WAS / IS / WILL BE

Stories from and for South Africa

Stellenbosch Media Forum 2024

COVER: Maliza Adendorff

PHOTOS: Abigail Baard / Nkululeko Ndlovu

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ESSENCE OF MAKING

FROM THE GROUND UP

letter from the editor

Each decennial anniversary since the advent of democracy has been one charged with celebration. It has been an opportunity for our government to tally up its successes from another decade and set intentions for the next, based on its shortcomings and aspirations.

The focus over the past three decades has shifted from reconciliation and nation-building, to questions around economic growth and social inclusion, and addressing poverty and inequality.

But how do we, as everyday citizens, living everyday lives, reflect on what democracy has meant to us over the years?

The truth is that democracy has meant something different to all of us. It has opened up different doors, and precipitated a variety of conversations. It has led some to appreciate the strides that have been made since 1994, and reiterated to others the ways in which this country might have stagnated.

These are the stories that the BAHons (Journalism) class of 2024 has endeavoured to tell in this year's *SMF* Magazine.

There are those stories that have been widely discussed in the public sphere, while others have been relegated to the periphery for years. You will meet characters that have grown bolder as our country has become freer; who have shared their lived experiences and knowledge to offer a perspective through which we can understand what South Africa ***was / is / will be*** in the years to come.

A mountain as witness

In keeping with the theme of reflecting on time, the cover of the magazine features Table Mountain, a prominent part of South Africa's landscape. While a partial aim of the magazine is to explore how some things have changed throughout the course of South Africa's history, it is important to recognise how others have remained the same.

Table Mountain was home to South Africa's first people. It bore witness to centuries of injustice, and watched as the winds of change swept through the nation. It has been a constant through every stage of our country's history, standing as a silent sentinel to both the scars of the past and the hopes of a shared future.

And the timeline? I think that's pretty self-explanatory.

I hope that as you make your way through the magazine in your hands, you will begin to consider the elements that have unified, diversified, and diverged our country.

But, most importantly, I hope you are moved to reflect on the ways in which your life, your identity, the people you know, the spaces you occupy, and the way you see this country, and the world, have been influenced and transformed by the state of our nation over the last 30 years.

Bayanda Gumede

BUILDING OUR COUNTRY

THE MEDIA IN TRANSITION

From heralding the rainbow nation after a legacy of propaganda and repression of free speech, the South African media landscape had to rebrand, reshape, and regroup countless times. As newsrooms combat the assaults of the post-print world and navigate the digital space, it grapples with the question: What next?

Aurelia Mouton

Over the last 30 years the South African media has played, and continues to play, an integral role in the functioning of democratic South Africa.

"If you do not have a properly informed public opinion, you cannot have a proper democracy," says Max du Preez, founder and editor of *Vrye Weekblad*.

Freedom House, a Washington-based political advocacy non-profit organisation, found that the media in South Africa is free and independent in 2024, scoring it a 3 out of 4. The scoring system works on a scale of 0 to 4 across political rights and civil liberties indicators, with scores reflecting the degree of freedom. Updates are based on significant real-world changes, using the previous scores as benchmarks, according to their website.

According to their 2024 report, this means that "South Africa features a vibrant and adversarial media landscape, including independent civic groups that help expose government malpractice and efforts to encroach on freedom of expression".

"The *SABC* was a proper state broadcaster; it only started changing slowly after the negotiations started after 1990. Until then it was the voice of the National Party and its security establishment. More or less the same was true of the Afrikaans newspapers," says Du Preez.

According to Du Preez, most English language newspapers were "mildly critical of apartheid" and "mostly focusing on social segregation rather than insisting that South Africa becomes a proper democracy in a unitary state".

DEMOCRACY ON THE FRONT PAGE

"Virtually all media in all languages enthusiastically supported the negotiations process of 1990-1994 in principle. The fatherly, almost messianic figure of Nelson Mandela towered over the country," says Du Preez. "Like most people in the country, the media were excited at the prospect of peace and social justice. The entrenchment of the right to free speech in the new constitution heralded a bright future for the media after many decades of censorship and restrictive laws."

"My broad view is that we are still one of the freest media in the world. We have our rights written into the constitution and that's a fantastic thing. We are still an open society. The two work hand-in-hand; the media, independent media, [helps society be] an open society, and open society makes room for [the media]," says Du Preez.

"The media hasn't just contributed to democracy – it has been an integral component of it," says Luke Feltham, acting editor-in-chief of the *Mail & Guardian*. "Our leaders are accountable to the people they serve. That only works with a free press. While there have been challenges and pressures, we have been privileged to enjoy that media freedom in this country over the last 30 years."

Enzokuhle Sabela, a third-year journalism student at the Durban University of Technology, believes that journalists and journalism held great power in shaping South African democracy and informing the public.

"They've kept the government on their toes, forced them to be accountable and serve the country in an ethical manner, even though a lot of work still needs to be done," says Sabela.

The Gupta-era state capture, the Nkandla scandal, the Tembisa Hospital corruption exposé, the uncovering of corruption in the National Lottery, and the Thabo Bester saga are only a few examples of investigative journalism that impacted South Africa.

"Investigative journalism in South Africa is healthier

GRAPHIC: Ubaid Abrahams, Aurelia Mouton


Pastoor
At veg
terug ná
video
Bedrog vir Maties se rugbyspelers: De Beer 'wil aangaan met lewe'
US skop rugby-ster uit wat student seksueel aanrand
Zuma se party skiet op na nr. 1 in KZN
Tragedy strikes Stellenbosch
'Women of Fire' face the flames... (again)
Almal is deur die weer
Skitter met 'n klein begroting
Picking up 'stompies'
MEET THE MAIN EDITORIAL TEAM
GORRELKOP
PULP REVIEW: Rocketman

than in most other democracies, including the big western countries. We have extraordinary people doing extraordinary work [...]. People like Kyle Cowan and Pauli van Wyk," says Du Preez, mentioning the work of *AmaBhungane*, *Daily Maverick*, and *News24* over the last two decades.

"The problem with that [is that it] is expensive, slow journalism," says Du Preez.

MORE OF THE SAME

Industry veterans and up-and-comers alike express concern that the South African media is struggling, citing the decline of print, print advertising, the rise of social media and the smaller 'digital-first' newsroom as part of the reason.

Du Preez believes that the South African media is in "real deep trouble", describing it as "tired" and "a waning influence in society".

"It's kind of odd because journalists are [typically] change makers. We're supposed to be adaptive, and in touch and subtle and whatever. And we prove not to be," says Du Preez. "In the last two [or] three decades we did not come up with new plans, we did not inject new energy, we didn't experiment and explore. We did more of the same. We're still doing more of the same."

Marvin Charles, journalist at *News24* and 2022 winner of *News24*'s Young Journalist of the Year award, agrees that South African media is experiencing a downward spiral.

"The handful of seniors that are still left are only clinging on to the fact that they love their job and [...] that they have a responsibility to share information," says Charles.

IF IT BLEEDS...

"I do not share the opinion that the media is in a crisis," says Rika Swart, general manager of news for Media24. "Media in South Africa is in a transitional period where they need to find themselves in a digital-first environment."

Swart highlights the importance of the media in this post-print era, as generative artificial intelligence (AI) and fake news pervade the online space, but Charles points out that many newsrooms have reverted to the 'if it bleeds, it leads' narrative in a bid to beat social media to breaking news online.

Du Preez notes that perhaps the solution is to steal the social media recipe and go where young readers are active online.

According to Feltham, the South African media is still just beginning to figure out where to go from here. "Like our colleagues everywhere else in the world, South African media is yet to figure out a thriving, sustainable business model in the digital age."

> 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT JOURNALISM IN THE FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE, BUT I DO KNOW THAT THE FUTURE WILL NEED JOURNALISTS'

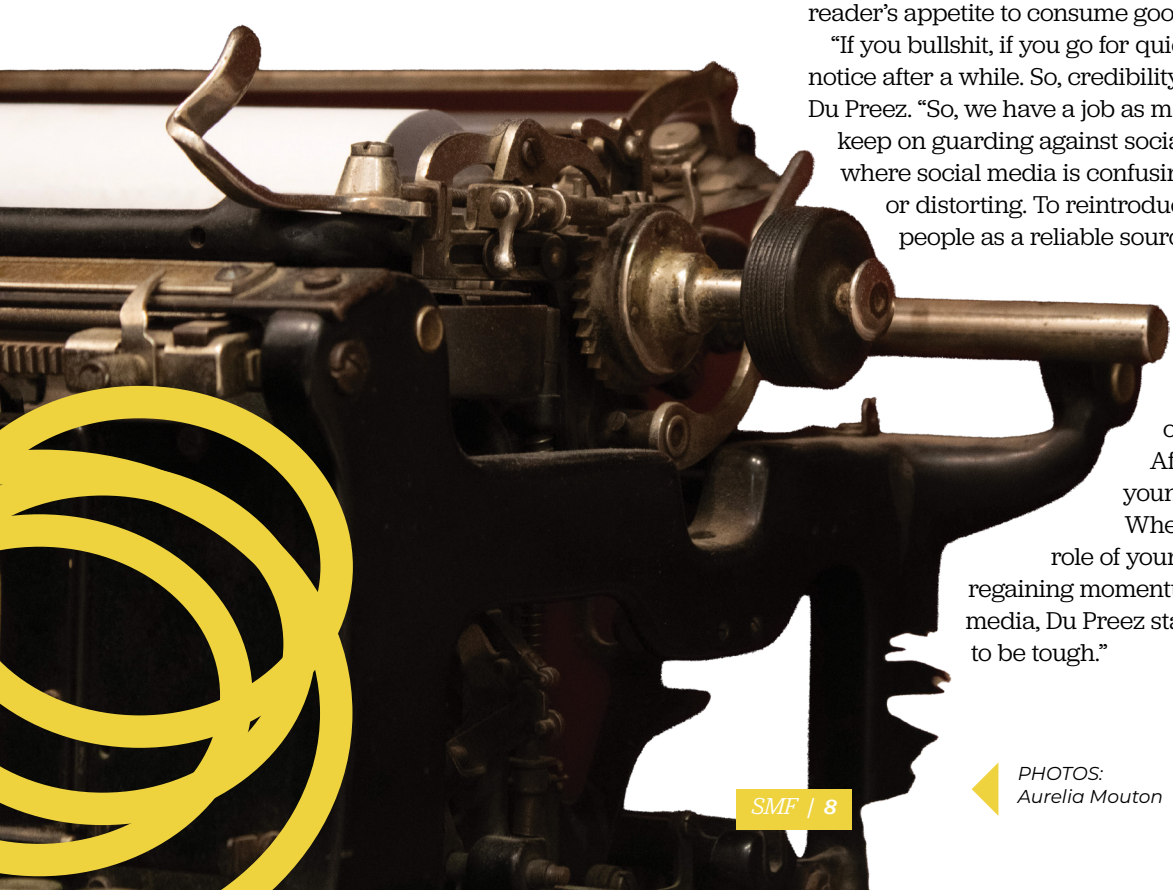
"'Digital-first', when it comes down to it, is just a slogan. How we package our content and the platforms they appear on are important of course. But that shouldn't change a journalist's ethics or professional integrity. Or a reader's appetite to consume good work," says Feltham.

"If you bullshit, if you go for quick clicks, people will notice after a while. So, credibility is what matters," says Du Preez. "So, we have a job as mainstream media to keep on guarding against social media, to engage where social media is confusing people, or lying, or distorting. To reintroduce ourselves to young people as a reliable source."

JOURNALISTS OF TOMORROW

Du Preez, Feltham, and Charles all agree on one thing: The South African media needs young blood.

When asked about the role of young journalists in regaining momentum in South African media, Du Preez states, "It's going to be tough."



PHOTOS: *Aurelia Mouton*

‘IF YOU BULLSHIT, IF YOU GO FOR QUICK CLICKS, PEOPLE WILL NOTICE AFTER A WHILE. SO, CREDIBILITY IS WHAT MATTERS’

Readership behaviour, online user behaviour, a boom in news-hosting platforms and social media news have all contributed to young journalists in South Africa inheriting an uncertain, insecure media landscape. The traditional newsroom is no more, yet editors and the former newspaper reader are still busy finding their feet in the online world. With *News24* boasting over 100 000 subscribers, it is an outlier in an industry where the *Daily Maverick* fights to keep news free to read. This was evident in their 24-hour shutdown in April 2024, which was meant to highlight both the necessity and expenses of quality journalism.

This was soon followed by an announcement by Styli Charalambous, the co-founder of *Daily Maverick*, on 23 September that the publication would be reducings its operating costs by 15%, partly through staff retrenchments.

Charles emphasises the need for young journalists who are “cognisant of the fact that journalism is not for the fainthearted”, and that the job comes with high moral and professional pressures.

Sabela says, “Young journalists need to show that they are hungry and not afraid. That’s what the next phase of democracy in SA needs; fearless journalists.”

“I’d love to see more young journalists embrace journalism as a craft and develop a passion for honing it. That goes beyond seeing it as a career path. You have to truly love it. If a journalist finds meaning in their work, so will their audience,” says Feltham.

“I don’t know what journalism in the future will look like, but I do know that the future will need journalists.”

PHOTO: Aurelia Mouton

CONNECTION PENDING

The number of South Africans with access to the internet has seen rapid growth over the past decade, according to Stats SA. But the cost of remaining unconnected in a digital age remains severe for a society as unequal as South Africa.

Marthinus Botes

Lungile Jikeka is the deputy-principal of Kayamandi High School in Stellenbosch. He has worked at the school for 30 years – practically his whole adult life, he says – and he is still haunted by the school's experience during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I don't want to relive that experience," he says.

Educators at Kayamandi High School did their best to provide students with an education during lockdown. Jikeka says that most students could only come to school once or twice per week. While teachers tried to use WhatsApp to teach online lessons, some students did not have access to cellphones.

Educators and students in Kayamandi simply did not have access to resources that other areas had access to – including digital resources such as access to internet, according Jikeka.

"It was not really effective," says Yolani Furunek, who teaches agricultural management practices at Kayamandi High School.

But Furunek says that internet access in Kayamandi has become more widespread in the years since the pandemic. "I imagine if we had that internet back when it was Covid, it could have been a lot different," she says.

Internet accessibility in South Africa has been growing quickly. The percentage of South Africans who have access to the internet shot up from only 34.4% in 2011 to 78.6% in 2023, according to Stats SA's general household survey for 2023.

However, while more than three quarters of South Africans have access to the internet, only around 14.5% have access to the internet in their homes – a number that has been more or less stagnant since 2011.

The internet's introduction into South African society has the potential to be a major economic and social asset – but economic disparities have made the South African information and communication technologies (ICT) sector a narrative in need of a hero, according to Prof Ke Yu, a researcher in the department of education leadership and management at the University of Johannesburg.

BRINGING INTERNET TO THE MASSES

Designing a business model that can provide affordable internet access to areas without economic resources is a difficult task – but some companies, such as the non-profit WiFi provider, Project Isizwe, have stepped up to the plate, according to Siobhan Thatcher, the company's head of education.

Project Isizwe recognised that for townships and rural areas, mainstream pricing models would not cut it, and that pricing models would have to adapt to accommodate these areas, says Thatcher.

"It's very difficult for Vox [a mainstream internet service provider] to say that they're going to go put fibre into Kayamandi, because no one there can afford a contract of R900 a month," she says.

The solution to this problem, she says, is the R5-a-day model. Rather than having to undergo a lengthy subscription process that often requires bank statements, credit ratings, and letters from employers, the R5-a-day model has allowed customers to buy uncapped internet, one day at a time, says Thatcher.

Alan Knott-Craig Jr, Project Isizwe's founder, believes that access to the internet should be a basic right, akin to electricity and water, not an expensive luxury, according to Thatcher.

"The same is true for every citizen, even if they live in an underserved or disadvantaged community, right? [If] you don't have internet – especially if you don't have cheap or affordable, or free internet that allows you to participate in any sort of democratic way – you don't have the ability to further yourself," says Thatcher.

Knott-Craig also founded Fibertime, a company that has provided high speed fibre-optic internet to Kayamandi, with a similar pricing model to Project Isizwe, says Thatcher.

Furunek says that Fibertime has been a game-changer in Kayamandi.

"Everyone has got that router

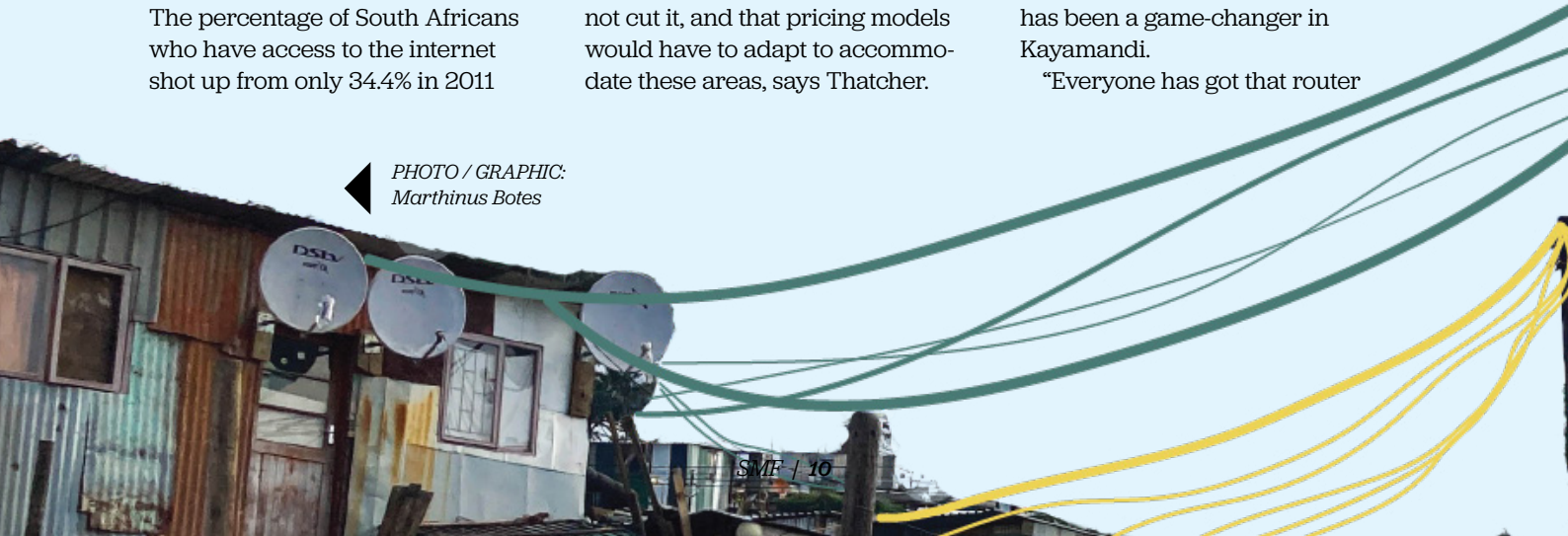


PHOTO / GRAPHIC: Marthinus Botes

to Fibertime installed in their houses," she says. She says that her students pay for internet access every day, which they use for video entertainment and social media such as Facebook and X.

"I use it for educational purposes," says Furunek. "I search for stuff for my lessons, for their assignments, I send voice notes, I send videos to them [...] it helps quite a lot."

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PROVIDING INTERNET ACCESS

The government's role in providing internet access to South Africans primarily comes in the form of legislation that requires large companies – for instance, mining companies – to spend money on their surrounding communities, according to Thatcher.

But the government has, in recent years, begun to take a more active role in the proliferation of internet access. The South African government's Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) has been involved in similar projects to those of Project Isizwe and Fibertime. This includes SA Connect, a project announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the 2021 state of the nation address, according to Hitekani Magwedze, former DCDT spokesperson.

"[SA Connect] is simply to ensure that, especially South Africans in the more rural areas, have access to data and the internet at very low costs, which is at around R5-a-gig per day. It works out to about R250 [for] unlimited access for the month," says Magwedze.

The DCDT, Magwedze says, has already connected more than 74 000 households via the installation of 4 000 Wi-Fi hotspots, and has the goal of bringing internet access to 5.5 million households in rural or township areas within the next three to four years.

South Africa's economy and society is shifting to favour the use of the internet and other forms of ICT, says Magwedze. The importance of the "digital economy" in South Africa's future is of key importance to the government, he says. "The inability for society – especially in the more rural areas – to make use of [the digital economy] further exacerbates their poverty and their inability to participate in the economy."

"Access to the internet and internet literacy are critical in today's job market," says Faiza Xaba, executive director and manager of Siyafunda, a nonprofit organisation dedicated to providing ICT skills to underprivileged communities.

"Individuals who are proficient in using the internet have a competitive advantage when seeking employment, as many job opportunities are now advertised online," she says. Not only can internet literacy get you a job, but it can also be a path towards upskilling, accessing online learning resources, and remaining informed about industry trends.

DIGITISING OUR DEMOCRACY

Traditional forms of voting – where paper ballots are stuffed into cardboard boxes – are becoming outdated as countries become digitised, says Prof Richard Millham, a researcher at the Durban University of Technology. Millham is interested in the potential to switch to electronic voting.

