



**HSRC**  
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# REVIEW

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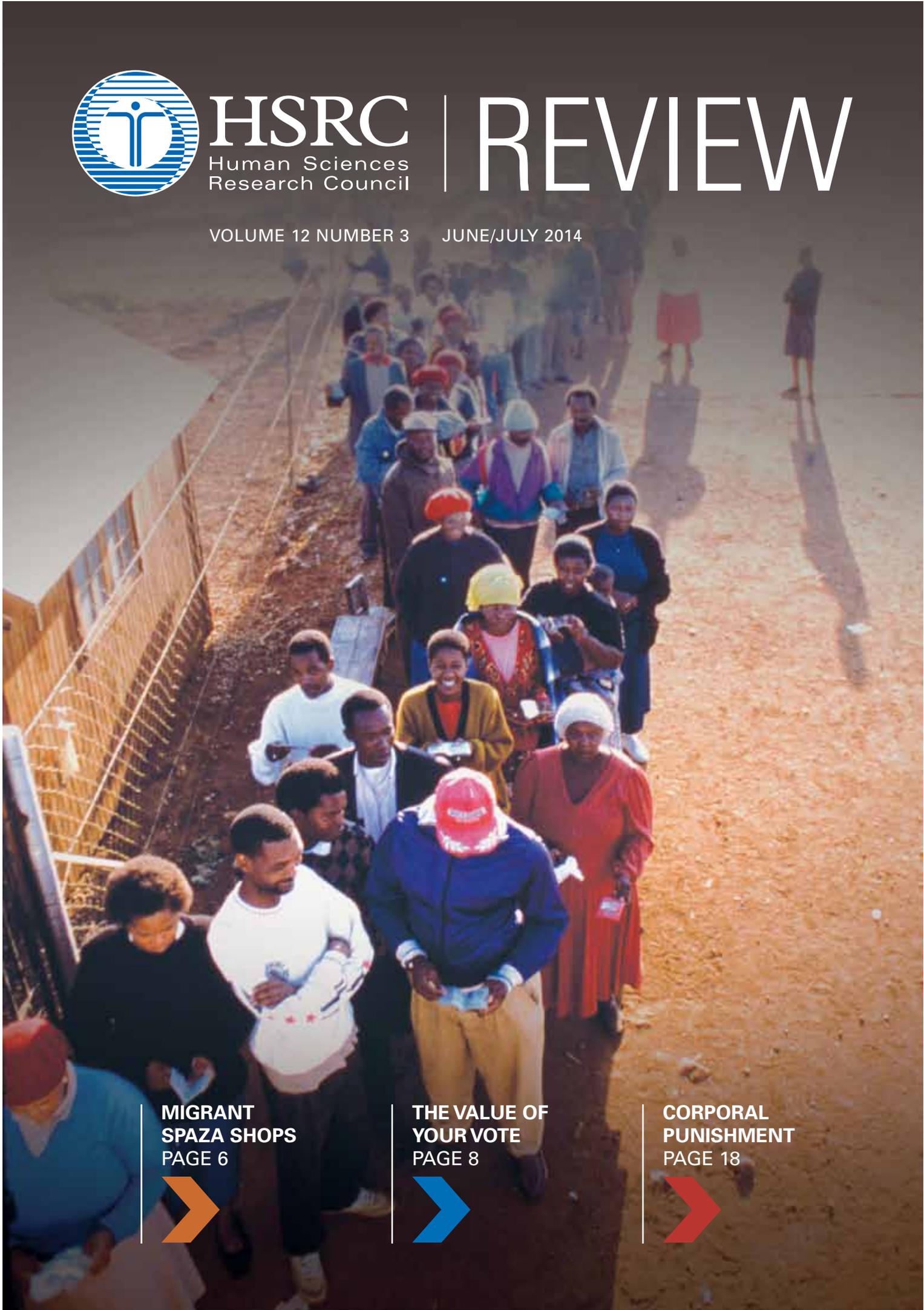
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## FURTHERING THE QUEST FOR AFRICAN SOLUTIONS FOR AFRICAN PROBLEMS

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), a newly incorporated programme of the Human Sciences Research Council, hosted the fourth annual *African Unity for Renaissance* conference (previously called the Scramble for Africa Conference) in Pretoria on 22 May 2014 under the theme 'OAU/AU at 50 and beyond: the quest for African solutions for African problems (ASAP)'.

At this event I took the opportunity to recall the vision, analysis, prescriptions and urgent call to action of the late Kwame Nkrumah, former Ghanaian president, in his speech 50 years ago at the Organisation of African Unity Cairo Summit on 19 July 1964:

'Great positive and social revolutions have created mighty nations and empires, and the waves of these revolutions lap our shores no less than they do those of other countries. Great technological and industrial revolutions have transformed the economies of large portions of the world, and the waves of those revolutions will not stop short on the continent of Africa. A revolution in communications brings knowledge of every change in the world to the remotest corners of our continent. The world will not wait – nor will it move step by step, however much we may wish. It is against this background of great political, social, cultural, scientific and technological revolutions that the emergence of African independence and the development of Africa must be viewed. None of us imagines that we can keep our own pace, immune from interference, isolated from the world's upsurges and revolutions.'

African solutions for African problems is a discourse that helps Africans take ownership of challenges on the continent that are not necessarily experienced elsewhere in the world – or in the same manner. It is a mantra that helps instil a drive towards finding more localised answers to issues of poverty, inequality, disease and unemployment. It is a claim of agency and policy independence that locates Africa and African agendas within increasingly multipolar geopolitical and economic landscapes.

This conference was held at a time of deep introspection and reflection on our continent, occasioned by a number of key anniversaries – the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity and the African Union; the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of apartheid in South Africa.

As we reflect on our successes and shortcomings, we need to ask ourselves, do we have a good story to tell? What research evidence and narratives of lived experiences can we draw upon? Has this evidence, and do these narratives, inform our continent's agenda for 2063?

We welcome AISA into our midst. We anticipate it will make a valuable contribution to addressing the many dimensions of the study of Africa in Africa and reversing the marginality, in global terms, of knowledge production in Africa. We foresee the institute undertaking and facilitating basic, applied and comparative research devoted to the study of Africa and African diasporas. Additionally, the institute will collaborate with and provide research-based policy advice on public affairs to African organisations.

AISA has always had a strong focus on nurturing and supporting young researchers, and this will not only continue with its incorporation in to the HSRC, but will also be strengthened.

Professor Olive Shisana, CEO, HSRC

*This is a shortened version of the opening and welcome address delivered at the opening of the African Unity for Renaissance conference on 22 May 2014 in Pretoria.*



Former president Thabo Mbeki, keynote speaker at the *African Unity for Renaissance* conference.

## FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

‘Beyond lamentation, what are we to do about African leadership?’ asked former president, Thabo Mbeki, at a conference organised by the African Institute at the HSRC entitled *African Unity for Renaissance*. The aim of the conference was to discuss African solutions for African problems, and it poignantly concluded on Africa Day on 25 May 2014.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), through which the continent first publicly and officially acknowledged poor governance lay at the root of its problems, is close to Mbeki’s heart. He pointed to this structure as a solution to answering that question, and agreed to formally address the issue of poor leadership in Africa through the continent’s leaders meeting and frankly criticising each other’s performances.

When it came to the civil war in South Sudan, Mbeki blamed the civil war that exploded there in December on a failure of leadership. Citing another example of dismal leadership, he referred to the son of a leader who embezzled half a billion euros of state money – a clear reference to the son of Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade.

But he also blamed himself and fellow African leaders for meeting under the auspices of the APRM and never saying, ‘We know you stole \$100 million’.

So what are the African intelligentsia to do ‘beyond lamentation’ to produce the leaders it needs to develop and prosper? Don’t expect answers from political parties, Mbeki said. Political parties talk about being servants of the people, but leaders tend to get into such positions simply to line their own pockets.

He intimated that one solution was to revive pan-African civil society movements with an African agenda.

## TRANSFORMING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF THE RURAL CHILD

With financial support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF), the HSRC is involved in rural-based research that seeks to promote the life of rural school-going learners by employing innovative ideas that derive from their environment. There are three multiyear projects – all located in a single rural school district of the Eastern Cape, in Cofimvaba.

The main intention of these projects is to promote and strengthen learning largely using the Cofimvaba community’s indigenous knowledge and human resources, as well as build on its environmental features. Alongside these pursuits is the conscious use of modern technology in the form of ICT tablets.

These projects all aim to transform the experience and quality of education of rural learners. Hence, change theory and participatory action research are used as the key research approach. It is hoped these projects are making a significant contribution towards realising the 2030 educational imperatives for the rural learner. The three research projects are:

- Technology for Rural Education Development (Tech4RED), a joint initiative between different departments, namely DST, the Department of Basic Education, the Eastern Cape Department of Education and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform;
- Promoting and learning from Cofimvaba community’s indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) to benefit and strengthen school curriculum; and
- IKS meets mathematics education: the influence of indigenous knowledge systems on mathematics learning.

## INNOVATION AS A RURAL DEVELOPMENT CATALYST

Slightly more than 30% of South Africa’s population resides in rural areas, which are characterised by inadequate basic services such as water, sanitation, and health and education facilities, as well as a lack of employment opportunities. More than two-thirds of the country’s rural people are poor. Raising rural living standards is therefore a top priority on the government’s agenda, as articulated in Chapter 6 of the National Development Plan.

One recent initiative is an HSRC project that has developed a combination of tools known as the Rural Innovation Assessment Toolbox (RIAT), which can assist decision makers in measuring innovation activities in rural district municipalities in South Africa.

The composite tools enable the generation of unique evidence, about innovation activities across four rural district municipalities. Interactive workshops with local stakeholders have helped to identify high-impact local innovation catalysts. The expectation is that these tools will eventually be applied by many more municipalities.

## INCORPORATION OF THE AFRICA INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA (AISA)

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) was officially incorporated into the HSRC on 2 June 2014 when AISA staff moved into their new offices in the HSRC building in Pretoria.

But the process started much earlier, in 2010, after a number of overlaps had been identified between the mandate and operational activities of AISA and the HSRC, among others, in external institutional review reports of AISA and the HSRC.

On 22 February 2012, cabinet approved the incorporation of AISA into the HSRC; on 9 December 2013, President Jacob Zuma signed into effect the Africa Institute of South Africa Bill Repeal Act and on 1 April 2014 the AISA Bill Repeal Act came into effect.

'AISA will now take its place as a strategic research programme alongside the other six research programmes within the HSRC,' said HSRC CEO, Olive Shisana, at the welcome function for AISA staff.

'The incorporation of AISA into the HSRC allows for an even stronger focus on Africa through different lenses provided by a variety of disciplines and partnerships,' she said.



*Cutting the cord: Prof. Olive Shisana performing the final act in bringing the African Institute of South Africa (AISA) into the HSRC. On her left is former acting CEO of AISA, Prof. Phindile Lukhele-Olorunju, and looking on is Dr Udesch Pillay, Deputy CEO Operations at the HSRC, who headed up the Incorporation Management Committee (IMC) of the two organisations overseeing the process, and Ms Nombuyiselo Mokoena, Deputy Director General at the Department of Science and Technology, who represented the Department in the IMC.*

## IMPROVING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH HIV RATES

An HSRC team led by Professor Linda Richter was commissioned to develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) platform that would contribute to the implementation of a range of interventions in communities hardest hit by HIV and AIDS, to improve services for young children and their families.

