suc-cesses, such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, have

investments in Africa that are barely four times more than Germany.

Against this background, post-socialist Russia, China, and India have taken up the challenges and opportunities to invest in Africa. Their rise in prominence in Africa is reshaping a new world order after the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea of a 'new world order', however, must not be seen as a radical shift from one order to another for a prolonged period that is likely to span over several centuries. The dynamics of power plays are often determined by creativity in technology and its use in the military, as well as economic dominance in the world. Hegemonic positions can change as swiftly as the liquidation of KODAK in its domination of photography worldwide.

Anand Singh's paper on **'Allegiance to which New World Order? 21st Century Engagement of China and India in Africa** is an interrogation of the concept of 'the new world order'. Retracing the concept from the early 20th century and its uses during this period, filtering into the 21st century, Singh argues that it is a testament to the ever-changing dynamics of power plays and the re-ordering of the pecking order from the most globally powerful economies, downwards. The rise of China, India, and Russia is an indication of the waning influence of the USA and its European counterparts. For its resources, Africa could very well return to its status as a 'testing ground' of the economically and militarily more powerful nations.

In his paper **'Sino - Africa Relations: Philia or Phobia?' Dev D. Tewari** engages existing discussions about Chinese economic interventionism in Africa and its impact on unemployment levels. Through analysis of published work and conversational outcomes, Tewari surveyed and analysed narratives and perceptions of rising Chinese influence in Africa. His analysis brought him to the conclusion that while Chinese investment in Africa has bridged numerous gaps in technological and infrastructural requirements, the use of imported Chinese labor and the export of African resources and manufactured goods somewhat annuls the good of Chinese investments in Africa. If their presence does not create jobs and their exports do not improve fundamentals, such as improved lifestyles and foreign reserves, they will lead to repercussions.

A more positive perspective is produced in the paper by **Kehinde Damilola Ilesanmi**, in his paper, **'Exploratory Study of the Trade Relation between India and South Africa: Opportunities and Challenges'**. Ilesanmi views the collaboration between the two countries as being complementary to each other, with promises of burgeoning possibilities in future collaboration. Their major constraints, however, are internal, constricted by infrastructural limitations. But the challenges are not difficult to overcome.

Kushboo Tewari, Moses O. Vincent, and Anand Singh's paper on

'Stigmatising against PLHIV and HIV Prevalence in South Africa: A Linear Discriminant and Spatio-Temporal Analysis' covers all the country's nine provinces. While the situation is restricted to one country, South Africa, its extensiveness is indicative of the perceptions that abound in the rest of the world about Africa and HIV/AIDS. Stigmatisation is the foundation for negative perceptions, especially about contagious diseases. Perceptions influence policies and attitudes, which directly impact areas such as FDI, tourism and cultural exchange programmes.

Each paper constitutes a glimpse into the post-COVID-19 world Order, but with the understanding that such a scenario is subject to rapid change.

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Decolonial Epistemic Considerations

This part provides focuses on elements of decolonial epistemics, related to the realities of inequality in South Africa, teacher education in comparative perspectives from South Africa and Sweden, the need for greater acknowledgement of the relevance and importance of African religion in society, a critical analytic focus on basic aspects of the prospering of human life and wellbeing, such as water availability and management, geo-political tensions, global peace and security, the African Diaspora and African development, glass artivism, and neoliberal governmentality and the knowledge worker. These were brought together in this volume together with the multi-lateral geopolitical studies, since they all together provide some foundational parameters for what a truly decolonial epistemics in the global South inter-linked and in interaction with the global realities of our times, might yet engage.

In **'The Controversial Impact of Coronavirus Lockdown Measures in the Context of an Unequal Society: A Decolonial Perspective',** **Magezi Elijah Baloyi** examines how COVID-19 disrupted the fragile momentum of decolonial transformation in South Africa, particularly within its education and information systems. Baloyi frames the pandemic as a socio-political tsunami. He argues that the lockdown measures imposed to contain the virus exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and stalled critical efforts to reverse colonial legacies. Drawing connections between the aftermath of the #FeesMustFall movement and the broader continental push for decolonisation, Baloyi critiques how externally imposed crisis responses often clash with indigenous trajectories of reform. Through a decolonial lens, he reveals how the pandemic not only threatened lives but also undermined the structural reconfigurations

needed to restore African agency, identity, and epistemic sovereignty.

One of the enduring challenges in teacher education is achieving a coherent integration between theoretical coursework and school-based practical experience. This often leads to a misalignment in student teachers' learning, where either theoretical or practical knowledge may be disproportionately emphasised to the detriment of the other. Moreover, the perspectives of teacher educators – who play a crucial role in guiding this integration – are not sufficiently understood in diverse educational contexts like South Africa and Sweden. In '**Navigating Educational Shifts: A Comparative Analysis of Teacher Education in South Africa and Sweden', Sarita Ramsaroop** and **Sandra Jederud** delve into the transformative trends that have shaped teacher education methodologies over the past two to three decades, focusing on the 'university/ research turn', 'accountability turn', and 'practice turn', These shifts advocate for extended immersion in classroom settings as a means to enhance teacher preparedness. The study offers insights that extend beyond the contexts of South Africa and Sweden by contributing to identifying best practices, systemic gaps, and to a more nuanced understanding of effective teacher education within diverse global contexts.

Alexander Paul Isiko's 'COVID-19, Religious Voices, and the Resurgence of Traditional Healing Practices in Uganda' critically examines the shifting role of religious institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the parallel revival of traditional healing practices. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including in-depth interviews and a broad online survey, Isiko explores how the authoritative voice of religious leaders, so prominent during the first wave of the pandemic, significantly waned during the second wave in Uganda. He argues that this decline in religious visibility and influence, while not directly causing the increased reliance on traditional remedies, contributed to a loss of public confidence in religious guidance, prompting many to seek solace in culturally rooted healing practices. His study highlights how the failure of Uganda's under-resourced healthcare system, combined with deep-seated socio-cultural beliefs, facilitated the resurgence of traditional herbal medicine as a trusted alternative. Ultimately, Isiko challenges long-standing theoretical assumptions about the centrality of religion during health crises, offering a nuanced account of how science, indigenous knowledge, and spiritual authority intersect and shift in times of public health uncertainty.

Siyabonga Khumalo's 'Community Perceptions and Strategies for Water Conservation in the Bhambayi Informal Settlement, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', assessed the perceptions of community members in the Bhambayi informal settlement regarding water conservation and issues

brought by water shortages in their locality. The study employed a case study design, an interpretivist paradigm, and inductive reasoning for data analysis. Ten participants were selected via purposive sampling for comprehensive interviews: five community leaders and five regular community members. Twelve community members engaged in two focus group discussions. The study demonstrated that infrastructure-oriented solutions, including the installation of in-yard taps equipped with water-saving devices, alongside traditional methods such as retrieving water from rivers and boreholes, as well as rainwater collection, might mitigate water scarcity in this community. The land issue is a significant obstacle for the government in constructing adequate housing and installing in-yard taps and toilets for community residents. The absence of community engagement in decision-making was perceived as an obstacle to water provision due to varying political affiliations among community members. This study advances understanding by exploring the efficacy of infrastructure-based and indigenous strategies for mitigating water shortages in the Bhambayi informal settlement, emphasising local viewpoints and systemic obstacles. The findings highlight the need for the government to adopt participatory operations, diversified strategies, and anti-corruption initiatives to guarantee equitable and sustainable access to water.

Globalization is another method of recolonizing African nations, including those that were previously excluded from the previous colonization and have now discovered a new frontier. This entails utilizing predatory tools like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and multinational corporations. To unify the world under one name, companies and other international financial entities of globalization under the United States of America's auspices offer services that in effect make countries dependent on them and also open to ideological coercion and positioning. Development requires full integration into the world system, which implies, in turn, accepting the terms of current macroeconomic policies as they were defined in 1989/ 1990, in the Washington Consensus. The world had changed. Capitalism had triumphed worldwide with the end of the Cold War. In **Geopolitical Tensions and Globalization: New Trends and Realities in Sub-Saharan Africa', Hlengiwe R. Phetha and Joram Ndlovu** examine geopolitics and globalization in the developing countries on whther they are or have not been left out of global world development. The central idea is that East Asia is seen as a model whereby developing countries opened their borders to find competitive niches and attract foreign capital, thereby triggering economic growth for the benefit of tier people. The paper also engages the impact of geopolitics on globalization around Africa. The paper

concludes that globalization underpins transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. It also explores some opportunities and gaps that can be harnessed to the benefit of these economies.

Anand Singh's 'A Critical Review of Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* **(1996)'**, primarily draws on his 1993 article, in *Foreign Affairs*. Its primary research question is: Is peace and security temporarily illusive or permanently fallacious? First providing an overview of Huntington's hypothesis, the article puts forward the argument that it appears that expectations for peace and security is indeed fallacious. This is supported with data drawn from empirical interview research with postgraduate respondents. It then analyses and evaluates the view in the context of a brief overview of aspects of some global wars, specifically peace and security matters in South Africa, the war between Israel and Palestine, and the dynamics of the religio-cultural tensions between Hindu and Islam followers in India. Similarly, it addresses two related complex dynamics in the Western world, e.g. the cultural stresses and strains within the context of the presence of Muslim migrants in Europe and Britain more specifically, and the matter of the supposed 'waning of confidence in 'democracy', in the western world, especially in the terms of the international Realpolitik of the recent historical and continuing global significance and relevance of the USA.

Life is a continuous struggle for survival in a world where humanity is unable to meet all her needs. The same is applicable to nations and continents. The African continent is in dire need of the further development of a number of international multi-lateral nexus already in existence. So, adopting a qualitative research methodology within a survey research design, **'The African Diaspora – Development Nexus: Issues and Implications for Africa'**, by **Odoziobodo Severus Ifeanyi and Nwaokoroeze Chinonye** explores the multifaceted transformative roles of Africans in the Diaspora in the socio-economic and technological development of the African continent. The paper creates a framework for understanding how leveraging the contributions of the Diasporas can transform Africa. However, the paper contends that as much as the importance of their contributions to the development of Africa cannot be overemphasized, most African governments have not adequately mobilized their citizens in the diaspora for their country's development. The paper therefore recommends that African leaders should create an enabling environment for the mobilization of the Diasporas for homeland development.

Despite high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, existing interventions often struggle due to social stigma, lack of sustained

funding, and insufficient community-level programmes to shift entrenched social norms. **'Glass Artivism: Protest, Upcycling, and the Art of Cutting through the Injustices of Gender-based Violence',** by **Kameshwaran Envernathan Govender**, **Tanya Pretorius,** and **Nalini Moodley,** explores how glass artivism can serve as a dual tool for public awareness and environmental sustainability. By focusing on upcycled glass art, this article employs an ecofeminist framework to analyse how the intersections of gender and environment can discursively challenge patriarchal dynamics and make silenced issues visible. Transforming waste through upcycling into artworks encourages transformative, critical thought about waste in relation to the thematic content of the art. Three case studies are presented: Saarah Begg's *From Waste to Worship* (2024), Caitlin Greenberg's *Echoes of Silence* (2023), and Abeer Al-Najjar's *Diaphanous* (2021; 2022). The findings demonstrate that these works leverage the mutable and symbolic qualities of glass to materialise suppressed truths and confront injustice.

In his **'Compulsive Work and Neoliberal 'governmentality': Benda Hofmeyr's *Foucault and Governmentality* – A Critical Review Essay',** Bert Olivier addresses Hofmeyr's fascinating and to many readers probably startling book, why so-called 'knowledge workers' work compulsively, even when circumstances are such that they have to pay attention to other activities, such as child-minding. In his view, Hofmeyr lists three reasons, namely the expectation on the part of employers that they be optimally productive (in exchange for working conditions that promote such productivity, including highly flexible working hours); the advanced technological means to work virtually anywhere (primarily constant access to the internet by means of various technical devices); and most importantly, the fact that they *desire* to work constantly. He situates her inquiry in the (neoliberal) 'Age of Control' – problematising this curious phenomenon, where knowledge workers (including researchers and academics) voluntarily supererogate to the point of exhausting themselves, sometimes to the point of 'burnout'. The review-essay concludes with, first, internal-textual, and then extrinsic-contextual critical perspectives on Hofmeyr's argument – that is, on what is *not* written there, which corresponds with the notion of the unconscious in psychoanalysis, and with the current, ongoing attempt at a global *coup d'etat* on the part of the so-called New World Order.

This volume on **Multi-lateral Geopolitical and Decolonial Epistemic Considerations,** covers a number of main themes. The editors wish to thank the authors for their formative contributions. The multi-lateral epistemic

development of scholarship in our global South countries are non-negotiable and need to be upscaled. The vision is to bring together scholars that critically study the realities and challenges but also the decolonial and decolonising caveats for our developing global epistemic networks. There are also many opportunities continuously emerging that we need to take on and develop, together with many scholars in South and southern Africa, our African continent as well as the Caribbean and global north. These need to be done in social and epistemic justice inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary as well as inter-, multi-, and trans-paradigm research.

In the the next volume of *Alter*nation this year's journal research focus is continued and expanded.

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Russia, China & India through African Lenses

Allegiance to which New World Order? 21st Century Engagement of China and India in Africa

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Abstract

This article is an interrogation of the concept of 'the new world order'. Retracing the concept from the early 20th century and its uses during this period, filtering into the 21st century, the paper argues that China and India's engagement with Africa, is a testament to the ever-changing dynamics of power plays and the re-ordering of the pecking order from the most globally powerful economies, downwards. The rise of China, India, and Russia are indications of the waning influence of the USA and its European counterparts. For its resources, Africa could very well return to its status of 'testing ground' of the economically and militarily more powerful nations.

Keywords: world order, power, Africa, China, India, 'testing ground'

Introduction

A common definition of the idea of a *'new world order'* dates back to more than a 100-years, when Woodrow Wilson, America's 28th President (1913 to 1921), spoke on 9 September 1919 at an election campaign at the University of Minnesota, Armory, Minneapolis. In neutral terms the concept refers to a new period of history evidencing dramatic change in world political thought

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and the balance of power in international relations. Despite varied interpretations of this idea of a *'new world order',* it is primarily associated with the ideological notion of world governance only in the sense of new collective efforts to identify, understand, or address global problems that go beyond the capacity of individual nation states to solve. The Latin phrase *novus ordo seclorum*, appearing on the reverse side of the Great Seal since 1782 and later on the back of the United States one-dollar bill since 1935, translates to *'New Order of the Age'* and alludes to the beginning of an era where the United States of America went through a four-year civil war (12 April 1861 to 9 April 1865) to become an independent nation-state. Perceptions and theories abounded after its introduction to the world, with conspiracy theorists having claimed that this was the USA's allusion to the *New World Order*, marking the beginning of American hegemony in the global economy. However, the mid-nineteenth century was too early to view the USA as a global hegemonic power, especially since inter-state acrimony forced the Americans to settle their internal problems before looking outwards. The concept was preceded by numerous synonyms before it consolidated, but more as rhetoric than as a concretised phenomenon amidst a world divided by two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century. A greater divide emerged after WWII between capitalist United States of America (USA) and socialist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as each competed for a following to create a world based upon their respective ideologies. In the USA numerous academics have viewed the 'New World Order' theory as a populist right-wing theory, amplifying their analyses against this rise through the prism of concepts such as 'survivalism', 'militarism', 'apocalypse' and millenarian scenario building (Camp 1997; Goldberg 2001; Fenster 2008).

Former American President Harry Truman's speeches (1945-1953: 33rd President) had phrases such as, *'better world order', 'peaceful world order', 'moral world order'* and *'world order based on law'* but not so much as the oft used contemporary notion of *'new world order'*. The two major World Wars fought in the first half of the twentieth century forced the world's most industrialised countries to recognise the need for a regulatory body that would act in preventative ways to control and end conflictual situations. Two years after World War I, the The *League of Nations* was introduced to the world. It ran from 10 January 1920 to 9 April 1946, setting itself off through a catch phrase that intended to legitimize its existence: *'the war to end all wars'*. Although Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the United States, from 1933 to 1945, and Truman may have been hesitant to use the phrase, commentators applied the term retroactively to the order put in place by the World War II

victors, the USA – who dominated through their leading roles in the creation of the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods Order as a 'new world order'. While the Bretton Woods Order negotiated a monetary system for independent states in 1944, the UN Charter was first discussed on 25 April 1945, had it adopted by 25 June 1945 and operationalised it by 24 October 1945 – within a period of six months. Its main aim was five-fold, to maintain: international peace and security; human rights; delivering humanitarian aid; engaging in sustainable development; and getting countries to recognise and respect international law and order. As the UN was being ushered in The League of Nations was being ushered out, finally closing its doors on 19 April 1946.

The post WWII era witnessed another type of non-military 'combat' through the Cold War between two super-powers: the USA and USSR. The differences were fierce but largely ideological: with the USA labelling itself as the 'leader of the free world' and the USSR presenting itself as the saviour of the world's majority working class: the proletariat. While the former promoted capitalism through individualism, the latter promoted collectivisation and communal ownership of productive resources, including land, machines, tools.

Into the Twenty-First Century

Since the 1980s political turmoil gave way to one of history's unprecedented ideological upsets – the demise of socialism and its failure to accomplish the communist order that it touted as its longer-term goal. While this brought an abrupt end to the Post World War II cliché of 'Cold War', it ushered in another disruptive force to the world. Labelled by Samuel Huntington (2011) as the *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order,* fundamentalist cum radical Islam set into motion what Huntington rightfully labeled as a cultural war dominated by the fight among the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Christian narratives replaced the cold-war era of capitalism against communism. The most widely discussed application of the 'new world order' phrase of recent times came at the end of the Cold War, beginning around 1991. The entire East European block of socialist states, those of the USSR, and in the Balkans folded almost simultaneously in favour of a radical shift away from Marxist ideology. Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev (USSR) and the senior George H.W. Bush (USA) used the term to try to redefine the nature of the post-Cold War era and the spirit of their great power cooperation that they hoped might materialize. Gorbachev's initial formulation was iconoclastic and

radically divergent to the romanticism of the socialist utopia of a singular class structure for the entire world. But his ability to press for it was severely hampered by the internal crisis of the Soviet system.

In comparison to Gorbachev, Bush's vision was not less circumscribed. He asserted:

> A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavour. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known[2].

However, given the new unipolar status of the United States immediately after the collapse of socialism, Bush egregiously stated that 'there is no substitute for American leadership'. The Gulf War of 1991 was regarded as the first test of the new world order:

> Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a new world order. ... The Gulf War put this new world to its first test.

Hua Hsu (2013), in his account of: 'A Global Government is Waiting on the Wings', stated that:

> The New World Order is not so much a single plot as a way of reading history. At its most basic level: A cabal, working in secret as well as through official-seeming, above ground means, seeks to establish an all-powerful, possibly Luciferian, one-world government. Suspicions surrounding a shadow Establishment date back at least to the 1700s, with the birth of the Freemasons and the Illuminati.

In his attempt to understand the contemporary conundrum of constantly changing geo-political dynamics, Hsu placed emphasis on the past century's global wars, the political realignments, and media innovations that provide a fresh insight into this age-old paranoia. He affirmed that in contemporary scenario building, the gerrymandering processes to create 'the New World Order' is an insidious case of concealment. It rests upon a hideous rhetoric about how the 'free people' of the West have begun to somewhat blindly

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[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_world_order_(politics)

surrender themselves to an imminent totalitarian regime. Hsu rightly raises a common anxiety ridden concern about their real intentions: *'What they want to do to us is never exactly clear – the anxiety tends to be more about the "new" part than the "older" part'.* Part of the answer certainly lies in the man-made laboratory hatched corona virus unleashed unto the world in 2019, bringing the entire world to a shutdown by March 2020, and henceforth lasting around 30 months.

In *The Guardian* (12 April 2020; 26 March 2023), challenges and conspiracies abounded about the future impact of the virus and how and where the virus began (respectively).

> Coronavirus: Who will be Winners and Losers in New World Order?[3]
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> The World Health Organization concluded from its initial investigation that a lab leak was 'extremely unlikely' to have caused the pandemic, but the second phase of its inquiries has stalled as Beijing has failed to share more data. China has a history of cover-ups, including over the deadly Sars outbreak; officials in Wuhan attempted to hide early Covid cases, arresting people who posted about the mysterious new disease; the top leadership in Beijing reportedly waited six days to warn the public after determining that a pandemic was likely; and officials have promoted disinformation, implying that the virus might have come from a US lab[4].

Americans and Chinese traded insults and suspicions at each other with a ferociousness that tended to negate the death tolls as a result of the virus's impact upon their populations. Political leadership in European countries joined the blame-game as well, but with a drab 'assertiveness' that was unconvincing about wanting to find the culprits of the virus leak. For instance, the response from Germany through their former Social Democratic party foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel, lamented that 'we talked the state down for 30 years, anticipating that the next generation will be less naive about globalisation. In Italy, the first European Union country that recorded abominable figures of deaths through coronavirus attacks, the former prime minister Matteo Renzi called for a commission into the future. However, the will to get to the root cause of the pandemic did not arise. In Hong Kong,

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[3] https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2020/apr/12
[4] https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2023/mar/26

graffiti reads: 'There can be no return to normal because normal was the problem in the first place'.

In Europe[5], the US and Asia the discussion has broadened out. Public life might have been at a standstill, but public debate has accelerated. Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state under Richard Nixon, stated that rulers must prepare to transition to a post-coronavirus world order. With the global economy and international air and sea travel being placed on hold, the world receded into a most uncertain phase in modern history. Incisive questions began emerging everywhere about a trashed global economy and public health, the relative virtues of centralised or regionalised health systems, the exposed fragilities of globalisation, the future of the EU, populism, and the alleged inherent advantage of authoritarianism.

It is as if the pandemic had turned into a competition for a new global leadership. A veiled insinuation emerged that it will be the countries that most effectively respond to the coronavirus crisis that will gain traction. With the world at a standstill and American pharmaceutical manufacturers such as Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson trying to capitalise, with brutal greed on the pandemic, diplomats found themselves operating out of emptied embassies and severely constrained to budgets. They were busy defending their governments' handling of the crisis, and often took serious offence to criticism. While national pride and health were at stake each country looked at their neighbour to view how badly affected they were or how quickly they were 'flattening the curve'. A Crisis Group think tank, in assessing how the virus will permanently change international politics, suggested:

> For now, we can discern two competing narratives gaining currency – one in which the lesson is that countries ought to come together to better defeat Covid-19, and one in which the lesson is that countries need to stand apart in order to better protect themselves from it.

India and the West

While the coronavirus brought an abrupt halt to the world economy like an athlete with a severely stubbed toe, the Russian attack against Ukraine served as an important diversion from the USA and China's roles as culprits of a global experiment to cull the human population. Ukraine was setting itself up for entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), much against

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[5] https://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news

the Russian appeal to refrain from that. Rising cost of living fuelled by rising oil prices infused a helpful diversion away from alleged culpability of a man-made pandemic by China and the USA. As the world was preparing for a thorough investigation into the genesis and responsibility of the coronavirus the Russia - Ukraine war led to an almost unannounced exoneration of these countries' role in the creation of the virus in their labs in Wuhan and California In a *Firstpost Opinion*, Hassan Suroor (2022) in an article titled: 'How a new world order is emerging from the ruins of Ukraine — and India is at the heart of it', wrote about a rapidly emerging new world order, to which the world has yet to realise, with India at the centre of it. With a claim that the iron-clad western world is teetering, Suroor accusingly wrote:

> There's a long list of Western foreign policy disasters and each new disaster looks worse than the previous one. But thanks to a skewed world order, the West has got away with it each time. That is, until now. With the Ukraine conflict, it appears, finally, to have run out of luck as it struggles to canvass support for its proxy war with Russia. Whatever the ultimate outcome of this crisis, it is shaping up into a watershed moment in post-War European history.

Suroor (2002) viewed the situation with western leaders as seriously miscalculating the rise of a country such as India because of its misguided assumptions about its leadership. He found fault with the brave public rhetoric of American President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron, of failing to build a broad coalition against Russia. Western countries appeared to have lost its momentum in appreciating the anti-West sentiment across large swathes of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. His analysis is suggestive of them being Machiavellian in their approach to the world, that even the most trusted traditional Western allies like Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, among others, have refused to fall in line with the USA and NATO countries.

India's adoption of a neutral stand has prompted a movement towards an 'anti-Western coalition', especially as seen in the increasing interest in the BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). By 2022 at least 23 more countries from four continents have shown interest in BRICS. An Editorial in *The Times* (London) noted that the shift towards an alternative competing world leadership formation will serve as a formidable challenge to NATO: including USA, Canada and 29 European countries. *The Times* noted that high-profile American and European leaders have been lining up in Delhi

as the post-Covid era began settling in to persuade the county's leadership to harden its stance towards Russia. However, to date India has remained steadfast in its principles of neutrality towards Russia, citing its dilemma in their 1971 war against Pakistan and reminding the Americans that they chose to assist their enemy when it really mattered.

Without detracting from Russian atrocities against civilian life in Ukraine, which India has publicly condemned, there remains a real possibility that the USA could face diplomatic isolation for its clandestine role in Ukraine. There is, at this juncture in early 2024, questions about how the war will end in Ukraine, what would be the costs to redevelopment there, and to what extent will Ukraine be isolated by NATO if there might be a level of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian state's unwillingness to do as its supporters in the role as funders and suppliers of military equipment wanted them to do.

Numerous American intellectuals and politicians have accused the American political establishment of stoking Ukraine's war with Russia. Those in charge, under the Joe Biden Administration, kept an ongoing blame-game against the Russians as the sole initiators of the war. Despite the Minsk Agreement of 2015, that Ukraine will not join NATO and they will not allow NATO military troops and equipment on their border with Russia, there were moves afoot early 2022 that broke this trust. Russia and Ukraine signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership in 1997, pledging to respect the territorial integrity of each nation. The agreement was signed on 21 February 2014 by the then-President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, a pro-Russian leader, and the leaders of the parliamentary opposition in Ukraine, through the mediation of the European Union and Russia.

However, in the Donbas region of Ukraine, differences between Russian speakers and 'ethnic' Ukrainians flared up to a point of an armed insurrection by both sides. Russian separatists were assisted by regular Russian forces when the Armed Forces of Ukraine took sides with their Ukrainian fellow citizens. According to a 2001 census, ethnic Ukrainians formed 58% of the population of Luhansk Oblast and 56.9% of Donetsk Oblast areas. Ethnic Russians formed the largest minority, accounting for 39% and 38.2% of the two Oblasts respectively. In the present day, the Donbas is a predominately Russophone region[6]. However, as Ukrainians fled the Russians dominated and claimed the territory as their own since it was allegedly turned into a majority

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[6]

https://www.google.com/search?q=Is+the+Donbas+region+majority+Russian%3F&client=firefox-

Russian population. The Minsk Agreement were signed after extensive discussion in Minsk, Belarus, on 5 September 2014 by which time leaders the by-then self-proclaimed leaders claimed autonomy for their two regions: Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). The real cause of the ethnic conflicts and the status of those who lost property were not addressed. Against this background, once stand-up Ukrainian comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy, propped up by the USA, served as the 6th President of Ukraine from 2019, after the breakup of the USSR in 1991. Zelensky allegedly complained to then German Chancellor and French President Macron in 2019 that he is unable to uphold the Minsk Agreement, paving the way for Russian confrontation with NATO's military build up on the Ukraine-Russian border. In a Chatham House research paper, Duncan Allan (2020) attempts to address the contradiction of the Ukraine status in the form of a question:

> The Minsk agreements rest on two irreconcilable interpretations of Ukraine's sovereignty: is Ukraine sovereign, as Ukrainians insist, or should its sovereignty be limited, as Russia demands?

Allan (2020) asserted that instead of trying to resolve an unresolvable contradiction, Western policymakers should acknowledge the starkness of the Minsk conundrum – somewhat tilting towards Russia's favour in their capture of territories, for the sake of world peace and stability.

      Against this background, second time Presidential candidate Donald Trump for instance, pledged to end the Russo-Ukraine war overnight if re-elected as President in 2024, while the likes of Jeffrey Sachs, Seymour Hirsch and Naomi Chompski have been highly critical of Joe Biden's role, as USA President, in supporting the war[7]. Was this, in a manner of speaking, an attempt by the 'deep state' in the USA to divert attention in its role in shutting down the world economy in March 2020, by using Covid-19 as their smokescreen.

The West and Africa
By the second decade of the 21st century Europe and the North Americas showed a reduced investment interest in the African continent. Since the peak in investments in 2014, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa from the United States dropped from just under 70 billion US dollars to 47.5 billion U.S. dollars in 2020. Despite its mineral rich resource base, Africa now receives

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[7] Each of these individuals appeared in YouTube discussions.

lower FDI inflows than any other region in the world. This decline is by more than US$20 billion (4 August 2021). China viewed this as an opportunity in Africa and has entered the continent with determination to replace the fledgling investments by the collective West. German Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa is lagging behind China, France, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA. It represented only 1 percent of the German total FDI stock abroad in 2018 and is concentrated in no more than a few African countries. That share has not changed in the last several decades. The focus of German enterprises is on Asia as well as Central and Eastern Europe. The remaining major industrialised nations such as France, the United Kingdom and the US jointly invest four to seven times more in Africa, around 850 German firms have roughly 200,000 employees on the entire African continent (as of 2017). Compared with other countries, German FDI is more concentrated in manufacturing as opposed to the natural resources sector.[8]

China and India in Africa

As rising economic powers China (Brandt 1997; Spence 2013; Wahed 2016) and India (Tharoor 2017; Malhotra 2018; Deepak 2021) have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the ways in which they survived colonial invasions from the eighteenth to first half of the twentieth centuries, and are rising like phoenixes from severe abject poverty caused by these invasions. Both China and India are venturing towards Africa in ways that represent distinctive diversions from the European colonization which dominated the world between the seventeenth to the latter era of the twentieth centuries. China however, with a head start advantage that began 12 years earlier than India, having begun in 1978, now has an economy that exceeds the size of India by at least four-and-half times. While India's economy is operated, as of January 2024, at a level of 4 trillion US dollars per annum, China's is operating at around 18 trillion US dollars, making the latter the second largest in the world (Zhou 2014). Their roles and presence in the African continent must be viewed against at least 3 factors:

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[8] https://www.ifw-kiel.de/experts/ifw/frauke-steglich/lagging-behind-german-foreign-direct-investment-in-africa-14622/
https://www.kfw.de/PDF/Download-Center/Konzernthemen/Research/PDF-Dokumente-Fokus-Volkswirtschaft/Fokus-englische-Dateien/Fokus-2020-EN/Fokus-No.-299-September-2020-Investment-Promotion-Schemes.pdf

- Their rapid rise in economic strength and increased potential for outward investments.
- The reduced interest in investing in Africa by the previous European and American investors; and
- Their need to find more employment niches for significant labour capital, which in turn adds to their much-needed foreign reserves through remittances. Both China and India earn significant amounts in remittances from their citizens working overseas, including Africa.

Within a span of less than fifty years China and India have disrupted the hegemonic aims of the USA and the USSR (the latter now defunct). On its own however, Russia is growing steadily economically to add to the multi-polar world that is emerging in early 21ˢᵗ century. In 2019, India's foreign employed citizens sent USD83.3 billion in remittances. In 2020, according to a World Bank report, India received over USD83 billion in remittances, a drop of a mere 0.2 per cent from the previous year, despite the coronavirus pandemic that devastated the entire world economy. In 2021 India was the world's largest recipient of remittances, having received $87 billion[9].

China however remained a distant second with a USD60 billion collection of remittances[10]. However, as Zhou discussed, the trajectories that each country is following is distinctly different. The synopses below for each country captures some of the unfolding scenarios by both countries in Africa.

China's Recent History with Africa

China's recent history in Africa can be traced back to the early 1960s. The African continent's relations with China were strained in the early 1960s as a result of its 'Cultural Revolution' programme, but improved in the late 1970s. As China's financial buoyancy improved their relationships with African countries consolidated by undercutting the West through their: (i) demand of fewer conditions for lending; (ii) granting assistance at very low rates, and repayable over much longer periods than what was being offered by the West; and (iii) they offered training to professional and technical personnel to African

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[9] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/87772872.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

[10]

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=CN

citizens. At the level of rhetoric, China's position in Africa appears more accommodating than what is offered by the West.

Imposed conditionalities by the West, merely the latest in the decades of humiliating experiences at the hands of former colonial powers and the United States, echoes the humiliations of the 'unequal treaties' foisted on China by the west in the nineteenth century. Indeed, China's ability to recognize this is 'part of the genius of its foreign policy endeavours toward Africa' (Mary-Francoise Renard 2011, quoting Alden 2008: 20). The choice of terms with which countries operationalise their engagements are almost always intended to signify the positive between two nations or among the many that may group together in emerging relations. Whether they are noted as geopolitical alliances, strategic partnerships or as cooperative relationships, history over the last two centuries has shown that one country is generally the hegemonic force over however many may enter into that relationship. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the imperialist tendencies of British and French over much of Africa, the Spanish in most of South America, and to a lesser extent the Portuguese, Belgians and Germans in Africa and other parts of the world.

China's relations with African countries, and indeed its global economic strategy, have been shaped by the need to obtain energy resources to support their economic development. However, political considerations have also played an important role. In 1971, African countries were instrumental in preventing Taiwan from obtaining a seat at the United Nations Security Council. And while Taipei had until recently retained the support of numerous African countries, China's diplomatic interventions, financial incentives, aid proposals, and military assistance to Africa have been premised on receiving countries' abandoning diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This strategy has proven successful (Mary-Francoise Renard 2011: 13; Drummond & Liu 2013).

From an impoverished lingering economic nation (Spence 2013), China has become Africa's largest investor since 2010, followed by the US as the second-largest investor in Africa, with France in the third place. In 2019 China's FDI stock in Africa totalled $110 billion, constituting over 20% of Africa's economic growth. Chinese FDIs have accelerated African supply to satisfy the continent's rapidly rising middle-class demand. Apart from the volume of its productivity and their extent of trade with countries throughout the world, China needed to create a convincing image for itself. African countries have become major trading partners to China's global economic strategy, to the point that its trade in the continent has surpassed that of the USA. China's forays into Africa since the early 2000's remains unprecedented.

For instance, the USA's FDI in Africa has been stagnant at one per cent, while China's FDI stands at three to four per cent. In 2013 the real terms of USA's trade in Africa stood at 85 billion American dollars while China's trade with African countries in 2012 stood at 200 billion American dollars (Gadzala 2015).

There are at least 5 major Chinese patterns of investments: capital Investments, Chinese technology and material, Chinese labour – minimal engagement of local level employment, cheaply made consumer goods that are not durable, and a reputation for destroying local entrepreneurship – both manufacturing and retail. Several case studies in Southern Africa attest to these patterns. In South Africa I covered the impact of Chinese investments in a mid-town industrial cum commercial hub in the city of Durban. Through the illustration of case studies covered in a qualitative study, entrepreneurs, mainly of 3ʳᵈ and 4ᵗʰ generation people of Indian origin in South Africa, relayed their stories of humble beginnings, significant successes and sudden downward spirals towards liquidation through cheap Chinese investments covered by state protection. The industries were especially in fabric imports and cheaper manufactured goods of fabric from China that out-priced local industrialists and retailers that served workers and managerial classes (Singh 2022). The Economist (20 April 2011) has brought to our attention similar situations in neighbouring provinces and Southern African countries. It covered the darkened alleys of the Soweto market in Gauteng Province, South Africa and in Lusaka, Zambia, where the arrival of Chinese traders brought about an immediate steep drop in prices in at least two staple food items. Chicken prices were literally halved and the price of cabbages dropped by 65 per cent. Frustrated livestock dealers marched with their wire mesh cages to the Competition Commission in Lusaka, to protest the Chinese presence in their territory. One of the sellers was quoted as declaring: *'How dare the Chinese disturb our market?'* In the same article of *The Economist* it was reported that in Dar-es-Salaam, the commercial capital of Tanzania, Chinese entrepreneurs were stopped from selling in their markets. The government had declared prior to April 2011 that the Chinese were welcome as investors but not as 'vendors or shoe-shiners'.

Chinese loans to Africa presently (2024) exceeds US$140 billion, but with questions being raised in each country for increased accountability by the politicians as well as what the implications would be in the event of non-repayments. China presently is a leading bilateral lender in 32 African countries and the top lender to the continent as a whole. The list includes: Angola ($21.5 billion in 2017), Ethiopia ($13.7 billion), Kenya ($9.8 billion),

Republic of Congo ($7.42 billion), Zambia ($6.38 billion) and Cameroon ($5.57 billion).

As the third most indebted nation to China, Kenya's political establishment had to engage in introspection. Most of these lessons were learnt during President Uhuru Kenyatta's regime amid reports a huge chunk of it was lost to corruption. Further reports suggest the country, considered an economic giant in East Africa, has in recent times struggled to pay off their debts. In the Republic of Congo it is reported that corruption has played a major role in the escalation of the debt to such egregious levels. Sudan - Makes to the list in fifth place. The conflict-torn country has an estimated debt of over $6.4 billion (Sh640 billion).

In the *Nairobi News* (2 May 2021) China's business dealings in Africa are the cause of serious consternation. China has in the past decade or so been involved in several multi-billion shillings projects, amid reports of kickbacks, a lack of accountability to a certain level, and high interest rates. This has left many African countries in debt. Kenya has not been spared, following a recent debate on whether the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project which was facilitated by the Chinese has been value for money thus far. In a YouTube report George Downs stated that the Chinese-built Standard SGR connecting Nairobi and Mombasa created much expectation about boosting the country's economic performance. Instead, it has become an important case study of how China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under Xi Jinping's leadership is more problematic than useful. Suspicions are raised about China's intentions in Kenya and the population at large remain sceptical with a condescending view about whether China can be trusted as a more viable alternative to the West in their quest for upward mobility in economic performance, technology transfers and overall social and economic upliftment of the general population.

In terms of the broader outlook in global strategies, the African-China relationship within the context of the 'New World Order' is that China will surge ahead while African politicians continue to constrain their populations upliftment.

India in Africa

India's approach to economic and political cooperation with Africa remains significantly different from China's. There is a lot of room for India in Africa: For example, Africa accounted for just 15 percent of India's outward total investment stock between 2017 and 2019.

The India - Africa bilateral trade has grown substantially over the last

decade, with the trade volume touching US$ 55.9 billion in 2020-21. India is the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investments of US$ 54 billion since 26 Jul 2021. In 2022 alone Indian overseas investors announced a record high of 22.2 billion US dollars foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa. A special report on investments in Africa showed such promise that it urged Indian investors to take their 74 billion American dollar investment in the continent to a new height of 150 billion dollars by 2030. Indian FDI to Africa is concentrated in oil, gas and mining in the primary commodities market. In the manufacturing sector, a dominance of automobile and pharmaceutical firms is seen[11].

India's list of more than 200 companies are spread across the continent, especially in Southern and Eastern Africa. Their trade and investment interests are rapidly rising. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of India's premier business association: the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – spoke to *Global* about why the African continent, with its growing and dynamic economy, has become the 'destination of choice' for many of their enterprises. He justified this statement with the explanation as Africa is increasingly embracing democratic practices, the suitability for investment is improving with it. Africa is investment-hungry and Indian companies are working across sectors. Major companies such as Tata Group, Godrej Group, Bharti, Kirloskar, Mahindra & Mahindra, Escorts, Apollo and Essar among a range of others, are doing business in Africa. The Tata Group, a saviour to British steel and motor manufacturing in Britain, is present in many manufacturing and services sectors in Africa as well, while Bharti has entered the telecommunications market. Other companies are active in FMCG, automotives, IT, power and energy, as well as mining and minerals, banking. Infrastructure such as railways, construction, roads and bridges, is also an area of great interest, but not as yet, since China's lead over India also serves as a chalkboard full of lessons about what not to do in Africa to ensure long term amenability and sustainability in the continent. Since achieving independence, India has consistently supported anti-colonial and anti-racist liberation struggles in Africa. While the earlier relationship was built on the legacy of colonialism, a wave of liberalization and privatization in India in the 1990s led to a decisive shift in its Africa engagement polices. However, despite robust

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[11]https://www.google.com/search?q=What+is+India%27s+FDI+in+Africa%3F&rlz=1C1CHBD_enZA782ZA782&oq=What+is+India%27s+FDI+in+Africa%3F&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160l4j33i22i29i30l3.12194j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

engagement for over 70 years, India's CII is still developing its longer investment framework for Africa.

An important milestone in their relationship with Africa is the elaboration of [10 Guiding Principles for India's Africa Engagement](#)[12] during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the Ugandan Parliament on 25 July 2018 (Ministry of External Affairs). These pillars reflect a change in the nuances of India's priorities. For instance, both Indian private and government representatives consistently emphasize India's desire for its partnerships to be inclusive, people-centric, sustainable, transparent, and guided by African needs and priorities. These principles form the basis of a coherent and comprehensive strategy. Adding to it are security concerns that have been and will continue to be costly against supremacist ideologies. India considers African countries, especially those with coasts on the Indian Ocean, to be a critical part of its Indo-Pacific strategy. India shares a rich history of maritime trade with these nations in particular, and it has signed defence and shipping agreements with many of them.

For the path-breaking message that Modi's pronouncements incorporate, it will be useful to repeat them here:

> *One*, Africa will be at the top of our priorities. We will continue to intensify and deepen our engagement with Africa. As we have shown, it will be sustained and regular.

> *Two*, our development partnership will be guided by your priorities. It will be on terms that will be comfortable for you, that will liberate your potential and not constrain your future. We will rely on African talent and skills. We will build as much local capacity and create as many local opportunities as possible.

> *Three*, we will keep our markets open and make it easier and more attractive to trade with India. We will support our industry to invest in Africa.

> *Four*, we will harness India's experience with digital revolution to support Africa's development; improve delivery of public services;

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[12] https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30152/Prime+Ministers+address+at+Parliament+of+Uganda+during+his+State+Visit+to+Uganda

extend education and health; spread digital literacy; expand financial inclusion; and mainstream the marginalised.

This will not just be our partnership to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals, but also to equip the youth of Africa for their place in the digital age.

Five, Africa has 60 per cent of the world's arable land, but produces just 10 per cent of the global output. We will work with you to improve Africa's agriculture.

Six, our partnership will address the challenges of climate change. We will work with Africa to ensure a just international climate order; to preserve our biodiversity; and, adopt clean and efficient energy sources.

Seven, we will strengthen our cooperation and mutual capabilities in combating terrorism and extremism; keeping our cyberspace safe and secure; and, supporting the UN in advancing and keeping peace;.

Eight, we will work with African nations to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all nations. The world needs cooperation and not competition in the eastern shores of Africa and the eastern Indian Ocean. That is why India's vision of Indian Ocean Security is cooperative and inclusive, rooted in security and growth for all in the region.

Nine, and, this is especially important to me: as global engagement in Africa increases, we must all work together to ensure that Africa does not once again turn into a theatre of rival ambitions, but becomes a nursery for the aspirations of Africa's youth.

Ten, just as India and Africa fought colonial rule together, we will work together for a just, representative and democratic global order that has a voice and a role for one-third of humanity that lives in Africa and India. India's own quest for reforms in the global institutions is incomplete without an equal place for Africa. That will be a key purpose of our foreign policy.

Modi's commitments to Africa sets a standard against a rampant practice of

domination and exploitation through the continent's post-colonial reliance upon exogenous forms of financial, technological and infrastructural investments. But his commitments are yet to be fully realised. Modi's global agenda remains under constant attack by multiple forces that are threatened by the rise of India as a one-time leader in economic performance. India's economic performance spread over 1800 of the last 2000 years, having been reduced from one of the richest to one of the poorest nations of the world through British colonisation. While Islamism is once again rearing its head against India, Christian missionary forces from the USA, neo liberal capitalism coupled with American populism from both right and left-wing sectors, prevail as counter forces not only to India but to Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa as well, collectively referred to BRICS. Numerous other countries have echoed their intentions to join BRICS in order to break American hegemony over the global economy, especially through an attack against the American 'petro-dollar'.

Conclusion

Since the last five years beginning in 2020, a pertinent question lingers over the world with a nagging sense of curiosity: *'Would we ever have a 'NEW WORLD ORDER' EMERGING AFTER Covid-19 and the Russian-Ukraine/ NATO crisis?'* Simultaneous to this crucial question, another more specific one stands side by side with it:

> *Against the continuous accusation of corruption in African countries, does Chinese engagement not follow the banality of their European and American predecessors?*

> *Will India be able to engage more productively with Africa than the West and China has done so far?*

This raises another core question as well: 'If India is prioritizing Africa as its next major destination for its FDI engagements, to what extent can Indians be trusted against the history of abuse by foreign powers in Africa?' Some hope appears in Prime Minister Modi's speech in the Ugandan parliament on 25 July 2018. While Indian investors in Africa do not carry with them the baggage of the West and China, the country will be observed more carefully in the post-Modi era for continuity. Such a promising vision for future Afro-Indo relations must be constantly weighted against the rising resentment against France's role

in West Africa, especially with their currency manipulation and regime control, as well as anti-China sentiments.

One of India's major engagements in Africa that has held it in good positive stead so far is its UN Peace Keeping role in Africa. India has been the largest troop contributor to UN missions since inception. So far India has taken part in 49 Peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 1,95,000 troops and a significant number of police personnel having been deployed. Affected populations in African countries have shown affection and appreciation for Indian troops wherever they served, especially for the minor-scale development work that they did for the people they served and protected. By the time the after-effects of Covid-19 and Russia - Ukraine debacle settles down a pertinent question about a new world order will rear itself and loom large over our heads: 'Will there ever be a power or powers in the universe that can level the proverbial playing fields without political and economic sabotage, to benefit all of humanity?' Presently, while 'world order' is a word more akin to an oxymoron than a reality, it is achievable - but only until and unless the consequences of a nuclear war does not matter to zealous political warlords.

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Sino - Africa Relations: Philia or Phobia?

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Abstract

China has become the second largest trader of Africa and total value of trade is crossing some more than $250 billon. Many African leaders see it as a new beginning for the journey of African development. However, the evidence indicates that China's trade with Africa is guided by some other political and national needs of China and with very little for the concern for Africa. In this article we examine how the strategic trade and investment relations between China and African countries has come to be identified and labeled in the discourse on Sino - African relations. The emerging narrative is that Chinese investment in Africa is fraught with issues such as low-quality projects labor abuses, risky loans, imported labor, illegal export, and environmental degradation therefore contributing critics labelling of Chinese activities in Africa as neo-colonialism. Gleaned evidence forms the review of literature and current actions of China are convincing that China 's objectives are hidden and Africa should tread cautiously in this endeavor. Nevertheless, we identify good Chinese-financed business outcomes, suggesting that Chinese investments in Africa have positively impacted technology transfer and significantly bridged Africa's infrastructure gap. In making explicit how these competing perspectives play out in the form of Sinophilia and Sinophobia, we conducted an overall review of the two perspectives to delineate the affection/disaffection phenomena characterizing the evolving Sino - Africa engagements. Conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Sino - Africa, Economic Engagement, Non-Economic Engagement, China, China - Africa relations, Sinophilia, Sinophobia

1 Introduction

The signs of China's economic expansion are becoming increasingly manifest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the last decade, China has built a network of trade, aid, and investment links with close to 50 African countries, and there has been a rush to buy up concessions to Africa's natural resources. Chinese companies are mining oil in Angola and Sudan, building roads in Ethiopia, working with the electricity sector in Kenya, building infrastructure and developing the tourism industry in Sierra Leone, and servicing mobile phone networks in Kenya and Nigeria (Zafar 2007). Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, Chinese companies are building vital infrastructure, including dams, ports, and roads, and helping to renovate government offices and other buildings. China's foreign policy is being increasingly driven by its domestic development strategy and the need for resources (Zweig & Jianhai 2005). However, the interest is not confined solely to natural resources, as Chinese firms have ventured into the light manufacturing and services sectors and entered into agroprocessing, apparel, and telecommunications. Meanwhile, Africa is increasingly awash with low-cost Chinese motorcycles, electronic goods, and T-shirts, benefiting the consumers in the continent (Zafar 2007).

Over the last several years, China has intensified diplomatic links with Africa. Under the auspices of the China - Africa Cooperation Forum of 2000, comprising 46 of 53 African countries, bilateral trade and economic cooperation have entered a new realm. In a symbolic gesture that carries much hidden weight, the Chinese foreign minister has maintained a policy of making his first official overseas trip each year to Africa (Zafar 2007). In January 2006, the Chinese government issued its official Africa policy, calling itself the world's largest developing country and seeking the establishment of a new strategic partnership with Africa marked by an intensification of dialogue on the political front combined with closer economic cooperation (China Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). In November 2006, a very high-level China - Africa summit, with the participation of more than 40 African heads of state, was held in Beijing to cement trade and investment relations between the world's fastest growing economy and the world's poorest continent. China's economic size in 2005, measured in purchasing power parity terms, is more than five times that of Sub-Saharan Africa, while its physical size is much smaller (International Monetary Fund (IMF hereafter) 2006). According to the World Bank's Atlas method, GNI per capita in 2005 was $745 in Sub-Saharan Africa, contrasted with $1,740 in China. However, there is a large convergence of interest based

on economic complementarities and strong possibilities for mutual gain (Zafar 2007).

As a rising power, China is altering some of the prevailing practices and parameters in development assistance. One analyst, Joshua Cooper Ramo, has termed the Chinese approach the 'Beijing Consensus', with the development of new attitudes toward politics, development, and the global balance of power (Ramo 2004). China's distinctive approach involves a combination of aggressive diplomacy and the cultivation of friendly ties with a 'no-strings attached' financial and technical assistance package. The only real prerequisite for Chinese assistance is support for Beijing's one-China policy (in relation to Taiwan, China). China's pledge of noninterference in countries' internal affairs and lack of lending conditions on governance or fiscal management have elicited positive reactions from several governments. However, China's lack of attention to governance, democracy, and human rights issues in Africa, as testified by its support of pariah regimes in Sudan and Zimbabwe and its delinking of aid from political reform, has raised concerns that the flow of Chinese aid may cause African governments to delay reforms that promote openness and accountability. Given the propensity for corruption in the management of natural resources, China's lack of attention to matters of resource transparency and mechanisms of oversight among its African partners has been a cause for concern. Moreover, the tendency of Chinese companies to import labor from China, coupled with allegations of poor labor practices and unfair competition against local enterprises, has generated an anti-Chinese backlash in several African countries, notably South Africa and Zambia. Finally, the disregard for environmental impact assessments risks derailing the progress that has been made on that front over the last two decades. In sum, there are fears that this neglect of governance and proper standards may be detrimental to many countries' overall development efforts (Zafar 2007).

China has found Africa as a lucrative destination for her Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Over the years the FDI has increased continually from as little as $75 million in 2003 to 5 billion in 2008 and then 4.2 billion in 2020 (http://www.sais-cari.org/Chinese-investment-in-Africa 2021). Increasing FDI is simultaneously followed by the increase in trade between two regions. For example, trade between China and Africa rose from $3b in 1995 to $10b in 2000, $40b in 2005, and $55b in 2006 (Soutman & Hairong 2007:79). Trade increased to $254b in 2021 and shows the continually rising trend (Mureithi 2022). Both rising FDI in the continent and increasing trade value over the

years are good indicators in general; however, there are many other things which go unnoticed when discussing trade issues only and this does not do a good job if evaluation. One should hence look at both trade and non-trade issues in total and see how this is going to play in the long run context. I follow hence a more comprehensive approach of assessing the gains and losses from the Africa-China economic engagement. The discussion here is arranged under 4 sections. Section 2 looks at the brief history of economic engagement and possible reasons for its growth and concerns. Section 3 on the other hand looks at the non-economic engagement and its possible impacts on Africa. An overall assessment of both economic and non-economic engagements is done in section 4. Possible challenges and policy actions are envisaged in section 5.

2   Sino - Africa Economic Engagements

2.1   A Brief History of China's Relations with Africa

China's relations with the African continent date back to the 15th century. In the Ming Imperial Tomb in Beijing is a wall painting of a giraffe-it was the famous Chinese admiral and seafarer Zheng He who brought it to the court in Nanjing during one of several expeditions to the Arab world and the east coast of Africa between 1413 and 1419. In modern times, official relations were established with South Africa after Sun Yat-sen was elected Provisional President of the Young Republic of China in 1911. As the communist leadership consolidated its hold on power in the early 1950s, China launched a more active policy of establishing contacts in Africa. Under the shadow of the Cold War, 29 leaders from political movements in Africa and Asia assembled in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. They discussed peace, economic development, and decolonisation, and agreed to increase cooperation between the peoples of the 'third world', a term coined by China's then leader Mao Zedong. Although China at the time was relatively underdeveloped, it provided extensive assistance to emerging African countries. A well-known example from the early 1970s is the Tanzam railway project, which connected the copper belts in Zambia with the port of Dar Es Salaam. This enabled Zambia to export copper without having to pass through South Africa or Rhodesia (Stein& Uddhammar 2021).

China began trading with North-east Africa before the Christian era. Several Chinese travelers reportedly visited Africa during the early part of the Christian era. China's first significant contact with Africa occurred during the

Ming Dynasty when the fifth and sixth voyages of the famous Zheng He naval fleet reached the north-east coast of Africa during the first quarter of the fifteenth century. The voyages were, however, an anachronism in Chinese history and were followed by a return to China's inward-looking approach to the rest of the world (Snow 1988: 30-31). A hiatus in the China–Africa relationship then set in for several centuries until Chinese labourers and traders came to several regions of Africa beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century (Shinn & Eisenman 2012: 17-26).

After taking power in 1912, Sun Yat Sen and the Republic of China (ROC) developed official relations with South Africa, where a Chinese community had become well established. South Africa soon became and remains the country with the largest number of persons of Chinese origin on the African continent. Most of the early migrants retained a strong allegiance to China and supported the Chinese nationalist party, the Kuomintang. The Second Sino - Japanese War (1937–1945) united the Chinese community in South Africa with China and led to fund-raising campaigns in support of the ROC (Yap & Man 1996: 255-277). The ROC had brief interaction with independent Liberia and was in contact with the Chinese community in the French colony of Madagascar. Challenges to its ability to rule China severely limited its engagement with Africa (Shinn & Eisenman 2012: 26–29). Relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Africa were slow to develop because of Mao Zedong's need to consolidate power and the fact that there were few independent African nations in 1949. According to Shinn (2019), several themes subsequently developed in the China–Africa relationship as it became more intense. They are presented thus:

- *First*, there have been different phases in China's relations with Africa that depend largely on global issues, and political and economic developments in China, not in Africa. They began with China's support for African revolutionary movements, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the Cold War, and the Sino - Soviet split during the leadership of Mao Zedong. This was followed by China's more pragmatic foreign policy, a focus on China's domestic reform, and a pulling back from Africa under Deng Xiaoping. Jiang Zemin, partly concerned by negative fallout from the Tiananmen Square events, again reached out to Africa and set the stage for a major expansion of the China – Africa relationship. Hu Jintao took advantage of his efforts and significantly increased China's trade, aid, and investment with Africa.

Xi Jinping has continued the economic engagement begun by Hu Jintao and expanded China's involvement in the security and political sectors, especially party-to-party cooperation.

- *Second*, implicit in the first theme, it is nearly always China that initiates important developments in the China–Africa relationship. This is not surprising and could also be said for the US relationship with Africa. A single large and powerful country can more easily initiate ideas and projects than can fifty four countries, many of which are small and weak. Although the African Union is slowly improving its ability to speak for the continent, it is not even close to functioning like a national government.

- *Third*, and lastly, the China–Africa relationship has always been asymmetric. The second theme is the most obvious manifestation of this asymmetry. Interestingly, however, economic but not political asymmetry once favoured Africa. For example, from 1980 to 1984, Africa's global merchandise exports averaged US$79 billion annually. In 1983, China exported only US$50 billion worth of goods. In the years immediately after Mao Zedong came to power in 1949, even the economies of South Africa and Egypt were probably stronger than the economy of China. By the 1990s, however, China had a significant political and economic advantage over African countries individually and collectively. In 2016, China's global merchandise trade was US$3.7 trillion; Africa's was US$790 million. As with the United States, it is a highly asymmetric relationship that has only increased with the passage of time.

Table 1 shows a summary of the different phases of China–Africa engagements which correspond roughly to China's changes of leadership.

Table 1: A Summary of Evolution and Characteristics of China - Africa Engagements

Phase	Evolution	Characteristics
Pre-nineteenth century until 1949	In the first quarter of the fifteenth century Chinese labourers and traders came to several regions of Africa. After taking power in 1912, Sun Yat Sen and the Republic of China developed official relations, notably with South Africa.	Chinese labour migration to South Africa and Madagascar.
Mao Zedong (1949–76)	The seizure of power by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1949 did not result immediately in any significant outreach to Africa. Mao Zedong was preoccupied with consolidating his rule in the early years of the new regime. With the decolonization of African countries, China began to pursue a more pragmatic policy in Africa and achieved a huge political victory in October 1971—admission to the United Nations.	After the Bandung conference of 1955, the PRC's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were established and remain essential to China's foreign policy until today. They include: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.
Deng Xiaoping (1978–92)	The number of African countries recognizing Beijing's 'One China' policy increased from forty-four in the 1970s to forty-eight in the 1980s; fifty-five African presidents visited China from 1981 to 1989.	But China's economic modernization left the country short of capital and unable to provide Africa with the same level of economic assistance.
Jiang Zemin (1992–2002)	This period witnessed an intensification of China–Africa diplomatic relations and unprecedented high-level Chinese official visits to several African countries. For example, Jiang Zemin made state visits in 1996 to Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. For the first time, China deployed personnel to a UN peacekeeping operation in 1989.	The main features of China's involvement with Africa are reflected in five areas: development aid; considerable increase in arms export; increased trade; loans for infrastructure; UN peacekeeping.
Hu Jintao (2002–12)	When Hu Jintao relinquished power in 2012, only four African countries—Eswatini, Burkina Faso, Gambia, and São Tomé and Príncipe—recognized Taiwan. This represented a significant victory for Beijing's 'One China' policy.	The second FOCAC ministerial meeting took place in Addis Ababa in 2003 attended by Premier Wen Jiabao, thirteen African leaders, and more than seventy ministers from Africa and China. In a side session, nearly a hundred Chinese business representatives assembled to meet with their African counterparts.
Xi Jinping (2013–)	Xi Jinping oversaw the 6th FOCAC, China released its second Africa policy paper. It emphasized the following themes (China, 2015): • Enhancing political mutual trust. • Deepening cooperation in international affairs. • Deepening economic and trade cooperation. • Deepening and expanding cultural and people-to-people exchanges. • Promoting peace and security in Africa. The key initiative for achieving this new order is Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China agrees to new projects; they routinely become part of BRI.	During the 6th FOCAC, China announced a US$60 billion loan, trade, and aid package to African countries. The package also included debt relief to the least developed African countries. China also announced more scholarships for African students to study in China. By 2015, there were almost fifty thousand African students studying in China.

Source: Adopted from Shinn (2019)

2.2 China's Economic Engagement with Africa: Trade and Investment

China is currently Africa's largest trading partner, having surpassed the US in 2009. It is undeniably appeal to African states as a trading partner and the increase in trade is a reverse of the decreasing economic importance to the West. In the past few years, the Chinese have built a network of trade, aid and investment with close to fifty countries. China's investment in Africa has reformed the position of Africa in the global economy. From a problem continent, China has contributed extensively to change Africa into a region with endless business opportunities. In 1975, the number of China aid programme in African countries outweighs the number of aid programmes provided by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established in 2006 and meant to boost trade and investment in Africa. Three major drivers of this endeavor were markets, resources in particular energy, and political support in the United Nations (Alden *et al.* 2008). In the FOCAC which was held in Beijing in year 2012, former President Hu Jintao announced new measures that the Chinese government will implement to strengthen Africa-China coope-ration, such as US$20 billion in loans to boost investment, personal exchanges, also peace and security (Bodomo 2013). With such significant amount of public investment, there will eventually be productive employment and a maximal utilisation of resources and all this leads to economic development. In the past century, availability of capital in Africa was one of the constraints to economic development (Boko *et al.* 2007). Thus, with China's significant amount of investment, Africa's economy could be developed rapidly, provided that the amount of money is managed efficiently.

Meanwhile, Africa's economy is also affected in a negative way that its internal markets for domestic producers have been deteriorating due to the private Chinese investment in Africa. Private Chinese companies which invest in Africa usually have a low cost of production, which will cause the presence of cheap Chinese wholesale in the African market. The market price of pro-ducts being manufactured by Chinese firms will be extremely low and as a consumer, we will purchase cheaper and more affordable products and this is good for the well-being of the Africans. However, if this situation persists long-term, it will affect domestic African producers and local retailers badly. African producers who are unable to compete with Chinese companies in terms of cost of production and market prices are left with options of firing workers

or deducting wages until they could regain competence. Lastly, they will be driven out of the market if they are unsuccessful in facing the fierce competition from private Chinese investment. For instance, Comatex and Batexci, two leading textile firms located in Mali have been severely affected by cheap fabrics from China (Ighobor 2013). The *Economist* noted too, that hundreds of textile factories collapsed across Nigeria because they could not compete with cheap Chinese garments. However, there are exclusive cases such as that South Africa is not severely affected because of temporary bilateral agreements between the governments that limit Chinese imports (Adisu *et al.* 2010).

In economic terms, I believe the positive impacts of Chinese investment in Africa far outweigh the negative impacts. With Chinese investment, regardless private or public investment, Africa's economy will be developed enormously because capital availability is an important factor to develop an economy. Also, China has created jobs for African which Africa would not been able to get for the past decades. Without China's investment, African countries' economy will still be underdeveloped as a result from reduction in export, only local-production goods are available in market and many more. Also, the aforementioned negative impacts could be overcome by implementing certain mutual agreement that benefits the locals as well as Chinese investors, but if we totally disallow Chinese investment, I believe the negative impacts will be much more severe.

3 China's Non-Economic Engagement
3.1 Political Engagement

With the huge Chinese unconditional aid in Africa such as the US$20 billion loan provided, relationship of Africa-China government-to-government has increased profoundly. China has close relations to the Islamist government in Sudan, democratic government in Botswana as well as authoritarian governments in Togo (Shinn 2011). They pay effort to develop and maintain a close government-to-government relationship and it is generally more successful than western countries in establishing close ties with African leaders in recent years due to Beijing's non-interfering policy. Unlike the West and International Monetary Fund (IMF), economic aids are often tied with conditions. A recent example of their close relationship would be China's new president Xi Jinping has chosen Africa as his first few official international trips. Xi visited Tanzania, South Africa, Congo during his trip to Africa during March 2013. Thus, there is no doubt that China's investment regardless the

state's investment or private enterprises investment improves the Africa-China relationship. With the establishment of a good relationship, China will be Africa's ally and Africa will be supported by China when it comes to financial, political matters. However, there are some certain negative political implications as far as it is concerned. Africa has a long history of unhappy experiences with foreign powers exploiting their country. Olusegun Obasanjo, president of Nigeria has criticized Chinese firms for violating safety and working standards (Courier 2011). For instance, In Nigeria, the Western Metal products Company Limited (WEMPCO), a Chinese company has been accused of releasing raw sewage into the river, polluting water resources which were supposed to be local fishermen's source of income.

Chinese investment is often related with conditions such as providing jobs for Chinese staff and profits for state-run firms, or in other words, profit-oriented. However, Beijing makes no issue of human rights concerns. In Zimbabwe, its president Robert Mugabe has been widely criticised for abusing human rights during his three decades in power as a president. China has been a supporter of Mugabe's government on the international stage and it would not oppose sanctions as it has a policy of not interfering African nations. As the video 'The Chinese are Coming' shown by BBC, the locals also agree that the presence of China in Zimbabwe makes life easier for Robert Mugabe (BBC 2011). With Beijing's support, Robert Mugabe will continue to stand strong as a President and abuse human rights, as the Chinese would not interfere in them. It is said that many of the worst autocratic leaders in Africa tend to favour China as an ally. In my opinion, the negative implications of Chinese invest-ment in Africa only occur in particularly a few countries but not every African nation in whole. Without Chinese investment, Africa-China relations might not be as strong as it is currently. Besides, by having China as an ally, there will be financial support, pooled resources for Africa and it will be transformed from a problem continent to an economically, politically strong continent.

3.2 Social-Cultural Engagements

Globalization is also defined as a process which involves an increasing interaction of people of different cultures, languages, and identities. As Chinese private investment begins to take place in Africa, there will be an influx of Chinese workers into Africa and thus causing the population of Chinese in Africa to increase. With the presence of Chinese ethnicity in Africa, there will be an increase in interaction between local Africans and Chinese and

cross-cultural experiences. Africans may have the opportunity to understand more about Chinese culture. For example, a private Chinese company sets up a business and the owner will reside in Africa. Eventually, their children will attend local African schools and learn to speak local African languages. This will be a major cultural breakthrough, where you see a young Chinese kid learning African language. Moreover, there are other beneficial socio-cultural impacts due to the Chinese investment such as inter-race marriages, presence of Chinese food in an African community, as well as an African kid practicing Chinese culture for example, the children in Tanzania practicing Tai Chi by the Tanzanian Beach, as shown in the BBC video. Besides, Chinese investment in aid form helps to develop Africa's infrastructure, including railway and road reconstruction, schools, clinic, hospitals. These plans improvise African community's standard of living. This can be illustrated with the establishment of road and railways; citizens could travel around easily. The Tanzania-Zambia Railway is one of the biggest complete sets of projects China has ever undertaken in overseas aid items (Jansson, Burke & Hon 2009). It has become a major truck line of communication linking the two countries and improving the well-being of citizens from both countries. The people of Tanzania and Zambia as well as other African nations praised this plan as 'the road to freedom' and a 'model for south-south cooperation'. The socio-cultural implications from China's investment in Africa are positive-inclined. Chinese investment in various African countries exposes African citizens to multiculturalism, where they could experience a new culture after experiencing the West's influence, but at the same time they could retain their unique identity and culture as Chinese are not there for colonization purpose.

China's activities in Africa are not decent as per the code of ethics. Myriad of activities by Chinese firms and tacit support by the Chinese government proves that this hypothesis can be accepted without much doubt. A brief summary of some selected incidents is reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Lack of transparency in trade and dealing, China in Africa

Particulars	Brief
Diamond mining in Marange, Zimbabwe by Chinese Company Anjing.	Ex-president Robert Mugabe announced that Anjin has looted diamonds worth $15b.

Source: K. Chimhangwa, 28 May 2021. https://www.opendemocracy.net
Major Problem: Anjing resisted its books being audited by the Auditor-General of Zimbabwe. Human rights watchdog Global Witness says that Zimbabwe security silenced dissent. In 2012, US office of Foreign Asset Control claimed that Anjin smuggled 3.7m carat of diamonds to Shanghai.

Particulars	Brief
Locals are not paid equal to Chinese labor counterpart	Local labour in Zimbawe is paid only $35 per month and are asked to work under inhuman conditions in 2021. Some 21 people were huddled in one room under COVID-19 epidemic restrictions.
Sources: *Economic Times* 15 September 2021. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/zimbabwe-under-complete-control-is-any-noticing Kenneth Matimaire. Zimbabwe: Chinese and military owned diamond firms score richest claim to diamonds under unclear circumstances, 21 January 2021. *Zimbabwe Independent.* https://www.business-humanrights.org	
Major Problem: Mistreatment of African labor and disrespect for the local law and order of Zimbabwe.	