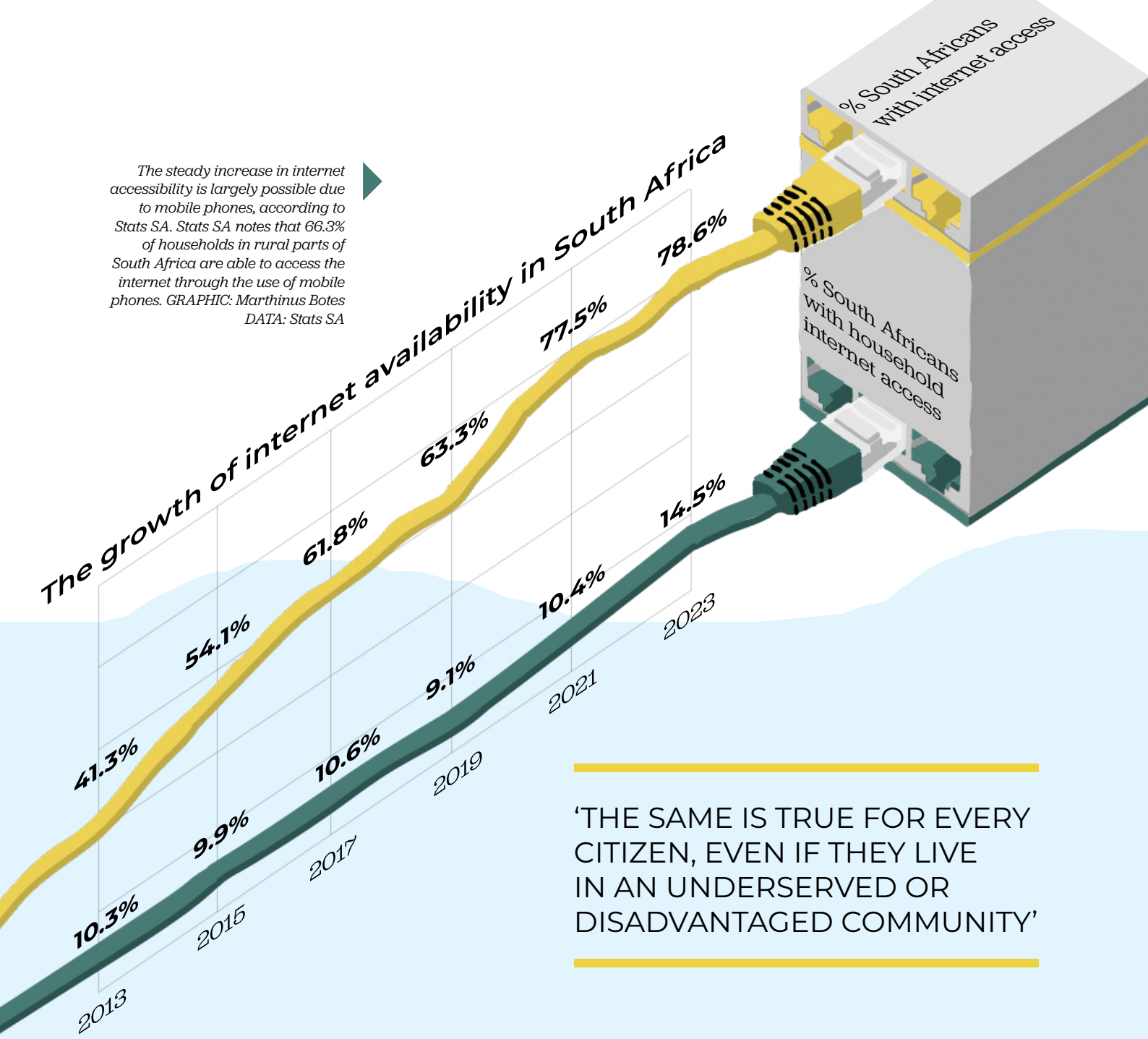
South Africa's 2024 national elections are a good example of the disconnect between our rudimentary forms of voting and digitised culture. Modern, electronic forms of voting may help to streamline South Africa's democracy, says Millham.

"In South Africa, phones are very pervasive. A lot of people have them, a lot of people use them," he says.

Millham has researched the use of mobile phones and biometric authentication to cast online votes, and estimates that online voting would make the South African electoral process easier, fairer, and cheaper in the long run. Not only are electronic votes immune to most forms of election fraud such as ballot-stuffing, but a last-vote-in system – meaning, a system that allows voters to make multiple votes, and only accepting the last vote entered – can give South Africans electoral agency, says Millham.

"One advantage of the last-vote-in is that you could publicly vote for the party that your family, or your friends, or whatever group that is, if you will, coercing you to vote a certain way – and then, later, in the privacy of your home, or some secret place, vote for the party of your choice," he says.

Before the internet can start contributing directly to South Africa's democratic process, there will have to be a large capital investment in internet infrastructure



The steady increase in internet accessibility is largely possible due to mobile phones, according to Stats SA. Stats SA notes that 66.3% of households in rural parts of South Africa are able to access the internet through the use of mobile phones. GRAPHIC: Marthinus Botes DATA: Stats SA

'THE SAME IS TRUE FOR EVERY CITIZEN, EVEN IF THEY LIVE IN AN UNDERSERVED OR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY'

and software – but the idea is already being piloted around the world, and a switch to an electronic voting system will pay dividends for South Africa, says Millham.

THE WAY FORWARD

Implementing more advanced technology and systems may, counterintuitively, cost less than upgrading existing systems.

Yu discusses the concept of technological 'leapfrogging', a phenomenon where the deployment of certain technologies can be skipped, in favour of more advanced technology that can counterintuitively be implemented at a lower cost.

"One of the examples people often talk about is bypassing landlines – which does happen in this country [frequently]. Of course, in early days, landlines [were] the means of communication, but lots of people nowadays – like, at home, they don't need to have a landline. They don't have a landline – they just go straight to the mobile phone," she says.

"So a lot of things can be bypassed," says Yu. "The question is how much that can happen."

Jikeka and Furunek see the value that the internet can have for educators, but the lack of digital resources still acts as a barrier to its utilisation, says Jikeka.

While the internet may have become more easily available in Kayamandi, educators lack equipment such as projectors and interactive whiteboards to use it to its full potential.

"I think we haven't tapped into it as much as we want to because of technology," says Jikeka.

BEHIND *the* BYLINE

Female journalists in South Africa navigate daily threats to their safety, confront stereotypes that undermine their credibility, and battle for recognition in a male-dominated field. A group of young female journalists share stories of survival, empathy, and determination in an industry that still falls short of equality.

Shérie Vollenhoven

"Being a woman in South Africa is always a threat. People have asked me if I've felt unsafe being a journalist in [this country], and I've always responded, 'I feel unsafe being a woman in South Africa.' And that is a sort of threat that a man would never understand."

These words from Julia Evans, a journalist at *Daily Maverick*, encapsulate the profound and often overlooked dangers faced by female journalists in a country where gender-based violence (GBV) remains alarmingly pervasive.

THE REALITY OF REPORTING

One report has shed light on the alarming rates of sexual violence in South Africa, revealing the reality that a woman is sexually assaulted every three hours. This report by Prof Indiran Govender, titled "Gender-Based Violence: An Increasing Epidemic in South Africa", published in 2023 by *South African Family Practice*, delves into the widespread and systemic nature of GBV. The first quarter of 2022 alone saw 10 818 reported cases of sexual assault, he writes.

This paints a picture of the daily dangers faced by women in various sectors, including those working as journalists. These statistics are a reminder of the urgent need for change and support systems to address and combat the crisis that continues to affect countless lives across the country.

"I was [...] reporting a story by myself, and then this man was chatting to me and trying to ask me out. [...] I walked to my car, and he followed me to my car. And I was sitting in the car, trying to close the door and he was still speaking to me," says Evans.

Evans emphasises that safety is a huge concern for female journalists, particularly when covering stories in risky environments or covering stories alone.

Caitlin Maledo, Liza-May Pieters, Tamsin Metelerkamp, Linkie Bessinger, Julia Evans, and Cheréne Pienaar all form part of a younger generation of female journalists navigating the South African media environment. PHOTOS: Supplied

Experiences like hers underscore the constant vigilance required and the additional layers of complexity that female journalists must navigate in their work.

BREAKING NEWS: GENDER BIAS STILL EXISTS

Evans says there has been significant progress in the media landscape from the past, especially in terms of media freedom. However, she acknowledges that gender biases still exist.

"I think 30 years ago [...] there was definitely a more conscious or unconscious bias about the fact that men are smarter [than women] and are more prominent," she says.

> 'IF I WERE A MAN, THAT CONVERSATION WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED LIKE THAT'

"You have to fight for your point or your story a lot harder than if you were a man," says Evans. "[You also fight] for people to actually believe you and take you seriously."

One experience involves a conversation Evans had with two men about her career. When she mentioned that she works as a journalist for *Daily Maverick*, their immediate assumption was that she was part of the publication's lifestyle section, *Maverick Life*.

"If I were a man, that conversation wouldn't have happened like that at all," she says.

NAVIGATING NEWSROOMS WITH CONFIDENCE

"I think the best way to describe my career in the media is to refer to it as a multifaceted experience. Being a news reporter has embraced me with numerous experiences, learning curves, and revelations which I believe one would [find difficult] in any other career," says Linkie Bessinger, a news journalist at *Netwerk24* where the majority of people in her team are women.

Before Bessinger began her career as a journalist, she had no initial understanding of what it meant to be a woman working in the media.

"I was fortunate enough to be raised in a [household] where my father [encouraged] my sister and I [to] believe that we could [do] anything we put our minds to," says Bessinger.

Bessinger attributes her success in the media to being a woman whose upbringing has not held her back.

Contrary to Evans, Bessinger's experience in journalism has not involved discrimination based on her gender, she says.

"I have never experienced a difference in treatment with regard to the types of stories we get confronted with."

In a newsroom, everyone is expected to simply do their job, says Bessinger.

THE EDITORIAL GENDER GAP

A research paper written by Dr Amy Ross Arguedas, Mitali Mukherjee, and Prof Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, titled "Women and Leadership in the News Media 2024: Evidence From 12 Markets", found that, among 240 major news outlets across the globe, only 24% of editors were women. Published by the Reuters Institute, this paper underscores a significant gender imbalance at the senior editorial level. Despite a global increase in the percentage of women holding editorial positions since 2020, South Africa's data presents a troubling reversal. The proportion of female editors in the country has plummeted from 47% to 29%, in four years, according to the research paper.

The situation differs when examining the representation of women in newsrooms more broadly. In a recent interview by Luba Kassova with Qaanitah Hunter – who is the assistant editor of politics and opinions at *News24* – they discuss this issue.

While women constitute a significant portion of journalists reporting on hard news beats, such as politics, there remains a disparity when it comes to high-profile assignments. In particular, exclusive interviews, which often hold substantial influence and visibility, are predominantly conducted by male journalists, Hunter said in the interview. This discrepancy reveals deeper issues of not just representation but also inclusion and influence within the field.

As a result, the perceived advancement in gender representation does not necessarily translate into true inclusion or influence within the journalism industry, according to Hunter.

While strides are being made towards greater representation, Hunter tells Kassova that the persistent gaps in editorial leadership and high-profile reporting assignments indicate that there is still considerable work to be done to achieve genuine inclusivity and equal opportunity in newsrooms around the world.

THE FEMALE FOCUS IN NEWS COVERAGE

Tamsin Metelerkamp, a journalist for *Daily Maverick*, reflects on the nuanced dynamics of being a woman in journalism, noting that gender can sometimes be an asset. "You may have an advantage with women in that people feel less threatened by you when you're approaching them for stories," she says.

While Metelerkamp acknowledges that she encounters online hate, she clarifies that it is primarily due to her role as a journalist rather than

her gender. However, she recognises that online abuse is a significant issue faced by female journalists. Her female colleagues, especially those covering political issues, are often targeted more intensely for both their work and gender.

"We have come an enormously long way in 30 years," she says. "There's always room for improvement, but I certainly think there's a lot more awareness now of what everyone can bring to the table from different backgrounds and how incredibly valuable it is to have a diverse news team. With that diversity comes an understanding of different spaces that you wouldn't have [in] a more homogenous team."

As the media landscape has evolved, so too have the qualities needed to thrive in journalism, where the value of diverse perspectives is now matched by a deeper appreciation for emotional intelligence.

While Metelerkamp emphasises the importance of varied backgrounds in enriching newsroom dynamics and coverage, others like Cheréne Pienaar, writer and content editor at Media24, highlight how traits once seen as weaknesses, such as empathy and sensitivity, have become essential tools for building trust and crafting impactful stories.

Pienaar says that she did not think that she was tough enough for this career.

"Many people reinforced this belief by saying I was too soft and too sensitive. However, as my confidence grew, I realised that it was my gentleness that gave me an advantage."

Pienaar says that empathy is important for a career in the media. "You can be the most focused hard-worker, but if you lack emotional intelligence it will be hard to gain trust in your reader, as well as the people you are writing about."

MAKING WAVES IN A 'DOG-EAT-DOG' WORLD

Caitlin Maledo, a news journalist and anchor for radio station *Smile 90.4FM*, recalls her early worries about being perceived as credible. "I was worried about not being taken seriously," she says.

Maledo has had a different experience than other journalists working in female-dominated offices. Although she only recently began her career, she recalls how male journalists took advantage of her during her internship by giving her work that was not in her job description. This contributed to why she left those offices.

Maledo claims that being a female intern required strength. "You need to stand your ground," she says.

She says that the sexism women face is evident in the outspoken nature of today's female journalists, who often have to assert themselves forcefully to make their points and establish their place in the profession.

She recalls instances where she pitched news stories only to have them taken over by two male journalists, who assigned her the "soft beat" side of the article she had originally pitched.

"If I had to describe [it], I would say that journalism is a dog-eat-dog world," says Maledo. Yet, she says, the women she works with are exceptionally outspoken.

She attributes this assertiveness to their experiences of being spoken over when they first started their careers.

BRAVING THE BEAT WITH CAUTION

Before starting her career at *Netwerk24* in 2024, Liza-May Pieters had concerns about her safety as a female journalist in South Africa, particularly when reporting from dangerous areas or covering events with people she did not know.

"As a woman in South Africa, you already have a lot of worries [...] that males don't necessarily have. [...] You're kind of forced to go into places where it's not necessarily the safest to be," says Pieters.

"Being a woman in journalism is full of ups and downs but eventually, you reach your destination," says Maledo.

GRAPHIC: Shérie Vollenhoven

DEMOCRATIC

The prevalence of disinformation may make people desensitised to it, but disinformation – especially in South Africa's political landscape – poses a legitimate threat to democracy.

Eugene Marais

The national elections on 29 May 2024 were hailed as the most important elections since the historic vote of 1994 by news agencies like *Bloomberg* and the *Daily Maverick*. But as South Africa stood on the brink of this election, a trend began to surface on social media. The elections were overshadowed by allegations on social media questioning the integrity of the vote.

Several social media users – particularly supporters of the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party – shared posts alleging that some ballot papers had already been filled out before the election took place, according to Africa Check, an independent fact-checking organisation aimed at limiting the spread of false information in Africa.

Official members of political parties also shared these claims. Senior member of the MK party, Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, claimed on the social media platform, X, that the African National Congress (ANC) had already started stealing votes in KwaZulu-Natal four days before the commencement of voting. Other claims included allegations of election rigging against the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), according to an MK party press release.

As the dust settled over an election that resulted in the ANC losing its parliamentary majority for the first time since 1994, the MK party applied to the Electoral Court of South Africa to set aside the 2024 election results and order President Cyril Ramaphosa to proclaim new elections. The MK party's spokesperson, Nhlamulo Ndhlela, claimed during a media briefing that the MK party had actually won a two-thirds majority, not the 14.58% that the IEC announced.

Several videos and photos of purported rigging quickly spread across various social media platforms, circulated by party members and supporters alike, trying to popularise the notion that the election was stolen from MK.

STOPPING A WILDFIRE

False information, such as the videos mentioned, has a way of spreading like wildfire regardless of its validity or the reputation of its source, says Kirsten Cosser, a researcher at Africa Check.

"[A] fundamental issue with fact-checking is that the speed at which false information travels is always going to be much faster than the fact-checking," she says.

Most of Africa Check's work consists of news and social media monitoring in search of claims to debunk, says Cosser.

"We look at targeting claims that have a really big reach or a really big audience. So, if something is claimed by a public figure [...] or if something is going viral on social media, we prioritise that, but then we also balance it with what we assess to be the sort of likelihood of causing harm," she says.

During the course of the elections, Africa Check published several articles debunking trending claims, such as the MK party's election rigging allegations and an artificial intelligence (AI) generated video of former United States (US) president, Donald Trump, encouraging South Africans to vote for the party.

Cosser says that in the days leading up to voting day, they saw an increase in online disinformation.

"There seemed to be a lot of public interest in it because [it] was something [that was] in the news quite a lot. Obviously, potential harm is quite large if trust in electoral integrity or electoral systems is undermined," Cosser says.

Waiting for claims to become viral before addressing them means that the information has already spread, and accurate corrections never spread as far as the false statement that it follows, says Cosser. Africa Check has therefore started "pre-bunking" in an attempt to be more proactive, she says.

"It's basically trying to predict

GRAPHIC: Eugene Marais

DISRUPTION

what kinds of false information about a particular topic will come up and pre-empt that and provide accurate information before something arises that could be false," she says. "When people are actually exposed to false information around these topics, they already know that it is false."

'CORRELATION, BUT NOT CAUSATION'

False information can have a major impact on the public's perception of particular topics, especially when it comes to politics, says Kira Alberts, research associate at Stellenbosch University's (SU) Centre for Research on Democracy (CREDO).

"[The impact] is something that's very hard to put into numbers or statistics because even in elections, people want to say 'Oh, false information swayed the election outcome'. [It] would be so easy and so nice to have that definitive line. But we can sort of establish correlation, but not causation," she explains.

"So it's very tough to measure, but what we do know is that it's very effective in swaying discourse and getting that inflammatory messaging out there," she says. "The more inflammatory a message is, the further it goes, [...] and in a very polarised society, disinformation just takes root much faster."

The unrest in parts of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in July 2021 showed how easily false information can flourish under such conditions. This is according to Masego Mafata, a master's student in sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand researching the unrest in Vosloorus, Johannesburg. Mafata says that she still doesn't know what the sole cause of the unrest was, but that false information played a significant role.

"Information was taken and manipulated to galvanise and mobilise people who were already disgruntled," she says. "When you look at a factor like information, [...] you start to see that the ground was fertile for false information to be used in Vosloorus to mobilise crowds in order to ensure that there's involvement or there's participation in the activities of the July riots."

A DIFFERENCE IN INTENT

False information can be split into two categories, according to Alberts: disinformation and misinformation.

"The difference is the intention. So, disinformation is the deliberate spread of harmful information with an intention to sway opinion or cause any public harm, whereas misinformation is merely the spread of false information. There's no deliberate intention [to deceive] behind it," she says.

This means that the spreading of misinformation can be treated through regular fact-checking, consumer awareness, and media literacy, according to Jean le Roux, senior investigator at Graphika, a social network mapping and analysis firm based in the U.S.

"With misinformation, you're focussing on the content so you're looking at what [claim was] made and you try and debunk that. And that's a relatively easy process," says Le Roux.

However, he says, disinformation is more challenging to combat. "No person spreading disinformation deliberately is going to bother themselves with reading a fact-check, because they likely know the evidence or the narrative they're spreading is false. For them, it's about getting that false narrative across regardless," he says.

While disinformation should be taken seriously, the term is also used to undermine legitimate concerns. This is according to Prof Nicola de Jager, chair of the department of political science at SU.

"There are definitely those who are spreading misinformation and disinformation, but there are also those who use the term to silence and delegitimise dissent, opposition and alternative approaches," she says. "And so, for me, it's a term that you need to recognise that it can be true and it can also be used for other purposes."

DEMOCRACY IS MORE THAN FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

The spread of disinformation is a growing problem in South Africa, according to Alberts. "It's very difficult to detect and counter, and the ways we are developing to detect and counter [it] are much slower than the methods developing to spread disinformation," she explains.

A good example of a coordinated disinformation campaign in South Africa, according to Alberts, is the Bell Pottinger scandal.

The British public relations firm was responsible for spreading

PAINTING: Lara Smith

disinformation to drive racial tensions in South Africa between 2016 and 2017. This was done to direct attention away from the state capture activities of the Guptas and former president Jacob Zuma, according to an article by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, titled "Bell Pottinger 'Incited Racial Hatred' in South Africa".

"Those campaigns had a very clear agenda to promote and whitewash the image of the Gupta family with all of the corruption allegations the dodgy friendships with politicians. All of those things were topics and narratives they needed to do away with," says Le Roux.

'DEMOCRACY IS MORE THAN JUST FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS'

To do this, the firm exploited racial tensions in South Africa, according to Alberts.

"Bell Pottinger [...] made use of existing racial tensions and pressed on the pressure points in society to gain reaction and ensure that the disinformation spreads further," she says.

While the days of the Guptas and disinformation campaigns seemed to be behind us, this year's elections were a stark reminder that these threats can always return, says Alberts.

De Jager's opinion is that the recent campaign of the MK party was a strategy to undermine democratic institutions, and to lay doubt on the outcome of the election. "[The MK party] want the Constitution to be scrapped, and in doing that, [they] want all democratic institutions to be scrapped. They're not looking for a democracy," she claims.

AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

Alberts believes that disinformation is a threat to democracy. Disinformation should be stopped, she says, but to stop it, another element of democracy must be infringed upon – freedom of speech.

"It's a big ethical dilemma, and I think that's also why it's taken us so long to take action in terms of legislating against it," she says. "Because how do you really counter it? There isn't a clear answer."

De Jager agrees that the infringement on people's freedom of speech presents a problem. In a democracy, people should have access to various sources of information so that they can make informed decisions, she says.

"Many [units countering disinformation] are detecting news that is countered to a certain viewpoint. And that's where democracy is very problematic, because you're literally silencing alternative news," she explains.

One thing that is clear is the threat that disinformation poses to democracy in South Africa.

"Democracy is more than just free and fair elections. Democracy is accountability. It is active public participation," says Alberts.

"Things aren't looking great and I believe the spread of false information plays a big role in that."

NEAR-MISS

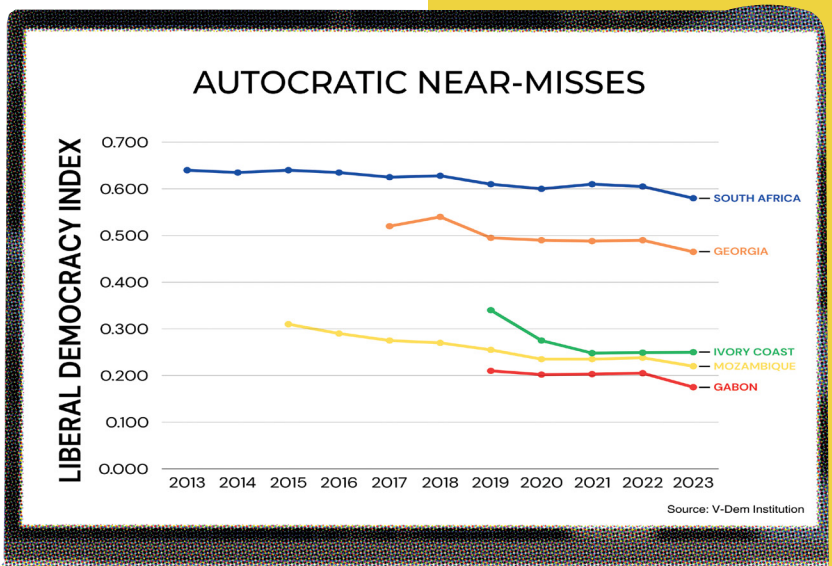
Kira Alberts is a research associate at Stellenbosch University's Centre for Research on Democracy (CREDO) and specialises in weaponised communication. She says that, through her research, she can see how much trouble democracy is in on a global scale.

The Variety of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, a Sweden-based institution that analyses the qualities of different governments, seems to corroborate this view in its latest annual report.

According to its 2024 Democracy Report, about 71% of the world's population lives in autocracies – an increase from 48% ten years ago. The report sorts governments into four categories:

1. **Liberal democracy:** The protection of civil liberties and equality before the law.
2. **Electoral democracy:** Elections with multiple parties that are free and fair, and satisfactory degrees of suffrage, freedom of expression, and freedom of association.
3. **Electoral autocracy:** Elections with multiple parties exist, but are not necessarily free and fair, and insufficient levels of freedom of expression.
4. **Closed autocracy:** Absence of freedom of expression, freedom of association and free, and fair elections.