The MEL platform will assist in learning and documenting new lessons learnt in a multiyear project involving 16 international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in five countries – Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya.

The project is supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, an American non-profit charitable foundation.

The role of the HSRC team is as follows:

- To assist the Hilton Foundation in assessing the impact of the initiative as a whole – all projects conducted by the 16 organisations, using monitoring data and experiences collected by partners;
- To develop, maintain and promote a learning agenda across all partners in collaboration with other stakeholders nationally, regionally and internationally;
- To develop innovative methodologies to drive improvements in services; and
- To conduct at least one impact evaluation.

On the basis of experience in using digital technologies,

the HSRC has developed a smartphone application (app) to collect household data for international partners. Based on a small number of indicators of children's growth and development, the app generates simple and attractive print outs for parents; gives community workers appropriate prompts to stimulate a child's growth and development, and interprets children's progress in relation to standards for growth and norms for developmental milestones.

For more information, visit <http://melycaba.com>



*Break time: Pre-primary learners receive their warm morning meal at Gatoto Primary School in Mukuru, Kenya. The school receives support from ChildFund. Mukuru is one of the largest slum areas in Nairobi, Kenya.*



*Serving children: Elizabeth Glazer of the Paediatric AIDS Foundation (second from right) with a volunteer working on the Survive and Strive community paediatric programme in Mandevu, Lusaka, with a 5-year-old boy and his grandmother. This programme provides a full complement of primary services for disabled children and families.*

## INTERNATIONAL BODY OF SURVEYORS TO MEET IN CAPE TOWN IN 2015

The world's social survey experts agreed to gather in Cape Town in 2015 for their annual meeting, following a presentation by a team from the South African Social Attitudes Survey unit, which is housed in the Democracy and Service Delivery programme at the HSRC.

South Africa became a member of the International Social Surveys Programme (ISSP) in 2002. The ISSP focuses on topics of importance to social science research, bringing together pre-existing social science projects and co-ordinating research goals. In this way it adds cross-national and cross-cultural perspectives to the individual national studies.

ISSP researchers concentrate on developing questions that are meaningful and relevant to all countries, and can be expressed in an equivalent manner in all relevant languages. Research organisations from the various countries that become members of the ISSP are carefully selected and need to prove their ability to ensure robust methodological rigour.

The ISSP module that will be discussed during the 2015 meeting will be the role of government, which makes the hosting of this event in South Africa even more relevant, since the country's democracy will be coming of age.

## PROFESSOR MAKIWANE TO REPRESENT SA IN THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON AGEING



Professor Monde Makiwane, chief research specialist in the Human and Social Development (HSD) programme at the HSRC, has been appointed as a commissioner of the Global Commission on Ageing in Developing Countries.

The commission was established last year by Partners in Population and Development (PPD). PPD is an intergovernmental initiative created specifically for the purpose of expanding and improving south-south collaboration in the fields of reproductive health, population and development.

Makiwane points out that a major activity of this global commission will be to conduct country assessments on population ageing, health and social protection as well as to identify policies, programme gaps and best practices in developing countries.

The findings of these assessments will be used to design advocacy strategies to inform policy development processes that could contribute to ensuring better economic security, health, dignity and wellbeing in old age.

According to the United Nations, by 2050 there will be more people in the world who are older than 60 years than children who are younger than 14 years. More than 10% of the population of nearly all the PPD member countries will be older than 60 by 2050.

'These predictions pose serious economic, social welfare and health threats in developing countries because of their inability and limited resources to provide social protection, health care and income security for the growing numbers of older citizens,' says Makiwane.

Although acknowledging the fact that South African social security is at an advanced stage as compared to other developing countries in Africa, Makiwane is cautious about the sustainability of these social security programmes. He calls on developing countries to reduce the number of people who were dependent on social security by passing legislations that would oblige the working population to save for their retirement.

'The entire working population, including low income earners, must be encouraged to contribute towards their savings for retirement,' he adds.

The commission consists of 14 commissioners and eight other people, leaders in their respective fields and in society, who support the commission.

# LESSONS FROM MEDELLIN: FROM A VIOLENT CITY TO ONE OF INNOVATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

A city that has cut its murder rate ten-fold over the last 20 years and was lauded as the most innovative in the world in 2013 is worth taking seriously, writes *Ivan Turok*. The *World Urban Forum* held in Medellin, Colombia, in April left an indelible impression on the 20 000 delegates who attended.

There are parallels and lessons for South African cities in the Medellin experience. Two decades ago, Medellin was notorious for being the most violent city in the world. Powerful drug cartels, such as the Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel and paramilitary groups, flourished on the back of deindustrialisation, rising poverty and inequality, and outdated socioeconomic policies.

Armed conflict in surrounding rural areas displaced communities and spurred urbanisation. The tide of migration caused precarious *barrio* (slum) settlements to spread up the steep hillsides around the city because of the shortage of land on the valley floor.

**A collective effort focused on tackling the causes and consequences of violence and inequality.**



## **Breaking the cycle from the bottom up**

Out of the predicament of growing anxiety and insecurity, a popular consensus began to emerge that conditions had to change. This constituted the basis of a collective effort focused on tackling the causes as well as the consequences of violence and inequality.

For a decade and a half, city institutions have been pursuing a bold vision of social transformation aimed at breaking the cycle of economic stagnation, social conflict and deteriorating public services, and restoring civic pride.

One element is a long-term strategy for Medellin's revitalisation, social renewal and physical integration. Sustained urban planning is an overarching theme aimed at intensifying development in the heart of the city and linking the outlying neighbourhoods through an innovative mass transit system.

Second, economic development has been pursued through a series of catalytic projects involving the redevelopment of former industrial sites and run-down buildings for a range of new purposes – incubators for business start-ups, a

convention centre to attract events and tourism, and new headquarter buildings for major regional corporations.

Municipal entities responsible for supplying key utilities have been encouraged to diversify and expand their operations to other jurisdictions in order to become more competitive and to boost employment. Unemployment in the city has fallen to single figures for the first time in 20 years.

**Local residents are intimately involved in all stages of design and delivery.**



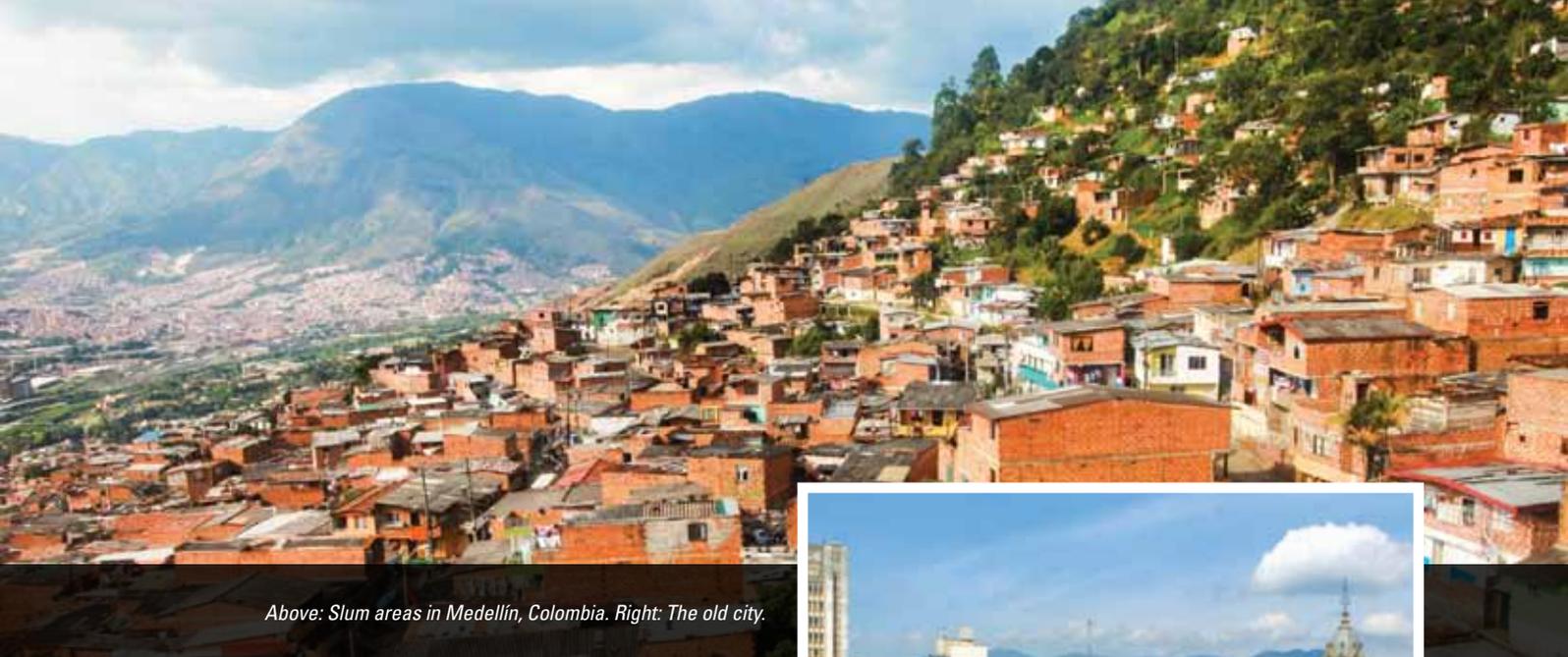
Third, a novel commitment has been made by the public authorities to strengthen the fabric of marginalised communities by investing in impressive multipurpose learning centres, health facilities and attractive public spaces with art and cultural artefacts. Local residents are intimately involved in all stages of design and delivery.

Neighbourhood upgrading has also meant legalising the unauthorised *barrios* and working to improve the condition of people's homes. The city's supply of formal housing has been bolstered by encouraging the growth of private building companies, housing cooperatives and social renters.

Fourth, there has been exceptional investment in a quality public transport network to connect peripheral communities to the economic core. A unique combination of cable cars, light rail, dedicated bus-ways and escalators has been carefully crafted to fit the city's challenging topography. Major new housing schemes built around selected stations have helped to increase ridership and viability.

There has also been a sustained effort to drive up the quality of schools, and health and social services throughout the city. Education is increasingly seen as a strategic requirement to enhance prosperity and wellbeing by developing more creative approaches to learning and investing in people throughout the life course.

So what lies behind this far-sighted social innovation and commitment to transformation?



Above: Slum areas in Medellín, Colombia. Right: The old city.



Education is seen as a strategic requirement to enhance prosperity and wellbeing. ➤

**A collective approach**

The economic and social crisis during the 1980s and 1990s created a special kind of resilience among the population. Its collective resistance to the armed conflict inspired a supreme collaborative effort to reconstruct and integrate the city.