Particulars	Brief
African Union building operations was spied on by China for 5 years.	AU building was built in 2012 by China and was spied on digitally. It was caught in 2017. *Le Monde*, a French newspaper, did an investigation.
Source: *Quarts-Africa.* https://qz.com/africa/1192493/china-spied-on-african-union-haeadquaters-for-five-years/	
Major Problem: China, although it is claimed that it is developing good relations with African countries by building the AU building, actually has nefarious intention of acquiring information illegally. In 2017 when it was caught, China declined comment and termed the allegation as 'absurd'.	

Particulars	Brief
Chinese company effectively imprisoned 300 workers for over a year in a factory during the COVID-19 lockdown in Mozambique.	Some 300 workers were not allowed to go out from the compound of Dugongo Cimentos for a year and lost their job if they decided to go out in 2020.
Source: Bowker. T. 2021. 'We're being treated like slaves': Factory Workers Stuck Yearlong during Lockdown. 24 August 2021. https://www.vice.com/en/article/wx5kmw/were-being-treated-like-slves-factory-workers-stuck-in-year-long-lockdown	
Major Problem: Chinese companies do not care for human rights and do not respect local country laws.	

Particulars	Brief
State capture in Congo and bribe of $10 million to Kabila family.	State capture and fraud.
Source: Fraud, bribery linked to China - Congo 'deal of the century': Report. Read more at: https://www.aninews.in/news/world/others/fraud-bribery-linked-to-china-congo-deal-of-the-century-report20211201213818/	
Major Problem: Corruption and illegal gain.	

Particulars	Brief
Land grabbing in DR Congo	A Chinese company, ZTE International, leasing thousands of unutilized hectares of land was labelled by Oxfam, a UK charity and others as 'land grab'.
Source: Ighobor, K. 2013. China in the Heart of Africa: Opportunities and Pitfalls in a Rapidly Expanding Relationship. *Africa Renewal* January. https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/january-2013/china-heart-africa	
Major Problem: China's inroads into Africa's agricultural sector include the 20 demonstration centres that President Hu said will 'help African countries	

increase production capacity'. But there was a backlash when the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo leased thousands of unutilized hectares of land to ZTE International, a Chinese company, in a deal that Oxfam, a UK charity, and others have labelled a 'land grab'. The 'land grab' accusation may be overstated, according to a study by the UK's Standard Chartered Bank. But the authors of the study believe that in the longer-term China could well seek to import much more food from Africa which, by World Bank estimates, has 60 per cent of the world's uncultivated land. 'Given Africa's potential, China is likely to turn towards it'.

Particulars	Brief
Collapse of local textile industries in African countries like Mali, Nigeria, etc.	Many Africans often refer to the poor quality of Chinese products and blame their low prices for the collapse of local industries.

Source: Ighobor, K. & A. Haidara 2012. Malian Women Create Beauty and Profit: Hand-dyed Fabrics Win Praises, Capture Markets. *Africa Renewal* April.
https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2012/malian-women-create-beauty-%E2%80%94-and-profit

Ighobor, K. 2013. China in the Heart of Africa: Opportunities and Pitfalls in a Rapidly Expanding Relationship. *Africa Renewal* January.
https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/january-2013/china-heart-africa

Major Problem: Comatex and Batexci, two leading textile companies in Mali, have been severely affected by cheap fabrics from Asia. 'Hundreds of textile factories collapsed across Nigeria because they could not compete with cheap Chinese garments', noted the *Economist*, which approvingly added that the Tanzanian government has stopped Chinese from selling in that country's markets. Chinese are welcome as investors, but not as 'vendors or shoe shiners', said the *Economist*.

Particulars	Brief
Crippled Furniture Industry in Zimbabwe	Import of Chinese furniture has continued to affect the African furniture industry.
Source: Ighobor, K. 2013. China in the Heart of Africa: Opportunities and Pitfalls in a Rapidly Expanding Relationship. *Africa Renewal* January. https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/january-2013/china-heart-africa	
Major Problem: In May 2013, Neil Bruce, head of Zimbabwe's Furniture Manufacturers Association, told the country's parliament that imported Chinese furniture, 'which is not strong', is crippling the local furniture industry.	

Particulars	Brief
Abuse of Workers in Chinese-owned Mines in Zambia.	Chinese-run copper mining companies in Zambia routinely flout labor laws and regulations designed to protect workers' safety and the right to organize.
Source: Zambia: Workers Detail Abuse in Chinese-Owned Mines. A Report by Human Right Watch on 03 November 2011. https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/03/zambia-workers-detail-abuse-chinese-owned-mines	
Major Problem: Performance assessments of some Chinese investors have not been stellar. The managers of Chinese-run mines in Zambia have been accused of not taking adequate safety measures for their local workers.	

Particulars	Brief
Destruction of Natural Habitat in Gabon	Uproar of Conservative following Operations of Chinese-run Oil Company in Gabon.
Source: Alfroy, P. 2006. China Sparks Conservation Uproar in Gabon. *IOL* 29 September 2006. https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/china-sparks-conservation-uproar-in-gabon-295607	
Major Problem: A Chinese oil firm is exploring in a Gabonese national park, angering environmentalists. State-run Sinopec, the largest refinery in energy-hungry China, has been prospecting for oil in the Loango national park in southern Gabon and has employed methods that critics say respect	

neither the law nor the environment. The company, which has declined all comment on the affair, was ordered by Libreville this month to halt all prospecting activities in the park. But the embarrassing case continued to cause upheaval in a country torn between the pressure to develop and the pressure to preserve its natural heritage.

Particulars	Brief
Poaching and illegal exports wildlife	African Wildlife is under threat due to the illegal activities of the Chinese.

Source: Pilling, D. & E. Feng E. 2019. The Impact of Chinese Investment in Africa, Including Development, Job Creation & Possible Environmental Degradation: How Chinese Entrepreneurs are Quietly Reshaping Africa. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 04 April 2019. https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/the-impact-of-chinese-investment-in-africa-including-development-job-creation-possible-environmental-degradation/

Major Problem: Not all Chinese entrepreneurs have a positive impact. In Madagascar, they are blamed for illegal exports of rosewood and zebu, a type of cattle. Chinese demand for African wildlife also fuels poaching, from Zambia to Mozambique.

4 An Overall Overview

An overview of China's engagement in Africa will be done by bringing together relevant but scattered evidence of the positive impacts (Sinophilia) and the negative impacts (Sinophobia) of the operations of Chinese firms and investments in Africa, in order to extend our understanding of the emerging academic tribes and territories shaping the evolving Afro-Chinese economic engagement landscape. Chinese presence in Africa holds a great fascination for most African nationals, academics, and commentators (Lekorwe *et al.* 2016; O'Brien 2016). Their achievements in technological and infrastructure advancements are a matrix by which African states and entrepreneurs can be measured.

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Sinophilia: The Chinese economic reforms which have catapulted a once agrarian economy into one of the world's largest industrial economies are inspiring and remarkable. Many Africans and scholars therefore see the Chinese socio- economic and infrastructure development model as a blueprint that can be duplicated or borrowed in order to unlock the huge developmental potential of many African economies (Johnston & Earley 2018). From the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 until the modern times, Chinese foreign politico-economic policy instruments have been far more aligned to the needs and interests of African governments (Anshan 2007; Campbell 2008); their past diplomatic records, devoid of colonialism and imperialism, have left no negative records on African states (Alden 2007). In the 1960s China's anti-colonial ideals and Marxist belief that independent states are obliged to help colonized states to achieve and defend their national independence, actually led to increased Chinese activism on the African continent (Alden & Alves 2008). Anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements in Africa greatly benefited from Chinese support. Indeed, China provided monetary and technical support to several African countries in the heady days of the independence struggle, with countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, and Ghana being beneficiaries of such support (Alden & Alves 2008; Gao 1984; Yu 1977). This financial support, post-colonially, has transformed into substantial resource-backed loans and grants to help finance much- needed infrastructure projects in many African states. Especially welcome is the fact that the Chinese loans, interwoven with aid and trade, are relatively cheap and easily accessible with few or no conditions, which represents a major shift from the 'strings-attached' financing policies of Western donors and the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that were inimical to most African economies in the 1980s (Tan-Mullins, Mohan & Power 2010). This is 'China's "exceptionalism"' (Alden & Large 2011). An exceptionalism pillared on the foreign policy framework and principle of non-interference in internal affairs – the 'Beijing consensus' (Ramo 2004) – and underpinned by the belief that the best way to minimize conflict and instability is to improve economic development. In summary, African leaders' affection for China has increased substantially over the last few decades due to China's long- established, non-colonial diplomatic partnership and, more recently, its decision to provide soft loans and invest in building infrastructure in Africa. We now turn our attention to the significant role and patterns of Chinese - African engagement in order to unpack what is driving Africa's new affection for China.

Sinophobia: As noted earlier, unlike the pre-1990s when China's foreign policy in Africa was primarily based on politico-ideological or politico-diplomatic favor-procuring considerations, China's post-1990s foreign policy engagements in Africa have been purely structured around politico-China in Africa economic considerations (Konings 2007) and resource security concerns, with the acquisition of oil and hard natural minerals forming the epicenter of these economic motivations (Alves 2011; Wang 2012; Taylor 2006; Jaffe & Lewis 2002). This comes as little surprise given that China's enormous growth in the manufacturing and technological sectors has necessitated the sourcing of commodities from the outside world (Sanfilippo 2010; Jaffe & Lewis 2002). Resource security has even become more pertinent in China's foreign policy framework since the nation's social stability as well as its regime survival has come to depend on the maintenance of its massive economic growth achieved over the last couple of decades (Alves 2011). Within this context, Africa – with its large but little-exploited resources – has caught China's eye and has thus emerged as a new frontier for Chinese resource acquisition (Jiang 2009). Indeed, China has also caught the attention of African governments and this can be explained by the fact that many African governments resent the conditions attached to Western donor assistance (Shinn 2007). China, however, positions itself as an undemanding investor. Therefore, many African governments, in desperate need of funding opportunities to rehabilitate or construct major infrastructure projects, have embraced Beijing with open arms. Beijing, in turn, has not resisted this warm welcome. Consequently, China has carefully ramped up its official development assistance (ODA) flows to African states in furtherance of its foreign policy interests (Dreher *et al.* 2018) including resource acquisition objectives (Taylor 2007). These types of grants and loans in particular, collateralized by strategically important national assets with high long-term value and mostly to be repaid in kind, have mainly targeted not only well-known mineral rich countries such as Angola, Sudan, Nigeria, and the DRC but also new oil-producing countries such as Ghana and Uganda (Alves 2011). Indeed, many African countries have received millions of dollars of loan facilities from China (Were 2018). A recent dataset released by the China Africa Research Initiative (CARI) at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies reveals that between 2000 and 2017 African governments and their SOEs had received loan facilities worth US $143 billion from Chinese government, banks and contractors, Angola being the top recipient with US $42.8 billion (CARI 2018). Herein lies the danger, the Sinophobia engendering deep-seated

discontent among some Afro-Chinese analysts. Seeking to interpret the Chinese infrastructure-for-resource loans 'black box', some analysts suggest that the loans are meant to 'debt trap' African states, to 'resource grab' the extensive mineral riches of Africa. The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson opines that the Chinese predatory loan practices undermine African regimes and mire them in debt (Kazeem & Dahir 2018). A closer look at the debt situation of some African economies lends credence to these assertions: while Chinese loans are less substantial in the debt of some African countries, Chinese loans in Zambia, the DRC, and Djibouti remain the most significant contributor to high risk of or actual debt distress (Eom *et al.* 2018). Kenya's debt to GDP situation makes for grim reading (Sanghi & Johnson 2016) and as of March 2018 its debt to GDP ratio had surpassed 62%, with China its largest lender and accounting for 72% of the bilateral debt (Dahir 2018). This raises serious concerns about the debt sustainability management of these African nations. Similar concerns have been raised in oil-rich Angola which owes about half of its external debt to China (Adegoke 2018).

Bilateral and external debts are nothing new. All countries, whether rich or poor, are financially indebted to another in some way. It is the structure of the Chinese loan deals with Africa and other debt-strapped countries that is so alarming (Ayittey 2017): Chinese loans are sometimes shrouded in secrecy and mostly do not require good governance guarantees (Taylor 2007); they are collateralized with important national assets and there always exists the prospect of the Chinese government taking over these assets in case of default by the borrowing country. This is what Chellaney (2017) refers to as 'China's debt trap diplomacy' and 'creditor imperialism'. Illustrative of the worrying 'risky-Chinese-loan deals' phenomenon in Africa is the loan agreement signed between the DRC government and the Chinese SOEs in 2007 (*Global Witness* 2011; Kabemba 2016; Marysse & Geenen 2009). Examining the specific features of the agreement – the suspensive and resolutive conditions, the barter principle that masks the real price of the commodities, its expansive duration, the exemptions from taxes, etc. Marysse and Geenen (2011) find that even the renegotiated version of the deal represents an unequal exchange, with the Congolese government having been the weaker bargaining party in the contracts. Kabemba (2016) finds the loan agreement to have been negotiated in secrecy. A report by Global Witness confirms that very little information is publicly available on the Sino - Congolese 'infrastructure for resource' deal signed in 2007 and further reveals that the deal was negotiated behind closed doors without any prior international bidding process (*Global Witness* 2011).

Over the past few decades, Afro-Chinese relations have grown steadily in all arenas – socio- economic, political, and development co-operation (Alden *et al.* 2008) – with China increasingly becoming an important source of financial support for many African nations. Frequent diplomatic exchanges, pillared on past and present politico- economic alliances, have also strengthened the ties between the two. Their 'developing country' tag also continues to shape their present alliance. However, while many African countries still struggle due to minimal industrialization coupled with huge deficits in infrastructure, the Chinese have succeeded in achieving a phenomenal economic rise. Therefore, many African states are now considering shackling their economic and political future to a Chinese lead precisely because of its demonstrable achievements and its perceived economic trajectory (Alden *et al.* 2008). However, despite the fact that the African economic landscape continues to benefit from Chinese-funded infrastructure and industrial projects aimed at enhancing economic development, claims about the impact of China in Africa, often portrayed as a 'Chinese scramble for Africa', have fomented fear within Afro-Chinese engagement. We argue that within African policy circles (governments, scholars, and special interest groups) the tensions between opposing perspectives on the value of the Sino - African business relationship have reached a crescendo.

First, some Chinese loan deals with African governments lack the necessary transparency to fit with the often touted 'win-win' Afro-Chinese relationship; they have also been shown to be skewed in favor of Chinese interests.

Second, although there are nuanced and sometimes good labor relationships between Chinese employers and African employees, empirical findings frequently reveal a worrying theme of labor abuses and Chinese entrepreneurs' disregard for labor union regulations.

Naturally, these disturbing revelations overshadow any positive Afro-Chinese undertakings. I therefore recommend that African public financial officials carefully strengthen their financial negotiation capacity in loan deals by involving civil society organizations and, if necessary, competent foreign financial firms in the transaction of such deals. The Forum on China - Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) can also help in this regard. Ministers of finance and economic planning should co-ordinate and find mechanisms to superintend

such huge financial transactions as the Sino - Congolese deal. Interventions must not always come from other foreign financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank as happened in the Sino - Congolese deal.

5 Challenges and Policy Goals

On the flip side, China's engagement with Africa brings forth some challenges. One of the challenges is the assurance that the Chinese imports meet the various quality and safety standards. Another is the risk of emergence of Chinese monopolies in the medium to long term after which they may also embark on collusive and predatory business practices as well as extraction of monopoly rents just like the current operators. This is especially the case since majority of the Chinese enterprises are still state-owned or are closely tied to the central government or the various provincial governments and can be part of the global strategy of the Chinese state. Possibly more daunting is the challenge posed by cheap Chinese imports the already eroded industrial of many African countries. Specifically, if, as is already the case in South Africa and Nigeria, for example, Chinese imports are resulting in factory closures and the inevitable job and income losses, Chinese imports may intensify the de-industrialization process initiated by the liberalization policies embedded in the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP. See Wilson III, 2005; Shin 2005 and Kaplinsky *et al.* 2006) for experiences of specific examples of how these situations have arisen in specific African countries.

Perhaps more fundamental challenge is the fact that cheap Chinese imports may actually discourage diversification of the productive based of these African economies away from crude agricultural and mineral products towards manufacturing and eventually service or knowledge intensive activities. This is a real challenge because new investors may either find it unattractive to compete with cheap Chinese imports or find it unnecessary because Chinese imports are so large leaving no significant excess demand which new entrants can aspire to meet. In that case, instead of Sino - African trade partnership lending assistance to the transformation and development process in Africa, it will actually truncate it. This along with the de-industrialization effects of cheap Chinese imports will indeed reverse the gains of industrial development made during the first two decades of independence in Africa.

Africa has experienced more violent conflict over the last four decades than any other continent. These conflicts have predominantly been in countries like Angola, DRC, Sierra Leone and Sudan that are endowed with immense natural resources including oil and minerals. The main source of conflicts has primarily been over how to control these resources. Peace and stability are beginning to prevail in many countries, although in some – like Sudan – violent conflict is still the biggest single obstacle to development. Oil revenues earned from China's trade partnership with some of these governments may also be used to prop up dictators, obstruct transparency in commercial transactions and fuel conflicts and human rights abuses in Africa (Lyakurwa 2006). These conflicts often plunge the poor into deeper poverty. The challenge is for the African rulers to prevent escalation of conflicts and socio-political instability. The instrumentality of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in this regard cannot be over-emphasized.

Foreign companies involved in oil, minerals and other extractive industries must make their payments more open to public scrutiny. Oil and mineral exporting African countries should continue to enforce the rule of law and reduce corruption and rent-seeking activities so that revenues from oil and minerals can contribute to economic growth. This has been the route of countries like Botswana that have implemented such policies and have experienced economic development, growth and reduction in poverty (Olomola 2005). The challenge is for African rulers to insist on these foreign companies subscribing to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as a precondition for granting mining concessions.

Chinese direct investment in Africa is driven primarily by the need to secure key commodity and energy assets as well as capturing under tapped markets (China Online 2006). In short, Chinese FDI are primarily resource seeking and secondarily market seeking. In contrast, Chinese investment in OECD countries is primarily market seeking, in which case, they go into strategic partnership with enterprises in the host countries. Chinese FDI in Africa is also typically accompanied by Chinese workers and most of the supplies are sourced directly from China. This is not universally the case. For example, in response to complaints by Nigeria and South Africa, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce has encouraged its companies to increase investment spending in developing countries, aiding technology development and personnel training. Specifically, in response to complaints by Nigeria's Minister of Science and Technology, Huawai Technologies Nigeria Limited, a Chinese FDI has established a training centre in Nigeria to train 2000 telecoms

engineers annually. Finally, China has a way of extracting extremely generous terms for its investment outside the resource seeking activities. For example, Nigeria offered incentives including no expatriate quota, full repatriation of capital and profits in addition to other generous incentives. China Monitor 2006. The challenge, therefore, is for African countries to invest the inflow of resources from the commodity booms in improving investment climate, developing human resources necessary to support investment in new industries and establish development banks necessary to provide financial support to nascent private investors. In this connection, there must be good and transparent governance while implementing these initiatives in order to ensure that the desired outcomes are realized. Successful implementation of these initiatives under good governance will create necessary conditions for Chinese FDI to have significant backward and forward linkages in the host economies. Needless to say, careful monitoring and evaluation processes, including requisite research must be carried out regularly to ensure that Chinese and, indeed, FDI from other sources and in any sector are beneficial to the host countries.

South African President Jacob Zuma warned in July 2013 that the then 'unbalanced' trade pattern is unsustainable. He was referring to the tendency of Africa to export raw materials to China while largely importing only cheap manufactured goods. Maged Abdelaziz, the UN Secretary-General's special adviser on Africa, told Africa Renewal that the continent must develop a strategy for its dealings with emerging economic giants such as China, Brazil and India. Along this line, talks began in South Africa in June 2011 to merge three regional trade groupings (the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community) into a 'grand free trade area' incorporating 26 countries with a combined gross domestic product of $1 trillion. Such a combined strength could give Africa a more assertive voice at the negotiating table. The China - Africa relationship will get stronger. The editors of China Returns to Africa sum it up: So long as Africa's development requires huge foreign investments, so long will China continue to be relevant. 'Irrespective of the concerns being voiced in some circles in Africa, Chinese involvement is widely considered to be a positive-sum game'.

6.0 Conclusions

In all, the positive economic, political and socio-cultural impacts of China's investment far outweigh the negative impacts. China's investment in Africa is

mutually beneficial for both countries. It is clear that China has been the most effective country in meeting the needs of Africans so far. Comments made by African leaders in the past shows that African countries welcome Chinese investment. Moreover, Chinese investment developed Africa nations in recent years such as Tanzania, Zambia and many more. As compared to investment by the West, Africa only obtained mere benefits from it and did not achieve any form of outstanding development. Although there are several limitations of Chinese investment as discussed, I believe those could be overcome by implementation of policies such as the limiting Chinese imports, enforcing strict regulation on private Chinese companies' labour standards. African countries must insist an equitable economic relation with China. They should not be satisfied by the means of increase in trade, but should receive technological transfers and more in exchange, so that they could be less dependent on other countries in future. African governments should further develop policies and strategies to increase transfer of technology and Chinese-local business integration. After all, the ultimate goal is to render benefits to Africa's economy.

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Exploratory Study of the Trade Relations between India and South Africa: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

The trade relationship between India and South Africa underscores their positions as leading regional economies in Asia and Africa. Currently, their bilateral trade stands at approximately $18.87 billion, reflecting considerable growth and potential for further economic collaboration. Both countries face challenges, such as economic complexity, infrastructural constraints, and socio-political dynamics, which present opportunities for strategic engagement. Given the rapid economic ascent of Asia, with India and China as central players, South Africa stands to benefit significantly from strengthened ties with India. India and South Africa possess complementary economic strengths, particularly in labor and resource-intensive sectors, which are vital for their bilateral trade. This study highlights that fostering stronger diplomatic ties, enhancing infrastructure, and expanding bilateral trade initiatives can create mutually beneficial growth opportunities. Both nations have a comparative advantage in certain sectors, enabling them to leverage each other's strengths for more sustainable trade relations. By investing strategically in areas like education and technology, India and South Africa have the potential to position themselves as regional powerhouses, creating a solid foundation for a long-term trade partnership. Strengthened economic cooperation between these emerging markets is essential for advancing bilateral relations and unlocking new opportunities for mutual growth and development

Keywords: Africa, India, South Africa, Revealed comparative advantage (RCA), Trade relations

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Introduction

Over the years, despite significant growth in trade between Africa and India by more than ten-fold from US$ 6.3 billion in 2002 to US$ 82.5 billion in 2021 (Afreximbank and Export - Import Bank of India 2018), Africa has been experiencing large deficits in their trade balance with India. In terms of exports and imports, Africa contributed 9.6% and 7.8% to India's global trade (Agrawal 2021). On the other hand, India contributed 6% and 5.6%, respectively, to Africa's global exports and imports (Agrawal 2021). India is Africa's fourth-largest national trading partner behind China, the EU, and the USA, accounting for more than 6 percent of total African trade in 2023, up from 2.7 percent in 2001 (Agrawal 2021; Export - Import Bank of India 2023). However, Africa now accounts for just over 8 percent of India's total trade, but this is only marginally higher than the 7.6 percent in 2001 (Afreximbank & Export - Import Bank of India 2018).

Factors responsible for the growing trade relations include the growing stock of foreign direct investment undertaken by African and Indian corporate entities; the deepening economic and political ties illustrated by several strategic initiatives, most notably "Focus Africa" launched by the government of India in 2002 to boost trade and investment between Africa and India, and the India - Africa Forum Summit launched in 2008. Furthermore, the government of India's Duty-Free Tariffs Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries and the strengthening cooperation between Afreximbank and Exim India have contributed immensely to the growth in trade relations between the two countries. However, South Africa has not fully utilized its business potential with India (Matshediso 2016). Hence there is a need to explore ways and means of continuing, increasing, and diversifying trade and investment initiatives in the respective economies.

It is on this background that some business delegations from South Africa and India have exchanged views on how the governments of both countries can partner with the private sector to create an encouraging environment for business to flourish (Matshediso 2016). In his remark on the business forum held in South Africa to explore the business opportunities between India and South Africa the Indian representative, Adi Godrej highlighted opportunities in sectors such as financial services, pharmaceutical and net care, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure, energy, and education that can be explored with emphasis on the mining sector as an important area of collaboration between India and South Africa. He further stressed the need for

South African companies to look for opportunities in the deep mining sector in India (Matshediso 2016).

The trade relationship between these two emerging markets reflects their status as regional leaders in Asia and Africa, respectively. As of recent years, the bilateral trade value stands at approximately $18.87 billion, indicating significant growth potential for both countries. Despite the progress, challenges such as economic complexity, infrastructure limitations, and socio-political dynamics present both hurdles and opportunities for future trade development. It's on this background that this study explored the opportunities and challenges inherent in the trade relations between India and South Africa. The remainder of this study is divided as follows. Section 2 provides a brief description of the literature while the methodology and discussion are provided in Sections 3 and 4 respectively. The conclusion to the study is provided in Section 5.

Literature Review

Historically, India and South Africa have had great economic and political connections, shaped by colonial rule and independent movements. The colonial history and experience between South Africa and India have defined their peculiar growth path and trade relationship.

> India came to our aid when the rest of the world stood by or gave succour to our oppressors. When the doors of international councils were closed to us, India opened the way. You [India] took up our battles, as if they were your own. Now that we have been victorious, it cannot be said too often that our victory is also India's (Nelson Mandela).

In 2021, India - South Africa trade amounted to USD 11.6 billion, crossing the landmark target of USD 10 billion (Ranjan 2022). Apart from the fact that these two economies have a huge deposit of tradable materials with large natural/mineral deposits, the level of trade openness and trade creation among them has helped to fast-track their growth potentials. Given this, South Africa and India face the common challenge of turning the legacy of underdevelopment and poverty into sustained economic growth and socio-economic improvement (Jacob Zuma 2016). He added that South Africa must

explore ways to continue, increase, and diversify trade and investment initiatives in the respective economies. This means that the presidency identified a lack of cooperation and collaboration as the major hindrance to trade development and breaking the poverty trap in South Africa.

Over the years, South Africa has successfully removed most of the trade barriers that inhibit free trade between the country and its trading partners by participating in some of the trading blocs such as the BRICS, Uruguay Round of the then General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the European Union (EU), and recently sealed a free trade agreement with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This is because the country realizes the enormous benefits and key role trade policy can play in South Africa's growth strategy.

Today, their partnership extends into diverse sectors, including agro-processing, financial services, pharmaceutical and net care, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure, energy, and education. Trade opportunities exist in these sectors between India and South Africa and by extension to all African countries, especially as most African economies are rich in mineral and human resources. These emphasize the areas of trade opportunities that can exist between India and South Africa and by extension to all African countries, especially as most African economies are rich in mineral and human resources. This invariably defines the pace of economic growth between the two countries. The moment these economies realize their interdependence and harness their economic prowess to tap and utilize these resources, then growth is inevitable. However, these resources are either not tapped or underutilized/underdeveloped giving rise to the countries' overdependence on foreign sectors for survival. South Africa and India face the common challenge of turning the legacy of underdevelopment and poverty into sustained economic growth and socio-economic improvement.

Trade relations especially in the informal sector among emerging markets like South Africa and India have been identified as the major driver of growth and their international trade relationship. In Africa, it is estimated that this sector accounts for a significant (or even major) part of urban employment (two out of every three people derive their livelihoods from the informal sector) and it is estimated to be growing at an annual rate of 7% (Karl 2000: 53). Aside their growth potentials, the informal sector mobilizes between 30% and 80% of the workforce, mainly in cities where they are experiencing a large influx of people from the countryside. The development of the informal sector to spur trade has been attributed to the divergence between the growth in the urban

population and the employment growth in the formal economy. Therefore, the informal sector makes up for the employment gap in the urban area which the formal sector could not fill. This is done through trade creation and promotion both locally and internationally.

The informal sector comprises a number of activities ranging from small commercial activities to small production and service enterprises which finds it major bearing within the retail trade sector. Although this aspect of trade could be said to be basically domestic-oriented, however, their spillover effects have a multiplier impact on international trade thereby opening up opportunities for the economy to harness the benefits of international for growth.

Looking at its trade relation with India, South African imports from India are concentrated in textiles and clothing, vegetable products, and raw hides and leather, while exports to India are more diversified with contributions made by mineral products, chemicals, base metals, textiles and pulp and paper (Van Seventer & Mlangeni 2002). The turn of events in South Africa's growth and financial development plans especially in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 has shifted the attention of policymakers to how to harness the benefits from foreign sectors through improved trade policy. Growth in the volume of goods and services exported prior to the start of the financial crisis in 2008 averaged only 3.9% per year (2000–2007), which is why, despite booming commodity prices, the current account deficit rose strongly over the period (Lawrence & Robert 2012).

Methodology

The study follows a descriptive analysis to explore the nature of trade between South Africa and India while the trend analysis will be employed to investigate and predict their future trade movements based on recently observed trend data. This approach is considered appropriate to test this objective because of its ability to forecast future values based on past observed values. Therefore, it is based on historical data about the trade performance given the overall trends of the market and particular indicators within the market.

The study considered two countries, South Africa and India. This is because apart from their historical and colonial similarities, these two countries have strong trade ties and relationships. The sample period spans from 1996 to 2022 which includes the colonial and post-colonial era for South Africa as well as the pre-financial and post-financial crisis era for both countries. The data to

be used consists of the annual trade balance for South Africa and India. The study is a comparative time series analysis between South Africa and India. The study adopts the revealed comparative advantage (RCA) to analyze the comparative advantage of each country's exports and imports rather than just on their absolute costs. This is because the RCA provides participatory trading between countries whereas absolute cost advantage does not. The country with a higher ratio of RCA to that of its trading partner can be said to have imposed stronger trade barriers. Moreover, the barriers to trade such as tariffs, import quotas, export licenses, etc. can be verified from the countries' trade relation agreements.

The concept of revealed comparative advantage hinges on the law of comparative advantage for international trade relations. Therefore, whereas a high RCA implies that the product is highly competitive and can be exported to countries having low RCA, a lower RCA implies otherwise. In other words, a value less than 1 implies that the country has a revealed comparative disadvantage in the product. Therefore, countries strive to protect their export in the foreign market by trying to get an edge over the competitors' products in the global market. A sample of several commodities was made and then their respective average RCA based on Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) three digits level was calculated for India and South Africa for the period 1996-2022. This will provide a clear picture of trade potential between the countries. A comparison of the RCA index of the various sampled commodities between India and South Africa was made to help identify the commodity having the core comparative advantage for exportation.

Discussion
The Nature and Amount of Trade between South Africa and India

India's exports to South Africa for 2022 – 2023 amounted to USD 8,474.42 million, and India's imports from South Africa amounted to USD 10,397.83 million (Table 2). Major Indian exports to South Africa include vehicles and components, transport equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, etc. Major Indian imports from South Africa include gold, steam coal, copper ores and concentrates, phosphoric acid, manganese ore, etc. In total, India exported about 5,020 commodities to South Africa while the total items imported by India from South Africa stood at 1,149 commodities in 2023 (IBEF 2024).

Table 1: INDIA – SOUTH AFRICA BILATERAL TRADE (Figures in Million USD $)

Years	India's Imports	India's Exports	Total Trade
1995	300	300	600
2013 - 2014	6 075.0	5 074.0	11 149.0
2014 - 2015	5 301.99	6 496.52	11 798.51
2015 - 2016	5 948.42	3 588.74	9 537.16
2016 - 2017	5 833.75	3 545.95	9 379.71
2017 - 2018	6 834.70	3 825.21	10 659.91
2018 - 2019	6 517.33	4 067.20	10 584.53
2019 – 2020	6 969.79	4 108.17	11 077.97
2020 - 2021	7 568.50	8 934.20	16 502.70
2021 - 2022	10 965.81	6 085.29	17 051.10
2022 - 2023	10 397.83	8 474.42	18 872.25
2023 - 2024*	8 266.95	6 263.23	14 530.18

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Indian exports to South Africa totaled $3.58B and $8.32 billion in 2020 and 2022 respectively. Indian exports to South Africa mainly consist of refined petroleum ($3.51B), cars ($1.24B), and packaged medicines ($573M). During the 25 years between 1995-2020, the exports of India to South Africa increased at an annualized rate of 10.4%, from $300 million in 1995 to $3.58 billion in 2020. However, a five-year trend indicates that Indian exports to South Africa have increased by 15.1%, from $4.12 billion in 2017 to $8.32 billion in 2022.

On the other hand, South Africa's exports to India totaled $7.88B and $9.14 billion in 2020 and 2022 respectively. Exports from South Africa to India consisted primarily of gold ($3.33B), coal briquettes ($2.94B), and raw copper ($666M). During the 25 years between 1995-2020, the exports of South Africa to India have increased at an average annualized rate of 13.9%, from $304M in 1995 to $7.88B in 2020. However, a five-year trend indicates that South Africa's exports to India have increased marginally at an annualized rate of 1.2%, from $8.61B in 2017 to $9.14B in 2022. This therefore implies that the trade balance is still in favour of South Africa apart from 2020-2021.

South Africa, after Nigeria, is still India's largest trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chakraborty 2020). However, the SA economy faces several challenges, including falling commodity prices, labour unrest, high unemployment, inequality, a high budget deficit, rolling power outages, and spiraling public debt. Furthermore, the Economic Complexity Index of 0.64 placed India 40 in 2022, and its total exports ($468B) ranked 15. On the other hand, the Economic Complexity Index (ECI) of 0.076 placed South Africa 59th in this category, however, it ranked 34 in total exports of $477 billion.

Comparative Advantage Between South Africa and India

In terms of trade relations with India, South Africa's imports from India are mainly focused on textiles and clothing, vegetable products, and raw hides and leather. This is evident as India enjoys a comparative advantage in hides and skin products, textile and clothing, and vegetable products compared to South Africa (See Table 1). In contrast, South Africa's exports to India are more varied, including mineral products, chemicals, base metals, and pulp and paper (Van Seventer & Mlangeni 2002; Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC 2021). As seen from Table 2, South Africa has a comparative advantage over India in wood, minerals, and stone and glass. The turn of events in South Africa's growth and financial development plans especially in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 has shifted the attention of policymakers to how to harness the benefits from foreign sectors through improved trade policy.

Table 2: Average Revealed Comparative Advantage Index

Product Group	South Africa (India as trading partner)	Product Group	India (SA as trading partner)
All Products	1,00	All Products	1,00
Capital goods	0,19	Capital goods	0,50
Consumer goods	0,11	Consumer goods	2,14
Intermediate goods	2,04	Intermediate goods	1,23
Raw materials	0,94	Raw materials	0,20

Animal	0,08	Animal	1,11
Chemicals	0,70	Chemicals	1,55
Food Products	0,48	Food Products	0,78
Footwear	0,01	Footwear	1,13
Fuels	0,73	Fuels	2,12
Hides and Skins	0,15	Hides and Skins	4,29
Mach and Elec	0,11	Mach and Elec	0,53
Metals	1,29	Metals	1,42
Minerals	2,77	Minerals	0,75
Miscellaneous	0,06	Miscellaneous	0,33
Plastic or Rubber	0,12	Plastic or Rubber	0,83
Stone and Glass	3,15	Stone and Glass	1,42
Textiles and Clothing	0,39	Textiles and Clothing	2,28
Transportation	0,68	Transportation	1,82
Vegetable	0,09	Vegetable	2,68
Wood	1,19	Wood	0,34

Source: Author's Computation based on data from World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS 2024)

Opportunities in India - South Africa Trade Relations

There has been a dramatic increase in bilateral trade and other forms of cooperation between India and South Africa in recent years (Naidu & Reddy 2011). A bilateral trade target of USD $ 20 billion between the two countries was committed in 2016, but the COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed the goal. As of the 2022 – 2023 financial year, bilateral trade totaled USD $ 18 billion, which means the target is within reach (IBEF 2023; Diplomatist 2020). Aside from economic growth, SA is a good business destination for Indian companies because it offers opportunities for engagement with Africa in general - particularly through Johannesburg, one of Africa's financial centers.

South Africa primarily exports more raw materials to India. Approximately 99.48% of South Africa's total exports to India are represented by the top 10 South African exports, according to the Department of Trade,

Industry, and Competition with, raw materials accounting for 73.67 percent of total exports (DTIC 2021; Consulate General of India to South Africa 2024). However, South Africa's top 10 imports from India account for 96.29% of total imports, of which 55.81% are manufactured goods and 44.19 % are raw materials (DTIC 2024). A wide variety of goods are exported from India to South Africa, including mineral products, vehicles, aircraft, transport, chemicals, machinery, metals, textiles, vegetables, plastics, motor vehicle equipment, and stone/plaster / cement. On the other hand, mineral products, wood pulp/materials, metals, chemicals, pearls and precious stones, machinery, equipment, textiles, food products, and stone/plaster/cement are some of the items imported from South Africa to India. During 2020, India had a large net trade with South Africa in the exports of Chemical Products ($1.02B), Transportation ($645M), and Mineral Products ($597M) (IBEF 2023).

During 2020, South Africa had a large net trade with India in the exports of Mineral Products ($4.28B), Precious Metals ($1.59B), and Transportation ($947M) (IBEF 2023). Despite the great potential for trade between the two countries, there are still many opportunities to explore. In the area of renewable energy, since ISA members India and South Africa are both active members, there is a lot that both countries can benefit from. For example, given its high level of development in the area of technology, India can offer its expertise in solar technology, while South Africa demonstrates a strong commitment to renewable energy sources (Drishti IAS 2023).

Furthermore, the advanced IT sector of India which is home to the world's top digital companies can contribute significantly to South Africa's digital economy (*Forbes India* 2024). For instance, South Africa already has numerous Indian companies located there, including Infosys and TCS which provide services in the areas of banking, energy, manufacturing, education, insurance, telecommunications, agriculture, automotive, and health care among others (PwC 2019). Other areas that India and South Africa can explore joint ventures include fields such as biotechnology, fintech, and artificial intelligence, leveraging India's tech-driven growth and South Africa's interest in developing a high-tech economy (India - Africa Partnership Report 2023). Indian and South African pharmaceutical companies need to form partnerships to address healthcare needs across Africa, as India is a leader in affordable pharmaceuticals (India - Africa Partnership Report 2023). Collaborations such as this will be in alignment with BRICS initiatives related to healthcare and pharmaceutical manufacturing (India - Africa Partnership Report 2023).

Food security and technological transfer in agriculture represent areas of growth for the agriculture sector. South Africa can learn from India's experience in improving agricultural productivity, which aims to reduce food imports through enhanced local production (Export - Import Bank of India 2023). Other benefits include contribution to employment, market for domestic firms, and Knowledge and skill exchange. For example, Nihilent Technologies has trained 2,800 students and 700 unemployed youth through Change the World, an IT center set up in the Eastern Cape in 2011. Nihilent also offers ten technology internships each year, with 67 interns. An initiative of the FirstRand Foundation, the program aims to address the critical skills shortage that exists in South Africa by bridging the gap between tertiary education and employability. Furthermore, the Tata Automobile Corporation Academy (accredited by SETA) is to train employees in manufacturing, engineering, and related services. Despite the great potential for trade between the two countries, there are still many challenges to overcome.

Challenges Facing India - South Africa Trade

The presence of trade barriers such as high tariffs and different regulatory standards poses challenges, despite the opportunities. According to the International Trade Administration (ITA 2024), there has been a reduction in tariffs from around 20 percent to an average of 7.1 percent in 2020. However, despite these reforms, importers complained that there exist nearly forty different rates, and the tariff schedule remains unduly complicated. The tariffs on Indian textiles and automotive parts, for example, can be prohibitively high in South Africa, which reduces their competitiveness (Naidu 2007; ITA 2024).

Furthermore, given that both countries are faced with several internal political and economic challenges, the capacity to take advantage of the opportunities may be severely limited. For example, foreign investment can be hindered by South Africa's energy crisis and political instability, while India's periodic shifts towards protectionist policies can impede trade flows (Drishti IAS 2023). Additionally, China and the US compete for South Africa's trade relationship, which has significant investments in the country and provides competitive trade financing (Vickers 2012). Other challenges include the ease of doing business, ownership requirements, bureaucracy and red tape, migration, and VISA issues. For example, the Ease of doing business though improving still has a long way to go to attract investment opportunities with

India ranked 63 and South Africa occupying the 84th position. Migration and VISA issues have also been reported as another major challenge. Bringing people from India at critical times when setting up a new subsidiary of Indian companies in SA has been a challenge due to delays in obtaining necessary permits. Furthermore, there is no direct flight between the two countries which makes trade further challenging.

Conclusion

South Africa and India have a strong trade relationship that holds considerable promise for growth. While tariff barriers, infrastructure, political dynamics, external competition, and economic instability present challenges to both nations, they also have opportunities for diversifying their trade portfolios and building a stronger partnership despite these obstacles. Agricultural products, renewable energy, information and communication technology, and pharmaceuticals provide a wide range of potential growth areas for both nations. This exploratory study highlights the strategic value of expanding India - South Africa trade beyond traditional sectors, encouraging the development of new areas of cooperation. As they continue to navigate global challenges, these two regional powers can set an example of successful collaboration and solidarity on the global stage.

Furthermore, Asian countries are believed to be the next global powerhouse with China and India leading the pace. This offers immense potential for South Africa, particularly with their trade relations with India. India's trade complementarities with SA have significantly increased. They are the two important emerging economies of the world with a strong history of understanding. India and South Africa enjoy comparative advantages for labor and resource-intensive sectors. Therefore, building economic cooperation between the two economies is imperative for more robust bilateral relations in a positive direction. A stronger diplomatic relationship, infrastructure investment, and fostering bilateral trade initiatives can lead to new growth opportunities between India and South Africa. In addition, by making strategic investments in education, and technology, they will have the potential to establish themselves as regional powerhouses and build a long-term, mutually beneficial trade relationship.

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Stigmatizing against PLHIV and HIV Prevalence in South Africa:
A Linear Discriminant and Spatio-Temporal Analysis

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Abstract

Evidence from the South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behavior, and Communication Survey shows that the level of HIV prevalence in each province varies. Among the factors that account for this variation is the level of stigma meted out to people living with HIV (PLHIV). This social and sometimes economic discrimination against PLHIV not only poses a psychological threat to the victim but also undermines the effort made by the constituted authorities to reduce and manage cases of PLHIV in every province. The fear of being stigmatized can make it difficult for people who have developed signs and symptoms to make themselves available for testing and for PLHIV to make themselves available for treatment. The former will increase the rate of prevalence in provinces where stigma against PLHIV is high. This situation may result in the movement of persons who have developed signs and symptoms and are PLHIV to provinces with less likelihood of being stigmatized for testing and treatment. Based on the

preceding, the study, therefore, hypothesizes that: (i) there is significant variation in the level of stigma against PLHIV; (ii) an increase in stigma against PLHIV is likely to increase HIV prevalence; and (iii) a spatial-temporal pattern exists in the stigma against PLHIV and HIV prevalence in provinces in South Africa. Annual time series data for the periods 2005 2012, and 2017 for all the provinces were sourced for analysis. Insignificant variation (*F-stat. = 1.17, p-value = 0.33*) in behavior towards family members living with HIV and HIV prevalence (*F-stat. = 2.52, p-value = 0.10*). The linear discriminant analysis shows that gender plays an important role in the level of prevalence of HIV in all nine (9) provinces of South Africa. The positive coefficient of the spatial dependence variable (i.e., ρ = 0.38) confirms that space and time matter in the prevalence of HIV. The negative coefficient (i.e., -79.91, p-value 0.05) on the spatially weighted stigma against PLHIV by family members was also computed from the estimated spatial fixed effect (SFE) and the other models. Findings demonstrate that gender factors account for social behavior that affects stigmatization against PLHIV and the prevalence of HIV and that there is a spatial relationship between stigmatization against PLHIV and the prevalence of HIV. There is an urgent need to address the burden of social and economic stigma against PLHIV and its impact on HIV prevalence. A notable disparity in the degree of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) was observed throughout all nine provinces, except for instances of stigmatization originating from family members. The provinces of Kwazulu-Natal and the Northern Cape have demonstrated notable advancements in reducing the amount of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) within their respective business and workplace environments.

Keywords: HIV Prevalence, Stigma, Spatio-temporal, PLHIV, Linear Discriminant Analysis

1 Introduction

A prominent societal concern pertains to the stigmatization linked to contagious illnesses. When individuals experience stigmatization, their physical and psychological well-being is confronted and exposed to various forms of criticism and social condemnation (Rewerska-Juśko & Rejdak 2022). Stigma can impede the general population's adoption of health-promoting behaviors, utilization of healthcare services, and treatment adherence, among other repercussions (Yuan *et al.* 2021). HIV/AIDS, a contagious ailment, encom-

passes both health-related and societal ramifications; nonetheless, there exists a paucity of scholarly literature addressing its social dimensions. According to Dejman *et al.* (2015), individuals living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) face significant obstacles, with stigma and prejudice being identified as the most prominent issues. South Africa ranks fourth globally among the top ten nations exhibiting a high prevalence of HIV infection. Based on the findings of Statistics South Africa (2021), it has been determined that around 13.63 percent of the whole population is afflicted with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Furthermore, the prevalence rate of HIV among individuals aged 15 to 49 will be 19.50 percent in 2021. According to Statistics South Africa (2021), there has been a notable rise in the overall population affected by HIV/AIDS, with figures escalating from 3.8 million individuals in 2002 to 8.2 million individuals as of 2021. South Africa is widely recognized as the global hub of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As an illustration, it is noteworthy that over 70 percent of those afflicted with HIV/AIDS are located on the continent of Africa, with Southern Africa alone accounting for approximately 30 percent of the global infected population. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), South Africa possesses the highest recorded population of individuals living with infections globally, with a reported figure of 7.97 million in 2018.

The stigma associated with HIV/AIDS is associated with specific gender identities, racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, impairments, and socioeconomic statuses. The stigmatization of individuals belonging to marginalized groups, such as gay men, impoverished black women, and those living in poverty, has resulted in a tendency to associate them with a higher prevalence of AIDS. This association is often based on the perception of their engagement in risky behaviors and their limited access to contraception and healthcare services. Furthermore, they have been held accountable for the dissemination of infectious diseases. According to Velloza *et al.* (2015), there is a significant prevalence of stigma in South Africa. However, in recent years, there has been a notable decrease in stigma due to the implementation of the HAART program and several social programs aimed at addressing this issue. Nevertheless, it is important to note that stigma persists in certain regions. South Africa has witnessed numerous instances of stigmatization, including the tragic murder of Gugu Dlamini in December 1998, who was targeted for openly disclosing her HIV-positive status (McNeil Jr. 1998). Another distressing incident involved the murder of Mpho Mtloung and her mother by Mtloung's husband, who subsequently took his own life (Treatment Action Campaign [TAC] 2000). Additionally, there have been cases of HIV-positive

children being denied access to schools, attempts to exclude individuals from employment, discrimination within military services, marginalization within local communities, and rejection by families. According to Skinner and Mfecane (2004), Lorna Mlofane, an activist with the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), was subjected to sexual assault and subsequently killed in 2004 due to her HIV-positive status. Numerous instances, including the aforementioned incidents, have gained significant recognition and received extensive media coverage.

Several published papers have included stigma as a significant aspect of their research findings. For instance, studies conducted among university students and schoolchildren have documented the presence of stigma (Cloete, Simbayi, Kalichman, Strebel & Henda 2008; Kang'ethe 2015; Pebody 2012; Sanabria 2016; Visser, Makin, Vandormael, Sikkema & Forsyth 2009; Wilson & Fairall 2010). According to a study conducted by Volks *et al.* (2016), University of Cape Town (UCT) students expressed the belief that their social standing and educational background provided them with a safeguard against HIV infection, leading them to perceive themselves as less vulnerable compared to individuals residing in townships or rural areas.

The presence of stigma related to HIV has a significant impact on the behavior and testing outcomes of individuals who are seeking HIV testing in certain locations (Kumar & Jha 2006). Extensive literature exists on stigmatized behavior, although limited scholarly investigations have been undertaken about the mobility patterns of individuals, particularly women, who seek anonymity by venturing outside their residences to undergo testing in alternative locations. Potential hurdles to HIV testing include the presence of misinformation concerning attitudes towards HIV testing and stigmatizing sentiments towards individuals living with HIV (Kandwal *et al.* 2010). The present study aims to examine the implications of stigma on the incidence of HIV across the nine provinces of South Africa. Stigma can have wider implications at the international level too. For example, countries that effectively combat HIV stigma and promote inclusive health policies enhance their standing on the global stage and attract foreign aid, investment, and cooperation in other areas. Stigma can lead to barriers to collaboration as countries fear sharing data on HIV; it can impact tourism as well as world order in some ways. Section 2 of the document provides an overview of the materials and statistical methods employed in the study. The findings are provided in Section 3. Results are discussed in Section 4. The concluding remarks and recommendations are provided in Section 5.

2 Material and Statistical Methods

2.1 Material

The present study employed secondary data obtained from the South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour, and Communication Survey conducted over many years, specifically 2005 2012, and 2017. The objectives of the survey were to uphold the monitoring of HIV infection and behavior in South Africa as well as enhance comprehension of the underlying factors fueling the HIV epidemic. Additionally, the survey aimed to gather data for the evaluation of the South African National HIV, AIDS, and STI Strategic Plan from 2012 to 2016 and to collect data necessary for monitoring the HIV indicators essential for preparing the country report for various international organizations. The analysis utilized a panel dataset comprising the nine provinces of South Africa, namely the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Northern Cape, and Western Cape. The dataset covered the years 2005, 2012, and 2017.

2.2 Statistical Methods

The study employed exploratory cross-sectional and panel analyses to investigate the relationship between stigma against people living with HIV (PLHIV) and HIV prevalence. The frequentist approach was utilized to examine various statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum. Additionally, spatial autocorrelation analysis, specifically Moran I and Geary C, was employed to assess the spatial patterns of stigma and HIV prevalence. Furthermore, the study also employed a frequentist approach to conduct exploratory cross-sectional and panel analyses on two additional variables: sexual debut before the age of 15 and condom use during the last sexual encounter among individuals aged 15 years and older. Similar statistical measures, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum, were employed to analyse these variables. Furthermore, the acquired data was analysed through a predictive linear discriminant function and a spatial panel linear regression. The purpose of the discriminant analysis was to investigate potential disparities between groups in terms of stigmatisation towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and the prevalence of HIV. On the other hand, the spatial panel linear regression analysis revealed a spatial correlation between stigma towards PLHIV and HIV prevalence across all provinces in South Africa.

3 Results

3.1 *Exploratory Data Analysis*

Table 1 shows summary statistics for the mean percentage responses to each perspective of stigmatisation against PLHIV relative to the periods under review. The mean percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV (i.e., If you knew that a shopkeeper or food seller had HIV, would you buy food from them?) in the nine provinces computed are 70.09, 79.20, and 84.40 for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 4.34, 3.36, and 4.21 for the mean percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV are computed for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While the minimum of 64.10, 74.30, and 78.80 were recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, a maximum of 76.20, 84.60, and 89.60 were recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively.

Second, the mean percentage YES responses to the question (i.e., Would you be willing to care for a family member with AIDS?) on stigmatisation against family members living with HIV in the nine provinces computed are 90.38, 91.87, and 90.52 for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 2.16, 2.03, and 2.60 for the mean percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against family members living with HIV are for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While the minimum of 87.50, 87.60, and 86.90 are recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against family members living with HIV for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, a maximum of 94.80, 86.90, and 95.90 are recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Lastly, the mean percentage NO responses to the question (i.e., Is it a waste of money to train or give a promotion to someone with HIV/AIDS?) on stigmatisation against PLHIV at the workplace in the nine provinces computed are 73.73, 82.60, and 85.08 for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 5.05, 5.51, and 2.70 for the mean percentage NO responses to the question on stigmatisation against PLHIV at the

workplace are computed for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While the minimum of 67.90, 72.10, and 79.60 are recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against PLHIV at the workplace for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, a maximum of 80.20, 89.40, and 89.10 are recorded as percentage YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against business owners or staff living with HIV for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Stigma Against PLHIV for Individual Years 2005, 2012, and 2017

Statistics	Stigma biz (% YES response)			Stigma family (% YES response)			Stigma work (% NO response)		
	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017
Mean	70.09	79.20	84.40	90.38	91.87	90.52	73.73	82.60	85.08
SD.	4.34	3.36	4.21	2.16	2.03	2.60	5.05	5.51	2.70
Min	64.1	74.30	78.80	87.50	87.60	86.90	67.90	72.10	79.60
Max	76.2	84.60	89.60	94.80	96.90	95.90	80.20	89.40	89.10

Source: Author's computation based on data collected from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
Note: stigma biz = stigma against PLHIV at their places of doing business; stigma family = stigma against family members who are living with HIV; stigma work = stigma against PLHIV at their place of work/employment

Table 2 shows summary statistics for the prevalence of HIV infection, sexual debut before the age of 15 years among youth aged 15–24 years, and condom use at the last sexual encounter among people aged 15 years and older relative to the periods under review. The average number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa computed is 1761, 2880, and 2580 for the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 2.16, 2.03, and 2.60 are computed for the mean number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa during the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While a minimum of 1056, 1923, and 1865 are recorded as the number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, a maximum of 2729, 6798, and 4621 are recorded as the number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, in all nine (9) provinces of South Africa.

Second, the average number of youths aged 15–24 years who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 years in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa computed is 323, 435, and 355 for the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 134, 185, and 104 were computed based on the average number of youths aged 15–24 years who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 years in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa during the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While the minimum of 156, 286, and 237 are recorded as the number of youths aged 15–24 years who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 years for the years 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, a maximum of 535, 852, and 591 are recorded as the number of youths aged 15–24 years who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 years during the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, in all nine (9) provinces of South Africa. Lastly, the average number of people aged 15 years and older who confirmed using condoms during their last sexual encounter in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa computed is 1028, 1715, and 1325 for the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. Also, standard deviation statistics of 468, 806, and 514 were computed based on the average number of people aged 15 years and older who confirmed using condoms during their last sexual encounter in the nine (9) provinces of South Africa during the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively. While the minimum of 469, 1085, and 934 were recorded as the number of people aged 15 years and older who confirmed using condom use during their last sexual encounter for the years 2005 2012, and 2017,

respectively, a maximum of 1805, 3550, and 2438 were recorded as the number of people aged 15 years and older who confirmed using condom use during their last sexual encounter during the periods 2005 2012, and 2017, respectively, in all nine (9) provinces of South Africa.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on the prevalence of HIV infection, sexual debut before the age of 15 years among youth aged 15–24 years, and condom use at the last sexual encounter among people aged 15 years and older for each of the years 2005, 2012, and 2017

Statistics	HIV prevalence			Sex debut			Condom Use		
	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017
Mean	1761	2880	2580	323	435	355	1028	1715	1325
SD	681	1540	872	134	185	104	468	806	514
Min	1056	1923	1865	156	286	237	469	1085	934
Max	2729	6798	4621	535	852	591	1805	3550	2438

Source: Source: Authors' computation based on data collected from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
Note: HIV prevalence = Prevalence of HIV Infection; Sex debut = Sexual Debut before age of 15 among youth aged 15–24 years; Condom use = Condom use at last sexual encounter among people aged 15 years and older.

The descriptive statistics results for the panel data are presented in Table 3. The observation column indicates that our study utilised a balanced panel consisting of nine (9) cross-sectional units and three (3) years of data. The total number of data points in the panel, denoted as N, is 27. The overall and within effects are computed based on a dataset spanning 27 province-years. The disparity is computed across a total of nine provinces. The panel's aggregate findings for the percentage of YES responses to the question on stigmatisation against company owners living with HIV are as follows: The mean was calculated as 77.90 percent, with a standard deviation of 7.18 percent. The minimum and maximum values recorded were 64.10 percent and 89.60 percent, respectively. The standard deviation for the between groups was calculated to be 3.35. The minimum and maximum values reported for this group were 72.60 and 82.57, respectively. In addition, the standard deviation for the inside group was calculated to be 6.42. The minimum and maximum values reported for this group were 65.26 and 87.30, respectively.

Furthermore, the panel's analysis revealed that the average percentage of negative replies (NO) regarding stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the workplace was computed to be 80.47%, with a standard deviation of 6.64. The minimum and maximum values recorded for this question were 67.90% and 89.40%, respectively. The standard deviation for the between-group variable was calculated to be 2.59. The minimum value recorded was 77.27, while the maximum value recorded was 85.30. In addition, the standard deviation for the within-group group was calculated to be 6.16. The minimum and maximum values observed were 69.14 and 88.04, respectively. In relation to the comprehensive panel analysing the proportion of affirmative responses to the inquiry regarding stigmatisation towards individuals with HIV within their families, the mean and standard deviation were calculated as 90.92 percent and 2.29 percent, respectively.

Additionally, the minimum and maximum values were recorded as 86.90 and 95.90, respectively. The standard deviation for the variable "between" was calculated to be 1.17. The smallest value observed was 89.53, while the greatest value recorded was 92.50. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the inside group was calculated to be 2.00. Additionally, the minimum and maximum values within the dataset were recorded as 87.92 and 94.36, respectively. Furthermore, the mean value of 2407 was calculated as the average for individuals who are HIV-positive and are aged 2 years and older, encompassing the entire panel. The standard deviation was calculated as 1157, with the minimum and greatest values recorded as 1056 and 6798, respectively.

The standard deviation for the variable "between" was calculated to be 971. The least value observed was 1643, while the largest value recorded was 5716. In addition, the standard deviation for the within-group group was calculated to be 684. The minimum and maximum values observed were 420 and 4489, respectively. In the fifth instance, the average number of individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 who experienced their sexual debut prior to the age of 15 was calculated as 371 for the entire panel. The standard deviation was calculated to be 147, with the minimum and greatest values recorded as 156 and 852, respectively. The standard deviation for the between groups was calculated to be 133, with the minimum value recorded as 244 and the maximum value recorded as 659. In addition, the standard deviation for the inside group was calculated to be 684.

Furthermore, the minimum and maximum values were recorded as 228 and 564, respectively. Finally, the aggregate panel calculated that 1356 individuals, aged 15 years and older, reported using condoms during their most recent sexual experience, representing the average number. The standard deviation was calculated to be 656, with the minimum and greatest values recorded as 469 and 3550, respectively. The standard deviation for the between-group variable was calculated to be 577. The least value observed was 891, while the largest value recorded was 2597. In addition, the standard deviation for the within-group group was calculated to be 351. Furthermore, the minimum and maximum values reported for this group were 563 and 2308, respectively.

Table 3 also presents the computed F-statistics for different responses to questions on stigmatisation against business owners living with HIV, stigmatisation against PLHIV at the workplace, stigmatisation against family members living with HIV, and stigmatisation against people living with HIV aged 2 years and older. The computed F-statistics for YES and NO responses to the questions on stigmatization against business owners living with HIV and the NO question on stigmatization against PLHIV at the workplace, respectively, are greater than the F-critical value. However, the computed F-statistics for YES responses to the question on stigmatization against family members living with HIV and people living with HIV aged 2 years and older, respectively, are less than the F-critical value.

Table 3: Panel Data Descriptive Statistic and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Result

Panel A: Panel Data Descriptive Statistic Results						
Variable		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Observation
stigma_biz	overall	77.90	7.18	64.1	89.60	N = 27
	between		3.35	72.6	82.57	n = 9
	within		6.42	65.26	87.30	T = 3
stigma_work	overall	80.47	6.64	67.90	89.40	N = 27
	between		2.59	77.27	85.30	n = 9
	within		6.16	69.14	88.04	T = 3
stigma_family	overall	90.92	2.29	86.90	95.90	N = 27
	between		1.17	89.53	92.50	n = 9
	within		2.00	87.92	94.36	T = 3
hiv_prevalence	overall	2407	1157	1056	6798	N = 27
	between		971	1643	4716	n = 9
	within		684	420	4489	T = 3
sex_debut	overall	371	147	156	852	N = 27
	between		133	244	659	n = 9
	within		684	228	564	T = 3
condom_use	overall	1356	656	469	3550	N = 27
	between		577	891	2598	n = 9
	within		351	564	2308	T = 3
Panel B: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results						
	F-stat.		*p-value*		*F-critical*	
stigma_biz	28.51		0.00		3.40	
stigma_work	15.19		0.00		3.40	
stigma_family	1.17		0.33		3.40	
hiv_prevalence	2.52		0.10		3.40	

Source: Authors' computation based on data collected from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

The correlation results for the selected variables in this investigation are presented in Table 4. A significant and positive correlation was observed between stigmatization towards business owners and stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the workplace ($r = 0.63$, $p = 0.00$). Additionally, a strong correlation was found between the number of youths aged 15–24 who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 and the number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older ($r = 0.87$, $p = 0.00$).

Table 4: Panel Data Pairwise Correlation Result

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1.00					
	-					
2	0.63**	1.00				
	[0.00]	-				
3	0.30	0.04	1.00			
	[0.13]	[0.84]	-			
4	0.32	0.26	0.15	1.00		
	[0.11]	[0.18]	[0.46]	-		
5	0.22	0.21	0.21	0.87**	1.00	
	[0.26]	[0.30]	[0.29]	[0.00]	-	
6	0.32	0.30	0.30	0.93**	0.95**	1.00
	[0.11]	[0.13]	[0.13]	[0.00]	[0.00]	-

Source: Author's computation based on data collected from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
Note: 1 = stigma_biz, 2 = stigma_work, 3 = stigma_family, 4 = hiv_prevalence, 5 = sex_debut, and 6 = condom_use

Furthermore, a highly significant correlation was observed between the number of youths aged 15–24 who had their sexual debut before the age of 15 and both the number of people living with HIV aged 2 years and older ($r = 0.93$, $p = 0.00$) and the number of people aged 15 years and older who reported using condoms during their last sexual encounter ($r = 0.95$, $p = 0.00$).

3.2   Exploratory Spatial Data Analysis (ESDA)

The maps depicted in Figure 1 illustrate the presence of varying levels of stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) at their respective business locations throughout South African provinces during the years 2005 2012, and 2017, with the exception of Gauteng. However, it is important to highlight the observed progress in reducing the degree of stigmatisation faced by People Living with HIV (PLHIV) within their workplace environments in the province of Kwazulu-Natal.

The maps depicted in Figure 2 illustrate the presence of varying degrees of stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) by their family members throughout different provinces in South Africa during the years 2005 2012, and 2017. However, it is important to acknowledge that each province displayed distinct variations in the degree of stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) in their respective business environments.
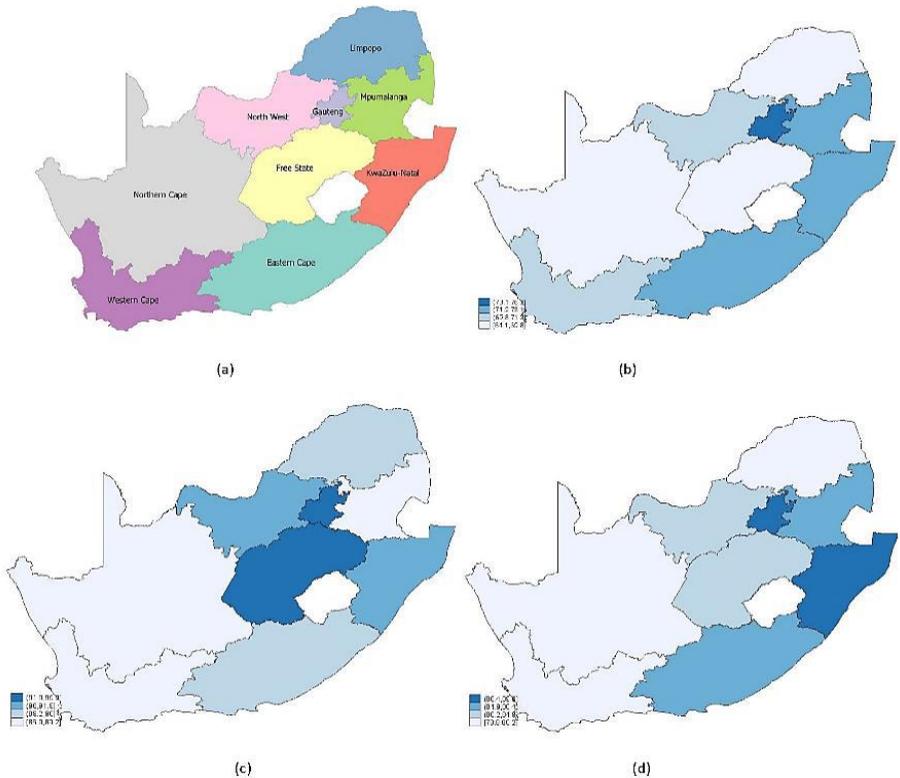
Figure 1: Maps showing the spatial distribution pattern of responses to the question on stigmatisation against PLHIV at their places of doing business during the periods 2005 (i.e., map b) 2012 (i.e., map c), and 2017 (i.e., map d).
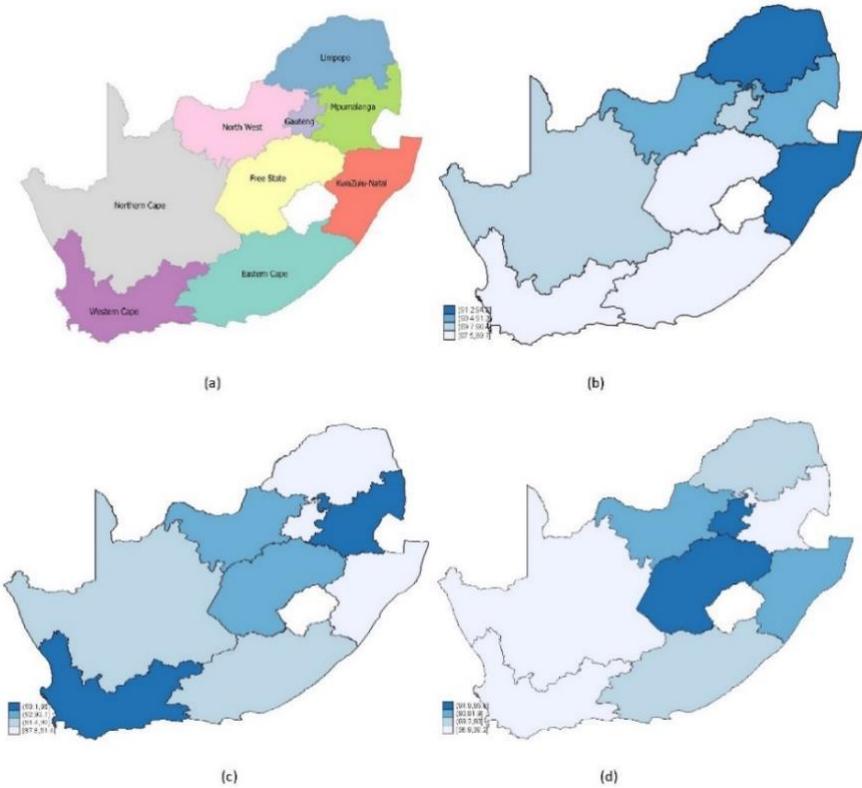
Figure 2: Maps showing the spatial distribution pattern of responses to question on stigmatization against PLHIV by family members during the periods 2005 (i.e., map *b*) 2012 (i.e., map *c*), and 2017 (i.e., map *d*).