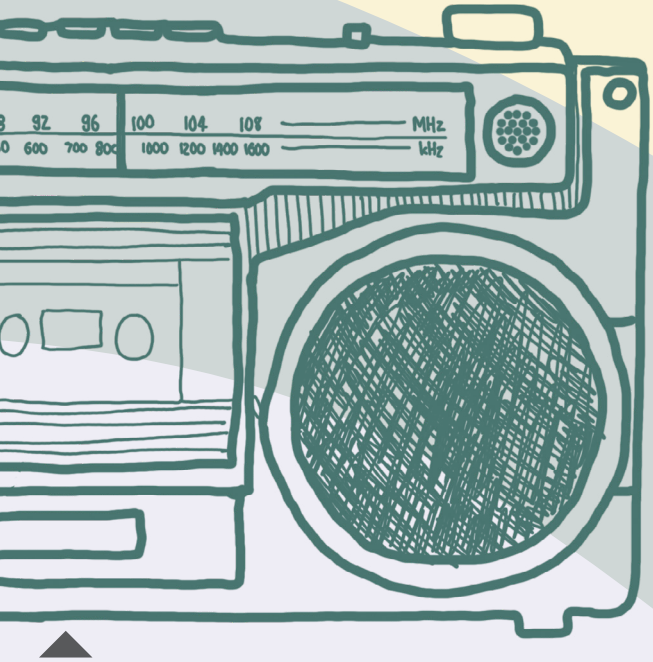
The report classifies South Africa as an electoral democracy, but also lists it as an autocratic "near-miss", meaning that it is slowly becoming more autocratic, but not enough to fall into a new category.



The liberal democracy index measures how democratic a country is, with 1 being the most democratic.

The countries classified as autocratic near-misses in 2023 and their liberal democracy index over the last decade, according to the V-Dem institution's democracy report. GRAPHIC: Eugene Marais

REGSTREEKS OM SES!



GRAFIKA: Kara le Roux

Mandisa Maphisa is 23, en 'n aspirant-joernalis. As kind het sy gedroom van 'n loopbaan as omroeper by die SAUK. Maar na jare se wanbestuur by dié uitsaaier, voel sy ontnugter oor die instelling.

Mandisa Maphisa

Dit is vroegoggend op 'n weeksdag. Terwyl ek gereed maak vir skool, speel die kenmerkende deuntjie van die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie (SAUK) se nuusprogram om sesuur. Die stemme van Vuyo Mbuli en Leanne Manas klink deur die huis met 'n vriendelike "*Good Morning South Africa*". Dit was my eerste kennismaking met die SAUK.

My ouers het nog altyd vir my vertel van die SAUK se baanbrekerswerk – hul nuusuitsendings op radio en TV.

Ek was oortuig dat ek eendag daar wou werk. Dit is immers die plek waar Suid-Afrika se nasionale identiteit, kultuur en publieke diskoers gevorm is.

Max du Preez, stigter en redakteur van *Vrye Weekblad*, sê in 'n onderhoud met *SMF* se Aurelia Mouton dat dit alombekend is dat die apartheidsregering onder meer die SAUK as spreekbuis vir 'n minderheidsgroep gebruik het. (Sien bladsy ses tot nege.)

Die SAUK se argiewe dui op die veranderinge wat die openbare uitsaaier ná 1994 aangebring het. Veranderinge wat die SAUK sou help om 'n belangrike rol te vervul: Die bou van 'n nuwe nasionale identiteit gegrond op respek, aanvaarding en verdraagsaamheid. Gevolglik spog die korporasie vandag met uitsaai-inhoud in al 11 amptelike landstale.

Ten spyte van hierdie ommekeer, wonder ek egter of die korporasie vandag stabiel genoeg is om in 'n moderne mark te oorleef.

'N AFWAARTSE SPIRAAL

Voor die dae van DSTV, was die SAUK se radio- en TV-programme my gesin se venster na die wêreld. Een aand terwyl ons gewag het vir die Sesotho-nuus om te begin, het die aankondiging op SABC 2 gevolg: Geen Sesotho-nuus vanaand nie.

Die volgende dag was daar 'n insetsel op dieselfde kanaal oor ongelukkigheid onder SAUK-werknemers. In Junie 2020 kondig die SAUK aan dat hulle ongeveer 600 van hul werknemers weens finansiële probleme moet afdank.

Hoe kon dinge so skeefloop by die SAUK?

Volgens die SAUK se 2022/2023-jaarverslag, het die openbare uitsaaier 'n R1,13 miljard verlies gely. In dié tydperk het hul inkomste ook met 8% verminder, volgens die verslag.

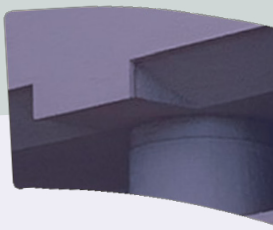
SAUK-winsmarges word onder druk geplaas deur stroomdienste soos DSTV, Multi-Choice en hulle stromingsplatforms. Gevolglik maak die SAUK stelselmatig minder wins. Dit is volgens dr. Calumet Links, ekonoom en dosent aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Links sê dat mense dikwels bereid is om te betaal vir 'n hulpbron wat hulle as waardevol beskou.

"As [die SAUK] dus nie 'n mededingende produk het wat aantreklik is vir mense wat eintlik vir hierdie dienste betaal nie, is daar natuurlik geen volhoubaarheid in hul befondsingsmodel nie. Hulle het gebruik gemaak van dinge soos TV-lisensies, wat

mense in hierdie land nie betaal nie, omdat mense voel die [SAUK] bied nie waarde aan hulle nie," sê Links.

Die SAUK se finansiële probleme word verder vererger deur die ongereguleerde koste van die staatsdiensmandaat, wat R817 miljoen in die 2022/2023-finansiële jaar beloop het. "So selfs al betaal ek nie my TV-lisensie nie, [kan 'n mens die SAUK] honderde duisende rande skuld en hulle kan niks doen nie," vertel Links. "Omdat dit hul mandaat is om openbare uitsendingsdienste te verskaf, is die kwessie redelik kompleks."

Links meen dat die SAUK dié probleem al 'n dekade gelede moes voorspel het en daarvolgens beplan het.



'ORAL VIR ALMAL'

Die belofte van die SAUK se slagspreuk '*Everywhere for Everyone*' of 'Oral vir almal', het eens kliphard weergalm. Hul drie TV-kanale het van die land se top 20 mees gekykte programme gehuisves en hulle 19 radiostasies het in 2023 meer as 26 miljoen luisteraars per week gelok. Dit is volgens 'n opname deur die data-platform *Statista* in Februarie 2023, asook die SAUK se 2023-jaarverslag.

Ek onthou hoe my grootouers oor naweke sou inskakel op *Lesedi FM* en hoe hulle die radio kliphard sou speel. Dié radiostasie se oggendgebede, sportbulletins en leefstylpraatjies was deel van ons naweekroetine. Sonder sosiale media of gevorderde tegnologie, het die SAUK my en my familie ingelig oor die wêreld.

Buiten die SAUK se nuus- en sportprogramme en radiostasies, het hul kanale ikoniese sepies gehuisves. Van *Generations* tot *Muvhango* en natuurlik die alombekende *7de Laan*. Dit is onder meer 'n paar van my gesin se gunstelingprogramme. Sodra die son sou sak het my ma of pa gesê: "Dis tyd vir Mandisa se Afrikaanse *show*." Dit was juis *7de Laan* wat ons huis Afrikaans leer praat het.

In 2023 het die SAUK saam met die *7de Laan*-produksiespan, aangekondig dat dié sepie na 24 seisoene uiteindelik hul heel laaste seisoen verfilm het. Weens finansiële probleme kon die openbare uitsaaier nie meer die sepie se produksiekostes dra nie. Die SAUK se finansiële krisisse het hul kykers ingedoen. Ek is terselfdetyd kwaad en hartseer oor dié situasie.

POLITIEKE INMENGING

Die SAUK het vir jare gesukkel met politieke inmenging wat gelei het tot wanbestuur. So skryf Sekoetlane Jacob Phamodi, swart feminis-aktivis, en bestuurder van die African Climate Foundation se New Economy Hub in Suid-Afrika, in 'n artikel op *akademie.dw.com*. Phamodi verduidelik in dié artikel, *The rise and fall of public broadcasting in South Africa*, hoe die SAUK ná 1999 gepolitiseer en gekommersialiseer is deur die regering van daardie tyd.

In 2011 word Hlaudi Motsoeneng as die SAUK se nuwe waarnemende bedryfshoof aangestel. Motsoeneng was nie gekwalifiseer vir sy pos by die SAUK nie. In 2014 het voormalige openbare beskermer, Thuli Madonsela, na aanleiding van 'n ondersoek bevind dat Motsoeneng sy matrieksertifikaat vervals het om aansoek te doen vir werk by die SAUK. Dit is volgens die 2014 openbare beskermer-verslag.

'n Voormlige SABC-tegnikus, Justice Ngema, verduidelik dat jare se wanbestuur binne die korporasie bygedra het tot die SAUK se agteruitgang. "Daar is op die meeste Vrydae na werksure by die SAUK gebraai en alkohol gekoop vir almal wat daar werk," beweer Ngema. Een maand het Motsoeneng glo vir elke werknemer 'n bonus van R10 000 by hul salaris gevoeg, vertel hy. Dit alles terwyl die SAUK se boeke in die rooi was.

In sy artikel verduidelik Phamodi dat die aanstelling van politici in posisies binne die SAUK grootliks bygedra het tot die verval van die instelling. Volgens Phamodi is onervare individue in hoë bestuursposisies geplaas. Teen 2021 moes die SAUK presies 621 werknemers afdank om finansiële volhoubaarheid te verseker. So berig die SAUK op hul webtuiste in Maart daardie jaar.

Ngema vertel dat die SAUK se bestuurspan 'n goeie werksomgewing vir hulle ingenieurs en tegnici geskep het. Hy verduidelik egter verder dat verskillende afdelings binne die SAUK gekla het oor die feit dat hul werk heeltyd gemonitor is deur persone in die SAUK se topbestuur.

GRAFIKA:
LARA SMITH

‘Daar is ongeveer 20 jaar se skade aan die SAUK wat reggemaak moet word’

ETIEK EN SAUK-JOERNALISTIEK

Politieke inmenging veroorsaak nie noodwendig die ondergang van die media en joernalistiek nie, verduidelik Shakirah Thebus, joernalis en fotograaf by *Cape Argus* wat vryskutwerk doen vir *Weekend Argus* en *Daily Voice*. Dit hou wel ’n groot bedreiging in vir die veld, wat veronderstel is om vanself eties en regverdig te wees, sê sy.

“Daar is geen werklike objektiewe of neutrale media-organisasie nie,” sê Thebus.

Elke mediahuis het vaste waardes, meen Thebus: “Of dit nou openlik bekend gemaak word of nie.” Wanneer die balans tussen joernaliste se integriteit en politieke belange begin wankel, raak dit egter gevaarlik.

Volgens my is dit die kern van die SAUK se probleem.

Keke Mulutsi, skakelings- en verhoudingsbestuurder by die Onafhanklike Kommunikasie Owerheid van Suid-Afrika (OKOSA), sê dat OKOSA alle uitsaaiers se tegnologie ondersoek en monitor. OKOSA het byvoorbeeld tydens die 2024-verkiesingsperiode die SAUK se uitsendings gemonitor, sê Mulutsi.

“[OKOSA het] seker gemaak dat die SAUK regverdig teenoor alle politieke partye optree en nie net die regerende party nie. Alle politieke partye moes dieselfde hoeveelheid lugtyd kry,” sê Mulutsi. As die openbare uitsaaidienste eensydig is, word hulle beboet, vertel hy.

HERVORMING: KALM NA DIE STORM

Motsoeneng se wanbestuur het die SAUK finansieel benadeel en het die etiek en integriteit van die organisasie ondermyn.

In Junie 2017 is Motsoeneng uiteindelik afgedank na afloop van ’n dissiplinêre verhoor, volgens die SAUK se webtuiste. Sy afdanking het die weg gebaan vir broodnodige verandering binne die organisasie.

“Daar is ongeveer 20 jaar se skade aan die SAUK wat reggemaak moet word,” sê Sizwe Mbebe, SAUK nuus- en sportverslaggewer. Volgens hom is daar wel tekens van verbetering: Nuwe aanstellings en ’n meer diverse redaksiespan.

Daar is vandag pogings om die SAUK weer op die been te bring. Wanneer ek saans nuus kyk of radio luister, is dit vir my duidelik dat daar nou ’n stem vir almal is. Die SAUK-uitsaaiers en -redaksie is meer energiek en entoesiasties. Ten spyte van hierdie positiewe veranderinge, heers daar steeds ’n gevoel van onsekerheid.

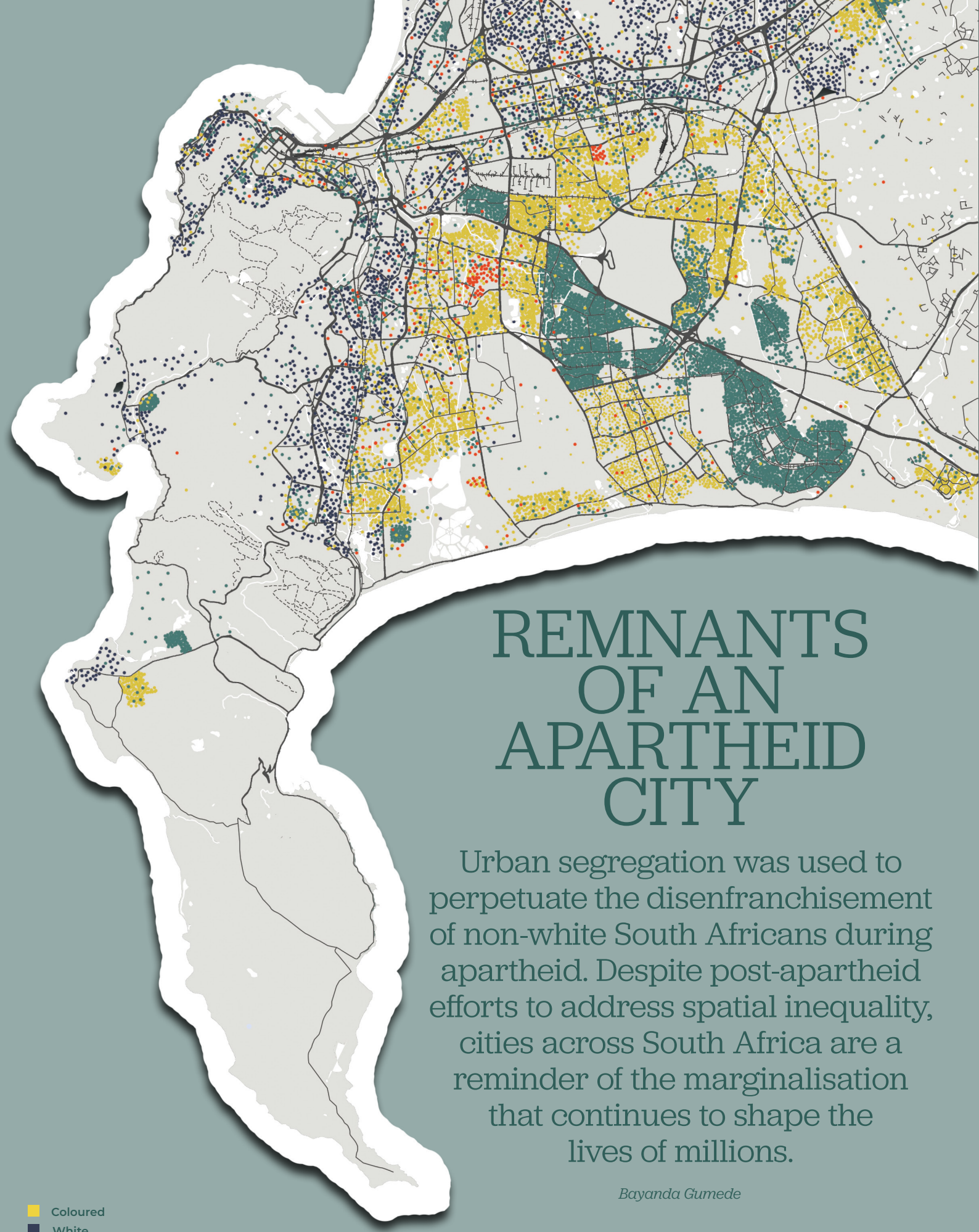
Terrance April, ’n bekende nuusleser en radio-omroeper, het skielik in Maart vanjaar sy laaste bulletin gelees op die SAUK se Afrikaanse nuuskanaal. Anders as sy voormalige kollega’s, is April nie die kans gegun om kykers op die lug te groet nie, het *Netwerk24* op 31 Maart 2024 berig. Tot vandag toe is dit onduidelik waarom April skielik weg is.

Hierdie onsekerheid maak my angstig oor die toekoms van talent by die SAUK. Ek wonder of daar plek sal wees vir jong joernaliste, soos ek, wat daarvan droom om in die uitsaai-bedryf te werk.

En tog, te midde van die chaos, is daar iets aan die SAUK wat vassteek. Ek kan nie die impak wat die uitsaaier op my lewe gehad het, ignoreer nie. Die nostalgie van die aande van Sesotho-nuus en *7de Laan* laat my hoop. Die SAUK is diepgewortel in my en my familie se lewens.

Ester Baatjies, kommunikasie student aan die Sentrale Universiteit van Tegnologie (SUT), deel dieselfde sentiment. Sy meen dat die SAUK ’n noodsaaklike deel van Suid-Afrika se media-landskap bly. “Alhoewel die SAUK uitdagings en omstredenheid gehad het, kan die goeie impak daarvan op my lewe en dié van vele ander, nie vergeet word nie,” sê sy.

Ja, die SAUK is nie meer wat dit was nie, maar daardie bekende “*Good Morning South Africa*” van Leanne Manas en Sakhina Kamwendo wat elke oggend opklink, herinner my dat die SAUK steeds hier is. Regstreeks om sesuur!●



REMNANTS OF AN APARTHEID CITY

Urban segregation was used to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of non-white South Africans during apartheid. Despite post-apartheid efforts to address spatial inequality, cities across South Africa are a reminder of the marginalisation that continues to shape the lives of millions.

Bayanda Gumede

Coloured
White
Black African
Indian or Asian

1 dot equals 5000 people

A data visualisation graphic depicting the distribution of population groups in Cape Town based on the 2011 national Census. INFOGRAPHIC: Bayanda Gumede

"We were talking about changing the apartheid city within 20 years. We were quite convinced [that] within 20 years, the apartheid city would not exist anymore. Well, it's 30 years later, [and] it's even worse," says Dr Cecil Madell, an urban planner who began his career in the 1990s.

South Africa was declared as "the world's most unequal country" on the cover of *TIME* magazine in May 2019. The cover, featuring the residential areas of Primrose and Makause in Gauteng, depicts two contrasting realities that speak to the legacy of urban segregation and spatial inequality entrenched in South Africa's history.

Johnny Miller, photographer and multimedia storyteller who took the cover photo, says that his *Unequal Scenes* series, which makes use of drone footage to illustrate spatial inequality around the world, developed from a desire to show a unique visual perspective of this long-standing issue in South Africa.

"While inequality does exist in other parts of the world, the legacy of apartheid, and specifically the architecture of separation, provides a very unique context in which to view this particular form of inequality," says Miller.

The architecture of separation, or urban segregation, can be understood as the unequal distribution of social groups across urban spaces. This segregation emerged as a result of colonial and apartheid spatial control and planning, according to a 2019 article by Dr Margot Strauss, in the academic journal, *Fundimina*.

REALITIES OF SEGREGATION

Kneo Mokgopa, the narrative development manager at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, understands the challenges of urban segregation because of his experience of it. Growing up in Soweto, Mokgopa would wake up before the sun in preparation for the journey of getting to school. It was a journey characterised by the act of waiting. Waiting in long queues for a taxi, bus or train that would be followed by a 40 kilometre transfer. This would be repeated at the end of each day, returning to a township on the other side of Johannesburg's mining belt.

"This is the way that this kind of injustice just engorges itself on your time," says Mokgopa. "This idea that black people's time is taken away from them, even before they [...] start anything, before they make any decisions. It strips you down."

"The conditions of our lives, of black people's lives, when you are removed from the centre, when you are pushed towards the outskirts, does not only manifest [in] the physical space, but also the living of life," says Mokgopa, quoting Prof Tshepo Madlingozi, commissioner of the South African Human Rights Commission.

"What you become is a pariah," says Mokgopa. "You are a pariah in your own country."

This experience of not belonging strikes to the core of the issue and is only exacerbated by inequality and inequity in different forms, according to Mokgopa.

A view of Stellenbosch Central from Kayamandi. PHOTO: Bayanda Gumede

"There's also this notion of not being able to enjoy the wealth of your country," says Mokgopa. "[South Africa] is such a rich country, but so many people don't have access to any of that richness and that wealth."

ECONOMIC DISPARITY BY GEOGRAPHY

Dr Richard Ballard, chief researcher at Gauteng City-Region Observatory, has investigated the reactions of people living in townships like Diepsloot in Johannesburg, when wealthy residential properties develop in the areas nearby.

The expectation is usually that people would be vocal about the economic discrepancies between the townships and the wealthy suburbs, according to Ballard. However, this is often not the case for people living in townships, as these developments are seen as an opportunity for jobs, above all else.

This narrative is often endorsed by the relevant property developers. However, Ballard found that these jobs were mostly domestic or laborious. Therefore the opportunity for people to achieve any kind of upward social mobility is rare.

"When we looked into it, [...] they were highly exploitative jobs," says Ballard. "[People] were very poorly paid."

"Ideally, we would live in a society that starts off super unequal and then over time, you get some kind of convergence," says Ballard.

However, this idea of socio-economic convergence is not a legitimate idea in South Africa, according to Ballard.

> 'WHAT YOU BECOME IS A PARIAH. YOU ARE A PARIAH IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY'

With an unemployment rate of 32.9% in South Africa, according to Stats SA's quarterly labour force survey for the first quarter of 2024, employers expect people to be grateful for job opportunities that are objectively exploitative, because there is nothing else, according to Ballard.

"If you're in this position of [not being] wealthy at all, you have to engage in these financial pacts where you're doing something that isn't getting you ahead in life, but you really have no choice," says Ballard.

THE CONTRADICTION OF TRANSFORMATION

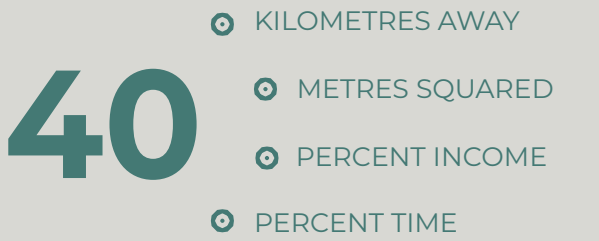
Ballard believes that for many government officials, addressing spatial inequality is about investing in working class spaces, by creating low-cost accommodation which aims to address the issue of insufficient housing.