Mature leadership has been one of the keys to success. Galvanised by the city’s downward spiral and loss of life, a cohort of political leaders has emerged who have set aside party-political differences in the wider public interest. Medellín’s long-term development strategy has been sustained from one political regime to the next by informal agreements between the main parties and across the spheres of government to ensure continuity.

Mature leadership has been one of the keys to success. ➤

Extensive dialogue and engagement with the different sectors of civil society and local communities has also helped to build trust and mutual understanding. A social compact across key civic institutions has provided a platform of stability and confidence, resulting in higher levels of investment and practical cooperation.

The sense of common purpose and ambition has been fostered by national recognition of the importance of cities for Colombia’s economic competitiveness and social cohesion. The country’s 1991 Constitution promoted extensive decentralisation of powers and resources, enabling a kind of developmental local state that South Africa has sometimes dreamt about.

Devolved responsibilities for economic and social advancement have been backed by investment in institutional capacity building, both within the public sector and across civil society. Alliances with various stakeholders have helped the city government harness the effort and energy of many different social partners.

**Getting back to basics**

One of the lessons for South Africa is the benefit that can be derived from empowering cities to take on strategic responsibilities beyond basic service delivery. Policy actions and interventions by the metropolitan municipalities are likely to be more effective if they recognise and respond to the causal dynamics of economic and social development.

Civic institutions also have much to learn from the long-term perspectives and commitment to collaboration of their Medellín counterparts. Out of the adverse circumstances of high unemployment, inequality and violent crime can emerge a sense of shared destiny and solidarity, on which to build transformative policies and programmes. ■

*Author: Professor Ivan Turok, Deputy Executive Director, Economic Performance and Development programme, HSRC.*



# MIGRANT SPAZA SHOPS: BUSINESS LESSONS FROM SOWETO

A survey on the operations of spaza shops in Soweto revealed migrants' eccentric business strategies and resilience dynamics. *Trynos Gumbo* and *Simamkele Bokolo* analyse the results.

Almost all urban centres of the world are experiencing soaring informal economic activities. Such activities provide much-needed income and employment opportunities to millions of residents, lifting some out of abject poverty. The South African economy presents favourable opportunities to start and operate small-scale informal businesses to migrants and as a result, the country's metropolitan cities continue to receive thousands of foreign nationals every year.

## The origin and growth of the informal economy

Informal economic activities existed well before industrialisation and modernisation processes, although with slight modifications over the years. The origin of the informal economy can best be explained by four views: firstly, where it is considered traditional and operates separately from the informal sector; secondly, where it is the result of relaxing conditions within the formal sector and as such is closely related to this sector; thirdly, where it operates outside the formal sector due to stringent regulations; and lastly, where it operates to support and maintain social networks and relations.

## Survey methodology

The survey involved administering 120 questionnaires to migrant spaza shop owners, and conducting 30 interviews with South African citizens owning and operating spaza shops, as well as council officials and community leaders. Qualitative and quantitative data on the business strategies and resilience dynamics of migrants were gathered to better understand how they ran their businesses, and to determine possible ways of integrating their operations within their communities and nurturing meaningful contributions to local socioeconomic development.

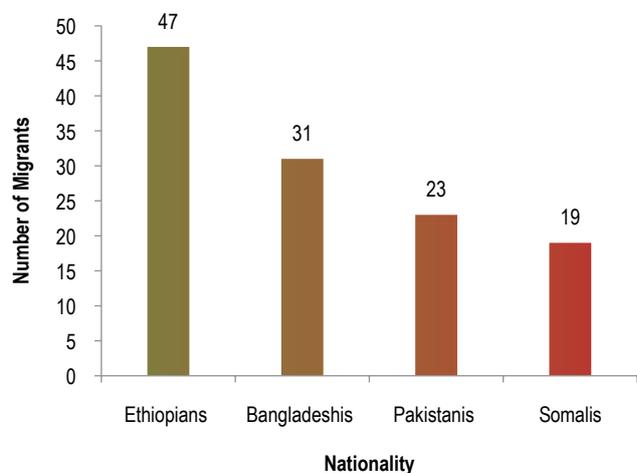
Most migrants joined the spaza retail trading business a year after arriving in the country.



## The results

The survey found the South African informal economy, particularly spaza retail trading businesses, continued to receive migrants from the African and Asian continents (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of Migrants

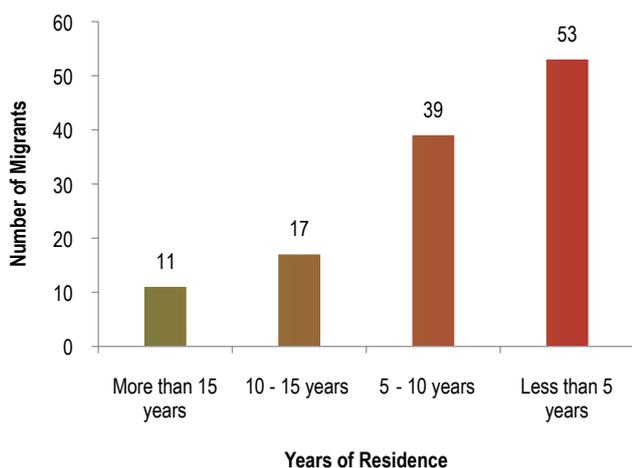


Most migrants joined the spaza retail trading business a year after arriving in the country (Figure 2 on page 7).

**86% had invested huge amounts of money... in their businesses, resulting in significant investments in the township.**



Figure 2: Migrants' years of residence



A majority (75%) of spaza shops owned by migrants had been operating for at least one year, while very few had been in operation for either less than one year or more than 10 years. The spaza shops largely dominated and flourished within the township, as they enjoyed a high and lucrative customer base. A large number (89%) of migrant spaza shop owners served more than 50 customers per day.

Migrant entrepreneurs contributed a great deal towards local communities in the form of retail spend (at stores like Cash and Carry, Devland Cash and Carry, Makro and Jumbo), housing extensions, and plot and township development. They also contributed in terms of rental income to landlords, and reduced prices and increased convenience (in terms of time and distance) of basic goods.

A majority (96%) of migrant spaza shop entrepreneurs paid more than R1 500 per month in rent. A large share (86%) had also invested huge amounts of money – more than R30 000 – in their businesses, resulting in significant investments in the township.

### Migrants' resilience and business strategies

Migrant spaza shop entrepreneurs exuded business intelligence and skills gained through informal training and mentorship provided by relatives and friends. They employed several business strategies that gave them the edge over their local counterparts, such as strategically locating their spaza shops, frequently buying a variety of stock in large quantities, adopting strict saving behaviours, offering lower prices, utilising aggressive marketing tactics and generating loyalty by giving credits (Table 1). Migrants enjoyed social, migration and religious ties that fostered strong business networks. They had strict saving habits and extended soft loans to their compatriots. They also practised hire purchasing

by helping relatives start businesses and making them pay back the capital in instalments; the newcomers only owned the businesses once all the money was paid in full.

Migrants maintained simple lifestyles, channelling their profits towards the growth of their businesses by buying delivery cars and other equipment to use in their business operations. They had also forged strong relations with community members, customers and suppliers, generating loyalty and trust among their key business stakeholders. Migrants also made efforts to learn the basics of local languages to improve communication with stakeholders and facilitate the finalisation of business transactions. As a survival skill, they installed burglar bars and small windows on their shops to secure their goods.

**Migrants maintained simple lifestyles, channelling their profits towards the growth of their businesses.**



Table 1: Business strategies and resilience of migrant spaza shop entrepreneurs

Strategy	Key Findings
Mentorships	High reliance on mentorship by relatives
Strategic location	Street corners to maintain visibility
Huge stocks	Stock to meet demand
Strict saving	Maintain simple lifestyles to save for the business
Small profit, quick returns	Aim not to maximise profits at once, e.g only 20c profit is made on a loaf of bread
Long operating hours	Operating hours are usually from 6am to 9pm
Aggressive marketing	Advertising using bright paintings, product names and local shop names
Network	Social, religious, migration and business ties
Adaptation	Language, customer preferences and expectations

Migrants' shops operated for longer daily hours, promoting flexibility and convenience to their customers, particularly for basics such as bread, milk and airtime. A crucial strategy they employed was keeping their prices lower to attract and maintain more customers and get good returns cumulatively, sometimes selling goods on credit to promote loyalty and repeat purchases. Migrants' spaza shops were situated at street corners to maintain and improve visibility to customers, which helped to boost sales. Sometimes their shops extended towards the main roads and were artistically and brightly painted with graphics of basic commodities to attract customers. They used African and local names such as Phiri to create a sense of familiarity and belonging to the community.

# THE POWER OF THE BALLOT BOX: PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE RIGHT TO VOTE

As the nation celebrates the successful completion of the fifth national and provincial elections, it is important to reflect on how South Africans generally feel about voting. As a response, this article by *Benjamin Roberts, Jarè Struwig* and *Steven Gordon* examines the nature of public attitudes towards voting.

They seldom experienced robberies, but when they did they were mostly at the hands of locals. Although there was general disgruntlement by local spaza owners about the way in which migrant entrepreneurs conducted their businesses, especially the lowering of prices and selling of alternative brand products, such as cool drinks that sell fast at low prices, the attacks could not be directly attributed to business strategy tensions and xenophobia. They were more often linked to general acts of hooliganism and store owners being caught in the crossfire during service delivery protests as easy targets.

## Conclusions and policy recommendations

Migrants are increasingly participating in the spaza shop business in South Africa's townships. They are attracted by the large, lucrative market of high-density populations, and have resiliently and strategically recorded huge successes compared to their local counterparts.

There is therefore a need for local government officials and community leaders to formulate policies, programmes and strategies that promote the inclusive development of spaza shop businesses and township communities in general. Migrants should be actively involved in community development. They should be encouraged to employ locals and enter into partnerships with young South Africans and share their experiences and business skills as a strategy for peaceful integration. ■

*Authors: Dr Trynos Gumbo, research specialist, Africa Institute (AI), HSRC; Simamkele Bokolo, former research intern, AI.*

*This is a summary of a research paper presented at the Urban Informality and Migrant Entrepreneurship in Southern African Cities workshop, hosted by the University of Cape Town, February 2014.*

Since its inception in 2003, the HSRC's annual South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series has asked representative samples of adults a range of questions designed to understand underlying values concerning citizenship, democracy and governance. These included a set of conventional measures concerning attitudes towards the act of voting. This article reflects some of the longitudinal findings but also focuses specifically on the 2013 survey round, which was conducted between October and December 2013 and consisted of a representative sample of 2 885 respondents aged 16 years and older living in private homes.

## South Africans placed a high value on the right to vote.



### The civic responsibility of voting

The 2013 survey showed that most South Africans place a high value on the right to vote. Almost four-fifths of the adult public (79%) agreed with the statement 'it is the duty of all citizens to vote'. This robust belief in the duty of citizens to vote is not surprising, given that prior to 1994 a majority of South Africans were denied the fundamental democratic right of being able to vote in free and fair elections.