The maps presented in Figure 3 illustrate the observed variations in the level of stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) in their respective workplaces throughout different provinces in South Africa over the years 2005 2012, and 2017, with the exception of Gauteng. However, it is important to highlight the progress made in reducing the level of stigmatisation against people living with HIV (PLHIV) in their workplace settings in the Northern Cape region between the years 2005, 2012, and 2017.
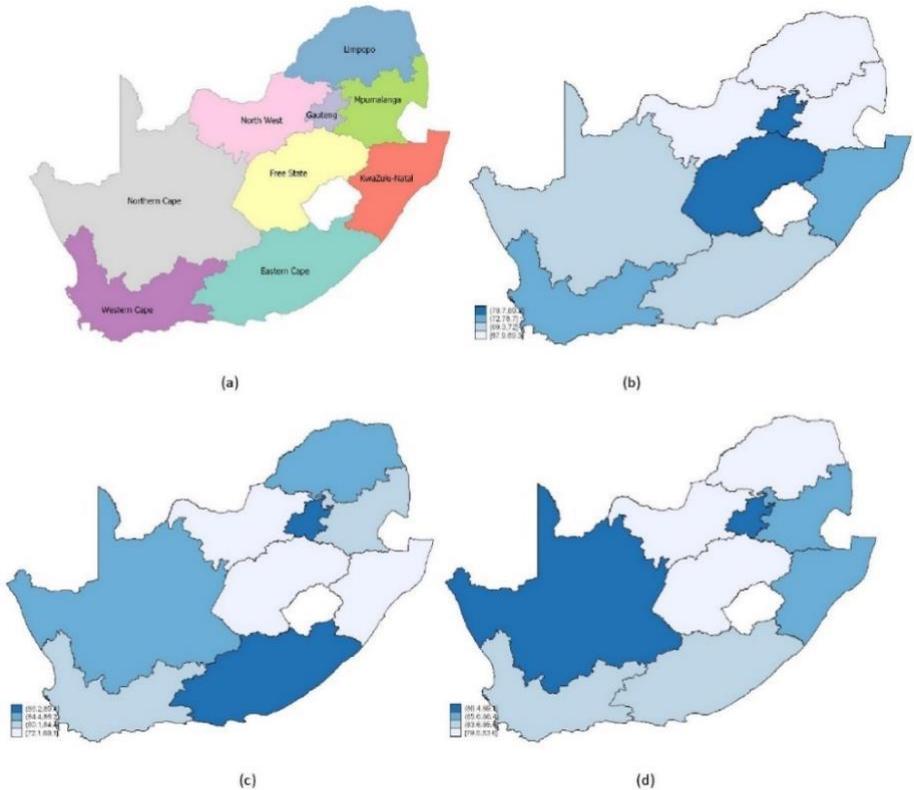
Figure 3: Maps showing the spatial distribution pattern of responses to question on stigmatization against PLHIV at their place of Work (e.g., In Private and Public Establishments) during the periods 2005 (i.e., map *b*) 2012 (i.e., map *c*), and 2017 (i.e., map *d*).

Table 5: Spatial Autocorrelation: Moran I

Variables	Moran I statistics [p-value]			Geary C statistic [p-value]		
	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017
hiv_prevalence	-0.122 [0.989]	-0.167 [0.682]	-0.136 [0.935]	1.025 [0.886]	0.913 [0.733]	0.924 [0.742]
stigma_biz	-0.287 [0.360]	-0.082 [0.805]	0.044 [0.342]	1.190 [0.291]	0.989 [0.733]	0.718 [0.113]
stigma_work	-0.284 [0.381]	-0.159 [0.838]	-0.437** [0.045]	1.184 [0.288]	1.237 [0.229]	1.549*** [0.009]
stigma_family	-0.179 [0.723]	-0.356 [0.117]	-0.013 [0.467]	1.054 [0.797]	1.094 [0.665]	0.932 [0.745]

Source: Author's computation based on data collected from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
Note: *, **, *** implies significance at 10% (i.e., 0.10), 5% (i.e., 0.05), and 1% (i.e., 0.01)

The results of the spatial autocorrelation tests, namely Moran's I and Geary's C, for each year, are displayed in Table 5. As stated by Górniak (2016), there exists a distinction in the interpretation of the Moran I and Geary C statistics. In the context of the Moran I statistic, a positive spatial autocorrelation is observed when the value of distance d is similar ($I > 0$). Conversely, a negative spatial autocorrelation is observed when the value of distance d is dissimilar ($I < 0$). When $I = 0$, the value of distance d is considered random.

Furthermore, in the context of the Geary C statistic, when the value of C falls between 0 and 1, it indicates a positive spatial autocorrelation, suggesting that values at a certain distance d exhibit similarity. Conversely, when C ranges between 1 and 2, it signifies a negative spatial autocorrelation, indicating that values at distance *d* are dissimilar. The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that, for each variable of interest across all years, the Moran I statistic (i.e., $I<0$) and Geary C statistic (i.e., $1<C<2$) suggest the presence of negative spatial autocorrelation. However, it is noteworthy that these statistics were found to be statistically significant (i.e., $p = 0.045 < 0.05$ and $p = 0.045 < 0.05$) only in the case of stigmatization against PLHIV at the workplace in the year 2017.

3.3   Discriminant Function Analysis

The results obtained from the discriminant function analysis undertaken in this study are presented in Table 6. Panel A shows the canonical linear discriminant analysis outcomes for HIV prevalence disaggregated by gender across several age groups. It also displays the results of stigmatization against people living with HIV (PLHIV) based on three established views, also stratified by age groups.   The estimated canonical correlations for dimensions one and two about HIV prevalence are 0.9341 and 0.7539, respectively. The F-statistics, namely 6.8547 and 3.2196, along with the corresponding p-values of 0.00 and 0.012, indicate that the computed canonical correlations for dimensions one and two are statistically significant at a 5% significance level (i.e., $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, in stigmatization against people living with HIV (PLHIV), the computed canonical correlations for the first and second dimensions are 0.9778 and 0.2221, respectively. The F-statistics, namely 5.1954 and 0.12967, along with the corresponding p-values of 0.02 and 0.88, indicate that only the computed canonical correlations for dimension one exhibit statistical significance at the 5% level (i.e., $p < 0.05$).

Panel B displays the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficient outcomes for HIV prevalence by gender across various age groups, as well as stigmatization against people living with HIV (PLHIV) from three established perspectives across distinct age groups. An increase of one standard deviation in HIV prevalence among males is associated with a predicted rise of 0.9950448 standard deviations on discriminant function 1 and 0.008556

standard deviations on discriminant function 2. Furthermore, an increase of one standard deviation in HIV prevalence among females is associated with a predicted rise of -0.7120348 standard deviations on discriminant function 1 and an increase of 1.223534 standard deviations on discriminant function 2.

Moreover, in the context of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV), an increase of one standard deviation in stigmatization against business owners is associated with a predicted rise of -1.141463 and 1.560969 standard deviations on discriminant functions 1 and 2, respectively.

Moreover, an increase of one standard deviation in stigmatization towards a family member who is living with HIV is associated with a decrease of -1.699982 standard deviations in the predicted values on discriminant function 1 and a decrease of -0.418699 standard deviations in the predicted values on discriminant function 2.

Finally, it can be observed that a one-unit increase in stigmatization against people living with HIV (PLHIV) at the workplace is associated with a 2.315041 standard deviation rise in the predicted values on discriminant function 1 and a -0.446396 standard deviation increase in the predicted values on discriminant function 2.

The discriminant functions under HIV prevalence are:

(i)   discriminant_score_1 = 0.9954*male + 0.0086*female; and

(ii)   discriminant_score_2 = 1.2235*female – 0.7120*male.

Also, the discriminant functions under stigmatization against PLHIV are:

(i)   discriminant_score_1 = 2.3150*Work -1.1414*Business-1.7000*Family; and

(ii)   discriminant_score_2 = 1.5610* Business -0.4187*Family - 0.4464Work.

Table 6: Linear Discriminant Analysis (Canonical linear discriminant, Standardized Canonical discriminant function coefficient, Canonical Structure, and Group means on canonical variables) Results

Panel A: Canonical linear discriminant

Fcn	HIV Prevalent among Male and Female [Group = Age]			Fcn	Stigmatization against PLHIV (work, business, and by family members) [Group = Age]		
	CC Stat.	F-stat.	Prob > F		CC Stat.	F-stat.	Prob > F
1	0.9341***	6.8547	0.00	1	0.9778**	5.1954	0.02
2	0.7539**	3.2196	0.012	2	0.2221	0.12967	0.88

Panel B: Standardized Canonical discriminant function coefficient

Prevalence by Gender	Function 1	Function 2	Perspective of Stigmatization	Function 1	Function 2
male	0.9950448	-0.7120348	Business	-1.141463	1.560969
female	0.008556	1.223534	Family	-1.699982	-0.418699
			Work	2.315041	-0.446396

Source: Author's computation using STATA 17.
Note: CC = Canonical Correlation

3.3 Spatial Linear Panel Regression (SLPR) Analysis

Panels A and B of Table 7 present the results of the estimated Spatial Durbin Model (SDM) and Spatial-Autoregressive Model (SARM). Table 7 also shows that Spatial Random Effects (SRE), Spatial Fixed Effects (SFE), Time Fixed Effects (TFE), Spatial and Time Fixed Effects (STFE), and Without Direct,

Indirect and Total Effects (No-DITE) variants of the SLPR models were estimated. First, while the spatial variable (i.e., *rho*) appeared to be statistically significant at 5% under STFE in panel A, it also appeared to be statistically significant at 5% under SFE in panel B. Moreover, a test was conducted to choose the most appropriate spatial model between SDM and SARM for discussion and prediction. Panel C shows the result of the test to determine the model to adopt for discussion. From the result and application of the stated decision rule, the SARM is considered the most appropriate spatial model for discussion and prediction. Hence, the SARM result will be the focus hereafter.

Table 7: Spatial Durbin Model (SDM) and Spatial-Autoregressive Model (SAR) for HIV Prevalence

Panel A: Spatial Durbin Model (SDM)				
SRE	**SFE**	**TFE**	**STFE**	**No-DITE**
Main				
stbiz	30.53	39.93	-7.22	23.84	30.53
stwork	-13.57	-11.45	-2.15	-7.37	-13.57
stfam	-78.84**	-71.71	-70.68***	-71.63***	-78.84**
sex_debut	-2.42	-5.93***	-4.40	-8.88***	-2.42
condumuse	2.13***	2.52***	-2.93***	3.46***	2.13***
const.	8794.68	-	-	-	8794
Wx				
stbiz	29.55**	29.83	-33.29	26.15	29.55
stwork	23.28	67.53***	26.42	16.78	23.28
stfam	-74.21	-	3.77	-	-74.21
sex_debut	-1.69	139.45**	-6.36	163.54***	-1.69
condomuse	0.36	-2.89	2.74**	-16.84***	0.36
		0.411		3.56***	
Spatial				
rho	0.09	0.24	-0.35	-0.76**	0.09
Panel B: Spatial-Autoregressive Model (SARM)				
SRE	**SFE**	**TFE**	**STFE**	**No-DITE**
Main				
stbiz	17.86	27.71	12.11	23.67	17.86
stwork	-16.76	-18.90	-13.01	-19.02	-16.76

stfam	-88.81**	-79.91**	-80.08**	-83.61**	-88.81**
sex_debut	-2.13	-4.89***	-1.80	-5.94***	-2.13
condomuse	2.19***	2.44***	2.12	2.75***	2.19***
const.	7872.522	-	-	-	7872.52
Spatial					
rho	0.17	0.38**	0.13	0.31	0.17
Panel C: Testing for SDM <u>OR</u> SARM					
chi2(5) = 8.38					
Prob > chi2 = 0.1366					
Decision Rule:					
H0: Fail to reject the null hypothesis, with a p-value greater than ten percent, use SAR.					
H1: Reject the null hypothesis, with a p-value less than five percent, use SDM.					

Source: Author's Computation. Note: **, *** implies significance at 5% (i.e., 0.05), and 1% (i.e., 0.01) respectively. SRE= Spatial Random Effects; SFE= Spatial Fixed Effects; TFE= Time Fixed Effects; STFE = Spatial and Time Fixed Effects; No-DITF = Without Direct, Indirect and Total Effects

The results presented in panel B show that only the coefficients (i.e., -88.81, -79.91, -80.08, -83.61, and -88.81) of stigmatising family members who are living with HIV (i.e., stfam) appeared with a negative sign and were also statistically significant at the 5% level under all the variants of models estimated. While the coefficients of sexual debut before the age of 15 years appeared with negative signs under SFE and STFE and were also statistically significant at the 1% level, the coefficient of the number of people aged 15 years and older who confirmed using condoms during their last sexual encounter appeared with positive signs under SRE, SFE, STFE, and No-DITE and was also statistically significant at the 1% level.

4   Discussion

The exploratory analysis of the data conducted shows that while the level of different perspectives on stigmatisation has reduced over the years, specifically, the variation in the stigmatisation of PLHIV by family members is low. This is so because the mean response result and the ANOVA result

suggest insignificant variation in behaviour towards family members and individuals living with HIV. An insignificant variation shows that the behaviour of family members towards a relative who is living with HIV has remained almost the same over the period under consideration. This finding is in line with findings made by Karim *et al.* (2008), who revealed that it would be easier to disclose HIV status to sexual partners and family members. And this may not be unconnected to the love and care they expect to receive from family members as opposed to strangers, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Our finding also aligns with the findings of a study in India where the authors confirmed that family members were informed first about HIV positive status as family is considered the primary support system in Indian culture (Yadav *et al.* 2006; Serovich, Craft, Reed & STDs 2012).

The result from the standardised canonical discriminant analysis shows a consistent positive linear relationship between the male gender and HIV prevalence. This finding proves to be consistent with the findings by Maughan-Brown *et al.* (2016) who associated the sexual behaviour of male partners with popularly held beliefs and culture in Sub-Saharan Africa with respect to men being considered superior and not answerable to women, which has led to leading a reckless life of having multiple sexual partners and engaging in unprotected sex (Ramjee & Daniels 2013; Rankin, Brennan, Schell, Laviwa & Rankin 2005). This study found a relatively improved level of HIV prevalence among the female gender over the years. This is in line with the findings of a study conducted in Soweto and Vulindlela, which found that despite the male dominance and gender violence that exist and prevent women from disclosing to their partners or acquiring VCT, more women were likely to get tested than men and held less AIDS-related stigma beliefs than men (Katirayi *et al.* 2017).

The spatial exploratory data analysis result shows a negative spatial autocorrelation in the level of discrimination against PLHIV at their places of work across the nine (9). This implies that the values of distance across the nine (9) are not similar. This may not be unrelated to the situation of varying levels of educational attainment, race, and urbanisation in the country. This factor may have contributed to the attitude towards PLHIV. This finding aligns with a previous study that showed that countries do not exhibit the same disposition towards PLHIV, even if they are spatially close or neighbours. For example, Maman *et al.* (2009) described the variation that exists in the behaviour of people towards PLHIV in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The correlational analysis conducted shows a positive but insignificant correlation between each of the perspectives of stigma and HIV prevalence. Moreover, our study found that a spatial relationship exists between stigmatisation against PLHIV and the prevalence of HIV. The positive ρ coefficient is consistent with omitted provincial factors that vary over time and affect HIV prevalence. The negative coefficient on the spatially weighted stigma against PLHIV by family members in neighbouring provinces indicates a clear and consistent effect by which a decrease in stigma against PLHIV by family members in one province encourages a decrease in stigma against PLHIV by family members in neighbouring provinces. A behavioural spillover was confirmed in this regard. Our finding aligns with that of Muleia *et al.* (2020), whose study revealed the presence of spatial patterns of HIV infection and prevalence in Mozambique.

Conclusion

A notable disparity in the degree of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) was observed throughout all nine provinces, except for instances of stigmatization originating from family members. The provinces of Kwazulu-Natal and the Northern Cape have demonstrated notable advancements in reducing the amount of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) within their respective business and workplace environments. Furthermore, it was underscored that gender-related factors play a significant role in shaping social behaviors that contribute to the stigmatization of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and the overall prevalence of HIV. Furthermore, our research has revealed the presence of a spatial correlation between the phenomenon of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and the overall prevalence of HIV. There is a pressing global concern, particularly in developing nations, to effectively tackle the issue of stigmatization towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and its implications on the prevalence of HIV. This trend of reduced stigmatization forebodes South Africa well in terms of its reputation worldwide and helps promote collaborations with countries.

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Appendix

id	Province	Stigma against PLHIV at their places of doing business (%)			Stigma against PLHIV by family members (%)			Stigma against PLHIV at their place of work/employment (%)		
		2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017	2005	2012	2017
1	EC	73.1	79.5	85.2	87.5	92	90	87.5	92	90
2	FS	65.8	84.6	84.9	87.7	92.1	92.3	87.7	92.1	92.3
3	GP	76.2	81.9	89.6	90.1	91.4	95.9	90.1	91.4	95.9
4	KZN	73.1	76.3	88.8	94.8	90.8	91.9	94.8	90.8	91.9
5	LP	64.5	74.3	79	91.5	87.6	89.5	91.5	87.6	89.5
6	MP	73	83.3	88.4	91.2	95	89.2	91.2	95	89.2
7	NW	71.2	78.3	84.7	90.5	93.1	90.5	90.5	93.1	90.5
8	NC	64.1	79.7	80.2	90.4	91.6	86.9	90.4	91.6	86.9
9	WC	69.8	74.9	78.8	89.7	93.2	88.5	89.7	93.2	88.5

Source: South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (2005, 2012, & 2017). Available online: www.hsrcpress.ac.za. Note: EC, FS, GP, KZN, LP, MP, NW, NC, WC under the province column denotes Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, and Western Cape provinces respectively.

Data on Condom use at last sexual encounter among people aged 15 years and older for each of the years 2005 2012, and 2017.

id	Province	2005	2012	2017
1	Eastern Cape	1267	1842	1045
2	Free State	590	1217	992
3	Gauteng	1613	2139	1887
4	KwaZulu-Natal	1805	3550	2438
5	Limpopo	856	1190	934
6	Mpumalanga	721	1116	1104
7	North West	726	1085	1140
8	Northern Cape	469	1235	970
9	Western Cape	1209	2065	1417

Source: South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (2005 2012 & 2017). Available online: www.hsrcpress.ac.za.

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Decolonial Epistemic Considerations

The Controversial Impact of Coronavirus Lockdown Measures in the Context of an Unequal Society – A Decolonial Theological Perspective

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Abstract

The socio-economic situation of Africa has been attacked by the coronavirus that has engulfed the planet faster than has any other deadly bacterium that has ever threatened the survival of the entire human race. The tsunami of the coronavirus has not only overtaken the life of many worldwide, but its consequences have also disrupted some transformational programmes. The pandemic arose while most African countries were at their peak of decolonising their education and information systems. The South African educational system, after having been affected by the #FeesMustFall campaign in 2015, is exerting an effort at the time to regain its previous momentum. Decolonisation, as part of its transformational trajectory, has had to face certain challenges arising from the arrival of the pandemic. Moreover, the moves that have been made to curb the challenge have had a huge impact on the decolonisation process that had started to reverse the colonialism of the past, with many African countries being reduced to mere shadows of themselves. Therefore, the intention, with the current research, is to unveil some of the obstacles that decoloniality has had to face as a result of the presence of the coronavirus, particularly within the South African context.

Keywords: Coronavirus, COVID-19, lockdown, inequality, Decolonial Theology

1. Introduction

The current author completely agrees with Alana Potter, who is quoted by Bega (2020:9) as saying: 'Covid-19 has shone a light on this profound pre-existing inequality and provides clear clues as to how it is driven. The emergency measures are welcome, but they need to be better monitored and the government needs to account against them. Importantly, the emergency measures need to lead to sustainable, lasting solutions in housing and in basic services provisions'.

The present article, instead of negating or dismissing the positive role of the lockdown rules, is aimed at indicating how they have come to expose the inequalities prevalent in South Africa, as well as how they have impacted on the decolonising of the life of the marginalised in society. The approach taken is directed at uncovering whether the socio-economic conditions of most African people were taken account when the rules governing the lockdown conditions, imposed to halt the spread of the virus, were first devised. Accordingly, the article exposes whether the tools and rules employed to assist in curbing the pandemic have been universally and acceptably applied, and whether they cannot still do much to save and protect the majority of the people in the country, and on the African continent, from contracting the virus. Prof Themba Sono has correctly indicated that the measures taken against the spread of the coronavirus have served to delay, or to undermine, the impetus of the decolonisation movement. Such was articulated in his telephonic interview with Munghana Lonene, in the programme, Africa wa vulavula, broadcast on 8 April 2020 (SABC 2020a). The gist of the broadcast forms the basis of the current research, in which the author intends to unveil, among other matters, how the measures that are being implemented to curb the virus are also the means by which decolonisation projects can be disrupted. The news reports that are contained in newspapers, and that are broadcast on the radio and television, as well as via other media sources, have been used in the study, since the research has been undertaken during the time of quarantine, when the opportunities to visit libraries, as well as to employ other methods of research, have been very limited.

In defining the nature of the coronavirus, Araie (2020:12) has the following to say: 'No event on earth could have sent about 16 000 airliners into storage, curtailed international global travel by 95%, forced 195 countries to seal their borders, cost the world a loss of over 2 trillion dollars leading to more than 50 million people being rendered jobless'. Such is the depth to which the

pandemic of Covid-19 has harmed and disrupted worldwide functioning. In overcoming the differences of race, religion, caste, colour, language, status, and wealth, among others, the virus has also managed to force all people to use a single universal language, namely one of 'survival'.

2. Short Background to the Emergence of the Coronavirus Pandemic

2.1. Definitions

Christensen and Senthilingam (2020) define coronaviruses as follows: 'Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are common among animals. In rare cases, they are what scientists call zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted from animals to humans. According to Health24 (2020), the World Health Organization (WHO) describes the so-called 'virus' as 'a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. The name comes from the Latin word 'corona', which means 'crown' or 'halo', and refers to the shape of the virus particle when viewed under a microscope'.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2020) identifies the coronavirus as giving rise to the 'widespread chaotic fear and boundless death caused by an invisible enemy'. According to Dennis Chow (2020):'Early research suggests that the virus closely resembles a known coronavirus harbored in horseshoe bats, according to Ian Jones, a professor of virology at the University of Reading in England'. Jones, as cited in Chow (2020), argues: 'What is not clear is the steps that moved the virus out of the bat, into some intermediate source or sources, and then finally into man'. Many different interpretations and variant conspiracy theories exist concerning the origin of the virus, which first led to the death of many in Wuhan, China.

According to Seroto (2018:1), decolonisation has become the norm in South Africa, with it being a radical attempt to reverse, change or undo what colonisation did, in the past, to knowledge systems, as well as to the colonised. Decoloniality, hence, is another way of rediscovering oneself from what was once lost due to colonisation, which dislocated both self and information by means of the enforcement of dehumanising colonial laws. Malema (as cited in Nare 2020:1 - 2) defines the phenomenon well in asserting that the school, which the party that he leads, namely the Economic Freedom Front (EFF), is currently building, has, as primary target, the teaching of a form of decolonised education that is directed at inculcating a sense of black pride in the student

body. The present author has realised that, if there were to be no colonisation, there would be no decolonisation either. However, because of what colonisation has done to the native inhabitants of Africa, it is crucial to reverse what the colonialists previously perpetrated, particularly through their colonialist education systems.

2.2.   Symptoms of the Coronavirus

Some common signs of the presence of the coronavirus in an individual include: respiratory symptoms; a fever and cough; shortness of breath; and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), kidney failure and, even, death. No cure is yet available for the virus.

A key point, in discussions of 2020 events, is bound, in future, to be the wave of coronavirus that has staggered the entire world during the cur-rent time period. Most African people based in South Africa had not yet realised how serious the issue was until the State President announced the country's shutdown, on 16 March 2020. During the second week of lockdown, over 1660 cases of coronavirus infection were already confirmed, placing South Africa as the leading African country in terms of the physical impact of the pandemic, with 11 fatalities having already occurred within the national boundaries.

Although the national lockdown announced by the President on 16 March 2020 was assumed to be the appropriate measure for coping with the crisis, much evidence shows that many, both in the urban and rural areas, were impervious to the call for them to remain at home. In some townships, including Alexandria, north of Johannesburg, people were forced to abide by the mandated restriction of movement, while those who lived in the more rural areas, like Malamulele township in the Limpopo Province, carried on life as normal. A Gaza Party local politician, Emmanuel Mtileni, observed the movement of people between the two Shoprite shops in Malamulele, witnessing 'vanhu va xewetana no qhavulana hambi ku ri ku khohlola va ri ekusuhi na le kusuhi'. Mtileni recorded seeing people greeting one another and shaking each other's hands, as well as coughing into one another's faces with impunity (SABC 2020b). Multiple arguments were advanced as to why people did not wish to curtail their daily activities, some of which will be discussed later on in the present article. Minister Beki Cele repeatedly announced that no one would be allowed to purchase alcohol or to walk his/her dog during the shutdown.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC's) news reporter, Hasina Gori (2020), indicates that some resisted the President's call to lockdown the nation as a whole, citing an example of Alexander township, where life was continuing as 'normal as usual' after lockdown. In addition, another news reporter on radio indicated that the townships Malamulele and Elim in Limpopo were overcrowded with people trying to access their social grants, while ignoring the social distancing regulations, and refusing to wear the obligatory facial masks. Concern was also expressed by the Premier of Limpopo, Stanley Mathabatha, that non-compliance with the lockdown rules was widespread (Makungo 2020). At such a time of national disaster, the need for decolonising the South African curriculum has been at its highest level, following on the 2015 #FeesMustFall campaign, which saw the statues of arch-colonialists, like Cecil John Rhodes, being removed from public exhibition.

3. Lockdown Exposure of the Long-Standing Inequalities Prevalent Throughout South Africa

A core task of decolonisation lies in assisting those who lost their dignity and respect, due to colonial pressures, to regain what they once possessed. Such upliftment of the downtrodden requires radically reversing the remaining inequalities, by means of ensuring that the majority of the previously disadvantaged communities are able to regain their worth in the current situation. Indisputably, South Africa is among those countries that are distinguished by the inequalities that were originally orchestrated by racism and apartheid. Even if the still-prevailing inequalities have tended to be overlooked by many, the arrival of the coronavirus, which forced the country into lockdown, for which it was ill-prepared, served to expose the existing inequalities. According to News24 (2020), President Ramaphosa went on record in the following way:

> The lockdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus has 'revealed a very sad fault line in our society' – inequality – President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his weekly newsletter, in which he also criticised the hoarding and selling of food parcels as 'disgusting'. 'But our lockdown has revealed a very sad fault line in our society that reveals how grinding poverty, inequality and unemployment is tearing the fabric of our communities apart', he said. Over the past three weeks, we have been confronted with distressing images of desperate people

clamouring for food parcels at distribution centres and of community protests against food shortages.

According to the television programme, Morning Live broadcasted on 6 April 2020, many South Africans were not cooperating with the lockdown injunctions, as could clearly be seen in the shots taken of those cooking and selling food on the street in the townships. The inequalities present in the situation were apparent, in that those who could afford to remain indoors, did so, whereas those who were living a precarious hand-to-mouth existence had to venture out to earn some sort of income, merely to be able to survive on a daily basis. Curbing the pandemic in South Africa, hence, demanded that even the poorest of the people be taken into consideration. For instance, there are some who are, at the best of times, only able to eke out a living on the streets from vending their goods. If such vendors were to be confined to their homes for 21 days without the possibility of selling their wares, the likelihood was that they would barely be able to survive until the lockdown was over. Secondly, the Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula, in response to the onset of the pandemic changed the rules of the public transport system in South Africa, showing that most South Africans depend on public transport for being able to satisfy their daily needs. Such reliance is yet another clear indicator of the levels of inequality currently existing in the country.

The visit of the Saturday Star reporter, Sheree Bega, to the Letlhabile area, just outside Brits in the North West province, indicated the devastating situation regarding the lack of water in the area, which was sufficient to jeopardise the imposition of any lockdown regulations in the area. A basic and cheap way of fighting the pandemic is to keep washing one's hands with just soap and water. The presidential message in this regard was, at the time of the current research, repeatedly being broadcasted throughout the day. However, regularly washing one's hands requires a continuous supply of running water (Bega 2020:9). Those who were without such a supply, and who had to fetch their water from some distant source, were unlikely to be able to remain at home continuously for a period of 21 days. The Limpopo Provincial Government has also used the argument of lack of running water to justify their reluctance to reopen their schools, with the province concerned having high levels of water challenges compared to other provinces that have a more ready supply of the natural resource. According to Mgidi (2020:4), Manthati Makoshane challenged the authorities in saying the following: 'How can they tell us about social distancing when they know very well that there are more

than five people in one mkhukhu? I need water and I need to go to the toilet'. Such realities confronted people even before the start of the pandemic, and with its onset, the situation has become even more problematic.

As most of the unemployed cannot afford to buy hand sanitisers and facial masks, the courts may be compelled to force the government to provide such sanitisers to its citizenry (Morning Live, 7 April 2020). In another incident, Premier Stanley Mathabatha of Limpopo, on 6 April 2020, received 32 radio phones donated by the company Altron Nexus to the Covid-19 disaster team (Tshungu 2020). The fact that many other donors have, since then felt duty-bound to supply some of the necessary equipment for fighting the coronavirus is a clear sign that there is a need for such assistance, particularly in the light of the prevailing inequalities. The article 'Big relief for squatters', which focuses on the water tankers supplying the informal settlements around the Vaal area, indicates how the government has been compelled by the coronavirus no longer just to speak about the need to service its people, but also to act swiftly on their behalf (Jimta 2020:4). Although the pandemic is frightening in the implications that it has for all South Africans, it has helped some informal settlements in the country access the resources that they had, previously, been unable to secure for themselves.

Whether keeping a family of eight confined to a one-roomed shack for 21 days can be seen as a viable proposition is highly debatable. Mgidi (2020:4) exposes how some of the rules that are used to govern the more affluent areas cannot be imposed on those living in overcrowded squatter camps, where millions of African South Africans live. in the above-mentioned report, the residents of Makause were indicated as retaliating to the imposition of the lockdown restrictions on them by asserting that the lockdown was for the middle and upper classes, whereas they had to share mobile toilets and streets with only a single water tap. A female resident, Thabisa Majeke, on being interviewed about the effects of the coronavirus on the local community, stated: 'No one has visited us since the lockdown started to check if [we] were even following the rules. We are suffering and no one cares'. Another example of the inequalities present in the current pandemic-afflicted nation can be seen in the mass removals of people from their informal settlements, because of the virus. Madisa (2020:2) reports on the mass relocations that have taken place, are which are likely to see the government building many temporary houses in future, so as to enable the poor to escape having to live in congested shantytowns. At the time of the current study, six informal settlements around Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Alexandra and Diepsloot were set to benefit from

the presence of the virus in their midst by way of their planned removal over the following few weeks. Most of the marginalised were, undoubtedly, going to have their needs attended to for the first time since they voted for the implementation of a democratic system of governance in 1994, due to the presence of the coronavirus. Thembi Nkadimeng, the president of the SA Local Government Association and the Mayor of Polokwane, argues:

> Who wants to be called a homeless child on African soil? It is only now that, as municipalities, we have facilities to deal with [the] homeless. Why have [i.e. has] this not been happening before? The coronavirus disaster has given us this silver lining, so we now say that, as municipalities, it is best for us to care for such people. We are now placing them temporarily in halls (Stone 2020:4).

Restricting taxi operations in South Africa, in which country most commuters do not own a vehicle, was a short-sighted decision that did not consider those who were in the process of decolonisation. For instance, Khayelitsha residents were shown as being cramped into a very small space that prevented compliance with the distancing laws, with them toyi-toyiing for the right to occupy a piece of land on which the government was prepared to allow only 49 families to erect their makeshift homes (Morning Live, 1 May 2020). In the same area, emergency medical service (EMS) workers were reported as striking, in response to their lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), impeding health service delivery in the area (SABC News, 3 May 2020). The above-mentioned actions demonstrate how the measures that were put in place to counteract the spread of the coronavirus infection have encountered multiple inequality-related challenges, with most of the poor and displaced having felt justified in resisting any attempt to enforce the lockdown rules on them. Naki (2020:3) enunciates the possibility of corruption, rather than hunger and the spread of the coronavirus, as being likely to rouse civil unrest among the masses in South Africa. Such a response to elected governance has resulted from the perception that some political leaders are benefiting themselves and their own families at the expense of the poor, even at such a time of national crisis.

With the pandemic only starting to show its full implications on the international front, Professors Jean-Paul Mira and Camille Locht appeared on French television, suggesting that trial vaccines should be tested on those based in Africa (Moyo 2020). Dr Mira was quoted as saying: 'If I can be provocative, shouldn't we be doing this study in Africa, where there are no masks, no

treatments, no resuscitation? A bit like as it is done elsewhere for some studies on Aids. In prostitutes, we try things because we know that they are highly exposed, and that they do not protect themselves'. Egregiously enough, Locht agreed with Mira's proposition.

Allegiance to those on the African continent is shown in the response of the former Chelsea soccer star, Didier Drogba, to the above-mentioned opinions, with him tweeting: 'It is inconceivable that we continue to accept this. Africa is not a laboratory'. Drogba's view should be seen against the background, and within the context of, France being a former coloniser of many African countries (SL International 2020). According to Moyo (2020), Drogba's sentiments were supported by other African footballers, including Samuel Eto (Cameroon) and Demba Ba, who went on to argue: 'Welcome to the west, where white people believe themselves to be so superior that racism and debility become commonplace. Time to rise'. Such inequality between Africa and the West is what decolonialists aim to overcome in their decolonisation efforts. The current author wishes to urge that the doctors based on the African continent should seek to counter the effects of the coronavirus on their own, rather than waiting for French intervention. Reuters (2020) has, since the broadcasting of Dr Mira's views on the use of African nations for medical trials, apologised for his remarks, in response to the resultant outcry, as well as to threats of litigation against him. Even post Mira's apology, the issue of Africa being a clinical testing ground remains a contentious issue, especially in the light of the statistics showing that more deaths related to the coronavirus have taken place in Europe and in the United States of America (USA) than in Africa. The medical trials should, more logically, have been first implemented where the coronavirus infection rate was highest. Why Africa should have been considered suitable as the first testing site, when the continent's death rates from the coronavirus have tended to be far lower than elsewhere, especially in some European countries and the USA, is a highly debatable matter.

Though it is not the intention of the current study to discuss the political details surrounding the behaviour of Minister Stella Ndaweni-Abrahams, which was reported on in the news for some time, it is important to indicate how South Africans are still affected by, and what they are still feeling about, the differences that are so clearly made manifest in the everyday lifestyle of parliamentarians and ordinary citizens. The President's reaction to the Minister's lunching with a friend in Fourways, north of Johannesburg, in clear defiance of his lockdown rules, has become a much-disputed issue (Mtshali 2020a:1). The cry 'Give Stella her marching orders!', which was vociferously

voiced by some opposition political parties, as well as by some members of the public, showed exactly how people felt about her two months' suspension from office, which occurred at a time when other citizens of the country were being arrested and charged with similar offences (Molobi 2020:1). Mtshali (2020a:1) also, ironically, argued that the Minister was part of President Ramaphosa's Covid-19 response team in the Cabinet, meaning that (at least some of) those in power did not see her as blameworthy.

The call for leadership by example, in terms of following the rules that leaders themselves make, still clearly remains to be heard in certain quarters. For the author, it is a question of inequality if those who are in a position of leadership, and who, indeed, make the rules governing a society are found to act in contravention of such rules; instead, those acting in such a way deserve to be more harshly sentenced than are the ordinary citizens when perpetrating such deeds. The above reminds the current author of George Orwell's allegorical novella entitled Animal Farm, in which the pigs, who have assumed rule over the ill-ruled Manor Farm, on finding themselves having broken their own rules, change their founding rule, 'All animals are equal', to 'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others[own italics]'. The very same pigs alter another of their rules, 'No animal shall sleep in bed', by adding 'with sheets', thus justifying their penchant for luxurious living in the farmhouse, while all the other animals are relegated to the farmyard (Orwell 1945). In contrast to Minister Ndaweni-Abrahams' actions, Ngubane (2020:10) explains the humiliation experienced by a KwaZulu-Natal couple on their wedding day for daring to contravene the very same rules, while the aforesaid Minister received only slight chastisement for not abiding by the officially declared mandate. It should be noted, however, that a court case has since been opened against her by the EFF for her breaching of national lockdown regulations (Mtshali 2020b:2).

Another point of controversy has to do with the self-employed, like traders. The U-turn that the government felt obliged to take to authorise their selling their wares openly in the street during the lockdown has raised many concerns. According to Mbolekwa (2020), on 6 April 2020 alone 766 traders in Johannesburg received permits to vend their goods in public, meaning that those concerned could immediately return to the streets and continue to sell their products, despite the lockdown. In addition, on television, on the same day, scores of people could be seen standing in queues to obtain their permits while ignoring the need to leave the mandated one-meter space between them. In short, they were seen touching, rubbing against and pushing each other, as

if no social distancing rule had been issued. In reality, however, being allowed to operate from 08h00 to 17h00 daily helped the vendors relatively little, as their trade depended on the public, who were in lockdown at the time, to purchase their wares. Secondly, by enforcing the need for street vendors to obtain permits, and, hence, to become subject to unprecedented control, the way has been opened up for curtailing their freedom in future. Joffe's (2020:12) illustrated report, showing men crowding around a bakkie, desperate for work, is a true reflection of what was being experienced, as part of the daily routine, in the vicinity of big shops, malls and warehouses at the time. Such individuals have to survive on what they are hired to do on a daily basis, meaning that one day spent without being assigned a paid piece job to do implies that they, and their families, have no food for the rest of the day. The plight of people like this during a 21-day lockdown is inconceivable for many.

4. Decolonising Controversies around the Lockdown, and Securing a Way of Reducing the Spread of the Coronavirus

For a developing country like South Africa, a shutdown or lockdown has, inevitably, meant that an extensive amount of damage has been done to the nation's economy. However, since lives had to be saved, imposing a lockdown was the only choice for the decision-makers to take, despite the economy suffering as a result. The coming into force of the lockdown has meant that migrant workers could not traverse the provinces so as to be with their families during the crisis, which has had serious implications for many an African marriage, which tends to survive on the basis of having the chief male figure working at some distance from his own home. The meaning of the restriction of movement was very clear, in that few marriages would be likely to survive the extramarital relationships entered into during the lockdown, when the strict travel bans were lifted and the migrant workers could resume visiting their families in their ancestral provinces. To ensure that long-term relationships were treated with all due seriousness even during the lockdown, the SABCNEWS (03 May 2020) indicated that the first aircraft to Brazil would be used to repatriate the South African citizens who were stranded in that country. Ironically, the above situation meant that South Africa's citizens who were abroad at the time of the lockdown were treated with greater consideration than were those who lived locally, who were unable to travel interprovincially to be with their families who lived at a distance from their workplace. The stress of

being away from one's family for a long period was already fuelled by the uncertainty regarding whether having a low-paying job would be sufficient after the lockdown, when the bills (such as those for rent) incurred during the lockdown would become payable once more. To endure such a life is extremely difficult for a black migrant worker at the best of times, but it is so much worse under the present conditions.

Noma Bolani (2020) discusses how the German people living in South Africa were repatriated at the start of the lockdown. However, even if it means death for those concerned, the culture of connecting with one's home during difficult times is a truly African phenomenon. Most African people wish to be repatriated and buried in their own home villages and towns. When Saddam Hussein was about to be executed, he returned to his home town, Tikrit. The same was done by the slain Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, who returned home prior to his own execution. Restricting mobility under the pretext of fighting the pandemic, according to Boaventura, should not jeopardise the basic human rights that are enshrined in the institutions of democratic governance. In the programme *Africa wa vulavula* (meaning 'Africa speaks'), Professor Themba Sono argues that African people do not tend to act for themselves, although they might have the resources to do so, because they often depend on the West to act on their behalf. Such was the response that was publicly voiced to the question regarding the French doctors who indicated that they wanted to test their trial medication for coronavirus on those living in Africa (SABC 2020). The eNCA reported that President Ramaphosa declared the Ranch Hotel outside Polokwane in Limpopo a green zone for quarantined South African citizens who were repatriated from China when the lockdown first started (eNCA 2020b). The declaration was made despite the recent remarks of a television presenter that Limpopo was 'higher grade' in witchcraft than were the other provinces. According to Sinhle Mavuso (2020), the rules, as stated by the President, were the following:

> The categories of people who will be exempted from this lockdown are the following: health workers in the public and private sectors, emergency personnel, those in security services – such as the police, traffic officers, military medical personnel, soldiers – and other persons necessary for our response to the pandemic ….

The above-mentioned rules were set for all South Africans, regardless of their background or educational standard. The President is clearly using them not to

punish the citizens of the country, but to curb the spread of the coronavirus as soon as possible. Every citizen, therefore, has been tasked with the responsibility of abiding by, and supporting, the overall national vision that is aimed at securing the safety of all living in the country. In addition, the President's speech, delivered on the eve of Good Friday, indicated that South Africa will not be the same again after the coronavirus disaster is over. The specific changes and differences involved were not mentioned, but the behaviour of all South Africans towards one another is likely to have changed for good (eNCA, 9 April 2020).

Dis-Chem, one of the biggest pharmaceutical retailers in South Africa, which vowed to assist with obtaining hand sanitisers, gloves and other PPE was, at the time of the current report, failing to pay its rent in malls and other buildings (Wilson 2020:11). With the lockdown affecting such a large pharmacy chain to the extent that its chief executives, Ivan Saltzaman and Estienne De Klerk, being compelled to negotiate for lower rentals for the duration of the lockdown, the challenge is clearly daunting. Besides the above, there is much speculation that many jobs might be lost after the lockdown.

Just as most countries in the world have begun to enjoy and feel some kind of freedom from colonialism and other kinds of inequality, it looks as though the implications of the coronavirus might be used to revive the worst of their past. At such a critical time, black African people living in Guangzhou in China were found to be subject to racial discrimination (Morning Live, SABC 2, 15 April 2020). This an instance of which was a note posted in a local McDonalds outlet, stating: 'From now onwards, we have been informed that blacks are not allowed to enter the restaurant'. According to Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (Cheng *et al.* 2022), 'Guangzhou had confirmed 114 imported corona-virus cases as of Thursday, 16 of which were Africans. This has led to Africans becoming targets of racism in China. Several Africans also claimed that they have been forcibly evicted from their homes and turned away by hotels'.

Such discrimination was found to occur at a time when China was openly accusing the USA of racism (Hindu Janajagruti Samiti 2020). Although Monyae (2020) had received a video clip from one of his closest friends in China, asking that South Africa and the rest of Africa should publicly comment on the alleged racism taking place in Guangzhou, the journalist played down the issue by providing several reasons for the established relationship between China and South Africa being devoid of discrimination. If the racism that appears to have been present in the above-mentioned situation is true, however, it is a matter of concern that, instead of the nations involved uniting against the

global pandemic, there seem to be those who are continuing to embrace the egregiously evil practice of racism. If African people wish to silence their compatriots in China, the matter is serious enough to raise considerable debate.

Just as the lockdown has been aimed at helping people, it has also become an opportunity for the perpetration of theft. Lourie (2020:1), among many others, reports on the theft of food parcels, donated by willing helpers, being stolen even by government officials. Officials and politicians have been accused of using the lockdown as an opportunity for stealing food parcels, with some being said to be using food to campaign for their own political parties. True African hospitality militates against trying to gain something in return for what is meant to be freely given. In addition, Moagi (2020:40) indicates that the residents of Booysens' informal settlements clashed with the police while they were protesting the lack of delivery of promised food parcels.

When Freedom Day occurred in the middle of the lockdown, some officials, who were supposed to be celebrating the day in isolation, were, instead, being summoned to their local magistrates' court for breaking the same rules of lockdown that they were supposed to be embracing and protecting as leaders of the nation, thus indicating their failure to lead by example. Two reports evidencing such misbehaviour on the part of government officials were printed in The Citizen on 28 April 2020, under the headings 'Mayor in party probe' and 'ANC Limpopo officials ignore lockdown' (Matlala 2020:7). The actions identified have helped to undermine the spirit of solidarity and ubuntu that should be especially visible during trying times.

In Cape Town, the arrival of Cuban doctors to help with fighting the pandemic was faced with mixed feelings from the trade unions in the Cape, which alleged that the government was betraying its own unemployed doctors by employing outsiders who would charge even more for their services than the locals would have done (Naki 2020:4). The South African Medical Association was found to take an extremely critical stance in defence of the local unemployed fraternity of medical practitioners (Hoeane 2020:12). The South African government would have avoided such a public outcry if they had, first, consulted with the relevant stakeholders about the situation, alerting them to the importation of Cuban doctors into the country. The citizens of South Africa should accept their responsibility to protect their democracy and freedom of opinion in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. In light of the claim that out-of-work South African doctors were not employed to handle the coronavirus pandemic, the government needed to justify its stance in the above regard, seeing that the African leadership was expected to consult with the people to

reach agreement on how to handle the so-called 'disaster'. Such a modus operandi explains why, in the case of South Africa's traditional councils, meetings tend to last for a long time, because a suggestion cannot be accepted as fitting for implementation until a consensus is reached on the issue at hand.

Few people would like to hold the position held by the ministers of education, in particular not that of the Minister of Basic Education, especially after Minister Angie Motshekga started a campaign to reopen primary schools. Her announcement of 1 June as being the first day for schools to reopen was not only received with mixed feelings by the parents and school governing bodies (SGBs) concerned, but it also served to split the opinion of parents and trade unions. The remaining inequalities that still exist between the former Model C, or well-to-do schools and the very poor schools that cannot afford to have even running water are the source of much conflict and debate. In relation to such dissension, Sobuwa (2020:7), supported by Masweneng (2020:7), contends: 'Meanwhile the Congress of South Africa Students (COSAS) is calling on parliament and provincial legislature members to open the same time as schools, saying that if it is safe for pupils to return to schools it should also be safe for lawmakers to go back to work'. The unions have started to threaten to take Minister Angie Motshekga to court if the matter is not resolved before opening day. Such are the issues with which the average citizen is concerned, rather than with contending against the root causes of colonisation and racism.

The issue of the reopening of the schools is also a serious point of contestation, due to the inequalities with which the situation is riddled. Besides the fact that most South African schools are overcrowded and have very limited facilities, to make the matter worse, several schools, of which many are in the poor black areas, have been burned down during the lockdown. The above means, inevitably, that the pre-existing overcrowding will be exacerbated when the lockdown ends, at the very time when the government wants the schools to reopen. Strong signs indicate that the unions and the government might come to loggerheads over the situation, since questions relating to the regulating of lockdown conditions require answering before the reopening of the schools takes place. The Minister of Higher Education in South Africa, Minister Blade Nzimande, wants educational institutions to reopen as a way of salvaging what remains of the 2020 academic year, while the trade unions, parents and SGBs are demanding to know that the safety of their children and teachers will be safeguarded. Whether the schools will, indeed, reopen on 1 June, as has been announced by the Minister, may be contested at court by the

trade unions and by some parent-teacher representatives. The reality is that, in terms of public health requirements, some schools might be able to afford to reopen, whereas others, in the poor communities, might not. For instance, some schools are able to afford to have a continuous supply of running water, along with having sufficient financial capital to make hand sanitiser available for all the educators and learners, while some schools are unable to have any additional outlay to that which they had prior to the onset of the coronavirus crisis.

As much as the lockdown has exposed the inequalities that are so rampant in South Africa, the government, which has been forced to supply food to the locked-down poor, has seen some of its officers being accused as thieves who have stolen from the poor. The proverbial saying, 'One man's death is another man's survival', has resonance in the current situation, in terms of the fact that the banks have been awarded a R200 billion guarantee by the government to help small businesses that have collapsed as a result of the depredations caused by COVID-19 (Ciaran 2022:1). The result is that the banks stand to benefit from the situation, while small business will have to rely on both short- and long-term loans for their survival.

Recently, the President and a governmental minister, Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, made contradictory statements that added much confusion to the situation regarding the banning of tobacco. Just two days after the President declared the lifting of the ban on tobacco, Minister Dlamini-Zuma broadcast, on exactly the same television channel, the message that the ban on tobacco was to continue (Stone 2020:1–2). The resultant battle, which was of both an economic and a political nature, has affected those whose compliance with the regulations could be compromised thereby. The country's largest cigarette manufacturer (British American Tobacco) vowed to open a court case against Minister Dlamini-Zuma if she did not reverse her decision before 4 May 2020. Besides the Minister's reversal of the President's statement raising issues with her own supporters, she was noted to be speaking on behalf of the same government that was headed by the President concerned (Mthombothi 2020:17).

The ensuing arguments politicised the issue still further, since the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) had already indicated their readiness to support Minister Dlamini-Zuma, with the spokeswoman of the League accusing those whom she said were insulting the Minister of being racists and of being misogynistic (Khambule & Medupe 2020:2). The obvious dilemma has raised doubts as to whether the Minister and the President consulted with each other before presenting their message to the public via the

mass media. Whether such a situation manifested political jockeying for power, or the intentional undermining of the President, can be seen in the actual effect that the contradictory statements have had on the functioning of the nation as a whole. Matlala (2020:2) reveals how white-owned companies in South Africa have benefited from the presence of the coronavirus in the country. The South African United Business Confederation has already met with National Treasury Director-General Dondo Mogajane over their sharp criticism of the decisions made regarding the selection of PPE, which have seemed to be biased and to have excluded black business in the awarding of the relevant contracts.

5. The Impact of the Lockdon on African Decolonisation

Poloko Tau (2020:9) indicates how the presence of the coronavirus has helped some drug addicts, through the opening of a rehabilitation centre in Mahikeng. An addict was quoted as saying: 'We were very bad when we walked in here [a] few weeks ago – dirty and probably smelling from that [i.e. the drugs] – but look at us now. We are not only doing well in terms of shedding the habit and addiction, but we feel like better people already, and [we] can't wait to go out there and [to] be purposeful and strive to make it in life'. The opportunity to enter a rehabilitation centre, into which they were forced, due to the lockdown, not only saved them from the virus, but also from their drug addiction as well. How many support the sentiment expressed by Vicky Abraham (2020:4) when saying that Covid-19 had strengthened her faith is debatable. Although Pastor and Honourable Minister Meshoe supported such a conclusion, the same cannot be said for all those whose jobs have been impacted on by the virus (Tau 2020). An intense faith would be required to make a similar assertion with sincerity, while many believers have been very unsure about what the future holds for them after the lockdown has ended. Relatively few car accidents have been reported during the lockdown, because motorists have not generally been on the roads, meaning that many a life has, hypothetically speaking, been saved from a car accident. According to the research statistics mentioned by Shaun Smillie (2020:5), the rate of violent crime has decreased, with some having attributed such a decrease to the lockdown, though some have argued for the ban on alcohol as having been the cause. By May 2019, 1500 murderers had already been forcibly detained by the police, while in 2020 only 432 murders have been recorded over the same time period.

An extremely painful funeral situation that occurred in a rural village outside Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape was broadcast on the SABC 2

Morning Live programme on 4 April 2020. The funeral was shown to be poorly attended, which was a serious concern for the family and relatives concerned. The interviewee, being the undertaker concerned, indicated that a problem that they faced was securing only 50 attendees, which was the prescribed limit under lockdown rules. Some of those who had wished to attend the ceremony had requested that the funeral parlour write letters to the authorities asking them for permission to attend the event and to bury their loved one. One female relative, who was excluded from attending the event due to the restriction on numbers, mourned the fact that the person to be buried was her aunt, for whom she was not allowed to be present at her final send-off. Short video clips of the funeral showed the poor attendance allowed, and how hurt the family members were because of some relatives having had to be refused permission to attend the funeral. Prior to the lockdown, the suspension of all other events at the time of a family funeral, as mentioned by Baloyi (2014:2), used to ensure that everyone who wanted to could attend the funeral at hand. The number of people attending a funeral or celebration then went uncounted. Therefore, the need to count the number of funeral attendees, which has come about with the lockdown restrictions, directly conflicts with the standard African tradition. Msomi (2008:219) calls such a reversal of traditional African communalism a form of 'rugged individualism' that is foreign to African people.

The African kind of funeral has been compromised by the demands made on African people by the measures imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Moagi (2020:1) argues that, during the coronavirus-caused lockdown, funeral costs have been cut, since the number of attendees per funerals has been reduced to 50 or less. Although the author argues that families no longer incur debt when burying their relatives, the issue of the African spirit of ubuntu has clearly come under attack. The way in which the deceased have been buried during the pandemic has violated the norm of true African funerals, as is shown by Baloyi (2014), who clearly indicates how Africans tend to use the funerals of their loved ones as a point of reunion and coming together, regardless of the cost and length of the journeys that are required to be undertaken by the attendees concerned. A death and funeral, in the African context, are a community affair. The late African writer, John Mbiti (1991:120), was quoted as saying: 'The corpse is kept frozen in the hospital or mortuary for several days, while funeral preparations are being made and relatives living far away are awaited'. In every decision-making venture, African people tend to assert their belief in consulting each other, until there is consensus in a particular case. The decisions made regarding the dates and rites

of funerals are no exception to the above, with the presence of every family member being awaited at the funeral site, no matter how far they have to come to attend the ceremony. Some, indeed, believe that they will be haunted by the spirits of their loved ones if they fail to attend their funeral (Ledubuko 2020:6). Regarding the issue of relationships and hospitality, the Munghana Lonene presenter, Maningi wa Ntamu, indicated that a man arrested for driving on the N1 highway between Johannesburg and Pretoria during lockdown indicated that he had felt compelled to visit his girlfriend after nine days of not seeing her. Another man was arrested on the N4 between Pretoria and Mpumalanga, while attempting to smuggle his girlfriend in his car boot (Head 2020).

African hospitality has been deeply affected by the depredations caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The inability to convey at least four people in a car, under lockdown restrictions, has meant that many relatives have been left stranded when an individual has been forced to drive their car in the same direction as others were hoping to go without taking them along too. Gradually, the practice of African hospitality has been whittled away from African people, leaving them without an identity. If other countries, like Germany, have been able to repatriate their citizens from South Africa, but African people have remained silent regarding the repatriation of their citizens who have been under alleged racial attack in China, the proof of negative self-thinking can be seen to demand much attention from those imbued with the spirit of deconstructivism. The current author strongly agrees with Julius Mutugi Gathogo (2006) on the importance of inculcating an ethos of African hospitality, according to which, for instance, the children belonging to the local community form a vital aspect of life in Africa in general. Opoku (2009:8), similarly, argues that, when a thorn penetrates the toe, the whole body bends down to the toe to pull the thorn out. The arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in South Africa has led to the imposition of lockdown measures, including the distancing of people from one another, which has clearly affected the kind of African hospitality that most African people would have liked to see being strengthened during the call made for decolonisation.

For the purpose of the current study, the present researcher selected a few African, particularly Xitsonga, idioms or sayings that have been contradicted by the actions performed and the measures taken to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The conclusions drawn are not intended to defy or undermine the measures concerned, but to indicate how rediscovering and redefining the nature of South Africans has been affected by them.

Regarding the traditional expression, Rintiho rin'we ari nusi hove

(literally meaning 'a single finger cannot pick up a single mealie grain'), demanding work cannot be achieved by only one individual working alone. According to the spirit of ubuntu, African people tend to share all their activities with others, ranging from working to eating together (Junod 1990:212). Another idiom supporting the same notion goes: 'Rintiho rin'we ari dlayi nhwala', meaning that a single finger does not kill a louse (Junod 1990:94). For instance, digging a grave for the deceased requires the cooperation of all the men in the village concerned. The saying clearly shows how African people need one another on a daily basis. Being open and responsive to one another's needs means that African people can uplift each other mentally, spiritually, psychologically and emotionally, as well as in sundry other ways. Nowadays, even the elderly, who used to be able to depend on their grandchildren, as well as on their neighbours, for assistance, are often neglected in their old age. The empowering African custom of working and consulting together before any activity can take place has been badly impacted on by the coronavirus pandemic, while attention has been diverted to the issue of the ban on tobacco, as debated between the President and the minister concerned. The form of isolation that the lockdown has imposed on African people will not yield the desired goal of decolonising the African mind from the ethos of Western individualism.

The meaning of the expression *vana va munhu va tsemelana nhloko ya njiya* is that the children of one man can split the head of a locust between themselves (Junod 1990:91). The idea of street children was not conceived of in the original African outlook on life, because, in Africa, it has long been accepted that it takes a village to raise a child. The lockdown regulations have destroyed the spirit of sharing, in terms of which a family would have been sustained by the neighbourhood. Instead, those without food now have to wait for handouts from donors, who often forget them and who tend to give only to their relatives and political allies. The source of donations is questionable when one's own neighbours are forbidden to offer one the simplest meal. Stealing from the poor also does not indicate the presence of the African spirit of sharing.

A key African characteristic involves sharing the joys and sorrows of life with one's fellow beings, which is an element that is truly embedded in the spirit of ubuntu. The well-known idiom that has been popularised by popular African writers like John Mbiti and Desmond Tutu states: 'I am because we are'. The saying is applicable to the majority, if not to all, of the African tribes, who have had such an identity eroded away through colonisation and other

Western-sourced inequalities. Conceptualising the spirit of caring for one another during times when people are barred from approaching each other is difficult for most African people, let alone for those who were employed in Gauteng province at the start of the lockdown, and who have been barred from travelling cross-country to their ancestral homes, where the other members of their family are based. To the current author, the coronavirus pandemic has started exactly where colonisation has left off, in helping to ensure that African people lose their sense of belonging to one another.

The concept of unnumbered crowds attending a funeral ceremony is biblical, as can be seen in the example of the funeral of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead by Jesus. According to the Bible in John 11:19: '… many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother'. The presence of multiple people at the funeral is also confirmed by the mentioning of 'people' (which is translated as 'crowds' in some versions of the Gospels) in John 11:42.

Geoff Hughes (2020:12), rather than just equating the present earthly challenge with the end of times, as some apocalyptic preachers are currently doing, argues that, despite the course of biblical history having been beset by many different massacres, genocides, wars and other calamities, people have still survived. Such a theological standpoint has been found to be relevant and contextual to the contemporary world and its realities. Likewise, a father of black theology, James Cone (1975) asserts, in accordance with the Bible, that God is always on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Thus, it follows that, if the coronavirus is the oppressor, then God is on the side of the oppressed. The oppressiveness of the virus has been evidenced by the fact that it has managed to force South Africans to celebrate Freedom Day behind closed doors. Too much fear has already been instilled in the people since the lockdown, which calls for the application of a form of liberation theology that should assist in healing the nation as a whole. Even after the lockdown has ended, there will still be those who are too afraid to return to their own churches to worship.

3. Conclusion

As much is it is a commendable reality that the lockdown has played an important role in slowing down the spread of the coronavirus in South Africa, it is equally true that the very same measures have brought about extensive controversy. The expectations that have come with the measures imposed have

exposed the existing inequalities that have been voiced by many for over a quarter of a century, since the start of the period of democratic governance. Some provinces, like Limpopo, have struggled even to obtain a regular supply of drinking water, with the injunction to wash one's hands regularly sounding an ironical note. Such inequalities are the very issues that those bent on decolonialism have been trying to address in attempting to assist the most marginalised of people. However wise distancing, as a preventative measure, has been, serving, as it has, as a sound defence against the spread of the coronavirus, the African poor, with their own spirit of ubuntu, which has inspired them to assist, and to share in the joys and sorrows of life with, one another, particularly in the funeral context, have been left stranded. The intention to be one another's keeper, and to show hospitality towards each other, has been compromised. Instead of communal life, the spirit of individualism, which has already destroyed the identity of some African people, has been allowed to run rampant over the spirit of the downtrodden and the oppressed.

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Navigating Educational Shifts: A Comparative Analysis of Teacher Education in South Africa and Sweden

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Abstract

One of the enduring challenges in teacher education is achieving a coherent integration between theoretical coursework and school-based practical experience. This often leads to a misalignment in student teachers' learning, where either theoretical or practical knowledge may be disproportionately emphasised to the detriment of the other. Moreover, the perspectives of teacher educators – who play a crucial role in guiding this integration – are not sufficiently understood in diverse educational contexts like South Africa and Sweden. This study delves into the transformative trends that have shaped teacher education methodologies over the past two to three decades, focusing on the 'university/research turn,' 'accountability turn,' and 'practice turn.' These shifts advocate for extended immersion in classroom settings as a means to enhance teacher preparedness. At the institutions involved, student teachers spend two to three days per week in school-based practice, balancing this with campus-based theoretical coursework. Employing qualitative methods and adopting the framework of boundary crossing, the study investigates how teacher educators in South Africa and Sweden perceive and support student teachers in navigating the interplay between these dual learning environments. The findings underscore the positive impact of workplace learning in both contexts, where some student teachers can seamlessly connect theoretical knowledge to practical application and vice versa. However, a critical observation emerges regarding the potential prioritisation of practical

knowledge at the expense of theoretical understanding – a contention often raised as a criticism of the practice turn. Notably, the study sheds light on the intricate balance required for effective reflective learning, as teacher educators observe a tendency among student teachers to align more closely with their workplace. This phenomenon resonates with Bruner's (2009) conceptuali-sation of an epistemological divide between school and university concerning the definition of valid knowledge in teacher education. The study highlights the nuances involved in bridging the gap between academic and practical realms, underscoring the need for a symbiotic relationship that facilitates the seamless integration of theoretical principles and work-integrated learning. Moreover, it is crucial to evaluate curriculum restructuring needs in professional higher education to effectively facilitate these transform-ative changes. The study offers insights that extend beyond the contexts of South Africa and Sweden by contributing to identifying best practices, systemic gaps, and to a more nuanced understanding of effective teacher education within diverse global contexts.

1. Introduction

In a fast-changing world, teaching is becoming increasingly complex, and the demands of teacher education (TE) institutions equipping prospective teachers with multi-faceted knowledge and skills to function effectively in the classrooms are increasing. Predetermined technical skills and experiential knowledge are inadequate for the complex problem-solving required in most contemporary teaching contexts (Willegems *et al.* 2017). Cultivating epistemic reflexivity to empower teachers to navigate complex teaching contexts and enhance their practice is crucial (Dean 2023). Epistemic rigor and intentional, situated practice are not innate abilities; they must be developed at the intersection of theory, evidence, and practice (Florian *et al.* 2017). Unfortunately, recurring critiques highlight that TE programmes are overly theoretical and disconnected from practical application (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden 2005; Resch, Schrittesser & Knapp 2022). Furthermore, these programmes often fail to equip student teachers with the essential knowledge required for effective teaching or provide effective methods for imparting this

critical knowledge and skill set (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden 2005; Pivovarova & Powers 2022).

The literature overwhelmingly cites the theory-practice divide as the primary reason TE programmes fail to adequately prepare teachers for the profession's demands (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005; Darling-Hammond *et al.* 2017; Gravett *et al.* 2011; Resch, Schrittesser & Knapp 2022). Evidence supports this claim, showing that many beginning teachers find the profession excessively demanding and stressful, resulting in high attrition rates in countries such as the USA, Netherlands, Austria, Spain, and Norway (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 1999 cited by Stokking *et al.* 2003; Mitani, Fuller & Hollingworth 2022). Novice teachers struggle with classroom management, learner diversity, assessment, organising classroom activities, and communication with parents (Stokking *et al.* 2003), indicating inadequate preparation. Furthermore, scholars argue that new teachers often enter the profession with unrealistic expectations, leading to significant culture shock and a struggle to survive once they begin teaching (Korthagen *et al.* 2006; Pivovarova & Powers 2022; Stokking *et al.* 2003).

Efforts to improve TE recognise the necessity of transcending traditional boundaries. Key strategies include integrating high-quality clinical work, extending practical experiences in schools, and combining these with intentional learning during coursework. Traditionally, theoretical knowledge was imparted through university courses, while practical experience took place in schools. However, the increasing demand for more extensive practical experiences has led to a shift toward practice-based, practice-focused, or practice-centered TE. This shift suggests that TE now centres around core teaching practices (McDonald, Kazemi & Kavanagh 2013) and includes extensive student placements in schools for observation and hands-on practice (Forzani 2014). It acknowledges that effective teaching requires both theoretical understanding and practical competence (Ball & Forzani 2009; Zeichner 2012), with scholars advocating for an expanded curriculum that emphasises what they actually do in the classroom and not only what they know (Grossman *et al.* 2009). Student teachers are thus spending more time on practice within TE programmes, often referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL). Although WIL is well recognised as a practice, the starting point of work-based activities and programmes disputably began with cooperative education, or the 'integration of classroom work and practical industrial experience in an organised program' (Armsby 1954:1).

Cooperative education is claimed to have its origin in the late 1800s in

the United Kingdom, in the early 1900s in the United States, and in the mid-1900s in Canada (Reeve 2004). The omnipresence of cooperative education, or WIL, is also referred to by many different names. These include practicum, work-based learning, work-related learning, authentic experiences, real-world learning, experiential learning, work experience, workplace learning, and practice-based learning, among others. These diverse names are embraced by various countries and universities, each reflecting nuanced perspectives on the intersection of work and learning. Mostly, descriptions of WIL comprise student learning linked in some way with organised work (Billett 2009; Patrick *et al.* 2009). Opposing a united definition, Patrick *et al.* (2009:6) refer to WIL as an 'umbrella concept' for 'a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum'. However, there are critics who caution against reducing teaching to visible behaviours alone, emphasising the need for nuanced examples that address responsiveness and adaptive decision-making (Kennedy 2016; Zeichner 2012). While the workplace is increasingly highlighted as a critical component for learning the teaching profession, with calls for greater emphasis on practical experience in TE, there is a risk of overvaluing workplace learning and neglecting the significance of university-based education (Caspersen & Smeby 2021). This leads to a shift of positions for involved stakeholders, challenging teacher educators, who must adjust academic language, encourage reflective pedagogy and balance scientific goals with the immediate needs of WIL student teachers in order to effectively bridge theory and practice (Jederud 2024). Instead, to promote professional development effectively, it is essential to maintain a balance between university coursework and workplace learning (Håkansson & Olsson 2017).

2. Background

This research initiative reports on a comparative analysis of TE between a University in South Africa and a University in Sweden. At the University in South Africa, the four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) programme in Foundation Phase (FP) teaching was introduced online in 2021 in collaboration with selected schools. The rationale for wanting to offer this programme online was to extend the contact-mode FP TE model, which incorporates a teaching school, to provide wider access and to contribute to in-service teacher development (see Gravett *et al.* 2019; Ramsaroop *et al.* 2020). The School-Based Student Teachers (SBSTs) follow the same BEd curriculum as their

contact-mode counterparts. Students in this programme graduate to teach all subjects in the Foundation Phase curriculum (ages 6-9), namely, numeracy, literacy, and life skills. Although the coursework is fully online, the programme is not a typical distance learning setup. Instead, it allows student teachers to benefit from rich teaching experiences with skilled mentors. As such, the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) entered into between the University and the partners requires, amongst others, that the partner schools provide the SBSTs with the equivalent of two school days for coursework studies (Ramsaroop *et al.* 2024).