However, the development of these housing projects, often within close proximity to townships like Soweto in Johannesburg, which already exist on the outskirts of city regions, serves to reinforce apartheid spatial planning that placed the poorest people on the peripheries, says Ballard.

"There's an ambivalence and a contradiction that comes in with that kind of spatial transformation."

"With townships, [...] you're not just on the other side of the road, you're 40 kilometres away," says Mokgopa. "And that 40 kilometres is important because what it means is that you don't have access to opportunities."

This distance forms part of an apartheid system which served to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of black South Africans, according to Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU), a non-governmental organisation that advocates for spatial equality in Cape Town. It involved the construction of 40 square metre low-cost houses, 40 kilometres away from economic opportunities, and acceptable medical and educational institutions. This necessitated people to spend 40% of their income and time on travel, according to Madell.



The 40-40-40 system was used to design townships during apartheid, according to Ndifuna Ukwazi. It refers to the size of low-cost houses, their proximity to economic hubs, and the percentage of time and money spent travelling between them. This is according to Dr Cecil Madell, an urban planner based in Cape Town. INFOGRAPHIC: Bayanda Gumede

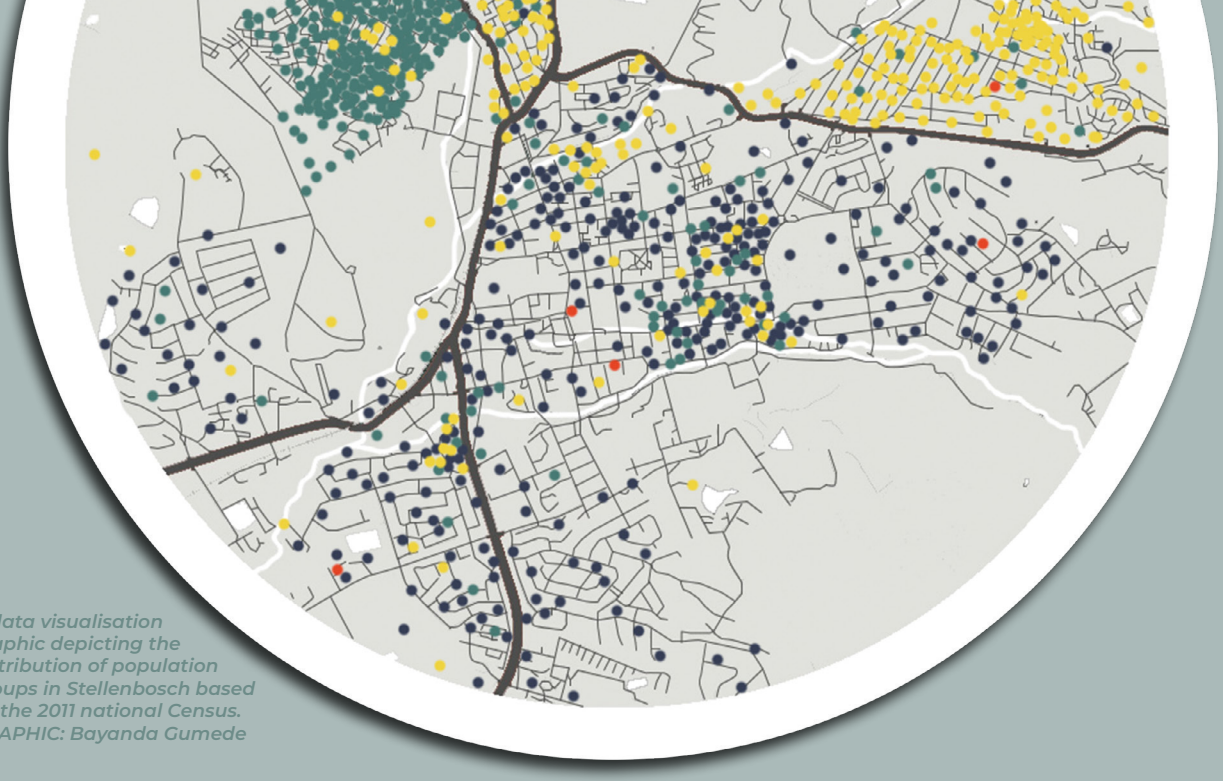
ORIGINS OF URBAN SEGREGATION AND SPATIAL INJUSTICE

The 20th century laid the foundation of planned urban segregation through the implementation of myriad prejudiced legislative acts, according to Strauss.

District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg are cases of suburbs that fell victim to the Group Areas Act of 1950, which barred the multiracial occupation of urban land. This resulted in the forced removal of countless people of colour from well-located, multiracial settlements.

People were relocated to urban spaces that had been divided into segregated zones designated for the occupation of certain racial groups. This coincided with the development of large peripheral townships surrounded by industrial buffer zones or vacant land, explains Strauss.

"After black people were removed from their land they were forced into what were called labour reserves and they were later called homelands," says Mokgopa.



A data visualisation graphic depicting the distribution of population groups in Stellenbosch based on the 2011 national Census. GRAPHIC: Bayanda Gumede

"[The reserves were] a space for labour," says Mokgopa. "It was where the cheap black labour was supposed to go and live."

It was these legislative acts which drove the development of decentralised, overpopulated, and concentrated pockets of racialised inequality, and poverty, according to Strauss. The demographics of areas like Langa in Cape Town and Soweto have yet to change in present-day South Africa, as cities become inundated with people seeking job opportunities in economic centres, says Madell.

"[Regarding] undoing apartheid, it's not about taking the poorest people living in an informal settlement, and then looking at where the wealthiest people are and saying, 'okay, let's put the one next to each other'," says Madell.

Madell adds that the process of finding a solution to urban segregation should begin with understanding that the people who are at the bottom of the economic chain should have the easiest access to it.

EFFORTS FOR SPATIAL EQUALITY

The focus of transformation should be on making it so that people have access to opportunities that empower them to take themselves out of places they no longer want to be in, according to Mokgopa.

This is the aim of the Development Action Group (DAG), an NGO that focuses on empowering communities to advocate for their land and housing rights, according to Querida Saal, a researcher at DAG.

The advent of democracy was laden with promises of a better standard of living for people of colour. However, some of these promises have yet to be realised, leading the affected to be distrustful of the system as a whole.

"I think [that] with years and years of failed expectations and promises not being met, or delivery not being at the scale that it should be, it's easy for hopelessness to creep in and people [to be] discouraged," says Saal.

"I think the biggest mystery in South Africa is how people of colour have remained so patient, [...] it's unbelievable," says Madell.

In the communities that DAG works with, residents are often in need of housing in spaces where there is easy access to socio-economic opportunities, social amenities, and whatever any individual would need to facilitate a good quality of life, says Saal.

However, the Cape Town residential market is exclusionary for people with a low income, which significantly limits a person's options of where they can reside, according to Saal.

"Where one is spatially located [...] has an impact on your experience in the city, your quality of life, and the extent to which you have the potential for upward mobility," says Saal. "I think that's how all these factors interplay for people living in our neighbourhoods."

To broaden access to well-located land and affordable housing, spatial equality social movements like Reclaim the City have partnered with advocacy NGOs such as NU, according to Zacharia Mashele, media and communications officer at NU.

Although the "provincial government [has] not been forthcoming", these groups work to raise the issues of spatial inequality and uneven land distribution to government through civic engagement, says Mashele. These engagements include the occupation of abandoned sites throughout the Cape Town city centre.

DAG continues to try to reignite a sense of agency and civic participation in communities that are still affected by the social and economic ramifications of spatial inequality, even though adversities arise.

"Having communities being drivers of their own development [...] can be quite challenging in the context in which we exist, because there is so much distrust within communities," says Saal. "Many communities across the country feel that they [are] not being heard." ●

TRAPPED

Apartheid's shadow lingers in on South Africa's fractured transport systems and urban landscape. Prof Julian Cooke and Prof Nyasha Mboti spotlight the hardships faced by marginalised communities, amplifying the urgent call for transformative urban reform.

Ubaid Abrahams

At 5:30 AM the streets of Strand are quiet and shrouded in mist. Inside her home, Rhenate Hadie begins her day just as she has for the past three years. Two and a half hours stand between her and her 8:00 AM shift. Although her commute to Somerset West should take somewhere between 10 and 20 minutes, it often stretches longer as it does for many South Africans who rely on public transport.

DISTANCE AND DEPENDENCE

"In most South African cities, the poor, and those living on low incomes, live in township areas [that are] a relatively long distance from business and employment centres," says Andisiwe Ranana, assistant director at the Western Cape mobility department.

For many South Africans, taxis are the most accessible form of transportation. According to the 2021 general household survey conducted by Stats SA, 33.6% of South African households had at least one household member who used a taxi during the week preceding the survey.

Buses only run on the main routes in a city and therefore place a greater need on taxis to connect individuals from outlying areas to the main parts of the city. This is according to Faghri Lyners, a taxi driver who has operated in Strand for 15 years. "If taxis stop operating, everything stops operating," claims Lyners.

Taxis are fundamental to those who do not have the luxury of owning a car, says Hadie.

"Most of us rely on taxis to get to work [...] It is not always easy, but what can we do? We have to get to work," says Hadie.

These are the consequences of apartheid-era spatial planning, which resulted in the development of housing in poorly located areas in a post-apartheid South Africa, according to Ranana.

"You've got to remember that the Group Areas Act is the derivative of two earlier acts. So, the Group Areas Act is under apartheid, but you've got to view it in the context of two pieces of legislation," says Dr Thulasizwe Simpson, historical and heritage studies associate professor at the University of Pretoria.

The Natives Land Act of 1913 was introduced to regulate land ownership. Simpson further explains that the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 designated certain parts of "white South Africa" as areas where black people were restricted to living.

"The Group Areas Act is about facilitating easier forced removals because in these white areas you can very easily get what were later known as grey spots, which are areas where different races will be living next to each other in an unregulated way," says Simpson.

GRAPHIC: Lara Smith

BY DESIGN

MODERNISM IN APARTHEID

"A Vision of a Future Cape Town" is a booklet co-authored by Prof Julian Cooke, Prof David Dewar, Lucien le Grange, Simone le Grange, and Piet Louw. It was showcased as part of an exhibition presented at the University of Cape Town's summer school in February 2019. Cooke, recognised for his architectural work in improving the livability of the Nyanga and Gugulethu hostels, outlines 11 key attributes that make a favourable city and analyses how Cape Town performs in those areas.

One particularly important point Cooke raises is the notion of convenience. In an ideal city, he explains, everyday activities should be able to take place with the least amount of "difficulty, time, and cost". People should be able to walk or ride their bicycles to complete their everyday tasks, he says.

According to Cooke, Cape Town was modeled during the pinacle of 20th-century design, an era that was heavily car-oriented due to the prevailing belief that everyone would travel by car. The idea of Western modernism was perfect for the apartheid government, because they could divide the city into various zones.

"So [they] started designing all the roads [...] and then everything else [fit] into a rational organisation of roads," says Cooke.

Cape Town's development is based around capitalism, says Latiefa Jacobs, community development practitioner and property agent. This can simply be seen through the way people are travelling to their workplace in the central business district, says Jacobs.

Cooke states that this urban theory embedded in modernism created different zones within a city - residential, business, industrial, and recreational zones.

The current situation places poorer individuals at a disadvantage, as noted by Cooke, forcing them to undertake lengthy journeys to reach cities and economic hubs, complicating their access to potential business opportunities.

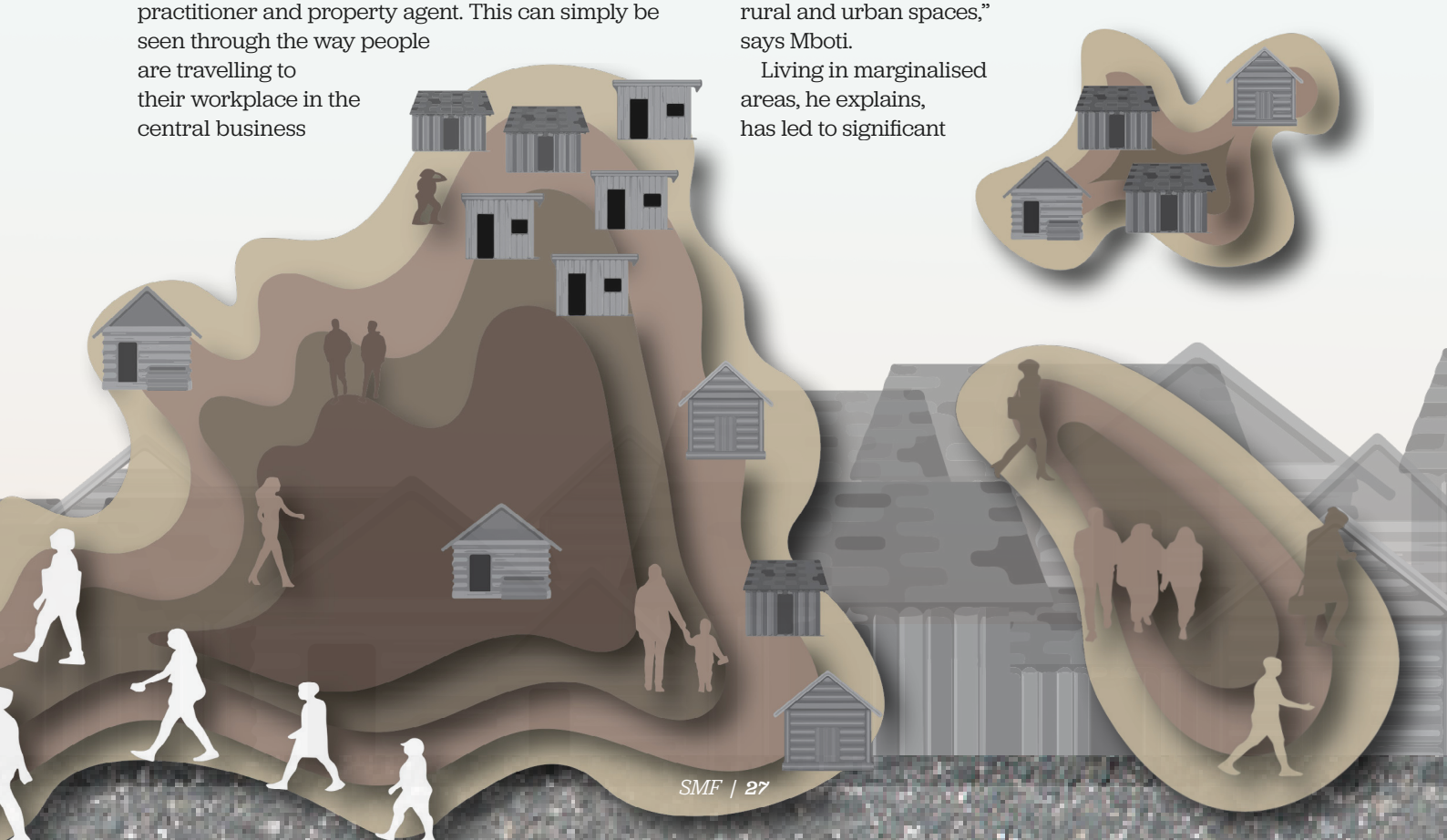
There's a bus lane and a taxi lane, but when people commute home there is no bus lane, explains Jacobs. "It's fine for them for you to sit in the traffic for three to four hours when returning home, but if you have to go to work, they are not fine with you being late," says Jacobs.

LINGERING MAGNETISM

Associate Prof Nyasha Mboti, head of the department of communication science at the University of the Free State, has pioneered the world's first general theory of apartheid. His work, known as *Apartheid Studies: A Manifesto*, provides a new framework for understanding the enduring presence of oppression, harm, injustice, poverty, loss, and inequality.

Mboti believes that apartheid is a phenomenon with enduring permanence, which has continued to affect society long after its official structures have crumbled. "[Apartheid] remains in our bodies, social relations, institutions, and rural and urban spaces," says Mboti.

Living in marginalised areas, he explains, has led to significant



inefficiencies in people's lives and these persist to this day. "As a rule in South African cities, the poorest groups travel the furthest and pay the highest proportion of their incomes in transportation costs," says Mboti.

"The development plan was always just to satisfy business," says Kevin Patel, steering committee coordinator for *Cape Crisis Committee*.
The *Cape Crisis Committee* deals with transport and spatial transformation issues, with the aim of creating a more accessible city for everyone.

"[Cape Town's development plan] is not about quality of life and integration, and people living a decent life with dignity and so forth," claims Patel.

The legacy of these planning policies continues to shape daily life. "What is this if not apartheid?" says Mboti.

THE ENGINEERED DIVIDE

The demographics of the taxi industry are demonstrative of the racial divide in transportation in South Africa, says Lyners. Most of his clients are people of colour.

The influence that this industry possesses is evident in the effects that occur when taxis go on strike, says Mboti. When exploited taxi drivers choose to protest, they are essentially "disrupting how poor people get to work", according to Mboti.

This highlights a deeper economic divide within South African communities. Mboti explains that the poorest experience hardship in its most extreme form, unlike those who are financially stable.

However, he avoids using the word 'imbalance', arguing that it implies the false notion that poverty is accidental.

"It was deliberately engineered in South Africa over more than 350 years of slavery, colonialism, empire, and apartheid. [...] Places like townships, which [were] ordinarily uninhabitable, are now permanent homes to millions," says Mboti.

'IF TAXIS STOP OPERATING, EVERYTHING STOPS OPERATING'

REDESIGNING THE FUTURE

The collective knowledge of Mboti and Cooke reveals that 30 years into democracy, certain groups in South Africa still experience the consequences of apartheid.

The need for rebuilding and redesigning cities is very important, to correct the wrongdoings of the past, according to Cooke. "The huge opportunity that's missed in this country is using the rebuilding of the cities to generate our economy to make hundreds of jobs, to give people a sense of building their own place and owning it," he says.

Urban redevelopment has many potential broader benefits, says Cooke. Rebuilding cities would create jobs, restore convenience, and foster a stronger sense of place and spatial identity, especially by empowering people to build their own homes.

"I don't know why, for instance, none of the political parties that we're going to vote for [...] have got that, fixing the city is a big part of their political agenda because you can't actually change it unless you change the city," says Cooke.

For Hadie, it has been three years. For Lyners, it has been 15 years. Years of routine and reliance have been shaped by policies implemented over 70 years ago which continue to impact communities to this day.

GRAPHICS: Ubaid Abrahams, Maliza Adendorff

Verdwaal é Bevry in bekende strate

Voor 1994 is strate in Suid-Afrika vernoem na bondgenote van die voormalige wit regime, sonder enige erkenning aan mense van kleur. Straatname kan nóú help om stedelike landskappe te dekolonialiseer en kan ook ’n belangrike rol speel in nasiebou.

Duné van Jaarsveld

SKETS:
Duné van Jaarsveld

Daar is ’n bakkery in Potchefstroom, die dorp waar Koba Jacobs skool gegaan het. Jacobs, nou ’n pensionaris van Klerksdorp, besoek altyd Turkstra Bakkery wanneer sy in Potchefstroom gaan kuier. Haar bakkery-uitstappie was haar gunsteling deel van haar kuiers daar.

Maar op ’n dag, toe sy weer in die dorp aankom, het iets vreemds gebeur. Die strate wat vir haar altyd so bekend was, het skielik ander name gedra. Jacobs het al die jare na Gouws-straat gegaan om haar gunstelingbakkery te vind. Nou was haar bakkery in Sol Plaatjie-straat.

Jacobs ken die dorp soos die palm van haar hand, maar die straatname is nie meer ’n gids om haar gunstelingbakkery te vind nie.

Die hernoeming van landsmerke, soos paaie en strate, is nie net ’n lukrake verandering nie, maar deel van ’n groter projek, verduidelik Vusithemba Ndima, die adjunk-direkteur-generaal van die erfenisbevordering en -bewaringsafdeling in die departement van sport, kuns en kultuur.

Hierdie projek is deur Suid-Afrika se demokratiese regering begin om die land se transformasie van apartheid na ’n demokrasie aan te help, sê Ndima. Dit is ’n projek met ’n doel: ’n Poging om die land te hervorm en te herdefinieer. Maar dit is ook ’n projek wat omstredenheid ontlok het, vertel Ndima. “Party mense ondersteun dit en ander staan dit teen.”

Straatname is immers nie net name nie, verduidelik Lindela Mashigo, Tshwane se stadswoordvoerder. “[Straatname vervul] ’n kulturele rol in terme van die boodskappe wat hulle oordra, boodskappe wat die siel van die land uitdruk,” sê hy. Hierdie name vertel stories van die gemeenskappe en mense wat in daardie ruimtes beweeg. “Hulle vervul ook ’n tegniese rol in terme van hul liggingsfunksie,” sê Mashigo.

’N NUWE LANDSKAPSTAAL

Gerhard Marx is ’n Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaar wat ou padkaarte opsny vir kuns.

In die paneelkassie van sy kar was daar ’n kaartboek. Hy onthou hoe hy en sy vrou graag op *roadtrips* gegaan het en dié kaartboek sou gebruik om hul pad te vind. Maar op ’n dag het hy besef dat die boek wat eens sy gids was, ’n bron van verwarring geword het. “Ewe skielik het die name in die kaartboek nie meer gekoördineer met die name in die landskap nie,” vertel hy.