When asked if they thought they could effectively participate in and influence politics through voting, the 2013 SASAS round revealed that close to half of all adult South Africans (46%) believed that their vote would not make a difference to electoral outcomes, while a similar share (45%) were positive about the power of their vote.

Looking at trends over the last decade (Figure 1 on page 9), there are distinct upswings in this belief before and after national elections (i.e. between 2003 and 2004, and 2008 and 2009), but these feelings appear short lived. The data also suggests there has been a decline in this belief since 2009, reaching its lowest observed level in 2013.

A sizeable minority believed voting had no discernible effect on electoral outcomes.

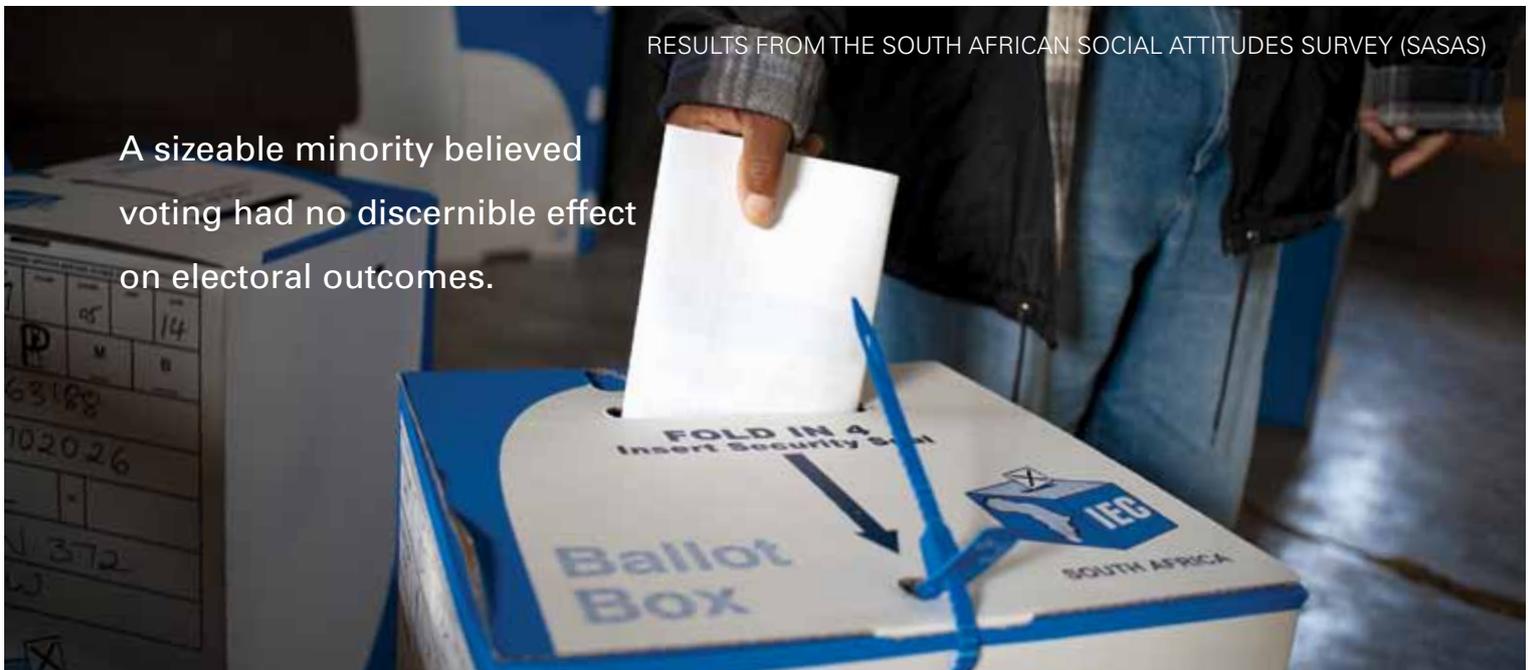
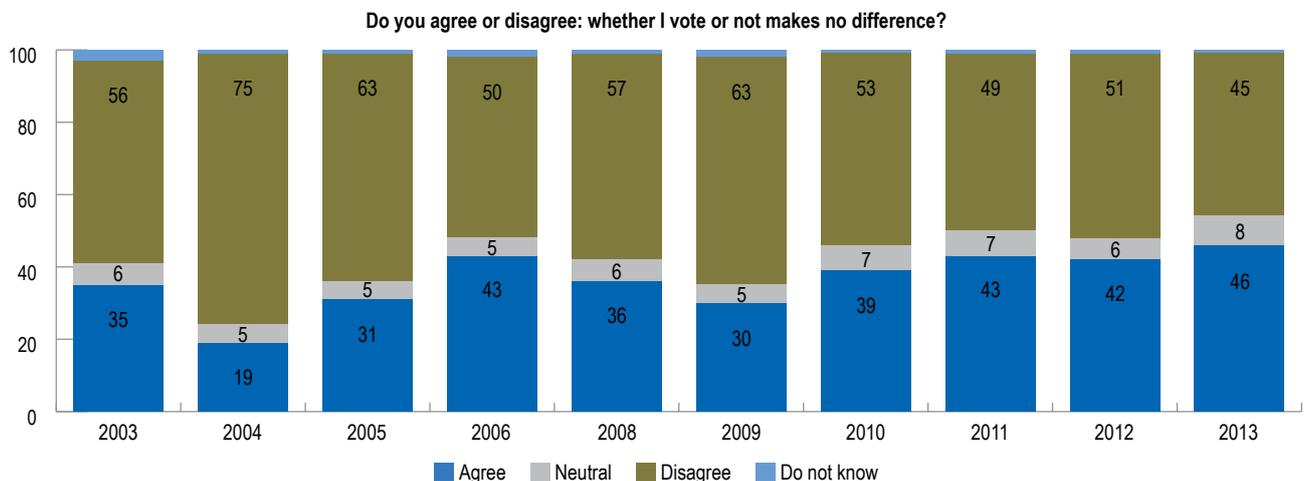


Figure 1: Internal political efficacy in South Africa, 2003–2013 (percent)



Note: Data is weighted to be nationally representative of the adult South African population. The question was not fielded as part of the 2007 SASAS round.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2003–2013

### Do voters believe politicians respond to what they think?

When it comes to perceptions relating to the responsiveness of elected officials, politicians and political institutions to the demands and needs of voters, a similar pattern existed. In 2013, two-fifths (41%) of the adult population agreed with the statement: 'after being elected, all parties are the same, so voting is pointless'. A further expression of public scepticism towards politicians was the finding that approximately two-fifths (43%) agreed with the statement, 'voting is meaningless because no politician can be trusted'.

In the case of both these questions, the proportion of respondents that was critical of elected officials and politicians increased by approximately 10 percentage points relative to the pre-election survey rounds in 2003 and 2008.

The evidence therefore showed that a sizeable minority believed that voting had no discernible effect on electoral outcomes or the responsiveness of the elected to the electorate, and that this perspective had become more widespread among South Africans in recent years.

More sophisticated analysis showed that the belief in

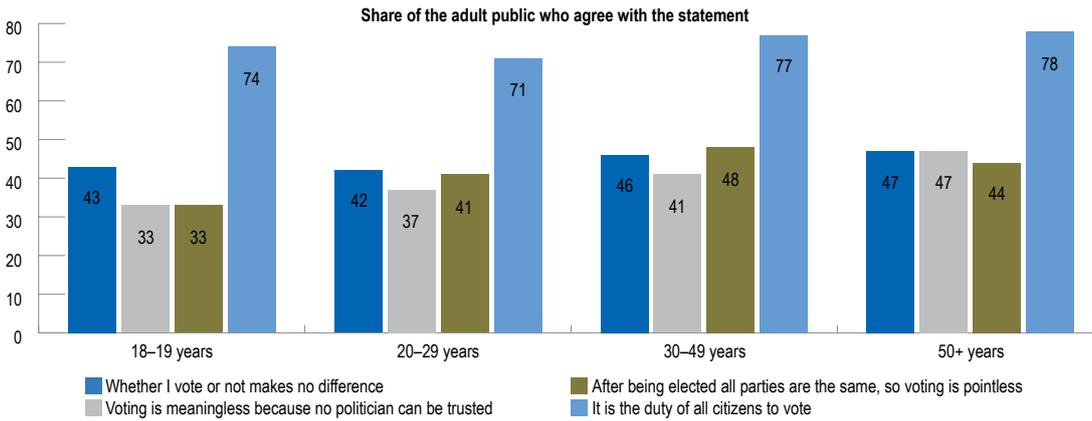
the effectiveness of the vote had a significant effect on the intention to vote and that this is likely to be of increasing importance in successive elections in the country.

### Elections and their discontents

The 2014 poll was the first election in which citizens born after 1994 were eligible to vote, and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) embarked on various campaigns to attract the youth vote. Apart from monitoring patterns of voter registration among this cohort, there was also much speculation about whether the so-called 'born free' generation would differ from or approximate other South Africans in their attitudes to democracy and politics.

From Figure 2 on page 10 it is apparent that today's youth were not found to be considerably different from older generations in terms of the perceived efficacy of their vote and sense of duty to vote. If anything, younger South Africans tended to be a little more positive in their viewpoint. It is also worth emphasising that the sense of duty to vote remained high among young South Africans, with 74% of 18–19-year-olds believing in this civic duty compared to 78% of those aged 50 years and older.

Figure 2: Political efficacy and perceived duty to vote in 2013, by age group (percent agreeing with statements)



Note: Data is weighted to be nationally representative of the adult South African population. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2013

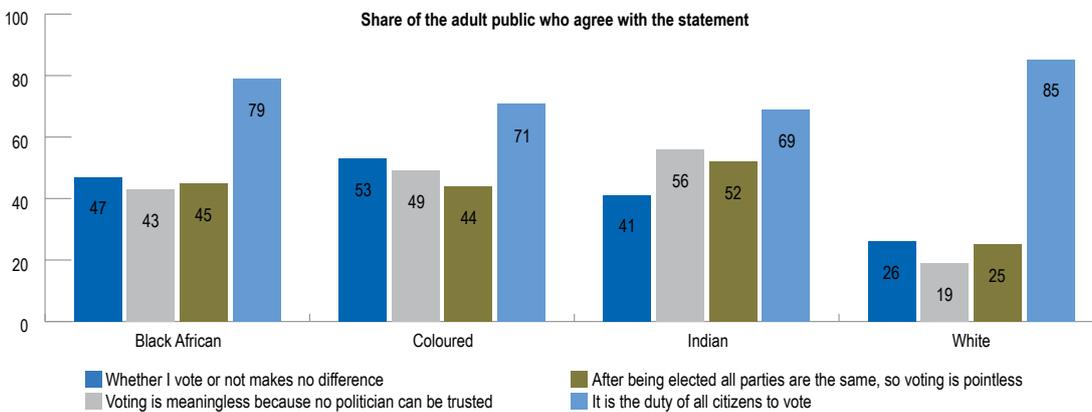
Figure 3 illustrates population group differences in civic attitudes. It is evident that in 2013, a significant share of the black African majority believed that their vote did not make a difference and was concerned about the responsiveness of elected representatives, indicating a level of political disillusionment.