The Swedish WIL TE referenced in this study, implemented in 2018, matches the standard campus-based TE programme in Sweden regarding academic content. This programme leads to a teaching certificate for primary school grades and consists of three components: subject studies/subject didactics, educational science, and teaching placement. WIL student teachers study at 75 % of the standard full-time pace during the autumn and spring semesters and at 50 % during the summer semester, totalling 5.5 years. From day one of their WIL TE, they are also employed 50 % as teachers at specific schools. The WIL education is structured so that student teachers attend academic studies at the University three days a week and teach at a school two days a week. Including the 20 weeks of teaching placement spread over the entire period, WIL student teachers spend more than twice as much time in schools compared to student teachers in standard TE programs. In WIL TE programmes, student teachers combine studies with paid work, ideally under the supervision of experienced teachers (Swedish Government 2020). However, the level of supervision can vary significantly, ranging from student teachers being solely responsible for a class with an experienced teacher as a mentor to sharing a class with another teacher (Fornberg, Faculty Programme Director, personal communication, June 11 2021).

In the 'practice turn,' the importance of linking theory and practice throughout the TE programme to make sure that the theoretical studies do not remain separate from the practice of teaching is key. In Finnish TE, the 'practice turn' and 'research turn' complement each other. Their joint purpose is to educate student teachers as pedagogically reflective practitioners who can conceptualise teaching practice comprehensively and approach it in an inquiring manner while also actively engaging in research (Toom & Husu 2021). The 'accountability turn' focuses on how these programmes are evaluated. As such, these 'turns' shape the landscape of TE, influencing how it is structured, delivered, and evaluated. Focusing on the 'university/research

turn,' 'accountability turn,' and 'practice turn' as delineated by Cochran-Smith (2016) and Reid (2011), this study aims to explore the perspectives and experiences of teacher educators regarding student teachers navigating between workplace settings and campus-based courses.

3. Boundary Crossing to Unleash Student Teachers' Learning Potential

The framework of boundary crossing is used in this study to illuminate student teachers´ potential for learning across both university and work-based settings. The integration of university and workplace-based learning has been conceptualised from various perspectives (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström 2003). Among these, more individual-centered perspectives draw upon the ´transfer metaphor´ in which learning is perceived as mainly a one-way process where student teachers obtain knowledge in vocational school and somewhat unproblematically 'apply' it at the workplace (Guile & Young 2003:64). On the other hand, the sociocultural standpoint views learning as a social process predisposed by the contexts where it takes place, that is, a construction of a learning that is ´situated´ (Lave & Wenger 1991). Given this perspective, the concept of ´boundary crossing´ is preferable to the concept of 'transfer', as it rather defines the process in which a student teacher moves and interrelates through different contexts and their 'boundaries' (Guile & Griffiths 2001). This process of boundary crossing, where student teachers engage with unfamiliar contexts, necessitates their continuous creation, association, and renegotiation of meaning. The outcome is a hybrid knowledge that becomes relevant in novel situations and contexts (Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen 1995). In contrast to the notion of transfer, where transitions are unidirectional, boundary crossing entails interactions across contexts. Recognising the potential for learning is crucial, especially in discovering how to integrate the differences between contexts when crossing boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker 2011). While learning typically occurs within well-defined settings, it can also take place as individuals engage with and move between various environments (Akkerman & Bakker 2011). For example, this can be seen when higher education student teachers transition between campus and workplace settings (Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström & Young 2003).

The present study recognises that all learning across and moving between the distinct contexts of campus and workplace settings involves boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker 2011). However, these boundaries do not

necessarily hinder learning; they can also serve as resources for continuity (Akkerman & Bakker 2011). In exploring the potential for continuity, we utilise the four learning mechanisms, namely, *identification*, *coordination*, *reflection*, and *transformation*, as proposed by Akkerman and Bakker (2011). The first learning mechanism of reciprocal *identification*, concerns where people are involved in defining or redefining the way that intersecting practices, here university studies and workplaces, either differ from each other (othering) or how they can justifiably coexist. The second learning mechanism, *coordination*, involves individuals working to establish a communicative connection between contexts, thus generating reliable and consistent routines. Attention is central to coordination – it integrates patterns that belong together, not only based on past connections but also through the discovery of new, creative associations. The third learning mechanism, *reflection*, involves examining the various perspectives that arise from intersecting practices and considering others' viewpoints to better understand and visualise one's own practice. The fourth learning mechanism, *transformation*, pertains to observable changes in existing practices or the emergence of new intermediary practices. Understanding these four learning mechanisms is crucial because engaging in both university and workplace contexts enables student teachers to acquire a broad range of competencies and integrate them effectively. This integration would not be possible if TE were confined solely to either the university or the workplace. Consequently, student teachers' professionalism can develop and improve through their active participation in and transition between these diverse contexts. Essentially, the substantial disparities between these contexts serve as the primary catalyst for professional growth (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström 2003).

However, it must also be taken into consideration that two types of sociocultural differences can be expected in learning processes at the school-work interface. First, there is a difference in epistemic culture, where school and work are distinct practices with unique attitudes toward knowledge and knowledge claims (Cetina 1999). Student teachers have acknowledged that university studies often rely on abstract and disciplinary knowledge, whereas workplaces focus on applied, implicit, and practical knowledge (Lave 1988; Smith 1999). The challenge from a boundary-crossing perspective is to interrelate these different epistemologies to benefit the apprentice's learning process (Guile & Griffiths 2001). Secondly, scholars within boundaries and boundary crossing highlight that school and work also invoke different identity positions. Student teachers are in an ambiguous position, simultaneously being

students learning and professionals expected to know and act (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Tanggaard (2007: 460) describes apprentices in trade vocations as marginal strangers who 'sort of belong and sort of don't.' Student teachers are at the periphery of both practices, facing a neither/nor and both/and situation of belonging to communities (Akkerman & Bakker 2011). This ambiguous position can lead to insecurity but also provides the potential to act as brokers, introducing elements of one practice into another (Wenger 1998).

In relation to boundary crossing (Akkerman & Bakker 2011), the knowledge transfer between the two contexts of university studies and workplaces can be described in terms of moving from 'knowledge-for-practice' to 'knowledge-in-practice' and vice versa (Cochran-Smythe & Lytle 1999:250). 'Knowledge-for-practice' refers to the formal knowledge and theories generated by researchers for student teachers to apply in order to enhance their practice. This knowledge must then be transformed into 'knowledge-in-practice' (Cochran-Smyte & Lytle 1999). A key challenge in this process is establishing meaningful connections between theoretical and practical knowledge – specifically, how to effectively integrate and balance 'knowledge of' (theory) with 'knowledge to' (practice) (Hasselbladh 2020).

Further, Dewey (1999) emphasises the importance of experience in all learning processes. To facilitate knowledge acquisition, experience must be coupled with reflection. Experience involves active engagement in transformative activities, and when these changes are critically examined, they gain deeper significance, leading to the creation of new knowledge (Dewey 1999). Schön (1983) expands on this idea, highlighting reflection as the crucial point where theoretical concepts intersect with lived experiences, ultimately shaping an individual's repertoire of knowledge-in-action.

4. Research Methodology

This study employed an interpretive qualitative research design to understand participants' experiences in a specific environment and the meanings they associated with those experiences (Patton 2002). This approach enabled us to explore and compare the views, assumptions, and experiences of teacher educators regarding student learning in the programme and at schools within two TE progammes in Sweden and South Africa. This research design is based on the idea that meaning and reality are constructed through various social entities, as 'there is no single, observable reality' (Merriam & Tisdell 2016:9). Empirical data gathered from Sweden and South Africa centers on a WIL TE

structure wherein students are immersed in schools as student teachers while concurrently engaging in university coursework. In the UJFE program, these student teachers are referred to as SBSTs, and in Sweden, these student teachers are referred to as WIL student teachers.

The data collection method aligns with a qualitative research paradigm, comprising semi-structured interviews for the data collected in Sweden (n=6) and South Africa (n=5). The sample was purposively selected to focus on the perspectives of teacher educators rather than student teachers. This aligns with the research aims of exploring and comparing the views, assumptions, and experiences of teacher educators regarding student learning in the programme and at schools. We made this deliberate choice because there is a notable gap in the literature concerning research from the perspective of teacher educators. By concentrating on this group, we aim to significantly contribute to this relatively underexplored area. The teacher educators selected for the study had been teaching at the university level for 5-25 years in Sweden and 6-12 years in South Africa. All participants had experience teaching in the practicum/WIL and other modules within the programmes at higher education institutions. Additionally, they had practical experience working as teachers in schools. There is no simple way to determine the right size of data set for a particular study (Braun & Clarke 2022). However, we found an adequate amount of 'information power', that is the respondent specificity data provided enough information in alignment with the aim of the study, the use of the established theory, the quality of dialogue and the analysis strategy (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora 2016). Credibility was established through data triangulation, as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), by comparing data from various participants and identifying patterns across different data sets. Additionally, a detailed audit trail was maintained. The authors also cross-checked and verified codes and categories from South Africa and Sweden to ensure consistency in data analysis across the two contexts. This approach enabled a thorough examination of the trustworthiness and validity of the findings of the study. The data was analysed abductively by constructing codes, categories, and themes best suited to address the aim of the research as it explores the meaning that is identified in the data (Kiger & Varpio 2020). Using the constant comparative method and the thematic analysis approach to analyse the data, the following themes were generated. Expressions such as '*I feel that I can plan teaching on another level*' and '*There is more weight in the discussions concerning, for example, didactic issues and didactic analysis*' were categorised under the theme '*Teacher educators as brokers between the*

school and the university.' Expressions such as *'I'm a teacher already. Practically, by the end of the second year, that's the kind of insight I get from them'* and *'I am not minimising what they are doing in the schools and their teaching, but they are not teachers'* contributed to the theme '*I'm already a teacher' versus 'not a teacher yet' – implications of a lopsided identification for WIL student teacher learning.'*

All ethical considerations were followed, as specified by the institutions in both South Africa and Sweden. In South Africa, ethical approval for the research was obtained from the faculty of education, in line with the Declaration of Helsinki. As the study did not involve the processing of sensitive or personal data, obtaining approval from a human research committee was not required in Sweden. This aligns with the ethical guidelines established by the Swedish Research Ethical Authority. To ensure the well-being of participants, particular attention was given to maintaining anonymity, preventing the identification of individuals in both contexts. This was especially important, as expressing critical views on WIL, TE could potentially conflict with their employers' expectations. Before the interviews, all participants received an informed consent form – either via email or in person – detailing the study's purpose and providing contact information. The form clearly stated that their identities would remain anonymous, emphasised the voluntary nature of participation, and assured them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time

The respondents in South Africa are referred to as T1 – T5, and the respondents in Sweden are referred to as T6 – T12.

5. Presentation and discussion of the findings
5.1 Teacher Educators as Brokers between the School and the University

From the perspectives and experiences of teacher educators in both South Africa and Sweden, spending extended time at schools while completing coursework presented many expanded learning opportunities for student teachers. In South Africa, learning is evident when student teachers are placed in well-functioning schools alongside mentors who serve as excellent role models. Teacher educators experience how some student teachers bring together their learnings in coursework with their classroom experiences, as follows:

> *The great part is that the theory that they are learning now, they actually see it at school (T4).*

> *They are in practice; they are part of the school. They are in the children's lives. There's the pedagogy and the teaching becomes part of them. I do see the link where they would bring the experiences from the classroom into discussions (T3).*

> *Their reflections after every session were insightful. They reminded me of the reflections we would have with qualified teachers. Whenever we asked them to reflect or comment on something, all of them were keen to share their thoughts (T5).*

Similarly, in Sweden, teacher educators are of the view that some student teachers can coordinate and participate in both contexts, enhancing their understanding of how theory can be put into practice. Excerpts from the data to support these views are:

> *It facilitates teacher educators to illustrate such points of contact between the contexts. It is positive in many ways. They have a prior understanding, and I feel that I can plan teaching on another level, as I have most of the students with me, while I can be criticised at the same time, of course (T11).*

> *There is more weight in the discussions concerning, for example, didactic issues and didactic analysis. Campus-based students, they contemplate and say, 'Well, I don't know what it's going to be like in my future teaching, but I can imagine that it would be like this', whereas WIL students, they tested [things] straight away and then came back and said, 'When I did this, things worked well, but when I did this, it didn't work at all. How come?' Another type of reflection takes place (T12).*

Thus, teacher educators perceive that some student teachers in WIL are engaged in transformative activities, where they reflect upon their experiences and critically examine changes, leading to the creation of new knowledge (Dewey 2009). The student teachers are perceived to establish meaningful connections between theory and practice and make use of the knowledge

transfer between 'knowledge-for-practice' to 'knowledge-in-practice' (Cochran-Smyte & Lytle 1999).

However, even if WIL education provides the potential for coordination processes to be established, teacher educators note that WIL student teachers can be divided into two groups based on their identification with the different contexts and their ability to coordinate the two. The key difference appears to be whether student teachers adopt a mindset of 'not a teacher yet, ' which we address in theme 2. Those who do are able to avoid forming a biased identification with one particular context and can go beyond mere identification and engage in perspective-taking, or 'look through the eyes of others at their own practices' (Bakker & Akkerman 2017:7).

The data suggests that when student teachers navigate boundaries as they move between the university and school learning contexts, it serves as a resource for continuity (Akkerman & Bakker 2011) when learning and experiences from one context are introduced into another. In this case, teacher educators observed student teachers integrating their school-based learning into coursework discussions. This process involves reciprocal identification, where student teachers redefine how intersecting practices in coursework and school settings either diverge (othering) or coexist. In the following example, the different perspectives that arise from intersecting practices to better understand and visualise one's own practice are facilitated by the teacher educator, serving as a broker between the two worlds:

> *I have interrogated a bit why they made the decisions that they made when they taught these lessons to see whether or not they're able to actually draw on the theory and the coursework in the module. And I was surprised to find that all of them could actually give a really good reason for the decisions that they made based on the theory that they learned in the coursework (T4).*

Student teachers demonstrate coordination by integrating related patterns, draw-ing from both past connections and new associations. Crossing boundaries can lead to novel insights, as it prompts reflection on differences, encourages explanations of one's understanding (perspective making), and fosters the ability to see oneself from others' viewpoints (perspective taking) (Fortuin *et al.* 2024; Nelson & Parchoma 2018). When individuals encounter discontinuities, they enter a 'third space' conducive to reflective learning and expanded learning opportunities, demonstrated by the following examples:

In their first year, they were reluctant to express themselves. In their fourth year, they sounded like qualified teachers to the extent that they would even make recommendations to us for future practice (T5).

When I observe their teaching in schools, I always think about whether or not learning is taking place, and in all of the lessons that I observed, I could very clearly see that the students paid a lot of attention to what learning needs to take place, and how do I get the children to actually learn this content? And that's something that I think even teachers with a few years of experience sometimes don't even consider (T4).

Research on individuals' multiple participations has shown that different forms of participation can be isolated and even conflict with each other, leading to experiences of discontinuities or boundaries that can hinder further engagement (Akkerman & Bakker 2011:13). Interestingly, this boundary also represents a space of both sameness and continuity, where two or more sites are relevant to each other in a specific manner. In both South Africa and Sweden, teacher educators perceive that some student teachers can see the differences, but they also see the need for co-existing and collaborating to make meaning across different contexts (Fortuin *et al.* 2024). However, some student teachers are perceived to face a challenge as they become the object of 'othering' while remaining in the workplace. They are perceived to mostly adhere to the distinct epistemological approaches to learning in the workplace and take a distant approach to the coursework as they spend more time at school, learning alongside mentor teachers. These observations echo views on the epistemological divide between school and university (Bruner 2009; Cetina 1999).

Their engagement in coursework, therefore, appears secondary to practice, often limited to completing assessments, and not always under-standing the 'why' of practice, echoed by the following sentiments of teacher educators:

I find that their attention to the content is almost secondary to what they experience in school .... Students that have engaged with content and have engaged with articles, you can see that discussion happening ... And there's a generally good discussion; I do see the link where they would bring in the experiences from the classroom into discussions, but when you ask them where do you see the links with the content,

> *then it's like verbatim quoting from what you've given them. It's bookwork that they just took up (T1).*

> *The quality of the engagement is often waiting for information rather than engaging in conversation …. they're not kind of engaging with the rigorous kind of levels of conversation that I think would be ideal (T3).*

> *Those who become too much of a teacher too fast, they become so practice- oriented that their studies become something that they have to rush through. Yes, it becomes something that they just have to do, instead of being something that will enhance their learning (T6).*

Further, due to their daily duties in the school context, WIL student teachers are perceived to require support from teacher educators limited to procedural rather than conceptual knowledge and the need for 'hands-on' material aimed at effectively managing their work situations:

> *This was the biggest difference, then. They also requested a lot of practical learning. They wanted feedback regarding things like 'What textbook can I use?', 'What web pages are there?', or 'What film should I show?' They want a lot of concrete suggestions, like 'How do I go about this? How do I conduct this teaching?' (T6)*

> *They want any additional notes and they want the online recordings for them, it's almost like if I've got that, it's enough….there's no urgency or priority to engage in a discussion around what is my own thinking about the content, never mind the practice for them. The content, they appreciate it, but they need it because they want to do an assignment... to write a quiz or test and you can see that because they just simply don't engage in discussions (T1).*

The above teacher educators face challenges in encouraging these WIL student teachers to take their university (i.e., academic) courses seriously and to recognise the legitimacy and importance of this learning context. Instead, the student teachers tend to engage in 'othering' (Akkerman & Bakker 2011), where they have already decided how different practices relate, or fail to relate, to one another. They define one practice in terms of another, highlighting the differ-

rences between them rather than integrating them. This engenders a situation where various identities associated with school and university settings are in flux, leading to contention and negotiation. Such circumstances frequently lead to conflict rather than harmonious integration. Consequently, the dichotomy between being acknowledged as a member of the school community and feeling alienated at the university has undermined student teachers' ability to reconcile the disparate practices and identities encountered in these two contexts. On the flip side, it is also important for teacher educators to reflect on the pedagogies they utilise to actively engage student teachers in the learning process and their relevance in developing the necessary competencies for the classroom (Hernández-de-Menéndez *et al.* 2019). In this case, boundary crossing can be positioned as a form of active learning that draws on real-life classroom challenges (Fortuin *et al.* 2024). Teacher educators would need to serve as intermediaries, utilising boundary objects like shared discourses to promote meaningful interaction and reflection (Veltman, Keulen & Voogt 2024). By engaging in real-life classroom problem-solving processes, teacher educators can identify' blind spots and effectively act as brokers (Veltman *et al.* 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to implement pedagogical strategies that promote student teachers' ability to navigate and learn across boundaries when addressing real classroom challenges (Wei *et al.* 2020). Additionally, these strategies should consider the specific contexts and tensions that student teachers experience (Noordegraaf *et al.* 2019).

5.2 'I'm already a teacher' versus 'not a teacher yet' – Implications of a Lopsided Identification for WIL Student Teacher Learning

The data further suggests that student teachers spending extended periods at schools develop a teacher identity from their first or second year of the programme. In South Africa, teacher educators' experiences with student teachers gave the impression that:

> *I'm a teacher already. Practically, by the end of the second year, that's the kind of insight I get from them (T1).*

> *The students, because of the time that they spend in school and with their mentor teacher, start to act more like teachers from as early as their first year (T2).*

> *So things like classroom management, you can see that from their first year, the SBSTs already have a much better grasp of how to manage a class during a lesson, how to introduce a lesson, and how the introduction progresses into the body or into the consolidation phase... they are starting to act more like teachers from as early as their first year (T4).*

The data suggests that the development of a teaching mindset may be facilitated by prolonged engagement with experienced teachers, as such immersion appears to accelerate enculturation into teaching practice more effectively than limited school-based experience during WIL**.**

Many teacher educators in Sweden observe that WIL student teachers' strong identifications as ready teacher entails an adoption of positions different from student teachers in regular TE programmes. While some teacher educators acknowledge the positive aspects of this, they all recognise certain challenges. The positive aspects are that some teacher educators perceive WIL student teachers to be more 'mature' than campus-based student teachers. Teacher educators can relate to this group of student teachers, establishing a sense of legitimate coexistence. They are recognised as members of the teaching community (Lave & Wenger 1991) and are seen as insiders to some extent. Evidence from the data:

> *Most of them were mature, so actually I thought it was more positive to have these students. You can talk with them as colleagues or ready teachers more than you can with students that come straight from upper-secondary school.... These students seem much more mature, actually (T9).*

Similarly, in South Africa, teacher educators did acknowledge the maturity, independence and confidence of SBSTs in their engagements.

> *I think that the practice that they have in the classroom certainly gives them more confidence to teach…In the fourth year, they have a full-time teacher disposition... the way that they would engage with me almost felt like I was talking to someone who was already a teacher in practice (T2).*

> *They were a bit more independent; I don't know if it is because maybe*

they are at school, so they see certain principles or concepts being applied in the classroom. So, they feel they know this, I can do it (T4).

During my interactions with them, I noticed that they behaved like qualified teachers. Their insights about the education system and experiences at school were informative and intense. They reminded me of the reflections we would have with qualified teachers (T5).

It seems as if student teachers are in the process of identification, where they are identifying themselves as teachers and defining the intersecting practice of the workplace. This leads to transformation learning processes where observable changes take place within university studies, that is, student teachers are changing their university practices in response to their work placements (Akkerman & Bakker 2011; Fortuin *et al.* 2024). A form of knowledge integration is perceived (Akkerman & Bakker 2014). The acquisition of the above traits appears to be a consequence of sustained collaboration with experienced educators and mentors. Consequently, this proximity may encourage them to seek guidance from mentors and establish stronger bonds with fellow educators within the school. Immersion in the educational setting naturally fosters a perception among student teachers of being part of the teaching staff at school. Prolonged engagement with pupils and inclusion in school activities have culminated in their assimilation into the school's community of practice.

However, the perceived positioning of WIL student teachers as ready teachers when they attend university studies also entails challenges. One such challenge is that these student teachers adopt a different hierarchical position than traditional programme student teachers. These WIL student teachers tend to see themselves as teachers rather than student teachers, leading to a lopsided identification. As a result, teacher educators perceive that these student teachers do not critically view themselves as learners, and their ambition to develop their knowledge is not as strong as that of ordinary TE student teachers. Their ability to reflect critically is compromised in terms of both perspective-making and perspective-taking. This means they struggle to clarify their own understanding and knowledge of a particular issue, as well as to view themselves from the perspective of others (Veltman *et al.* 2024). In South Africa, experience in the school has much more influence over student teachers than does their learning at the university, as they were '*seeing practical examples of what they are actually doing, so in their minds, they don't need it as much. They have it all figured out' (T3).*

Teacher educators contend that the student teachers' adoption of a qualified teacher's identity, rather than that of student teachers aspiring to teach, influences how they internalise and engage with their learning in the coursework. In the context of legitimating coexistence (Lave & Wenger 1991), sensitivity plays a crucial role for those involved. Typical in these identify-cation processes is the encounter and reconstruction of boundaries between practices (Akkerman & Bakker 2011), and the repercussions when WIL is prioritised, as per the following utterances:

> *I am not minimising what they are doing in the schools and their teaching, but they are not teachers. There is too much learning that needs to still take place, and respectfully, their mentor teachers are very qualified. They are in excellent schools, some of them, and they are seeing really good practice, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you yourself are now a teacher. You could be just assisting in the class. The narrative needs to change for them in terms of what is a qualified teacher.*
>
> *I am a teacher in practice, although I am interning. I am in the classroom every day, but I still need to develop my skills as a teacher. I am not yet a teacher. This is my title when the teacher refers to me in the classroom, but internally and professionally, I know that I still have a lot to learn (T1).*

Further, some teacher educators perceive that student teachers do not always see the value of coursework, which has led teacher educators to experience a sense of epistemological competition with mentors over the legitimacy of knowledge. This often culminates in the disregard of coursework learning in favor of exclusive reliance on learning in and from practice at schools. Student teachers are defining the way that the intersecting practices of university studies and workplaces differ from each other (othering) and have difficulties in seeing how they can coexist. Thus, they seem to struggle to reflect upon how making use of the perspectives from university studies can enhance their understanding of their practice in the workplace (Akkerman & Bakker 2011).

Such a trend is concerning as it hinders the development of a critical inquiry approach to teaching. It is a tension-filled process that involves continuous negotiation, acting as a broker between the two systems, which takes time. The following excerpts from the two countries highlight these challenges:

> *Competition with the mentor, feel like u have to continuously justify …. cos my teacher does it this way…. It is only in the 3rd-year the reality check comes in …. develop trust in lecturers that they have the experience to guide your learning … Start to shift (T1).*

> *For those who couldn't accept that they were not teachers yet, for them it became quite difficult, and from them there was perhaps more questioning regarding 'Why should we learn this? (T6)*

Student teachers often value their daily classroom experiences but not always understanding the 'why' of practice can lead to misconceptions and compromise student understanding of how children learn. Criticisms and guidance are frequently perceived as attacks, requiring careful handling to improve understanding and recognising the mentor's expertise and structured approach. Learning at the boundaries also requires coordination, 'even in the absence of consensus' (Akkerman & Bakker 2011:143). Coordination requires the establishment of a communicative connection between differing practices or perspectives; coordination also requires 'translation between the different worlds' (Akkerman & Bakker 2011:144).

Here, it is important to recognise that identification initially emphasises differences or 'othering' when one practice is defined in relation to another (Akkerman & Bakker 2011:142). This approach requires teacher educators to engage in a dialogical process, such as questioning the intersecting systems, including the roles, functions, and uniqueness of each system. Bringing coursework and practice together is important but challenging, as expressed by TE1 as follows:

> *Whatever reflections or whatever positive criticism you attempt to give, they always take it as an attack. These are the kinds of critiques and criticisms that you have to work with, and we discuss, and we kind of work better through it when we discuss (T1).*

> *You see the mentor, but you don't see how the mentor pulls children into the lesson, calms them, and continues with a well-planned structured learning episode. Be careful about your interactions with the children because they might look engaged, but they actually do not listen carefully, and then it's like, but my teacher also does that in the class and not understanding the expertise and the years of practice that*

> comes with it. This is what happens when you are learning to be a
> teacher (T1).

Different perspectives on teaching practice were keenly felt by T1, who
believed that the influence of the school environment or culture on student
practice is powerful, although not always for the better. She stated that the role
of teacher educators is to build a bridge between the two learning environments
so that different perspectives can be identified and utilised as a basis for student
teacher (and mentor teacher) learning. This can be due to student teachers being
in an ambiguous position, simultaneously being student teachers learning and
teachers expected to know and act (Akkerman & Meijer 2003), who 'sort of
belong and sort of don't' (Tanggaard 2007:460). Also, WIL student teachers
are in a specific position where they are mainly within the epistemic culture of
workplaces with distinct attitudes toward knowledge and knowledge claims
(Cetina 1999), which influence their attitude towards the epistemic culture of
university settings. The role of teacher educators as brokers in encouraging
self-reflection and epistemic reflexivity among student teachers is crucial. To
achieve this, intentionally introducing elements of one practice into another
(Wenger 1998) by incorporating student teachers' practical knowledge and
real-world classroom experiences into their coursework is needed. Without this
guidance, student teachers might miss out on developing the critical thinking
skills essential for effective teaching.

6. Conclusion

This comparative study highlights how teacher education in both South Africa
and Sweden is shaped by the global shift toward practice-based learning.
Despite contextual differences – such as online versus campus-based
university engagement – student teachers in both countries face similar
challenges in navigating diverse classrooms and integrating academic and
practical knowledge. Teacher educators in both contexts observe that while
workplace learning strengthens the link between theory and practice, it also
risks reinforcing an epistemological divide, where practical knowledge is
perceived as more valuable than theoretical understanding. As Gustafsson
Nyckel *et al.* (2020) note, workplace norms often structure learning in ways
that limit critical reflection. This underscores the need for curriculum
restructuring that balances academic and practical learning, supporting the
integration of knowledge, skills, and values essential for professional practice

(Sheppard, Macatangay, Colby & Sullivan 2008). Drawing on Ulrich and Eppinger's (1995) structured design approach, curriculum development should prioritise essential competencies to ensure coherence between educational goals and workplace demands.

The study suggests that extended practice placements at schools risk becoming work-based learning unless supported by reflective academic components. A phased curriculum – beginning and ending with university-based learning, with integrated employment in between – could foster deeper reflection, as advocated by Tynjälä *et al.* (2003). This is especially important in today's dynamic classrooms, where teaching practices are no longer static or easily transferable (Rorrison 2008). Student teachers need structured opportunities to reflect on foundational questions such as the purpose of education and their role within it. Ultimately, this north–south collaboration reveals that effective teacher education requires a shared responsibility among universities, schools, and student teachers. Boundary crossing should be conceptualised not as a one-way transition but as a reciprocal process that reshapes both academic and workplace practices. These findings offer valuable insights for international teacher education reform, emphasising the need for integrated, reflective, and context-responsive approaches.

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COVID-19, Religious Voices, and the Resurgence of Traditional Healing Practices in Uganda

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Abstract

Religious institutions and spirituality beliefs are in the spotlight not only for expounding the root of and intervention to pandemics, but also being a sanctuary for a population battling obscure pandemics. Religious voices on pandemics are treated with conviction, as affected societies seek their guidance. Religious voices to the first wave of COVID-19, both in Uganda and all over the world attest to this. However, the waning voices of religious leaders and institutions during the second wave in Uganda, on the one hand, and the reinvigoration of traditional healing remedies for treatment of COVID-19, on the other, are two contrasting features which water down previous scholars' postulation of the centrality of religious voices during pandemics of this nature. Using mixed methods approach, comprising of qualitative in-depth interviews with 19 respondents and an online quantitative survey questionnaire upon two social media groups with a total of 500 respondents, the study established a decreased visibility of religious voices with a change in the message by religious leaders during the second wave of the pandemic. Second, although there was no significant relation between dwindled religious voices and a sky-rocketing recourse to traditional remedies for COVID-19, in many respects, the decreased voice of religious leaders rescinded the optimism that the people held in religious ideology, with solace found in the effectiveness of traditional healing remedies. Third, the popular use of traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19 emanated from the deplorable capacity of Uganda's modern healthcare system to manage the pandemic, on the one hand, and socio-cultural traditions and beliefs of the people concerning the disease and medicine, on

the other. The distinct contribution of this article to the scholarship of 'religion and pandemics' is that it purges religious beliefs and voices which have previously and overly been theorized to be central during pandemics, with the relegation of religion on one hand, and promotion of science on the other.

Keywords: COVID-19, Coronavirus, healing, second wave, traditional medicine, religion, Uganda

Introduction

This article reflects on the second wave of the Coronavirus disease in Uganda. The Coronavirus disease of 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19, emerged from the Chinese town of Wuhan in the year 2019, spreading wildly to the entire world, with massive infections and deaths (Liu, Kuo & Shih 2020:328). Due to the incessant mutation of this virus emerging into 'variants', scientists forewarned the evolution and manifestation of this pandemic into numerous waves (Liu *et al*. 2020:331; Ministry of Health 2021). For Uganda's case, the first wave of COVID-19 was experienced from March 2020 to the end of the year. In May 2021, the government of Uganda officially announced that the country had entered the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with an appalling 81 percent infection upswing between March and April of 2021. The second wave was therefore a resurgence of COVID-19, preceded by a period of less scary transmission witnessed in 2020 (GoU 2021). Whereas the country had a cumulative total of 361 deaths due to COVID-19 between March 2020 and May 2021, the more aggressive second wave was accounting for a positivity rate of 17 percent among those tested, as well as an average of 40 deaths per day. By the beginning of July 2021, the COVID-19 confirmed cases were 82,082 with 51 percent of these registered in the past three months of the second wave. The harmonized death count due to COVID-19 stood at 1,873 fatalities, representing a 2.3 percent fatality rate, with 19 percent increase registered in the past three months (Museveni 2021; Mwebesa 2021; Aceng 2021). The second wave was attributed to the opening up of workplaces, schools, worship places, a public non-adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) like social distancing, use of masks, and hand hygiene, as well as imported variants of the virus from India, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom (GoU 2021; *Daily Monitor* 2021a; Aceng 2021).

Faced with the surge in COVID-19 infections and fatalities, on June 18, 2021, the President of Uganda imposed the second nationwide lockdown, with a host of measures intended to curtail the spread of the virus. Among these was the closure of places of worship, including churches, mosques, and other such congregating places, since they fuelled the rapid transmission of the virus (Museveni 2021; Aceng 2021). Unlike the first lockdown, which saw the president consult the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) and other such notable religious leaders in the country, it was not the case during the second lockdown (Blair *et al*. 2021:1).

The significance of religious voices during pandemics has been echoed by Dols (1979: 180) and Cunningham (2008:30) as critical in not only interpreting the occurrence of pandemics through pious traditions, but also guiding society and furnishing hope to a traumatized population due to the pandemic (Huremovic 2019:14; Isiko 2020:78). The reliance on religion to make sense of and help mitigate epidemics has clearly been evident since the pre-Christian era (Stange 2020:11-23) and more popular throughout the world in the past 200 years, when the first epidemic of the modern globalizing era, cholera, began to spread worldwide (Phillips 2020:436; Barmania & Reiss 2020:15-22; Huremovic 2019:7-35). However, the conspicuous waning and or quietude of religious voices and a reinvigoration of traditional healing remedies during the more drastic second wave of COVID-19 downplay the long-held centrality of religion in times of crisis.

During the first wave, there existed a mixed reaction from religious leaders over the government's decision to a nationwide lockdown, including the closure of places of worship. Religious leaders provided theological inter-pretations of the disease and attended to the practical needs of the populace, since a number were toiling due to the adverse effects of the lockdown to the economy (Isiko 2020:83-93). However, circumstances of the second wave in Uganda seemed to suggest otherwise with a diminished voice of religious leaders about the pandemic. The waning voices of religious leaders and the intensified recourse to traditional medicine for treatment of COVID-19 are two contrasting occurrences which defined the second wave in the country.

Conceptualizing Religious Leaders and Voices – Uganda's Context

Religious voices are hereby defined as responses, reactions, and attitudes of religious leaders, religious organizations, and their followers to the pandemic

in terms of their interpretation, solution, and reaction to government policy towards the pandemic. Although Uganda subscribes to the tripartite religious traditions of Christianity, Islam and African indigenous religious belief system, the study took interest in the visibility of Christian and Muslim religious leaders only. Their voices are public and the most visible. Official statistics indicate that Christianity constitutes 85% of Uganda's population and Islam 14%, totalling to 99% of Uganda's population. Less than 1% of Uganda's population affiliate to African indigenous religion(s) with their religious leaders marginal in the social dispensation of the country (UBOS 2016). The lone voices of African indigenous religious specialists had been suppressed by state sanctions during the first wave of COVID-19 in Uganda (Isiko 2020:82). Therefore, voices of Christian and Moslem leaders in Uganda are taken to be the public voice. In the context of this article, religious leaders are Christian clergy and lay leaders (bishops, priests, pastors, apostles, and influential leaders of Christian laity) as well as Muslim clerics (Sheikhs, Imams and any other Moslem clerics). In some cases, religious leadership is defined under umbrella associations and organizations, for example the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) which brings together mainstream Christian denominations, the National Fellowship of Born Again and Pentecostal Churches (NFBPC) – an umbrella association of all Pentecostal churches in Uganda, and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), which amalgamates representative leaders from 'major' religious denominations in the country.

Basing on empirical evidence amassed on the second wave of COVID-19 in Uganda, this article raises and answers the following questions: What kind of religious voices were echoed in the second wave of COVID-19 and how did they differ from the first wave? Which circumstances shaped the change in religious voices about COVID-19 during its second wave? What kind of relation existed between the change in religious voices about COVID-19 and the increased popularity of traditional healing for COVID-19? Why did traditional healing remedies become popular for the treatment of COVID-19? This article is structured as follows: Introduction; conceptualizing religious leaders and voices; theoretical framework; literature review; methodology; religious voices on the second wave of COVID-19; the relation between religious voices and a recourse to traditional healing remedies, the popularity of traditional healing remedies; discussion; limitations; and the conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the theory of religious coping. The theory of religious coping was first pronounced by Kenneth Ira Pargament, in his book, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (Pargament, 1997). The theory postulates that when faced with a crisis, people tend to turn to religion to cope with adversity. The theory contends that religious people in crisis tend to cope by obtaining a personal closeness with God, a sense of meaning and purpose in life; engaging in religious coping activities, which are typically attempts to be less sinful and participation in religious groups; and searching for an explanation for the adverse event usually situated in religious-spiritual perspectives (Bentzen 2019; Sibley and Bulbulia 2012:2 - 4). Since then, several scholars have used it to explain the relationship between religion and pandemics, asserting that epidemic affected communities practice religion more (Cunningham 2008:30; Bentzen 2019). This theory has overly been used by studies on 'religion and COVID-19' to-understand the changes and impact that COVID-19 pandemic has had on people's religious life and practice. Empirical evidences available from variant scholars on religion and COVID-19 posit a positive relationship between religion and COVID-19 pandemic, with the global population becoming more religious and indeed depending on religion to cope with COVID-19 pandemic (Meza 2020; Boguszewski *et al.*, 2020:4; Thomas & Mariapaola 2020:1; Isiko 2022:22). This theory is significant to this study as it facilitates in interrogating the unusual negative association between religion and COVID-19, and the conspicuous silence of religion during the more disastrous second wave of COVID-19 as experienced in Uganda.

Literature Review

Religious voices and the use of traditional medicine shaped debates about interpretation and treatment of COVID-19 since its outbreak in 2019. The uniqueness of the COVID-19 pandemic to the medical research community, without any proven cure, surged recourse to traditional medicine remedies and spiritual beliefs especially in Africa and Asia (Mshana *et al*. 2021:6; Ganguly & Bakhshi 2020:3084). However, the application of traditional healing remedies and prayers against COVID-19 generated a notable discussion about their effectiveness after undergoing the vital biomedical processes to ascertain their efficacy (Mshana *et al*. 2021:9). Although the World Health Organisation (WHO) initially indicated that the use of traditional remedies against the pandemic was ineffective and detrimental, the global public interest in

traditional medicines for COVID-19 treatment compelled it to relent (Karabulut 2021; Richey *et al*. 2021). As the anti 'COVID-organics' protestations emerged from the nations of the Global North, the WHO signed a pact with the President of Madagascar to scientifically test Covid-organics – the country's 'cure' for COVID-19 (Richey *et al*. 2021). In some other African countries like Zimbabwe and Mali, a case for precision herbal medicine in the treatment of COVID-19 was made by scientists (Dandara *et al*. 2021:2; Sanogo 2020).

Scholars like Rodrigues & Metz (2021:2) argued for the centrality of traditional African healers in the COVID-19 pandemic, on account of their philosophy which is compatible with preventive measures for COVID-19. However, during the first wave, the case was different in Uganda, when both government and scientists were utterly against the possible use of traditional medicine for COVID-19. Uganda's Ministry of Health was apprehensive about the possible use of a herbal drug for COVID-19, which was manufactured by Madagascar (*Daily Monitor* 2020). Government further cautioned traditional healers against treating COVID-19 patients or anybody with similar symptoms. Traditional healers were required to refer all their clients with Coronavirus symptoms to modern health facilities for management (*Daily Monitor* 2020).

Instead, religious voices in terms of the assurance of miracles and healing for COVID-19 patients were more pronounced. In addition, primary healthcare preventive interventions for the pandemic were tightly hinged on the collaboration with religious leaders; yet a sizeable number of them were utterly against the closure of places of worship as a preventive measure to the spread of COVID-19 (Isiko 2020:81). A historical analysis of the outbreak of the great plague in 1347, the London plague in 1665, the Spanish flu in 1918, and the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014 depict the centrality of Christians in inspiring the world with their resilient faith and compassion in the midst of pandemics (Whiting 2020). During the Roman era, for example, oppressive emperors marvelled at the high visibility of humanitarian care of Christians towards the ailing and dying in times of plagues, as Christian churches opened their doors to serve as clinics (Whiting 2020).

Indeed, in African countries like Tanzania, COVID-19 increased the intensity of religiosity, with religious voices and activities being dominant during the pandemic (Isiko 2022:20; Ndaluka *et al*. 2021:131). This response in several African countries is not surprising, given the fact that African societies are fond of resorting to their cultural and religious beliefs whenever they experience pandemics with no obvious cure (Isiko 2021:238). However,

the second wave of COVID-19 in Uganda was characterized by two contrasting issues which challenged pre-existing literature. Despite the resurgence of the disease, religious voices were non-belligerent compared to the first wave. Second, there was an increased recourse to traditional healing for COVID-19, contrary to the reprimand during the first wave. The conspicuous waning of religious voices amidst the recourse to traditional healing needs to be analysed in the context of the historical negativity of foreign religious groups to African-healing remedies (Isiko 2018:148-183). This article analyses circumstances for these contradictions, seeking answers as to why the previously dominant religious voices in the first wave had no trace during the second wave, despite the increasingly visible recourse to traditional healing remedies.

Methodology

The study used a mixed methods research approach. This article is based on qualitative in-depth interviews and quantitative online survey. The study was done between June and July 2021. Qualitative in-depth phone interviews were conducted by the researcher himself with 19 key informants. It was not possible to have face-to-face interviews because the country was under a nationwide lockdown due to the resurgence of COVID-19. A smartphone with audio-recording function was used to record the interviews for each informant. In addition to audio-recording, the researcher jotted down the major issues as each interview progressed. This helped in making preliminary analyses of the information during the interview process. The key informants were purposively selected, based on their knowledge, interaction, and experience with Uganda's contemporary religious landscape. These included University lecturers of religion and theological studies; teachers of Religious Education with at least a basic degree in Religious Studies or Theology; public commentators on religion and religious expression and graduate students of religious studies. These categories of key informants were thought to hold not only vast knowledge about religious expression in Uganda, but also the capacity to contrast religious behaviour between the two waves of COVID-19 in Uganda. To triangulate expert opinions of key informants, the article relies on an extensive use of information in public media – both mainstream and social media – because these epitomize not only the thinking of common people, but also represent the public voice. Mainstream media includes national newspapers and television broadcasts. Social media includes Facebook, WhatsApp,

and YouTube. This article consequently carries references and quotations from public voices, visibly captured in public media on religious behaviour, and the utilization of traditional remedies during the second wave of the pandemic in Uganda.

An online survey sampled two social media groups: A WhatsApp group of 250 undergraduate students, offering religious studies as one of their course subject combinations, and a Facebook group of over 400 members belonging to an urban Pentecostal Church in Kampala City. The online survey questionnaire aimed at establishing three issues: How widely spread was the use of traditional remedies for COVID-19, whether religious voices on the second wave of COVID-19 were as significantly visible compared to the first wave, and whether they thought there was a relation between religious voices and recourse to traditional remedies for COVID-19. The choice of the WhatsApp group for the undergraduate students was based on two justify-cations: First, government had suspended all activities of academic institutions, universities inclusive. The students went into a forced recess period. Students spread all over the country to their homes, which represented a reliable national picture – both urban and rural – in relation to the three aspects being surveyed. Second, the study required respondents who were abreast with religious sensi-tivity of the Ugandan society, devoid of religious biases. Based on the academic study of religion at the university, it was assumed that these partici-pants possess religious sensitivity devoid of biases inherent at believer's level. The choice of the Facebook group for an urban church was thought to furnish an authentic picture on the opinion of the urban population on the three aspects, owing to the fact that urban areas are more exposed to public media, a channel for conveying voices of religious leaders.

A systematic analysis of information was done. For in-depth phone interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed into English, as the inter-views were executed in this language. Carefully analysing the transcripts, three major themes were identified: These were 1) religious voices on the second wave of COVID-19; 2) the relation between religious voices and recourse to traditional remedies for COVID-19; and 3) the popularity of traditional healing remedies for COVID-19. The online survey questionnaire yielded percentages based on the opinions of the participants. The online survey safeguarded personal details of respondents like religious affiliation, gender, academic level, and ethnic status. This was because the study aimed at establishing how widespread the three aspects were in the community regardless of those considerations.

Ethical considerations were taken care of. The key informants, were informed that the interviews would be recorded and they verbally accorded their consent. In a special study room, secluded untargeted individuals gave the ambience for making phone calls in privacy. The researcher collaborated with account administrators of the WhatsApp and the Facebook groups, who were familiar to the members. With the exception of ticking either 'Yes' or 'No' for each of the three questions which constituted the online questionnaire, the respondents remained anonymous. In circumstances where quotations attributed to key interviewees have been used, the quoted respondents are represented by titles and other such neutral personal data other than their actual names. However, individuals whose identities were disclosed in public media in regard to their personal experiences with the pandemic, appear in the article as such.

Religious Voices on Second Wave COVID-19

The online survey sought for opinion on the visibility of religious voices during the second wave of the pandemic. Out of the 250 members of the WhatsApp group, there was a response rate of 217 members (86.8%). From the 217 responses received, 193 members (88%), acknowledged that religious voices diminished in the second wave when compared to the first wave of the pandemic in Uganda, while 24 (11.1%) of the total respondents disagreed. Although it was difficult to get a definite number of people for the Facebook group, since individual members were known to have multiple accounts within this group, a total number of 283 responses was received on the visibility of religious voices during the second wave, compared to the first wave of the pandemic. Of the 283 responses, 233 responses (82.3%) were of the opinion that religious voices were not visible during the second wave compared to the first wave. Therefore, out of the grand total responses of 500 members from both WhatsApp and Facebook, 426 responses (85.2%) were of the opinion that religious voices were not visible during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

The percentage representations above unwrap two revelations. First, religious voices on the second wave of the pandemic were not felt by the population, both in the towns and in the countryside. Second, the laity themselves did not feel the visibility of their own institutions during the second wave of the pandemic. With regard to the 19 key informants, 15 of them agreed that religious voices were not as much pronounced during the second wave as they were during the first wave. The four key informants who disagreed,

claimed that religious voices remained visible, only that there was a change in the message for the second wave. In brief, two key findings surfaced: Most religious voices during the second wave significantly waned in comparison to the first wave, and even with the negligible religious voices noticeable, the message was quite different from those of the first wave. In the foregoing paragraphs, the message and messaging of the second wave is discussed and an account for the waning of religious voices is made.

Conceptually, the message embodies religious views and explanations on the genesis and steps to conquer the pandemic. The first wave involved practical interventions of relief food and other basic items from religious leaders to the disconcerted population. On the other hand, the messaging includes the mechanisms, avenues, and frequency with which messages of religious leaders regarding the pandemic are relayed to the public. The study established that there was a significant alteration between the first and second waves of the pandemic in Uganda. Whereas during the first wave of the pandemic, religious leaders and institutions were comforting the people, challenging conspiracy theories that negated religion's connection to the pandemic, and providing basic needs for the most victimized, the situation was different during the second wave. One key informant provided a comparative argument about religious voices between the first and second wave of the pandemic, stating as follows:

> They were very strong in the first wave but now weakening in the second wave because their prayers are less effective. Miracles of healing COVID-19 are not happening. Original pomp of powerful and healing religious prayers is at stake. Religious leaders themselves are dying of COVID-19. Their powers have been challenged. Religious leaders failed to render practical and spiritual healing solutions to the pandemic (Religious cleric and Senior lecturer, Interview 28 June 2021).

In the first wave, religious leaders had a lot of explanations concerning the pandemic. They tried to make religious meaning out of the pandemic. They attributed the pandemic to the sinfulness of mankind and their accentuation was on prayer and repentance. They promised God's healing powers over those who contracted the virus, while some decreed that God's love for Uganda would never permit COVID-19 to outstretch to this country (Isiko 2020:86). Failure of fulfilment of these first wave COVID-19 prophetic utterances might have

weakened their faith in God as the healer. The prophecies pronounced in the first wave were not followed with substantiated evidence of healed people by the second wave of COVID-19. There were, however, arguments from some religious leaders that the non-repentance by people during the first wave, angered God, who decided to punish the disobedient people with the second wave. Since then, they emphasized the message of repentance, forgiveness, and faithfulness.

The first wave of the pandemic looked more distant than the second wave. Religious leaders' ideology and voices during the first wave were based on ravage by the disease in China, the USA, and other European countries. Religious leaders and their congregations in Uganda were imagining a mysterious experience. The pandemic was distant because, apart from Uganda register-ing quite lower cases and deaths compared to other countries, they were not affected at personal level. Uganda hardly experienced any death or critical case of any religious leader during the first wave, yet religious adherents felt affected by the lockdown, but not COVID-19. Their ideology about the pandemic in the first wave was therefore neither based on reality nor practicality. The religious leaders were not speaking about COVID-19, but government's responses to the pandemic, which were meaningless to an ordinary pastor and his congregants. Several religious voices publicly decried the closure of places of worship because Uganda had not experienced any serious threat of the disease, while others proposed that places of worship needed to be kept open on the understanding that they had the means to maintain SOPs for COVID-19. They fell short on this as they branded government's stance to close places of worship a political strategy to curtail religious leaders' massive influence during a presidential campaign season.

However, the second wave was affecting them individually, with an innumerable number of relatives and friends being lost to COVID-19. By June 27, 2021, a combined number of 22 well-known religious clerics from both traditional and Pentecostal churches and the Muslim community in Uganda had succumbed to COVID-19 (*Daily Monitor* 2021b). Given the massive deaths of their own, it left religious leaders at crossroads with regard to what message to relay to the distraught puzzled population. It was the gross impact of this second wave that forced religious leaders not to complain about or proclaim healing – a spiritual prescription justified to be ineffective. This low-key attitude of religious leaders during the second wave was psychological and part of human nature regardless of religious ideology, in that disease and sickness become more meaningful when are felt than imagined.

Although prayer remained noteworthy in the second wave, more stress was on science and following the SOPs. For example, although the Anglican Bishop, Fred Sheldon Mwesigwa of the Ankole diocese argued that the second wave was a spiritual warfare which the church had to fight by prayer, the church had to go scientific. Relatedly, the presiding Apostle of the Born-Again Faith (BAF), Apostle Dr Joseph Serwadda employed African perspectives to justify lockdown and quarantine measures instituted in the second wave, on account of previous application of similar strategies to contain pandemics in traditional Africa. He cited examples of both people and domestic animals that would be isolated when diagnosed with contagious diseases like small pox. These were in addition to religious leaders' willingness to solicit donations for more COVID-19 vaccines (*Daily Monitor* 2021b). Religious leaders accepted science entirely, contrary to their mixed attitude during the first wave. The second wave became more 'scientific', as religious leaders adapted more to scientific explanations than to religious ones. Religious leaders therefore emphasized the Ministry of Health SOPs for COVID-19. They further lobbied for consideration as 'essential workers', not for the sake of opening up places of worship, but to reach out and offer psycho-social support to those infected and affected by COVID-19. Religious leaders became part of government's drive to mobilize vaccination against COVID-19. The emphasis on science does not imply a disbelief in religion, but an attempt to appreciate that religion cannot do without science, for science affixes value to religious ideology.

Still, the change of stance and message of religious leaders during the second wave were attributed to the fact that several church leaders had been infected and several others dying of COVID-19. Based on the change in approach and message conveyed during the second wave, one interviewee was hesitant to acknowledge the invisibility of the religious voice and said the following:

> I disagree that religious voices have waned. Religious leaders are coming out, but differently in order to safeguard themselves from infection since they are among the gravely affected judging by COVID-19 deaths numbers. Maybe they have declined on the aspect of distributing food. This is because death and near-death experiences among religious leaders have been witnessed. They realized that it is no longer a fight for eating food but an issue for survival (Lecturer, Interview 23 June 2021).

The above view highlights the change in circumstances of religious leaders during the second wave, which had an impact on their visibility in society. The seriousness of the disease made them to retreat physically, away from the communities for fear of infection. It was important that they secured their lives first to be able to pastor the suffering followers. Religious leaders instead proved that they were as vulnerable as other categories of Ugandans, as they set out to safeguard themselves against the consequences of the lockdown, ensuing from the pandemic. It also highlights the notion that, possibly their starving followers preferred attendance to their practical need of food to encouraging them to follow scientific preventive measures against COVID-19 or even the gospel.

Nonetheless, the adoption of a scientific approach to the second wave of COVID-19 was not characterized by absolute abandonment of prayer. National prayers were conducted on July 25, 2021, the fourth since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020. Ecumenical prayers organized by the Inter-religious council of Uganda (IRCU) took place at State House, Entebbe. However, public responses to the fourth national prayer day during the second wave of the pandemic were in contrast to those during the first wave. The public was more receptive to prayers during the first wave, but became negative during the second wave. Probably, the ineffectiveness of prayer in the prevention and healing of COVID-19 in the first wave made Ugandans to re-examine the efficacy of prayer. Public scorn and contempt of the national prayers were witnessed, urging government to instead prioritize vaccination. The following two tweets portray the extent to which Ugandans felt that prayer and religious approaches were ineffective responses to the second wave of the pandemic and preferred refocusing their energies and resources to scientific approaches:

> Israel has fully vaccinated 55% of its population. It has agreements with Pfizer and Moderna to secure 18 million doses of the vaccines. Today, Ugandans have a public holiday to dedicate the country to the God of Israel. It is the fourth time since the pandemic cropped up in the country (tweeted June 25, 2021).

Another person tweeted:

> National prayers like the one organized today may be well-intentioned, but truth is some things don't need prayer but require common sense!

> Buy oxygen, PPEs, hospital beds, ambulances, and also enable medics to get to and from work to save lives (tweeted June 25, 2021).

Organizing national prayers for the second wave of COVID-19 seemed an unwelcome strategy for most Ugandans. They argued that unfortunately, while 'serious' countries were immersed in scientific research and socio-economic planning to deal with the health challenges posed by COVID-19, Uganda was gloriously squandering so much energy and financial resources rotating around its pulpit theatricals, including public holidays for COVID-19 prayers (Tacca 2021). Religious voices during the second wave changed from just prayer to urging government to secure medical supplies and moderate medical costs because religious leaders were personally affected. It was argued that more reliance on religion than science during the first wave of the pandemic was because COVID-19 was in its infancy, with neither a cure nor a vaccine. This was in line with common tradition in societies all over the globe that when humanity fails with demonstrable knowledge, they often turn to illusions of magic and religion (Tacca 2021). With a scientific breakthrough of COVID-19 vaccination, it restored the hope that religion and prayer could not do, making religious supplications for COVID-19 almost irrelevant. Religious voices for refocusing the fight against COVID-19 through science were echoed across the pluralistic religious divide in this country. The head of the Islamic Faith in Uganda, Sheikh Ramadhan Mubajje said to the president:

> Your Excellency, I have had an opportunity to visit my people in Mbale. My mother has been battling COVID-19 in the Mbale Regional Referral Hospital. The doctors in the hospital decry insufficient medical supplies to manage the Coronavirus patients, although they are committed. Yet in some hospitals, especially the private ones, they charge exorbitant medical bills for COVID-19 patients. Your Excellency, private hospitals charge between two to five million shillings per day. There are private hospitals that have turned COVID-19 treatment into a profitable business and they are indeed excited about this profitable opportunity (UBC Television 2021).

It was established that during the second wave of the pandemic, religious leaders used the national prayer day to advocate for equitable medical care for COVID-19 patients. They promoted a safe and conducive working environment for medical personnel giving medical care to COVDI-19 patients. They used the day to urge government to extend sufficient medical supplies for the

management of COVID-19 and raised a public outcry about the injustice and unfairness that COVID-19 patients were subjected to by private medical service providers. It can be argued that this alteration of the message by religious leaders happened because they themselves were victims, hence advocating science more than the religious rhetoric. Indeed, the realization of the futility of prayers alone to combat the pandemic led to the birth of the notion of a 'science-led church'. The debate on the effectiveness of religion and prayer against COVID-19 on the one hand, and science on the other, defined the centrality of national prayer celebrations during the second wave. President Museveni believed that prayers alone wouldn't curtail the surge in COVID-19 infections and deaths that were ravaging the country. He argued as follows:

> There is an issue here, refusing to do our mandate and only praying? This virus is avoidable. But if we don't do what we are supposed to do, then, we cannot only say, pray, pray and no effort. I reject the idea of making mistakes and then come and pray, I am not part of that. I believe in a science-led church because science is the study of the power of God (*Daily Monitor* 2021b).

The President's demeaning attitude towards prayer and religious people at a national prayer day at the State House may have been intended to send a signal to any possible religious voices against government's response to the pandemic. This finding resonates with the invisibility of religion in China's public arena, the initial epicentre of COVID-19. The invisibility was attributed to the bulging power and authority of the Chinese State, arising from its unlimited control strategies of the pandemic which cut off the religious actors' space to contribute to stopping the disease (Xiong & Li 2021:2). Religious leaders may have guarded against state reprisals as the case was with some pastors during the first wave. Indeed, such feelings of insecurity with the president's attitude were expressed by a religious leader as follows:

> The silence has been due to the president of Uganda taking himself as the religious head of the nation. In his address, he claimed that after 150 years of Christianity in Uganda, he has a bishop in his house, making reference to his own daughter, who is a Pentecostal pastor. The president views religious leaders as his children and no longer listens to them (Anglican Priest & Graduate Student, Interview 27 June 2021).

To some people, it was argued that the organization of national prayers to deliver the country from the COVID-19 pandemic was not on religious grounds but a political gimmick by the State managers to divert desperate citizens away from the ailing health infrastructure that was incapable of handling the pandemic. One public commentator wrote in one of Uganda's national daily newspapers:

> Museveni may not strike you as a natural religious cult leader. However, if there is space in the religious sphere, he can exploit it. Dispute it if you want, but the people praying at state house pretend to be in harmony because they fear and worship the president. God alone is incapable of drawing them to a shared understanding. These theatrical prayers at state house reinforce many people's beliefs that the pandemic is in the hands of God. So, Museveni can afford some breathing space (Tacca 2021).

Therefore, these findings reveal that as COVID-19 worsened in terms of numbers and infected cases and deaths, the belief in prayers, miraculous healing, and generally the power of the spiritual sphere to control the pandemic, waned. The trials and tribulations of COVID-19 that religious clerics and leaders experienced at a personal level did not only incapacitate their supposed anointing to deal with pandemics, but also weakened their spiritual stance in an ideology of which they are the custodians. The religious leaders paved the way for science because they could no longer hold on to religious rhetoric of the spiritual weaknesses of mankind as the cause of the disease. They could not proceed with the spiritual prescriptions of repentance and healing because the aggressive second wave of the pandemic had proved these ineffective. It also reveals that the call for national prayers during the second wave of the pandemic was nominalist in tendency, intended to provide illusory hope in a population which was already desperate for concrete solutions to the pandemic. This change in religious behaviour during the second wave yielded to alternatives for which the public would exploit to cope with the pandemic. One such alternative was recourse to traditional healing remedies.

Relation between Religious Voices and Recourse to Traditional Healing Remedies

From the online survey of 500 respondents, emerging from both the WhatsApp and Facebook groups, the study sought to establish whether there was a relation between the change in religious voices during the second wave and the increased use of traditional healing remedies for COVID-19. A combined number of 367 respondents (73.4%) of the total respondents objected the existence of a relation between waning religious voices and recourse to traditional healing remedies for COVID-19. Relatedly, 12 of the 19 key informants disputed the supposed relation between religious voices and recourse to traditional healing remedies for COVID-19. These statistics therefore reveal that a substantial percentage of the population did not presume that the change in religious voices coerced masses to pursue traditional healing remedies. However, a smaller number of the people were in concordance.

Emerging from the key informants' interviews, it was certified that during the first wave of the pandemic, religious voices were significant in laying out grounds for hope among the dismayed citizenries. This made the people so comfortable that it was pointless to solicit for alternatives. During the first wave, prayers dominated and were central at each single event when COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals. No single public prayer ceremony existed at the release of healed victims during the second wave. Yet, there were countless testimonies by individuals who were healed of COVID-19 after the application of traditional remedies. Such personal testimonies pointed to the effectiveness of traditional healing remedies, which lessened the hype that religious leaders had enjoyed in the past. Their silence was therefore anchored on their inability to furnish any sort of solution (Religious Education Teacher, Interview 16 June 2021). Another interviewee stated that gone were the days when Christian clergy and Muslim clerics proclaimed healing with their 'mighty touches and holy water'. Their silenced powers meant a shift in the healing paragon from pastors to herbalists (Senior lecturer, Interview 08 July 2021). Therefore, recourse to traditional healing for COVID-19 was largely justified by the impotence of religious institutions, coaxing people to unearth a substitute.

Arguments against any relation between religious voices and recourse to traditional healing remedies are based on the fact that traditional medicine in African societies boasts of a long-acknowledged history that dates back to the pre-colonial era as well as Christian and Islamic entries into Africa. Instead, the popular use of traditional medicine for COVID-19 during the second wave has its rationale in the socio-economic and political environments in which COVID-19 emerged, and generally the dysfunctionality of health service

provision in Uganda. In the next section, a discussion is presented on circumstances that account for the popular recourse to traditional remedies for COVID-19 in the second wave.

Popularity of Traditional Healing Practices for COVID-19

Traditional healing practices have existed since time immemorial and have been an integral part of human cultures (WHO 1978; Isiko 2018:3). Traditional healing practices, also termed 'traditional medicine' are defined as 'the sum total of knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement of treatment of physical and mental illness' (WHO 2001; 1978). Traditional medicine entails diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs incorporating plant, animal, mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques, and exercises applied singly or in combination in order to maintain the wellbeing, as well as to treat, diagnose, or prevent illness (WHO 2001; Kebede *et al.* 2006:127).

Whereas the definition of traditional medicine is comprehensive, the concern of the WHO has always been limited to herbalism (Isiko 2019:72). Similarly, in contemporary Uganda, with the COVID-19 context, much concern has been on herbal remedies, physical exercise, and taking advantage of natural climatic conditions. Spiritual healing therapies by diviners were visible, although suppressed during the first wave. For example, there were efforts by the Acholi cultural society in Northern Uganda and Tondism faith in Buganda of central Uganda to revert to divination, amidst the COVID-19 outbreak (Isiko 2020:88-90). In the second wave, traditional healing practices for COVID-19, involving spiritual beliefs were rare and unpopular. However, a preference for herbalism and other such exploitation of the natural environment in which people lived gained more popularity during the second wave than in the first.

The online survey sought to establish scope and popularity of herbalism in the treatment of COVID-19 in Uganda. Out of the 500 responses, 479 (95.8%) respondents agreed that herbalism was popular among the population for treatment of the disease. Special interest was drawn on the stand of members of the Facebook group which constituted two categories of people traditionally thought to be apprehensive to the utilization of traditional healing remedies: 1) Pentecostal Christians, and 2) Urban dwellers. However, study findings established otherwise. Out of the 283 respondents from the Facebook group, 269 (95%) agreed that herbal remedies were sought-after for the

treatment of COVID-19. This meant that from their vantage viewpoint as urban dwellers and Christians, they were witnessing a high number of people using herbal remedies for the treatment of COVID-19.

Herbal remedies for COVID-19 in Uganda can be grouped into three categories. The first category is processed herbal medicines by fairly literate herbalists who have mastered the benefits of processing leaves, stems, and roots of locally available plants. They have transformed the herbs into various forms including powder, liquid, and sometimes tablets. These are well packaged and branded with the specific diseases they cure. This category is produced by 'second generation' herbalists who mastered herbalism through apprenticeship from kindred. The paramount distinction between the second-generation herbalists and their mentors is that the former acquired some moderate level of education which enabled them to appreciate the added value of processed herbal remedies, commensurate with medicinal traditions of their generation. The second category consists of scientifically proven herbal drugs whose chemical composition, dosage, indications, and side effects are notable and documented. This category is made by highly trained scientists who have specialized in natural therapeutics, ethnobotany, biochemistry, and pharmacology among others. In this category is COVIDEX and COVILYCE, which became prominent during the second wave of the pandemic. These were made by Professors at Mbarara University of Science and Technology and the Gulu University respectively. The third category include commonly known herbs, previously used for treatment of common colds, flu, high fever, and all those symptoms that are associated with COVID-19. These are locally available from plants around homesteads and in the bushlands. Locally available herbs were used in a concoction form for drinking, inhaling, steaming oneself, body smearing, and smoking among others. These herbal remedies were accompanied by sunbathing and physical exercises at regular intervals. With no specific treatment for COVID-19, the local populace, professional scientists, and researchers perceived herbal remedies as likely alternatives to deal with the pandemic. In the proceeding paragraphs, a presentation is made on the circumstances which made traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19 popular in the second wave.

An interviewee, commenting on the popularity of herbal remedies for COVID-19 asserted: 'The first wave equipped us with cooking tactics, but the second wave shaped us into wonderful herbalists (Assistant lecturer, Interview 23 June 2021). The first wave of the pandemic was less serious than the second one. The first wave lockdown domesticated people. Being indoors was the only

coping strategy in the absence of categorical information about managing the disease. Ugandans were more threatened about the lockdown restrictions and its effects on survival than the disease. Food, but not medication was the most vital item during the first wave. They therefore kept at home with the major task to prepare their own meals, since food kiosks were closed. They did not need medication, since the disease had been restricted to a measly group of people who had had contact with foreign travellers. The second wave, though deadlier, found a fairly elucidated citizenry. The application of herbs to boost immunity was a reckoned preventive measure. The wave was so tenacious that people could not turn a deaf ear to what was unfolding, as various people were ailing. People's wellbeing was a priority. This brought trepidation and agitation among the population, as herbal remedies would be prescribed by anybody to anyone as a preventive measure for COVID-19. Therefore, people had to master all the herbs that were commended to be miracle cures for COVID-19, just in case they developed any symptoms similar to those of the confirmed cases.

The challenge of inaccessibility to modern health and pharmaceutical remedies during the second wave of the pandemic facilitated the penetration of herbal remedies for the treatment of COVID-19. Access to health embodies three aspects, namely availability, proximity, and affordability. Medications for the COVID-19 treatment in the first wave were inexpensive and available all over the country. The most common pharmaceutical medications prescribed for COVID-19 patients included a combination of Azithromycin, Hydroxychloroquine, Zinc, paracetamol, and Vitamin C tablets (Ministry of Health 2020). These medications were accessible over the counter at a modest cost of less than 20 US dollars per dose. These were basic drugs that any government health facility would avail to any suspected COVID-19 case at zero cost. This was in addition to encouraging Ugandans to take a lot of fresh water and fruits (rich in vitamin C) which are within the reach of any household. The number of COVID-19 cases was quite dwarfish during the first wave, such that sickbeds were afforded by each victim in medical facilities designated for the management of COVID-19. Uganda was battling the Wuhan variant of COVID-19 which was deemed less aggressive than the newly imported variants in the second wave. COVID-19 patients with the Wuhan variant experienced mild symptoms which never required highly specialized management. Due to a handful of patients and affordable charges, the treatment of COVID-19 cases during the first wave was restricted to government health establishments (Kamurungi 2020).

However, the resurgence of COVID-19 during the second quarter of 2021, overwhelmed the available public health facilities, with a surge in infections, critical illnesses, and death. Many health facilities, with the exception of the national and regional referral hospitals and private hospitals in the urban areas, did not have the capacity to attend to COVID-19 patients. The worse new variants were resistant to basic tablets used in the first wave. The majority of the casualties required critical care in high dependency units (HDUs) and intensive care units (ICUs). The number of patients who required ICU, exceeded the availability of ICU beds in the country. The cost of HDUs and ICUs was unaffordable by the low-class Ugandan. Personal protective equipment (PPEs) for medical personnel were not only in short supply, but also acquired at an extortionate cost, due to the increased demand. Private hospitals were charging about five million Ugandan shillings, equivalent to 1,500 US dollars per day, for COVID-19 patients in ICU. Corpses were confiscated by private hospitals on the failure to settle the exorbitant medical bills (Abet 2021a; Muhumuza 2021a).