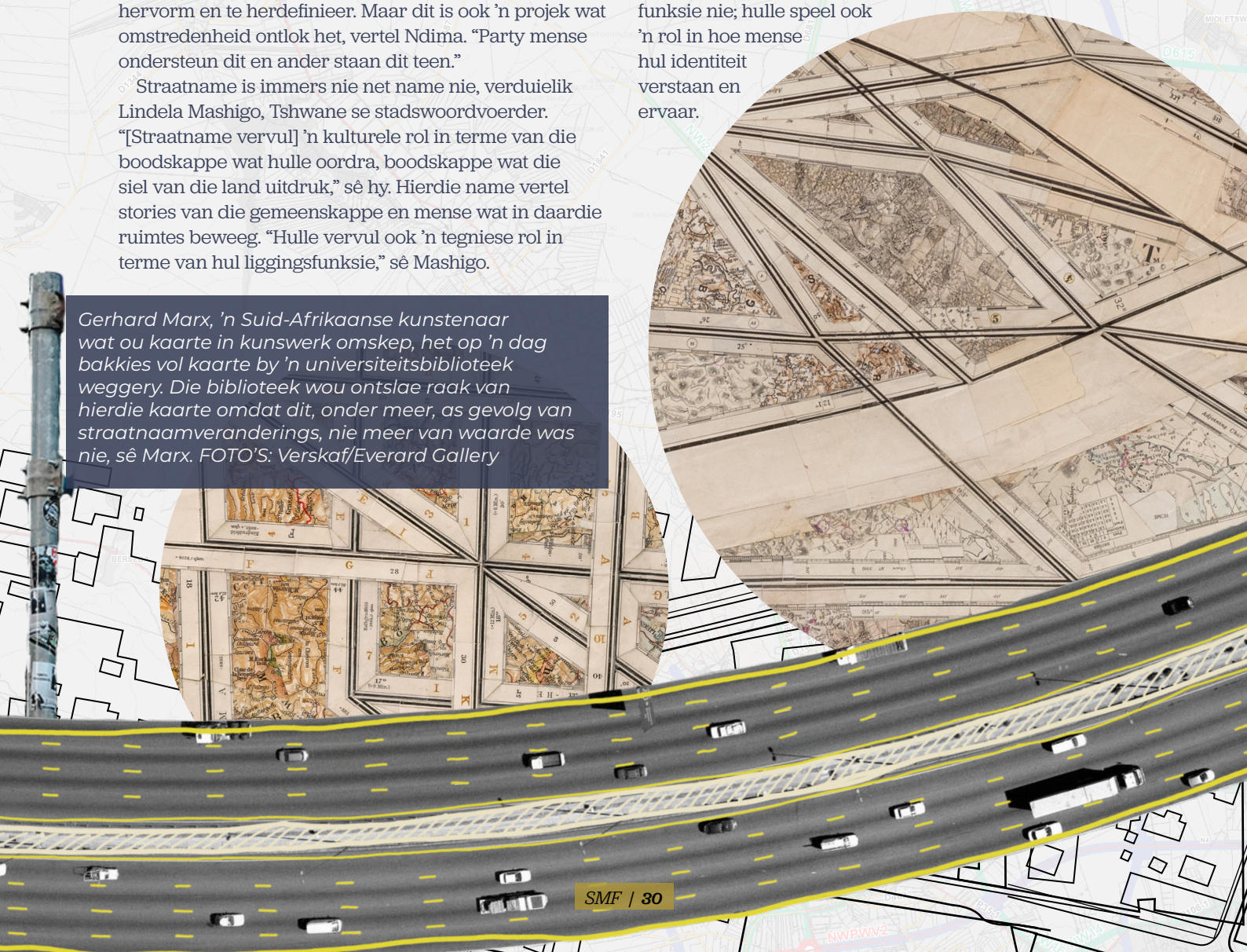
Op hierdie dag was die kaartboek in Marx se kar nie meer van waarde nie. As gevolg van al die straatname wat verander is, was Marx se boek, volgens hom, skielik ’n risiko eerder as ’n hulpmiddel.

“Die gedagte dat die amptelike taal rondom die landskap waarmee mens groot geword het, ewe skielik kan verander en dat ’n nuwe taal rondom hierdie ding geskep kan word, het my gefassineer,” sê Marx.

Hierdie poëtiese element van name en landskappe bekoor hom. “Dit het my laat besluit om met die kaartboek [kuns te maak],” sê Marx. Hy omskep sedert 2001 ou Suid-Afrikaanse kaarte in kuns.

’N BEVESTIGING VAN IDENTITEIT

Straatname vervul nie net ’n kulturele of navigasie-funksie nie; hulle speel ook ’n rol in hoe mense hul identiteit verstaan en ervaar.



Gerhard Marx, ’n Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaar wat ou kaarte in kunswerk omskep, het op ’n dag bakkies vol kaarte by ’n universiteitsbiblioteek weggery. Die biblioteek wou ontslae raak van hierdie kaarte omdat dit, onder meer, as gevolg van straatnaamveranderings, nie meer van waarde was nie, sê Marx. FOTO’S: Verskaf/Everard Gallery

“Burgers benodig straatname om adresse te kan hê wat gebruik kan word vir bewys van verblyf,” sê Mashigo. Hierdie name dien as merkers van identiteit en geskiedenis en verbind met die tradisies en kulture van die mense wat in dié ruimtes woon.

Die benoeming van plekke en landmerke, soos strate, het die vermoë om gevoelens van individuele- en kollektiewe identiteit aan strate te koppel. “Straatname is verbind met ’n persoon se identiteit, want wanneer ’n mens ’n straatnaam sien wat vernoem is na iemand van jou ras en kultuur, voel jy bemagtig en verteenwoordig in die stedelike ruimte,” sê Thembani Mkhize, ’n straatnaam-navorser by Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO).

“Jy voel asof jy daar hoort,” sê hy.

Meeste straatname het tydens apartheid mense van kleur uitgesluit. Daarom is die hernoeming van strate in demokratiese Suid-Afrika veral belangrik. Nuwe straatname kan al die rasse en kulture van die land insluit, verduidelik Mkhize.

’N PROSES WAT DIE HELE NASIE BETREK

“Die Tshwane Geografiese Namebeleid (2023) sowel as die proses van hoe die munisipaliteit die benaming en verandering van geografiese kenmerke bestuur, is in nasionale en provinsiale wetgewing ingebed,” voer Mashigo aan. Dié beleid se doel is om plaaslike geografiese name te transformeer en moet ooreenstem met nasionale en provinsiale wetgewing, sê hy.

Nie almal voel egter positief oor die verandering van straatname nie. “Party landsburgers het briewe aan die Verenigde Nasies se Groep van Deskundiges oor Geografiese Name geskryf om naamveranderings regdeur Suid-Afrika teen te staan,” sê Ndima. Enige Suid-Afrikaanse burger kan by hul munisipaliteit aansoek doen om ’n straatnaam te verander.

TEENSTRYDIGE EMOSIES

In Klerksdorp, waar Jacobs nou woon, gebruik baie mense nog die ou name van die veranderde strate. “Soos wat ’n mens nou ouer word, onthou niemand regtig die nuwe name nie,” vertel sy.

Tydens die implementering van die hernoeming van 25 strate in Tshwane, moes die inwoners en besighede langs die hernoemde strate byvoorbeeld hul adresse en dalk besigheidskaartjies verander, sê Mkhize. Hy vertel dat vandat hierdie straatname verander is, dit omtrent 10 jaar geneem het vir die nuwe name om aanvaar en gebruik te word.

Iemand soos Marx, wat in die verlede al sy oë gerol het wanneer hy sien ’n straatnaam is verander, dink daar is tog waarde in die hernoemingsproses. “Ek dink die ongerief wat die hernoeming van straatname bring is van waarde, want dit laat ’n mens weer kyk,” sê hy.

Naamgewing dien as ’n subjektiewe blik op ’n landskap. Marx verduidelik dat Suid-Afrika se ‘subjektiewe blik’ in die verlede baie spesifiek koloniaal en Westers was. Vandag, met name soos Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela en Walter Sisulu, wat die strate van die land vul, is daar ’n nuwe narratief aan die ontwikkel – een wat alle Suid-Afrikaners insluit.

GRAFIKA EN SKETSE: Duné van Jaarsveld

Straatname wat herdenk

Daar is ’n straat in Melkbosstrand wat vernoem is na George Mellet, ’n voormalige inwoner van dié kusdorpie. Hy was in sy lewe ’n wethouer en burgemeester van die Milnerton/Blaauwberg-munisipaliteit, sowel as raadslid van Melkbosstrand.

“[Die Stad Kaapstad] het die straat na my pa vernoem as huldeblyk vir sy bydrae aan [Melkbosstrand], sy jare se bydrae aan die Stad Kaapstad en plaaslike bestuur,” sê Yolande Mellet, George se dogter. “My pa is in Maart 2019 oorlede, so dan beteken enigiets wat gekoppel is aan sy nalatenskap en erflating soveel meer.”

GRAFIKA EN SKETSE:
Duné van Jaarsveld

"Om Steve Biko-rylaan te sien, laat my bemagtig voel," sê Thembani Mkhize, 'n straatnaam-navorser by Gauteng Region City Observatory (GRCO).

Die benoeming van strate reflekteer 'n land se dinamika, verduidelik Mkhize. Tydens apartheid was die benoeming van strate 'n manier om politici van die tyd te verheerlik, sê Mkhize. Die hernoeming van straatname ná apartheid het, volgens Mkhize, die vermoë om waardevolle boodskappe van politieke verandering in Suid-Afrika oor te dra.

"Ek dink die gedagte dat dinge nuwe name kan kry en dat dinge nuwe beskrywings kan kry, is bemagtigend en bevrydend op 'n baie positiewe vlak," verduidelik Marx.

MERKERS VAN DEMOKRASIE

Die hernoeming van straatname, voor en na apartheid, is gedenkwaardig van aard. "'n Straatnaam wat 'n gekleurde persoon herdenk, laat my voel dat ek raakgesien word," sê Mkhize.

Ten spyte van hierdie poging, is die werk nog nie klaar nie. Daar is steeds baie strate wat hernoem moet word om regtig die kulture en erfenis van die hele Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap te weerspieël, meen Mkhize.

"'n Aansienlike aantal straatname is al verander, maar byvoorbeeld in Pretoria [nou Tshwane] se middestad is daar meer as 200 strate waarvan slegs 25 strate hernoem is," sê Mkhize.

Nie alle provinsies beleef dieselfde hoeveelheid hernoemings nie. "Die meeste veranderinge vind in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng en die Oos-Kaap plaas," verduidelik Ndima.

Op grond van sy navorsing is Mkhize oortuig dat huidige straatname nie 'n werklike weerspieëling van 'n demokratiese Suid-Afrika is nie. In sy waarneming het die regering nog nie daarin geslaag om die volle omvang van nasiebou te verwesenlik nie, aangesien huidige straatname steeds verdeeldheid onder Suid-Afrikaners skep.

SOCIOLECT

COCONUT

Soon after the birth of a democratic South Africa, the emerging black middle-class found themselves negotiating their social position.
Within the context of a united South Africa under the 'rainbow nation' slogan, the 'coconut' became the product of this negotiation.

Nkululeko Ndlovu

A 'coconut' is a black person that, through their association with white people, has a 'white personality', and is usually considered out of touch with their African heritage.

"It's kind of like sticking out and being cast to the side or just being frowned upon because you don't act, or sound, or behave the way you should based on the colour of your skin," says Nkazimulo Cele, an isiZulu-speaking law student at the University of the Witwatersrand.

"You will find, Ofilwe, that the people you strive so hard to be like will one day reject you because as much as you may pretend, you are not one of their own," writes Kopano Matlwa in her novel "Coconut". Matlwa captures the overlooked complexities of being a born-free black South African. This novel speaks to a situation in post-apartheid South Africa where young, middle-class black bodies may find themselves walking a fine line that few people find themselves having to walk: fitting in with both black and white South Africa.

WHO AM I?

I am an isiZulu-speaking black man in my twenties, born in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. I grew up in the suburbs, and from preschool I received a private education.

I was first bequeathed the term 'coconut' when I was 13. It was during an afternoon rugby practice when my white coach commented on my use of words like 'bequeathed' in-between drills, and my 'white-sounding accent'. For a moment, I was happy that I was 'different' from other black people. In fact, I thought I was better than other black people.

It was only later in life that I realised how such instances made me judge other black people – as a 'good' black or as 'the others'. This was not the first time my blackness was challenged. In each instance, I was being included and simultaneously excluded.

PHOTO: Ubaid Abrahams

YOU ARE WHO WE SAY YOU ARE

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, which started in 1996, began after South Africa had just come from a painful history marked by dominance and the forces of colonialism, says Thobani Zikalala, an independent political analyst based in KwaZulu-Natal. And as appropriate as the hearings were for the context of the time, they had fundamental flaws in practice, according to Zikalala.

"The [problems] of the TRC are that it also [...] meant to almost offer a 'kumbaya' moment for a very bad past. [...] And then after that, shaking of hands and washing of feet and things went on," says Zikalala.

The rainbow nation rhetoric acted as a way to promote social cohesion in South Africa given the history it had just emerged from, says Zikalala. However, there was a problem of whether this ideal directly reflected in society – which it did not – according to Zikalala.

"The idea of a united South Africa is only a rhetoric of [the] government and those who support the post-1994 democratic dispensation, of course, which has been incorrectly called the 'post-apartheid South Africa'," he claims. "It's not [...] the integration project of post-1994 South Africa."

"And [the rainbow nation project] is problematic because it suggests that there is no apartheid in South Africa. But the after-effect of apartheid and the structural effects of apartheid are still present today," explains Zikalala.

While the rainbow nation ideal was sincere, it had adverse results on South African society, according to Asanda Ngoasheng, an independent political analyst.

"What it also did is that it kind of created a prescribed version of what it meant to be South African, what it meant to be white, what it meant to be black. It created a prescription around how one engages with race and around race," says Ngoasheng.

In South Africa, the black middle-class is a site of these prescriptions, according to Lieve de Coninck, a lecturer and researcher based at the University of Amsterdam. De Coninck also authored a qualitative study in 2018 called "The uneasy boundary work of 'coconuts' and 'black diamonds': middle-class labelling in post-apartheid South Africa".

Part of such prescriptions is the dominant idea that an authentic black identity is tied to the experience of racism and material deprivation – that is, low economic status, according to De Coninck.

JACK OF ALL TRADES, FITTING IN WITH NONE

According to De Coninck, black people who have enjoyed upward social mobility have to engage in boundary work to affirm their position as authentic black people.

"Boundary work is basically the work that people do, the practices they engage in to construct and to maintain, class differences or identity differences," says De Coninck. "So I think, 'coconut' – and before there was the '[black] diamond' – it's middle-class labels. Or, I think it's social mobility labels."

> 'YOU WILL GET SO FAR REMOVED FROM YOUR BLACKNESS [...] [THAT] WHEN YOU ARE IN A TOWNSHIP OR ANY BLACK SPACE, YOU ARE NOT BLACK ENOUGH'

Psychologically speaking, the existence of coconuts in South Africa is also a product of the socialisation of the black body in predominantly white spaces, according to Ngoasheng.

"When it comes to socialisation, [...] one mistake you can make is to assume that parents are the only socialisation agents. In fact, many socialisation agents [exist]," says Dr Sibusiso Mhlongo, a practising psychologist based in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal.

The way one is socialised may result in one's own behaviour matching that of individuals around them, sometimes without even realising it, according to Mhlongo.

Cele recalls distant memories during her school-going years, when she began to resemble the same demeanour and tastes as the people around her.

"I found myself in a more predominantly white school, so I was in the minority in terms of black children [...] you could probably count how many black children there were in the class," says Cele. "And because most of my friends were white [...] I then began having that shift where I was being made more aware of the fact that I am different in the way in which my friends did things differently like outside of school; where they lived was [also] different to me."

In recalling this memory, Cele reflects on a typical experience of struggling to come to terms with her own identity, often rejecting it in an attempt to assimilate – the cost being her cultural identity.

"Basically, there wasn't much reinforcement of my black identity; no black staff, just the only black staff there [was] were the caretakers [...] the atmosphere around me definitely changed. It became very white

and because of that it just, I don't know, kind of made me assimilate more to that kind of system," says Cele. "The way that I sound, my inability sometimes to understand something that's being told to me in Zulu, my inability to respond back. [...] I felt like, you know, I really am just in the dark," she says.

Ngoasheng interprets moments like these as one of two ways the black child may develop in largely white spaces. The first is an obsession to feel part of the whole and in search of belonging where you "twist yourself into a pretzel", she says.

"Because of how white people continue to frame blackness in your face, in your curriculum, in your school, [...] you become disillusioned. Because you listen and you hear what they say, and you begin to ask yourself, 'If they can say this about people who look like me, then what are they saying about me behind closed doors?'," says Ngoasheng.

A GROUP OF THEIR OWN

At the age of 18, Cele realised that throughout her life, the way she presented herself was not true to the identity that she was born with. This realisation came in 2020, after news broke about the murder of George Floyd, in which four Minneapolis police officers were involved. This event sparked riots and saw the revival of social justice movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

"I remember watching that video and I was like, 'What the heck is this?' Like, there's no way I'm actually watching this happen," says Cele.

Since then, Cele came to engage with her culture in search of a deeper connection to her heritage and with her people.

"I started enjoying just talking in Zulu, even though my Zulu wasn't amazing at all. I just loved how I started appreciating things [...] in Zulu," says Cele.

The suburban black child remains stuck on the line that they attempted to walk, perfectly misplaced and accepted by none, says Ngoasheng.

"You will get so far removed from your blackness [...] [that] when you are in a township or any black space, you are not black enough. You can't dance like black people, you don't understand all of the lingo," says Ngoasheng. "And people in that black world will also kind of make sure that you know that you don't belong in this world with us. And then you go to white people, and you don't belong there either." ●

PHOTO: Ubaid Abrahams

'Uit die blou van onse hemel...'

Discussions about South Africa's national anthem focus on its ability to inclusively represent the nation's diverse population while grappling with the weight of its historical context. While some experts see the current hybrid anthem as a sufficient compromise, others argue a new version could better address reconciliation and past traumas.

Amy Lindström

It is time for the Springboks to take the field. The crowd of supporters holds its breath in a collective hush as the singer steps forward, microphone poised for what feels like a historic moment. The orchestra strikes up the resonant notes of '*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*'.

Despite the palpable anticipation, the first two verses feel like a mumble. The crowd seemingly holds back, waiting.

As the *"Setjhaba sa South Africa, South Africa"* of the second verse fades into the air, the crowd begins to shift.

"Uit die blou van onse hemel!" the crowd roars, their voices booming with a fervour and familiarity that resonates throughout the vast expanse of the rugby stadium.

"It is always vexing to hear," says Dr Carina Venter, chair of the South African Society for Research in Music, and musicology lecturer at Stellenbosch University (SU). "Nationalism [and] the troubled history we hear indexed in the idea of a national anthem, has darkened history in South Africa and elsewhere."

South Africa's national anthem, adopted after the country was still shaking off memories of apartheid, continues to be a topic of discourse, even after 30 years of democracy.

"It was a noble goal, but was it wise to use an apartheid symbol for this purpose?" asks Prof Michael le Cordeur, the vice-dean for teaching and learning at SU's education faculty, in an article for *Daily Maverick* in 2019.

'DIE STEM VAN SUID-AFRIKA'

'Die Stem van Suid-Afrika' was a poem written by CJ Langenhoven and composed by Marthinus Lourens de Villiers in 1921. It was sung in public for the first time on 31 May 1928, but was accepted as the national anthem on 2 May 1957, says Le Cordeur in the article.

Incorporating *'Die Stem'* into the new national anthem was a compromise, according to Richard Cock, a South African musician and conductor.

The new South African government sought to adapt the national anthem to include all South Africans, irrespective of race, says Prof Mawande Dlali, head of the department of African languages at SU.

Venter, too, is enticed by the need to belong to a collective – one that is hopeful, aspirational, and inventive of new ways of being South African.

The older, Afrikaans generation approaches the national anthem with reluctance, says Venter. "I think there are more urgent measures of inclusion that should preoccupy us."

A NEW *'STEM'*

"National symbols can be inclusive, but they can also be very divisive. This one has lasted 30 years nearly, and is widely accepted," says Cock. "As with all compromises, some will be disappointed, but they are necessary."

Venter has noticed a change over the past few decades, with the isiXhosa, isiZulu, and Sesotho sections of the anthem growing louder as rugby audiences transform and more South Africans invest in the present and the future, as opposed to longing for a tainted past.

There have also been complaints that the original "aesthetic value" of '*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*' has been lost, says Dlali.

The jingoistic nature of national anthems reflect their inherent purpose of making one proud of one's country, says Cock. However, alongside the questions of the anthem's appropriateness is discourse on whether the anthem should ever be rewritten.

Venter believes that even with an anthem in South Africa's 11 official spoken languages, there is no guarantee that everyone would feel included.

"Until South Africa becomes a country where people are included socio-economically and where each person wanting to live in this country [...] can access the promises locked up in the Freedom Charter, there will be exclusion," says Venter.

Nonetheless, she suspects that the South African national anthem will never be without its paradoxes. ●

WHEN LANGUAGE BLOCKS BETTER HEALTHCARE

Language barriers are bound to be an issue in a country with 12 official languages. In the healthcare field, these barriers can have life-changing consequences. This impacts the way in which doctors are able to interact with patients, potentially affecting the quality of care patients receive.

Nicholas Gleeson

Imagine you are a young Sesotho man in a hospital. None of the staff can speak your language, so they do not speak to you at all. In fact, their clinical notes claim that you are confused. They do not inform you of your positive HIV diagnosis. You believe that you have done something wrong to upset them because every day they stick a needle in your back. It takes a young, Sesotho-speaking student to eventually explain to you what is going on.

This is a reality caused by language barriers in the South African healthcare system, according to Dr Francois Coetzee, program coordinator at Stellenbosch University's (SU) rural clinical school at the Ukwanda Centre for Rural Health, based in Worcester.

The Sotho patient in question suffered due to a language barrier and a resulting lack of care, according to Coetzee. "[The injection] was part of the treatment, but nobody made the effort to communicate what it was about," he says.

PROBLEM OR NOT?

Dr Angela Hartwig, who has worked in rural hospitals in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, expressed the challenges that language barriers pose to healthcare professionals.

"Sometimes I want to be able to explain things in more detail, but I know I don't have the vocabulary to do that. Or, maybe, I'm trying to get a deeper understanding of what the patient is going through, but I can't really understand all the nuances of what they're trying to say," says Hartwig.

Communication barriers in hospitals can lead to misdiagnosis and less individualised and holistic care which negatively affects both patients and healthcare staff, according to an article published in the *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare* in 2013, written by Dr Emina Hadziabdic and Dr Katarina Hjelm.

"I think [the language barrier] is a real issue. [...] I don't think anybody has given it much thought so I think it is neglected," says Gavin MacGregor, director of Umthombo Youth Development Foundation, which is an organisation that aims to overcome staff shortages in rural hospitals in South Africa through scholarships for rural learners.

However, Foster Mohale, acting head of communications for the national department of health, claims that language barriers are not a prevalent issue.

"We haven't heard of a significant issue where someone can't access health services or can't be assisted precisely because none of the healthcare workers can understand his or her language," says Mohale.

Dr Asithandile Nozewu, a postdoctoral research fellow at SU currently researching the issue, disagrees. Nozewu is trying to bring the issue to the government's attention.

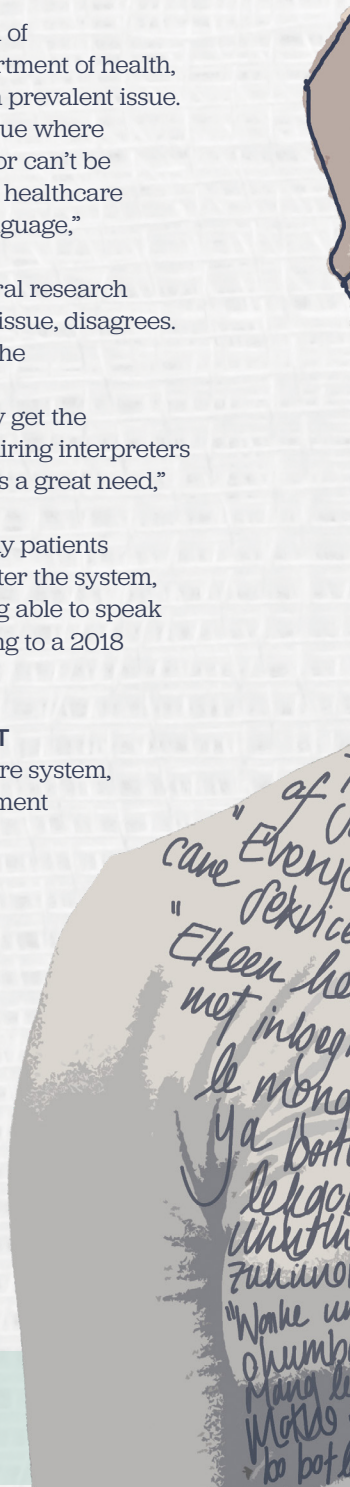
"Part of our research [...] is to actually get the government to see the importance of hiring interpreters in the system [...] because it's a need. It's a great need," says Nozewu.