By contrast, the sense of duty to vote and the belief that their vote could change politics was more common among the white minority. For instance, only a quarter (25%) of white South Africans thought their vote made no difference and less than a fifth (19%) supported the view that voting was pointless because all political parties were the same.

Coloured respondents believed the most that their vote made no difference, while Indian respondents had the least faith in the ability of elected officials to respond to the demands and needs of voters.

To some degree the observed variance may be a function of the socioeconomic differences between population groups. Affluent and tertiary-educated respondents tended to demonstrate much higher levels of perceived voter efficacy than their less educated and poorer counterparts. Yet, political beliefs and evaluations of the performance of political institutions and representatives are also likely to inform the differences that exist, for example, between Indian and white respondents.

Figure 3: Political efficacy and perceived duty to vote in 2013, by population group (percent agreeing with statements)



Note: Data is weighted to be nationally representative of the adult South African population. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2013

**Conclusion**

As democracy in South Africa continues to change and evolve, it is heartening to note that the civic duty to vote is still firmly embedded in the national consciousness. However, the findings of this review seem to indicate that the mass public is increasingly questioning the power of their vote to shape election outcomes and hold elected leaders to account. In particular, it is the poor and disadvantaged who are more likely to question the efficacy of their vote, suggesting a sense of disillusionment among this socioeconomic subgroup towards electoral politics.

As the South African democracy continues to consolidate, there is a need to monitor and evaluate the trends outlined in this review, for rising disaffection among the voting-age population has the potential to increasingly place downward pressure on conventional forms of political engagement such as voting. ■

Authors: Benjamin Roberts and Jarè Struvig, SA Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) co-ordinators, HSRC; Steven Gordon, PhD researcher trainee, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery programme, HSRC.



# THE VOTER'S VOICE: OUTCOMES FROM THE 2014 ELECTION SATISFACTION SURVEY

In late 2013, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) tasked the HSRC with conducting two representative studies related to the 2014 national and provincial elections: a voter participation survey (VPS) conducted in November and December 2013, and an election satisfaction survey (ESS) conducted on election day on 7 May 2014. In this article, *Benjamin Roberts, Jarè Struwig, Steven Gordon and Mercy Ngungu* provide an overview of the national results emanating from the election satisfaction survey.



The principal aim of the 2014 ESS was to assess opinions and perceptions of voters and election observers regarding the freeness and fairness of the electoral process. The study was also designed to evaluate the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing the 2014 national and provincial elections. This is important in determining the credibility and legitimacy of the election.

The study was conducted among two groups of respondents, namely South Africans who voted in the 2014 national and provincial elections, and local and international election observers. The target population for the voter component of the study was individuals aged 18 and older who were South African citizens and who were registered

as voters for the 2014 national and provincial elections. In addition, the local and international election observers visiting the selected voting stations on election day were also interviewed. This article looks specifically at the data gathered from voter interviews.

### General voting experience

Voters were asked a range of questions designed to elicit a general sense of their electoral experience. The survey found that more than two thirds (69%) of those who voted were able to reach their voting stations in 15 minutes or less, with 20% taking between 16 and 30 minutes, 7% taking between 31 and 60 minutes, and 4% taking in excess of an hour.

**On average, voters queued for 25 minutes at their voting stations before casting their vote.**



Apart from travelling time, on average, voters queued for 25 minutes at their voting stations before casting their vote, with 66% spending 15 minutes or less queuing. This represented a significant improvement relative to the 2009 election, where on average voters queued for 34 minutes to vote.

At each voting station, the IEC is expected to ensure there is appropriate signage and instructions indicating where voters must go to cast their ballot and what the voting process entails. This is an important element in easing the voting process. Ninety-six percent of all voters were contented with the signage and instructions, of which 66% were extremely satisfied.

Another notable component of electoral management is ensuring the actual procedures that voters follow in casting their ballot inside the voting station are both straightforward and efficient. Ninety-seven percent thought the voting procedures were easy to understand, of which 70% described the process as 'very easy'.

**Accommodating voters with special needs**

Voters were asked to consider the extent to which they felt voting procedures at their voting station effectively accommodated people with special needs. The majority of voters stated the voting procedures considered 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent' the needs of the elderly (92%), persons with disabilities (87%), the partially sighted (76%), the blind (69%), women (87%) and women with babies (83%). Overall, 85% of voters found the voting stations easily accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly, 4% were neutral, while 9% did not find the voting stations easily accessible to these groups.



**Timing of decision on political party of choice**

Voters were asked to indicate when they finally decided who they would vote for in the elections. Party loyalty seemed to have featured to some extent, with more than three quarters of voters (78%) indicating they had made up their mind who to vote for months prior to election day. Only a small share decided their voting preference on election day (7%) or shortly beforehand (6%).

**97% of voters voiced satisfaction with the secrecy of their vote.**



**Perceived secrecy of vote**

The survey found 97% of voters voiced satisfaction with the secrecy of their vote, of which 73% were extremely satisfied. Similarly high levels of satisfaction were found irrespective of the population group, age or sex of voters.

Table 1: Perceived secrecy of the vote, 2014 (%)

	Satisfaction with the secrecy of one's vote (percent)
Very satisfied	73.5
Satisfied	23.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1.6
Dissatisfied	0.4
Very dissatisfied	0.5
(Don't know)	0.4
Total	100.0
Total % 'satisfied'	97.2

Note: Column percentages may not add up to 100% exactly due to rounding off.

Source: HSRC (2014) IEC election satisfaction survey (ESS), 2014

**Political coercion**

Ninety-four percent of voters reported no one tried to force them to vote for a certain political party. Of the 6% who reported some form of coercion, 5% indicated the intimidation had occurred prior to going to the voting station on election day, with the remaining 1% saying it occurred while waiting to vote. Of those who experienced coercion, 27% said this changed their voting decision. The most commonly mentioned sources of this coercion were political parties (45% of cases), family members (29% of cases) and to a lesser extent, other voters (17%).

**5% indicated intimidation had occurred prior to going to the voting station... 1% said it occurred while waiting to vote.**





### Political party tolerance

Political tolerance between contesting political parties and their supporters represents a fundamental component of electoral democracy, and is instrumental in ensuring free and fair elections. More than half (56%) of voters believed that political parties were very tolerant of one another during the 2014 election campaigns. A further 24% reported that parties were somewhat tolerant of each other, while 15% observed that there was no prevailing culture of tolerance.

**94% felt the election procedures were free... similarly, 94% of voters were of the opinion the election procedures were fair.** ➤

### Electoral freeness and fairness

The delivery of free and fair elections represents a central element of the IEC's constitutional mandate and is the cornerstone of liberal democracies. As revealed in Table 2, an overwhelming majority of sampled voters (94%) felt the election procedures were free, while a further 3% indicated they were free with only minor problems. Similarly, 94% of voters were of the opinion the election procedures were fair, with 3% again stating they were fair with minor infringements.

Table 2: Did voters rate the election procedures as free and fair? (%)

	Election procedures were free (percent)	Election procedures were fair (percent)
Yes	94.1	94.1
Yes, with minor problems	2.7	2.8
Not at all	1.6	1.6
(Don't know)	1.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Total % 'yes'	96.8	96.5

Source: HSRC (2014) IEC election satisfaction survey (ESS), 2014

**96% of voters expressed general satisfaction with the quality of services provided by IEC officials.** ➤

### IEC performance

Ninety-six percent of voters expressed general satisfaction (of which 69% were very satisfied) with the quality of services provided by IEC officials to voters on election day, with 2% expressing a neutral position and only 1% saying they were dissatisfied.

In addition, voters were requested to assess 10 dimensions of the conduct of IEC officials at their voting station. In general, voters offered a considerably positive opinion of electoral staff. They rated officials as extremely helpful (83%), friendly (82%), patient (81%), co-operative (79%), professional (78%), honest (78%), knowledgeable about elections (76%), considerate (76%) interested in their jobs (76%) and impartial (71%).

### Voter education

Sixty-five percent of voters believed the IEC's voter education was very effective and 25% believed it was somewhat effective, while 4% indicated it was ineffective. The remaining 6% were uncertain or unsure of how to respond to the question on voter education effectiveness.

Voters were additionally asked to rate the usefulness of sources of information that provided them with information about voting, with response options being 'very useful', 'somewhat useful' or 'not useful'. Radio and television (97% and 96% respectively) were regarded as the most useful information sources about voting. Posters and billboards (92%), as well as newspapers (91%), political parties (90%), pamphlets (89%) and voter awareness booklets (87%) also received broadly positive evaluations. Only small minorities cited these sources as not useful.

Slightly lower levels of perceived usefulness were reported in relation to the IEC communication campaign (82%), civil society organisations (80%), and workshops (77%).

Sources based on information technology such as the IEC website and the 'X for democracy' website were rated as useful by close to two-thirds of voters with access to these forms of media (both 70%). Access to internet-based resources continues to remain relatively circumscribed in the country, so the aforementioned ratings suggest a diversified approach to voter education whereby conventional media sources are strategically used alongside social media to communicate with the electorate.

### Concluding reflections

Based on an assessment of voter interviews collected on election day, the HSRC found the voting public was overwhelmingly confident that the 2014 national and provincial elections were both free and fair, and provided an exceptionally favourable evaluation of the management performance of the IEC and the conduct of its officials at voting stations.

The lingering challenge facing the country in future elections remains the mounting political disillusionment among the voting-age public and the electoral disengagement this is inducing.

### Methodology

A complex sample design was used in drawing the sample of voting stations. The design included stratification and a multi-stage sampling procedure. This was to ensure that a nationally representative sample of voting stations was selected and the results of the survey could be properly weighted to the population of registered voters in the country.

At the actual voting stations, fieldworkers used random sampling to select voters to ensure a fair representation in terms of gender, population group, age and disability status. A sample of 300 voting stations countrywide was selected for the purposes of the study. To ensure representative data from each province, the distribution of the voting stations and the number of interviews at the voting stations was proportional to the IEC's distribution of registered voters.

At each voting station, 50 voters were expected to be interviewed during the course of the day. These were divided into four time slots to ensure a fair spread of interviews over different times of the day, when different situational dynamics might have been experienced at the voting stations. ■

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## IN CONVERSATION WITH SIPHESIHLE DUMISA



Siphesihle Dumisa, reflects on her participation in a research project designed to commemorate 50 years of the existence of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) or the African Union (AU), as it is known today, and her contribution to the framing of a new vision for Africa (Agenda 2063) for the next 50 years.

### As a young researcher, how did you get involved in such a complicated project?

I applied to present a paper at a youth conference organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was subsequently invited to other regional meetings where I had the opportunity to interact with colleagues from the UNDP. Later, I was invited to serve on the reference group for this project.

### What is the project about?

The main objective was to commemorate 50 years of the existence of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) – today the African Union (AU) – and to contribute to the framing of a new vision for Africa (Agenda 2063).

A team was commissioned by the UNDP and the AU Department of Political Affairs. These two organisations are joint chairs of the governance cluster in the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, which is a body consisting of UN agencies and organisations working in Africa in support of the AU and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) programme.