The cost of treating COVID-19 went beyond the ability of not only the working class, but also relatively affluent Ugandans. This was accentuated by a respondent:

> The people cannot afford those colossal amounts of money charged for managing COVID-19 patients in hospitals. Uganda's per-capita income is so disheartening that even a university lecturer cannot comfortably meet the five million shillings per day to treat a Covid patient. Also, the medical insurance scheme cannot meet such exorbitant expenses. Herbal remedies fall in the means of most Ugandans. These remedies have been motivated by limited resources and selfish increase in the hospital bills. It is exorbitant. It is like we have apartheid of some sort; segregation of some sort; it is only the rich to get treated. So, what does the poor man who can't afford five million shillings do? One resorts to herbs which have worked since time immemorial (Lecturer, Interview 23 June 2021).

Uganda's per capita income stood at 817 US dollars for the year 2020 (World Bank 2021). This means that the majority of Ugandans were tottering between life and death, between poverty and destitution. All the above were in addition to the high cost of testing for COVID-19 which was restricted to accredited testing facilities, not widely spread in the countryside. A PCR test for COVID-

19 ranged between 180,000 and 250,000 Uganda shillings, equivalent to 51 and 71 US dollars respectively (*Daily Monitor* 2021b). Hospitals with oxygen plants and supply were isolated and distant from the rural folk. Medical oxygen was scanty and afforded by only the well-off. Accounts of deaths due to denial of oxygen to poverty-stricken patients trended in public media (Muhumuza 2021b). Apart from the outrageous and prohibitive cost of healthcare for COVID-19 in the second wave, these services were not accessible to the majority of Ugandans, who survive on less than one dollar a day. The second nationwide lockdown restricted travel between districts, making it strenuous for most people to access treatment in districts where the services existed. Yet, also hospitals were perceived by many people as hotspots for COVID-19.

All these empirical challenges at the height of the second wave are contrasted with the open and free availability of herbs that Ugandans had revelled since time immemorial for both preventive and treatment of symptoms synonymous with those of COVID-19. At a non-professional level, herbal remedies are shared gratis within the communities. People resorted to taking herbal concoctions, not only to elude the contraction of COVID-19, but also to evade the abhorrent and repugnant medical bills. Even among the educated and urbanized Ugandans, information on the types of herbal remedies was gravely sought-after and circulated over social media, with clear procedures on how to prepare the concoctions. The availability of these herbs all-over-the-place kept everyone on the good side of the law as far as the travel ban was concerned. Noticeable was a Facebook post prescribing taking lemon juice and ginger, shared over 40,000 times (*Daily Monitor* 2020). Processed herbal remedies were cost-effective to any native Ugandan. The much sought-after local herbal drug, COVIDEX, was approved by Uganda's National Drug Authority, but was valued at a tolerable retail price of 12,000 Uganda shillings, equivalent to three US dollars per dose (Abet 2021b).

In addition to the inaccessibility was the perceived ineffectiveness of modern treatment for COVID-19 in comparison with herbal treatment. Many Ugandans lost confidence in government hospitals, citing incompetence, mismanagement, understaffing, poor remuneration, occasional paucity of basic supplies, as well as corruption, exposing a social fault line where only the wealthy could afford health services (Kyeyune 2021; Muhumuza 2021b). These were in addition to the media crowded with messages of death of people previously under hospital care in the ICUs of government and private medical facilities. The argument that medical oxygen weakened rather than strengthened COVID-19 victims was commonplace among the local

population. This was a result of improper messaging by medical facilities whose messages of emphasis were on the number of fatalities rather than those who had healed from the disease. On the other hand, success stories of those healed from the disease were severally told in both mainstream and social media, but with the glorification of herbal remedies as the breakthrough trick. In the Daily Monitor publication series titled, *Beating Covid*, seven of the 10 individuals analysed by this study confessed to the use of herbal concoctions and attributed their recovery from COVID-19 to herbal use. This made people to believe that herbal treatment is a much better alternative. In line with these public perceptions, one respondent stated:

> Some people doubt the efficacy of hospital medical prescriptions. This is catalysed by social media. In this phase, everybody has become a doctor. Even the ministry is failing to come up with clear guidance. Many herbs are on market through social media, coaxing people to move to the bushes the following day. The use of social media has escalated the use of herbal medicine. Those who come up to speak about beating COVID-19, glorify herbal remedies. All these are done over social media (Assistant lecturer, Interview 27 June 2021).

The unregulated social media space which makes everyone a 'journalist' of some sort, facilitated the proliferation of 'social media herbalists' for COVID-19. There is an illusory belief among the citizenry that all public media reports are authentic. In contemporary contexts, the social media influences choice and preferences, including health seeking behaviour. The nationwide lockdown made people, especially the urbanized unoccupied, spending precious time on social media. Telecom companies in Uganda devised friendlier data bundles and easing internet access during the lockdown. Africell, for example, came up with 'stay home' data bundles, which offered double the amount of data one purchased during the lockdown. Social media henceforth became one of the unregulated major sources of Covid-19 updates. This became a viable tool for rapid information dissemination during the pandemic (Alotiby 2021: 3146).

Earlier studies in other countries indicate the significance of social media and internet in influencing the pursuit of herbal remedies for COVID-19 (Alyami *et al*. 2020:1328). The *Wall Street Journal* reported about a war between global health policy makers and social media companies that were spreading phony cures for COVID-19 (Vyas 2020). This kind of information about herbal remedies was all over the world, right from Venezuela's president

who suggested on his Twitter account that 'tapping into ancestral wisdom of recipe for ginger-lemon tea' was a cure for COVID-19 to Indians who promoted a concoction of cow dung, garlic, and prayer (Vyas 2020). The popularity of COVIDEX, Uganda's herbal drug for COVID-19, was due to the hype it received from social media, gaining the attention of the public, the Ugandan drug regulators, and the Head of State (Nakkazi 2020). Actions by YouTube to ban and expunge video content on COVIDEX from its sites, simply increased its demand among Ugandans as it was interpreted as sheer envy from modern pharmaceuticals and arrogance of Western epistemology on medicine. For Uganda's case, individuals circulated personal videos on Facebook and WhatsApp, steaming themselves with concoctions, directions on using herbs, as well as personal testimonies of healing from COVID-19 as a result. However, social media carried several videos containing falsehood and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and the approved vaccines for the disease. By so doing, the social media dissuaded Ugandans from modern healthcare services, consequently promoting herbal remedies for COVID-19. This was the case with India, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo where social media indirectly hyped-up false news and misinformation with regard to COVID-19, overflowing social media much more than factual information about the pandemic (Sharma *et al*. 2020).

The ineffectiveness of modern healthcare responses to COVID-19 was not just a matter of perception, but reality. This was evidenced by challenges associated with the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 vaccination program. People turned to herbal remedies partly because of limitations and misconceptions associated with the vaccination strategy in Uganda.

First, the country experienced issues of inaccessibility to the vaccine, since all WHO approved vaccines were manufactured outside Africa. They were mostly too expensive for individual country outsourcing, causing African countries as part of the African Union to lobby for supply through the COVID-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility (COVAX facility) (Atwine 2021). There was a hoarding of vaccines by the wealthy countries and middlemen who bought off most vaccines from the manufacturers, to sell at unimaginable prices to developing countries (Binagwaho *et al*. 2021: e1169; Merelli 2021). Vaccine nationalism exemplified by countries' decisions to hoard vaccines and inoculate groups that were not at high risk, substantially reduced the availability of COVID-19 vaccines in most African countries (Binagwaho *et al*. 2021: e1169).

Second, the first batch of vaccines only contained 864,000 doses to serve a country of more than 40 million people. The government strategy on vaccination was to target a select group of people thought to be at high risk of contracting the virus. These were the medical and security personnel, teachers, adults aged 50 years and above, as well as all those people with comorbidity (WHO 2020). This meant that the majority of Ugandans would not be vaccinated immediately.

Third, there was a slow uptake for the vaccine due to long distances to authorized vaccinating health facilities, mistrust, and misinformation about the drug (Echoru *et al*. 2021:2). There was propaganda that the vaccine changes one's DNA, causes infertility and blood clotting, and that it reduced one's longevity. A study by Echoru *et al*. (2021:4) highlights rumours as a major roadblock to effectiveness of previous vaccination pro-grams in Uganda. However, the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was being used in Uganda, was also not 100 percent effective against the virus. Studies done by Chagla (2021) as well as Hung and Poland (2021:854), rated the Astra-Zeneca vaccine at 70 percent efficacy against COVID-19, more than 14 days after the second dose. To ordinary Ugandans, this raised a debate as to whether the vaccine was better than the herbs that had stood the test of time. Several Ugandans were therefore hesitant to take vaccines whose efficacy was lower than those used in other countries at the time. The emerging of five COVID-19 variants in Uganda, against which the AstraZeneca vaccine was not effective, revealed that nobody was completely safe with the vaccine alone. The worst came when India, the principal manufacturer and supplier of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine to most African countries, including Uganda, stopped exportation in order to deal with a disastrous second wave of the pandemic at home, which had claimed the lives of thousands. India could no longer produce enough for both its domestic demand and export. All these factors brought desperation among Ugandans with the only resort available being traditional medicine.

Consequently, the increased use of traditional medicine for COVID-19 in Uganda had its genesis in the inadequacies in modern medical institutions and services which created a vacuum for traditional herbalism to take shape. However, arguments from public commentators that traditional therapies like steaming with exotic weeds or drinking cockroach soup to cure COVID-19 dismayed ordinary citizens. They struggled to come to terms with the com-plexities of the failing health service institutions and service delivery in the country. These are incapable of comprehending the impact of global health politics in the discovery, manufacture, financing, and distribution of COVID-

19 vaccines upon developing economies like Uganda. Nonetheless, these pseudo-beliefs in the efficacy of traditional medicine for COVID-19 gave the failing government some breathing space (Tacca 2021).

It is still worthwhile to note that traditional medicine is intertwined with the cultural, religious, socio-economic, geographical, and political environment of societies in which they evolve (Isiko 2019:72). Therefore, with or without the failure of the modern health system to support the management of COVID-19, traditional remedies would still take the day until an effective and trusted vaccine or cure that counteracts their traditional beliefs is discovered. It has been part of African Christians and Moslems, in times of crisis like those of pandemics with no cure, to revert to African traditional religious beliefs for solutions. Ugandan Christian and Islamic clerics, for example, encouraged the reliance on traditional medicine at the height of the second wave. Herbal remedies for COVID-19 did not entail consultations with spirit mediums, which would otherwise have compromised religious people's beliefs in Christianity or Islam (Lecturer, Interview 16 July 2021).

Politically, President Museveni shielded and promoted the manufacture and use of COVIDEX and COVILYCE herbal drugs produced by local Ugandan scientists. The president's intervention reigned above the bureaucratic Western pharmaceutical ideological inclinations of the national drug regulator, which had barred the production and use of the above herbal drugs (Owiny 2021). The touting of traditional herbal drugs by the African political class as it was in Madagascar, Tanzania, and Uganda was not necessarily a celebration of a 'medicinal jackpot' which would alleviate Africans from the deadly COVID-19, it was rather a demonstration of a liberation struggle of a new type, an intellectual liberation struggle to get out of unhealthy dependency on Western medicine and vaccines (Nakisanze 2021).

The political attitude in Uganda towards African herbal remedies for COVID-19 was not in disarray with those across the continent. Madagascar's Covid-Organics, for instance, were given a nod in several African countries not as a tested cure for COVID-19, but as part of a deeper engagement with the question of Africa's place in the world. COVID-Organics promoted the Pan-Africanism ideology which depicted African countries as sufficient and independent, capable of producing its own medicines, rather than importing them as aid from the Global North, thereby undercutting economic and racial discrimination that was already visible in the global COVID-19 vaccination strategies (Richey *et al*. 2021).

Culturally, the recourse to herbalism in the face of COVID-19 in Uganda was rooted in 'tradition'. Africans have for innumerable years been using traditional medicine remedies for uncountable diseases. It was therefore not surprisingly for Ugandans to trust traditional medicine to treat COVID-19. The herbs used, are plants within their midst. One respondent described the unsurprising recourse to herbs for COVID-19 in the following words:

> People are experts in treating flu. So, they think they are masters in managing the prevalent symptoms of COVID-19. People already had their traditional remedies of expelling the mucus from the lungs. They knew all these even before the widespread of hospitals. They still employ traditional herbs for healing purposes. For example, steaming is not a new invention. African mothers would make use of several herbs and mango tree leaves to treat common cold, flu, and high fevers among children – characteristic symptoms of COVOD-19. The consumption of greens and vegetables, rich in vitamin C is a common practice in several African traditional communities. In addition, prayer and sacrifice and the taking of herbal concoctions are integral to the lifestyle of Africans (Assistant lecturer, Interview 10 July 2021).

Herbalism is one of the indigenous knowledge traditions which have been inherited generation after generation. The opinion of the above respondent insinuates to the proposition that even when Ugandans were uninformed of this new disease called COVID-19, they would still use these herbal remedies to treat the symptoms as before. COVID-19 presented symptoms that are not alien to Ugandans, except for the level of severity with which these manifested. Uganda has herbs which regulate the constant flow of mucus and normalizing body temperature. Therefore, Ugandans were utilizing their inherent herbal knowledge to survive the pandemic.

Discussion

The study sought to investigate the change in religious voices during the second wave of COVID-19, seeking to establish the genesis of conspicuous invisibility of religious voices during the second wave. The study also sought to establish whether or not a relation existed between the waning religious voices and recourse to traditional healing remedies for COVID-19 and the rationale behind the popularity of the remedies. Contrary to studies conducted during the first wave (Isiko 2020; Blair *et al*. 2021), religious voices were

marginal in the second wave. This finding contradicts the religious copying theory and earlier studies which postulate the centrality of religious beliefs and voices during pandemics whose aetiology and cure are bizarre (Huremovic 2019:14; Isiko 2021:240). Whereas previous studies have advanced religious explanatory models for pandemics of this nature (Isiko 2020), this study has established the relegation of religion and the promotion of science, with religious leaders championing the vaccination exercise and observance of SOPs in contradiction of their moving religious messages of miracles, healing, and spiritual hope, manifested in the first wave of COVID-19, and earlier disasters (Cunningham 2008:29-31). Empirical evidence from the first wave of the pandemic indicated that during COVID-19, most victimized people used their religion more intensively and thereby becoming more religious than others (Bentzen 2020:4). However, findings of the second wave in Uganda reveal that as COVID-19 infections and deaths escalated, the belief in prayers, miraculous healing, and generally the power of the 'spiritual' to control the pandemic waned. The public was apprehensive about the relevance of national prayers in dealing with the pandemic.

The change in the message by religious leaders during the second wave of COVID-19 portrays not only the disillusionment, but also shortcomings of religious elites, especially when confronted with unfortunate burdens synony-mous with those their 'sheep' encounter. The waning of religious voices during the second wave at a time people needed them, waters down prior postulations that religions have an immense bearing on society's socio-political direction, influencing policy preferences inclusively (Isiko 2020). The shift of messages from religious explanations to scientific explanations for COVID-19 during the second wave, was not disbelief in religious tenets, but sustained evidence of the complementarity of religion and science. This argument conforms to postulations advanced by both Whitaker (2020) and Whiting (2020), that being religious does not necessarily make one anti-science. They illustrate their argument with the example of Martin Luther who did not pit faith against reason during the bubonic plague of the 16th century. As a religious cleric, Luther urged Christians to pray, but he also felt the duty to remain in Wittenberg to nurse the sick and the dying. He, however, advocated for the SOPs by then, reasoning that while he believed in God's ultimate power to cause healing, human responsibility was important. Human responsibility included following responsible practices of sanitation, medication, self-quarantine and social distancing to curb the spread of the contagious disease (Whiting 2020).

However, the invisibility of religious voices and religious leaders' preference for scientific explanations should not be surprising during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, given sustained evidence of decline of religious explanations with the ascent of explanations on biomedical science (Phillips 2020:434; Barmania & Reiss 2020:15-22). Science in its infancy is ineffective in affording alternatives to faith-based explanations. This was the case in the early 19th century Christian Europe, when it was pounced on by cholera. Faith communities, both religious elites and lay people, took little heed of any explanations but their own to account of cholera, since medical healers of all persuasions never supplied cogent alternatives. However, the persistent non-success of religion to account convincingly for pandemics renders biomedicine more pertinent. For example, once biomedical sciences concluded on exactly the aetiology, transmission, and germ revolution of cholera, science gained pre-eminence over religion. In Uganda's case, the public embracing of science by religious leaders was due to discoveries and innovations of COVID-19 vaccines and their effectiveness as the pre-eminent game changer.

Historical studies like Isiko (2018) have analysed the negative perception, castigation, and censorship of traditional medicine by European Christians in Uganda, adjudging them not only as satanic but also life-threatening. The overwhelming impact of Christian and Moslem religious clerics during the first wave of the pandemic in Uganda, could have accorded a sprinkling of alternatives to deal with the pandemic (Isiko 2020). It was initially thought that religious leaders' conspicuous silence in the second wave could have left the population with haphazard responses and alternatives, finding their way to traditional healing remedies. The findings, however, reveal no significant relation between diminished religious voices and people's recourse to traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19. The historical hatred that the Christians hold upon traditional healing remedies, have been proved to be non-existent in this study, with religious clerics instead justifying the utilization of herbal remedies, based on biblical perspectives. Contrary to initial assumptions, the refractory recourse to traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19 emanates more from the flaws and inadequacies within modern healthcare (in Uganda) and the entrenched traditions of cultural societies than religious leaders' silence about the pandemic. This finding grants an augmentation to the precursory studies which posted that traditional healing practices evolve from the cultural, socio-economic, and political organization of societies, and this can progress devoid of any foreign influences (Isiko 2019). Despite the enormous breakthrough and general acceptance of bio-

medical practice, it has fallen flat in comprehensively substituting traditional healing – instead, they exist side-by-side (Tabuti, Dhillion & Lye 2003:120). This is because traditional healing practices are not only proximal and low-end, but also deeply embedded in the wider belief and cultural systems, an integral part of the lives of most Ugandans and Africans at large.

Various studies have largely linked the use of traditional medicine in the developing societies to the inaccessibility to modern healthcare. The unavailability of or long distances to medical facilities, high medical costs, and inadequate medical staffing, supplies, and equipment are a thorn in the flesh (Kebede *et al*. 2006:127-128). The increased recourse to traditional remedies for COVID-19 in Uganda is not shocking, since previous studies indicate that about 60 percent of the population utilizes them. These study findings fulfil expectations in a previous article, postulating that it would be a matter of time for Ugandans to embrace traditional healing in the wake of COVID-19 (Isiko 2020:79). These factors seem to be recurrent in all situations of medical necessity regardless of the gravity of the disease.

Limitations

Just like other studies carried out at the peak of the pandemic (Phillips 2020; Barmania & Reiss 2020; Isiko 2020; Richley *et al*. 2021), the lockdown measures made it strenuous to reach religious leaders and traditional healing practitioners who would have been the most primary respondents to the study. There were conceptual limitations too. Religious leaders and voices were limited to Uganda's two significant religious traditions of Christianity and Islam. Although, traditional healing practices are a significant component of African indigenous religious ideologies, the voices of their professional practitioners – traditional medicine specialists were not part of the study. The study also, experienced inaccessibility to primary source material due to the library lockdowns, a heavy reliance on uncorroborated social media and other internet sources for information about COVID-19 pandemic, and real consequent dangers of generalization, of mistaking a part for the whole, and the predominance of official religious positions over viewpoints of lay members of faith communities (Phillips 2020:435).

Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the waning voices of religious leaders on one hand and resurgence of traditional healing practices for treatment of COVID-19 during the second wave, on the other hand. This was premised on religious explanatory postulations of pandemics and earlier studies which posit an increased recourse to religion for people experiencing adversities, and in this particular case pandemics like COVID-19. The study however, established a decreased visibility of religion and religious voices during the second wave of COVID-19, with a sky-rocketing recourse to herbalism for COVID-19. In many respects, the decreased voice of religious leaders rescinded the optimism that the people held in religious ideology for the disease, with solace found in the effectiveness of science and traditional herbal remedies. The popular use of traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19 emanated from the deplorable capacity of Uganda's modern healthcare system to manage the pandemic, on the one hand, and socio-cultural traditions and beliefs of the people concerning the disease and medicine, on the other.

Uganda being a significantly religious country, religious leaders are taken to be the salt and light of the nation. Their silence, especially at the height of a cureless pandemic like COVID-19 is an abdication of their mandate, obliging citizens to act in darkness by exploiting any feasible escape route.

Religious leaders are important gatekeepers to their communities, playing a vital role in policy implementation regardless of whether or not a policy makes no overt reference to religion. Individual religious leaders may disseminate health information, allow health professionals to relay information to the congregants, or reach out to the marginalized during a pandemic. They are to transmit messages in a wholesome way, always paramount when the trust in science is lost, but so imperative during a pandemic. However, the religious leaders' dwindled voices during the more disastrous second wave of COVID-19 devalued the centrality of religious beliefs, previously theorized to be the bedrock upon which pandemic victims cope with adversity. This is a clear demonstration that whereas majority Ugandans claim either Christian or Muslim religious affiliation and identity, the silence, inaction or impotence of Christianity and Islam in times of adversity make the people to revert to African indigenous religious ideologies and practices for which traditional healing practices are an observable component.

From the evidence, the study therefore confirms the continued importance of traditional remedies in healthcare provision in Uganda and recommends an integration with modern healthcare provision. Significant

resources ought to be provided for continuous research and studies to establish the efficacy of these herbal remedies.

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Community Perceptions and Strategies for Water Conservation in the Bhambayi Informal Settlement, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Abstract

This study assessed the perceptions of community members in the Bhambayi informal settlement regarding water conservation and issues brought by water shortages in their locality. The study employed a case study design, an interpretivist paradigm, and inductive reasoning for data analysis. Ten participants were selected via purposive sampling for comprehensive interviews: five community leaders and five regular community members. Twelve community members engaged in two focus group discussions. The study demonstrated that infrastructure-oriented solutions, including the installation of in-yard taps equipped with water-saving devices, alongside traditional methods such as retrieving water from rivers and boreholes, as well as rainwater collection, might mitigate water scarcity in this community. The land issue is a significant obstacle for the government in constructing adequate housing and installing in-yard taps and toilets for community residents. The absence of community engagement in decision-making was perceived as an obstacle to water provision due to varying political affiliations among community members. This study advances understanding by exploring the efficacy of infrastructure-based and indigenous strategies for mitigating water shortages in the Bhambayi informal settlement, emphasising local viewpoints and systemic obstacles. The findings highlight the need for the government to adopt participatory operations, diversified strategies, and anti-corruption initiatives to guarantee equitable and sustainable access to water.

Keywords: water conservation, indigenous strategies, infrastructure-based strategies, water shortages, informal settlement

Introduction

Water shortages is a global issue that adversely affects numerous nations, including both industrialised and developing countries. Water shortages are prevalent worldwide, even in nations recognised for substantial rainfall. Water scarcities in arid countries such as Africa induces famine amidst unstable economic growth (Glantz 2019; Ahmed *et al.* 2018). In certain regions of South Africa (SA), water shortages have resulted in numerous issues, including starvation and diseases due to diminished agricultural output and livestock loss (Besada & Werner 2015). This adversely affects the South African economy and engenders socioeconomic issues, especially for underprivileged individuals, including the residents of Bhambayi, KwaZulu-Natal. Binns *et al.* (2001) and Cole *et al.* (2018) assert that this phenomenon arises due to 70% of SA receiving no more than 600 mm of precipitation annually.

The Umgeni River system, which provides water to several regions of Durban, is experiencing reduced water levels due to lessened precipitation (Summerton *et al.* 2009). Climate change is resulting in a heightened frequency of natural disasters, including droughts, storms, floods, and rising sea levels, which can promote the transmission of waterborne infections. As the planet warms, issues such as water shortages are exacerbating. Like numerous other South African towns, Durban and its surrounds rely on water that flows into streams. Water Governance Facility (2012) mentioned that, despite frequent rainfall in SA, water supply is inadequate for the dams to reach their maximum capacities. Residents are advised to conserve water due to the potential for drought-induced shortages (Chen *et al.* 2016). This, however, leads to the erroneous belief among certain community members that rainfall guarantees sufficient water inflow into dams and streams.

Water shortages have compelled the government, through municipalities, to implement numerous steps to mitigate this situation, including the repair of water leaks to save unnecessary water losses (Thakur *et al.* 2019). Multiple municipalities, notably eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, have formulated plans to mitigate water misuse by residents. Consequently, it is essential to comprehend the perspectives of community members concerning efforts to mitigate water shortages. The Bhambayi community is facing issues of water scarcity, characterised by significant economic and physical constraints of water. Inhabitants obtain water from communal standpipes or faucets. There are five taps for a population exceeding 4,000, resulting in a ratio of 1 tap to 800 people. This has resulted in residents of the informal settlement

resorting to illicit methods to access water nearer to their settlement.

Kahil *et al.* (2019), Pereira *et al.* (2009), and Prathapar (2000) contend that water scarcity was a significant problem in numerous countries during the 20th century, but it has deteriorated in the 21st century. In 2014, the United Nations projected that over 700 million individuals globally resided in areas marked by water scarcity, a situation anticipated to deteriorate due to climate change and the increasing global population. While numerous studies focus on water shortages, there is a paucity of research regarding measures to mitigate water shortages in informal settlements. One can also not presume that a study executed in suburban or township environments will produce analogous results to those undertaken in dissimilar contexts. So, the study aimed to obtain suggestions to minimise water shortages directly from the Bhambayi locals, as they are crucial in preventing or alleviating the contributing elements to these shortages.

Wang (2010) determined that water shortages are attributable not only to insufficient rainfall but also to poor water management by both community members and the government. Similarly, Kumar (2013) posits that water shortages can be categorised into two types: physical and economic.

(i) Physical water shortages arise from an inadequate supply of water to meet demand, often linked to low groundwater levels, poor water distribution, and significant environmental degradation.

(ii) Economic water shortages manifest in numerous African nations due to insufficient investment and management, hindering impoverished populations from accessing available water resources.

Kumar (2013) reported that in 2013, over 1.2 billion individuals faced physical water scarcity, while 1.6 billion had economic water constraints. This state has likely worsened due to population growth. By 2025, an estimated 1.8 billion individuals are predicted to reside in regions experiencing severe water scarcity (Alcamo *et al.* 2000).

This study is about solutions employed to mitigate water short-ages from the community's perspective in the Bhambayi informal settle-ment, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). It aimed to inform policies that corres-pond with the needs of informal settlement communities and their constitutional rights to water and sanitation through exploring local perspectives, as well as how they themselves may improve their access and responsible use of available water.

Theoretical Framework

This study employed a rights-based approach (RBA) to explore community members' perspectives regarding strategies to water shortages and to ascertain the fulfilment of the right to safe water and sanitation. According to Uvin (2007), a Results-Based Approach (RBA) is crucial for community development. It enables the voices of community members to be acknowledged, and their issues and challenges to be addressed by relevant service providers. Yamin (2009) asserts that an RBA posits that the government ought to develop the marginalised, safeguard their rights, and empower them to manage their own lives. By doing so, community members will be empowered, enabling them to contest unjust actions.

Since the Bhambayi informal settlement has historically lacked sufficient water and developed sanitation facilities, the RBA informed this study by positioning water access as an essential human right, highlighting the government's duty to uphold this right for marginalised groups such as Bhambayi community members. Development enhances human well-being, enabling individuals to exercise autonomy and facilitate self-determination, opportunities, and choices (Kindornay *et al.* 2012). The researcher employed RBA to analyse the perspectives of community members in the study, consistent with the values of empowerment, participation, and accountability. This approach guided the qualitative approach, incorporating comprehensive interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with community leaders and members, thereby prioritising their viewpoints on water shortages and conservation solutions.

Methods

The Bhambayi informal settlement is in Inanda, a historically marginalised region approximately 20 km from Durban's central business district (CBD). The settlement faces severe socio-economic challenges, including poverty, insufficient housing, and restricted access to basic amenities (Raniga & Ngcobo 2014). It contains residences constructed post-1994 under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and additional self-constructed dwellings, including deteriorated shacks. Several RDP houses were constructed in the early 2000s due to a collaborative development initiative by the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality and Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS), formerly referred to as the Bhambayi Reconstruction and Development Committee (BRDC), as noted by Raniga and Simpson (2011).

Bhambayi was established because of the riots that transpired in the 1980s. A significant number of black Africans inhabited areas surrounding Phoenix and Gandhi settlements due to pull factors like employment and educational opportunities in Durban and its surroundings. These reasons prompted a swift influx of individuals from adjacent provinces and nations, resulting in an increase in informal housing to 1,800 (Raniga 2017). This area is next to the Mahatma Gandhi Museum, and government officials are aware of this settlement since they frequently travel the Bhambayi route to the museum. The primary challenges confronting this community are social issues such as adolescent pregnancy, elevated unemployment rates, overcrowding, insufficient water and sanitation infrastructure (including taps and sewage systems), and HIV/AIDS (Simpson 2003). All these things contribute to a detrimental environment for this marginalised community. The table below presents the demographic statistics of the Bhambayi informal settlement.

Table 1: Bhambayi Informal Settlement: Essential Demographic Data

Residents	+4 000 residents
Types of Housing	
Informal structures	65%
RDP houses	25%
Miscellaneous (backyard houses, etc.)	10%

Unemployment rate	62%
Access to Fundamental Services	
Piped water	35%
Flush toilets	12%
Formal sanitation	43%
HIV Prevalence	30%
Typical household size	5-6 people (overcrowding index: 2.5 persons per room)

Source: eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality Integrated Development Plan (2024)

The researcher utilised a case study design, interpretivist framework, and inductive reasoning in the data analysis process. This approach was appropriate for the study as it allowed for an exploration aimed at achieving a comprehensive knowledge of participants' perceptions. It acknowledged the voices of regular community members who engaged directly and indirectly in this case study by listening to their accounts of acquiring drinkable water. The researcher employed a multi-method strategy for data collection, namely utilising interviews and FGDs. The qualitative technique was employed as it enabled individuals to articulate their perspectives and experiences (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* 2014) about collaborative strategies between community members and government to mitigate water shortages in the Bhambayi informal settlement. It enabled the researcher to comprehend the potential partnership between the government and citizens in mitigating water shortages in this region. Creswell 2007) asserts that qualitative research enables the investigator to explore and comprehend the perspectives, concepts, and ration-ales attributed to a social issue by individuals or groups.

Understanding water shortages impacting nearly every resident of the Bhambayi informal settlement required a qualitative perspective. This study involved 12 community members who participated in 2 FGDs, each comprising 6 participants. Additionally, five community leaders (including the ward councillor and ward committee members) and five ordinary community members, chosen through purposive sampling, were subjected to in-depth interviews. A limitation of non-probability sampling, wherein the researcher selects individuals based on specific traits required for the sample, is its lack of guaranteed representation due to the absence of statistical randomness; thus, it cannot be generalised (Sarantakos 2017). Nonetheless, a benefit of non-probability sampling is its ability to employ a limited sample to get comprehensive and detailed data (Bryman 2016). The study sample included both men and women to explore their differing viewpoints on water scarcity. Participants were adults who had resided in the Bhambayi informal settlement for more than two years. The justification for selecting adult participants was the ease of obtaining consent and their greater familiarity with the topic under investigation. Ethical approval was obtained from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, under protocol reference number HSS/0649/017M. Data were gathered from June to early August 2018.

To streamline communication during FGDs and interviews, data were collected in isiZulu, as all participants were native isiZulu speakers. The researcher transcribed all audio-recorded interviews and FGDs. The data were

evaluated by thematic analysis to identify pertinent themes and uncover patterns within the data. The researcher discerned recurring themes and patterns during data gathering and condensed the material into manageable segments (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Mouton 1996). Following the methodology of Braun and Clarke 2006), the researcher immersed himself in the data by transcribing and subsequently re-engaging with the interview material. Subsequently, he performed initial coding by annotating pertinent data segments, such as indications of 'illegal connections' or 'protest'. The codes were reclassified into overarching themes, including 'infrastructure-based tactics' and 'indigenous strategies.' The researcher subsequently evaluated these themes against the original data set to confirm their validity prior to further refinement. The 'Results' section delineates each theme, substantiated by direct quotations from participants as proof.

These are questions asked during interviews and FGDs: What impact has water shortages had on households or communities? Which strategies do community members implement to secure sufficient water for their daily requirements? Which measures would most effectively address Bhambayi's water predicament? What is the effect of illegal water connections on the community's water supply? Do residents perceive that the government is meeting its responsibility to supply water as a fundamental right? What measures may be implemented to combat corruption in water distribution? What enduring solutions might community members propose? In what ways can the community and government collaborate more effectively to address water shortages?

Results

Participants in this study identified two categories of solutions to mitigate water shortages in the Bhambayi informal community. This study identified infrastructure-based and indigenous initiatives as key themes, as numerous participants referenced them throughout data collection. The infrastructure solutions involve the installation of in-yard taps equipped with water-conserving mechanisms, while the indigenous strategies encompass the digging of boreholes, utilisation of river water, and rainfall collection.

Infrastructure-based Strategies

Infrastructure-based strategies denote technical mechanisms designed to avert the misuse of potable water by community members. The installation of in-

yard taps equipped with water-conserving devices is essential (Onyenankeya *et al.* 2021). Implementing these techniques is essential due to significant water loss from leaks in ablution blocks and unauthorised connections of taps and toilets in the Bhambayi informal community.

In-yard Taps with Water-conserving Devices

The municipality has not installed in-yard taps with water-conserving mechanisms in the Bhambayi informal community; however, numerous illegally connected taps are leaking due to the substandard materials employed by locals for water supply connections. Ablution facilities constructed by the government require enhancement in numerous informal settlements in SA, such as Bhambayi (Dickson-Gomez *et al.* 2023), due to extensive lineups of residents awaiting access to communal taps for water retrieval. This indicates their restricted access to water and adequate sanitation. Several participants believe that the provision of sufficient water to community members is the government's lowest priority in this area. A participant remarked:

> We need in-yard taps in every household because water is a basic need for every person. Government officials should ensure that people's needs are met, as they usually do during elections. They must stop giving empty promises because they only need our votes during elections. **(Female, aged 26)**

These thoughts exhibit a sense of entitlement towards service delivery. The RBA asserts that the government must deliver services to fulfil fundamental needs and prioritise the urgent need of individuals at the grassroots level (Fantini 2020). The majority of Bhambayi residents inhabit shacks, rendering water sourced from common taps susceptible to pollution, particularly when stored in open containers within their households. In many regions of KwaZulu-Natal, adequate housing and facilities are lacking, resulting in the limited water supply being susceptible to contamination. This results in water wastage as community members retrieve new water and discard it after their supplies become tainted. During the FGD, it was proposed that the government should install water-conserving in-yard taps equipped with meters in every household, enabling residents to access water as needed. One participant remarked:

> The government should install the in-yard taps in our premises since such taps have meter boxes that record the amount of water consumed. People would start using water wisely because they will have to pay for it since a meter measures the volume of water used in a property. **(Female, aged 35)**

A community leader concurred with the proposal to install in-yard taps, as it would restrict water consumption and hold water wasters accountable for their excess usage. A participant who is a community leader stated:

> The government is in the process of building proper houses with water and sanitation for Bhambayi community members. When that has been done, each household will be charged tariffs and rates; this would reduce the misuse of water as it usually happens at standpipes and ablution blocks because people use these facilities anyhow. Eventually, this will be addressed as we are still in negotiation with the owner of the land that shack dwellers invaded …we do not want to put the in-yard water and sanitation in shacks that were illegally and poorly built. In the meantime, people must continue using ablution blocks while we try to expedite the building process. **(Male, aged 51)**

Despite the necessity of installing in-yard taps in Bhambayi, the government is unable to initiate the process due to the presence of unlawfully constructed shacks that are unsuitable for habitation. The land is held by a private trust. The government safeguards and assists its citizens, preventing landowners from displacing them, and is devising a lasting solution, as articulated in subsections 24 and 26 of Chapter 2 of the South African Bill of Rights.

> Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being .… Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing …. No one may be evicted from their home or have their home demolished without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances…No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions **(Constitution of South Africa 1996).**

Upon the construction of adequate housing, community members will incur charges for water and sanitation services if their consumption exceeds the allocated free basic water for indigents. Temporarily, they must persist in

utilising ablution blocks until enough housing is constructed. Installing in-yard taps may encourage residents to conserve water, as the municipality would hold households accountable for the water consumed, reflected by the meter box readings. This would mitigate confrontations resulting in physical, verbal, and emotional abuse at communal taps during the long waits sometimes observed at ablution blocks and diminish the unsanitary habits of community members who discharge wastewater onto the ground. The community must effectively oversee communal taps and toilets; nonetheless, it remains ambiguous who is responsible for their maintenance. Residents must be consulted prior to any development to establish a partnership, as their involvement is crucial for the success of a project (Cirolia *et al.* 2017). Certain participants believed that the government should safeguard and uphold the infrastructure. A community leader stated:

> People employed to look after the communal taps should be more accountable. They come late to work and leave early. No one supervises them, so there are stagnant queues at the communal taps and toilets. Specifically, municipal workers who should ensure that community members use this infrastructure correctly need to be more competent. The residents also ought to protect their infrastructure; they must learn to meet the government halfway and stop complaining… people who steal copper pipes are known by some community members, yet they keep quiet. **(Male, aged 39)**

Young participants added:

> We have recently not looked after communal taps; we are not united as a community. We need to be responsible because these taps are for us. Even if someone sees a tap leaking or junkies destroying it, that person does not report or try other means to save water; that is not right. If there were in-yard taps, we were going to use water responsibly. **(Male, aged 25)**

> If something is not yours, you use it anyhow! These communal taps are stolen by junkies who are from Bhambayi and surrounding areas. It would be better if each household had its in-yard tap and toilet than sharing because no one monitors how residents use communal taps and toilets. **(Male, aged 31)**

> There should not be a reason for failure to save water because saving water is like saving anything you have. Water plays an integral part in a person's life. When you cook, you need water; when you bathe, you also need water. Community members do not save water because they are not paying water tariffs, and their communal taps are not locked at night and end up stolen. **(Female, aged 23)**

The South African Constitution advocates for the provision of essential infrastructure and services, asserting that access to basic needs, such as water, is a fundamental human right accompanied by corresponding responsibilities (Gleick 1998). During the conversations, the tendency to assign blame was apparent about the protection and maintenance of the infrastructure in Bhambayi. There was a propensity to emphasise rights while neglecting the responsibilities that the community ought to uphold. This was observed during discussions when the topic of in-yard taps frequently emerged, as the majority of participants contended that the government failed to uphold their right to get sufficient water. The following statements were made by participants:

> The right to water is not yet realised as the municipality still needs to put taps in our yards yet. Moreover, it hardly brings water to us during water restrictions. I never thought I would wake up every day and experience dry taps. I thought water cuts were from 22h00 to 4h00. However, they go beyond 4h00. This is literally frustrating. **(Male, aged 48)**

A community member raised the following:

> As much as the community must work with the government to address this problem, the government should accelerate the process of putting the in-yard taps to ensure that the right to water and sanitation is realised. Government officials must not make decisions for us because they do not stay here and do not experience and know our struggles because they live in elegant houses in Umhlanga, Bluff, North Beach, and La Lucia. When our shacks get burnt, we will not have water to extinguish the fire… those officials who delay the installation of the in-yard taps will enjoy life in their posh houses and come with food parcels and cameras the next day .… Communal taps that they say we

> must use are far from our premises; we are desperate for in-yard taps. **(Female, aged 33)**

Due to the government's failure to address several issues raised by community members in previous years, they perceive protesting as the sole means to compel the government to acknowledge their demands for sufficient water in Bhambayi. A link frequently exists between service delivery and civil society protests (Joseph & Williams 2022). A community member expressed her feelings:

> Community members should be united, establish a civil society movement, and engage with the government; if needed, the community must protest because the South African government only listens when you act violently. Every resident should participate in every action taken by the community… Residents are not invited to serious meetings when issues such as water shortages are discussed… just to know what is going on and have an input on measures to address this problem. **(Female, aged 60)**

Similarly, another participant had this to say:

> In 2006, those who connected water illegally were disciplined and charged of corruption. I know someone who was even charged in court. Police and soldiers used to accompany municipality officials to close illegally connected taps. But the community protested and demanded proper infrastructure so that they would start to pay for water. Since then, the government has never disciplined those connecting water illegally … we do as we please now (laughs). **(Female, aged 31)**

Most community members thought that demonstrating was the sole means to compel the government to fulfil their demands, including the installation of in-yard taps. Installing in-yard taps may reduce illicit water connections and enable the government to regulate water usage inside the Bhambayi informal settlement. Community engagement is deficient, particularly with decisions made at the local level.

Indigenous Strategies

The indigenous techniques focus on the natural resources in Bhambayi that locals can utilise to mitigate water shortages, specifically groundwater, river water, and rainwater.

Drilling of Boreholes

Bhambayi is one of the places in the eThekwini region that possesses underground water. Consequently, participants contended that due to the limited rainfall in the area, there is a need for intervention by the state, parastatals, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to drill boreholes, as communal taps fail to supply sufficient water. Individuals may extract water from boreholes during periods of water restrictions (Chaminuka and Nyatsanza 2013). The boreholes should be linked to the communal taps to prevent reliance on water trucks during limitations. One of the participants stated the following:

> As a community, we need to come together and request the ward councillor to urge the municipality to come and drill for underground water for us. We do not mind using it when we wash our clothes and water our gardens…Sadly, our suggestions are not considered, and we are sidelined when decisions are taken by municipal officials. **(Female, aged 35)**

One participant in an FGD claimed that his home had built a borehole to endure water limitations. This borehole helps other community members, at no cost, especially those who lack other water sources during water restrictions. This family executes regulations about access to water from their borehole, stipulating a maximum collection of 20 litres per household. A participant remarked:

> We also use water from boreholes as there is underground water in Bhambayi informal settlement. A family with a private borehole here allows us to collect water from there, although this borehole cannot cater for every community member. It is high time that the community works with the government and other stakeholders to maintain and take care of their natural assets, such as boreholes and rivers. **(Female, aged 59)**

This family assists community members lacking alternative water sources during municipal restrictions on communal taps. These restrictions entail scheduled or unexpected interruptions of water access or limited supply pressure, compelling residents to depend on other alternatives to get water (Mottelson 2023). A religious organisation situated in the community of Phoenix, adjacent to the Bhambayi informal settlement, supplies water to the residents of Bhambayi during periods of water shortages. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assist in mitigating water shortages in numerous regions confronting this issue (Rugemalila & Gibbs 2015). The population is advised to boil this water prior to consumption, as it is untreated. One participant remarked:

> It is hard; electricity load-shedding is better than water shedding. God created water for a reason. Water is a basic need; one cannot survive without water. I am grateful for what the NGO does; as a faith-based organisation, it provides potable water in safe containers during water shedding. **(Female, aged 56)**

Another participant added:

> We usually wait for water trucks from the eThekwini Municipality… sometimes end up not receiving water from them if we do not have a bribe. If it does not come, we wait. Luckily, there is a mosque where I stay, and it leadership gives us boiled water from boreholes. Why the government does not collaborate with religious organisations to distribute water during restrictions because corruption is rife between the municipal officials and private companies that get tenders to deliver water during restrictions? **(Male, aged 63)**

Corruption was apparent among tenderpreneurs and municipal officials responsible for distributing water via trucks during water shedding. A commitment must be extended to faith-based organisations as they have commenced providing water to individuals pro gratis. Boreholes were predominantly required in the dry season when water shortages were prevalent, as the Bhambayi inhabitants collected rainwater during the wet season. Given the drought conditions in KwaZulu-Natal, boreholes may be a viable way to guarantee water access for all residents, notwithstanding the depletion of dams and rivers. Tapela (2012) contends that borehole water is unreliable due to the seasonal fluctuations in groundwater availability, particularly in regions

susceptible to drought. The government should establish water tanks adjacent to the boreholes and replenish them with water when subterranean water is unavailable in such boreholes. A borehole should be accompanied with a water tank, supplied with municipal water as a contingency measure. Certain people contend that borehole water may possess superior quality compared to seawater, as seawater is saline and can induce diarrhoea when ingested, as well as dermatological issues when utilised for bathing.

Use of Water from the River

Bhambayi possesses a natural water supply that many locals neglect due to land and water pollution originating from the village itself. A non-perennial river is in this hamlet, adjacent to the Kasturba Gandhi Primary School and Nanda Newtown Comprehensive High School. A participant, who is a community leader, remarked:

> We should not only depend on the government for some things; we have rivers in Bhambayi. Let us come up with ways to use water from the river that we have because some communities are desperate for such sources. We must learn to do things for ourselves and seek help after we have tried our level best .... **(Female, aged 45)**

Nonetheless, residents can only utilise river water for laundering garments, as certain individuals regard this stream as unprotected and susceptible to contamination due to the disposal of solid waste by some community members. The rivers of Durban are contaminated due to multiple factors, including a malfunctioning sewer system (Mdluli *et al.* 2023). A participant stated:

> We cannot rely on the river that we have because, in winter, it has little water. In summer, it is more polluted because the heap of waste next to it gets eroded and deposited inside. I prefer to drink and cook using rainwater because it is cleaner than river water, but I would not mind washing my clothes with water from the river. **(Female, aged 49)**

The expressed perspectives indicate that certain individuals deem harvested rainwater suitable for culinary and potable use, whereas river water is deemed suited solely for washing purposes. This may occur due to occasional sewage overflow into the river and reduced water levels during winter. Collect-

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ing water from this stream is labour-intensive, and animals contaminating the river renders the water turbid, perhaps posing health risks to the locals. Consequently, it is imperative to enhance community awareness to inform individuals about diverse methods of safeguarding this resource, as it can be crucial amid water limitations. "A person who embodies ethical and moral values, values other living beings, and behaves in a manner that honours their right to life can attain a sustainable environment" (Kılıç 2020: 240). A member in the FGD stated the following:

> I get water from a river, and we ensure that we boil it; although I am allergic to it, I do not have another alternative. I cannot afford to buy still water because it is expensive for me as I do not have a proper job. **(Male, aged 54)**

In addition, another participant mentioned:

> There is a stream we get water from down the road when there is water shedding. My mom had an operation on her shoulder because of lifting heavy buckets of water from the stream. This could be handled accordingly, as waking up and finding taps dry for a few days is painful. **(Female, aged 32)**

A considerable proportion of Bhambayi residents obtain water from a nearby stream. Retrieving water from the river has resulted in health issues, including bodily pain and arthritis, particularly among the elderly, as community members often transport many litres of water and must ascend a slope on their return home.

Rainwater Harvesting
Due to the absence of adequate roofing in most shacks in Bhambayi, people have difficulties utilising the gutter system for water collection in tanks and buckets. Rain-harvested water is sometimes contaminated due to the prevalence of rust and dust on most rooftops. Rainwater is essential for the Bhambayi settlement due to their inadequate water supply. The allocation of water tanks may enable community members to utilise rainwater collected from roofs during the wet season. Consequently, in the absence of tanks, community members are compelled to utilise trenches, buckets, and containers

for rainwater storage. Harvested rainwater might subsequently be utilised for rainfed agriculture or domestic water supply. Regrettably, rainfall may be contaminated with micro-organisms and toxic compounds necessitating purification prior to utilization" (Helmreich & Horn 2009: 118). Participants provided the following statements:

> Currently, the government still needs to place water tanks in Bhambayi. There are no tanks for storing rainwater for washing and irrigating gardens. Even when we get much rain, we do not have tanks to harvest it; our buckets need to be bigger and sealable to prevent bacteria as we cannot afford chemicals to treat it. Community members, assisted by community leaders, must seek donations from retail stores and firms around Bhambayi and buy water tanks for the community. (Male, aged 30)

A participant shared her sentiments:

> We harvest rainwater by putting drums next to the wall behind our houses. Water would flow into these drums during the rain, and [we] keep those drums for backup when water restrictions occur. I suggest that every household should have water tanks, or a drum placed at the back of every shack. Within the community, only one support group has a water tank to store water for irrigating its garden. That water tank was donated to elderly people by a building hardware shop. **(Female, aged 33)**

The support group is the only organisation possessing a water tank which is connected to the roof and gutters of the Mahatma Gandhi Museum for rainwater harvesting. In this group, the tank water is used for irrigating plants and occasionally for cooking. It is typically secured to avert misuse by children. Water intended for cooking is frequently disinfected with bleach to render it safe for consumption.

Discussion

A significant number of participants express dissatisfaction with the infrastructure in the Bhambayi informal settlement due to inadequate maintenance. They admonish local officials for failing to assist them in

mitigating water problems and facilitating development in the area. Participants require enhanced service delivery in Bhambayi, as the area is underdeveloped. The municipality must respond promptly to issues related to damaged infrastructure, like leaky and ruptured water pipes. They claim that this is lacking because of poor administration in the municipality. Inadequate municipal management results in insufficient service delivery and obstructs development (Reddy 2016). Participants contend that the municipality postpones the repair of leaky pipes in Bhambayi due to the prevalent financial difficulties faced by the residents, attributed to elevated unemployment rates. Consequently, they are unable to remit payments for alternative services. Many municipalities in SA face significant challenges in repairing damaged water pipelines due to insufficient budgeting for such occurrences (Khambule *et al.* 2019). The issue exacerbates with a limited number of ratepayers in that region (Fitchett *et al.* 2016).

Members of the Bhambayi community require equitable access to water supply and sanitation facilities comparable to those in affluent areas such as Umhlanga, La Lucia, and Durban North, notwithstanding their lack of financial means to afford these services. They rely exclusively on complimentary basic water. The municipality fails to sufficiently address the grievances of Bhambayi community members, resulting in conflict between community members and leaders, as individuals have grown disillusioned with collaborating with the government to accelerate development processes, having previously received unfulfilled promises from authorities. Consequently, they protest to articulate their demands and discontent, as the government promptly intervenes when such actions occur. Participants asserted that the municipality must involve citizens in project implementation and permit their participation in decision-making processes. Community members must be notified and encouraged to participate in the water committee meetings when discussing the conditions of water and sanitation in the Bhambayi informal settlement. Only specific individuals are chosen to represent community members at those meetings, and these individuals provide only limited information to the community regarding the municipality's strategies to mitigate water shortages in their area. Facilitating community involvement in decision-making mitigates conflict between the municipality and the public, enhances government transparency, and amplifies public engagement in development (Ife and Tesoriero 2006). Consequently, participants in this study perceive that municipal officials and certain people make decisions on their behalf, thereby disempowering them from engaging in discussions around

water and sanitation. The municipality needs to consider that participatory service delivery also involves the ordinary residents in decision-making.

Given the presence of subsurface water supplies in the Bhambayi informal settlement, numerous participants proposed drilling boreholes as a contingency measure when water from communal taps is inaccessible. Certain individuals have excavated their own boreholes, thereby alleviating water shortages. Nevertheless, several locals question the quality of the subterranean water due to its susceptibility to pollution and lack of treatment. Numerous participants noted that certain community members neglect to safeguard the infrastructure, since ablution blocks are frequently vandalised, and stolen copper taps and pipes are sold at scrapyards. Individuals may hesitate to safeguard infrastructure, such as ablution facilities, because to their perception that the government has excluded them from the decision-making process. As some residents sustain themselves by selling stolen metal to scrapyards (Bezuidenhout 2011). This suggests that certain community members are attributing their criminal behaviour to poverty. Such individuals are negligent and obstruct progress. Moreover, fail to protect their infrastructure. Most participants recommended the installation of in-yard taps to provide a regular water supply. They contend that the definitive remedy for water scarcity in Bhambayi is for the government to provide enough housing equipped with in-yard taps and toilets.

Illicit water connections impede service delivery (Uys 2004). Due to illicit water connections, participants report regular water shortages in Bhambayi, resulting in conflict over the limited supply, as it fails to meet their home requirements. Moreover, participants express dissatisfaction with the condition of ablution facilities (toilets and showers), which are unavailable during nighttime and weekends. The researcher identified a sewage leak along the roadway, mostly due to the absence of a professionally designed drainage system, which presents significant health risks to neighbourhood people. Informal settlements lack adequate government provision of water and sanitation, leading to health issues such as diarrhoeal infections (Richards *et al.* 2007). Not all people of the community engage in water saving practices. Nonetheless, the majority of elderly people demonstrated diverse methods of water conservation, including rainwater gathering and under groundwater usage. They urged young individuals to initiate water conservation efforts, including washing vehicles and irrigating gardens with river water. The younger generation must recognise indigenous water conservation methods as instructed by the older generations (Ward *et al.* 2007). Enhanced education on water conservation measures is

essential to ensure that community members effectively preserve water.

Moreover, the allocation of water by municipal tankers requires proper regulation, as some participants said that the municipality dispatches only a limited number of water trucks to serve a large population under water shortages. Not all community residents have access to water, while certain dishonest truck drivers are profiting from its demand. Consequently, the installation of water tanks on each street was a solution to guarantee equitable water distribution during the water restrictions. Many people oppose water restrictions due to their imposition and the municipality's failure to communicate the timing of these limitations. It is problematic for residents returning home late from work to discover taps devoid of water.

It is presumed that municipal authorities claim to know community members' needs without engaging in with them. This method engenders distrust and discord between the government and the broader community; thus, community involvement in decision-making is essential for achieving good outcomes in any local initiative (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006). The water supply and sanitation services should have been more efficient, as the majority of community members utilise pit toilets and share merely two ablution blocks and five standpipes. There is a continued necessity for adequate housing to guarantee the realisation of individuals' rights to safe shelter, water, and sanitation. While the government needs to deliver services to fulfil fundamental requirements, individuals must promote self-reliance, such as in the procurement of funds for water tanks. Although most of the residents in Bhambayi informal settlement are unemployed, those who can afford should pay for some services to ensure that the government provides these services consistently and does not face financial constraints due to a lack of cost recovery.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions of Bhambayi residents regarding strategies to mitigate water shortages in their area. It establishes that infrastructure-oriented and indigenous approaches can be employed to mitigate water scarcity. These findings enhance existing knowledge in this research domain by elucidating the challenges that Bhambayi residents presently encounter in acquiring water. The Bhambayi community's efforts to tackle water shortages require development from the government and other parties, including the corporate sector. This study indicated that the majority of individuals must engage in water conservation due to the persistent water shortages in this area.

The research revealed that members of this community are only marginally involved in municipal decision-making about the development of this area.

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Geopolitical Tensions and Globalization: New Trends and Realities in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Globalization acts as a contemporary re-colonising force in Africa. Even for countries previously spared historic colonisation, it opens a new frontier of power dynamics. This entails utilizing predatory tools like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), and multinational corporations. Geopolitics and globalisation have both positive and negative effects on the African economy. The paper explores geopolitics and globalization in developing economies, irrespective of their level of participation. Achieving development requires full integration into the global framework, which implies adherence to the macroeconomic policies outlined by the Washington Consensus four decades ago. At the end of the Cold War, capitalism triumphed worldwide. East Asia serves as a model of how developing countries have opened their borders to find competitive niches and attract foreign capital, thereby triggering economic growth. This paper will further discuss the impact of geopolitics on globalization around Africa. While globalization would not accelerate economic growth, gross capital formation would, as the variables for employment and war were not significant. The paper concludes that globalization underpins transformation in the organisation of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. Geopolitical and economic shifts may present both risks and opportunities for Africa to expand regional trade agreements, attract investment, and build industrial resilience. To achieve this, bold policy decisions are required in infrastructure investment and international engagement. In future, Africa should balance external partnerships and changing geopolitical realities to foster a competitive, and sustainable economic environment.

Hlengiwe R. Phetha & Joram Ndlovu

Introduction

Globalization has become one of the buzzwords in international politics. Notably, its conceptualisation and use across academic fields have sparked an interesting debate, as commentators view it from different perspectives. While some commentators view globalization in a positive light, others attach negative connotations to it and thus see it as a disadvantage to the world order. Economic and trade alliances with new economic partners, such as China, India, and others, have benefited Sub-Saharan Africa, but it has been adversely affected by the recent rise in geopolitical tensions (Paul 2023). For Held (2002), globalization leads to increased interpretation of economic, political, and social practices, and brings distant societies face to face both at the local and global levels. In this context, the world cannot live without globalization. The final opinion of the impact of globalization on African economies is probably not going to be settled for a while, in part because further research is not conclusively confirming or refuting either position, or in large part because most of these dramatic opinions are founded solely on ideological affinities (Ani 2013). Escalation of current geopolitical tensions would see countries in Sub-Saharan Africa hit by higher import prices or even lose access to key export markets (Paul 2023). African economies are currently in this state because of their own exclusion from international markets due to restrictive policies and market barriers. In a world of deep fragmentation, Sub-Saharan Africa stands to lose more than other regions, yet the upside exists if fragmentation is contained (IMF 2023). This makes a compelling case for pursuing a deliberate entry into international markets.

Globalization has integrated Africa into the world economy, yielding mixed results of increased trade and investment alongside economic marginalization, dependency, and de-industrialization (Ibrahim 2013). According to historical records, Africa is among the regions most dedicated to the structural adjustment projects of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Bretton Woods twin organizations. It was impossible to avoid advocating for market liberalization from the 1970s through the 1990s. Since the 1990s, Africa has been gradually but steadily regaining its former glory. The services and export sectors' share of the GDP has been gradually increasing (Sundaram

et al. 2011). Geopolitically, the continent has become a crucial arena for power competition, offering opportunities for influence but also rendering nations susceptible to external pressures resulting from shifting alliances and reliance on primary commodity export (Ibrahim 2013). The region's financing options have deteriorated significantly over the past year due to the escalation and tightening of global monetary policy, prompted by the rapid rise in global inflation after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which led to higher interest rates worldwide (Paul 2023). Growing export and import flows are essential for promoting economic expansion and raising living standards in developing nations. Countries need to build resilience against likely fallouts from fragmentation and position themselves to benefit from possible changes in trade and capital flow patterns (IMF 2023). This paper seeks to discuss how geopolitical tensions shaped the dynamics and outcomes of globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the impact of geopolitical tensions on trade, investments, and technology in SSA?

- How do these tensions affect infrastructure projects and regional integration efforts?

- What are the benefits of globalization and risks resulting from geopolitical tensions across SSA?

- How do domestic political institutions, governance quality, and civil society respond to external pressure resulting from globalization and geopolitics?

Methodology

The study utilized qualitative research to analyse pre-existing texts (Bowen 2009). This approach allowed the researchers to employ document analysis, including newspapers and academic papers. In this case, documents containing texts on geopolitics, globalization, tensions, trends, and realities were the potential sources for this qualitative analysis. The term document is used to refer to a variety of materials, including texts, photographs, and/or audiovisual material, as sources for qualitative analysis (Morgan 2022). The use of document analysis is a frequently underutilized qualitative research approach. Qualitative researchers often favour other methods over document analysis because they

want to be actively involved in field research (Bowen 2009). The scarcity of literature on document analysis has contributed to the lack of awareness of the important role this method plays in conducting qualitative research. The document analysis process involved identifying relevant documents. Several factors were considered in deciding which documents to include, which involved authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Morgan 2022). The sample size was generally determined by the scope and depth of the analysis and the diversity of the data sources. Purposive sampling was used in selecting high-quality documents that best answer the research questions (Armstrong 2021). A total of 100 documents were reviewed, and only 20 were found to be relevant, credible, and accessible. The relevant documents were then themed and analysed to ensure authenticity and credibility. The analytic procedure involves selecting, appraising, and synthesizing data contained in the document in the form of excerpts, quotations, and categories.

The Dynamics of Globalization

A few concepts associated with globalisation will be explained and discussed in this paper to ensure easy reference. Globalization means different things to different people. Held (2002:2) refers to globalization as the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life. Globalization, according to Taylor and Dawn (1999: 11), refers to a growing openness of national economies to economic activity by companies from other states, greater interdependence between different national economies, as well as the harmonization of what is produced, export-ed, and imported within a nation with the demands of the international econo-my. Borrowing costs in Sub-Saharan Africa have also increased in both do-mestic and international markets (Ani 2013). For instance, Sub-Sharan Afri-can region could lose an estimated 10 billion of foreign direct investment and official development assistance inflows. Held (2002) further says that it is the movement of goods, ideas, information, services, cultural and economic activi-ties across the political boundaries of the state. There is a need for strategic decoupling to ensure that Sub-Saharan African regions fare better and continue to trade freely, even if the US/EU cut ties with Russia (Fosah, Mama, Dinga 2023). Thus, trade flows will be directed towards the rest of the world, creating new opportunities for new partnerships and boosting intraregional trade (Lere 2014). Globalization is the interconnectedness of the global world.

According to Ibrahim (2013:85), the term globalization refers to the

'process of the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across the international boundaries'. Furthermore, globalization is a concept principally aimed at the transcendental homogenization of political and socio-economic theory across the globe. Nsibambi (2001) sees globalization as a 'process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and peoples facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skill, as well as interfacing of cultural and value systems and practices'. Based on this definition of globalization, interaction amongst countries cuts across different spheres of life, thereby knitting together the countries involved in or affected by those changes (Fosah et al. 2023). The countries can expand financial inclusion, build a broader domestic investor base, and increase attractiveness to a larger set of external investors by upgrading domestic financial market infrastructure, which can be achieved through digitization, transparency, and regulation, and expanding financial diversity. According to Held (2002:15-21), the three main concepts used to define globalisation are: stretched social relations, intensified flows, and increased interpretation of globalisation. Riding on the tail winds of China's globalization since the early 2000's, the value of exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to China increased tenfold over this period, largely driven by oil exports (Fosah et.al. 2023). By contrast, the value of total external debt for the US and the EU declined by about 30% from their mid-2000s peaks. The US and EU still account for most of the region's foreign direct investment stock, with China accounting for only 6% as of the end of 2020 (IMF 2023).

Globalization, Trade, and Investment Dynamics

When a country penetrates another country or other countries, there is an increase in the interpenetration of economic and social practices, likely to bring distant cultures and societies face to face, at both the local and global levels (Held 2002). For example, the case of transporting nuclear waste from Britain to Australia is one in which a nuclear waste reprocessing firm processes waste from Japan and dumps it in Australia. This shows the complexity of global interaction, whereby a process that starts in one country ends elsewhere in the world and yields either good or bad results (Fosah et al. 2023). Sub-Saharan countries can identify a niche sector that may benefit from trade diversion to capitalise on potential shifts in trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows (Paul 2023). The phenomenon of globalization has proven itself as working for

the rich and developed countries at the expense of the poor or Third World countries (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). This implies that the growing intercomnectedness that is said to be brought about by globalization is a myth. According to Chinwe (2010:2), Africa is confronted by globalization.

This globalization has brought many challenges to Africa with significant impacts and effects on all economies of the world (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Multinational institutions will need to continue facilitating dialogue among nations to promote economic integration and cooperation. However, on the positive side, globalization has affected the production of goods and services. It affects technology and leads to its diffusion from origi-nating nations to other nations (Aderonke 2012). Aderonke (2012) says that neolibe-ralism's ideational power in Africa has been improved and undergirded by the uneven power relations between the post-colonial African state and the Interna-tional Financial Institutions (IFIs). One key implication of the collective effects of globalisation and neoliberalism is the weakening of nation-al sovereignty (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). The prompt increase in cross-border economic activities due to globalisation has led to a rising asymmetry between the rule of government and globally expanding markets. Strange (1996: 72) argues that 'the hasty interpenetration of economies is facilitated by a global drive for liberalisation of markets, privatisation, deregulation and a dramatic reduction of the commanding role of the government in national planning, especially in Africa'. The downside of increased economic integration is that Sub-Saharan Africa has become more susceptible to global shocks (Ibrahim 2013). For instance, many countries that rely heavily on imports of food, energy, and fertiliser suffered one of the worst crises in decades when global commodity prices soared in 2022, on the heels of the war in Ukraine and amid the effects of COVID-19.

Furthermore, the Commission on Global Governance (1996) confirmed that 'it is becoming gradually evident that the step of globalisation of markets is presently exceeding the capacity of governments to provide the necessary framework of rules and cooperative measures to ensure stability and prevent exploitations of monopoly and other market failures'. The rise in global tensions is spilling into the region, and the recent increase in protectionism, including in Sub-Saharan Africa, threatens to unravel earlier gains from integration (IMF 2023). On his part, Mazrui (1999) highlighted this by pointing out that 'every stage of Africa's contribution to globalisation was also a stage in its own marginalisation'. This conventional wisdom suggests that globalisation raises the rewards of good policy and highlights the costs of poor policy

(Ani 2013). For several countries currently facing aggravated debt vulnerabilities, the roads to debt restructuring have been marked by coordination problems among a diverse group of creditors, which could worsen if geoeconomic fragmentation deepens. In that sense, globalization is a phenomenon worth studying and analysing if we are to understand how the global economy operates and how countries are interconnected. Copper (2001) advances the view that globalization has influenced health in contradictory ways, where globalization has spread infectious diseases and everything from cholera to HIV/ AIDS.

He further states that globalization has also diffused unhealthy products such as tobacco and narcotics (Cooper 2001). However, globalization has also led to improved public health systems, particularly sanitation and vaccinations. In this regard, a rigorous global effort is about to follow the eradication of smallpox with the eradication of polio (Honey 2004). According to Tsai (2007: 103), 'globalization has also led to the diffusion of expensive medical technologies, even into places where much less expensive public health measures could yield much greater gains in health'. These views lead to the conclusion that globalization has both negative and positive effects on countries and their societies.

Global Trade and Economic Flows

Economic globalization is not a new process by any standard (Ibrahim 2013). For the past five centuries, firms in economically advanced countries have expanded and extended their reach through trade and production activities to territories worldwide (Khor 2000: 1). Khor further states that over the past two decades, economic globalisation has accelerated due to various factors, particularly technological developments and the liberalisation policies that have swept the world (Khor 2000). In a nutshell, economic globalization is the process whereby the economies of the international community are connected and interconnected. Furthermore, economic globalization is about the interdependency of states financially (Ani 2013). Economic events constitute one part of the world that affects the economies of other parts. This is demonstrated by the interdependency of the world currencies (Held 2000). However, the value of each currency is determined by its relation to other currencies. Economic globalization further reinforces, instead of replacing, patterns of dominance and dependency of capitalism and richer states (Held 2000: 29). Hence, the economies of poorer countries depend on foreign

investment. Sub-Saharan African countries were split on the UN resolution following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with half of the countries condemning the invasion while the other half did not or abstained (IMF 2023).