Nozewu believes that there are many patients who face language barriers as they enter the system, with only 16.6% of South Africans being able to speak English outside of their home, according to a 2018 *Statista* report.

PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE PAST

With a previously segregated healthcare system, South Africa's first democratic government had to create one cohesive system that could serve all, said Mohale.

"Before 1994, we had many health departments [...] from different homelands," says Mohale. "We passed the National Health Act and integrated all the health services under one department," he says, referring to the amalgamation of the separate healthcare departments created during apartheid. "We have been



GRAPHICS: Maliza Adendorff

working very hard in order to break all those impediments of the past which were as a result of racism and racist pieces of legislation."

"It was easier back then to just [...] have English and Afrikaans. That didn't cost much. But now, where every language – official language – is equal, that means more money, more resources," says Nozewu.

In an ideal environment, each hospital would be equipped with a translator for every language, but that is not possible, according to Coetzee.

PLACEMENTS CAUSING PROBLEMS

Nozewu states that doctors are not placed according to language compatibility, but according to where the need for doctors is highest.

Whilst medical students are taught different languages before they graduate, they may be placed in regions of the country where the languages they learnt are not spoken. Learning other languages is not only about being able to speak them.

"The importance of language acquisition encompasses a comprehension of cultural nuances and communication norms relevant to healthcare interactions in various communities," says Prof Karin Baatjes, vice dean of the faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at SU.

"Learning a new language lays the foundation for effective communication strategies and conveying empathy and respect on a basic competency level," she says.

MacGregor believes doctors should be placed according to their language skills.

"There is value in [...] exposing doctors during internship and community service to different settings, I understand that. But definitely for community service, where the idea is to help address staff shortages in rural or outlying areas, [language proficiency] should be taken into consideration," says MacGregor.

Training healthcare professionals in dealing with language barriers can make communicating easier for both patients and healthcare workers, says Coetzee.

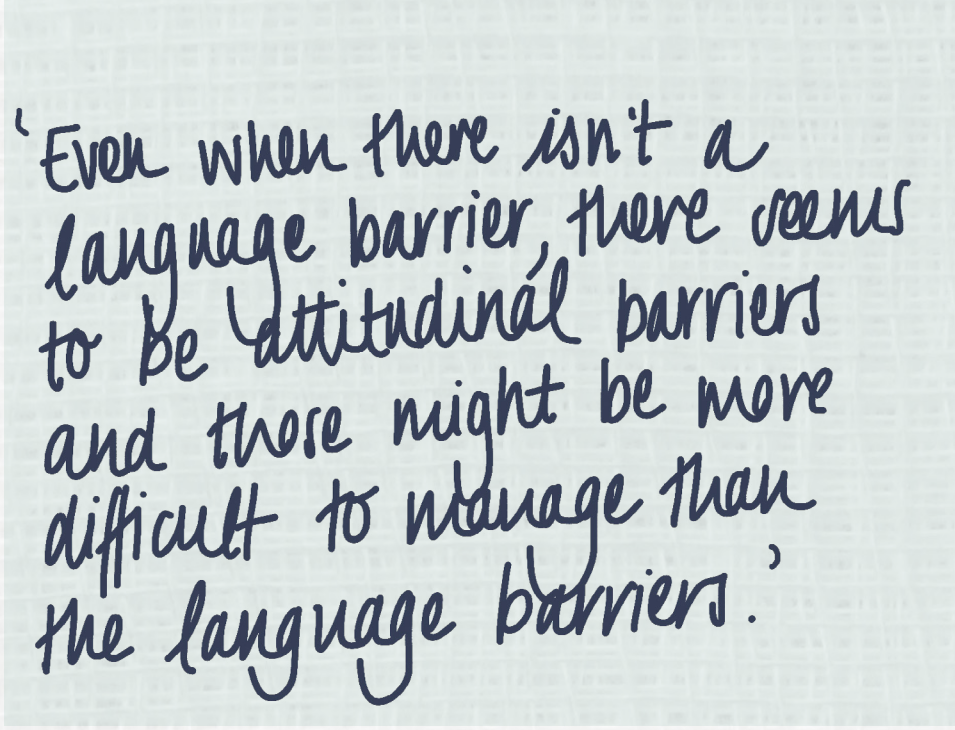
"It's skills in actually connecting with people, [...] with touch, with your facial expression, your tone of communication, making extra time where you connect with another human being and not a person with a problem," says Coetzee.

LOST IN INTERPRETATION

Various methods of interpretation, both formal and informal, are used in South African hospitals, according to an article written by Prof Ana Deumert titled "Serving South Africa's multilingual patient base", published in *Social Science & Medicine* in 2010.

The Western Cape department of health uses a company called Folio Online, which provides a telephone interpretation service, according to Alaric Jacobs,

GRAPHICS: Maliza Adendorff



principal communications officer for Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. Although helpful, telephonic interpretation has its flaws. Passing a telephone back and forth is frustrating and does not allow for communication through body language, says Coetzee. "I think I did that once. It just made the consultation so artificial," he says.

Hiring more interpreters in hospitals is a realistic approach, says Nozewu. "You also need that personal experience where that person is there. Someone who's going to understand not just the language but also the cultural issues. Someone who is going to interpret, well, the non-verbal issues," she says.

Often, hospital staff are used as interpreters, which can compromise important ethical and professional boundaries, according to Coetzee.

"So now, you find a security guard or a cleaner that can speak Sotho. And now you need to tell the patient he's got HIV and then there's a confidentiality issue. That's part of the challenges of the healthcare environment where there's a language barrier," says Coetzee.

The use of informal interpreters can also lead to important information being lost in translation, according to Coetzee.

"It's not unusual that you ask the question and the patient talks for a minute flat and then the translator says, 'He says yes'. [...] It's super frustrating [...] then there's discomfort which comes when you have to talk through a stranger to the doctor," he says.

"I feel like [third-party interpreters are] actually wasting my time, because I can understand enough to know they're not interpreting exactly what I was trying to get across," says Hartwig.

When staff who act as interpreters know the patients, it can become uncomfortable for them to share intimate details.

"Depending on who's translating, the patient may or may not tell the truth. [...] They get to the doctor and the nurse that's translating [and it] is actually a relative or someone in their community. [They don't want to] talk about their personal stuff because they don't want everybody in the community to know," says MacGregor.

Due to a lack of formal interpreting methods available, doctors are forced to adapt, learn, and make-do, says Hartwig, who learnt isiZulu at school and who is a home language English speaker. She worked in the Eastern Cape and could not speak any isiXhosa.

"When I went to Mthatha [...] there was no one available to translate. So I had to listen to what my patients were saying, go and speak to the clerk and say, 'What does this mean?' [...] So I was able to learn in that way," says Hartwig.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

"Even when there isn't a language barrier, there seems to be attitudinal barriers and those might be even more difficult to manage than the language barriers," says Coetzee. He stated that there is a culture in South Africa's healthcare system of trying to find solutions for problems, not for people.

Nozewu claims that the issue of language barriers is further exacerbated by a lack of willingness from the government to invest in solutions and from doctors to engage.

Despite the efforts of many, some doctors adopt the mentality of, "we're not dealing with a language issue here, we're here because you're sick and that's all we want to deal with", says Nozewu. Many doctors want to deal with medical issues, not language issues.

Where the government seems to be unwilling to view the issue as a priority, some private initiatives aim to improve the situation.

"Something that has been offered for a few years in the Eastern Cape is a medical isiXhosa course. [...] I think that's helpful in bridging some of the gaps for people who come from other provinces and don't have much exposure to the language," says Hartwig.

"[Umthombo Youth Development Foundation's] whole aim was, and is, to address staff shortages in rural hospitals with locals who understand the language, understand the culture, who are part of the community," says MacGregor.

With issues around funding, staffing, methods, and willingness, the South African healthcare system needs solutions. And according to Nozewu, no single solution will wipe away all problems caused by language barriers in hospitals.●

Roots OF RESISTANCE

A natural hair movement has been sweeping through the coloured community in post-apartheid South Africa. People are reclaiming the word *kroes*, previously used as a derogatory term for textured hair. However, hair remains a controversial topic for coloured people in South Africa.

Alison Hermanus

A young coloured girl sits between her mother's knees on a hot Sunday afternoon. The sharp sting of the relaxer burns her sensitive scalp. Her mother's hands work through her hair with a mixture of urgency and determination, pulling and tugging at each curl.

"Hou jou nek styf," her mother commands, as both a warning and a plea. Every curl that falls under the relentless tug of the comb is more than just hair. It is a piece of the young girl, smoothed and straightened into submission. She does not have a choice - the boys at school have been saying her hair is *kroes* and she knows that they think *kroes* hair is ugly.

As each curl is smoothed, she loses a part of her identity.

BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE

Hair was used as a tool of categorisation in apartheid South Africa, according to Simone Thomas, founder of Kroes Rocks. This online hair community is "changing the narrative of natural hair", according to their Instagram and Facebook accounts.

The feeling of lost identity relating to hair can be traced back to the pencil test that was used as a tool by the apartheid government to distinguish 'European people' from 'non-European people', explains Thomas.

To be classified as European, or white, a pencil inserted into the hair of the person subjected to the test would need to slip out, says Thomas. This would not be possible with textured hair.

Being classified as white during the time of apartheid came with certain privileges that other racial groups in South Africa did not have, says Thomas.

Straighter hair, typical of white people, was the ideal. Many coloured women would undergo chemical treatments, such as relaxers, to straighten their hair and give it a smoother texture, she says. This was not solely done for the pencil test, but also to blend in with white people in South Africa and appeal to their beauty standards, Thomas says.

"Preference for straight hair [amongst] coloured people, before the natural hair movement, was largely as a result of the long-term effects of apartheid," says Mandisa Mereeothle, owner of Kroes Hare Care, a hair care brand that focuses on providing products for natural hair. "The regime in itself imposed Eurocentric beauty standards."

"People would look at you differently if your hair was curly," says Olivia Adonis, owner of

GRAPHIC: Alison Hermanus

Crown of Beauty Hair Design. She has been in the hair industry for 34 years.

During the time of apartheid, the word *kroes* was used in a derogatory way towards people with textured hair, according to Thomas, and people would change their hair to avoid hearing this word in reference to their hair.

FITTING IN

Post-apartheid South Africa, while freeing, was a time when many people felt confused about their identities, wrote Justin Bradshaw in a paper for the School for International Training Study Abroad Programme. Dynamics of racial hierarchies echoed even after 1994, he writes in his article, "Identity Crisis: Making Sense of Post-apartheid Relationships Between Whiteness and Antiracism".

This confusion carried over into the coloured identity and the hesitance towards adopting natural hair, according to Thomas. "There has been a change and it's been a slow change. [...] It has taken more than 10 [to] 15 years."

This hesitance is still linked to the racial hierarchy that Bradshaw writes about. Along with wanting to feel like they belonged and had identity, coloured people wanted the benefits of passing off as white, says Thomas.

"The only [hair] products you were able to find 12 years ago were products that changed the appearance and the texture of [...] what they call 'ethnic hair'," says Thomas, referring to chemical treatments, such as relaxers and straightening perms, that changed curly or coily textured hair to straight hair.

"There [has been] a relationship between straight hair and economic opportunities," says Thomas, who completed a master's degree in marketing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. For her research, Thomas focused on the consumer behaviour of black women with natural hair. Chemical hair relaxers, which chemically straightens or 'relaxes' curly hair, are still extremely popular. Coloured people with straight hair seem to get better job opportunities. Natural hair was looked down upon and was seen as unprofessional, she says.

During apartheid coloured mothers felt pressured to give their daughters relaxer treatments, older family members judged anyone with too much texture in their hair, and the word *kroes* remained an insult, according to Thomas. This furthered the idea that coloured people had: straight hair was better than textured hair.

CHEMICALS TO CURL DEFINERS

Naturally, a decline in the purchasing of chemical relaxer treatments came after their consistent popularity throughout apartheid, says Thomas. This decline came in the years after apartheid ended, which may indicate that something has changed.

After 30 years of democracy, coloured people have started to embrace their heritage more, they have started to embrace their natural hair, says Thomas.

Today natural hair has become more normalised and, as a result, more people are starting their natural hair journeys. Whether that means transitioning, doing a big-chop (the act of cutting damaged hair to grow one's natural hair texture), or shaving everything and starting over.

"For the longest time I didn't even know my hair could [curl]," says Miché February, who started her natural hair journey in 2020. After shaving her head and growing her hair out, February fell back into the habit of constantly using heat on her hair, ultimately damaging it and having to shave it for a second time to start the process all over again. February says this was because she thought having natural hair was too much maintenance.

"I actually got a huge reality check where I was like: 'Taking care of natural hair is actually a daily job'," says February. "I get significantly more compliments when my hair is straight than when my hair is curly; but I get more sincere compliments when my hair is curly."

"There should be more workshops in our communities that [are] aimed at eradicating all the negative stigmas [around] natural hair," says Chanté Driver, who started her natural hair journey in 2017.

Thomas claims that, when she was transitioning into her natural hair journey, she could not find a lot of guidance on how to take care of her natural hair. No one ever taught her how to style or keep her natural hair healthy, so she decided to educate herself and help others in their journey, Thomas says.

Embracing one's natural hair means growing out previously damaged hair and prioritising taking care of new growth and nourishing natural hair. The transition to natural hair means getting rid of harmful hair habits like chemical treatments and excessive heat use, according to Lucía Ortega Sampson in an article titled "Hair transitioning: What it really means", published on *The Hair Routine* website.

GRAPHIC: Alison Hermanus

'MY HAIR IS KROES AND THAT'S OKAY'

People in the natural hair movement have decided to reclaim the word *kroes* and to use it in a positive way, rejecting the negative history of the word instead of letting it impede their natural hair journey, says Mereeotlhe.

"The natural hair movement is a powerful counter to these imposed [Eurocentric] ideals. It promotes self-love and acceptance of our natural beauty," says Mereeotlhe. "I decided to reclaim the [word *kroes*] as an act of self-empowerment and resistance."

Driver explains that the negative connotations surrounding the word *kroes* are part of the reason why people around her are so hesitant to start their natural hair journey.

This is why reclaiming the word is so important. Taking away the negativity associated with the word takes away the singular beauty standard of straight hair, says Driver.

The combination of communities and brands aimed at educating people about their natural hair and giving the word *kroes* a new meaning can inspire many, and move the natural hair movement forward, Driver explains.

"It should be a relationship. A woman should wear a crown with pride and confidence [...] You shouldn't wear it to impress someone else," says Adonis.

"Finally letting go and getting rid of the idea that my natural hair is ugly was very liberating," says February.

"We need to realise that there is not just one standard of beauty," says Driver. "We will wear our hair with pride." ●

COLOURISM IS NOT JUST SKIN-DEEP

Colourism – which is a form of prejudice against people with a darker skin tone, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary – remains a prevalent issue, especially in South Africa.

"Our history with apartheid has been a big contributor [to colourism] and has brought great division amongst not only black people but other people of colour as well," says Siphesihle Nxokwana, an activist with over 170 000 followers on TikTok. Nxokwana has spoken out about colourism on social media, and has received responses from black, coloured, and Indian South Africans, who have experienced colourism within their own racial groups. During apartheid, white people were given better places to live, better job opportunities, education, and much more, according to Prof Miquel Pellicer, senior research fellow at the German Institute of Global and Area Studies, and Prof Vimal Ranchhod, deputy director of the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), in an article for SALDRU. This incentivised people of colour to pass as white to access these opportunities.

Dark-skinned women still face prejudice

"I'm a light-skinned South African woman so I've always been privileged," says Nxokwana. She noticed that her sister, who is dark-skinned, was treated differently growing up.

During apartheid, light skin or complexion, straight hair, and narrow facial features were associated with wealth and a higher social status, while darker skin, natural hair, and many other ethnic features were devalued. This is what Slindile Mbatha argues in her master's thesis for UCT's psychology department.

Even light-skinned enslaved people were treated better than dark-skinned enslaved people, working inside the house instead of in the hot sun, says Nxokwana. This idea is also seen in history amongst African slaves in North America, as explained by Prof Verna Keith and Prof Cedric Herring in a 1991 journal article in the *American Journal of Sociology*, titled "Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community".

"Light-skinned women have always been preferred over dark-skinned women," claims Nxokwana.

Where is the love?

"I used to question myself and be like, 'Did I get this opportunity because [...] I worked for it, or did I get it because people think that my skin colour was used as an advantage?'" says Karabo Nwamusi, who has written on colourism in the online publication *Assembly*.

"The more we discriminate against each other based on how light or dark we are, the less likely we are to succeed in fighting racism outside of our communities," says Nwamusi. ●

Stemme van verandering

Op die bladsye van ’n roman, of in die kort reëls van ’n gedig, word die vreugde, pyn en lyding van ’n nasie verewig. Maar taal kan die wapen van revolusie wees; skrywers kan dit gebruik om ruimtes te skep waar verandering begin en nuwe stemme hul regmatige plek inneem.

Lara Smith

Gestel jy is die heerser van ’n outoritêre regering, hoe sou jy jou nasie beheer? Wat sou jy doen om ’n beheerde ruimte te skep? Jy hoef nie verder te kyk as die destydse apartheidsregering nie. Hulle het ’n manier gevind om beheer uit te oefen.
Deur Afrikaans te gebruik as ’n instrument van onderdrukking het hulle mense se unieke stemme uitgesluit en weggeneem.

Tydens apartheid het skrywers egter onderdrukking weerstaan deur in hul gemeenskappe se dialekte te skryf. Dit is volgens dr. Marni Bonthuys, ’n dosent in Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland.

Die gebruik van omgangstaal, die nie-standaard variante van ’n taal, het vernuwing in Afrikaanse letterkunde gebring. Omgangstaal het ’n stem aan onderdrukte gemeenskappe gegee en realistiese weergawes van hierdie gemeenskappe se ervarings weerspieël, vertel Bonthuys.

DIE KRAG VAN STORIES

Literêre werke is nie net ’n weerspieëling van ’n nasie se geskiedenis nie; dit vang ook die krag en hoop van toekomstige veranderinge vas.

“’n Skrywer het so baie mag oor ’n mens se emosies – om dit te beïnvloed. Ek bedoel sommige van my hartseerste oomblikke was as gevolg van karakters uit ’n boek,” vertel Herschelle Benjamin, publisiteitspesialis vir *kykNET* en dramaturg.

Boeke is vir hom ’n manier om van die wêreld te vlug en om homself uit te druk. “Ek het baie goed gesien in my wêreld – in my dorp – wat ek nie kon verstaan nie. Ek dink ek wil dit [in my werk] verwoord en dit aanspreek [...] Soortvan gebruik om vir mense ’n stem te gee.”

Een van Benjamin se eerste prosa-stukke is gebaseer op sy neef wat vir jare ’n stryd gehad het met dwelmmisbruik, en die gevolge daarvan op dié neef se ma. Hy wou met hierdie stuk spesifieke temas gehoor laat word, sê Benjamin.

Benjamin gebruik verskillende variante van Afrikaans in sy eie werk om homself meer akkuraat uit te druk.

“Ek het baie neergekyk op myself [omdat] ek nie soos voluit Kaaps is [nie], en ‘djy’ en ‘djou’ [sê nie]. Maar dis nie waar vanaf ek kommie. Ek kom vannie Platteland af. Jy sal nou nie ’n brei hoor nie, maar ek brei *actually*. So, ek het altyd gehou van die taalaspek van my mense en hoe my ma klink, en hoe my pa klink, en hoe ôs praat,” sê Benjamin.

Benjamin het in Piketberg grootgeword en sy skoolloopbaan daar voltooi. Toe hy in 2014 aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch begin studeer het, was dit vir hom opvallend dat mense anders klink. Dit was die eerste keer dat hy ander dialekte en sosiolekte, soos Gayle, gehoor het. ‘Gayle’ verwys na ’n tipe dialek wat gedurende apartheid onder gay mans ontstaan het, en steeds in dié gemeenskap gepraat word.

In 2022 het Benjamin die *South African Literary Award* (SALA) ontvang vir beste debuutskrywer vir sy drama *In Slavenhuis 39*, wat gebruik maak van Kaaps en Gayle. “Die Gayle is so [...] *I mean come on*, dit is so deel van ’n gemeenskap,” sê Benjamin.

Vir hom is Afrikaans nie net ’n taal wat op papier moet leef nie. “Dis ’n taal wat moet leef soos mense beweeg en praat en hoe hulle praat en hoe dinge verander en beweeg met die tyd.”

SKETS:
Lara Smith

'IS DJY ALLOWED OM SOE TE SKRYF?'

"My eerste inspirasie vi' skryf was laasjaar of die djaar voor haai toe ons beginne skryfwerk doen oor jonger Afrikaanse *poets* en *writers*," vertel D'Angelo Kemp, 'n meestersgraadstudent in Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland.

Op universiteit het Kemp agterkom dat daar skrywers van sy ouderdomsgroep is wat skryf soos hy praat. "Ek is gebore in Elsiesrivier en ek *spend* nou al my hele liewe hier innie selle ou huisie," vertel Kemp.

Op skool is Kemp aan swart digters en skrywers soos Adam Small blootgestel. Small se werk het by Kemp 'n liefde vir gedigte, kortverhale en dramas gekweek. Small het Kemp geïnspireer om taalgebruik te bevraagteken.

"Hoekom skryf die persoon dan nou soe? *Like* is djy *allowed* om soe te skryf? *Like* 'n klomp *questions* het na my toe beginne kom en toe ek mos nou kyk in sy hele oeuvre, toe sien ek dat hy maak *main* gebruik van die taal."

"Daais toe ek besef, *but* die ou het 'n naam gemaak vi' homself in 'n taal wat mense *usually gelabel* het as 'n *gangster*-taal," sê Kemp.

Volgens Bonthuys was Adam Small aktief betrokke by die swart-bewussynsbeweging en was hy die voorloper van 'n nuwe generasie van swart Afrikaanse digters. Small het in Kaapse Afrikaans gedig en volgehou dat Kaaps 'n taal is en nie 'n variant nie. Dit is volgens die *LitNet*-skrywersalbum.