The researchers had to provide in-depth analysis and empirical evidence that could serve as lessons for the future. The research was structured into five regional reports that encapsulated historical and progressive discussions of critical issues that have characterised the continent over the past 50 years, and that are likely to shape imperatives over the next half century.

The jubilee anniversary celebrations were underpinned by three key questions: (1) what has been done over the past 50 years? (2) where is the continent today? (3) and what direction needs to be taken over the next five decades? I would add a fourth question to this – what is the role of the youth in achieving the vision of the continent towards 2063?

### **What did the research involve and how did the young scholars fare?**

Between May and December 2013, a group of African scholars and civil activists assembled in three African countries to provide academic oversight and guidance to the research procedure. Alongside seasoned academics and well-established experts, a handful of young scholars and professionals were invited to serve on the reference panel. The young people were given the opportunity to participate on an equal level with other reference group members throughout the project. We were appointed to chair sessions, make presentations in special commissions, and act as discussants on the regional papers. At no point was our participation in the panel activities indicative of token appointments or bean counting to create a facade of youth representation. When we spoke, we spoke boldly, and we were heard.

### **What do you think was the benefit of the youth's contribution to this forum?**

For me personally the experience of serving on the reference panel inspired me to think critically about the increasing role of the youth in shaping the next 50 years of democracy and development on the continent. I wonder if promoting the philosophy of pan-Africanism could lead to an Agenda 2063 that could rescue the millions of youth who are uneducated, unemployed and deeply trapped in cycles of poverty and disease.

### **How can the pan-African and African Renaissance philosophies assist the AU in achieving its vision of 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena', as described by AU Commission chairman, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma?**

The citizens to whom the AU chairman refers are essentially today's youth; they are Africa's adults, leaders and decision makers of tomorrow. To achieve this vision, it is imperative that the youth takes ownership of it and assumes responsibility for it. However, the twin ideologies of pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance appear to be less important to young people today than in the era immediately post-independence. This makes it questionable whether these principles should remain relevant in Agenda 2063, as this vision is likely to be implemented, and its successes and failures experienced, by people who are in fact young today.

### **There has been much talk about the great resource of young people in Africa while Europe is dying of old age. It's estimated about 35% of Africa's population is between 15 and 35 years' old, with a further 30% younger than 15. But how can the youth be a resource if it is plagued by high levels of poverty and disease, and a lack of education?**

The current situation of youth in Africa is an anomaly – studies show that African youth is the most marginalised in the world. This is not surprising given the rate of unemployment and lack of education so many young people are faced with. Like any resource, for young people to make a more effective contribution to society, we need to put in the necessary effort to cultivate young people's potential. We are sitting with millions of rough diamonds that should be polished so their value can shine through.

The unproductive labour force of young people is a missed opportunity to enhance economic performance. Countries must invest in empowering young people. I think the point should be to create a citizenry that is inclined to give back and help others, rather than having a few succeed while the majority succumbs to the status quo.

### **Why is this so important?**

Democracy and development are instrumental in so far as they contribute to improving the lives of all citizens. If Africa is to achieve better living conditions for all, the poverty and income inequality trends of the past 50 years can no longer be sustained. In light of the rising culture of individualism, it is perhaps here where young people must concede that ideologies remain relevant.

Pan-Africanism teaches us that African unity is vital for communal progress. At an international level, unity behind a firm African Renaissance agenda is fundamental for the continent to reaffirm its power and work towards taking advantage of the changing global balance of forces.

### **How do you think the youth participation in the AU panel activities contributed to the progress of young people on the continent?**

The UN and AU's efforts to involve young people in their projects are commendable, since it is the youth of today who will be responsible for implementing the vision crafted in Agenda 2063.

It is critical that intergenerational dialogue is accelerated. The protests and other forms of resistance led by anxious youth illustrate the increasing necessity for this interaction. I hope that the solutions proposed in the research report will garner support from the youth demographic.

To quote Frantz Fanon, 'each generation must of relative obscurity find its mission, fulfil or betray it'. What is our mission? I cannot say. However, enhancing democracy and development are certainly key aspects of this mission, and the passing of the baton from the older generation to the youth remains an integral part towards fulfilling it. ■

*Siphesihle Dumisa, Master's intern, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery research programme, HSRC.*

*Note: The AU is currently reviewing the completed report, Fifty Years of Building Democracy and Peace in Africa: Policy Reflections and Future Options, for acceptance and ratification.*

# MEDIA 'CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC' ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICA-CHINA RELATIONSHIP

The formation of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group of emerging states has come to epitomise the geopolitical shift that CNN journalist, Fareed Zakaria, in his book *The Post-American World* called 'the rise of the rest'. *Herman Wasserman* explores how the South African media portrays the relationship between China and South Africa.

Despite the various criticisms against the analytical usefulness of the concept of BRICS, the emergence of this group has already led to vibrant scholarly activity across a number of disciplines such as politics, sociology and economics. There is now also a growing interest in media studies on the BRICS countries.

Media studies scholars are interested in, for instance, differences and similarities in the media systems in these countries. While the membership of the BRICS group assumes some comparability with regards to regional economic position (even if the size of the economies and growth rates differ vastly), their media systems range from a free press (South Africa and India) to state-owned and -controlled (China).

In at least three of these countries (Brazil, South Africa and India), huge internal inequalities have a direct impact on the ability of citizens to access the media and participate in the public sphere. Also of interest is the emergence of regional centres such as 'Chindia' on transnational flows and contraflows of media content and capital. These and other topics are becoming focal points in comparative media studies.

## Building China's image in Africa

One area that overlaps with the study of international relations and politics is that of the notion of 'soft power'. First coined by Harvard politics professor, Joseph Nye, soft power describes how states aim to win hearts and minds in the global arena by non-coercive means, i.e. by making themselves attractive to others.

The media can play an important role in these attempts by portraying a certain image of the country abroad. Within the context of the BRICS grouping, the question of media use to promote soft power has arisen, especially in relation to China's increased media presence on the African continent. The last few years have seen an increase in the number of Chinese media outlets being established in Africa. Among these are the state-owned news agency Xinhua, China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI) and the newspaper *China Daily*. China has also invested in training and exchange programmes for African journalists.

This broadening footprint of Chinese media on the continent has been seen as part of a more assertive, outward-focused foreign policy shift by China. In this regard, the media has formed part of what American journalist, Joshua Kurlantzick, called a 'charm offensive'. But a recent counterargument made by Anbin Shi, journalism professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, is that the growing presence of Chinese media in Africa should rather be seen as a 'charm defensive' – an attempt to counter the negative stereotypes of China that are circulated by the Western media.

## Dealing with Western stereotypes

These stereotypes include the view that China is a new imperial power intent on extending its dominance over African countries, that it exploits African resources and labour, and that it disrespects human rights.

**A recurring concern is that China's state-owned media culture will have a detrimental influence on press freedom.**



From the perspective of the media, a recurring concern is that China's state-owned media culture will have a detrimental influence on press freedom in Africa, and that the growing presence of these media outlets on the continent will reverse some of the hard-won gains by media in African democracies. This fear was recently reiterated in the South African context when it emerged that a Chinese business consortium formed part of Iqbal Survé's Sekunjalo group that bought Independent Newspapers.

The question then arises, how have these soft power initiatives been received by African media? And has African media bought into the prevailing Western stereotypes, or has it been telling a different story?



Critiques of Western media coverage of China's involvement in Africa have highlighted the Orientalist tropes of China as exotic, threatening, ominous and unknowable. Paul Zeleza, a Malawian historian and writer, has identified three discursive themes in the representation of China in Africa – imperialism, globalisation and solidarity.

**A balanced approach**

What has been the case in the South African media? How has the relationship between China and South Africa been portrayed?

Contrary to what might be expected in the light of the critiques of media coverage of China in the West, several studies of the South African media suggest that it does not pigeonhole China-Africa relations in terms of negative stereotypes. Instead it has assumed a position that can be described as cautiously optimistic.

China is high on the news agenda. In terms of quantity, China has received by far the most coverage of all South Africa's BRICS partners, with India following in second place. Qualitatively, the picture that has emerged from content analyses over the past few years is that China's involvement in Africa is portrayed positively, especially when couched in business and economic development terms.

Literature about China's role in Africa suggests that China's presence on the continent is often viewed in stark binary terms, as either an exploitative, predatory force or a benevolent, development partner.

Individual reports may still take a stereotypical stance, but these are also refuted by other media – as could be seen in a recent spat between the publications *Daily Maverick* and *Nosweek* about the latter's rather alarmist reporting of Chinese shopkeepers in South Africa. The overall balance between positive, negative and neutral statements may suggest an understanding that China's role in Africa is complex, which cannot be portrayed in simplistic terms as either a bad or good news story.

The availability of Chinese media has contributed to a more balanced picture of China's presence on the continent.



**Changing perceptions on China**

Interviews with journalists and editors have also brought to light that the availability of Chinese media has contributed to a more balanced and nuanced picture of China's presence on the continent. Editors have reported that their views have either changed or become more nuanced and informed over the course of recent years as a result of exposure to the official Chinese views, as presented by the official news agency, Xinhua. In these cases it may be said that Chinese soft power, exercised via the media, has had the intended effect. These findings are preliminary and are currently being developed further by means of more interviews and an extended sample.

What seems to be lacking still is more reporting on the human side of China's growing presence on the continent. For instance, what does the everyday life of Chinese migrants in South Africa look like? How do Chinese migrants experience life in South Africa? Are they experiencing high levels of xenophobia?

These are the softer types of questions that our media should still be asking to round out the focus on the harder angles of political and economic encounters between these two members of the BRICS grouping. ■

*This article is based on a talk given at the HSRC in April and on an article published in the Journal of Asian and African Studies.*

*Author: Herman Wasserman, professor of media studies, Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town (herman.wasserman@uct.ac.za).*

# CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: THE THIN LINE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

This year the South African government is due to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the African Committee of Experts and Welfare on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. *Andrea Royeppen* is waiting to see what government will do regarding promises made in treaties with two organisations in light of damning statistics about violations of children's rights through the consistent practice of corporal punishment at home and at school.

Corporal punishment is defined as 'any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light' by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Some view it as an acceptable form of discipline, others as violence against society's most vulnerable group. Either way, corporal punishment still exists even though it has been banned in schools and alternative care settings such as foster care environments and child or youth centres.

## Corporal punishment in schools

According to the 2012 General Household Survey, 2.2 million children experienced some form of corporal punishment at school in that year. This equated to 15.8% of children who bore testament to the government's inability to enforce the law. Such figures are on the increase even though the South African Schools Act banned corporal punishment in schools in 1996.

Recent media attention and concerns magnified corporal punishment in schools after a 12-year-old learner had to seek medical attention for a wound on his leg caused by a plank that was thrown at him, allegedly by his teacher. In another highly publicised case, a Grade 2 learner in Vosloorus was forced to clean her blood off the floor after she was allegedly beaten by her teacher and suffered a nosebleed for spelling her name incorrectly.