But does economic globalization bring justice to everyone across the globe? To answer the question, economic globalization as a feature is characterised by unequal development. Allen (1995: 237) contends that contemporary society is characterised by the growing dependence of the developing countries on the richer economies of the developed world. About half of the region's current international trade value would be affected in a scenario in which the world is split into two trading blocs: one centred on the US/EU and the other on China (IMF 2023). Cases in Latin America and Africa are cited as evidence of this view. The two regions serve as the source of raw materials, whilst developed countries export manufactured goods to them (Allen 1995: 243). The prices of metals like gold are set by developed countries worldwide, whereas the prices of manufactured goods are determined at the state level (Allen 1995). Globalization has manifested itself in different forms in Africa (Ani 2013). Economic globalization is a very uneven process, with increased trade and investments being focused on a few countries but affecting almost all countries differently. As the region loses access to key export markets and faces higher import prices, Sub-Saharan African countries would be expected to experience a permanent decline of 4% in real DGP after 10 years relative to a no-fragmentation baseline (Ibrahim 2013). Disruptions to capital flows and technology transfer could bring additional losses. However, not all is bleak, and some milder scenarios of shifting geopolitics may create new trade partnerships for the region (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). For example, there is a view that a low-income country may account for only a minuscule part of world trade, but changes in demand for prices of its commodities or a policy of rapidly reducing its import duties can have a major economic and social effect on that country (Khor 2001).

On the other hand, the fact that economic globalisation has deteriorated with the crisis does not suggest that the world is observing an end to globalization (Olasunkanmi 2011: 62). However, countries are irregular in their donation of various types of resources and technologies. Countries differ in their capabilities to produce different types of goods and resources, and in the demands for certain goods in individual countries that exceed the country's ability to produce them (Olasunkanmi 2011). Economic globalization had a great impact on African communalism, where many policies were made, and these policies hurt the African people. Moshirian (2011) argues that the process

of globalization continues to take forms and characteristics prompted by global phenomena today. Economic globalization brings about global apartheid (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). This is between developed and developing countries. There is an increasing split between the rich and the poor, and there is also no justice between the sexes (Beck 2000: 50). Furthermore, women are being exploited because they work in the industries under bad conditions for long hours and they earn low wages. According to Khor (2000), the uneven nature of the present globalization process is manifested in the fast-growing gap between the world's rich and poor people, between developed and developing countries. This results in the polarisation of societies, and Africa is not immune to this reality. According to Olasunkanmi (2011: 62), the structure of the global economy makes most people poor'. This leads to the conclusion that global economic performance and structure generate societal inequalities worldwide.

Economic globalization negates the ideals of cultural relativity and cultural pluralism today in such a way that Africa suffers from a crisis of identity because of the importation of foreign values (Ani 2013). Furthermore, in Africa, economic globalization has been accused of creating globalized people, destroying the unique national cultures and identities (Olasunkanmi 2011). According to Castells (2002:38), economic globalisation demanded new forms of work characterised by high performance driven by international standards. This is because completion drives economic growth. Beck (2008: 38) says that societies could run out of jobs if no precautions are taken. It is imperative to take a quick look at how the global economic meltdown affected the African continent (Ibrahim 2013). This is not to suggest that Africa is a homogeneous geographical space, but the reality is that the entire continent has been affected by globalization.

Economic and Geopolitical Frictions in Africa

African nations that depend heavily on these exports have suffered due to the crisis's impact on commodity prices, which have fallen, especially for minerals and oil (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). It is now harder for many African countries to implement programs to mitigate the consequences of the crisis due to a drop in export revenues, which has restricted their fiscal space (Balchin 2009). The two most important sources of foreign cash and investment for many African nations, foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances, have dramatically declined. African countries' fiscal freedom has been further diminished by the fall in FDI and remittances, which has increased their reliance on aid and other

outside financing sources. Many African governments are now facing even greater financial difficulties due to the crisis's impact on aid and development support from industrialised countries (Ibrahim 2013). Building resilience requires strengthening regional integration and expanding the pool of domestic resources to counter potential external shocks (IMF 2023). To ensure that African nations receive the assistance they need to recover from the crisis, there is an urgent need for greater accountability in international aid commitments.

The demand for African exports has decreased due to the slowdown in global growth and the steep decline in industrial production worldwide (Ibrahim 2013). Greater integration would require reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, strengthening the efficiency of customs, leveraging digitalization, and closing infrastructure gaps (IMF 2023). This is most evident in the downward trend in commodity export prices. The fact that most African countries rely primarily on commodity exports for their export earnings makes this particularly concerning (Dullien & Kotte 2010). Moreover, the decline in export earnings is likely to have detrimental knock-on effects, lowering government revenue and exacerbating the already precarious fiscal situation in many African nations. The impact of these crises has varied across countries, including in Africa (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Prioritizing improvements in quality in institutions, especially the regulatory framework, is an effective way to help promote private infrastructure. While many countries have experienced a sharp deterioration of growth prospects, others have continued to record improvements. For example, within Africa, as more countries saw their economies plunging, others (including South Africa and Nigeria) remained relatively stable despite the challenges. According to the G20 (2009), the African government has taken the most important steps to lessen the economic crisis. Depending on domestic financial markets can broaden financing sources and lower volatility associated with excessive reliance on foreign inflows (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Moreover, improving domestic revenue mobilisation requires both revenue administration, tax, and policy reform to alleviate constraints on social and infrastructure expenditures (IMF 2023). Most commentators overlook the fact that several structural and macroeconomic growth initiatives dubbed 'finance-driven capitalism' are largely responsible for the financial crisis.

Geopolitical Trends and Realities

Countries in the region can position themselves strategically to benefit from trade diversion and potential new FDI flows (IMF 2023). From a general

perspective, there are several advantages associated with globalization. Some apply to individual countries, while others apply to the world at large. For example, according to Nsibambi (2001: 2), globalisation opens people's lives to other cultures and to all their creativity, as well as to the flow of ideas and values. Creating the right environment to attract FDI would allow countries to reconfigure global supply chains by choosing like-minded partners (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). He further says that information and communication technologies have eased interaction among countries and people. Moreover, globalization has eased international trade and commerce, facilitated foreign investment and the flow of capital (Nsibambi 2001). Globalization has eased international trade and commerce to facilitate foreign investment and the flow of capital, for greater accountability and responsibility of the leaders to serve their people. Reducing domestic policy uncertainty, including improving governance, could reduce the country's perceived risk level and help attract more foreign capital investment (Ifedi 2020). However, this has forced African leaders to create or adopt policies and measures that are opposed to the feelings of many (Ibrahim 2013: 88).

Moving further, the international lobby and pressure groups from different groups have combined to reinforce the phenomenon of globalization to force the state to shift its behaviour and the way it relates to its internal and external partners (Ibrahim 2013). Identifying and building sectors that benefit from trade diversion can increase a country's success. Importantly, globalization has been described as generating a sense of unity among nations and groups (Ifedi 2020). According to Aderike and David (2012: 194), information and communication technologies have facilitated interaction among countries and people, creating a global village from a world that is wide and diverse. Countries can also rely on trade promotion agencies to help identify potential opportunities, build the necessary skills and capacity for exporters, and eventually re-orient production to take advantage of new flows (Mukhtar & Abdulqadirr 2025). Hence, it is said that a major positive impact of globalization on Africa is that it has made information available on how other countries are governed and the freedoms and rights of the people. Moreover, globalisation has opened African countries to intense external scrutiny and exercise pressure for greater transparency, openness and account-ability in Africa' (Ibrahim 2013: 89). The enormous rise in global interconnect-tivity is affecting people's lives in different ways, some predictable and others unforeseen (Ibrahim 2013). Furthermore, one of the major changes that is seen as an increase in global awareness is that globalization has freed labour across

boundaries. The region can leverage its abundant labour force in agricultural resources to become the world's factory and food exporter if the necessary investments are undertaken in human capital and sustainable agricultural practices (IMF 2023). People everywhere are now much more aware of events and issues. This has massively increased awareness of global differences in living standards, life chances, and political and social rights and liberties.

Geopolitical Contradictions in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the context of rapidly changing geopolitics in Russia/ Ukraine, African leaders must absolutely rethink and develop strategies to serve their straddling economies (Klomegah 2024). Despite all the good things enumerated above, globalization also has a negative impact. The underlying causes are well known and, therefore, allowing their possible effect to largely influence the already stressed economic processes will spell disaster and tragedy for Africa. According to Ibrahim (2013: 87), the Cold War, which was born out of the process of globalization, has had significant consequences for Africa. Archival records show that Russia not only supported African countries in their efforts to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonialism and attain political independence but also facilitated the UN General Assembly's adoption in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Klomegah 2024). Moreover, foreign technology enables TNCs to outperform local firms, thereby increasing unemployment. Notwithstanding higher wages paid by TNCs in certain countries, only a limited number of workers were hired in TNCs' capital-intensive sectors (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). There is an argument that more jobs were created in labour-intensive agricultural and manufacturing production at the cost of poor working conditions (Kiely 1998: 59). However, 64 years later, Africa is still far from attaining economic freedom despite its vast natural and human resources. Approximately 60% of the population is impoverished, with untapped resources and shabby development.

Globalization has introduced anti-developmentalism by declaring the state irrelevant or marginal to the developmental efforts (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). He further says that as development strategies and policies which focus on stabilization and privatization are being pushed by the external donors, this has resulted in greater poverty and inequality and undermined the ability of the people to participate effectively in the political and social processes in their countries (Ibrahim 2013). Some say leadership attitudes and

approaches are holding back development in Africa. Others blame external factors, including opaque relations with foreign barriers. Without an effort to negotiate and identify development priorities, without an effort to cut off self-centred attitudes, our development in another country would be prolonged. According to Held (2000:11), income inequality has increased in some industrialised countries, reflected in a higher share of capital in national income and greater wage inequality. This emergence of wealth is important for the analysis of globalization since exceptionally high earnings have typically been linked to compensation paid by MNEs. Went (2000: 46) suggests that the creation of globally reaching businesses and international superstars has heightened wealth concentration and likely increased market and political power for the beneficiaries, locally and globally. If underdevelopment is attributed to imperialism and colonialism, why should responsibility not also be directed toward African leaders and their executive and legislative institutions? Africa does not need weak public institutions and a public society with obsolete, parochial ways of managing its economy. The development of Africa requires a thorough examination of how geopolitical changes are influencing Africa's unity and development, and how they have impacted the continent across its regions (Henckert 2024). It is also an important influence on people's perceptions of globalization.

The economic benefits and social costs of globalization are not evenly dispersed amongst the social groups (Ibrahim 2013). In many countries, some groups of workers have been poorly affected by trade liberalization and the transfer of production to lower-wage economies (Went 2000). Furthermore, this has primarily affected the unskilled workers, while some skilled and pro-fessional workers have been affected by the development. Africa's develop-ment processes need to be reviewed, obstacles identified, and the participation of foreign players controlled and monitored, and its role in the emerging new world order reimagined (Klomegah 2024). However, in some countries, globalization has caused a serious gender imbalance. Hence, the magnitude of this imbalance largely depends on the level of gender equality prevailing in a country's standards and institutions at the time of integration into the global economy (Milner 1998). Several external players are swiftly dividing Africa and undermining the unity it has sustained over several years by using anti-Western slogans and rhetoric, staging political confrontations, and consistently urging African countries to embrace hatred toward foreign entities' participa-tion in Africa's economy (Henckert 2024). According to Aderonke and David (2012), another side effect of globalization has been a sharp growth in the level

of illegal cross-border activities. This has involved augmented tax evasion, and the rise of multinational crime groups involved in money laundering, trafficking in people, and the sex and drug trades (Nkurayija 2011).

There are clear indications that Africa is sharply divided, with diverse conflicts taking a heavy toll on its development. For instance, there is a lack of a unified approach to the continent's development in the African Union (de Coningi 2024). The strengthening of African Unity has long been sought, but it has never been fully achieved. On these grounds, globalisation does not always yield positive results (Hussein & Nyanchoga 2025). To foster integrated development, regional integration organisations have been established across Africa, but overall, they have done little to improve their respective regions. On the contrary, it is also associated with negative effects at the individual and global levels (Ibrahim 2013). As a need for regional integration, and the reasons for past failures become better understood, new efforts are being made to strengthen economic and political ties between countries. Africa is no exception in this regard, as evidenced by the 2008 world economic meltdown (Henckert 2024). In many cases, African leaders continue to have the most extensive bilateral relationships with their colonial powers (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). However, Russia and China are critical to Western and European trade connections.

The Role of Multinational Corporations

Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have a major role to play in the globalization debate. Held (2002: 6) argues that globalisation does not erode the North-South divide but, instead, intensifies it by marginalising many third-world states. African countries need to consolidate their political independence and sovereignty while overcoming acute socio-economic issues and development (Bull & Banik 2025). Russia has blamed African leaders for their inability to employ common sense and, in their own interests, and, most importantly, within the principles of the supremacy of international law, especially amid the current geopolitical changes rapidly shifting from the unipolar system to a multipolar world order. The dominance of Multinational Corporations has brought many crises to societies, including those in Africa (Henckert 2024).

Russia's active work on the African continent is a significant part of the broader set of measures to develop constructive cooperation with a greater number of countries pursuing an open and balanced foreign policy guided by common sense and their own interests. Hymer (1975: 83) argued that the

impact of this latest evolution of the business enterprise is uneven develop-ment, as it produces poverty. According to Held (2000: 8), Multinational com-panies have been engines of global economic development, technological transfer, and deepening globalisation. Russia advocates a more equitable and democratic international order that will promote reliable security, the preserva-tion of unique cultural and civilizational identity, and equal opportunities for the development of all states (Bull & Banik 2025). It is said that Multinational Corporations have grown not only within their domestic corporate frameworks but also by setting up new subsidiaries in host economies and by purchasing subsidiaries through mergers and acquisitions (Allen 1995: 246). Beck (2002) illustrates that the significance of the role of Multinational corporations in de-termining the global economy has improved in the 20th century. Driven by Western and European aspirations pursued over the past three decades since the collapse of the Soviet era, Russia is shifting toward a multipolar configu-ration and is now moving into Africa (Klomegah 2024). Hence, multinational companies are generating the highest production and employment worldwide.

They are obligated to their mutual relationship with globalization, in which globalization has led to higher FDI flows to countries, while the oppor-tunity of receiving a greater share of global FDI flows has encouraged several countries to undertake further liberalization (Castells 2002). In the context of development processes, African leaders are aware of the need to prevent neo-colonialism and destructive attitudes towards resources. The fight against neo-colonial tendencies remains a daunting task for African leaders, the regional organizations, and the African Union (Hussein & Nyanchoga 2025). In addition, multinational companies have enabled the international integration of markets for goods and services, helping to form the global village. Whilst the inclination to receive cohesive support from the global economy, the reduction in the prominence of the state's economic role led to the expansion of MNCs, especially in developing countries (Ani 2013). Moreover, the corporations have built local relationships and established a strong local presence through FDI to benefit from the different advantages. According to the G20 (2009), countries aiming to attract higher FDI were busy granting MNCs greater freedom and support in pursuing economic cooperation with them.

Allen (2008) illustrates that MNCs were not only supported for their impact on economic growth, but also for their significant impact on productivi-ty and industrial development driven by FDI. African leaders have political mandates from their electorates; they should take sole responsibility for Afri-can problems and find African solutions within their professional skills and

competencies (Klomegah 2024). According to Nsibambi (2001: 6), the opening of technological and managerial assets of foreign investors to developing countries, employment with a better-trained labour force, higher national income, more innovations and enhanced competitiveness have led to the addition of foreign market outlets for a developing country's exports. Moreover, the MNCs tried to attain competence by minimizing their cost and maximizing economies of scale while reducing duplication (Nsibambi 2001). However, by maximizing economies of scale, they invest in several regions to gain diverse advantages from host countries, allowing them to operate more effectively in their home base (Cheni 2004). Furthermore, across the various elements, it is believed that indicators would encourage enterprises to grow and invest abroad, thereby fostering multinationalism.

Eweje (2006) argues that economic growth is the most used indicator of human progress and development, given the increasing level of environmental degradation. Furthermore, environmentalists have raised concerns about the negative impacts of global trade and the overuse of the natural environment for domestic production (Cheni 2004). Subhash (1981) states that multinational corporations do not seem to be contributing much to promoting political stability, preserving local culture, or enriching consumer lifestyles. The gradual growth of contradictions between Russia and the West accelerated the formation of the pivot-to-the-East idea, though its implementation was slow (Bull & Banik 2025). However, the current crisis in relations between Russia and the West, for its own sake, is irreversible and has driven an increase in the number and quality of ties with countries outside the United States (Klomegah 2024). This is interesting since it is their role in the political and socio-cultural affairs of developing countries that is usually questioned. As the economic crisis hit the continent, Multinational Corporations played a pivotal role in helping countries with struggling economies.

According to Honey (2004:94), 'policy makers agreed that an image of stability and reliability is of great importance in attracting foreign investments. The world majority is closely embedded in Western-centric globalisation, although it has its own problems. But half of them were willing to guarantee no changes in tax rates for a certain period. In addition, it is significant to note that multinational employment is predominantly important to Africa because unemployment is predominant, and wages are low (Tsai 2007). For example, the unemployment rates in Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa in 2001 were about 27 per cent, 34 per cent, and 26 per cent, respectively, which resulted in poverty due to high unemployment (G20 2009). Hence-

forth, countries such as South Africa faced a high unemployment rate as they faced an economic crisis. Russia's ties with its western neighbours have accumulated over centuries and cannot be cut overnight (Bull & Banik 2025). Within the West itself, there is both an ideological and purely material stratification. This has led to the involvement of a Multinational Corporation in assisting the country with infrastructure development to rescue the economic situation (Mendez-Parr, Agarwal, Luke, et al. 2025). Behind this façade of general political slogans lies an extremely heterogeneous political and mental space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, geopolitics and globalisation have both positive and negative effects on the African economy. Africa needs a comprehensive strategy to successfully navigate the geopolitical and economic transformations. While globalization has increased trade and investment opportunities, geopolitics poses significant risks to economic stability and development. African countries must develop effective strategies to navigate these complexities and ensure sustainable economic growth. Africa must improve regional trade and supply chains by eliminating trade barriers, strengthening transportation logistics, and promoting intra-African trade. To reduce reliance on external suppliers, African nations must establish industrial hubs that enable them to specialise at various stages of production. To navigate geopolitical tensions, Africa needs to boost local manufacturing and attract foreign direct investment by incentivising domestic production and diversifying investment sources beyond traditional partners. Trade disruptions and regulatory changes must be addressed for African trade policy to align with emerging standards. This necessitates improving infrastructure and technological capabilities to support Africa's technology-driven industry. By strengthening policy frameworks and strategic partnerships, Africa should be able to secure long-term funding from multilateral institutions for expanding industrialization. The paper concludes that geopolitical and economic shifts may present both risks and opportunities for Africa to expand regional trade agreements, attract investment, and build industrial resilience. To achieve this, bold policy decisions are required in infrastructure investment and international engagement. Thus, Africa's future depends on striking a balance between foreign partnerships and shifting geopolitical realities to maintain a competitive, sustainable economic environment.

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A Critical Review of Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* (1993): Is Peace and Security Temporarily Illusive or Permanently Fallacious?

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Abstract

This review of Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* (1996), primarily draws on his 1993 article, in *Foreign Affairs*. Its primary research question is: Is peace and security temporarily illusive or permanently fallacious? First providing an overview of Huntington's hypothesis, the article puts forward the argument that it appears that expectations for peace and security is indeed fallacious. This is supported with data drawn from empirical interview research with postgraduate respondents. It then analyses and evaluates the view in the context of a brief overview of aspects of some global wars, specifically peace and security matters in South Africa, the war between Israel and Palestine, and the dynamics of the religio-cultural tensions between Hindu and Islam followers in India. Similarly, it addresses two related complex dynamics in the Western world, e.g. the cultural stresses and strains within the context of the presence of Muslim migrants in Europe and Britain more specifically, and the matter of the supposed 'waning of confidence in 'democracy'', in the western world, especially in the terms of the international Realpolitik of the recent historical and continuing global significance and relevance of the USA.

Keywords: Clash of civilisations, World Order, peace and security, religio-cultural wars, Realpolitik, democracy

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Introduction
The idea of 'peace and security' stems from an unending quest among human societies to control, if not, obliterate violence altogether. The cumulative impact of violence among human societies over the last three millennia have led to a contemporary problem more than 1.5 billion people on this planet living in violence torn countries. The UN Charter places the responsibility of stopping violence on the United Nations itself, by taking collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, and border conflicts and wars, which continue in numerous parts of the world. Historically, conflicts and wars have occurred for a range of reasons. It begins from Roman and Greek expansionism more than 2500 years ago, extending into periods of Christian and Islamic expansionism since the advent of both religions, and followed by West European colonialism, with their domineering influence on world politics and economic control. Historical conflicts and wars have set the pace for the brutality that we often witness currently throughout the world. Contemporary wars and conflicts, according to Samuel P. Huntington (1993; 1996), have resurrect-ed the fight for recognition and control of people's destinies through reinventtion of civilizational pasts, emphasizing a determination to modernize without westernizing, or Africanising, Hinduising or Islamising the realpolitik and social fabric of what has become, since European colonialism, 'national identities'.

Since its publication in 1996, Samuel Huntington's groundbreaking book on the *Clash of Civilisations and Remaking of the World Order* continues to serve as a seminal account of how the world is rapidly changing along defensive religio-cultural lines. The genesis of this book lies in a shortened essay that Huntington (1993) published in the journal: *Foreign Affairs*. Thirty-one years later, much of what he prophesied is playing out with an accuracy that is revealing about how American hegemony, through its network of support, is being challenged globally. The issues that he raises are about how ancestry, language and religion are now openly in conflict against the current global order. They are about how colonized people lost their identities and right to self-rule over the last 300 years through domination by a handful of countries that have made up and control the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as well as most of those that make up G7 and G20 nations. Huntington's article and subsequent book provides a persuasive account of the histories, languages and indigenous patterns of socio-political formations.

Ever since the advent of ships and long-distance sailing, as well as metallurgy and the advancements of weapons, starting from swords, knives, guns and canons, to nuclear missiles, armoured vehicles, ships as aircraft carriers and fighter jets, the world conflicts throughout the world have resurfaced to a point of making the world even more unsafe than previously. These instruments have become weapons of attack and mass destruction, essential for the policies and actions of the people who act either as groups, as nation-states, or as wider regions such as sub-continents or even entire continents. They serve to protect themselves from either internal or external threats for a range of reasons. Most often, it is a fight for territory and what value and natural resources such ground offers. As the world's populations grew and people began migrating and becoming increasingly dependent upon what their newly settled territories had to offer, occupation extended itself to possessively guarded ownership. Migration, protection of national identities, and resurrecting civilisations' narratives have impacted upon 'Peace and security in the world' in ways that turn the phrase into an oxymoron. The challenges lie with how leaders craft their ways through political processes to attain topmost positions in government, albeit within processes that are mostly deemed as 'corrupt'.

A glimpse into how political leaderships evolve and become corrupt will help to contextualise reasons for current uncertainties for peace and security in the world.

Contextualising Reasons for the Fallacy of Peace and Security

In 1997, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) commissioned a working paper on corruption around the world. Tanzi (1998) titled his paper as: *Corruption around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope and Cures.* Referring to a definition of corruption by Johnson (1997), Tanzi stopped at his mere mention of it as being 'broad', and did not offer one as his own. He interestingly sidestepped mention of countries that are most corrupt and which would top them and why? While he mentions the USSR and its allies, he did not view the American government in a similar vein. But he did mention that the American government was aware of American exporters losing out on contracts because they were not able to pay bribes to governments that were acting against corrupt practices. Late President Richard Nixon's role in the Watergate Scandal for instance, nor the Saudi royal family's leaning on American military for support against their enemies, and amassing trillions of dollars from its oil sales, were absent in his paper.

Historically, settlement patterns emerged in ways that gave rise to social systems that were often a reflection of the local leaderships' impact, dependent upon his/her/their abilities. Leadership is central to the social, economic and political directions that societies or nations take. How they create their internal mechanisms for survival and their external relations to build alliances for trade and stability are reflections of their strategies on at least two levels. First, it is to consolidate personal power and self-enrichment – which enhances their visibility; and second, it is to build identities around capacity that has resonance with the leadership. Leaders are often accepted for their creativity, physical ability, militaristic prowess, and economic capabilities. Their acceptances are underpinned by being accepted as custodians and role models of prevalent religious, philosophical and ideological beliefs that represent both cosmological and super-structural values.

Historically, as populations grew, complexities in societies increased concomitantly. Each area, region and extended territories evolved in terms of technological advancements, population increases, growing needs and a search for markets. At whatever level leaderships hold on to power, the ideas of 'peace and security' is relative to numerous issues that include personal ambition, big business interests and longer-term positions in the context of regional and global politics. In the print media, television news channels, and in the numerous social media platforms, these issues feature through the lenses of varying ideological positions. If it is about the Russian attacks on Ukraine, Vladimir Putin is spoken about as either a warmonger or as one who is standing up and against American gerrymandering in Europe. With reference to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, he is often referred to as a stand-up comedian who has overstretched his ambition to become leader of a country that is Europe's largest wheat producer. His career to make people laugh is a far cry from his ability to fight a war against a self-defense expert, a one-time leading official of the Kremlin and battle-hardened fighter that Putin is.

When centered around American political leadership, it was at a time (the early to mid-2020s) that ex-president Joe Biden was a generally well-meaning politician who lost his direction by trying to improve the image of his son Hunter Biden, an attorney cum businessman. But this has come to naught when popular news desks revealed his 'laptop controversy' that discussed how Hunter Biden's business deals took in around 11 million dollars between 2013 and 2018. But the money was allegedly spent quickly. Investigation into why so much went into Hunter Biden's account revealed that none of his business deals came to any fruition. But more importantly, classified documents were

found in Joe Biden's residence and in his former vice-Presidential office, where they should not have been. The fight against this father and son duo, brought ex-president Donald Trump to the fore in the 2024 American Presidential election a President who is appreciated for ensuring that the USA did not enter into any war during his term of office from 2017 to 2020. Trump however, is despised for his crude, misogynistic, and generally non-charismatic manner of communicating. He promised in his 2024 campaign run, a commitment to ending the Russia-Ukraine war, as well as doing his utmost to end unbridled migration into the USA. In Ukraine's President Zelensky's visit to the USA in September 2024, he met with Donald Trump but not Vice President Kamala Harris, nominated by the Democratic Party to replace initially chosen Joe Biden for the Presidential race in November 2024. This was seen as a plea to Donald Trump to end the war in Ukraine, as he had declared, should he win the American presidential race.

About South Africa, peace and security appeared to be a far-off goal against the poor performances of the African National Congress governments since Nelson Mandela and to a lesser extent, Thabo Mbeki. As rampant corruption began to set in, and service delivery in almost every sector of life in South Africa frustrated economic progress, questions about the future of the country almost inevitably centered upon social responsibility, capacity and competency of the politicians. In this third decade of the 21st century, against the background of the country's racial and ethnic diversity, unease and insecurity about their future remains prevalent among the minorities of Whites, Coloureds and Indians. While relative peace continued into the era of a Government of National Unity (GNU) after the general elections of 2024, fears of attacks against racial and ethnic minorities remained prevalent.

Methodology

The issues above dominate narratives and discussions in social gatherings, in the various media platforms, and even in live comedy shows. Social media is keeping people more informed, albeit in a medium that has become equally manipulative in trying sway people's beliefs towards dominant or opposing narratives. This is how interviewees too responded to questions and conversations about peace and security – nationally in South Africa and as they saw it globally. Among twelve selected interviews, done through purposive sampling, candidates had to be knowledgeable about the concepts of peace and security at three levels of understanding. The questions were open ended and

were asked in a way that permitted free flowing conversations around each aspect, which included how people felt about peace and security at an individual level, at community and national levels, and about continental cum global factors connected to them. All of the respondents were graduates: three at first degree levels, five at Master's degree levels and 4 at PhD levels. All were South African males, four of them of Indian Hindu background, four were White Christian background, one was Coloured and Christian (of mixed descent), and three of the Islamic Faith. Each of them talked about peace and security at cultural, ethnic and religious levels. As people who were relatively aware of current global affairs, they were able to extend their views to broader regional and international levels, citing examples of how their identities play a major role in their relationships with people of other backgrounds. Ultimately, all of the twelve interviewees talked about being open to everyone, but were guarded in admitting, with some discomfort, that their social backgrounds inevitably draw them to people of their own particular racial or religious backgrounds. Three of them characterized this social pattern as 'spillovers' from the apartheid era. All of them however, believed that it is a human tendency to socialize mostly among people who have a common ancestry, and who share similar religious or political beliefs and family values.

Information gathered from the interviewees began from the conversations in groups of three or more over a period of time. A conscious effort was made since December 2022 when, in a group-of-four meeting that was more casual than formal, one of them made a statement that encapsulated a common sentiment about South Africa's political and economic woes. He linked them to the problems he was having about emigration and the challenges of violence, war and unemployment all over the world. When a White 62-year old engineer commented that he has nowhere else to go, the Indian accountant replied:

> *Show me a place in the world where there aren't any problems of the nature you are mentioning about South Africa? In America people are losing their jobs and houses like never before; in Canada Prime Minister Trudeau is treated as a joke. The unemployment levels there are so high that a friend's daughter who left two years ago to teach Mathematics couldn't find a job because Canada reserves government jobs for mainly White Canadians born in the country. In England the Muslims are declaring Sharia law wherever they can apply it, and Europe continues to paint a grim picture about how they are going to become Islamic if they don't curb Muslim migrants from over-*

> *shadowing them. That entire northern hemisphere is gripped by the Russia-Ukraine war, for which we are paying through fuel price rises and rising cost of living. And in South Africa we have a rogue government that is doing its best to rip the tax payers off in whatever they can steal. As Indians we are now too westernized to want to go back to India. So we too have nowhere else to go.*

Other conversations often narrowed down to such issues about South Africa's national state of affairs, as well as problems of the world. The frequency of them encouraged me to take down notes, and to revise them in order to ascertain the most recurrent patterns. My ideas did not gel together until two of the 12 individual interviewees replied, independently of each other, in virtual carbon copies of each other. The common operative question in one-on-one interviews was:

> *When people talk about the disturbances such as the events in Durban in July 2022, the Russian - Ukraine war, the Israeli - Hamas/ Palestinian war, Uyghur Muslims in China, ethnic cleansing of Hindu/ Sikh/ Buddhist/ Jain and Christian minorities in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan, Pakistan's ethnic cleansing of more than a million Afghans, forcing them to return to their homeland, what comes to your mind?*

Their answers were simple but carried with them a depth that will prevail for many more decades ahead as the changing world order is being reshaped through violent confrontations and proxy wars:

> *All the common person wants is to live in peace and security wherever they are. Right now the world is in turmoil with countries like the USA, China and Russia taking the lead in creating this uncertainty for us as family people.*

> *Most people just want to live in peace and ensure that their jobs and families are secure. The ordinary person is not interested in issues beyond that.*

Peace and security in South Africa were at the forefront of their responses, especially violence related to holdups, carjacking, home invasions, business

robberies, corruption among politicians, lack of service delivery and their failures to address unemployment. The root of South Africa's problems are seen to be located in the issues of the concerns that they raised. Against the structural violence of the past, through the staggered benefits that the four racial categories received (White, Coloured, Indian and African) a common understanding about this translating into racial biases and backlashes were commonly accepted. But there was an implicit understanding among the interviewees that race, ethnicity, religious and linguistic background also have tendencies to manifest through class differences all over the world. Class differences may occur through what is a somewhat natural outcome in situations where high performers in education, business and politics arise to dominate not only in their fields of activity, but also in policy making that creates encrusted layers of privileged classes. This frequently tends to leave the working-class majority behind, keeping them at generally stagnant levels. The differences mentioned above may be exacerbated when multi-cultural societies continue to discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity or language, or when they become hosts to foreign migrants. People from these categories are often relegated to the most marginalized segments of society, left to fill the gaps in the most menial unskilled lowly paid areas of service provision.

A similar principle may apply to the highest performing economies of the world, whose technologies permits advances in military equipment to dominate and control the less powerful countries. The USA has been most visionary in this area since the Second World War (WWII), when their dropping of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forced the Japanese not only to surrender, but to abandon their imperialist designs for South-East Asia. This catapulted an already recovering USA from the economic depression of the 1930s, into a position of strength – replacing two of the most powerful countries in Europe: Britain and Germany, who were virtually bankrupt in their war against each other. Like Japan, Germany too was forced to abandon their preoccupation with arms production and the militarization of their societies. Through their losses against Russia and the Allied Forces, led by Britain, and the negativity that Nazism cast upon the entire nation, they curtly swayed away from being a battle-ready nation to one that was determined to rebuild their economic, political and social structures that were inclined to reintegrate into the global community. While Britain reigned among the victors of World War II, its successes were dependent upon 1.2 million soldiers from India, and support from the coffers of the Indian economy. By 1945, when the war was almost over, Britain's reign over the Indian state was also drawing to a close.

Agitation against British rule in India made it untenable for their continuation as a colonizing power. Being dependent upon India for much of its resources and wealth, Britain's withdrawal also implied an open admission to a situation of virtual financial bankruptcy. By the mid-twentieth century colonized countries began following India's example by fighting for their independence too. The latter half of the twentieth century saw to its completion, albeit in terms more favourable to the British and other European colonizing countries, than the decolonized nations.

'Great Britain' has since been increasingly referred to as just 'Britain' or the 'United Kingdom'. They have, since the post WWII period, been a subservient ally to the United States. Their creation however, of the Commonwealth i.e. ex-British colonies, allowed a situation of neo-colonialism to take root. This allowed Britain relatively easy access to the oil reserves in the Middle East, as well as other natural resources and manufacturing infrastructure in their ex-colonies. Colonisers remained major beneficiaries of the wealth creating instruments in their previous colonies, albeit through a pattern of indirect rule. While nations are still fighting for their extrication from this post-colonial form of exploitation, they are also fighting to restore their identities by bringing back respect and popularity for their languages, social customs, religious institutions and practices, and protection of their indigenous knowledge bases. These situations prevail throughout the world, making ex-colonisers the principle perpetrators of conflict and war in the world. It is in this aspect that Samuel Huntington (1993; 1996) remains accurate and convincing.

From Cultural Clashes to War

Huntington's use of the words 'Clash of Civilisations' can be viewed as an understatement of how events unfolded since the early twenty-first century. The USA and the rest of the world was least prepared on 11 September 2001 against the attacks by Islamic fundamentalist group called Al Qaeda, on the beacons of American capitalism: the (in)famous 'twin towers'. The attack occurred in broad daylight on a normal working day, clearly designed to not only inflict maximum impact on working people but also on the American administration. Underpinning this attack was a response from Osama bin Laden, in an interview with ABC reporter, John Millar, published in ESQUIRE, 1 February 1999, that reinforces Huntington's statements about the fight against current hegemonic forces being essentially around ancestry, religion and culture:

> *The American imposes himself on everyone. Americans accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists--those children, who have no weapons and have not even reached maturity. At the same time, Americans defend a country, the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children .... We are sure of our victory against the Americans and the Jews as promised by the Prophet: Judgment day shall not come until the Muslim fights the Jew, where the Jew will hide behind trees and stones, and the tree and the stone will speak and say, 'Muslim, behind me is a Jew. Come and kill him.* (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/miller.html)

Osama bin Laden's gripe was about the USA's unflinching support for Israel and their control of land and resources, especially oil, in Muslim dominated countries (Telhami 2002; Jones 2012). Hailing from an established family that are close to royalty in Saudi Arabia, their fame is derived from the major contracts that they acquired in the building of roads and highways across the country. While the bin Laden's family remained content with their rise to riches and fame, Osama bin Laden chose to veer towards Wahhabism and adopting the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's life in a literal sense. His gutsy approach against foreign control of land and resources in Muslim dominated countries won him significant praise and support throughout the Muslim world. On 23 August 1996, three months after he was expelled from Sudan under US pressure, Osama bin Laden issued a declaration of war (*fatwa*) from his hideout in the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan.

> *Terrorising you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanding duty. These youth are different from your soldiers. Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youths to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations.* (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/02/bin-laden-war-words-quotes#)

The rise of 'militant Islam' (Latif 2004) is widely attributed to the zeal that its takers reveal about the lesser importance of life on earth, against an afterlife in the Muslim version of *jannah* (heaven). Reference to 'The last Day' abounds in the Koran and the Hadith, and is taken as literal among those who have

endeared themselves to both these Islamic scriptures. But others among Muslims are vocal about such literal translations, arguing that it is not what the scriptures intend to impart to the followers of Islam. However, varied are the interpretations of Islamic scriptures, opposition to such literal translations only tend to appear when the matter rises to the public's attention. References to wars during the medieval period by Christians against Muslims, especially in their oft cited crusades, provide insight into how long drawn out are the conflicts among the followers of the Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Such references reinforce Huntington's idea of the wars in the twenty-first century having its roots in the civilisational pasts of nation-states. In South Asia too, India's rise as a competitive economic and military power is reclaiming previously captured temples that were converted into mosques. Their justification almost always lies in the scriptural texts and figures that date back to the epic periods that are millennia away from the present.

Peace and Security in South Africa

In South Africa peace and security has become a perennial issue since the post-Thabo Mbeki era. Already a country infamous for its violence and government mismanagement, South Africa steeped even lower into the Foreign Direct Investors (FDI) market. The rise in car jackings, home invasions, bank robberies, degradation of services in every sector of government, government mismanagement and lack of accountability in service delivery finances, has reversed the euphoria that came with the Mandela and Mbeki eras in post-apartheid South Africa. National GDP dropped to a mere one percent, exports and manufacturing has declined to levels previously unknown (notwithstanding the Covid-19 years from March 2020 to April 2022, and restrictive University entrances to Medical Colleges, as well as job opportunities prioritized for the African majority first, have created a situation of reverse discrimination in favour of Africans. Having ushered in a significant level of uncertainty for the future generations upward mobility, the dream of emigration remains what it is. The value of the South African currency has reduced people's opportunities for overseas migration to naught. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal during the month of July in 2022, there arose an exacerbated degree in the loss of faith in post-apartheid government . What started off as a protest against the ex-President Zuma's incarceration in the hinterland town of Mooi River, rapidly spread to the urban, commercial and industrial areas of

Durban. Every possible business that could be accessed was raided – with a freedom brought about by the absence of law enforcements agencies. The absence of both the police and army gave people an opportunity to raid businesses that was unknown in the history of Durban. Residential areas too were being attempted to be raided. But the swift organization by residents themselves into policing forum units, armed with privately owned firearms, helped save most residential areas from wreck and ruin. The working class Indian dominated townships of Chatsworth and Phoenix were tested and tried by mobs of Africans allegedly wanting to break through citizen manned barriers, around which several fights broke out. News about the deaths of several people (all Africans) during this period of unrest led to the arrest of six people of Indian origin, which led to national news reports on a regular basis. They were imprisoned beyond the period of the dictates of the law, and were often discussed about on South African television almost to the point of sentencing them by media. But after more than eighteen months, all of them were released without charges, bar one who died during the period of incarceration.

Israel and Palestine

The fight between the Israelis and Palestinians must be viewed on two levels. The first is that Israel, an area of around 22 145 square kilometers, barely 3 000 square kilometers more than South Africa's Kruger National Park, which stands at 19 455 square kilometers, has a history of acrimony with its Arabian neighbours. Israel is around 350 kilometers long from north to south, and 60 kilometers wide, from east to west. Often referred to as 'Jewish Homeland' or 'Zionist State', Israel's population by religious breakdown is 7.4 million Jews and a little over 2 million Arabs, who are mainly Muslim. Israel occupies a space that is significantly smaller in area in comparison with the countries that surround it. They include Lebanon to the north, with an area size 10 452 square kilometers and a population of more than 5 million people. Egypt lies to the south of Israel, covering 995 450 square kilometers with a population of 47,5 million people. Jordan and Syria are to the east of Israel, 89 342 square kilometers and 185 180 square kilometers, with populations of 11.5 million people and 13.1 million people respectively. Mentioned in the Old Testament as the 'Chosen people':

> *For you [Israel] are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth*

to be his people, his treasured possession (Deuteronomy 7:6).

While many who subscribe to the New Testament believe that God's covenant with the Jews have been revoked, The Church at large refutes this claim. They accept the terms laid out in the Bible itself:

> *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Israelis were noted for their tenacity to survive as well as their intellectual capacity (Lipartito & Sicilia 2004). They lived both nomadic and sedentary lives. According to Robin and Harris (2021), chroniclers and Byzantine hagiographers provided evidence about Jews dominating in much of the Middle East. From the kingdom of Himyar, whose capital was located in Yemen, the territory that stretched across the Arabian Peninsula, was dominated by Jews. The pre-Islamic scholarly research accepts this as fact, acknowledging that Judaism was introduced to Yemen by an ancient king. The writers noted that the same sources wrote about influential Jewish communities in north-western Arabia. In the pre-Islamic era they were spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Since the Roman occupation of Arabia, Jews settled in numerous parts of Arabia. But there were constant conflicts between them and other indigenous populations in Arabia. The advent of Islam radically transformed the political situation in the Middle East, to the point of making the Jews a pariah segment of Middle Eastern population. This sentiment also consolidated in Europe as well, reaching an apex in Hitler's rise to power in Germany (Smilde n.d.).

The second level begins from the time of the consolidation of the modern era and the domination of the Jews in business and industrialisation. The rise and consolidation of industrialisation is as old as Jews themselves as a cultural categorization. But their visibility in global terms became more apparent since the mid-nineteenth century as Europe witnessed numerous Jewish entrepreneurs use their families, their literacy, social networks, and business acumen to overcome their social marginality through tenacity and innovation. Accusations of the Jews dominating business in Germany too and their alleged exclusivism that made them socially insular communities served as the basis for German agitation against them. A similar pattern was alleged

to have prevailed throughout Europe and the North Americas, often leading to studies on Jewish economic history with a clear sense of an antisemitic tinge to it. Such marginalisation of the Jews led to their focus upon the creation of a homeland in the Middle East. As the anti-colonization agitation gained momentum in the 1940s, the British decided to leave the Middle East too. But first they created a Jewish homeland calling it the 'State of Israel' on 15 May 1948. While they were admitted to the United Nations as a country, the Palestinians cried foul because they were stateless. The uproar against this creation led to a popular and widespread agitation against this creation, forcing Muslim nations to rebel against it. While the western nations were ready to rid their populations of the 'Jewish menace'/ 'Shylock's Shadow', their business interests and managerial skills were somewhat indispensable. They were welcomed as investors and innovative entrepreneurs but hardly as permanent citizens in the European countries and the North Americas. Israelis appreciated that sense of recognition and protection and turned inward to depend upon their innovative acumen to fend off attacks by Muslim opponents beyond their immediate border countries.

Since its creation in 1948, Britain's role thereafter was short-lived. They were accused of abandoning Israel, who had since fought at least 9 wars in: 1948–49, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, 2006, and 2023–present. Numerous key Islamic states have since inverted their anti-Israel stance to support the country: Egypt in 1979, Jordan in 1994, and the UAE, Bahrain, Morroco and Sudan since 2020. While Saudi Arabia has not recognised Israel overtly, it was alleged to be in a state of readiness by the end of 2023 to do so. The Palestinian attack against Israel is alleged to have been staged to derail that process, considering that Saudi Arabia is the most financially secure state among the 57 Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). The gruesomeness of the Palestinian attacks against Israeli citizens was resonant of the centuries of gruesomeness for which Islamic expansionism became so infamous. Raping, killing of unarmed civilians, including children and pregnant women, and shouting war-cries of Allah-uh-Akbar remains since the earl days of Islamic massacres during their early days of expansionism. History is replete with incidents of such merciless charades wherever Islamic rule was spread. Jews in the Middle East became and remain their targets.

However, changes in attitudes have changed over the years. Saudi Arabia permits Air India to fly over its territory since 2017, a three-hour period that reduces the flying time by at least two hours. This is a welcome gesture since it also reduces the fuel requirement by a significant amount. While Saudi

Arabia has not publicly acknowledged this, the Air India also gained permission to fly over Oman, another alleged anti-Israel country. Officials from there too did not comment on this at that time. But the arrangement served as a significant gesture against the rising influence of Iran in that region. Shi'ite Iran supports HAMAS who supports Jaish-e-Muhammad in Pakistan, an anti-Hindu force that believes its campaign against India will one day turn India into an Islamic state. But Sunni/ Wahabi dominated Saudi Arabia abhors the rise of Iran's technological successes, and holds them responsible for the gruesome 7 October 2023 attack against Israeli civilians, which is blamed upon Iranian help to HAMAS. Since then, a prolonged war has witnessed a severe ruination drive against Palestinian strongholds in Gaza, which was not denounced by numerous important neighbours such as Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia.

India: The Hindu - Muslim Debacle

In this section the central focus for South Asia is India, a country that has suffered waves of invasion that predate the Christian era. The contemporary battles that India (that is Bharat) are rooted in began in an era of an invasion by Alexandra of Macedonia (referred to by western scholars as Alexandra the Great). In those heady days of history India was, to the travelling adventurists, entrepreneurs and warriors on horseback, as well as sea farers and river bound traders, a center of trade, learning and cultural exchanges. For at least 2000 years the geography of the world was continuously redrawn to capture the territories that dominant forces conquered as they ventured towards India. Around 515 BCE, the Indus Valley region was overrun by the Achaemenid Persian Empire. At least two hundred and twenty years later, Alexandra of Macedonia, around 327 BCE, defeated the Persian Achaemenid Empire and attempted to do the same after his entry into India. He was undoubtedly attracted to India's wealth, as well as its spiritual system that taught and still teaches a philosophy about the realization of eternal peace before death of the human body. However, barely two years later Alexandra moved to Babylon, in 325 BCE, where he died around 12 June 523 BCE. The cause of his death remains a mystery, although it allegedly happened after a night of extravagance and alcohol consumption to celebrate a victory over his opponents there. While many historians paint a picture of Alexandra being militarily successful in India, there are two things that count against this depiction. Firstly, Greek presence in India lasted only two years. No colonizing force after having

conquered a territory, ever gave it back to its ruler only because he had put up a good fight, as one of them described his battle against the Indian leader Porus. Secondly, as Robert Holmes's (2021) analysis suggests another unconventional description of Alexandra's tryst with destiny in India. He and his Greek army had restricted himself only to the Indus Valley River, had seen wealth and sophistication there like they had not seen before, and had recognized that India's system of medical care was more sophisticated than their own in Greece. It is therefore odd that Alexandra gave up one of the most prized areas of capture by his forces, but yet continued to capture what is now modern-day Iran and Iraq.

As Islam consolidated after the seventh century, and had its followers enter into numerous battles with Europeans along this trajectory, contact had already been made with India in the 620s BCE. By 629 BCE, Islam's first mosque, the Cheraman Juma Masjid, outside Arabia, was built in Kodungallur, Kerala (Singh 2016) – under very peaceful and accommodating positions. A hundred years later, by the eighth century, violent Islamic invasions of India began. They began with the Arab conquest of Sindh from 711 to 713 CE, followed by the Umayyad Caliphate, led by Muhammad bin Qasim. Qasim left India by 715 CE, after which Indian Kings fought back to regain their lost territory. In the eighth century alone there at least fourteen invasions into the provinces of Sindh, Punjab and Rajasthan. Infamous names to Hindus such as Mahmud Ghazni in the eleventh century, Bhaktiyar Khelji of the twelfth century – all of whom have become infamously known as the Delhi Sultanate. Their brutal misdeeds have carried over into the generations that followed, remaining as divisive relations between Hindus and Muslims up to the present. The Delhi Sultanate was replaced in 1526 by the Mughal Empire, which was one of the three Muslim 'gunpowder empires', including the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Their rule of the Indian sub-continent continued until the early part of the eighteenth century. At this time, Emperor Akbar proved to be one of the most accommodating among the generally zealous Muslim rulers, who were out to convert Hindus to Islam. Akbar's approach was to be accommodationist through a policy of religious tolerance, to entice Hindus to believe in the fairness of Islamic leadership. Mughal rule reached it zenith by the early 1700s as European domination of India increased, culminating in British domination between 1757 and 1947. It was also seriously challenged in several taxing and costly battles, especially between the Rajput-Mughal wars and the Maratha-Mughal wars. Other battles were on at least two levels. The first is the continuous constriction through imprisonment, of the voices that

challenged British colonial rule, and those who evolved politically to become serious contenders to the British created political party, the Indian National Congress (INC), in which India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi were members. Numerous leaders, among whom Subash Chandra Bose and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar appeared to possess far greater appeal than the INC leaders mentioned above (Bose 2011; Sampath 2019).

India's contemporary situation with peace and security on its borders continues from 1947. By the end of British presence in 1947, India's Hindu majority managed to rid themselves of direct foreign rule. But they continue to battle external forces of the North Americas and in Europe, who remain committed to containing India's rise towards becoming a major global economic player with China (Sharma 2014; Albuquerque and de Lima 2024). If left to its own powers, India's steady growth is aimed at equaling the USA and China in their domination of the global economy. But India's current strategy is to exorcise numerous legislative devices that were set into motion by the outgoing British colonists and the political party that they created i.e. the Indian National Congress (INC). Several core issues, according to J Sai Deepak (2021; 2022) continue to constrain extrication of the Hindu majority through constitutional means, via laws that are asphyxiating towards their faster movement in improved economic performance, education and upward mobility. Among them temple is control by state governments. Huge amounts of cash by devotees is usurped by officials for party-political purposes over service delivery for their state's citizens. Minorities such as Muslims, Sikhs and Jains have greater control than the Hindu majority over their own institutions. The education syllabi, according to J Sai Deepak (2021; 2022) are still controlled by anti-national forces, who are committed to providing biased literature of, for instance, historical accounts of battles and victories between invading forces and indigenous armies. This has a direct bearing upon how people build confidence about themselves from past lessons. Americans continue to fund Pakistan's army who in turn fund 'non-state actors' against India through Jammu and Kashmir. The civilian government in Pakistan is subdued by the army and its intelligence wing: Inter State Intelligence (ISI) services. While Canada supports the secessionist Kalistan movement for the breakaway of Punjab province from mainland India, with tacit support from the USA and Britain, they ironically do not enjoy popular support within that province. The Open Society Foundation, supported by billionaire George Soros, openly flaunts his support for the Kalistan movement and anti-national Muslim organisations that challenge the Indian state.

While there is clearly a wide schism between Hindu and Muslim interests in India, the battles are rooted in the historical episodes of Islamically imposed cultural genocide, forced conversions, temple takeovers and looting, women and children abduction, and murdering of men through beheading – creating mounds out of the cut off heads of their captives and put on display in public spaces. Much of this type of behavior was replayed by Palestinian organization Hamas attackers against Israeli civilians on 7 October 2024.

Europe, Britain and Muslim Migrants

The battle between Europeans and Middle Easterners date back to the medieval period when wars between Christians and Muslims were continually fought over centuries. There are claims and counter claims about Islamic forces taking over Christian owned land, followed by European 'Crusader' forces fighting back to reclaim those territories. The wars, like always, were brutal and still remembered more than a thousand years later. Islamist forces fought valiantly to curb the spread of Christianity cum European expansionism in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. But the fight continued over the centuries, albeit under changing historical circumstances.

Through their oil companies active in various countries, in cahoots with the Americans over the last hundred years or more, Arabian and the Mediterranean countries remained militant about their presence there. In one of the most destabilizing actions by the British in Iran, for instance, the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh's government through the joint collaboration of American and British forces, a level of chaos emerged in 1953 that remains unstoppable. Britain built the oil reserve of Abadan, Iran, which was the biggest in the world at that time. Mossadegh's promise to nationalize it was not acceptable to both Britain and the USA, hence his overthrow, which became widely known as the *28 Mordad coup d'état* (Byrne 2013).

Twenty-first century Britain, and the rest of Europe, are experiencing a significant rise in migration of Muslims from war ravaged Islamic ruled countries, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Sudan. While the intentions were often about filling positions in the both skilled and unskilled sectors in European countries, as communities consolidate in Europe protests and demands for more rights are on a significant increase. In Britain, Muslims are three per cent of the population, but they makeup seventeen percent of their prison population. Much of this has to do with what is infamously called the 'grooming gangs' – appropriated by the White far right

political supporters, especially among the British National Party, after the justice system, police services and social workers services have allegedly failed to stem the problem with grooming. The concept 'grooming' is associated with older men befriending younger White British girls for the sake of sexual favours, sex work and drug sales. While it is not restricted to Muslim men, the idea is being used in Britain to mobilise against the perceived rapid increase in Muslim migration into Britain and the perceived threat of increasing areas of sharia governed localities. David Batty's report on Saturday 2 March 2024 in The Guardian, retraced the history of anti-Muslim fervor in Europe to the early 2000s. His write-up illustrated how the notion of Muslim majority areas in European cities are becoming no-go areas, in a way that is capturing the imaginations of the majority in that continent. Starting off as a fringe belief and settling into the mindset of mainstream conservative politics instigated by a British Torie politician, Paul Scully – the Member of Parliament for Sutton and Cheam in Greater London – later retracted his claim that Tower Hamlets and Sparkhill were unsafe for non-Muslims to enter. The instigation spread to right wing politicians in the USA, Britain, and other parts of Europe that now believe that there is an existential threat to Western civilization because of Islam. An anti-fascist research organization called *'Hope Not Hate'* did a survey among Tory party members. They found that fifty-two percent of the Tories in Britain subscribed to the country becoming unsafe because of the alleged rising tide of Islamic radicalism.

What Batty's account does not cover however, is the organized attacks by hordes of Sikhs, allegedly funded by Pakistan's intelligence agency Inter-State Services (ISI), against Indians and state institutions such as the High Commissions and Consular General premises in the UK, USA and in Canada. Ironically, none of the Kalistani Sikhs have any inclination towards resettling in an independent Sikh homeland in India, and neither is there a popular movement within India for the creation of an independent Sikh homeland they call 'Kalistan'.

In Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden and Demark there are stark contrasts with countries such as Hungary and Poland. The former set of countries, including, Britain, vacillate between having an open-door policy for migrants as opposed to completely shutting them off, depending upon which ideological segment wins elections and forms the next government. But in the latter two countries a policy of total non-acceptance of Muslim migrants, escaping the violence of their respective Middle Eastern countries, have been imposed. Leaders in Hungary and Poland maintain an obtuse determination to

forbid Muslim migrants' entry into their countries, using incidents of violence, rape and radicalism that challenges both state authority and resources and unemployment as, they claim is happening in other European countries.

In Britain, the Labour Party win July 2024 brought about a complete reversal of the Tory party gerrymandering to stop the inflow of Muslims. This led to widespread attacks on mosques and Muslims when rumour spread after a seventeen-year old school boy whose parents were Ethiopian, stabbed and killed three White girls aged 8 and 9 years old. The rumour was that the perpetrator was Muslim. This led to a violent manifestation against Britain's Muslim population, bringing to the fore increasing pent-up feelings about how Islam is likely to dominate and at some time in the future take over the entire country. This sentiment now abounds in other parts of Europe and Scandinavian countries, often urged on by documentaries such as those produced by journalist cum videographer Tommy Robinson. His documentaries are a scathing attack on Muslims throughout Europe, supported by his overt acceptances of other minorities in Europe, such as Jews, Hindus and Sikhs. Common objections against Muslims include wearing out their Social Welfare budgets, lack of understanding and respect for women, rape, criminal and terrorist links and violent activities, religious intolerance, and wearing of the hijab (women black garments that totally cover face and body), and above all these, is the likelihood of each of their countries, from around fifty years hence, becoming predominantly Muslim and Islamic in rule. With between 5 and 10 percent population estimates in each of these countries, and Muslim women having a significantly higher reproduction rate than the negative reproduction rate of European women, that possibility is remains real. The inverse of these objections lie in counter attacks of European countries supporting Israel and the Zionist ideology, which Muslims claim is inherently Islamophobic.

Unless this issue is resolved, the chances of peace will remain stagnant between Europe and Islamic countries.

The USA: Realpolitik and the Waning Confidence in 'Democracy'

After World War II (WWII) the Americans shifted from the concept of capitalism and coined and built upon a new catch phrase that has become an operative currency in 20th century politics: *democracy*. Associated with this concept are persuasive terms such *'freedom of association'* and *'freedom of choice'*. But to what extent have Americans been custodians of these catch

phrases and how have they played out in the world of *realpolitik*? Even at the height of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the Americans were engaging in espionage activities to deliberately effect regime change in numerous countries throughout the world. Iran, as mentioned above was one such example. Otherwise the USA had a policy of 'Preservation of Acquired Influence' (PAI) to deal with friendly dictators who were losing popular support and therefore hardly likely to be of much value to them. Béliveau's (2023) account of this publicly undeclared policy mentioned three countries and their leaders: Batista in Cuba (1956–1959), Mobutu in Zaire (1990–1991), and Mubarak in Egypt (2011). They had a choice of prolonging support for them or abandoning them to avoid direct engagement against who were considered to be unfriendly forces. As Anastasia Somoza Garcia was losing his grip in Nicaragua, then American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, made a lasting and revealing statement about himself and American politics of espionage and interference in the sovereignty of independent countries and about whose leadership they do not approve: *'He may be a son of a bitch, but he is our son of a bitch'*.

It was on 28 July 1945 that Roosevelt himself proposed the creation of the United Nations (UN), in the American Senate, to avoid further wars. By 24 October 1945, 29 countries had ratified the Charter of the United Nations. The UN was therefore a creation of the USA, and how it functioned over ever since illustrated a trade of bias in America's favour. Successive Presidents either continued to abandon or support authoritarian leaderships as they felt the circumstances demanded, often disregarding their own rhetoric and foreign policy positions. For instance, abandonment cases surfaced several times under different Presidents: Cuban President Fulgencio Batista in 1959 by Dwight Eisenhower; President Suharto of Indonesia in 1998 by Bill Clinton; and in 2011 Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak by Obama. On the contrary, American Presidents who courted relationships with dictatorial leaders: George H.W. Bush in the case of Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko in 1990–1991, Barack Obama in the case of Bahrain's Hamad bin isa al-Khalifa in 2011, and Donald Trump in the case of Egyptian Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in 2019. All of these leaders had the reputation of extreme dictators, yet continued to receive the support of American Presidents.

However, more than mere support, a plethora of evidence has accumulated over time by journalists and academics about alleged American interference against governments of countries that refused to act as sycophantic cronies. The war was allegedly against 'communism'. Central to these allega-

tions was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the USA, allegedly assisted by local cartels and politicians. Tim Weiner locates the CIA involvement in narcotics trade to fight against 'communist governments' right from its very inception in 1947. In a periodical called 'COVERT ACTION: INFOR-MATION BULLETIN', he began with the caption: 'CIA and Drugs'. In the first sentence of its Editorial it stated:

> *It is clearly appropriate, once again, to underscore the enormity of the sordid role of the CIA in the world of drug trafficking. As we show in this issue, the CIA has been, from its inception, a major source of opium, heroin, and now crack. Revelations that the planes which fly weapons to the anti-Sandanista contras, in Honduras and Costa Rica, returned filled with drugs, may – if they are allowed to be fully explored – yet shock the conscience of the American people, numbed by a decade of equally incredible revelations.*
> (https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00845R000100170001-8.pdf)

Published in 1987, this issue was only released on 3 June 2010 for public readership. Eighteen other articles followed this Editorial, exposing the clandestine activities of the American administration in developing countries from South America to the Indochina borders. The sentiments in the quoted paragraph above have a resounding resonance in the work by several other writers, including: McCoy (2009) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison having posted his course outline on the web about this challenge (Truong 1987; https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00845R000100170001-8.pdf).

In the internecine wars in Cuba, Nicaragua, Honduras, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq and Afghanistan, among others, American weaponry and ground forces brought about more destruction than victories to themselves. The trajectories in the Ukraine war with Russia and the Gaza war between Israel and Hamas (Palestinian) are repetition of the previous American offenses. In the Ukraine war against the Russians, the Ukrainian army are proxies for an American attempt to contain Russia's rise under Putin. Numerous American intellectuals and researchers have showed up the American double standards practiced ever since WWii. Jeffery Sachs (2024) for instance, provides challenging statements in an article that outlines Putin's 5-time offer for peace, between 2014 and 2024 with the USA and NATO and for a nuclear free

Ukraine. The initiation for peace talks began with the first version of the Minsk Agreement accepting Putin's offer for peace. But it was broken twice, despite President Vladimir Zelensky's tryst with the USA attempting to silence Russia through a claim that *'It is none of Russia's business if Ukraine becomes a member of NATO and places nuclear weapons within its own territory'*. Zelensky and Putin agreed and exchanged signed papers for Ukraine to be nuclear free and non-aligned to NATO. Even though the United Nations Security Council accepted this agreement, Sachs (2024) noted that:

> *U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, following in the tradition of British anti-Russian war-mongering dating back to the Crimean War (1853 – 1956), actually flew to Kiev to warn Zelensky against neutrality and the importance of Ukraine defeating Russia on the battlefield. Sicne that date, Ukraine has lost around 500 000 dead and is on the ropes on the battlefield.*

The broader, unspoken about aims of the USA, is to dismember and split Russia into three parts, in the same way that the Soviet Union was dismembered. A similar attempt is being made by them with India, through their sponsoring of Pakistan's military and intelligence wings. The aim in India is to use Indian agents within the country to dislodge the popularly elected government and dismember the country under the guise of states being too diverse to belong to a singular union. The Kalistani Movement trying the same for the Punjab Province, in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and gradually in Kerala, with the rise of an illegal Muslim Army gathering strength in that province (Malhotra and Neelakandan 2018; Malhotra and Viswanathan 2022). These are, as Sachs (2024) observed, old tactics that were used by the British during the height of colonialism in the nineteenth century. But the practice still prevails. His reminder is noteworthy, that in 1999 the USA bombed Serbia to relinquish Kosovo, and pressured Sudan to do the same with South Sudan, where large deposits of oil exist. Americans have undoubtedly noted their limitations in battle since the 1950s, especially since they were unable to win any of the wars outright, despite the extensive damage they caused against their 'enemy forces'. Their real aim however, is to clearly hold on to hegemonic control of the global economy through whatever means possible, despite the wreck and ruin they cause wherever they interfere. Finishing wars as outright victors in battles are no longer an objective, especially when they leave affected territories in states of perennial chaos, where quests for power by oppositional

forces become functional to their quest for hegemonic control of the global economy. It is in these kinds of situations that the arsenal of USA's toolkit of rhetoric presenting themselves as global peace-makers and defenders of 'the free world' sets itself into motion, persuasively defending itself through the use of globally important print media, social media and television media outlets.

The USA's alleged involvement in dethroning Bangladesh's Prime Minister in July 2024 is another recent case in point. While there is an outright denial by the USA that it did not have any role in the fall of the Sheik Hasina government in Bangladesh, numerous incidents since mid-2022, especially in the role of the USA High Commissioner to Bangladesh, share resonance with the spirit of Weiner's 1987 publication on the CIA's roles in the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*. As reported in the media, Peter Haas, the American High Commissioner in Bangladesh, was challenged numerous times by the ruling party about the time he spent with members of the opposition party. Ironically, at the fall of Bangladesh's Sheik Hasina government, a Pakistani funda-mentalist Sunni group, the Jamaat-e-Ismalia, was at the forefront of the protests that unseated the government. These reports implicitly implicated Pater Haas in a way that recalled memories of America's close relationship with the Afghanistan Administration and their scramble for safety in 2022, leaving behind some eighty billion dollars' worth of military equipment. Henceforth, time will unravel whether the alleged request by the Americans to take control over Bangladesh's jurisdiction of St Martin Island is true or not. The purpose for this request was to train citizens of Myanmar in St. Martin island to agitate, and use iyt as a base to fight against China if ever the need arises. The student protest against the Sheik Hasina government's policy of prolonging the benefits of Bangladesh's veterans of the 1971 war against the Pakistani army, served as an opportune moment to extend the protest against her rule as well. The veteran's family members were also beneficiaries of job reservations and state subsidies. Since she also had most of the opposition party members imprisoned as well, the odds against her were high. After several weeks of protest against these veteran's privileges, the protestors appeared to have turned against her too. Sheik Hasina had to flee to India – the only country at that time that was prepared to grant her asylum. Ironically, the Americans befriended the Chinese to restrict the Japanese during WWii. But the rise of Mao Tse Dung forced the Americans away from China, who chose to lean towards socialist USSR. Once more, as China rises towards the position of super-power, the USA will need all allies, including India and Bangladesh, to contain the Chinese thrust towards sole 'ownership' and control of the South

China Sea. But in the typical colonial style of divide and rule, the USA continues to support Pakistan financially and militarily, as well as supports India militarily through technology collaboration and transfers. Both the latter two countries will continue to fight against each other, while the Americans will continue to play judge and jury about who they think is wrong is right.

Conclusion

Contemporary battles are no longer fought between the worn out Middle Eastern Islamic forces and the post-colonial Europeans. Armies from both areas have tried to hide their hideous crimes against humanity by controlling education systems and literature production for educational purposes. Release of their roles in captured societies are likely to turn large segments of their populations against their very own leaderships. Millions of Muslims are becoming members of 'ex-Muslim Groups', and most of the British no longer classify themselves as Christian. After the bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for instance, the Americans enjoyed a super-power status. However, their clandestine operations in numerous other countries over the last few decades are beginning to force the youth and others to reassess their priorities and loyalty towards their state. A recent survey has shown that the majority of youth no longer trust the American state in international politics. Most of them therefore no longer have that sense of pride in being American. A key reason for this is the greed and misinformation of the Deep State in the affairs of other countries. It is clear that the world is veering towards a multi-polar leadership that refuses to accept the North Americans as eternal forerunners to global politics for the sake of peace and security. American trysts in previous places of battle, such as those recalled above, have besmirched their role as 'leader of the Free World'. While their economic and military might still prevail they no longer have the respect that stood its ground immediately after the Second World War. While China is almost at the stage of super-power status, India is rapidly catching up with both, having transcended the economic performance and military strengths (in several areas) of its last colonial masters: the British. While Jihadists cum Islamists fight against European and American control of their oilfields in the name of Islam, Hindus are reclaiming their religious sites taken over by Muslims during successive brutal invasions over an almost 700-year period. In Africa and among the indigenous populations of the South and North Americas, there are ongoing battles for the resurgence and protection of their languages and indigenous knowledge systems. The fight therefore, as

Huntington avers, is along religio-cultural lines. It is no longer, as he has observed, along political ideological or economic lines alone**.** Huntington's advocacy that the USA must learn to live with the inevitable reality about a multi-polar world leadership, is persuasive and based on realities they are already confronting. Americans will fight hard and unscrupulously to maintain their hegemonic position, supported by the allies in NATO, and the G7 countries. American hegemony is viewed as unscrupulous because their fight against Iraq was a dubious 'search' for the alleged non-existent 'weapons of mass destruction'. In Ukraine, their army is used as proxies against the Russians. Hence, most of the world will grow tired of their being brow beaten and are very likely clubbing up against them through for instance the BRICS nations. But China and India, the most populous countries in the world, continue in BRICS as acrimonious partners, an oxymoron in itself.

Against this wide background of war and chaos, will a multipolar leadership give rise to the elusive concept of 'peace and security' in the world, or will the concept remain an oxymoron?