Kemp verwys na voorbeelde uit die hede, en sê dat mense die gebruik van Kaapse Afrikaans in Nathan Trantraal se digbundel, *Chokers en Survivors*, as bendetaal beskou. Ten spyte van hierdie beskouing is daar steeds 'n groot aantal mense, soos Ronelda Kamfer en Ryan Pedro, wat in Kaaps skryf en vir hulself 'n naam maak.

Afrikaans is "meer as net 'n taal", volgens Kemp. Dit is 'n deel van sy identiteit. Of hy nou Kaaps of Standaardafrikaans praat, dit vorm steeds deel van sy kultuur en bied vir hom vertroosting.

OM TE VOEL EN TE SIEN

"Ek wil net hê mense moet *kind of* sien wat ek gesien het, voel wat ek voel en miskien ietsie sien wat hulle nog nie voorheen gesien het nie. Maar in iets wat bekend is," verduidelik Anouk Cronjé, digter en honneursstudent in Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Sentrale temas wat in haar skryfwerk voorkom is natuur en visuele beelde, verduidelik sy. Cronjé sê sy wil nie 'n morele les oordra aan haar lesers of haar emosies onthul nie.

"Ek sou sê natuur, oomblikke, die lig-val en hoe 'n blaartjie in die wind wapper en hoe die son patrone maak as jy jou kop 'n sekere manier draai. Daai soort goeters. Ek sou sê perspektief is 'n ding wat baie voorkom, letterlik en figuurlik," sê Cronjé oor die temas wat voorkom in haar skryfwerk.

"Ek het in Wellington, *born* en *bred*, my hele lewe gebly en daar skool gegaan [...] So, ek is maar 'n Bolander in murg en been en ek het begin skryf so seker graad tien," sê Cronjé. Haar skryfinspirasie het begin met die sanger, skrywer en storieverteller, Nataniël.

‘DIE OU HET ’N NAAM GEMAAK VI’ HOMSELF IN ’N TAAL WAT MENSE *USUALLY GELABEL* HET AS ’N *GANGSTER*-TAAL’

Nataniël, bekend vir sy skerp humor en onmiskenbare styl, is die meesterbrein agter die geliefde *Kaalkop*-rubrieke wat al vir meer as 20 jaar in die vrouetydskrif *Sarie* verskyn. Cronjé onthou hoe sy op twaalfjarige ouderdom hom vir die eerste keer gesien het in dié tydskrif. Van daardie oomblik af het sy maandeliks haar ma gesoebat om die *Sarie* te koop.

‘ALLES IN HIERDIE TAAL MET SY MOOI KLANKE’

“Ek het grootgeword in Namakwaland, op ’n skaapplaas wat ook ’n gastehuis is. Van jongs af het ek te doen gehad met interessante mense en stories,” vertel Joha van Dyk, ’n skrywer en PhD-student in Engels aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

In graad twee het Van Dyk besef dat sy geen opsigtelike talent het nie. “So, toe besluit ek om ’n talent te skep. Ek het na skool op my broer se ou oorgeboude *PC* vir die eerste keer ’n *Word document* oopgemaak en begin skryf. En net nooit opgehou nie.”

Van Dyk se skryfwerk fokus op temas soos identiteit, boeliegedrag, seksualiteit, ras, geslagsgeweld, eetversteurings en geestesgesondheid. “Elke boek word van twee verskillende, uiteenlopende karakters se perspektiewe vertel en laat dus vir my toe om unieke stemme te skep vir my karakters. Ek sien hulle as mense met regte probleme, en in regte lewe is alles *messy*. Alles *overlap*,” vertel Van Dyk.

Sy het haar skryfstyl ontwikkel deur na Afrikaanse kunstenaars soos Spoegwolf, Jan Blohm, Johannes Kerkorrel en Valiant Swart te luister. Dit het haar laat besef dat Afrikaans pret kan wees. “Ek kan dig, gesels, sing, skryf... Alles in hierdie taal met sy mooi klanke.”

Van Dyk het in 2020 haar meestersgraad in Engels ontvang en het terselfdertyd haar eerste boek, *Branderjaer*, gepubliseer deur Human en Rousseau. In 2022 is haar tweede boek, *Vuurvreter*, gepubliseer en in 2023 is *Kanniedood* vrygestel. Haar roman *Kanniedood*, wat oor bendekultuur handel, het ’n vorm van Kaaps gebruik om die stemme van twee bruin hoofkarakters uit te beeld.

“Eendag sal ek wel skryf met Namakwalandse Afrikaans! Daar is nog so baie stories wat wag om vertel te word,” sê sy.

GENERASIES VAN REVOLUSIONÊRE SKRYWERS

Oor die jare het verskillende skrywers groeperings in Suid-Afrika gevorm. Hierdie skrywers het vernuwing tot die Afrikaanse taal gebring en het grense oor gesteek deur in Afrikaans te skryf.

DIE TWINTIGERS

In 1925 was daar ’n beweging om Afrikaans as ’n amptelike taal te vestig. Digters het gefokus op die natuur, geloof en die eensaamheid van individue, vertel dr. Marni Bonthuys, ’n Afrikaans en Nederlandse dosent aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Eugène Marais se “Winternag” was die eerste volwaardige gedig wat in Afrikaans geskryf is en het dié vernuwing ingelei, verduidelik Bonthuys.

DIE DERTIGERS

Die 1930’s was die ontwakingsperiode van Afrikanernasionalisme. Die digkuns van hierdie tydperk het besin oor die idee van menswees, sê Bonthuys. Belydenispoësie, waar die gevoelens en emosies van die “ek”-spreker sentraal staan, is volgens Bonthuys ’n voorbeeld hiervan. Sleutelfigure van hierdie tydperk is digters soos N.P. van Wyk Louw, Uys Krige, W.E.G. Louw en Elisabeth Eybers, vertel Bonthuys.

DIE SESTIGERS

Volgens Bonthuys is die sestigers ’n ikoniese groep Afrikaanse skrywers wat tradisionele literêre norme en -konvensies herskryf het. Hulle het postmoderne tendense, soos surrealisme en eksistensialisme, na die Afrikaanse taal toe gebring en het veral die politiek van die tyd gekritiseer. Belangrike skrywers van hierdie tydperk is onder andere André P. Brink, Abraham de Vries, Breyten Breytenbach, Ingrid Jonker en Adam Small.

TAAL AS ’N STRYDWAPEN

Stryd-poësie verwys na gedigte wat in die 1970’s tot 1990’s deur bruin digters geskryf is. Hulle gedigte het kritiek gelewer op die gebruik van Standaardafrikaans, ras-onderdrukking en bevat uitsprake oor die onreg en impak van die apartheidsregime, verduidelik Bonthuys.

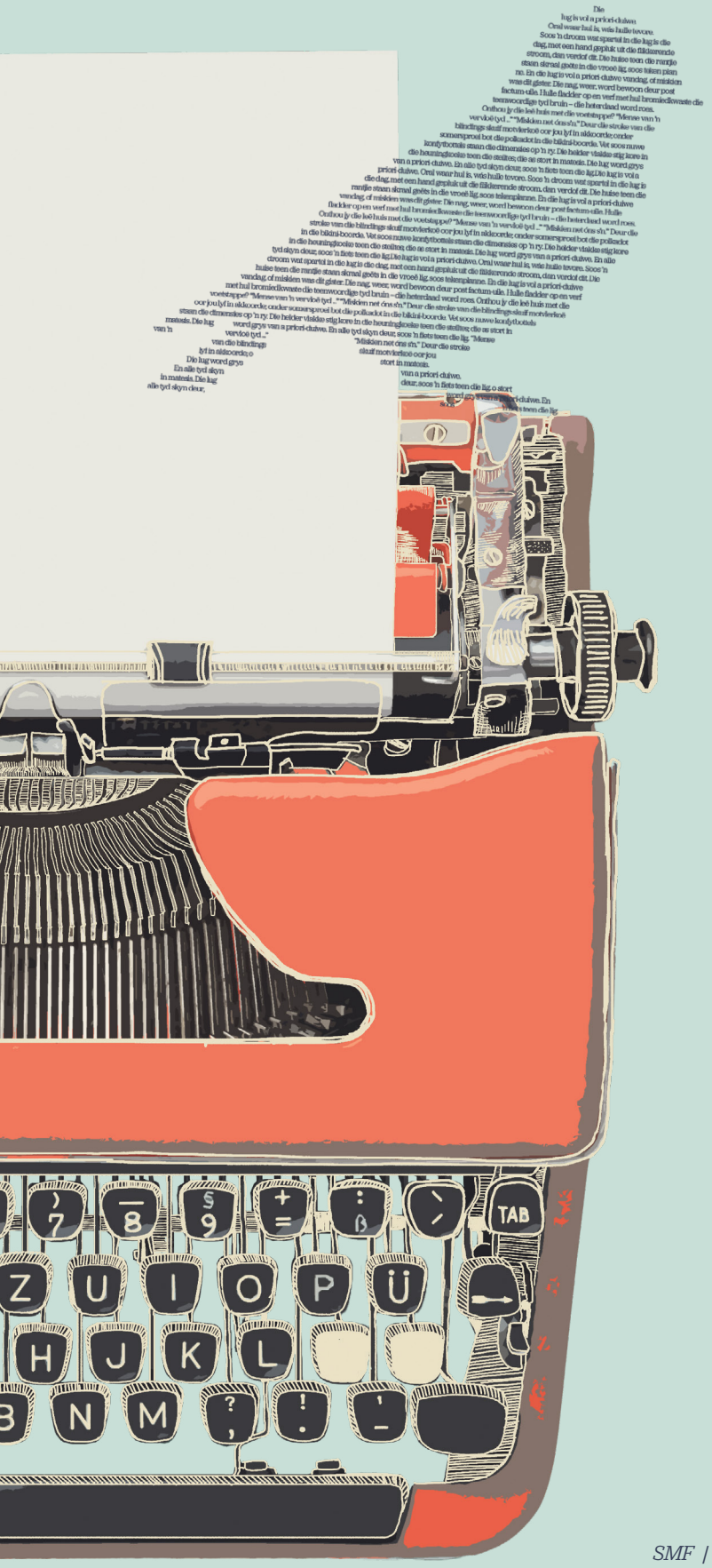
SKETS: Lara Smith

Afrikaans:

’n Komvandaan en hiervandaan

Hoewel Afrikaans veel ouer as 100 jaar is, vier dié taal op 8 Mei 2025 eeufees as ’n amptelike taal. Dit maak van Afrikaans ’n relatiewe jong, ontwikkelende taal wat steeds aan die verander is.

Maliza Adendorff



Ek luister ’n gesprek af in die kajuit van ’n bakkie. Ons is iewers op ’n grondpad, naby Loeriesfontein in die Noord-Kaap; daar waar selfs die sein opdroog. My ma gesels met haar vriendin oor dié se seun, en sy planne vir die toekoms.

“Ek weet nie,” sê die tannie. “Maar in die klap van sy kleintongetjie, klink dit of hy wel planne het.”

Dit klink of Afrikaans hier vooruit boer. Dis die eerste keer dat ek dié gesegde hoor, so eg Afrikaans soos dit mag wees. In die klap van my kleintongetjie en in die sprak en sprook van die Afrikaanssprekendes rondom my, lê daar ’n vraag: Hoe lyk ons moedertaal se paadjie vorentoe?

AFRIKAANS SE KOMVANDAAN

Afrikaans het in die Kaap in die sewentiende eeu ontwikkel, in ’n “smeltkroes” van inheemse mense en Europeërs, verduidelik dr. Amanda Marais, voorsitter van die departement Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. “[Afrikaans] kom uit die dae van die ou Kaap af en wat mens ook moet onthou is: Dit was ’n omgangstaal,” sê sy. Marais is ’n dosent in Vertaling en Afrikaanse Taal en -Letterkunde.

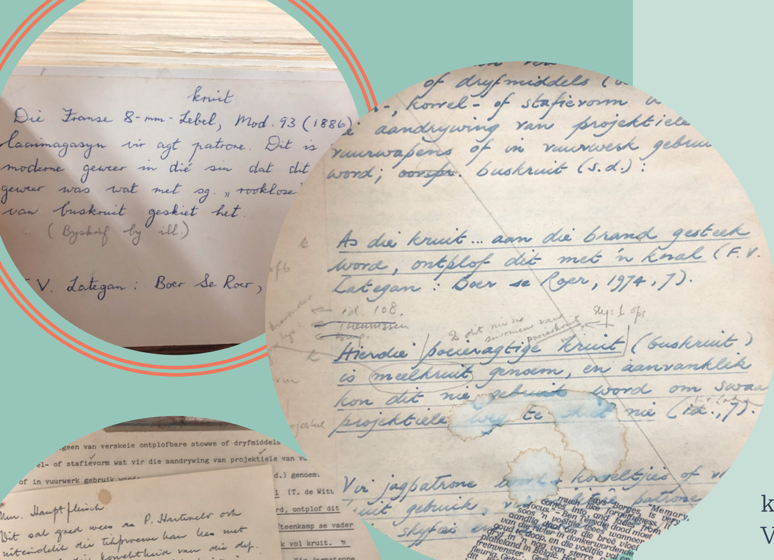
’n Omgangstaal is die gebruikstaal of geselstaal van ’n streek, voer die webwerf *gesellig.co.za* aan.

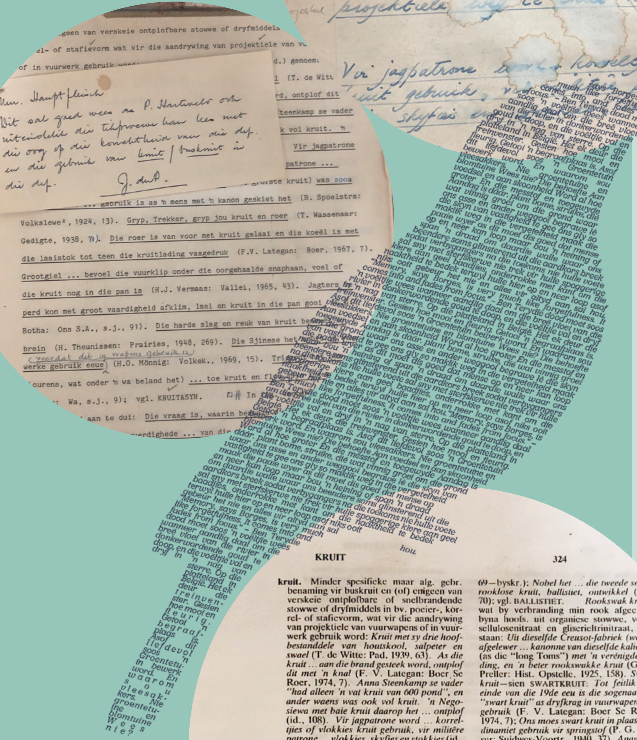
Volgens Marais is Afrikaans ’n voorbeeld van kreolisering –’n proses waarin ’n taal ontstaan deur in kontak met ander tale te kom. “[Kreolisering] beteken vinnige verandering van taal in so ’n kontaktyd. Dis eintlik amper soos [wanneer] jy iets in ’n drukkoker sit en jy draai die stoom aan. So het Afrikaans baie, baie vinnig begin ontwikkel.”

AFRIKAANS VANDAG

Volgens *South African History Online*, is Afrikaans in 1974 as amptelike onderrigtaal in skole afgedwing deur die apartheidsregering. Dit blyk dat daar vandag

GRAFIKA: Maliza Adendorff





Daar is omtrent 3,5 miljoen kaartjies met Afrikaanse woorde op in die Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal se argiewe. ’n Woord word opgeneem en die verskillende uitsprake en gebruike van die woord word daar gelys. Keer na keer word die woordelyste en betekenisse geredigeer en oorgeskryf totdat dit uiteindelik in die woordeboek geplaas word. FOTO’S EN GRAFIKA: Maliza Adendorff

nog, 30 jaar na apartheid, ’n negatiewe konnotasie aan Afrikaans gekoppel word.

“Dit was ’n verskriklike ramp vir Afrikaans,” vertel Marais. “Jy doen geen taal enige guns deur dit op mense af te dwing nie.” Volgens haar dra Afrikaans steeds die etiket van “die taal van die onderdrukker”.

Wicus Pretorius, redakteur van *Tuis*-tydskrif, sê dat Afrikaans in die verlede ’n taal van uitsluiting was. “Mens kan nie die geskiedenis miskyk nie.”

Volgens Pretorius het Afrikaans in die afgelope 30 jaar meer verruimend geword. “Die taal het ’n bietjie meer loslit geword, en ’n bietjie meer verwelkomend. En dit is vir my ’n ontsettend positiewe ding.”

“Daar is [egter] nog steeds [taalkundig] ’n verkeerde Afrikaans en ’n regte Afrikaans,” sê hy.

Pretorius, ’n voormalige onderwyser in Afrikaans, is bekommerd oor die standaard van Afrikaanse onderrig en beweer dat die kwaliteit van vandag se leerplanne nie meer voldoende is om vir leerlinge ’n goeie [Afrikaanse] onderleg te gee nie.

“Ek word soms terneergedruk oor die stand van Afrikaans [...] Ek sien hoe taalvaardighede stelselmatig verswak en hoe die aktiewe woordeskat van jong Afrikaanses regtig al hoe kleiner raak,” vertel Pretorius.

HIERVANDAAN?

’n Taal wat op verskeie vlakke kan funksioneer, is ’n sterk taal. So sê dr. Gerda Odendaal, ’n mederedakteur van die Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal (WAT).

“’n Jaar na Afrikaans as amptelike taal erken is, is daar met die woordeboek begin. Stadigaan het [Afrikaans] op verskillende terreine begin funksioneer. Daar is begin preek in Afrikaans en die Bybel is in Afrikaans vertaal,” sê Odendaal. “As jy die funksies [van ’n taal] begin uitbrei versterk jy eintlik die taal.”

Afrikaans word nie meer soos in die verlede op regeringsvlak of in howe gebruik nie, maar die taal kry nuwe lewe op ander terreine. “Ons sien ’n opbloei in film, televisie, drama en literatuur,” voer Odendaal aan. “As ’n taal funksies verloor is dit nie ideaal nie, maar dit beteken nie noodwendig dat die taal gaan verdwyn nie.”

Die verengelsing van skole en universiteite bied nog ’n risiko vir hoe Afrikaans funksioneer, sê Pretorius. “Ons leef in ’n meertalige land waarin Engels basies die *lingua franca* geword het. Dit is die taal waarin die meeste Suid-Afrikaners, ongeag hulle moedertaal, hulle alledaagse sake bedryf,” verduidelik hy.

’N KAAPSE DRAAI

Die 2022-sensusopname wys dat 10,6% van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking Afrikaans as ’n omgangstaal praat in hulle huishoudings.

“[Daar is] allerlei stories oor hoeveel dialektiese vorms [van Afrikaans] daar is,” sê prof. Hein Willemse, eerstydse hoof van die Afrikaanse Departement aan die Universiteit van Pretoria. “Party praat van 12 of 13, sommige praat van 25 [Afrikaanse variëteite].”

“Met ’n bietjie moeite sal enige persoon wat Afrikaanssprekend is al hierdie sogenaamde variëteite wat ons het, kan verstaan,” sê Willemse.

Standaardafrikaans was vroeër bekend as “AB Afrikaans”, of “algemeen beskaafde Afrikaans”, vertel Marais. Dié term kom nie meer

GRAFIKA:
Maliza Adendorff

in Afrikaanse woordeboeke voor nie. “As jy dit só ’n etiket gee, wat noem ’n mens [ander dialekte]? Onbeskaafd?”

Volgens 2019 se Taalkommissie is Standaardafrikaans ’n variëteit van die taal wat in bepaalde situasies as die norm beskou word. Hierdie vorm van Afrikaans hoor ons in klaskamers, lesingslokale en howe. Dié variëteit word ook in skryfwerk soos handboeke, nuusberigte en verslae gebruik.

“[Standaardafrikaans] is eintlik ’n bo-dialektiese variant,” sê Willemse. Hy beklemtoon dat Afrikaans gesien kan word as ’n “omvattende term”, maar ook dat daar ’n stigmatisering is rondom verskillende variëteite van Afrikaans. Willemse sê dat stigmas rondom dié variëteite gevorm word deur streekselemente en sogenaamde “ras” en “klas”.

Daar word stemming gemaak rondom die breë intellektualisering van Kaaps, om Kaapse Afrikaans tot ’n groter mate te standaardiseer, sê Willemse. “Wat daarmee saamhang, is [...] die erkenning van die menswaardigheid van die sprekers van daardie spesifieke variasie.”

Willemse voel dat dieselfde proses behoort te geld vir ander variasies van Afrikaans, of dit nou Griekwa-Afrikaans, Gariep-Afrikaans of Namakwalandse Afrikaans is. “Daardie groter mate van erkenning en erkentlikheid is belangrik vir die ontwikkeling van Afrikaans.”

Daar is verskuiwings wat besig is om in die Afrikaanse taal plaas te vind, vertel Willemse. “Die hele gesprek rondom Kaaps [...] is een van die belangrikste groeipunte in Afrikaans [...] Die feit van die saak is, [Afrikaans] gaan ’n pad deur Kaaps [...] en deur al die ander variëteite moet loop. Dis net eenvoudig die waarheid,” sê Willemse.

“AFRIKAANS IS ’N HUIS MET BAIE KAMERS”

“Afrikaans as taal is ’n huis met baie kamers, en dit is juis daardie diversiteit en kragtigheid wat gevier gaan word,” sê Giep van Zyl in ’n berig wat op 8 Mei 2024 deur *Maroela Media* gepubliseer is. Van Zyl is Afrikaans Amptelik 100 se nasionale koördineerder.

“Wat Afrikaans vir my mooi en *sexy* en verfrissend maak, is hoe mense dit gebruik,” sê Bibi Slippers, ’n Afrikaanse digter en -draaiboekskrywer. “Die verskeidenheid van dialekte en variante van Afrikaans is ongelooflik,” sê sy.

“Mense in verskillende dele van die land se Afrikaans pas by hulle omgewing aan,” voer Slippers aan.

“Al hierdie maniere van [Afrikaans] praat, het organies ontwikkel.”

“Die taal is beter as daar meer variasies is,” sê Slippers. Dit is soos honde, sê sy.

“Opregte honde is baie keer geneig om meer siektes te hê en meer *frail* te wees,” verduidelik Slippers. “*Pavement specials* wat oop is vir invloede, is baie maal baie sterk honde met min probleme, hulle leef langer en dit gaan goed met hulle.”

“Ek dink mens kan iets daarby leer, daar is gesondheid in ’n ontvangklikheid en oop wees vir variasie en verskeidenheid,” sê Slippers.

> ‘Die feit van die saak is, [Afrikaans] gaan ’n pad deur Kaaps [...] en deur al die ander variëteite moet loop’

AFRIKAANS: ’N STERWENDE TAAL?

Vir Anne-Ghrett Erasmus is Afrikaanse nie ’n sterwende taal nie. Sy is ’n kunskurator by die Breytenbach Sentrum in Wellington. Die sentrum dien as ’n plek vir opleiding vir verskeie kunsvorms soos beeldhouwerk, visuele kuns en digkuns. “Dis ’n baie lewendige taal, wat transformeer, wat modern is en goed omarm. Nuwe woorde en nuutskeppings,” sê Erasmus.