These are just two of several recent cases that have been highlighted in the media; it is believed there are many more like them that have remained unreported or just not received the same kind of media attention. The prevalence of corporal punishment may be linked to the fact that it is not seen as an issue of rights. The rising number of corporal punishment cases in South African schools is no longer merely a moral dilemma, but has been propelled into the national conversation on improving policy to protect children's rights.

## Corporal punishment as a child rights issue

Corporal punishment in schools was put under the spotlight at a recent conference of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), held on the eve of Child Protection Week 2014. Here, SAHRC chairman, Advocate Lawrence Mushwana, identified corporal punishment as a serious hindrance to the rights of children as entrenched in the constitution.

Corporal punishment must  
be ended as it violates the  
learner's rights to education  
and dignity.



'It is therefore of grave concern that there are still schools that administer corporal punishment. Corporal punishment must be ended as it violates the learner's rights to education and dignity,' he said. The outcome of the conference proposed that better co-ordination was needed among education departments, the government, trade unions, educators and civil society to deal with the problem.

A recent research report commissioned by the Centre for Child Law on *Promoting effective enforcement of the prohibition against corporal punishment in South African schools* was presented at the conference and showed there was no consistent approach to dealing with educators who administered corporal punishment. This was coupled with ineffective responses from the government departments in responding to and recording queries. Ensuring accountability, improving reporting structures and more effective monitoring systems were all discussed as points of departure to deal with corporal punishment.

The commitment to banning all forms of corporal punishment in schools is not taken seriously. 



### **Why is corporal punishment still so prevalent in schools?**

It is clear there is an 'official ambivalence' to the ban on corporal punishment, given that 15.8% of the child population was still subjected to it in schools in 2012. The Department of Basic Education has commented on the continued use of corporal punishment by linking it to a reflection of a violent South African society. The routine of violence was a particular area of concern mentioned at the SAHRC conference. Here, Professor Julia Sloth-Nielsen, a senior professor in the Law Faculty at the University of the Western Cape, said that, 'the problem lies with an active practise and culture of impunity'.

The commitment to banning all forms of corporal punishment in schools is not taken seriously. In some cases, parents have either exacerbated the problem by encouraging teachers to use beatings as a form of acceptable discipline or echoed this 'official ambivalence'.

**A ban on corporal punishment... arose out of a need to break the cycle of violence and aggression in SA.** 

### **Banning corporal punishment in the home**

In an effort to address this situation, the Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, made a statement conveying the intention of the Department of Social Development to ban all forms of corporal punishment, both

in schools and homes. While it is difficult to negotiate and prescribe methods of discipline to parents, Dlamini said the treatment of children in the home environment also needed urgent attention and confirmed the government would extend the ban on corporal punishment to the home. The proposed legislation aims to reinforce the government's commitment to the protection of child rights and to reduce the harmful impact of corporal punishment on the development of the child. It would also be used to encourage parents to use more positive forms of discipline.

The ban on corporal punishment in the home will be difficult to implement. Different forms of discipline in the home are informed by different cultural values, religious persuasions and established norms. Evidence generated in research has shown that a prohibition of corporal punishment in school does not necessarily ensure that the rights of children are protected in terms of them not being subjected to inhumane treatment.

It will be interesting to see how a policy banning corporal punishment in the home will be monitored and evaluated. Such a policy will also need to be clear on defining acts of corporal punishment and how parents or caregivers will be held accountable for their actions. Minister Dlamini stated that the call for a ban on corporal punishment both in schools and homes arose out of a need to break the cycle of violence and aggression in South Africa saying, 'Children are impressionable and when those in positions of authority use violent means to encourage discipline, the children understand this as saying violence is permissible when trying to persuade others to act in a certain way'. ■

*Author: Andrea Royeppen, PhD intern, PAN: Children. PAN: Children ([www.children.pan.org.za](http://www.children.pan.org.za)) is a web-based platform managed by the HSRC and UNICEF that provides a consolidated digital repository on the situation of children in South Africa.*

# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF SCHOOLS

School choice is a daunting task for caregivers who have to consider which school will optimally support their child's early social, emotional and cognitive development. *Alastair van Heerden* and colleagues surveyed a sample of households in rural and peri-urban KwaZulu-Natal to better understand the factors that parents in such communities consider when making this critical decision.



Researchers at the HSRC and New York University (NYU) conducted a short-term study of 1 961 children (7–10 year olds) and their families to better understand the factors parents consider when deciding on schools for their children. The study took into account the fact that for many living in low-resource settings, their preferred choice and the realistically practical choice could be very different.

## Study methods

Study participants (children and their households) were systematically sampled from 24 communities in close proximity to the HSRC Sweetwaters office in the Msunduzi municipality in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). This area is characterised by high rates of household poverty and a high burden of HIV, resulting in parental illness and death. Each community was selected on the presence of a primary school within walking distance from the homes that were interviewed.

Of the 1 961 households, 1 891 children were identified as attending school. The following reasons were provided for children who did not attend school: financial problems, chronic illness and disability, school safety and a child not wanting to enrol.

The distance between home and the attending school was calculated for each of the 1 891 households. Researchers found that most children (85.5%) attended a school within a short distance (i.e. 3 km) of their homes. A smaller percentage (13.7%) used schools situated 5 km or further from their homes. Peri-urban denotes areas of extreme poverty at the perimeter of developing world towns or cities. There was often more than one school within the 3 km walking distance of a child's home. This was particularly true in the peri-urban environment.

Caregivers who sent their children to schools in close proximity took into account costs, distance and not having another option.



### Choosing schools

When looking at the reasons caregivers in both rural and peri-urban environments gave for choosing schools that were either close or distant, it became clear that caregivers who sent their children to schools in close proximity took into account costs (34.7% compared to 12.7%), distance (69.4% compared to 7.8%) and not having another option (22.0% compared to 4.2%). Those who sent their children to distant schools mentioned the following reasons: social (10.3% compared to 16.6%); the school's ethos and inherent culture; and the performance of the school (23.4% compared to 73.6%).

Those who sent their children to distant schools mentioned the following reasons: social, inherent culture, and performance of the school.



Parents of children going to a school close by were more likely to perceive the attending school as poor, compared to other nearby schools (13.9% compared to 4.9%). Household socioeconomic status (28.3% compared to 57.3%) and maternal education (4.2% compared to 27.7%) were both found to be higher in households where school choice was exercised.

Although boys and girls were equally likely to go to either close or far schools, slightly more 7-year-old children went to a school close by (24.2% compared to 18.2%) and slightly more 10-year-olds went to a distant school (24.7% compared to 29.0%).

Modelling these responses revealed that those caregivers who chose schools in close proximity were five times more likely to say they had no other choice, than parents sending their children to distant schools. Mothers with a tertiary education were also more than four times more likely to send their children to a distant school.

### Social inequality deep seated

The implications of these findings is that as socioeconomic inequality in South Africa grows, so parents of low

socioeconomic status will find themselves more and more segregated from – and without access to – the better-resourced schools in the country. This is also confirmed by other studies.

As socioeconomic inequality in SA grows, so parents of low socioeconomic status will find themselves segregated from... better-resourced schools.



Although school choice has the potential to reduce racial segregation in schools, the often substantial costs associated with learner mobility make this eventuality unlikely. Rather than the education system becoming a tool for overcoming inequalities in South Africa, current disparities are likely to become more entrenched.

This data suggests that in the current policy context in which school choice is permitted, more thought should be given to ways of making school choice a reality across the entire socioeconomic spectrum where choice is not an option for many families with a low household income.

The decision about which school to send one's child to is a complex, multifaceted, intergenerational decision coloured by the decision maker's own academic history. For many caregivers, the decision is a simple one – the closest school is on the whole sufficient. It is easy to access, safe and affordable. For others, socioeconomic conditions curtail the options available and limit the choice of school. Although parents may wish to send their child to a different school, they do not have the social capital or economic resources required to send their child to any but the closest schools.

Finally, a small but significant group of children attends schools chosen by their caregivers for reasons other than cost and convenience. These schools' academic performance, culture and social considerations all play a role in the caregivers' choice, and the families have the resources to act on these factors.

These findings suggest that although access to education is now broadly available, policy should begin to address the need for access to high quality education within walking distance of rural and peri-urban households. ■

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*This article is based on Van Heerden, A., Aber, L., Richter, L., de Kadt, J. and the SIZE Research Team. (2014). Factors influencing primary school choice in rural and peri-urban KwaZulu-Natal, Children's Geographies, Under Review.*

# THE RIGHT TO CARE

Justice is a well-established principle by which societies and the actions of individuals are measured. But what about care? *Stephan Meyer, Tamara Shefer, Thenjiwe Meyiwa and Vasu Reddy* report on why care matters, based in part on a forthcoming book titled *Care in Context: Transnational gender perspectives*.

Care has been gaining considerable attention over the last three decades as an important concept of concern to researchers, activists and policy makers. Even though care is vital to our survival and development, it was long taken for granted. Such disregard arises from the hidden interest to perpetuate the uneven distribution of the giving and receiving of quality care. As a result, women and girls and people who already suffer economic discrimination remain locked into disproportional degrees of caregiving. In turn, men and boys, and people who are economically advantaged, are locked out of it. While many – including the World Bank – emphasise the ways in which this obstructs women’s capacity to participate in education, economic, political and social life, a big silence hangs over how this reproduces forms of masculinity that are damaging to both females and males.

Caring is an option... open to all,  
irrespective of their biological  
sex and social gender.



## Understanding the concept of care

Originally associated with maternal thinking and feminist ethics, care has since gained broader currency. The initial distinction – men think in terms of justice and autonomy, women in terms of care and interdependencies – is giving way to more sophisticated understandings of the ways in which care is gendered. A nuanced understanding of the social construction of masculinities and femininities shows that an orientation towards care is not a so-called women’s morality. On the contrary, caring is an option, and arguably also a right and a duty, open to all, irrespective of their biological sex and their social gender. In addition, care and justice are no longer seen as opposites. Instead, as Joan Tronto of the University of Minnesota argues, there is a growing awareness that care must be democratised and at the same time, democracies must become more oriented towards allowing people to give and receive quality care.

Transdisciplinary collaboration is broadening and deepening our understanding of three interrelated aspects of care: care as an attitude (expressed in the notion to care about someone or something); care as a practice (as expressed in the notion of caring for someone or something), and care as a value (as captured in the concept of an ethics of care).

## Care as a research topic

Important innovations characterise current research on care. Firstly, comparative studies cover an increasing variety of countries. Thus, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development’s (UNRISD) project, Political and Social Economy of Care, covers unequally resourced and established welfare regimes such as South Africa and Switzerland, and Tanzania and Japan. Secondly, the relations between social policy, welfare and care are becoming clearer, as evident in a further study associated with UNRISD, involving political scientist Shireen Hassim. Finally, there is an accumulation of empirical data on care, for example, on the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, as in a study on time-use surveys led by economist Debbie Budlender.