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The African Diaspora – Development Nexus: Issues and Implications for Africa

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Abstract

Life is a continuous struggle for survival in a world where man is unable to meet all his needs. The same is applicable to nations and continents. The African continent is in dire need of development of all strands. Essentially, the development of any nation or continent is the collective responsibility of all citizens of the nation or continent including those in the diaspora, who are individuals living outside the content. They are in more vantage positions to assist by virtue of their dual experiences, technical know-how, valuable networks and access to significant technology and capital. The African Union is aware of this strategic quality of the diaspora and recognizes it as a 'sixth region' of the African Union, thereby emphasizing its importance to Africa's development trajectory. Positioned as a literature-based conceptual review, the paper employs the transnationalism theory as a theoretical framework for analyzing how leveraging the contributions of the Diasporas can transform Africa. However, the paper contends that much as the importance of their contributions to the development of Africa cannot be overemphasized, most African governments have not adequately mobilized their citizens in the diaspora for their country's development. This paper therefore recommends that African leaders should create the enabling environment for the mobilization of the Diasporas for homeland development.

Keywords: African, Diaspora, Development, Enabling Environment, Mobilization

Odoziobodo Severus Ifeanyi & Nwaokoroeze Chinonye

1 Introduction

Development is the attainment of a condition in which citizens of a nation can access the minimum requirements for an enhanced living standard. It is the ultimate desire of any nation that wants to improve the material conditions of its people. It is also one of the most important issues in the governance of any nation and it is highly discussed in academic discourses. Ii is a determining factor in the categorization of nations of the world, hence, nations of the world are grouped into developed, developing and underdeveloped. In the contemporary international system, development not only determines a nation's material prosperity but also its capacity to assert itself politically, economically and diplomatically. For most African nations, the quest for development is especially critical due to history of colonization, exploitative economic structures, governance deficits, and socio-political instability. Ake (1996) states that post-independence Africa has grappled with persistent challenges ranging from poverty and unemployment to technological backwardness and fragile state institutions. These are conditions that are antithetical to the development of a nation.

In any case, Africa continues to strive to become developed with a view to improving the material conditions of its citizens. Numerous efforts have been made at various levels both nationally and internationally to address issues mitigating Africa's development, and several strategies have been devised to achieve this but one strategy worth exploring is the mobilization of Africans in diaspora for the much needed development of African nations due to the vantage positions they are occupying which affords them the opportunity to play critical roles in Africa's development.

Africans in the diaspora are many and come from different countries of the continent. They reside across Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Asia and Latin America. These individuals are not only economically productive members of their host societies but also possess a wealth of knowledge, skills, technological exposure, and access to global networks. According to the African Union (2020), the diaspora is the 'sixth region' of Africa, with the potential to contribute significantly to the continent's economic and social transformation.

This paper not only explores how Africans overseas can contribute to Africa's development trajectory but also the downsides of their contribution. It also looks at the continent's developmental challenges and ways of overcoming them. It is the contention of this paper that should the Diasporas be adequately

mobilized through the provision of enabling policies, they can turn round the development fortunes of Africa. They have been positioned to act as important bridges between Africa and the developed world through economic contributions, innovation, political engagements and institution-building, But they must be uniquely leveraged upon by leaders of African nations, development institutions and the Diaspora community itself to achieve this transformative role for Africa's development.

2 Theoretical Framework

Transnationalism theory is adopted as a framework for the analysis of this paper. Transnationalism theory made its debut in the late twentieth century following the work of Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Lanc in their pioneering book, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (1994). This work prepared and watered the ground for transnationalism which they defined as 'the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement' (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994). Their work countered the claims made by classical migration theories that migration gradually but eventually separates migrants from their countries of origin permanently. Transnationalism theory argues that migrants never sever links or ties with their countries of origin as they continue to relate with both their home and host countries in various ways. Transnationalism theory views migrants as people with dual and often times, multiple identities, experiences, loyalties and networks which are used positively for both the host and home countries. Migrants therefore act as bridges between their home and host countries.

The theory was further amplified by the works of other scholars such as Steven Vertovec (1999; 2004) who highlighted the economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions of transnationalism. Vertovec maintains that transnationalism is about the entrenched cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, and institutions that bring about development outcomes in both sending and receiving countries. The outputs of transnationalism among other things include remittances, knowledge and skill transfers, research collaborations, business investments, political participation, and social remapping of identities, etc.

The deployment of transnationalism theory is appropriate in analyzing the role of diaspora in development as it views migrants as active participants

in development efforts of two countries, their home and host countries rather than passive victims of displacement or contributors to the 'brain drain' Syndrome. By virtue of their dual engagements, migrants facilitate the flow of financial capital, human capital, technology, and ideas to their countries of origin (Faist 2000) and at the same time, contribute to the development of their host countries by the work they do and the tax they pay. This perspective is in tandem with contemporary development thinking that recognizes migration as a potential catalyst for growth, innovation, and institutional change.

Transnationalism theory is very relevant in analyzing this paper because it provides understanding on how Africans in the diaspora contribute to the development of the continent through remittances, skills transfer, entrepreneurial ventures, advocacy, institutional partnerships and research collaborations, etc. The African Diasporas are in the vantage position of having acquired advanced technological knowledge, skills and even capital which they willingly transfer to Africa not minding that they reside overseas. They also have access to global markets and professional networks, all of which are needed for Africa's transformation; they give out all these for Africa's development (Adepoju 2008).

Again, Transnationalism theory also discusses the role of states and institutions in promoting or abetting diaspora engagement. While the diaspora may be favourably disposed to assist in their homeland development, the role of the state cannot be overemphasized as supportive government roles through policies, trust-building mechanisms, and institutional frameworks can make or mar their developmental impact (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). Thus, the theory not only analyses and explains diaspora–development nexus but also offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing cross-border connections, migrant agency, and the development potential of sustained transnational engagements.

3 Africans in the Diaspora

Diaspora notion is not a new phenomenon as it has been discussed in antiquity in relation to the dispersal of the Greek and Jewish people after the destruction of the Temple and the annexation of Judea by Romans. Diasporas can be defined as 'national migrant communities living in interaction among themselves and with their country of origin' (Assogba 2002). Diaspora generally refers to the movement of people away from their original countries to other nations. Reasons for moving away from one's country of origin can be

varied but the important thing is that one moves away to other countries and still clings unto the country of origin tenaciously, in the sense that the feeling of being a member of the country of origin is not forgotten irrespective of whatever happens or whatever one becomes in the new country. It is in this sense that the African Union defines the African Diasporas as all 'people of African origin living outside of the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality, and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union' (African Union). Some of the Diasporas may no longer have connections with their lands of origins, but in their innermost heart and actions, they still remember and act in favour of their lands of origin.

The notion of diaspora in Africa is traced to the forced evacuation of African people to other countries occasioned by the Transatlantic Slave Trade (16th - 19th century). Shepperson (1966) describes this phenomenon as the dispersal of Africans in all countries of the globe due, firstly to slavery, then colonization and again on one's own free will. Palmer (2000) also sees the African diaspora from this angle of international dispersion of African people to various parts of the world originating from the transatlantic slave trade. In any case, the diaspora phenomenon is today intertwined with migration; it has both economic and political dynamics and is shaping development in all countries of the world including Africa. However, the African experience of it started with forced migration.

Despite the fact that the African diaspora phenomenon started with slavery, it has endured and has been transformed and is being seen from the vantage point of a common identity of Africans residing in other countries of the world. They are now being seen as a community. For Cohen (1997), despite being scattered across multiple territories, the African diaspora constitutes a community of people who have retained a sense of common identity and homeland. This situates the diaspora in terms of shared consciousness. The implication is that diasporic identity is not only about geographic dispersal but also about cultural memory, solidarity, and collective identity tied to Africa, (Cohen 1977).

Africans in the diaspora continue to exhibit cultural, linguistic, and spiritual connections to their African ancestry, Asante (2008). From an Afrocentric perspective, traditional, cultural, linguistic, political and economic ties are important issues in the discussion of the African diaspora phenomenon. This is because there is need for cultural continuity and identity maintenance as the diaspora serve as the living repository of African traditions and values

even in foreign environments. Tölölyan (1996) describes Diasporas, as people emerging from displacement from their lands of origin but yet remain connected to a homeland through emotional, cultural, and political ties.

Nevertheless, Africans in the diaspora can be categorized into three main groups, each identified by the period they left Africa to other countries of the world. The pioneer African Diasporas, also known as historical Diasporas, were those forced out of Africa due to the Transatlantic Slave Trade between the 16th and the 17th century. There is need to differentiate this set of African diaspora from other Africans who moved to Europe or America on their own accord in the 1960s. This is essentially because the Africans forced into migration as a result of slavery blended more into local populations and most of them lost connections with their lands of origin. They see Africa as their place of origin; many no longer know which countries of Africa they originated from. However, they may have lost contact with their lands of origin but they still know they are Africans symbolically. To this extent, many of them love Africa and are ever ready to assist Africa. Some of them are antagonistic to Africans, anyway. Again, part of African Diasporas in the period ranging from the 15th century up until 1960 migrated to Europe as a result of Africa's encounter with colonialism and the colonial labour policy which gave them the opportunity to migrate to, and settle in Europe thereby becoming Diasporas. Therefore, there are many African Diasporas in several countries of Europe who belong to the older generation of African Diasporas who were not affected by the slave trade.

The second group of African Diasporas were Africans who migrated to settle in other countries especially the colonialist countries. This was occasioned by the conducive atmosphere for migration created by colonial contact. After the independence of many African countries, there arose strong economic and cultural ties between the colonialist countries and members of the colonized countries of Africa enabling many Africans to migrate to Europe; and others, to America on their own, mainly for educational advancement and improvement of living conditions. This situation enabled many to settle in these countries thereby forming diaspora communities. This period can be classified as a period of 'voluntary migration'.

The aftermath of independence brought much trouble to the African continent as most countries then began to experience self- rule with the attendant struggles for political power leading to party formations which occasioned cleavages and conflicts of various dimensions. Succession to power brought election with electoral violence and political persecutions as

aftermaths. Bad leadership brought about corruption and mismanagement of the economy, all leading to hardship and poverty which occasioned disenchantment with the living standards in many African countries. This led many Africans to migrate out of Africa. Beginning from the 1980's, many Africans left the continent as a result of State failures, wars, hopeless poverty or political persecution, (Adepoju 2005). The African Diasporas of this period can be classified as the third African Diaspora group.

Currently, Africa is rated as one continent that has a large number of her citizens in the Diaspora. Their numerical strength, value and contributions to their host countries are such that cannot be ignored when searching for resources and strategies for Africa's development in today's contemporary world. Many nations of Africa are already mobilizing them for the development of their countries while some are dragging their feet.

Table illustrating African Diaspora Population Estimates

S/No.	Country	Estimated Population (M)
1.	Brazil	108.2
2.	United States	46.4
3.	Haiti	11.0
4.	Dominican Republic	8.5
5.	Mexico	6.3
6.	Venezuela	5.8
7.	Colombia	4.9
8.	France	4.4
9.	Cuba	4.0
10.	United Kingdom	3.3
11.	Jamaica	2.9
12.	Ecuador	1.3
13.	Canada	1.2
14.	Trinidad and Tobago	0.8

Source: TELL Communications Ltd. (2024, October 19). *The African diaspora: Over 350 million strong, a global force reshaping culture, economy, and identity*.
TELL Magazine. https://tell.ng/the-african-diaspora-over-350-million-strong-a-global-force-reshaping-culture-economy-and-identity/

4   What the African Diasporas are Capable of Doing and Are Doing in Africa's Development

The African diaspora is a politically relevant actor capable of influencing both host and home countries through advocacy, remittances, and cultural diplomacy. The following are some of the contributions Africans in the diaspora are capable of making and some are already playing these roles in Africa's development.

4.1   *Economic Contribution*

The African diaspora has much economic power which is reflected through remittances; this consistently outpace official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) in several African countries. However, beyond remittances, the diaspora's economic roles are broad and transformative as discussed below:

Remittances: Diaspora communities send billions of dollars annually to Africa, and these often serve as lifelines for families and also contribute to national economies. Many African families are sustained back home by the money sent by their relations overseas. Without the financial intervention of the Diasporas, a greater percentage of African youths will be out of school. The same is applicable to the sick. The money sent by Africans in the diaspora helps in paying the medical bills of their relations back home. They also send money for community development such as hospitals, schools, etc.

Investment and Entrepreneurship: Many diaspora members are engaged in business ventures across the continent, investing in sectors such as agriculture, technology, real estate, and renewable energy. They enjoy the advantage of two world experiences as well as capital at their disposal more than those in Africa. This gives them the latitude of taking risks as well as trying their ideas on innovative ventures. As a result, some industries have been established in many African countries through the instrumentality of the Diasporas.

It can be authoritatively said that the contributions of African Diasporas in areas of finance, entrepreneurship, and human-capital development are fueling Africa's growth as remittances now exceed other external flows, diaspora-led investment fosters innovation and infrastructure, and returning professionals transfer skills and knowledge to local economies (Anyanwu &

Gnimassoun 2019; World Economic Forum 2024).

Diaspora Bonds and Funds: Many capital intensive projects have been carried out in Africa through diaspora bonds and funds created by some African governments. African governments realized that the diaspora have the capacity to raise fund and in order to do that, they try to create innovative financial instruments which target diaspora investors .The funds generated are utilized in financing infrastructure development projects. For example, the government of Ethiopia issued a 'Millennium Corporate Bond' worth about $56 million and which targeted Ethiopians at home/abroad through the state-owned power company. This helped to fund the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) (Xinhua 2018). Also in 2017, Nigeria raised $300 million via its 2017 diaspora bond to support infrastructure development (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission [NIPC] 2017).

Trade Facilitation: The Diasporas are people of more than two world experiences; having been in Africa and now in other countries of the world, they have the opportunity of knowing both the African and international markets. In terms of trade, they can market African products especially raw materials and others to those who need them overseas. Equally, they can also market overseas goods to Africa nations. They are therefore capable of turning around Africa's business fortunes by marketing African products, including engaging in cultural exports and agribusiness, etc.

4.2   Knowledge and Skills Transfer

Many Africans went overseas in quest of the Golden Fleece. They studied professional courses and are today working as professionals in their host coun-tries with their advanced and sophisticated technologies. They are exposed to current knowledge in science and technology. Some other Africans working overseas acquired skills which gave them the impetus to work. Together with the intellectuals, they possess vast and relevant knowledge that can signifi-cantly impact youth development in Africa. The Diasporas can offer mentoring in digital technology, virtual workshop; they can also engage in collaborative research with African intellectuals, share experiences in technological inno-vations, entrepreneurship and leadership (Adeoye 2022). Knowledge and skill transfer foster creativity and employability as well as accelerated economic growth. When all these happen, African youths become empowered.

Digital mentorship, online learning platforms, exchange programs and learning innovation hubs should be established to strengthen the connectivity between African Diasporas and African youth. The essence is to create a channel through which professionals abroad can share expertise in technology, entrepreneurship, and research with the youth in Africa (World Bank 2021). Essentially, knowledge and skill transfers from the diaspora to young Africans perform the strategic role of bridging global and local knowledge gaps, which hinder youth development in Africa. When this gap is filled, young Africans are empowered to become key drivers of sustainable development, youth empowerment, and stronger socio-economic ties between Africa and its diaspora are built(African Union Commission & OECD 2020). By connecting diaspora networks, Africa can transform its youth into drivers of progress and innovation (African Development Bank 2022).

Professional Expertise: As mentioned above, many Africans became diasporas in a bid to become professionals and having achieved that, they work overseas and are now in a position to use their professional expertise for the good of Africa by contributing to Africa's development through direct services and provision of professional expertise in their relevant sectors like health, education, engineering, and governance (World Bank 2021). By so doing, Africans in the diaspora contribute to the development of human capital; they also promote entrepreneurship, and accelerate sustainable growth across the continent (African Union Commission & OECD 2020).

Mentorship and Coaching: African Diasporas also assist the continent's development through mentorship by which they transfer knowledge, infuse the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship in Africans. It is important to note that in order to fit into the system and become productive, many Africans overseas had to learn one skill or the other and today they are providing various assistance to their relations back home through guidance and connections to professional networks from where they are exposed to global perspectives on various enterprises. By so doing, they are helping to bridge the continent's skills and opportunity gaps (Adebayo 2021). Virtual mentorship and collaboration are tools through which Africans in the diaspora are contributing to human capital development and institutional strengthening in Africa (African Union 2020). They may not come home to physically teach their fellow Africans but by the aid of virtuals, they can impart knowledge on those back home. Therefore, instead of being losses to Africa – 'brain drain', their

assistance have become 'brain gain' to the continent and are promoting sustainable growth and inclusive development across sectors of the African economy (Okonjo-Iweala 2022). We can therefore say that by virtue of the advanced knowledge and skills they gained in foreign lands, the Diasporas can and do mentor young African entrepreneurs, academics, and civil servants through formal and informal channels.

Academic and Research Partnerships: There are partnerships and collaborations taking place between African diaspora academics and home-based scholars. This no doubt, can significantly advance Africa's development. Having acquired advanced knowledge and working in foreign universities and industries; and being willing to assist, the Diasporas engage in collaborative initiatives with African universities to expand research output, curriculum reform, and faculty development. This is already taking place in many African higher institutions.

There are areas of comparative advantage between Diaspora academics and local researchers. While diaspora academics can provide global expertise, mentorship, and access to funding networks, local researchers can provide contextual understanding and indigenous knowledge (Tebeje 2020). When they combine, innovation in education, technology, and policy are fostered to address challenges like climate change and health inequities, etc. (Mohamoud 2018). Today such initiatives like the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program exists to demonstrate how brain circulation replaces brain drain and how higher education and research ecosystems are being strengthened by the Diasporas (Carnegie Corporation of New York 2022). This is Pan-African solidarity in action aimed at promoting sustainable growth from within and beyond the African continent.

Technology Transfer: One area where the assistance of Africans in the diaspora is needed very urgently is in the area of technology transfer to home communities. Without technology, Africa's development will take time to happen or may not come too easy. Africa does not have modern technology but they have Africans in the diaspora who have acquired much of it and who are making waves in Europe and America by their accomplishments. Diaspora engagement in technology transfer is capable of accelerating the introduction of digital tools, platforms, and innovations which can help Africa leapfrog development hurdles in health tech, fintech, and edtech, etc.

This initiative can be achieved through collaborative innovation hubs,

digital platforms, and diaspora-led mentorship programs. It is recommended that Governments of African nations and institutions create the enabling environments by ways of policies which encourage diaspora investment in technology startups and research partnerships (Akinwale 2020). In order to bridge the skill gaps and foster sustainable development in Africa, knowledge exchange networks must be established (Ndemo & Weiss 2017). Equally, Africa must leverage remittances for technology-driven projects which can promote inclusive growth. Again, trust and connectivity between diaspora professionals and local innovators must be strengthened to ensure mutual benefit so as to empower Africa's technological ecosystem and drive socio-economic transformation (Mavhunga 2017).

4.3 Advocacy and Representation

Africans in the diaspora are capable of bringing about Africa's development through advocacy and representation routed through strategic pathways such as policy advocacy, image-building, civic engagement and political representation, as well as support for African causes.

Being citizens of two worlds; the Pan African council notes that African Diaspora communities can leverage policy advocacy by influencing both host-country and home-country decision-making. They are in a position to reach out to their foreign colleagues to make changes in certain laws, policies and regulations that affect Africa; they are also capable of causing members of their host countries change their perceptions about Africa. They can also influence pro-Africa policies which are for the advancement of the continent., Pan-African Council (n.d) The African Union's Diaspora Division also underlines the fact that the diaspora should be mobilized and encouraged to participate in the building and transforming the African continent (The Africa Union (2005).

The Diasporas being ambassadors of Africa in whatever country they are, are also in a position to polish the image of Africa and change the negative narratives and perceptions about Africa through image-building to their host countries. By promoting African heritage, culture and enterprise abroad, they help shift long-standing stereotypes and attract investment or tourism for Africa. For example, diaspora networks are being used to reconnect globally with Africa not merely as a donor-recipient relationship, but as partnership-driven, first-among-equals collaboration.

4.4 African Union

In the realm of civic engagement and political representation, diaspora members can serve as bridge-voices linking African concerns with global platforms. They can engage in electoral politics, run for offices their host countries, lobby for African-friendly legislations in host countries, or assume advisory roles in home-country governance. Some Africans are engaged in party politics and stand for election overseas. Some Africans have won elections and are members of parliaments in some oversea countries. Being in fora where legislations are made on sundry issues including those pertaining to Africa, they cannot but lobby and win good legislations on issues that advance Africa's development. This representation strengthens accountability, participation and ensures diaspora interests align with African development goals.

Lastly, diaspora involvement in support for African causes through remittances, investment, knowledge-transfer and philanthropic initiatives serves as an engine of growth beyond traditional aid flows. For instance, migration and diaspora engagement are recognized by the African Development Bank and International Organization for Migration as key elements in converting human mobility into development outcomes (African Development Bank 2018).

Summarily, when Africans in the diaspora mobilize their resources, influence and networks towards policy advocacy, image-building, civic engagement and political representation as well as support for African causes, they become stakeholders in an Africa-owned development agenda rather than peripheral contributors.

5 Challenges Facing Diaspora Engagement in Africa

Much as the Diasporas have the capacity and capability to assist in Africa's development in various ways, there are impediments to this imperative.

5.1 Policy and Institutional Gaps

Experiences over the years have shown that engagement of the African diaspora in Africa's transformation is a desideratum, yet, policy and institutional gaps have bedeviled the initiative. Challenges such as lack of coherent diaspora engagement policies, weak institutional capacity and fragmented coordination continue to make a mess of the efforts by the Diasporas and international donor agencies. Except for few African countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana

and Kenya, many other African countries lack coordinated diaspora engage-ment policies. Where there is any, they fail to integrate existing ones into their national development frameworks with the resultant effect of fragmented and short-term initiatives (EUDiF 2021). Again, most leaderships of African countries lack the political will to factor in the Diasporas into their develop-ment agenda for fear of hijacking their country's leadership. They therefore stave agencies they create for diaspora engagement of funds and efficient manpower (ICMPD 2021).

Added to the above issues is the manifest absence of trust between the home governments and the diaspora communities. The Diasporas are wary of bureaucratic bottleneck, corruption and inefficiencies as well as weak legal protections for any investment back home (ALN Academy 2023). As a result, they are discouraged from investing in the economic, political, educational and social development of the homelands. Coupled with all the above-mentioned challenges, there is no reliable data about the numerical strength of the Diasporas and their capacities and capabilities which would inform the home government of areas where the Diasporas can assist in Africa's development (NIDCOM 2024).

There is therefore, an urgent need for reforms that will foster *policy coherence*, institutional strengthening, and transparent governance frame-works so as to assure the Diasporas of protection while engaging in Africa's development. Without these reforms, Africa risks underutilizing a critical development resource capable of driving multiple goodies – innovation, investment, and knowledge transfer for the continent.

5.2 Political and Governance Challenges

The Diasporas despite their known potentials- financial and intellectual contributions, are continuously neglected in national planning processes there-by making them feel marginalized. Again, they are not accorded the degree of recognition due to them in the governance of the country. Till date, they are not yet allowed to vote in their countries' election which is one of the democratic rights of every citizen of a nation.

Certain inadequacies of government in Africa such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and impunity of leaders which translates to lack of application of the rule of law in dealing with citizens impede diaspora engagement; this also discourages diaspora investment and participation (Ratha & Plaza 2020). Policy somersault is another factor which discourages

the diaspora from engagement with Africa as unclear policies and restrictive regulations limit opportunities for diaspora-led entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer. Such governance gaps undermine trust and reduce the willingness of skilled professionals abroad from collaborating with local institutions (African Union 2022).

Moreover, in many African countries, political instability and unstable leadership transitions disrupt long-term development initiatives. Political instability which brings about frequent policy changes in addition to lack of accountability - the hallmark of most African governments make it difficult for diaspora investors to predict and manage risks (Mohamoud 2019). Experiences of corrupt practices which lead to diversion of resources from productive projects make the diaspora skeptical about the effectiveness of governance systems (Transparency International 2023).

To address these challenges, African governments need to strengthen transparency, ensure policy consistency, and establish diaspora engagement frameworks. By promoting good governance and accountability, the continent can better harness the diaspora's potential for sustainable development.

The greatest impediment to diaspora engagement with Africa's development is *insecurity*. African Diasporas are afraid of engaging, even traveling or returning to Africa due to security challenges ranging from wars, terrorism, conflicts, banditry, kidnaping and impunity of leaders in most regions of Africa. Diasporas value their lives, and even though, they would want to participate in ventures aimed at the development of the continent, once they remember that their safety is not guaranteed, they develop cold feet and distance themselves from participating and engagement.

5.3 Economic and Investment Barriers

Diaspora engagement in Africa's development is often hampered by economic and investment barriers with lack of favourable investment environment as a major obstacle. Major characteristics of the obstacles which discourage the Diasporas mostly include but not limited to bureaucratic red tape, weak property rights, inconsistent tax and unfavorable legal frameworks (Cadremit 2024). Investing in Africa at all is a risk but is more complicated by a combination of complex administrative procedures and corruption; these issues discourage Diasporas from investing in any productive venture in Africa.

The absence of reliable diaspora financial contribution instruments such as diaspora bonds, pooled funds, or specialized investment platforms

make it difficult for diaspora contribution to Africa's development. This lacuna restricts structured participation of African Diasporas in local development (Brookings Institution 2023). This is because means of contributing funds to development programmes and projects in the absence of these instruments disrupts their contribution.

Foreign policy strategies for financial engagements pose critical challenges to diaspora investors in Africa. There are disparities in exchange rates, limitations on profit for transferred funds as well as currency instability. They increase transaction costs and deter long-term engagement of the diaspora in Africa's development (Business Day 2024). In all, these constraints disrupt the transformative potential of diaspora capital.

To counter the debilitating effects of these hindrances, African governments need to carry out institutional reforms deliberately aimed at strengthening investment governance. They also need to develop reliable and secure diaspora financial instruments; liberalize exchange regimes and foster trust so as to sustain diaspora participation in Africa's development.

5.4 Social and Psychological Factors

Social and psychological dynamics significantly determine the extent to which the African diaspora engages in the continent's development. *Lack of trust* between diaspora members and local institutions mars diaspora engagement in Africa's development due to personal and shared experiences of encounter with corruption, mismanagement, and opaque governance structures which more often than not, discourage diaspora investment and collaboration (Moyo 2018). For fear of misuse and outright loss, many Diasporas prefer to direct their efforts elsewhere.

Third- and second-generation diaspora members suffer identity crisis which act as impediment to their contribution to Africa's development. Because they are not deep rooted in African culture and tradition due to their partial origins, there is identity disconnect, whereby generations born or raised abroad are perceived as having weakened emotional ties to their ancestral homelands making them become detached from African affairs. It therefore limits their inclination to participate in developmental initiatives or to repatriate skills and resources (Adepoju 2020).

Another barrier to diaspora engagement in Africa's development is the brain drain versus brain gain tension which bring confusion between those who left Africa in quest of greener pastures and those still in Africa. While

migration often robs Africa of her skilled workforce, the potential for brain gain—through remittances, knowledge transfer, and transnational networks—remains underutilized (Docquier & Rapoport 2019). Persistent socio-political instability and limited institutional support prevent effective mobilization of diaspora expertise.

Therefore, there is need to integrate every African overseas into the diaspora community so that they are made to contribute to Africa's development. This can be done by addressing these social and psychological barriers through trust-building, inclusive identity frameworks, and enabling policies for the transformation of Africa's diaspora from a distant observer into an active developmental partner.

5.5   Inadequate Communication and Outreach Mechanisms

Inadequate communication and outreach mechanism continue to act as hindrances to effective diaspora engagement in Africa's development. As a result of *inadequate diaspora mapping,* many States of Africa lose out in harvesting the potentials of their Diasporas. This limits governments' and institutions' ability to design targeted policies and initiatives. Many governments of Africa lack comprehensive diaspora databases, making it difficult to identify and mobilize skilled professionals abroad. Lack of information deprives people who are interested to invest in Africa of what is available and where it can be found. It also hinders collaboration between Africans overseas and their brothers back home.

Communication channels are important in the dissemination of information. Most governments lack clear channels of information flow to and from their Diasporas. They also lack adequate knowledge of *who is who and who is what and who is where* among their Diasporas. As a result of lack of reliable and current data on diaspora professionals, many governments are always at a loss on how to locate her professionals overseas. Most times, they rely on outdated or fragmented systems to reach their Diasporas, leading to inconsistent and inefficient information flow (Kifle & Desta 2020). There is therefore need for robust digital platforms or coordinated communication channels to reach potential diaspora contributors to Africa's development priorities. There is also need to channel information on Africa's development priorities to the Diasporas for engagement.

Opportunities for both African governments and diaspora professionals on capacities and capabilities towards solving Africa's development

challenges abound, but visibility of opportunities on both sides are lacking, thereby denying Africa diaspora engagements in Africa development. For instance, investment opportunities, development programs, and partnership schemes targeting the diaspora are often not widely publicized, thereby having minimal participation (World Bank 2022). The resultant effect is that professsional and skilled African Diasporas lack reliable entry points for engagement in economic transformation of the continent. Addressing these communication barriers requires data-driven outreach strategies, enhanced digital engagements, and proactive information sharing to strengthen diaspora–homeland relations and unlock Africa's full development potential.

5.6   *Legal and Citizenship Barriers*

Inability to accommodate Diaspora Africans with dual citizenship deprives many African countries of development inputs of their Diasporas just as ambiguous legal status do. Unclear and confusing rules about status, property ownership, voting rights or residency issues have combined to deprive some African states of the contributions of their citizens in the diaspora. Situations have made many Africans have dual citizenship and what does it remove an African country according dual citizenship to such Africans in so far as they contribute to Africa's development. If one is not accorded his rightful status in a country he belongs, he may not have the moral obligation to contribute to its development by means of investment (Ratha 2011).

Some legal issues pertaining to ownership of properties or business registration as well as bureaucratic bottleneck discourage some Diasporas from engagement in Africa's economic development (The Habari Network 2020). Equally, the same barriers hinder Africa from harvesting the dividends of African professional services, capital, skills and networks. In order to tap from the potentials of its diaspora, African governments must reform its legal frameworks to accommodate inclusive citizenship (Ratha 2011; The Habari Network 2020).

5.7   *Limited Engagement Platforms*

The contributions of information and communication technology to the development of the world today cannot be overemphasized. It has made the world a global village. It has brought about the creation of multiple platforms from where people get information about the world and in particular, things

they cherish and what concerns them most. The absence of diaspora networks between Africa and her diasporas as well as among the diasporas, have made many Africans at home and in the diaspora to be excluded from useful information that would have aided the development of the continent.

Many countries of Africa have not harnessed their diaspora into formal associations that can relate officially with her governments and institutions. This has significantly hampered any meaningful relation with its government. In this contemporary age when digital and institutional linkages, networks, collaborative efforts on investment, knowledge transfer and policy advocacy are tools with which Diasporas are engaging with her people, any country that fails to mobilize its diaspora into associations and the likes, risks abandonment of her diaspora. It is a demonstrated fact that diaspora networks are boosted by reliable connectivity and structured platforms which enable transnational cooperation (Meyer 2022). It is important that regional digital frameworks and inclusive policies that foster innovation and socioeconomic growth across the continent are strengthened for the sake of Africa's development trajectory (Adepoju & Moyo 2023).

5.8 *Limited Inclusion of Women and Youth in the Diaspora*

Today, there is a growing recognition of the role of African Diasporas in driving development in Africa, yet women and youth seem not to be included seriously in these engagements. There are structural barriers, such as gender bias, unequal access to resources, and limited representation in policymaking, which marginalize women and youths (Adebayo 2022).

With a restless, innovative and budging youth population, Africa stands to gain tremendously from the innovative and vibrant ideas of her youth. Youth and women are known for their genuine contribution of innovative ideas, skills and investments, yet they have a number of challenges in influencing development agendas in Africa (Okeke 2023). This is because strategies that ensure equitable participation of women and youth in many African diaspora programs are not factored into institutional frameworks (African Union 2021).

Strengthening inclusive policies and creating targeted initiatives that empower women and young people could significantly enhance Africa's socio-economic transformation. Their inclusion would not only foster diversity in decision-making but also promote sustainable and inclusive development across the continent (Nwosu & Diallo 2024).

6   Potential Downsides of Diaspora Engagement in Africa's Development

In discussing African diaspora - development nexus, it is important to point out that much as the role of the diaspora in the development of Africa is celebrated, there is need to be wary of this initiative because of its obvious negative consequences if not controlled. In this case, there is need to interrogate the potential downsides of sustained cross-border engagements. While diaspora engagements in Africa is capable of maintaining social, economic, and political ties across national boundaries (Basch *et al.* 1994), there are implicit structural tensions and contradictions that may undermine development outcomes in Africa.

An obvious downside of remittance to Africa from the diaspora is the potential dependency syndrome associated with it. Remittances from the diaspora has been the Diasporas' most obvious contribution to Africa's development so far. This has to a great extent, provided household income to many African families and even communities and generally, provided foreign exchange which has boosted the growth of the African economy. Today in many countries of Africa, the risk of remittance dependency is an economic reality. Experts warn that while remittances are a central feature of transnational economic practices, excessive reliance on them may weaken domestic productive capacity and reduce state accountability in development financing (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). A situation could arise whereby families and communities instead of making individual and collective efforts to better their lots economically, may idly wait for funds from their brothers and sisters overseas. This has the tendency of weakening incentives for domestic productivity and employment creation. Again, overdependence on diaspora inflows could expose African economies to external shocks arising from economic downturns in host countries.

In Africa, social networks based on kinship, ethnicity, or locality determine transnational practices such as remittances, investments, and philanthropic activities. This implies that diaspora engagements are unevenly distributed. The implication is that diaspora engagements in Africa bring about unequal development outcomes. This is another major downside of diaspora engagement as it makes distribution of transnational resources to be unevenly distributed**.** In this sense, Faist (2000) notes that transnational social spaces are inherently selective. The implication is that benefits tend to accrue to specific communities rather than the broader national population. This selective distri-

bution of diaspora inflows has the tendency of deepening regional and socio-economic inequalities, thereby, contradicting inclusive development goals.

Another downside of diaspora engagement in Africa's development is their contribution to political tensions and legitimacy challenges. Transnationalism encourages diaspora participation in home country politics and Diasporas often try to influence government processes and policies through funding and distant mobilization. With enormous resources including funds and networks at their disposal, there is the possibility of creating political polarization and fueling conflict dynamics in many fragile states of Africa. Such engagement may generate legitimacy and accountability concerns (Vertovec 2004). This forms part of the reason for the mutual mistrust between the diaspora and the home government which makes most African governments display nonchalant attitude towards mobilization of the diaspora for homeland development. In actual fact, there are situations where diaspora groups have been implicated in fueling political instability in their countries of origin. There are cases where they have helped in financing the overthrow of the home government.

In recent times, migration which used to be the common cause of brain drain is being looked upon in migration studies as the precursor of brain gain. This is because of the perceived positive impact of brain circulation occasioned by migration. Transnationalism theory contends that migrants do contribute knowledge and skill virtually but empirical evidences abound to demonstrate that in many cases, such knowledge and skills transferred virtually do not endure in the long run. Therefore, there is a limit to which transnational knowledge transfer can go, Virtual or short-term engagements often fail to offset the long-term effects of brain drain (Adepoju 2008) especially in the health, education, and engineering sectors. Today, Africa continues to experience the shortage of skilled professionals in key sectors such as health and education, revealing the limits of transnational knowledge transfer.

Despite the perceived contributions of transnational engagements to Africa's development, institutional weakness in many African states continues to constrain the developmental impact of transnational engagements. Trans-nationalism makes no pretense of the fact that cross-border practices operate within broader political and institutional contexts (Basch *et al.* 1994). This is a fact that diaspora engagement cannot change. Therefore, the impact of political and institutional environments will continue to affect the development of a nation despite diaspora engagements. Where governance is weak, diaspora initiatives may be adversely affected by policy somersault, corruption, and

political instability, leading to mistrust and disengagement. In such contexts, transnational ties may reproduce rather than resolve structural development challenges.

Finally, authenticity or being oneself is important in life. Unfortunately diaspora engagement in Africa can bring about the reproduction of overseas initiatives that do not align with the continent's values, culture and tradition. This is one area where diaspora engagement poses great danger to Africa, namely, reproduction of external dependency. In attempts to assist in Africa's development, the diaspora could give the condition that their initiatives must meet global standard, in which case they must follow Western development models that are inimical to African social, cultural and institutional contexts. This is antithetical to local ownership, indigenous knowledge systems, and grassroots development initiatives.

Conclusively, much as diaspora engagement in Africa's development, is capable of transforming Africa significantly, it has the disadvantage of undermining Africa's authentic development. Therefore, there is need to be cautious in mobilizing the diaspora for Africa's development. They should not be allowed to give conditions that are not favourable to Africa. Effective diaspora mobilization must be rooted in strong African institutions and value systems; participatory development frameworks, and policies that marry external contributions with internal capacity-building so as to achieve sustainable and equitable development outcome.

7 Way Forward in Africa/ African Diaspora Engagement

The following are expected to be done in order to maximize Africa diaspora engagement in Africa's development.

7.1 *Strengthening Institutional Frameworks*

Institutional frameworks are strategies meant for the actualization of certain objectives. There are strategies already created for diaspora relations. In order to pursue diaspora engagement in Africa's development robustly, ministries or agencies dedicated to coordinate diaspora networks should be given clear mandates and resources to streamline investment processes, and ensure accountability in development projects (Adebayo 2021). When this is done, the continent will experience increased remittances and knowledge transfer (World Bank 2022) which are things needed for Africa's transformation. For

instance (Mengistu 2020), noted that Ethiopia's Diaspora Directorate has enhanced investment participation through transparent policy mechanisms.

Again, strengthening institutional framework means carrying out reforms where necessary. This creates trust and encourage long-term partnerships between Diasporas and home countries. The African Union reiterates that strengthening governance structures not only mobilizes financial resources but also unlocks human capital essential for sustainable growth across Africa (African Union 2023).

7.2 Leveraging Technology and Digital Platforms

Knowledge transfer including technology and skill transfers is one of the strategies which can engender Africa's transformation faster and the tool for its achievement is the creation of digital platforms like the Africa Diaspora Network. All these enable knowledge exchange, mentorship, and investment (Adepoju 2022). African governments should key into current digital technologies like the use of online platforms and social media to connect diaspora members with development projects in Africa. The essence is to enhance communication, collaboration, contribution and real-time impact monitoring.

The World Bank believes that fintech innovations and crowd funding apps, are applications through which Diasporas contribute directly to local enterprises and social projects (World Bank 2023). Again, virtual knowledge hubs including virtual conferences and e-learning platforms enhance collaboration between experts abroad and institutions at home (UNDP 2021). Digital tools bridge physical distances and foster partnerships, promote innovation, and amplify Africa's global voice, thereby transforming remittances into sustainable development capital (OECD 2022).

African governments should also create portals for skills exchange, entrepreneurship training, and mentorship programs for interactive engagement between the young Africans back home and their countries' diaspora communities. When these initiatives are pursued vigorously with mandates to institutions created for them, Africa will begin to see the dividends of technology and digital platforms in her development efforts.

7.3 Facilitating Investment and Entrepreneurship

One of the ways through which the diaspora can foster development faster in Africa is by mobilizing diaspora communities to invest in entrepreneurship

(AUC 2024). The African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) set an example by launching the 'Streamlining Diaspora Engagement to Catalyze Private Investments and Entrepreneurship for Enhanced Resilience'. This is an initiative aimed at mobilizing the human and financial capital of African Diasporas across eight countries, explicitly targeting entrepreneurship and private-sector investment (AfDB *et al.* 2023). Creating programmes that enable pathways for Diasporas to invest, transfer skills, and partner with local actors is capable of accelerating sustainable growth, especially by empowering youth, women and rural communities (AfDB & AUC 2023).

By engaging diaspora effectively, they will not just remit money to Africa passively but they will be involved in entrepreneur-led ventures, which makes them provide both capital and expertise while reinforcing local ecosystems. Creating an enabling environment through policy frameworks, financial tools and diaspora networks is a key strategy to link diaspora investment and entrepreneurship to Africa's broader development agenda (EAC 2023). In this direction, countries of Africa need to create and develop innovative financial instruments like diaspora bonds and investment funds tailored at diaspora investors to channel remittances and savings into productive sectors like agriculture, technology, infrastructure, and Small and Medium Enterprises, SMEs.

African governments should create the enabling business environ-ments for their Diasporas by implementing tax reforms, waivers, grants, and business facilitation services to encourage diaspora entrepreneurs to invest or out rightly relocate their businesses back to Africa. These are ways of encouraging the diaspora to invest in Africa.

7.4 Skills Transfer and Capacity Building

One thing that orchestrates development in a nation is the quality of its manpower. Africa is blessed with a budging youth population. Incidentally most of these youth lack the necessary skills that make for productive growth. Africans in the diaspora possess these kinds of skills and they are gainfully employed, working in advanced countries contributing to their host counties' economy. They, therefore represents a vast reservoir of expertise, innovation, and financial capital that can strengthen Africa's human resource base (Adepoju 2021). Through planned and coordinated initiatives such as mentor-ship programs, academic exchanges, and digital collaboration platforms,

African diaspora professionals can contribute to enhancing local institutional capacities and fostering technological innovation (Moyo & Osei 2020).

Again, Africans in the diaspora can effectively transfer skills to those in Africa through virtual platforms. When this is done, there is promotion of knowledge circulation rather than brain drain. This creates a mutually beneficial relationship between African nations and their diaspora communities (World Bank 2022). African governments can invest in skills development by fostering partnerships with her diaspora. Governments of Africa must invest in skills development engendered through diaspora transfer and mentorship. Governments must deliberately make policies aimed at facilitating diaspora participation in national capacity-building strategies. Doing all the above will make African governments achieve inclusive growth, self-reliance and long-term socioeconomic transformation.

7.5 Harnessing Cultural Diplomacy and Advocacy

The diaspora can significantly contribute to the development of Africa through harnessing cultural diplomacy and advocacy. They can promote African heritage, values, and innovation abroad, Being Africa's ambassadors, diaspora communities are capable of reshaping global perceptions and attract partnerships for the continent's growth (Nye 2004). Through advocacy, they can attract investments, support educational exchanges, and foster international cooperation and linkages.

Moreover, cultural diplomacy uses soft power to enhance Africa's influence in trade and global policy making (Snow & Cull 2020). The diaspora can also use transnational networks to bridge cultural and economic divides and thus position Africa as a hub of creativity, opportunity, and resilience.

7.6 Promoting Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Engagement

Gender disparity is a reality that has continued to rob Africa of the potential inputs of women in development. It is a situation whereby women are not factored into decision making because of the belief that they are meant to be seen and not to be heard but this has become otiose as globalization is concerned. Today, women count much in development discussions and are forces to reckon with in developed countries of the world. Women including African women are occupying very sensitive and important positions that are capable of transforming Africa significantly. Therefore, in trying to attract

development to Africa, inputs of both men and women must be taken into consideration. Both genders must be mobilized.

Therefore, African governments must harness the development potentials of her womenfolk by organizing those of them in the diaspora into a community of their own so as to tap from their different resources. By forming them into a community, they will feel important and will work hard to contribute their quotas as women to Africa's development.

Apart from gender sensitivity, another potential human resources that must be mobilized for the transformation of Africa is the youth who are the 'greater tomorrow'; they are vibrant and innovative than old men who are spent forces. When knowledge and skill transfers as well as mentorship are recommended for Africa's development, the youth are the people being referred to. The question that needs to be answered is: when the youth are excluded from the development processes and programmes, who will take over the mantle of leadership tomorrow? The answer is that Africa cannot neglect her greatest development asset.

Inclusivity encompassing gender sensitivity and youth mobilization among the African diaspora is a key to the acceleration of Africa's progress toward equity, prosperity, and resilience. When diaspora communities mobilize both male and females as well as youth, they mobilize resources and knowledge that empower women and marginalized groups, thereby driving innovation and socio-economic growth (UN Women 2023). Inclusivity must also be extended to development networks as this encourages equitable participation in decision-making and promotes diverse perspectives that shape Africa's transformation agendas holistically (Adeleke 2022).

To harness the full spectrum of talents and perspectives for Africa's transformation, African governments should be interested in mobilizing the totality of their Diaspora, both male and female, youth and the elderly. This is to say that they should ensure that diaspora engagement strategies are inclusive of women, youth, and marginalized groups.

7.7   *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research*

Efforts at Africa's development must be coordinated and must be intermittently monitored and evaluated so as to assess the extent of implementation of planned programmes and the success achieved so far, as well as challenges being encountered. For diaspora contribution to Africa's development to be successful, targets must be set, time frames determined and instruments for

implementation mapped out. All these steps must be monitored and evaluated.

There must also be follow-up action and continuous research for better results. This is because Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research (MER) are very important instruments in all facets of life. For advancement in whatever man does, he needs to monitor what he does, evaluate progress made so far and carry out more research on the way forward. The same is applicable for a coordinated Africa diaspora engagement in Africa's development. There is need for systematic monitoring of programs engagement of Diasporas in investments and knowledge transfers so as to track progress and ensure accountability (Moyo 2021). Evaluation helps in assessing the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting sustainable growth and innovation.

The essence of research is to identify best practices and emerging opportunities which enables data-driven policy decisions (Adebayo & Smith 2022). A better way through which African governments and development partners can achieve accountability, transparency and also attract diaspora trust to amplify socio-economic transformation across sectors such as education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, etc is by carrying out monitoring and evaluation of their efforts in knowledge transfer, mentorship, investment and entrepreneurship, etc. (Kane 2023).

Conclusion

The socio-economic and cultural development of the African continent is a collective responsibility of all members of the continent including those overseas. This paper explores the roles which Africans in diaspora play in Africa's transformation. Apart from financial support, they assist the continent in areas of investment and entrepreneurship; knowledge and skills transfer as well as in advocacy and innovations. They also link Africa to the world through fostering partnerships and collaborations which are intended to strengthen local institutions and drive sustainable growth. Through these measures, the diaspora also markets African potentials to the world. They represent Africa in international platforms and networks where they lend their voices to issues pertaining to Africa and also try to influence policies on Africa and shape narratives which polish the image of Africa against the distortions and misrepresentations of Africa's traducers.

The paper discovers some challenges to diaspora engagement in Africa's development but proffers improvement strategies. However, much as the diaspora can, and do play these laudable roles in Africa's development, they

cannot be moved to action without efficient and effective collaboration between African governments and the diaspora communities. The diaspora needs to be deliberately harnessed and mobilized in order to play these roles. African governments also need to create the enabling environments which can motivate the diaspora to play their roles effectively. Nevertheless, it is the finding of this research that while a few African governments have made efforts to mobilize their diaspora, many are yet to wake up from their existential slumber with regard to mobilizing their Diasporas for Africa's development.

Africa's development cannot be achieved by the efforts of only those resident in Africa, the African diaspora remains an indispensable force for progress, unity, and transformation and they need to be sufficiently mobilized for this all important role.

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Glass Artivism: Protest, Upcycling, and the Art of Cutting through the Injustices of Gender-based Violence

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Abstract

Despite high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, existing interventions often struggle due to social stigma, lack of sustained funding, and insufficient community-level programmes to shift entrenched social norms. This article explores how glass artivism can serve as a dual tool for public awareness and environmental sustainability. By focusing on upcycled glass art, this article employs an ecofeminist framework to analyse how the intersections of gender and environment can discursively challenge patriarchal dynamics and make silenced issues visible. Transforming waste through upcycling into artworks encourages transformative, critical thought about waste in relation to the thematic content of the art. Three case studies are presented: Saarah Begg's *From Waste to Worship* (2024), Caitlin Greenberg's *Echoes of Silence* (2023), and Abeer Al-Najjar's *Diaphanous* (2021; 2022). The findings demonstrate that these works leverage the mutable and symbolic qualities of glass to materialise suppressed truths and confront injustice.

Keywords: Artivism, community cohesion, ecofeminism, GBV, glass art, South Africa

Looking through the Window

The central problem addressed in this article is the pervasive nature of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, necessitating innovative, sustained approaches beyond mere awareness campaigns (Mkwananzi & Nathane-Taulela 2024: 1, 8). GBV encompasses diverse forms of violence – sexual, physical, psychological, and economic, impacting men and women (including cis, trans, and non-binary), and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Underreporting remains a crucial challenge due to stigma, fear, and systemic barriers.

Despite the high levels of GBV, many people touched by violence are silenced as traditional interventions lack concrete action despite a plethora of legislation and policies (Mkwananzi & Nathane-Taulela 2024: 5). Power imbalances, precarious employment conditions, and deeply ingrained sexist cultural norms contribute to the normalisation and silencing of GBV. Key themes in GBV are the intimidatory range of GBV-related acts (on a continuum from everyday sexism to criminal acts) (Kelly 1987) and the fear of retaliation that often prevents victims from speaking out (Buscatto *et al.* 2025: 2, 3).

Glass is particularly relevant because of its unique properties: it can take on any colour (representing diverse cultures), it is fragile (emphasising the vulnerability of victims), it can be dangerous (suggesting the perpetrator), and it can exist as both a solid and a fluid (suggesting an openness to solutions). Furthermore, upcycling glass creates a direct link between the disposability of materials in a capitalist waste culture and the systemic devaluation of women's lives, an alignment central to ecofeminist theory.

Art, by its nature, transforms complex social issues into personal and physical experiences, inspiring reflection and potential action by giving voice to data (Stetz 2023: 192). Govender and Moodley (2025: 22) define artivism as 'protesting artistically or arts used as a form of protest'. Glass artivism is uniquely positioned for this intersectional discussion because of the material's specific properties: it can take on any colour (representing diverse cultures), it is fragile (emphasising the vulnerability of victims), it can be dangerous (suggesting the perpetrator), and it can exist as both a solid and a fluid (suggesting an openness to solutions). Employing a case study methodology appropriate for developing a deep understanding of complex issues, this article aims to address two key research questions through a critical and interpretive ecofeminist analysis: How does upcycled glass art function as a tool for protest or education, and what critical contributions does it make to discourse surrounding GBV and ecofeminism? and, What kind of discursive or social

consciousness outcomes are evident in glass artivism practice?

Glass artivism is a convergence of art, activism, and sustainability that offers a lens through which to address pressing social and environmental issues. This practice leverages the unique material properties of glass to echo eco-social messages and inspire political action. In a context like South Africa, where GBV persists at high levels, existing interventions against this social injustice (Enaifoghe, Dlelana, Durokifa & Dlamini 2021: 125) often struggle against social stigma, lack of sustained funding, and insufficient community-level programmes to shift entrenched social norms (Mkwananzi & Nathane-Taulela 2024: 1, 8). This article focuses on how glass artivism can serve as a vital tool for public awareness, encourage recycling, promote community cohesion, and stimulate critical thought about GBV, particularly through the creative process of upcycling waste into meaningful artwork.

Art made from recycled materials can be put to many uses. It can mitigate waste accumulation, promote environmental sustainability, and drive socio-cultural change (Asamoah, Adom, Kquofi & Nyadu-Addo 2022: 50). Recycled art enhances environmental aesthetics and encourages innovative repurposing of waste (Fayoumi 2024: 140; Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 31).

Artists redefine waste as an expressive and symbolic material, gene-rating economic opportunities by involving local waste pickers and recycling cooperatives (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 32). The Waste Not Want Not project in Johannesburg, led by Tamzyn Botha, created a library of waste items sourced from self-organised reclaimers and offered the waste items for use by invited residency artists and a community youth art programme, while successfully provoking library visitors to see waste as a creative resource (Botha & Iqani 2024: 2).

Artists working with waste explore issues of sustainability and ethics when creating artworks, embracing the 'plasticity and uncertainty' of materials like recycled glass (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 11). The global glass art community is increasingly engaging with climate action, responsible consump-tion, and sustainability, while asking overlooked pertinent questions such as how to reconcile the high energy consumption of glass furnaces with a commitment to environmental sustainability (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 4). This global engagement with ethical responsibilities highlights that material sustainability is an important consideration for contemporary art glass practice (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 13). Overall, upcycled glass, used by visual artists, is a sustainable material choice that reduces waste and conserves natural resources, offering a tangible way to engage with environmental issues in this

era in which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment (Fayoumi 2024: 146).

Gathering Shards for Upcycling

A literature review indicates that GBV is a global issue and is addressed by politicising art-based responses. South Africa has a rich history of politicised protest art, known as struggle and resistance art, which served as an instrument of change against the apartheid regime (Pauwels 2022: 124). Protest art is a component of artivism, connects diverse disciplines, and conveys ideas about global issues such as equity. Rather than learning oriented towards specific disciplines, a case can be made for a globally oriented and issue-based learning approach to achieve an equitable and fair society (Stein & Murungi 2025). Through an issue-based learning approach, art can build global competency in communicating ideas and taking action (Stein & Murungi 2025; *Asamoah et al.* 2022).

In *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992) coined the term kyriarchy (a social system of intersecting and interlocking hierarchies of domination, oppression, and submission), which she derived from the Greek words *kyrios* (lord or master) and *archein* (to rule or dominate) while seeking to redefine the analytic category of patriarchy in terms of its many intersecting structures of domination (Ferguson 2014: para. 9). Using the kyriarchy is 'prismatic', drawing in systems like the patriarchy and shifting the focus from single-axis-based systems.

Using glass art as a protest tool aligns with broader initiatives such as Australian artist Sam Bowker's 2021 *Metaphors in Broken Glass* exhibition in Lebanon, which used 'blast glass' salvaged from Beirut homes to reflect on trauma and accountability (Bowker 2021: 86):

> Broken glass is fragile, fast, loud, and dangerous, but it can be salvaged, recycled, and repurposed. It offers an unconventional lens to reflect on trauma, resilience, recovery, and accountability. […] Visitors enter a room that contains a low plinth, covered in broken window glass from the streets of Beirut, collected by Ibrahim Ammar from the Live, Love, Recycle initiative. This not-for-profit agency salvaged the 'blast glass' from within people's homes to create vessels – known as *ibriq* – for drinking water, olive oil, and wine, each hand blown.

The Bowker exhibition featured the mutable potential of any glass, even the 'blast glass' from the war-torn streets of Beirut. From this glass broken by war, 'symbolic vessels [were made] which had been re-formed in Beirut but broken again in transit', offering a metaphor for rebuilding after disaster and the ongoing cycle of trauma and renewal (Bowker 2021: 86). The *Metaphors in Broken Glass* project exemplifies how contemporary upcycled glass art can be used for social critique beyond merely beautiful objects.

Highlighting the material's symbolic potential, Irish artist Sophie Longwill (2023) notes, glass is a paradigm for womanhood, which is constantly prismatic and reflecting reflections. Longwill's *Let's Hook Up* series directly confronts abortion, sexual inequality, and sexual assault through life-size, paper-thin glass lingerie sculptures, providing a platform for creative expression and drawing on her personal experiences with GBV in Ireland (Longwill 2023). She works with glass because glass enhances underlying artistic concepts by being 'fragile yet dangerous, solid yet fluid, transparent yet opaque' (Longwill 2023):

> [Glass], with all its conflicting narratives and expectations, could be viewed as a paradigm for womanhood. It has an emotive quality that accentuates the powerful underlying messages presented in its artistic use.

The active outcome of Longwill's (2023) glass lingerie sculptural work creates a safe space for dialogue around sexual inequality and GBV, facilitates personal catharsis and collective connection among women, and leads to a visible unburdening of shared experiences:

> As [Longwill] opened up about her personal experiences, the women around [her], including family, friends, and complete strangers, came to join with their stories. It was heartbreaking to realise that this too, carrying the burden of these experiences, was a part of everyday life as a woman for so many. However, it was heartening to experience the connections formed, the tears shed, and the weight lifted. These pieces became a way to start the conversation.

Glass' symbolic potential to stimulate dialogue is also explored in Karen Donnellan and Suzanne Peck's *Blow Harder* project, which uses the language of the glass hot shop to challenge male-dominated power dynamics and in-

grained misogyny. Donnellan and Peck's *Blow Harder: Language Gender and Sexuality in the Glass Blowing Studio* research project grew from a 2017 lecture of the same name. The project is an example of self-reflexivity of glass artists. Irish artist Donnellan and American artist Peck tackle deep-seated issues within the glass art community, using the language and culture of the glass hot shop as their medium for critique (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 6). The artefact of their project is the *Sex Positive Lexicon Poster* that challenges the male-dominated power dynamics and ingrained misogyny prevalent in glass hot shops by proposing alternative, inclusive 'neutral', 'feminist', and 'high-brow' alternative terminologies to traditional glassblowing jargon (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 6). The artists use humour as political activism, demonstrating that challenging 'indoctrinated misogyny is no soft act' (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 6).

By transforming and reshaping the spoken word within the glass community, Donnellan and Peck highlight the 'mutable potential' of language to expose and then rebuild a more equitable space, demonstrating that glass can also be a vehicle for profound social commentary. The poster acquisition by the Corning Museum of Glass and its viral presence on TikTok underscore its significant impact and reach within and beyond the glass art world (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 17).

The 2022 Power of Glass Conference in Scotland drew artists worldwide who use glass to explore social and political narratives to actively challenge existing biases and advocate for inclusive environments, including diversity, identity, representation, and gender equality (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 4). The conference was held to celebrate the Year of Glass and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Rothwell & Kelly 2023: 5). The agenda provides pathways to action through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. The goals are a global call to action to end violence against women and protect the planet (among other goals) (UN 2015).

A recent example of protest against a lack of intersectionality and erasure occurred during the #RhodesMustFall protests. In 2016, at the University of Cape Town, the transgender activist group TransCollective staged a protest against the lack of inclusion of trans issues in the *Echoing Voices From Within* exhibition that explored racism, patriarchy, and whiteness (Pauwels 2022: 123). The protest highlighted that single-issue protests are not intersectional, and the dismissal of trans concerns diminishes the trans people's humanity. The protest resulted in the closure of the exhibition.

During the protest, placards were placed on top of artworks as a meta-narrative with statements such as:

'We are saying down with faux inclusivity – please make it clear that we are not welcome here', 'RMF [#RhodesMustFall] will never tokenise our presence as if they ever treasured us as part of the movement', 'We will no longer tolerate the complicity of black cis womxn in our erasure', and 'The transwomen who build RMF are not part of this exhibition' (Pauwels 2022: 123).

Several performance artists have used glass to confront GBV and systemic oppression, transforming deeply personal experiences into public statements. Yann Marussich's *Cutting Edge* (2017) uses broken glass to evoke the suffering of human existence (Birinci 2023: 4).

Marussich portrays humanity as a 'prisoner in a painful world' by entering a bathtub full of broken glass (Birinci 2023: 4). More directly addressing GBV, Ana Mendieta's *Glass on Body Imprints* (1972) responded to the rape and murder of a girl (Birinci 2023: 5). Mendieta soaked her own body in animal blood and performed against a glass partition, recreating the victim's poses in front of an audience. The visceral and confrontational experience made violence against women visible (Birinci 2023: 5). Anna Mlasowsky's *4 Feet Apart* (2020) demonstrates how glass can symbolise breaking free from oppressive constraints using glass rods attached to dancers' backs that break as they attempt to interact, freeing them to embrace (Birinci 2023: 5). In *Chorus of One* (2016 - 2018), Mlasowsky uses unbreakable Rhino glass to create a protective cloak (Birinci 2023: 5), using metaphor to make the need for protection against violence visible. These examples highlight how the mutable and symbolic qualities of glass can directly engage with, protest, and transform narratives of GBV and oppression, making silenced issues visible and confrontable.

Art offers opportunities to communicate complex ideas in a medium accessible to a wide audience, helps inform and educate about environmental and social problems, and proposes new ways for sustainability and co-existence. Art transforms complex ideas about issues into something that can resonate with the personal and inspire empathy, motivating physical action. Artistic expressions and personal narratives are tools for exploring social and environmental changes, capable of transforming complex issues on both a personal and physical level. Children who grow up near places of environmental transformation are influenced by ethical and moral discussions that motivate personal change and activate cultural shifts (Craven 2025: 35). Similar influence can occur within a transforming social environment that engages issues of GBV.

Art and arts-based therapeutic methods have proven effective in addressing GBV (Woollett *et al.* 2023: 3). In South Africa, arts-based methods in violence research enable participants to articulate difficult or previously unspoken experiences, providing a 'safe space' for personal storytelling, particularly in low-resource settings (Longwill 2023; Woollett *et al.* 2023). The safe and engaging space that art creates for dialogue about challenging topics empowers traumatised women to connect with each other and unburden themselves (Longwill 2023). Regular art therapy supports young people with emotional regulation in contexts of ecological crisis, domestic violence, abuse, and neglect, building resilience and emotional capacity for action (Wardle 2025: 30). Parents and carers are also offered art therapy to support parenting skills and develop an understanding of their children's needs (Wardle 2025: 30). The materials and images used in art therapy sessions can address and contain complex and multifaceted feelings about GBV (Woollett *et al.* 2023: 4).

Artivism is defined as an organic relationship between art and activism, primarily aiming for social change. Art is uniquely suited to activism:

> Art can adopt any particular form and channel a process of transformation, becoming socially relevant and, what is more important, [can open up] the possibility for translating specific responses in a wide array of contexts and situations (Castellano 2020: 438).

Art often has a subversive character, critiquing the perpetrators of GBV and sometimes silencing collaborative, democratic projects that seek to empower stigmatised individuals and communities in art histories (Castellano 2020: 438). Artivism can amplify marginalised voices and challenge injustice, it can transform experiences into political agency and expression, and it can provide tools or instruments for change, 'particularly for those whose body was or still is a site of stigma and violence' (Martins & Campos 2023: 234). The use of the body in art is a potent symbol of resistance and struggle, particularly as it is the visible target of GBV.

Mythmaking is considered a crucial creative and theoretical strategy for shaping and defining localised artistic practices, enabling artists and scholars to envision new possibilities for the categories they invent through their work (Sidogi & Greenberg 2024: 37). Storytelling and myth are linked, with myths serving as 'constructs' that operate as mediating symbols that enable individuals to perceive and share a common understanding of reality

(Sidogi & Greenberg 2024: 31). Through strategic 'counter-mythmaking', glass artivism can suggest a common understanding essential in creating a collective challenge to environmental and social injustices by mythologising the silence surrounding GBV and biodiversity.

Upcycled art plays a crucial role in raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainability (Fayoumi 2024: 138). Both key issues are at the centre of ecofeminism. Artists working with recycled materials prompt viewers to question the sustainability and ecological impact of human activity (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 34). Artists often express despair about the current state of the environment and make statements about current culture by transforming waste into aesthetically pleasing installations that enhance environmental aesthetics and serve as potent sensitisation tools (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 34, 45). Art has the capacity to evoke emotions, cultivate empathy, and promote self-reflection about complex environmental changes, offering a universal language that articulates complex multi-sensorial universal messages and making the messages accessible to a wider audience (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 50).

Despite increasing public discourse and awareness, GBV often re-mains taboo across many cultures and even at medical facilities. Artists' voices are silenced if their art addresses topics about which the art industry maintains a taboo. For example, current feminist scholarship and activism against GBV often marginalise the voices and experiences of violence of black trans women, necessitating more nuanced and inclusive constructions of GBV (Buscatto, Karttunen & Provansal 2025: 20; Shabalala & Wessenaar 2023: 60).

A significant concern in the South African glass art community is the persistent dominance of white artists (Sidogi & Greenberg 2024: 30). The white-centric structure of early pioneers of studio glass persists, resulting in a disproportionate number of white artists making glass art, despite efforts to be inclusive (Sidogi & Greenberg 2024: 30). This prevalence of white artists perpetuates the misconception that glass art is a 'whites-only endeavour', which hinders glass art development (Sidogi & Greenberg 2024: 36). In order to amplify the voices of more diverse artists, Sidogi and Greenberg (2024: 30) recommend that scholars and artists should challenge and transform the South African and broader African glass art industry by embracing 'local lexicons and positionalities'. By including diverse voices, the glass art industry can address GBV-related issues in an inclusive, relevant, and collective way.

This article contributes to the threefold gap left for shifting entrenched social norms by existing GBV interventions: social stigma, lack of sustained funding, and insufficient community-level programmes. The article proposes

glass artivism as a sustained and sustainable approach to raising public awareness, giving voice to silenced experiences of GBV, and activating social change concerning GBV. This article also highlights the limited research on upcycled glass art's contribution to environmental issues through pollution reduction and community empowerment through waste reclamation in contexts like South Africa.

Refracted Perspectives: Ecofeminism and Glass Art

The theories that guided this research project were ecofeminism and intersectionality. Ecofeminism emerged from the intersections of feminist research and various movements for social justice and environmental health. As a framework, ecofeminism helps understand how artists use their practice to critique existing social arrangements and to envision sustainable futures.

In her foundational work on intersectionality, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex', Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) theorises that experiences of discrimination are compounded at the convergence of intersected issues. Later, in 'Ecofeminism revisited', Greta Gaard (2011: 28) articulates how ecofeminism emerged 'from the intersections of feminist research and the various movements for social justice and environmental health, explorations that uncovered the linked oppressions of gender, ecology, race, species, and nation'. These foundational perspectives are crucial for understanding how artistic practices can challenge deeply entrenched intersected systemic issues. This article draws on these foundations to explore the intersections of violence directed at the environment and at people.

Feminist curatorial strategies are crucial for addressing real-world sexual violence through museums, challenging patriarchal and colonial representations, and moving beyond mere display to actively addressing the perpetration of sexual violence against women (Perry & Krasny 2022: 7). Perry and Krasny (2022: 2) argue that:

> A meaningful distinction must be made between historical museums, which may identify sexual violence as a factual historical event and art museums' tendency to treat the content of images of sexual violence as secondary or even irrelevant to their status as artworks.

The ecofeminism framework has the potential to expose such dismissive strategies with its systemic focus. Ecofeminism analyses how gendered expe-

riences intersect with environmental degradation, connecting the degradation of nature with the oppression of women (Iqani & Knoetze 2017). Environmental justice is intrinsically linked to economic justice, and a new economic model is necessary (Panneels 2019: 2). A new economic model suggests strategies of linking individualised, subjective experiences to the broader systems that create those experiences. The goal of ecofeminism is to challenge and transform interconnected systems of oppression – patriarchy, capitalism, and ecological exploitation – by linking the liberation of women with the care and liberation of the environment (Gaard 2011). In this way, the context (eco-social) and its inhabitants (biodiversity) can be acknowledged and heard.

Ecofeminists call for embracing a model that, at its core, reclaims already used resources and protects biodiversity as a treasure, delinking hierarchies of 'worthiness' from all forms of life. Used as a framework, ecofeminism helps in understanding how artists use their practice to critique existing social arrangements and envision alternative futures. Younger generations can be developed through artmaking to become change-makers who manifest sustainable alternatives. Children 'need to use the creative tools at their fingertips with a responsible understanding about how the world works and how they can change it' (Stein & Murungi 2025) for intergenerational benefit and resource sustainability.

In glass artivism, ecofeminism is particularly relevant when considering women reclaiming domestic materials (like glass) for reuse. Taken a step further, the act of reclaiming becomes upcycling, transforming discarded glass objects into art. Symbolically, the glass object embodies a reclamation, turning materials often associated with consumption, waste, or even the hidden realities of domestic life into symbols of resilience and renewal.

Glass' 'mutability' challenges the utilitarian origins of glass objects and offers a chance 'for a better understanding of the societies that used them' (Chinni, Silvestri & Verità 2023: 663). Artists imbue their art with a purpose that can be read for understanding the social context from which the artworks spring. Saarah Begg (2024) describes this process as an 'alchemy of fire and intention, [where her glass] beads are imbued with a sense of purpose, their once-haram essence transmuted into something inherently halaal-permissible and pure'. Through this alchemy, waste glass undergoes numerous processes that ultimately result in a sacred artwork. Applying the concept of the mutability of everyday objects becoming conduits of cultural meaning through alchemy means conceiving that everyday sexisms are many and part of a larger system – a continuum.

In 'The Continuum of Sexual Violence', Liz Kelly (1987: 47) crucially conceptualises GBV as a continuum – ranging from everyday sexism to criminal offences like rape. This continuum is not an accumulation of isolated incidents; rather, the incidents form an integrated whole in which they reinforce each other as a pattern embedded in professional and cultural hierarchies (Kelly 1987: 48). Similarly, artworks that address GBV are an accumulation that reveal embedded patterns. Kelly's (1987) continuum of violence can be symbolically reflected in the endless recyclability of glass.

The ecofeminist framework allows an examination of how glass artivism can disrupt these dynamics, give agency to victims, and make these often-silenced issues visible and confrontable (Stetz 2023: 192). Feminism, and by association, ecofeminism, leaves interpretation and critical reflection to the viewer, which is 'a feminist method to destabilise power hierarchies' (Minillo & Harman 2025: 1489). By leaving interpretation to the viewer, the democratic and reflective viewer-artwork interaction disrupts dominant, often patriarchal or capitalist, power dynamics that try to fix meaning and control understanding (Doane, McCormick & Sorce 2017: 120).

Analysing Specific Shards

A qualitative case study methodology (Yin 2003) helped develop a deep understanding of glass artivism within its real-life context.

The three artists, Saarah Begg, Caitlin Greenberg, and Abeer Al-Najjar, were purposively selected based on three criteria:1) materiality, specifically the upcycling of waste, 2) thematic alignment with GBV, and 3) cross-contextual perspective, showing glass artivism as a universal mechanism that transcends borders.

The artworks were analysed through a critical ecofeminist lens. Using this lens, the physical transformation of glass (the 'alchemy' of upcycling) mirrors the social transformation required: relinquish the perceived disposability of women that makes them vulnerable to GBV and reclaim women as valued.

Saarah Begg: Environmental Justice is Social Justice

Saarah Begg is a young artist (b. 1997) of Cape Malay/ Indian descent. Her work *From Waste to Worship* (2024) (Figure 1), was a finalist in the 2024 Sasol New Signatures Art Competition. Her practice centres on an 'alchemy of fire and intention', where she transforms 'humble' discarded beer bottles (symbols

of 'indulgence and excess') into sacred *tasbih* (prayer beads). This laborious process involves crushing the bottles and melting the glass into rods to form delicate beads that retain the 'imprint of its former identity', effectively reclaiming value from what is often dismissed in a capitalist waste culture.

Figure 1: Saarah Begg, *From Waste to Worship* (2024). 34 cm x 4 cm, flameworked beer bottles (Image: Saarah Begg 2025)

Analytically, Begg's project embodies an ecofeminist critique of consumerist culture, linking ecological responsibility to spiritual value while challenging the 'throwaway culture' inherent in many patriarchal economic systems. Ultimately, *From Waste to Worship* serves as a call to action, encouraging

viewers to reconsider their relationship with the world and find beauty:

> As these beads are strung together to form a *tasbih*, or prayer beads, they take on a deeper significance. No longer mere remnants of a forgotten past, they become conduits for contemplation and devotion. Each bead represents a prayer, a moment of reflection, a step on the path towards spiritual enlightenment. But *From Waste to Worship* is more than just a physical transformation; it is a call to action. It challenges us to reconsider our relationship with the world around us, to see potential where others see waste, and to find beauty in the unlikeliest of places. It is a reminder that even the most ordinary objects can be infused with meaning and purpose, if only we are willing to look beyond the surface.

Caitlin Greenberg: The Personal is Universal

Caitlin Greenberg (b. 1987) is a South African white female artist and academic. Her practice is informed by her earlier research into the manifestations of the 'shadow' and the cultural trauma associated with serial killers who target women.

Her installation *Echoes of Silence* (2023) employs blown glass and mixed media alongside a superimposed soundscape of 'colliding' women's voices to make the invisible trauma of GBV tangible. The glassblowing process itself acts as a metaphor for reclaiming one's voice, as expelling breath into molten glass transforms formlessness into a materialised agency. The resulting delicate, pressurised spheres and glass scars hold memory, serving as a universal call to listen to the 'loud chaos' of suppressed stories that deserve to be heard. By leveraging the material's ability to be 'fragile yet dangerous', Greenberg's work functions as critical protest art that destabilises power hierarchies and demands acknowledgement of truths often hidden by systemic oppression (Figures 2 and 3).

Greenberg's *Echoes of Silence* (2023) is a visual and soundscape of super-imposed women's voices that accentuates the inner clamour of suppressed thoughts and is a universal call to listen to the unspoken, as every silence holds a story that deserves to be heard.

While the article focuses primarily on South African art, the inclusion of Palestinian artist Abeer Al-Najjar provides another crucial global comparative perspective on waste.

Figure 2: Caitlin Greenberg, *Echoes of Silence* (2023). Installation 4m x 5m, mixed media (Image: Caitlin Greenberg 2025)

Figure 3: [Close-up] of the Oom Gert portrait in the installation (Image: Caitlin Greenberg 2025)

Abeer Al-Najjar: Brutal Honour Killings Made Visible

Abeer Al-Najjar is a Palestinian artist and designer dedicated to reviving the ancient craft of Palestinian glassmaking, using her skill to embody reality and highlight social issues (Al-Quds 2023, paras 2, 6). Her work demonstrates that the ecofeminist link between the treatment of nature and the concept of humans-as-waste is global. Al-Najjar's work, *Diaphanous* (2021; 2022), confronts the systemic invisibility of honour killings in Palestinian society (2022.bezalel.ac. 2022, para. 1).

Al-Najjar's work is an example of ecofeminist protest art that leverages glass' symbolic properties to confront the systemic invisibility of violence against women. The title of this work, *Diaphanous*, functions as a critical interpretive framework, highlighting how societies deliberately attempt to avoid revealing and openly addressing the brutality of these killings (2022.bezalel.ac. 2022, para. 4). This societal refusal to see the violence mirrors the systemic degradation argued by ecofeminism, where the oppression of women is linked to the dismissive treatment of nature and the concept of humans-as-waste (Yates 2011: 1679–1681). The work commemorates victims across Palestinian communities (2022.bezalel.ac. 2022, para. 1) and includes workshops designed to actively raise community awareness, linking the artistic critique to practical social action.

Diaphanous (2021; 2022) (Figures 4 and 5) is a call to action, challenging viewers and workshop participants to acknowledge and address societal injustices and the pervasive issue of violence against women (Al-Quds 2023, para. 8; 2022.bezalel.ac. 2022, para. 1).

Figure 4: Abeer Al-Najjar, *Diaphanous* (2022). 120cm x 60cm, glass. (Image: Abeer Al-Najjar 2025)

Figure 5: Abeer Al-Najjar, *Diaphanous* (2021). 160cm, glass (Image: Abeer Al-Najjar 2025).

Fusing the Glass Narratives

In 'The human-as-waste, the labour theory of value and disposability in contemporary capitalism', Michelle Yates (2011: 1679 – 1681) links 'pollution and toxic industrial chemicals' (pre-consumer waste) and 'garbage' (post-consumer waste) to humans-as-waste, when she asserts that 'intrinsic to capitalism's generation of objective waste is the logical necessity of wasting human lives'. When conceptualised alongside Liz Kelly's (1987: 47) continuum of violence model, upcycling disrupts the perception that resources – and human lives – should be 'trashable'. Upcycling disrupts the perception that resources should be trashable and art about GBV reclaims agency by refusing to be silenced, dismissed, or trashed.

Drawing on insights from the presented case studies, this article suggests that glass artivism has the potential to create a critical space where awareness ignites resistance. While this article does not measure empirical behavioural or policy changes, three themes of transformative impact were found: transformative reclamation, discursive protest, and social and environmental justice.

Begg's *From Waste to Worship* (2024) exemplifies the transformative power of upcycled glass by reclaiming humble beer bottles, transmuting them into sacred, tangible spirituality guides. This challenges consumerist narratives (Begg 2024) and educates viewers to 'reconsider our relationship with the world around us, to see potential where others see waste' (Begg 2024). This directly promotes mindful consumption and environmental consciousness (Begg 2024).

Greenberg's *Echoes of Silence* (2023) exemplifies discursive protests against GBV by making the invisible trauma and suppressed truths visible and tangible (Greenberg 2023). Her work addresses the pressure and constraint of societal expectations under which women are forged, while emphasising that the scars in the glass hold stories (Greenberg 2023). Her art makes clear that 'every silence holds a story that deserves to be heard' (Greenberg 2023), prompting self-reflection and fostering the empathy needed to dismantle patriarchal structures.

Begg's *From Waste to Worship* (2024) aligns with ecofeminist principles, showcasing how the reclamation of everyday, domestic materials (humble beer bottles) can be transformed into objects of cultural and spiritual significance (Begg 2024). This transformation promotes environmental consciousness by advocating for recycling and mindful consumption while imbuing materials with a new, sacred value, challenging the throwaway culture inherent in many patriarchal economic systems (Begg 2024). The project's challenge encourages communities to recycle glass while fostering reflection on deeper social issues, illustrating how upcycled glass art effectively contributes to environmental education and inspires a shift in perception from waste to worship (Begg 2024). Sensitisation to sustainability through art plays a role in sustaining the environment (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 32).

Greenberg's *Echoes of Silence* (2023) can also be viewed using ecofeminism's systemic lens. Upcycled glass art related to GBV can thus be seen as a form of consumer and human waste reclamation from capitalism and the patriarchy. By embodying the 'silenced voices of women' that speak about the range of their GBV experiences through delicate yet resilient blown glass,

Greenberg (2023) makes the invisible trauma and suppressed truths of GBV visible and tangible. The use of superimposed women's voices in a soundscape creates an 'inner clamour of suppressed thoughts', challenging societal constraints that force women into silence and demanding acknowledgement of what is hidden (Greenberg 2023). The very act of glassblowing (expelling breath into molten glass) is a metaphor for the dual actions of releasing what is inside the body and reclaiming one's voice and materialising agency (Greenberg 2023). The artwork's fragile, pressurised surface reflects the internalised chaos experienced by women, serving as a call to listen and really hear the testament to resilience and to see the breaking free from the fear of judgment (Greenberg 2023). The artwork effectively leverages art's capacity to evoke emotions, cultivate empathy, and promote self-reflection, essential steps in confronting and dismantling patriarchal structures that perpetuate GBV (Asamoah *et al.* 2022: 50).

Al-Najjar's *Diaphanous* (2021; 2022) foregrounds glass art as a medium for ecofeminist protest, inherently linking social and environmental justice. Her upcycling of discarded glass and the conceptual content of her work, which depicts the violent oppression of women (Al-Quds 2023, para. 5), embody the ecofeminist perspective that environmental degradation and GBV are inter-connected forms of oppression. Her intentional artwork title, *Diaphanous,* reflects a quality of glass, making visible hidden violence to critique how societies actively render violence against women invisible (Al-Quds 2023: para. 8; 2022.bezalel.ac. 2022, para. 1). The hiding of the degradation of the environment mirrors the systemic devaluation and silencing of women. By transforming these complex, often ignored, issues into tangible and reflective art, Al-Najjar challenges the prevailing gendered power relations and calls for a more holistic understanding of co-existence, both in patriarchal societies and in nature (Buscatto *et al.* 2025). Al-Najjar's work inspires empathy and action against interwoven forms of structural violence.

Conclusion

While the case-study nature of this research provides deep, 'thick' descriptions rather than broad generalisability, these findings highlight the significant potential for art to ignite resistance. Ultimately, this scholarship creates a critical space where awareness fosters progress toward equitable and sustainable futures. Future work should look toward longitudinal studies to quantify the long-term impacts of artivism on policy, specifically addressing the 'invisible

contours' of GBV directed at marginalised groups such as Black trans people, whose experiences remain largely invisible in existing scholarship.

This article explored glass artivism as an innovative response to the enduring challenges of GBV alongside broader environmental injustices. Employing a critical ecofeminist framework, this article highlighted the intrinsically interwoven nature of social oppressions with ecological exploitation, linking the oppression of women with environmental degradation and the dismissive attitude towards biodiverse life. By examining the distinct yet interconnected works of Saarah Begg, Caitlin Greenberg, and Abeer Al-Najjar, this article explored glass art's potential for stirring action in the service of social and environmental justice.

Upcycled glass art can be a tool for facilitating critical discourse and transforming complex social issues into accessible, resonant, personal, and physical experiences (Stetz 2023: para. 192). The central discursive contribution of this article lies in establishing glass artivism as a dual tool for public awareness and environmental sustainability.

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Compulsive Work and Neoliberal 'governmentality': Benda Hofmeyr's *Foucault and Governmentality* – A Critical Review Essay

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Abstract

Why do so-called 'knowledge workers' work compulsively, even when circumstances are such that they have to pay attention to other activities, such as child-minding? This is the question that Benda Hofmeyr addresses in this fascinating and to many readers probably startling book. She lists three reasons, namely the expectation on the part of employers that they be optimally productive (in exchange for working conditions that promote such productivity, including highly flexible working hours); the advanced technological means to work virtually anywhere (primarily constant access to the internet by means of various technical devices); and most importantly, the fact that they *desire* to work constantly. Situating her inquiry in the (neoliberal) 'Age of Control' – problematising this curious phenomenon, where knowledge workers (including researchers and academics) voluntarily supererogate to the point of exhausting themselves, sometimes to the point of 'burnout' – Hofmeyr deftly pursues her inquiry, first through Michel Foucault's suggestive reflections on Neoliberal Governmentality (the ingenious way in which neoliberal societies combine 'governing' with a certain, cultivated, 'mentality', which produces a certain kind of paradoxical subject marked by both 'subjection' and 'subjectivation'). Secondly, she embarks on a systematic investigation into the manifestation of knowledge work in a society hell-bent on controlling everyone, followed by scrutiny of the curious link between what the ancient Greeks called '*thumos'* (spiritedness), motivation and compulsive work, and of the question of connecting compulsive work and neoliberal governmentality. Finally, she addresses the crucial question of the viability of

resistance on the part of (knowledge) workers, with ambiguous results. In addition to intermittent critical remarks on what is written in her text, the review-essay concludes with, first, internal-textual, and then extrinsic-contextual critical perspectives on Hofmeyr's argument – that is, on what is *not* written there, which corresponds with the notion of the unconscious in psychoanalysis, and with the current, ongoing attempt at a global *coup d'etat* on the part of the so-called New World Order.

> … what is morality, if not the practice of liberty, the deliberate practice of liberty? (Michel Foucault).

Introduction: The Phenomenon, that 'knowledge workers' *Want* to Work All the Time

Who would work all the time, if they have the opportunity to relax, or to spend time pleasantly and constructively with their families or friends? Most people would probably shake their heads in disbelief when confronted with evidence that there is a group of individuals who actually do this ostensibly irrational thing. This distinct human assemblage comprises so-called 'knowledge workers', who demonstrably work constantly, and compulsively, even under circumstances that are not conducive to the kind of work that requires high levels of attention. Why? How do we make sense of something that seems to border on masochism? This is the question that Benda Hofmeyr addresses. She lists three reasons, namely the expectation that they be optimally productive (they *have* to), the technological means to work virtually anywhere and at any time (they *can*), and most importantly, the fact that they *desire* to work constantly (they *want* to).

Hofmeyr pays sustained attention to the work of Michel Foucault, reading his published lectures as 'problematisations' – a critical practice he developed in his history of ancient Greek sexuality – and which Hofmeyr understands transcendentally insofar as they are said to reveal the 'conditions of possibility' of the discursive justifications of cratological practices. What particularly interests her is Foucault's problematisation of 'neoliberal

governmentality' – which the French thinker regarded as being potentially inimical to human freedom – and proposes to scrutinise the phenomenon of the knowledge worker through this lens. In passing, one could also understand problematisation as the discursive self-positioning of the subject *vis-á-vis* the dominant discourses of his or her social context, which would unilaterally 'construct' their selves *unless* problematised or resisted. Put differently, for Foucault (1992: 10-11) 'problematisation' appears to mean the critical, 'sifting' thinking that grows out of, and refers back to, certain 'practices' of the self, or 'arts of existence', such as those he discusses under the rubric of the eponymous 'care of the self' (Foucault 1988). In *The Use of Pleasure* he says (Foucault 1992: 11):

> It was a matter of analyzing, not behaviours or ideas, nor societies and their 'ideologies,' but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought – and the *practices* on the basis of which these problematizations are formed.

If one thinks of it this way, the question arises: what enables one to problematise something? I would say that problematisation – and the curious fact of knowledge workers wanting to work constantly – is 'dialectically' related to autonomy, because no matter how much institutional authorities may exploit, and benefit from, the sustained, productive intellectual work of knowledge workers, the fact remains that, the more productive one is in this domain, the more it contributes to the experience of autonomy, on condition, of course, that one's work is recognised by peers and others in the public domain. Inversely, one has to be able to act with a modicum of autonomy (giving oneself the rule, or law) to begin with, otherwise the act of acquiring, and generating knowledge in a manner that accords with one's own unique abilities would not make sense. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Hofmeyr (2022: 10, 70, 95, 99, 145) situates the activity of knowledge workers in relation to autonomy, although I would argue that it should be given even more weight than she allows it insofar as autonomy may be seen as the motivational presupposition of the desire to work constantly or continually on the part of someone who knows that she or he *can* do so – in the dual sense of having the requisite intellectual capacity as well as technical means.

      Hofmeyr's sustained focus on the knowledge worker in relation to the fact that 'knowledge work' is the economic driver of the present era – something that Jean-Francois Lyotard already noted in the late 1970s under the

rubric of *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) – exposes the link between what these workers do and the neoliberal imperative of the 'greatest return', which requires the greatest efficiency on the part of workers. Knowledge workers are no exception, with the result that activities that may seem extraneous to their work, but actually contribute to their ability to work efficiently – such as sport and modes of relaxation – are justified as promoting productivity. Hofmeyr finds plenty of evidence, however, that what really motivates individuals who create and promote knowledge is their sense of achievement and recognition, together with the awareness of the quality of their work. It is interesting that one of Hofmeyr's sources confirming this dates back to 1959 (Drucker), and together with the fact that Maslow put personal achievement that promotes self-actualisation at the zenith of his famous motivational 'hierarchy of needs' already in the early 1940s, this confirms my suspicion, that neoliberal govern-mentality did not invent the phenomenon of the incessantly productive, achievement-motivated knowledge worker, but merely tapped into a motiva-tional root that has been a part of human psychology, if not always, then for a long time.

True to the philosophical reflex of *zurückfragen*, and drawing on the arch-apologist for neoliberalism, Francis Fukuyama, Hofmeyr unearths what may be regarded as the *Urquell* of knowledge workers' desire to work continually, compulsively, namely *thumos*, which derives from ancient Greek insights into the nature of the human psyche (*psuche*). The most important of these is probably Plato's notion of *thumos* as one of the three characteristics of the soul, the other two being reason and desire. Importantly, Plato identifies 'spiritedness' as belonging to *thumos*, and being at the basis of the capacity to get angry in the face of injustice (something I shall return to, given its apparent scarcity on the part of individuals in the face of contemporary injustice). Hofmeyr pursues the motif of *thumos* in contemporary society, particularly regarding knowledge workers, who are ultimately seen by her – partly following Fukuyama, who regards this force as irrational – as exemplars of *thumos*-driven individuals in the context of neoliberal harnessing of *thumos* for its own productivity-optimising aims.

To answer the question, whether neoliberal theory has discovered a way to hitch *thumos* to the profit motive, Hofmeyr turns to Foucault's under-standing of economist Gary Becker's belief, on the one hand, that greater profits require a combination of workers' self-optimisation and employers' willingness to invest in employees to enhance their optimal efficiency and productivity, and neoliberal 'privatisation guru', Milton Friedman's view of

economic activity, including labour, as voluntary investment or entrepreneurial activity predicated on future gain or return. The organisational logic corresponding to this entails the *imperceptible control* of knowledge workers' lives in their entirety – overt control has to be avoided at all costs, lest it undermine the experience of workers, that they are *voluntarily* engaged in optimalising their work performance. Needless to point out, there is a subtle form of deception operating in this situation, despite which – if we add the element of *thumos*, which is connected with the experience of self-actualisation – knowledge workers are likely to live up to neoliberal expectations. Applying Becker's theories to knowledge workers, Hofmeyr summarises matters in this way (2022: 123):

> … the working subject appears to be an enterprise unit, which is a stabilised 'form of life' comprised of the cycle of labour and consumption in equilibrium. Understandably, this cycle of production of utilities or satisfactions and its consumption *has to* reach an equilibrium to be sustainable. What the 'form of life' reveals are the worker's preferences. Compulsively working workers' preference, then, is work as opposed to competing satisfactions or utilities such as leisure or family time. If these workers persevere in this preference for compulsive work, it is because they are indeed making a profit that may be invisible to others, namely the thumotic satisfaction produced and consumed by way of creative, problem-solving knowledge work. It should be remembered that this 'form of life' of the worker is situated in the context of neoliberal control that pre-organises the free choices at the disposal of workers, conducting the conduct of the enterprise unit according to a cost-benefit calculus that serves the objective of a pervasive neoliberal political-economic programme or governmentality. This implies that this form of control actively harnesses not mere productive output, but the very thumotic satisfaction that propels it.

In short, neoliberal capitalism has devised a way to get the most out of these workers, and, judging by the sources adduced by Hofmeyr, it has been assisted in this by researchers who have conveniently shown the best, or most effective, way to achieve the optimal performance of workers – such as finding avenues of incentivisation that create the impression of spontaneity and initiative on the part of workers themselves, while in truth subtle forms of 'management' are the source of such pseudo-spontaneity. One thing that neoliberalism cannot

change, however, is the fact – elaborated on by Hofmeyr – that knowledge workers are generally their line managers' epistemic superiors in their respective research fields, which explains why they can afford to 'shop around' for organisations which are compatible with their own sense of values, which includes respect for them and their work.

While Hofmeyr understandably references such writers as George Huber regarding the prognostication, that information would become crucial for post-industrial societies, it is strange that she does not mention Jean-Francois Lyotard – whose *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* appeared in French five years before Huber's comparable work – in this regard. Admittedly, Lyotard did not, like Huber, focus on the requisite management styles for post-industrial societies, but he did foreground the epochal transition that was taking place in terms of the novel value that would be attached to information in epistemic terms, and without which the neoliberal interest in 'soft' management techniques regarding 'gold collar' knowledge workers would be unthinkable. At any rate, it is significant that Hofmeyr acknowledges that, instead of the 'soft', humane mode of managing knowledge workers, what has emerged is a technological web of 'complex control' – something that Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has uncovered in startling ways.

It is appropriate that Hofmeyr gives sustained attention to *the* thinker of the 'network society', Manuel Castells (2010), who – perhaps more than any other – has painstakingly enumerated the characteristics of the era of the 'space of flows' and 'timeless time'. In the light of Castells's findings no one can doubt where power resides today, namely in networks, and it stands to reason that those who can negotiate these networks in a creatively productive manner – and this includes knowledge workers – would be empowered far more than those who do not, or cannot because they lack the skills to do so. But Castells (as well as other researchers) is not blind to the fact that real power does not lie here, but with 'the rules of the (network) game' and those agencies (like multinationals and financial markets) whose complex interactions generate these rules – for example, in determining in an open-ended manner which areas of knowledge work are prioritised over others. One can easily imagine that a critical discipline like philosophy could be downgraded in relation to other, less critical ones that confirm the *status quo*, and philosophers who are not 'bread-thinkers' (to use a term that Schopenhauer employed to label 'philosophers' who serve those in power) would therefore be less in demand than individuals in other disciplines.

Hofmeyr deftly disabuses one of the notion that the digital platforms

comprising the work environment of knowledge workers are 'disinter-mediated'; despite claims to the contrary, they are not really, insofar as they are *technically* mediated by means of mechanisms such as algorithms, which manipulate the behaviour of internet users in subtle ways, as Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has demonstrated at length. This resonates with Foucault's contention – highlighted by Hofmeyr – that the neoliberal 'free market' is not at all free, given the way in which it is constructed. In other words, the *cognoscenti*-denizens of the web are not 'equal', or equally treated; depending on one's volitional behaviour on epistemically relevant platforms, you are either rewarded by means of rankings or awards, or penalised, based on one's choices. It turns out that behind the façade of equality the old scourge of social (and economic) hierarchy lurks. Hence the question, raised by Hofmeyr in the face of this unmasking of the covert workings of 'complex power': to what degree is *resistance* to this cryptic functioning of asymmetrical power-relations in the age of putatively spontaneous, voluntary, self-organising work possible? She comes to the unsettling conclusion, that today (Hofmeyr 2022: 153 - 154),

> Self-creation [of knowledge workers; BO] has been co-opted by the neoliberal power/knowledge configurations in which it is inscribed, stripped of its critical, liberating potential, and normalised…Along the same line as Foucault's contention that power is not bad, but dangerous, I conclude that resistance in this context is not impossible, but improbable. In a context of constantly changing, flexible flows of complex control, the odds seem to be stacked against the working subject's ability to keep track of the governmentally imposed limits that have become increasingly imperceptible and elusive.
>
> As Foucault points out, what should be questioned is the politics of truth that underlie these flows of control. The possibility thereof calls for a pessimistic activism, a renewed and constant critical vigilance and awareness of just how dangerous power relations have become in our present information age in which the neoliberal theory of human capital has co-opted the supposedly free zone of resistance as self-creation (as the only space in which to practise liberty) with its injunction to (self-) invest in the entrepreneurial subject as a 'project-in-the-making' …. Control, no matter how pervasive, is never complete. What is called for, however, is a critical consciousness of the operationalisation of truth/ complex control that conditions the possibilities of our being, acting, and thinking in the present.

The 'pessimistic activism' Hofmeyr calls for here takes into account the power of neoliberalism, but also of human subjects to resist its tendency, to totalise such control via various strategies. We are not simply, irresistibly, 'subject to' control, but simultaneously capable of subjectivation, of positioning ourselves vis-á-vis such strategies. In what follows, I shall draw on this Foucaultian insight on Hofmeyr's part by relating it to a far greater contemporary threat than that of neoliberalism, even if it was made possible by the exorbitant financial profits engendered by the latter. In addition to the preceding, intermittent critical remarks regarding Hofmeyr's argument, this review essay will engage in an internal, textual critique of her claims, followed by an extrinsic-contextual critical perspective on what is *not* written there, which corresponds with the notion of the (textual) unconscious in psychoanalysis.

How Adequate is Hofmeyr's Explanation of the 'irrational' Dedication of Knowledge Workers to their Work?

Hofmeyr's thesis concerning knowledge workers' veritably 'irrational' devotion to their work must be seen in a wider context. Near the beginning of her chapter on Foucault and governmentality she states programmatically that (2022: 17):

> The quintessential Foucauldian question animating this book throug-hhout is what we are today, in relation to our present, understood as a globalising neoliberal governmentality in which life is reduced to constant work under conditions of strict control.

That is to say that Hofmeyr's primary interest concerns the *subject* under neoliberal rule, and a better point of departure than Foucault is unlikely in light of his familiar, sustained investigation into the nature of the relationship between knowledge (or truth), power and his persistent attempt to understand the human subject (Hofmeyr 2022: 29-30; 32; 78-79). (Nevertheless, this does not mean that other, heuristically equally suitable points of departure cannot be employed to this end.) Her characterisation of neoliberalism as 'a global and globalising programme' (p. 19) is therefore of utmost importance insofar as it disabuses one of the common bias, that it merely instantiates an economic system by focussing unambiguously on its cratological-political and ideological features. As David Harvey points out (Hofmeyr 2022: 21),

neoliberalism has attained the status where it has become embedded in people's 'common sense' – something that testifies unambiguously to its dominant ideological status. After all, when a worldview exhibiting a programmatic structure has reached this point, it is no longer questionable; at least, not without risk to those who have the courage to do so. It is further significant that Hofmeyr emphasises the problematical implications of neoliberalism's insistent prioritisation of economic freedom, or the supposed 'freedom of the market' (p. 22). This pertains to the convenient myth, that society in its entirety benefits from an increase in overall wealth, and not only the capitalist classes, but perhaps more importantly, to the easily overlooked, negative consequences this has for *political* freedom. In a country like China, for example, with its signature 'state capitalism', one encounters a large degree of economic freedom, but no political freedom as such.

A more far-reaching matter is related to the above, to wit, the false, mercenary anthropology underpinning neoliberalism, which claims that human beings are essentially rational, competitive creatures who routinely make rational decisions as far as economic and financial matters are concerned (Hofmeyr 2022: 22). Needless to say, this is an extremely controversial assumption in the light of numerous contrary claims, particularly those of psychoanalysis, historically prepared for by Arthur Schopenhauer's preceding irrationalistic philosophy of the Will in the 19th century. According to the latter, the actions of human beings are driven, by and large, by unconscious wishes and motives, collectively termed the Will, rather than by rational decisions, regardless of the degree of rationalising justification that may follow a disastrous, albeit ostensibly 'rational' choice. A psychoanalitical theoretician and practising psychoanalist such as Ian Parker (2011) has convincingly demonstrated the primacy of the unconscious in psychical manifestations of its causal efficacy on the part of workers in the neoliberal dispensation, insofar as these are displayed in quasi-pathological actions such as obsessive neurosis (see also Olivier 2013; 2015; 2018 in this regard, and 2022 for a thematisation of this in the context of the Covid-19 'pandemic').

Importantly, this consideration bears on Hofmeyr's thoroughgoing argument concerning the motivation of knowledge workers: instead of the threefold motivation she discerns (expectations of employers regarding workers' productivity; availability of technical means enabling them to work virtually all the time; the *will* to work continually, linked to *thumos*, and the concomitant desire for self-actualisation), one can argue that Parker offers an alternative explanation, namely the largely obsessive-neurotic character of

workers in the context of neoliberalism (see also Olivier 2015; 2018). Parker writes (2011: 42):

> Those who suffer in obsessional mode under capitalism are subjects who buy into the separation of intellectual and manual labour, the separation of thinking from being, and live out the predicament of a puzzle about the nature of being as if false consciousness really did operate only at the level of the individual. Lacan argues that the question that haunts the obsessional neurotic concerns being, existence, their right to exist and whether they are alive or dead…The 'obsessions' are repetitive ideas manifested in a series of actions from which the subject seems unable to escape. Even though this eventually may result in suffering that is too much to bear, enough to bring someone to ask for help, it is still stubbornly tied to personal administrative strategies that contain an unbearable surplus of satisfaction – 'jouissance' is our name for this excess – within the domain of the 'pleasure principle …'.

It may appear as if the repetitive symptoms of 'obsessions' which, according to Parker, are manifested in 'personal administrative strategies', are light years removed from the *thumos*-and desire-driven, self-fulfilling, creative and cognitive, while simultaneously affectively instrumental, knowledge work under scrutiny here. This impression notwithstanding, it is abundantly evident from what Hofmeyr (2022: 81) writes that knowledge workers are, indeed, *obsessively* dedicated to their work, and that this is accompanied by personal suffering, as noted by Parker. She observes that (Hofmeyr 2022: 100; my underlining; BO):

> … the unquestioned wholesale conviction displayed by the ever-working subject, even in the face of the evident toll that constantly working takes, cannot be entirely accounted for by the clever charade of other-induced coercion, masquerading as self-motivated conviction. The inherent contradictions of a *de facto* irrational, <u>obsessive</u>, and self-destructive work-drivenness are bound, inevitably, to result in severely detrimental side effects for the working subject. And they do. At both the rational and the emotional levels, the working subject is bound eventually to become disenchanted by the clever ploy of 'smart power'. Nevertheless, despite the havoc it wreaks on the working

subject's mental and physical <u>health</u>, on collegial and familial relationships, the knowledge work addict displays an almost devotional commitment to the task at hand.

Is at all surprising, then, that Parker draws attention to the fundamentally irrational functioning of unconscious, obsessive psychic motives on the part of workers under neoliberal capitalism? To be sure, he does not single out knowledge workers, as Hofmeyr does, but 'workers' as encompassing group includes them, and if it can be persuasively demonstrated that workers in general are subject to such an obsessive drive, Hofmeyr's argument – with its implicit claim, that the question concerning the grounds of knowledge workers' irrational attachment to their work has been *conclusively* answered – would have to be broadened.

Comparing *Jouissance* and *Thumos*

To be able to judge the validity of my psychoanalytically oriented argument (as derived from Parker, and implicitly from Freud and Lacan) one has to understand the meaning of the Lacanian concept of *jouissance*, described by Parker (above) as 'unbearable surplus of satisfaction'. Add to this that, given Hofmeyr's acknowledgement of knowledge workers' irrationality, as well as their *unconscious* motives concerning their work obsession (Hofmeyr 2022: 70, 77), my own alternative psychoanalytical approach to the riddle of knowledge workers' ostensibly conscious and voluntary, excessive work-performance (known as 'supererogation') – that is, their 'obsessive work mania' – could perhaps simply be a comparable account of this phenomenon in a different register. Or is it the case that Hofmeyr's version differs fundamentally from a psychoanalytical account, when considering the precise meaning of *jouissance*? Hence, what distinguishes *thumos* from *jouissance*?

It will be recalled that Hofmeyr (2022: 75-102) elucidates the meaning of *thumos* largely with reference to Plato's thought, but she nevertheless also draws on other sources, including Homeric epic poetry as well as ancient Greek tragedians (such as Sophocles and Euripedes), Hegel, Fukuyama and MacIntyre. She highlights the various emphases encountered in each respective case and takes pains to explain her own interpretive preferences every time. Compared to Plato, for instance – who characterises *thumos* (the noble white horse) as spiritedness which can be tempered through education by reason (represented by the charioteer) – the emphasis shifts in Homer's works and the

tragedies of Sophocles and Euripedes to the 'excessive' in *thumos*, as expressed in uncontrollable fury and impetuosity. Hofmeyr delivers an insightful analysis of Hegel's contribution on the topic of work or labour by arguing that, while the German philosopher does not explicitly reference *thumos*, it is implicit to the indispensable role that he attributes to work in the development of society, as long as one reads Hegel 'through a Platonic lens'. Moreover, she detects in Hegel's notion of the self-actualising function of work an important clue to arrive at a thorough understanding of *thumos*. As far as Fukuyama is concerned, Hofmeyr observes astutely that his causal linking of *thumos* (as the driving force behind work) with work ethics as cultural phenomenon is not cogent or consistent, precisely because work ethics only made its appearance relatively recently in cultural history; there has to be a deeper, innate 'cause' for the virtually irrational work-attachment on the part of knowledge workers. In Hofmeyr's opinion *thumos* is the right candidate for such a causal role, given its recognisable manifestation in different historical periods. She therefore arrives at the following finding (2022: 102):

> We may conclude, then, that read through a Platonic lens, it is *thumos* – not primarily reason or desire – that fuels the worker to work. Knowledge work in particular – as challenging, entrepreneurial, creative, and problem-solving – ignites the thumotic dimension of the soul. It is what spurs the worker to rise to the occasion and persevere until the job is done. It is then not so surprising that the neoliberal knowledge worker's work-drivenness is irrational from a utilitarian point of view, in other words, that the surplus gains for the workaholic are not necessarily evident in conspicuous consumption or increased health or well-being. Work, it would seem, appeases not the dark horse of desire, but the white stallion of *thumos*, what Empedocles called the 'seat of life' … – that part of the soul that seeks recognition, and which, when appeased, generates an immense and addictive form of gratification or well-being.

Several aspects of Hofmeyr's wide-ranging discussion concerning *thumos* deserve attention, all of which cannot be elaborated upon here, although I shall return to others. What has to be noted briefly here, is her conception of certain historical events, such as the two World Wars, as violent expressions of *thumos* (2022: 99), but which are difficult to reconcile with 'spiritedness', or even 'impetuous fury' (although it is clear on what grounds she does this, namely

the interpretation of *thumos* by, for example Homer, whose heroes, like Achilles, are driven by this force in a self-annihilating manner). To be sure, one could establish a connection between spiritedness and destruction, but regarding the latter I would argue that Freud's death drive, or *Thanatos*, comprises a better category for comprehending such phenomena, in the light of Freud's (1974: 4510) distinction between two ways in which it is manifested: on the one hand, *conservatively*, in so far as one always returns to a previous, familiar place, and on the other hand, *aggressively*, among other ways collectively as war. In passing one should note that Freud's conceptual pair, *Eros* (the life drive) and *Thanatos* (the death drive), correspond with the ancient Greek thinker, Empedocles's countervailing couple, *Philotes* (love) and *Neikos* (hatred/strife), with which Freud was familiar. The allusion to Freud returns one to the issue of the relevance of psychoanalysis, of which he was the 'father', while Jacques Lacan may legitimately be regarded as his (radical) French heir.

What place does *jouissance* occupy in Lacan's work? As witnessed earlier on the part of Parker, it denotes excessive, virtually unbearable *enjoyment*, rather than 'pleasure'. (It is telling that, irrespective of Lacan's specific psychoanalytical application of the term, in French it also means 'orgasm'.) For Lacan *jouissance* instantiates a moment of transgression of the Freudian 'pleasure principle' which, in contrast to the latter, comprises the experience of intense, almost painfully intolerable enjoyment. This explains why it is fundamentally irreconcilable with the limitations imposed on the subject by the pleasure principle (Lacan 1997: 176-177, 191-197; 2007: 18; Evans 2006: 93-94). After all, contrary to the first impression it creates, the pleasure principle promotes and maintains an economy of homeostasis, which limits the subject's *enjoyment* to the minimum. Although initially it may strike one as being counter-intuitive, as governed by the pleasure principle, *pleasure* is *conservative*, whereas *jouissance* (*enjoyment* in the psychoanalytical sense) is *excessive*, disproportionately extreme (Parker 2011: 52-55). It bears on the question concerning the grounds of knowledge workers' disproportionate dedication to their work that, according to Lacan, the human subject continually inclines towards such extreme enjoyment in relation to the restrictions placed upon it by the pleasure principle. This explains why Freud initially labelled the latter the '*unpleasure* principle'. It is therefore instructive that Kaja Silverman makes the following observation, which simultaneously illuminates the difference between the pleasure principle and *jouissance* (1983: 54):

> For Freud, pleasure represents the absence of unpleasure; it is a state of relaxation much more intimately connected with death than with life. Indeed, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) at one point refers to the pleasure principle as 'Nirvana principle' ….

As already noted, *jouissance* contrasts glaringly with this in so far as it is marked by transgressive, unendurable enjoyment, which hardly represents 'a state of relaxation'; on the contrary. Furthermore, it is significant that Lacan (1997: 176) explicitly establishes a connection between *jouissance* and 'prohibition' by means of Freud's myth (in *Totem and Taboo*) involving the parricide of the 'primal father'. Here he remarks meaningfully that (Lacan 1997: 177):

> ... without a transgression there is no access to *jouissance*, and ... that is precisely the function of the [moral] Law. Transgression in the direction of *jouissance* only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law ... what we see here is the tight bond between desire and the Law.

The first thing to remember here is that 'desire' in the Lacanian sense is not synonymous with 'desire' in the sense of 'appetite' (closely linked to 'need'), as employed by Plato in relation to the black horse in the chariot-myth pertaining to the structure of the soul. As I shall demonstrate below, for Lacan (unconscious) 'desire' (*Wunsch*, for Freud) instantiates that which distin-guishes subjects from one another in so far as it is unique, or singular, for every person. Add to this that any prohibition, which presupposes the moral Law, depends upon discourse in so far as it is a function of the ethical and axiological aspects of the symbolic order – that is, language considered as discourse, where meaning serves power. Against this backdrop, *jouissance* may be seen as being both pre-symbolic and trans-symbolic in specifiable ways. It is pre-symbolic in so far as entering the symbolic through language-acquisition requires of the subject to relinquish *jouissance*, which it strives to attain at the level of the imaginary – Lacan's second register of subjectivity, the 'real' being the third of these (Evans 2006: 134-135; Olivier 2004) – in its attempt to coincide with the 'fullness' (*plenum*) represented by the Mother in the unconscious (Parker 2011: 53, 95; Evans 2006: 93-94). This clarifies the meaning of 'symbolic castration': to be disempowered by language, which alienates the subject from enjoyment (*jouissance*) by means of the linguistic signifier.

The prohibitions faced by the subject are therefore paradoxical – that which is prohibited (*jouissance*) is unattainable on discursive-structural grounds, *except* on condition of *transgressing* the symbolic, which amounts to trans-symbolic action. This is where the intimate connection between *jouissance* and the death drive (*Thanatos*) comes into view, in the sense that both of these surpass the symbolic order at the boundary of what the ancient Greeks named *Até*, on the other side of which humans cannot exist (Lacan 1997: 189**,** 257-283; here Lacan provides an interpretation of Sophocles's *Antigone* by arguing that the tragic heroine's *jouissance* consists in the fact that she insisted on burying her slain brother, Polynices, despite her impending death sentence). Simultaneously it shows why *jouissance* is intolerable, yet no less desirable because of its unendurability. Lacan confirms its thoroughly paradoxical character by refusing to conceive of it as something mystical or instinctive, preferring to understand it as '… something constituted by the very human activity that keeps it at bay, constituted as a something beyond, something that drives the subject as they speak, and drives them beyond speech' (Parker 2011: 53).

These insights enable one to grasp the connection between *jouissance* and the puzzling work obsession on the part of knowledge workers: they are no exception to the rule of being subjects constituted by discourse, which simply means that, as humans, they are unable to step outside of language as symbolic register. Yet, at the same time (like all human subjects) they tend in the direction of *jouissance* by virtue of their structural-anthropological constitution as *desiring* beings. To phrase it succinctly, desire and the moral Law are mutually constitutive. How to understand this ostensibly opaque statement? It becomes psychoanalytically transparent when considering Freud's insight (1974a: 741; see also Olivier 2021a), that the unconscious is originally constituted on the part of the human subject by the repressive internalisation of the 'primordial prohibition' – whether the latter is comprehended in classical terms as the proscription of sexual access to the Mother, or as any other interdiction, for example when a toddler is forbidden to stick her or his finger into the chocolate cake on the coffee table. As humans we (mostly unconsciously) desire precisely what is forbidden by the moral Law; hence the phenomenon of experiencing *guilt*. Does it not stand to reason, then, that workers generally – including knowledge workers – would work obsessively under neoliberalism because, failing that, they would experience intense guilt? This does not only, or even decisively, concern work ethics, as Hofmeyr has persuasively demonstrated. In other words, *jouissance* has to be

enlisted to make sense of this state of affairs. How is this done?

What should be kept in mind is that *jouissance* consists in unbearable, language-surpassing enjoyment, which nevertheless exerts a forbidden attraction on the subject. Moreover, *jouissance* instantiates what is known as 'universal singularity': *all* human subjects are motivated by *jouissance* (universality), yet for each person it is different (singularity). The Christian martyr, Joan of Arc, was probably in the fiery embrace of *jouissance* where she died at the stake in the 15th century for defending France because of her religious convictions; clearly, Leonard Cohen understood this perfectly, judging by the lyrics of his song dedicated to this French saint, where he describes her as the fire's 'bride'. Similarly, the Scottish nationalist leader, William Wallace, probably experienced *jouissance* when he was cruelly executed by being drawn and quartered in 1305 for his political and military resistance to English rule. Equally, a woman who is caught in the extraordinary intensity of orgasm experiences *jouissance*, judging by the evidence gathered by neurologist Leonard Shlain (2003: 69-70), who designates the sublimity of the human female's orgasm as a unique phenomenon among living creatures. Knowledge workers are irresistibly driven by the promise of *jouissance* to exceed themselves continually. The flipside of this is that, when these perfectionists feel that they have not fully succeeded in their quest, or that they constantly *have* to, and *want* to, improve on their previous achievements, they ineluctably experience the *guilt* that is inseparable from the implicit expectation, that they do not fail.

The elusive Lacanian concept of the *objet petit a* ('little other object') is intimately related to the preceding account. Some of Lacan's central concepts went through several stages of development, and that of *objet petit a* is no exception. Whereas it initially signified the 'object of desire', the mature version of *objet petit a* denotes the 'object-*cause'* of desire (Evans 1996: 128-129). This could be any object, *from the perspective of which the singular desire* of the subject may be comprehended – that is, that represents *jouissance* for the subject. In contrast, a *fetish* is the perverted counterpart of the *objet petit a* in so far as it no longer functions as *cause* of desire, but has *itself* become the object of desire. In one of the Cowboy Junkies' songs the singer confesses to seeing her lover's shoes where he left them, and missing him; the shoes therefore comprise an *objet petit a* indexing her desire for him (where he, in turn, may be seen as an *objet petit a* for a more profound desire – that which marks her ultimate *jouissance*). If, perversely, the shoes themselves were to become her 'object of desire', they would be in the position of a fetish. Another

revealing instance of an *objet petit a*, encountered in Freud's clinical work, is discussed by Slavoj Žižek (1993: 206-207; see also Olivier 2005), where a self-inflicted wound on the ring finger of a married Viennese woman marks the site of her true, but repressed desire for a former lover, whom convention prevented her from marrying, although she would have preferred to do so. An *objet petit a* could be any object – not necessarily anything tangible – such as a poem, a wrist watch, a dancing woman, a symphony, an old jacket, or a blues song. Bob Dylan's 'One more cup of coffee for the road' is undoubtedly an *objet petit a* for me; why this is so I don't know, but it has something to do with the unfathomable nostalgia in its minor register. When it comes to knowledge workers, their *objets petit a* would no doubt include any object that functions for every distinct person by unmistakably uncovering their (unconscious) singular desire, such as an e-mail message from the editor of a scientific journal, informing them that an article penned by them has been awarded a prize for the best scientific article published in the journal that year. This desire is intimately bound up with their knowledge work, but for every person it is differently enmeshed.

It is my belief that this state of affairs, articulated in psychoanalytical terms, throws further light on what motivates knowledge workers, Hofmeyr's eloquent *thumos*-oriented explanation notwithstanding. The latter is indeed a valid, illuminating theoretical perspective on the question, what motivates knowledge workers at a conspicuously irrational and unconscious level, to work themselves into the ground for the sake of sustained, optimal work productivity, as may be seen in her neat summary statement (Hofmeyr 2022: 126):

> Today the knowledge worker is unequivocally the definitive propellant of the economy. These workers are valuable for their expertise in a particular field, and their seemingly vocational devotion to their work. The overarching argument that I have pursued here is that the theory of human capital at the heart of the neoliberal governmentality of control actively engenders an irrational work-drivenness among knowledge workers by tapping – not primarily into their rational or desiring selves – but into their *thumotic* selves.

While it is true that the elements of both the unconscious and the irrational are invoked by her, this occurs minus their thorough exploration, however, which only the discipline of psychoanalysis enables one to do, as I have attempted to

demonstrate here by enlisting the Lacanian employment of *jouissance*, *objet petit a* and *guilt*. One should add that, in accordance with Hofmeyr's demonstration of the subtle control disingenuously exercised over knowledge workers by neoliberal organisations – by exhorting the latter group's thumotic selves to greater achievements for the sake of optimising profits – one could draw a psychoanalytic analogy to similar effect. That is, one could replace *thumos* with *jouissance*, which means that the strategies harnessing *thumos* may be understood as promoting conditions which harness knowledge workers' *desire* (in the psychoanalytic sense) for recognition and self-actualisation in such a manner that it fosters an unconscious striving for trans-symbolic *jouissance*. After all, no symbolic utterance could quite capture the 'extreme enjoyment' of the knowledge worker who has the experience of having reached the apogee of knowledge generation in her or his field.

Placing Hofmeyr's Text in an External, Social Context

Hitherto my criticism of Hofmeyr's argument in her book has addressed internal, textual criticism; here I want to concentrate on external, social-contextual criticism. Once again the psychoanalytical notion of the unconscious will be invoked here, in so far as certain matters and events *that do not feature explicitly in her text* may be shown to bear undeniable relevance for what she has written. Lacan (1977: 46 - 55) emphasises the indispensable role of discourse in the analytical situation, where the therapist assists the subject of the analysis, in the course of her or his 'free association', to arrive at an intelligible symbolic interpretation of their reconstructed life-narrative. After all, the free-associative discourse of the analysand is anything but coherent; this is the point of free association – in order to neutralise the natural inclination to speak coherently, which is a function of reason, enabling one to arrive at the 'truth' of the subject's unconscious.

To be able to make sense of the latter, ostensibly cryptic statement, one has to recall that, among those who do not bother to understand psychoanalysis, Lacan is notorious for his (initially confusing) reversal of Descartes's paradigmatically modern saying, *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am'), to read: 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think', or – in extended form – 'I am not wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am where I do not think to think' (Lacan 1977a: 166). 'I am where I do not think' is evidently an allusion to the unconscious, of which the functioning here is crucial in so far as it manifests itself negatively in

instances of a *lapsus linguae* as well as hesitations, omissions, discursive gaps, signs of aggressive or insistent negations as well as confirmations. By nudging the conversation in a certain direction, the psychoanalyst harnesses such symptomatic indicators of the unconscious (which is constituted by the repression of unacceptable or unbearable material) to be able to come to a meaningful interpretation of the analysand's associative discourse.

Lest the impression be created that this process still displays too much 'rational coherence', one should keep in mind that Lacan's conception of the subject – or $, denoting the 'split' or 'interrupted' subject – undermines such coherence in principle, in the sense that a coherent subject (as encountered in ego-psychology) negates the founding insight of psychoanalysis, namely, that human rationality constantly has to reckon with the destabilising workings of the unconscious. It should therefore be clear that an alliance with ego psychology is furthest from Lacan's thought. This much is evident in his remark, that (Lacan 1977: 49):

> The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse.

Accordingly, Lacan (1977: 50) designates the unconscious as that 'chapter' of the subject's life history that has been 'censored', and as such is 'marked by a blank', as witnessed by the unintended actions (including 'speech acts') on the part of the subject. This notwithstanding, the repressed 'chapter' of the subject's story can be rediscovered by means of the interpretive cooperation between the analyst and the discourse of the free-associating analysand, despite the characteristic *resistance* by the latter – one must remember that such resistance is the function of reason at the level of consciousness. The 'language' of the unconscious is legible in the subject's physical symptoms, childhood memories, discursive omissions, 'idiosyncratic' linguistic expressions and word-selection (Lacan 1977: 50).

If readers were to be puzzled by the psychoanalytical detour, above, the answer is simple: it is necessary as rationale and heuristic for my social-contextual criticism of Hofmeyr's text, which can be read against the backdrop it provides. As we have seen, the unconscious, repressed 'truth' of the psychoanalytical subject (or analysand) can only be reconstructed with the assistance of the knowledgeable analyst. Anyone familiar with psychoanalytical discourse analysis would know that it is hardly presumptuous

to read written texts in an analogous manner, given the comparable occurrence of gaps, omissions and lacunae in texts – what is known in hermeneutics as 'the unsaid' – and that these gaps may similarly be construed as a function of repression or exclusion, in so far as it indexes something intolerable or unacceptable to the writer. Recall, too, that repression is a function of prohibition, then it follows that the conspicuous omission or 'blind spot' in Hofmeyr's argument may indeed be a symptom of her *unconscious* repression of world-shattering events (to be addressed below) – or at least the unacknowledged side of such events, given that she makes nominal reference to them – which have been unfolding in global space for some time now. Significantly, however, the open discussion of all aspects connected to these events has been censored, *prohibited*, by the mainstream, conventional discourse, as anyone 'with eyes to see and ears to hear' can ascertain in the mainstream media – but on condition that one is willing to actively search for and peruse alternative media, where the mainstream omissions are explicitly thematized (Mercola 2022b; Olivier 2022a).

The reason for my belief that Hofmeyr's text evinces signs of significant omissions should be clear, at least to those people who have read this impressive text. Anyone who is capable of the level of penetrating, critical thinking that Benda Hofmeyr displays in her book would undoubtedly have perceived the resemblance between the object of her own transgressive, resistance-oriented, Foucaultian mode of thinking, namely neoliberal governmentality, on the one hand, and that which may, without fear of exaggeration, be described as irrefutable evidence of a prodigious attempt to execute a mondial *coup d'etat*, on the other. It is simply unthinkable that someone who is capable of making the following statement in relation to Foucault's conception of power and resistance, would not adopt a comparably critical stance in the face of this still-unfolding global power grab, *on the assumption that she has consciously taken note of its various manifestations* (Hofmeyr 2022: 138):

> The trajectory leading from resistance to liberation, from liberation to domination, and back again (via resistance) has to be inscribed *in* the very fabric of individual subject-formation as a constant practice or exercise of liberty.

Information about the true extent of the worldwide movement towards totalitarian control of humanity comprises part of what Lacan calls the

'censored chapter' of the subject's life story – in this case that of Benda Hofmeyr; if this were not the case, I believe, one would almost certainly have encountered a resistance-oriented, critical *Auseinandersetzung* regarding its reprehensible actions and programme in her text (which was published in the course of these events occurring), even if, for lack of space, it could not be worked out systematically. Given her Foucaultian awareness of the 'danger' posed to human freedom by neoliberalism, it makes sense that Hofmeyr would have responded with thumotic outrage to this unprecedented danger facing humanity if she had taken conscious note of it at the time. After all: in the history of humankind, *when* has such resistance, as the exercise or praxis of freedom, ever been more urgently required than at *this moment*?

The rhetorical question, above, notwithstanding, it is not difficult to comprehend the reasons why the majority of people worldwide are still blissfully unaware of these nefarious developments occurring right under their noses, as it were (even if such comprehension is accompanied by an irresistible chagrin at their blindness). The chief reason for their ignorance is the fact – evidently itself unknown to the masses – that the mainstream media (CNN, BBC, Sky News, Al Jazeera, the SABC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Times, and even The Guardian, etc.) are, according to reliable information, all compromised, and news outlets (including The Exposé, The Epoch Times, Children's Health Defense and Dr Mercola) which disseminate 'deviant' information are summarily censored (Kennedy 2022; Nevradakis 2022; Mercola 2022; 2022a). Unless one perseveres in searching for alternative, as-yet uncensored sources, where alternative information concerning ongoing events is to be found, one is at the mercy of an ideologically monochrome array of news and discussion outlets, which can easily be identified (Olivier 2021; 2022a). Such alternative sources could be taken down or removed at any time by agents of the New World Order [NWO], as the power complex behind the global *coup d'etat* is known, among other similar designations. At the time of writing this article, I have published more than a dozen essays in various journals and online forums, including four full-length, peer-reviewed articles in national and international journals, on various, related aspects of this sustained attempt to attain complete global power through, among other things, sophisticated digital financial technology (Olivier 2021; 2022; 2022a; 2022b). The indispensable sources on which I have drawn include Robert Kennedy's two recent books (Kennedy 2021 and 2022), of which particularly the first one is thoroughly documented, and whose most immediately important aspects I have summarized in a recent paper (Olivier

2022b). Three other indispensable books should also be mentioned here, given their fearless, extremely informative exposure of what can only be called the demonic activities of the NWO (which is mainly driven by the World Economic Forum [WEF] of Klaus Schwab): Naomi Wolf's *The Bodies of Others* (2022; see especially Chapter 19, titled 'Evil Beyond Human Imagination'), Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins's *The Truth about COVID-19: Exposing The Great Reset, Lockdowns, Vaccine Passports, and the New Normal* (2021), and Peter and Ginger Breggin's *COVID-19 and the Global Predators – We Are the Prey* (2021). All of these books uncover the deceptive, sinister activities on the part of those who comprise or serve the NWO; not only that the COVID 'pandemic' was in fact a 'plandemic' (sometimes called a 'scamdemic'), and that this was only the first phase of their global programme for the appropriation of total power but also that the 'novel coronavirus' was *not* of natural, 'zoonotic' origin, as had initially been believed. Irresistible recent evidence indicate that the 'virus' was created by artificial technical means in a laboratory, and furthermore (much worse) that the so-called 'vaccines' are in fact no vaccines in the true sense – which prevent infection as well as transmission of a pathogen – but are in fact aimed at reducing the world population drastically. In other words, they are 'biological weapons', as several of the leading opponents of the NWO have termed them (while others, more pointedly, call them 'clot-shots'), in the light of accumulating evidence to this effect (Philipp 2022; The Exposé 2022; 2022a; 2022b).

By far the most shocking evidence concerning both the 'virus' and the 'vaccines' was recently brought forward by a bio-technical analyst, Karen Kingston (Wilson 2022), who demonstrated – with the aid of supporting documentation – that the 'virus' is no virus at all, but a technical-biotic creation, which means that it is partly technical and partly alive, and that it functions like a parasite of sorts. This explains why Ivermectin, an anti-parasitical medicine, is highly effective against the so-called 'virus', as well as for clearing one's blood of the 'vaccines', which are related to the 'virus'. As Wilson (2022) indicates, Kingston (2022) made this startling revelation in an interview with Mike Adams (the 'Health Ranger'):

> Kingston is a biotech analyst with more than 20 years of experience. She has been reviewing research that has been conducted on Covid 'vaccines' over more than a decade. 'I really want the truth to be understood and the evidence to be seen and evaluated,' she told Adams. So, during the interview, she discussed some of the patents she

has found: in particular, quantum dots 'because that's the backbone technology and energy of this AI [artificial intelligence] bioweapon,' she said. 'It's part biology and part technology … that's always been the intention of Covid-19.'

Wilson (2022) proceeds by summarising Kingston's (2022) most significant findings, as set out in the interview with Mike Adams, and after listing the relevant 'vaccine'-patents of pharmaceutical companies such as Moderna, she writes of Kingston:

> Moving onto the purpose of Covid tests, Kingston explained the test swabs are to collect people's genetic material and inoculate people with the nano weapon – the spike protein AI bioweapon which is part biology and part technology. It's not only technology but it also has gene sequences, she said. 'This technology is meant to spawn inside the body, it's a parasite … It has not [been fully activated in a lot of people.] The activation is very much contingent on the 5G [and] fibre optics networks … also the quantum dots are activated using LED [light-emitting diode] so there's light activation involved as well.'
>
> She then discussed patents that reveal the shocking nature of the 'spike protein' structures in 'vaccines.' The hybrid inorganic-organic structures demonstrate 'cognitive action' capabilities. They are described in patents as 'intelligent sensor platforms' that carry out instructions. So-called 'spike proteins' seen in electronic microscopy are actually these nanotech platform structures that are small enough to enter nervous system cells and alter their behaviour.

It is redundant to emphasise that this information is more than shocking in ethical terms – given its unrepresentability, it belongs in the category of the 'terrible sublime' (Olivier 1998) – what kind of beings who call themselves human are capable of planning and executing such a programme with the goal of annihilating millions, if not billions of people? Keeping in mind that the decisive characteristic of a psychopath (or sociopath) consists in their lack of remorse and inability to experience guilt, the worst is that these psychopaths of the NWO – for that is what they are – have *abused and exploited the understandable confidence that people generally had in their countries' medical authorities and governments*, to get them to accept what is now increasingly called 'the clot-shot'. Apart from such misplaced confidence,

another reason why people generally repress awareness of the global power-grab underway is probably because subliminally they sense its mind-boggling enormity – the colossal power involved – and feel overwhelmed by it, powerless to stop it. The puzzling question is why *some* people who get to know about it are able to resist it and act against it – but that is a question for another paper.

This is no 'conspiracy theory'; by cleverly branding information which exposes their plans as 'conspiracy theories', the NWO has managed to deflect most of what has turned out to be accurate, if damning information – something that alerts one to the fact that we are witnessing an information war at a global scale. This is evident from the fact that Facebook – one of the companies guilty of suppressing the true state of affairs mercilessly – recently admitted for the first time that the British investigative paper, The Exposé, was correct when it reported in August 2022 that a depopulation programme was in fact underway. According to Facebook, substantiating evidence has corroborated the following (The Exposé 2022):

> Facebook has confirmed that official Government reports, confidential Pfizer documents, and the cost of living crisis proves your Government is trying to kill you and depopulate the planet.
>
> Back in August 2022, The Exposé published an exclusive in-depth investigation and discovered that official Government data, confidential Pfizer documents, and real-world events such as the current cost of living crisis, the alleged impending climate change disaster, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the ongoing development of Artificial Intelligence, strongly suggest that there exists an agenda to depopulate the world, and your Government is, in essence, attempting to kill you.
>
> That investigation was shared by a reader on Facebook on the same day that we published the article, and Facebook took it upon themselves to immediately remove the post and label it as 'misinformation'.
>
> However, the reader who shared our article disputed Facebook's censorship and they finally responded in October to confirm that they were in fact wrong, the investigation was entirely correct, and that the reader's Facebook post is now back on the highly censored social media platform.

This may seem surprising, to say the least, but there it is – notwithstanding the fact that this has not been reported anywhere in the mainstream media (to the

best of my knowledge), it has now been acknowledged in the public domain by one of the most prominent mainstream media (Facebook) serving the agenda of the New World Order (or the World Economic Forum), that this unscrupulous, unconscionable people-slaughtering process is occurring at present. Anyone who doubts this, can look up The Exposé, The Epoch Times and Children's Health Defense, among other news outlets, where they will find plenty of eye-opening information on topics such as the current burgeoning of 'excess deaths' – but should not be surprised if Google, another WEF-serving company's search engine, tries to dissuade them from consulting these news sources. (By contrast, Brave is a search engine with no such commitments.)

The fact that I refer to the NWO and WEF, as well as to people associated with them, as the force behind these heinous crimes, raises a *caveat*, though: is this not to fall into the trap, cautioned against by Foucault (1972: 121), that one must learn to 'cut off the King's head' – that is, that power does not reside in a person, or an organisation, for that matter? Instead, it is a function of power-relations within a network of diverse relations (Foucault 1972: 99, 119, 142, 186). But recall that, as Castells (2010) has demonstrated, contemporary power is a function of electronically networked informational and communicational exchanges located in the 'space of flows', which is compatible with Foucault's conception of power. And given the deftness with which the media agents of the WEF manipulate such informational exchanges to their own advantage, and to the disadvantage of the millions of people who are left in the dark about the purpose of these manipulations, this leaves one in no doubt that one is facing an *information war* on an unprecedented, worldwide scale.

Conclusion

One can therefore only hope that the kind of critical thinking practised in her book by Benda Hofmeyr will, in future, be applied by her to the current deception and lethal abuse of power, aimed at the total subjection of humanity on a global scale (and not only by her, but by an incrementally growing number of commentators). I believe that there is reason to believe that she is likely to do just that, judging by what she writes about *critique* in the conclusion to her book (2022: 154):

> The utterance of critique, rather than premised on a solution, is present-ed as a resource, an instrument that serves to awaken consciousness,

the consciousness of those who (must) seek to resist and to refuse what
is. Critique, then, is a challenge directed to what is, and hence imposes
a responsibility on the subject to mobilise his/her resilient agency,
however minimal it may seem, to recognise and contest subjection.

Moreover, given the role of *thumos* or spiritedness that Hofmeyr has uncover-
ed, including the capacity for anger being conditional upon it, I believe it is no
exaggeration to state that, unless people worldwide start *awakening con-
sciously* and showing *thumos*-generated *anger* in the face of growing evidence
of the unforgivable crimes on the part of the WEF and their cronies in the NWO
(Annett 2022) – from medical organisations such as the World Health
Organisation to governments (who, ironically, *should* be concerned about the
well-being of citizens!) – *it is not impossible that the NWO could be successful
in the realisation of their goal of creating a future where humanity would be
enslaved by means of a technocratic system of total, central digital control*
(which, by all accounts, already exists in China), as Melissa Cuimmei (Ryland-
media 2021) has explicitly indicated (see also Olivier 2022b). To be able to
retain our humanity and relative freedom, it is *imperative* that people should
resist the global fascism which is taking root – in European countries such
resistance has been growing for some time, even if the mainstream media pur-
posely ignore it. As Hofmeyr argues in her book regarding the threat of neoli-
beralism, one may add that, in the absence of individual as well as collective
resistance to the growing threat of mondial totalitarianism, there is no hope of
safeguarding humanity's democratic liberties. In the final analysis one may
gather courage from Hofmeyr's Foucault-oriented remark, that (2022: 138):

> Foucault's conception of power therefore leads, as I have argued …,
> to the conclusion, that 'the conditions of existence which are to be
> transformed are woven from the same cloth as the practice of transforma-
> tion itself' … – they are both of the order of 'an action upon an action'
> .... While the relations of power are indeed *constituent*, the more or less
> stabilised social norms, the norms of behaviour, are *constituted*. What
> this means is that liberty might just be within our grasp, but not attainable
> once and for all. Liberty is not a state, but entails continuous *practices*
> or exercises of freedom. While the ubiquity of power dissipates the
> fantasy of autonomous self-creation, it enables heteronomous practices
> of freedom – a hard-earned freedom that is not freedom *from* power, but
> freedom *through* power, despite power and because of power.

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From what she stresses here it is clear that one faces the task of utilising the very ubiquitous strategies, aimed at gaining complete power over the human race, to be able to free humanity from this suffocating quest for global power. The first rule in this regard is: Do not comply! It is compliance that has led to millions of people suffering injury and death from the 'clot-shots' – and there are signs, ironically, that those who were instrumental in promoting such damaging practices as lockdowns and mandating 'vaccines' are beginning to ask for 'amnesty' (Setty 2022). Obedience and compliance with what the NWO prescribes would be the beginning of the end – especially when one is confronted with the looming 'option' of accepting a 'digital (banking) identity' (RylandMedia 2021), which would enable the WEF to control one's life through programmed 'money'. In the inspiring words of Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985: 153-154): '*Nolite te bastardes carborumdorum*' ('Don't let the bastards grind you down').

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See also the following articles on Kingston's 'Substack' website in a series titled '*Dismantling COVID-19 Deceptions*'. Below is a list of links to the documents that Kingston discusses in the interview with Adams:

- Part 5: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Why are Quantum Dots in the COVID-19 Injections? Karen Kingston, 28 October 2022.
- Part 2: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Psychological and Biological Impact of False Positive PCR-Tests, Karen Kingston, 12 October 2022.
- Part 4: Dismantling Covid-19 Deceptions: Lies, Damn Lies, and Spike Proteins, Karen Kingston, 14 October 2022.
- Video: Biotech Analyst Karen Kingston Unveils the Covid Vaccine 5g Link + Biosynthetic Ai Nanotech, Health Ranger Report, 6 October 2022.
- Biotech analyst Karen Kingston unveils PATENTS and documents describing the covid vaccine 5G link, biosynthetic AI nanotech, 'soft actuators' and NEUROWEAPONS implanted with needles, Natural News, 6 October 2022.
- The Biotechnology experimentation has to be stopped – US has now developed deadlier version of alleged Covid Virus, The Exposé.

- [Moderna, Thermo Fisher partner to manufacture COVID vaccine, other drugs](#). Reuters, 23 February 2022.
- [Quantum Confinement Effect](#), Science Direct.
- [Qdot Label Conjugates for Cell & Tissue Staining](#), ThermoFisher.
- [Fluorescent Inorganic-Organic Hybrid Nanoparticles](#). Wiley Online Library, 19 September 2018.
- [Carbon Nanotubes & Quantum Dots: Army Thinks Very Small](#). Breaking Defense, 7 January 2020.
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- miFIGHT.org website [HERE](#)
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