## The Care in Context project

With its fine-grained qualitative analyses that use the care diamond (page 23) as a starting point, the Care in Context project builds on these studies, culminating in a volume, *Global variations in the political and social economy of care*. Focusing on South Africa and Switzerland, it brings together different care worlds. It also seeks to shed light on the questions posed by authors Shahra Razavi and Silke Staab: to what extent and in which ways are solutions to universal existential questions worlds apart? At the same time, as the subtitle, *transnational gender perspectives*, emphasises, the project underscores the need to develop an improved picture of the ways in which local, national and global care regimes relate to each other.





## THE CARE DIAMOND: WHO IS ACTIVE IN THE CARE FIELD?

- Families, households and personal relations, which extend to friends and community members as embraced in the concept, philosophy and practice of *ubuntu*.
- States and their welfare instruments, which include cash transfers (such as child support grants and pensions) and services (such as public care centres for dependants and social work interventions).
- Markets, which cover companies offering financial products (such as pensions and medical aid) and services (such as hospitals, childcare facilities and home-based care) as well as individual care workers who sell their services on the labour market.
- Not-for-profit organisations, which include voluntary unpaid care but also extends to so-called volunteers who are (under-) compensated for care work done in lieu of other sources of income.

*Based on Razavi UNRISD 2007*

Source: Razavi, UNRISD (2007)

The combination of theoretical and conceptual reflection, policy analyses, examination of care models, and narratives of care offer evidence of the sometimes catastrophic, sometimes subtle consequences when care is neglected. At the same time it gives insight into heroic commitments across communities to care.

Some of the findings include:

1. **Care crises take different forms and are widespread.**  
They may impact countries as diverse as South Africa and Switzerland in different ways and for different reasons, such as health pandemics or ageing populations. Such crises emerge when burdens of care exceed capacities. One form of such capacity overload is when people who are themselves largely in need of care, such as the ill and the elderly, have to care beyond their means for other dependants.
2. **Care greatly shapes and is shaped by inequalities.**  
Gender is one such inequality. Alternative masculinities are emerging that empower men and boys to care more than before. However, women and girls are still more likely to engage in hands-on care for others, a point that the image on the project publication cover seeks to evoke. This effect of gender can be amplified or diluted by other categories of difference and inequality, such as sexuality, class, and migrant status.
3. **Care and injustice interconnect in diverse ways.**  
Care deficits are rightly condemned for the injustices they entail. On the other side, power is not only exerted through the underprovision of care; power can also be exercised through care itself to determine the wellbeing or lack thereof of caregivers and care recipients.
4. **The care diamond is a useful starting point for analyses and policy planning.** It plots a broad spectrum of contributors to care regimes and is amenable to adaptation.

Greater focus on care is emerging on the policy front, both nationally and globally. 

### The impact of care on policy

Greater focus on care is emerging on the policy front, both nationally and globally. Speaking at the HSRC, Minister of Science and Technology, Derek Hanekom, declared, 'Our vision of a developmental state is of a state that is both capable and caring'. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director, meanwhile stresses the imperative to care on a global scale in her foreword to *Care in Context*: 'Governments, the private sector, international organisations and civil society must work together and take concerted action to recognise, reduce and redistribute care work, so that all people can fully enjoy their human rights and benefit equally from development'. Some countries are already turning these words into reality with influential policy guidelines or special government bodies overseeing care, such as the United Kingdom's Ministry of State for Care and its Support and the Care Quality Commission.



## POLICY IMPERATIVES THAT CAN BE INFERRED FROM THE PROJECT

1. **Reduce care burdens.** The material preconditions (e.g. infrastructure and access to resources) that are necessary and that ease the provision of quality care have to be met.
2. **Distribute care fairly.** Inequalities in the distribution of care penalties and care benefits that erode social cohesion must be eradicated.
3. **Empower everyone to give and receive quality care.** The exercise of power through care deficits should be contained through, for example, care leaves, without care in itself thereby becoming a new instrument of coercion.
4. **Enable a diversified care mix.** Different circumstances at different times mean that people need a variety of types of care to be provided in households by states, markets, and not-for-profit organisations. This also means that policy should limit the displacement of state responsibility onto families, friends and households and curb the colonisation of care by markets.

### Putting care in the public spotlight

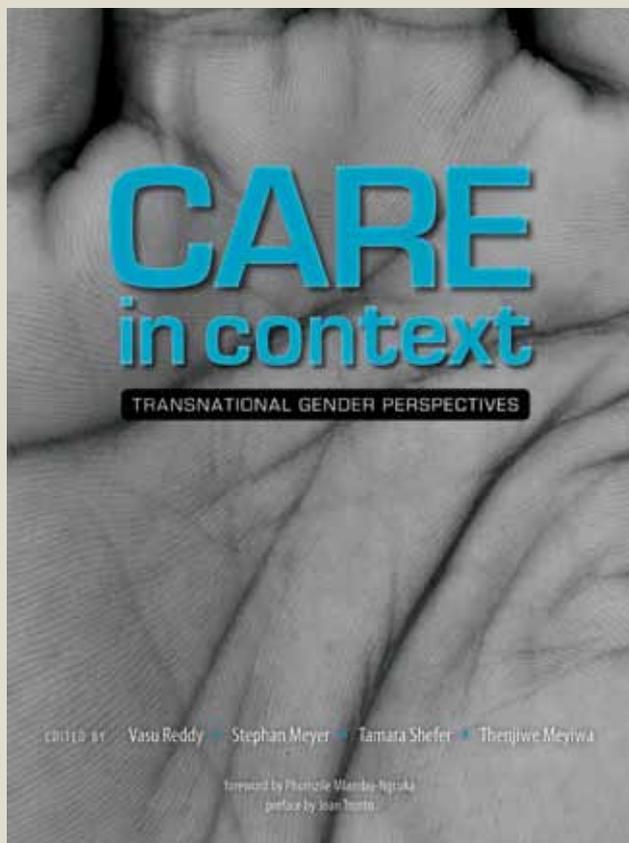
The book, *Care in Context*, seeks to revitalise public discussion on critical questions related to care, such as the kind of care arrangements we ultimately want, through fanning vigorous public debate about the fundamental right to give and receive quality care. ■

*Authors: Stephan Meyer, associate, Center for Gender Studies, University of Basel; Tamara Shefer, Professor in Women's and Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape; Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Research Director, Education and Skills Development, HSRC; Professor Vasu Reddy, Executive Director, Human and Social Development, HSRC.*

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### **Care in Context** **Transnational gender perspectives**

**Author:** Vasu Reddy, Stephan Meyer, Tamara Shefer, Thenjiwe Meyiwa (eds)  
**Pub month & year:** June 2014  
**ISBN soft cover:** 978-0-7969-2419-3  
**Format:** 240 x 168 mm  
**Extent:** 424 pages  
**Price:** R290.00 | \$27.95 | €22.00  
**Rights:** World Rights

#### **About the book**

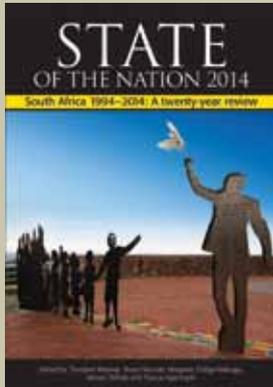
*Care in Context* is a thought-provoking book that looks at gender inequalities in the context of care. Drawing in part from unique transnational perspectives and gripping interviews, this book focuses on key questions that intellectuals, policy makers and all of us who care and need care have to ask, such as, what is good care? Who should be involved in providing it? And how should care be arranged and organised so that the interests of both caregivers and care recipients are equally provided for?

Care is indispensable to human flourishing. Without it we cannot survive. It is vital to the development of all individuals and to that of the broader society. Increasing economic and health problems have also contributed to mounting care crises in different parts of the world. With this view, the book offers fresh and nuanced perspectives and is a definite must-read for all those affected by issues of care.

#### **Endorsements**

With its focus on care in Switzerland and South Africa, this book might appear to put an unusual pair side by side. It is refreshing and thought provoking to have 'the north' and 'the south' compared in this way, and disturbing to see what this demonstrates. Differences aside, both countries are deeply conservative and patriarchal in the realm of family policies; there are serious gaps between social policies and practices; care policies and practices reproduce gender inequalities; the vast majority of carers, in families, in formal and informal economies, and in the volunteer sector, are women; and elderly people are not only care receivers, they also play a significant role in providing care to others. These well-referenced essays from a variety of disciplines constitute a rich resource for the study of care. They set an agenda for the next round of public debate and scholarship on care, both theoretical and empirical.

FRANCIE LUND, *School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal*



**State of the Nation: South Africa 1994–2014**  
**A twenty-year review of freedom and democracy**

**Author:** Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Muxe Nkondo, Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu, Moses Sithole and Francis Nyamnjoh  
**Pub month & year:** July 2014  
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**Format:** 240 x 168 mm  
**Extent:** 544 pages  
**Price:** R270.00  
**Rights:** World Rights

**About the book**

'Deserves to become a regular port of call for everyone wishing to keep abreast of key developments in South Africa today' – *SA Review*

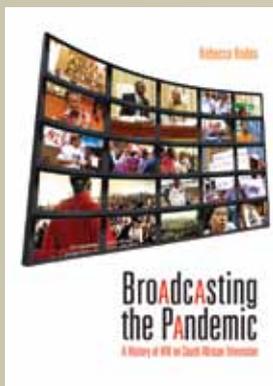
This seventh edition in the internationally acclaimed *State of the Nation* series from HSRC Press is a significant contribution to the debates around the impact of 20 years of freedom and democracy on South Africa. Resonating with a wealth of research in a variety of disciplines and cross-disciplinary fields, leading scholars analyse and reflect on an emerging balance sheet that urges all South Africans towards a fair, coherent and multipronged approach to development in which all stakeholders need to participate.

The two decades of freedom and democracy are viewed through the lenses of politics, economics, society, health, environment and the global context. Each of these sections offers illuminating and significant analyses of topics of national importance.

Across the world, scholars, academics, policy makers and general readers look to the annual editions of *State of the Nation* as influential frames of reference for South African current affairs and the pathways forward.

*State of the Nation 2014* presents:

- insightful reflections on two decades of freedom and democracy, emerging trends and future perspectives
- a definitive bridge between longitudinal studies and compelling narratives
- critical views that will challenge understanding of past and current affairs.



**Broadcasting the Pandemic**

**Author:** Rebecca Hodes  
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**Format:** 240 x 168 mm  
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**About the book**

*Broadcasting the Pandemic* tells the story of a South African television show, *Beat It!* Created during the aspirational years of the political transition in which the broadcast media was poised to democratise the airwaves, *Beat It!* was first screened on public television in 1999 and developed into one of the most powerful health education initiatives in contemporary history. *Broadcasting the Pandemic* traces the show's evolution, exploring how *Beat It!* used the medium of television to inform its viewers about HIV at a time of increasingly rapid infection rates, but in which government education and treatment campaigns were largely absent.

*Broadcasting the Pandemic* pioneers a new methodology in scholarship about South Africa – using a television programme to explore the history of AIDS activism and policy. It provides a contemporary history of television in South Africa, and of its role in the most influential social movement to have emerged from the democratic transition: the HIV activist movement. Its content will interest readers from a wide array of disciplines, including African studies, journalism, public health, sociology, cultural studies and the history of medicine.