Erasmus besit steeds haar Afrikaanse taalhandboek wat sy in matriek gebruik het. Sy sê dat sy bekommerd is oor Afrikaans se akademiese funksie en kwaliteit. Hoewel dit ’n lewendige taal is, moet die taal deur middel van taalriglyne onderhou word, meen Erasmus.

“Afrikaans is soos ’n ou huis,” sê sy. “Daar moet versorging wees. [Taalriglyne] is maar net deel van die fondamente van die gebou. So as jy [die fondamente] laat verkrummel, hoe sal die gebou staande bly?”

“[Afrikaans] is so ’n ongelooflike ryk taal [...] Ons het baie om te verloor, ons wil nie hê dit moet verlore gaan nie – géén taal in die wêreld moet verlore gaan nie,” sê Pretorius. “Dis deel van die diversiteit van die menslike ras, dit móét beskerm word tot die laaste lettergreep.”

AMANDLA OLWIMI LWEENKOBE

Iva Fulepu

Kwigumbi lokufundela umfundi uphakamisa isandla, unomdla wokwazi banzi ngesifundo nangona ekhangeleka esabhidekile nje ebusweni. Umsebenzi wezibalo obhalwe ngumfundisintsapho ebhodini ubonakala ulula, kodwa uyabhideka kuba imiyalelo ibhalwe ngesiNgesi.

"Titshala, ndicela undicacisele ngesiXhosa," uvakele esitsho umfundi.

Umfundisintsapho unqwale ngetloko ngelixa aqalisa ukuwuguqulela umbuzo lo, noxa kusazinzile nje ukuzithandabuza komfundi. Ingaba uza kuphumelela njani lo mfundi ezifundweni zakhe xa efundiswa ngolwimi lwasemzini angaluqhelanga?

Abafundi Abashiyekela Emva

Aqhelekile ke amabali afana neli kuninzi lwamagumbi okufundela akwiphondo leNtshona Koloni. Abafundi abathetha isiXhosa bazibhaqa kunyanzeleke ukuba bejongene nemeko yemfundo entsokothileyo, apho ulwimi lwabo lweenkobe luba lwelesibini.

"IsiXhosa lulwimi lwasekhaya, xa ndifundiswa ngesiXhosa ndiyakhawuleza ukuyibamba into ukwegqitha xa ndiyifundiswa ngesiNgesi," kutsho uAnothando Menze, ongumfundi wamabanga aphezulu.

"Into xa ndingayiva apha esikolweni ndiye ndicele umhlobo wam ukuba andicacisele ngesiXhosa, ngoba uninzi lweetitshala azisithethi isiXhosa, ngoku ke xa ndicela utitshala andicacisele ngesiNgesi ndiye ndingamva ncam. Ngoko ke kuye kube ngcono ukuba ndicele umntu othetha ulwimi lwam," utshilo uMenze.

Ngaphandle komgaqonkqubo weelwimi ezininzi woMzantsi Afrika olwela ilungelo lemfundo ngolwimi lweenkobe, abafundi abafana noMenze, ominyaka ili16 ubudala, bashiyeka besokola ngezifundo ezifundiswa ngesiNgesi okanye ngesiBhulu, iilwimi ezingaqhelekanga emakhayeni abo nasezintliziyweni zabo.

Ulwimi Lwasemzini Egumbini Lokufundela

Nabo ootitshala bamonqelwe ngumqa ezandleni ngenxa yalo mqobo wokusetyenziswa kolwimi lwasemzini xa befundisa. USimphiwe Mcinga, ongutitshala wamabanga aphezulu eKayamandi High School, uthi ngenxa yobuninzi babafundi abathetha isiXhosa esikolweni apho, kunyanzelekile exube nesiXhosa xa afundisa ngesiNgesi.

"Ukuba bendinokufundisa ngesiNgesi kuphela andiqondi ukuba bebenokuyiva into endiyifundisayo," utshilo okaMcinga.

Uzibonela ngawakhe indlela iingxaki zolwimi eziyichaphazela ngayo inkqubo yokufunda.

"Ukuba bangafundiswa ngesiXhosa babhale ngesiXhosa, bangenza ngcono kakhulu. Abafundi ababhala ngolwimi lwabo bazuza lukhulu ngoba umbuzo ungolwimi lwabo, ze nempendulo ibe kwangolwimi lwabo. Nabani na xa ebhala ngolwimi lwakhe kuba lula ukuba agqwese," ugqibezele ngelitshoyo uMnu. Mcinga.

GRAPHICS: Lara Smith

Ulwazi Lweengcali

Ngokutsho kukaNjingalwazi Robyn Tyler, oyingcaphephe yeelwimikwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona Koloni, iziphumo zokungalusebenzisi ulwimi lwasekhaya lomntwana zidlulela ngaphaya kwemingeni yokufunda. Uphando lwakhe lugxile kwimfundo ebandakanya iilwimi ezahlukeneyo.

"Xa kubandakanywa ulwimi lwabantwana lwasekhaya ekufundeni, bayaphumelela ngokweemvakalelo nangokwemfundo," wangeza ngelitshoyo uNjingalwazi.

Eyona nto ifunekayo kukuzimisela ngamandla kwabezopolitiko ekuncediseni izikolo ekubeni imigaqonkqubo yazo yelwimi iquke zonke iilwimi kwaye ibe nentsingiselo kubo bonke abantwana, uvalelile ngeli uNjing Tyler.

ISebe leMfundo Liyawuqonda Lo Mqobo

Isebe liyakukhuthaza ukufundiswa kwabantwana ngolwimi lweenkobe.

"Umfundi ofundiswa ngolwimi lwakokwabo usoloko enenzuzo," kutsho uMpumelelo Thobela, oyingcali yezemfundo noyintloko kwiphondo laKwaZulu-Natal.

"Umfundi ofunda ngolwimi lwasemzini kufuneka aqale acazulule ulwimi olo ngaphambi kokuba aqonde umxholo kunye nesigama seso sifundo. Umzekelo, xa sifundisa inzululwazi yeziphathekayo, kubakho amabinzana aba nzima enzululwazi ekufuneka umfundi aqale wajongana nawo."

UThobela uchaze iinzame zeSebe zokuphucula le meko. ISebe lithathela ingqalelo, landisa ze lenze uguqulolwimi lube sesikweni. Xa kuguqulelwa ulwimi utitshala kufuneka azame ukusebenzisa iilwimi zabantwana abafundisayo ngenjongo yokuzama ukucacisa amagama anzima. Kodwa oko kusekwinqanaba lokuqala, utyibele ngelitshoyo lo mfo.

Indlela Eya Phambili

"Ukuze ndizithembe ingase ndifunde esikolweni samaXhosa ngoba kujongeka kulula phaya. Ngoba ingathi ungacaciselwa ngesiXhosa into xa ungayiva kakuhle ngesiNgesi," utshilo uMenze.

UMenze noontanga bakhe basajongene nehambo enzima esikolweni. Kubafundi abafana naye, lendlela igcwele amahlandenyuka ngenxa yezithintelo zeelwimi.

Kodwa ngaphandle kweenzame zootitshala abafana noMcinga lo, ukungabikho kwemfundo ngeelwimi zeenkobe kusaxhaphakile.

IZINTO ZOMOYA
(THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT)

Traditional healing was once a vital and deeply integrated aspect of indigenous life in South Africa, but it has since become misappropriated and misunderstood. The practice is now entangled with debates of good and evil through a Western lens, and faces growing tensions about its true meaning, according to several healers working in this field.

Ntokozo Khumalo

As *imphepho* clouded my vision and enveloped the rondavel that my grandmother and I kneeled in, my heart was conflicted and my eyes sealed shut as I heard her prayer.

"Sfiso, here is your child, she is about to leave to go back to Johannesburg. May her way be protected by *nina abaphansi*," my grandmother prayed.

I could not help but pray to God to forgive me for kneeling *emsamo*. I have always struggled to reconcile the culture I was born into with a religion that rejects the core principles of its practices.

ALTERED LIVES

Religious books have had an ideological influence over people, especially during colonisation, according to pastor Felix Meylahn, the Lutheran director of studies at Stellenbosch University.

One of the legacies of colonialism is the cultural violence that remains in South African societies. This is according to a 2021 article written by Prof Ntokozo Mthembu, in the *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Medical and Health Science*, titled "Relevance for Traditional Medicine in South Africa: Experiences of Urban Traditional Healers, Izinyanga".

Colonialism has left indigenous societies with altered cultural ideas and values through, among other factors, enslavement and the apartheid system, writes Mthembu. It built societal concepts and connotations of ugliness, darkness, inferiority, and sinfulness of being black.

The practice of traditional healing serves more than 80% of the country's population and there are approximately 200 000 practitioners, according to Mthembu. Yet, there is still a stigma surrounding them and their practice, according to Mpilo Mathobane (*Gogo* Mpilo), a sangoma from Johannesburg.

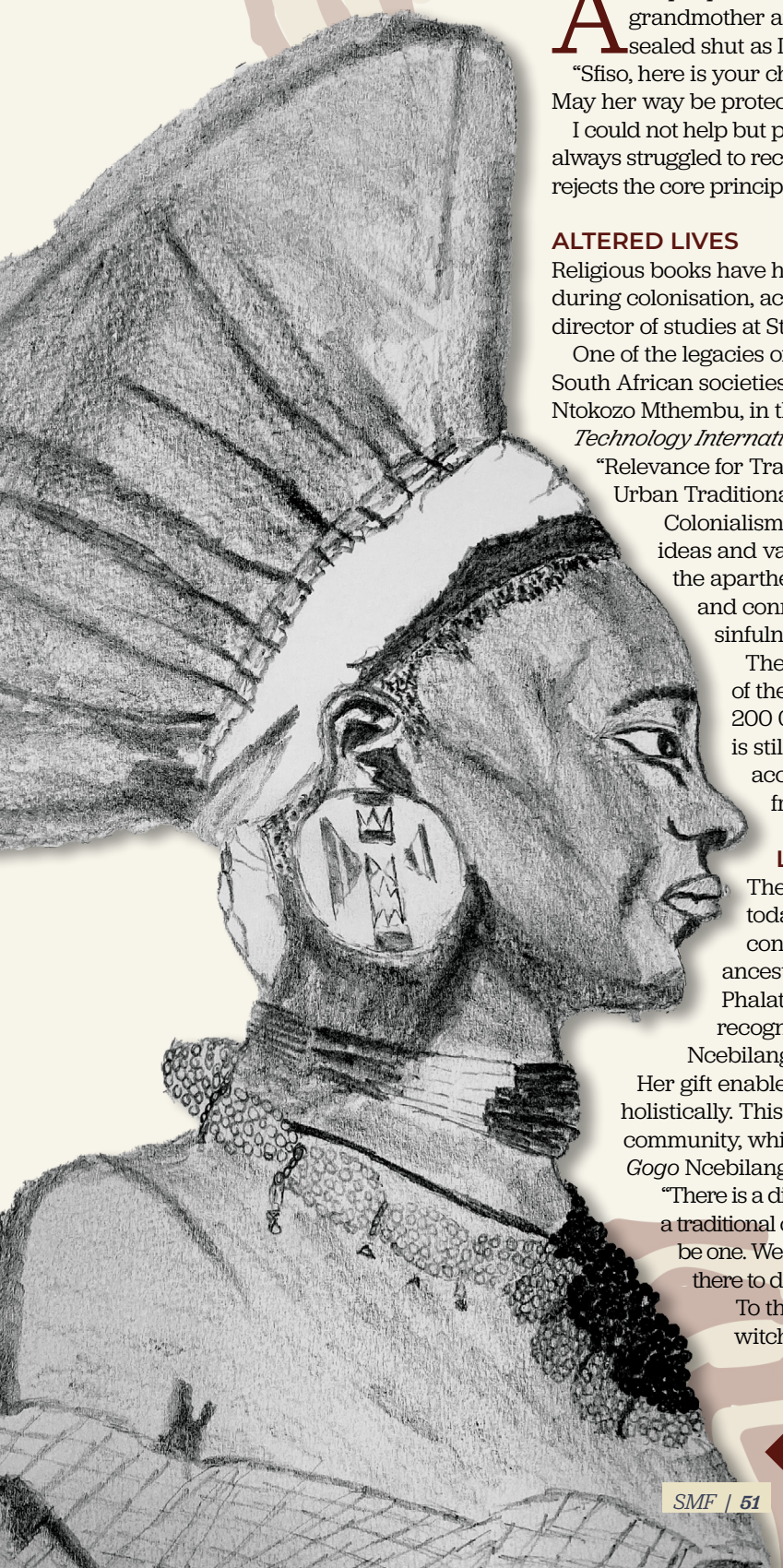
LINGERING INFLUENCE

The prevailing forces of this cultural violence manifest today in the misunderstanding of *ubungoma*, which has contributed to the negative connotations that surround ancestral gifting. This is according to Palesa Asanthe Phalatse, a traditional healer from Randfontein, who is also recognised by the name of the ancestor that is within her: Ncebilanga Ntombi *ka* Dlamini.

Her gift enables her to communicate with ancestors to cure people holistically. This gift was not fully understood by the people in her community, which made them hesitant to accept it at first, says *Gogo* Ncebilanga.

"There is a division of Christianity and *ubungoma*. When there was a traditional ceremony at home, we had [integrated] the two faiths to be one. We understood that *ubungoma* is not demonic and it is not there to destroy anyone," says *Gogo* Ncebilanga.

To this day, some Christians equate *ubungoma* with witchcraft and a practice that is not for the good



SKETCH: Ntokozo Khumalo

of people, according to Sylvia Tshongweni (*Gogo* Nyangile), a *thwasa* from Cape Town.

Before European settlers came to Africa, indigenous healthcare was an essential part of the social system and had great political influence in both private and public spheres. This is according to Prof Engela Pretorius in her 1999 article, "In the home stretch: the legalisation of African traditional healing in South Africa", published in the *Acta Academica* journal. Under the missionary influence and results of repressive political policies, the colonial administrators prohibited traditional African medicinal practices, condemning them as being 'heathen and primitive', Pretorius writes.

"Our knowledge has been lost to [African people]. People do not know of *ubungoma* and its intricate functions," says *Gogo* Magasela, a *gobela* from eMnambithi, formerly Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal.

THE PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL HEALING

People have taken Bible verses to "shoot other people down", says Meylahn. When reading scripture, one needs to take into consideration the context in which the chapter was written. There are fundamentalist Christian groups that take texts and justify "all sorts of things", says Meylahn.

One such scripture is Leviticus 19:31, which was centered on how one should have nothing to do with the dead. Then the teachings would conclude that one cannot worship God and ancestors – shunning traditional healing in the process.

'SOME PEOPLE DON'T LIKE US. SOME PEOPLE CALL US WITCHES'

Rather than viewing Leviticus 19:31 as a scripture written at a specific point in history, its purpose was rooted in reason. The reason was that the Hebrew people had to follow laws and regulations that were put in place to set them apart. They needed to be set apart from the people they found in the 'Promised Land' when they came out from Egypt, says Meylahn.

"What I have learnt at *ephehlweni* [...] is that you have God and your ancestors, you have this gift of being able to help people [with what] you get from nature. Where does that come from? It's God's creation, right? We are told, as a person who is in an initiation school, you must pray and talk to your ancestors," says *Gogo* Nyangile.

Gogo Nyangile says that the practice of traditional healing cannot be easily compared to what a Western medical doctor does. It is also not something that can solely be classified as a religious practice.

"The role of a healer [...] is not restricted to one aspect of an individual's life. They do not operate beyond the physical alone, nor just the spiritual. They deal with the holistic wellbeing of a person. They can be a therapist, a love specialist, a spiritual guide, a *sangoma*, a mentor, or a person who cleanses a home. Their roles in society are multifaceted," says *Gogo* Nyangile.

Traditional healing is a practice that is passed down from one generation to the next through the calling, known as *ubizo*, writes Mthembu.

GLOSSARY

These glossary terms carry unique cultural significance, enriching the article and deepening the understanding of traditional healing.

Imphepho: Traditional incense
Abaphansi: Ancestors
Nina: You (plural form)
Emsamo: At the ancestral dwelling place
Ubungoma: Divination
Ithwasa: Traditional healer during initiation
Ephehlweni: The place of initiation
Sangoma: Traditional healer
Isangoma: The singular form of traditional healers
Ubizo: The calling
Gogo: The spirit that a healer has within them – a spiritual guide
Gobela: Traditional mentor
Intwaso: Spiritual emergence
Thwasa **:** Get initiated
Bayangihleka: They are laughing at me
Esigodlweni: Consulting room
Ziyalahlwa: Disregarded

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEALERS

Gogo Mpilo never went to *ephehlweni*, nor did she have any *gobela*, as her ancestors would reject any form of assistance from anyone. This rejection would manifest itself physically, as she would become ill whenever someone tried to help. People in her community do not understand that there are different types of *intwaso*.

"We have to look back at the reason why people *thwasa* by a *gobela*," says *Gogo* Mpilo.

Not all *sangomas* need to go to *ephehlweni*, as their ancestors would teach them all that they need to know. At some points they would also send people who would help to guide the *sangoma* through the process, writes Mkhulu Mngomezulu in an article titled "Call Me By My Name: Ubizo and Ancestral Names for Abangoma" in *Herri*.

The song *Bayangihleka* by Buhlebendalo, a *sangoma*

GRAPHIC:
Ntokozo Khumalo

who is also a musical artist, speaks of society's reaction towards her journey. She sings about how people's limited knowledge about ancestors causes them to react in such a way.

"They do not know that *idlozi* gives you life," sings Buhlebendalo in *Bayangihleka*.

"Not everyone who comes to *esigodlweni* is meant to undergo the process of becoming *isangoma*. Some people that present with illnesses that seem like they have the gift might have an evil spirit that they need to be cleansed off," says *Gogo* Magasela.

Thwasa is a practice of bringing to light. Spirits that reincarnate and have bad intent *ziyalahlwa* and not used, as they bring darkness and not light, says *Gogo* Magasela.

There is not just one type of healer. How your ancestor reincarnates tells you which type of *sangoma* you are meant to be. Beads inform people of what type of healer a person is, says *Gogo* Nyangile.

The calling is not something that *uGogo* Nyangile had a choice to accept. She says that she was chosen before she was born and the process of her acceptance was a difficult journey.

"My ancestor is a man. When I see him, he is usually dressed in a brown vest [...] with a spear. He is always running towards the sea with a fire around. I am *umgoni* – the war people," says *uGogo* Nyangile as she touches her black, red, and white wrist beads.

Gogo Nyangile describes the different kinds of traditional healers. There are *isiXhosa* or *izihlwele*. They are people with white and sometimes blue beads. Their ancestors usually make them emotionally sensitive and not financially prosperous.

Izithunywa healers are also emotional, and they have strong compulsions to pray a lot. Lastly, there are *umdawo* healers, who usually have waist pains and back pains. Women who are *umdawo* usually have long menstrual cycles that can last for up to two months, says *uGogo* Nyangile.

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL

As a woman in my twenties, I often reflect on moments where religion and traditional beliefs meet at crossroads. I vividly remember my uncle's words in my native language: "Are you also going to partake in such activities as a Christian?" He asked this question during my late great-grandmother's ceremony. In this ceremony, we had to bring her spirit back home so that a dark cloud could be lifted from our family.

There were various traditional requirements that needed to be fulfilled for the ceremony to be successful. One requirement was needing to be bathed in bile, by an elder who spoke to the family's ancestors.

Once I was done, I returned to the main house drenched in a rancid stench. I walked into the living room and saw my uncle watching *Muvhango*.
It was in this moment that he turned to me and asked that question.

Gogo Siphamandla, born with the name Andrea, says that the Bible is a book that is meant for good, yet people have used it for evil. This is the same concept as traditional healing. It is a human phenomenon that should not be limited to Western ideologies, but be understood as a human phenomenon across all boards.
Something that is good could be used for evil.
However, that does not make it inherently evil, says *Gogo* Siphamandla.

'SOME PEOPLE CALL US WITCHES'

"Some people don't like us. Some people call us witches. Some people call us fake *sangomas*. Their first response is to fear it, as that is what is being preached to people from pulpits. [They want] to reject the demon and cast it away," says *Gogo* Nyangile.

"I always asked my *gobela* why I am seeing all these dark things, because [...] I am not a dark person," says *Gogo* Siphamandla. Her *gobela* would reply with, "You see it so that you are able to heal it.
You are being shown all this darkness, hatred, and witchcraft because you can reverse it.
It is not for you to practise, but rather to protect and heal people from it."●

The sketch was inspired by Buhlebandalo, a South African artist who sings about her ancestral gifting. It includes elements that hold significance in sangoma attire.
SKETCH: Ntokozo Khumalo

TRANSLATING WITH CULTURE IN MIND

When translating a concept from one language to the next, there is sometimes a moment where meaning becomes "lost-in-translation". This is according to Fundile Majola, an isiXhosa language practitioner at Stellenbosch University.

However, when attempting to bridge the gap of translation, there are various things that a person can do before prematurely "declaring that their language lacks direct equivalents to [other languages]", says Majola.

One such remedy, according to Majola, is tapping into indigenous knowledge. Though this may not always be easy, research has helped in gaining more knowledge about languages.

The Nguni terms used in this article represent culturally specific concepts, which are applicable to this article specifically. Translations were obtained through research and contacting various sources.

Translating specific cultural concepts from Nguni languages to English can create "ill truths" when treated incorrectly, says Majola.

POWER, UNIFORMS, AND *domestic work*

In post-apartheid South Africa, the domestic worker uniform carries deep and complex meanings, shaping and highlighting power dynamics. For some, it is a symbol of professionalism. For others, it recalls a history of subservience. From art to politics, the uniform has been reimagined, challenging old narratives.

Erinma Nedum

The issue of domestic worker uniforms in South Africa is a contentious one because it may symbolise a lack of change. While domestic workers also work for black families, employers of black females are still predominantly white. This is according to Andisiwe Mazibuko-Ntholeng, PhD candidate in sociology at Stellenbosch University (SU).

The domestic worker's uniform serves as a lens through which we can gain deeper insight into the challenges domestic workers face. It is not the uniform itself that degrades domestic workers, but it publicly marks their position, which has been constructed as low in the social order. This is according to Prof Sithabile Ntombela, dean in the education faculty at the University of Zululand, who explores the exploitation of domestic workers in South Africa in a chapter of the book "Was it Something I Wore?" edited by Prof Relebohile Moletsane, Prof Claudia Mitchell, and Prof Ann Smith.

Chwayita Memo, a domestic worker from Cala in the Eastern Cape, began working as a part-time nanny in late 2023. On her first day of work, she was not asked whether she preferred to wear a uniform or not; she was made to wear one.

"It is the fact that it goes against liberation and movement. It is a sign that power has not [shifted], exploitation [is] still in effect," says Mazibuko-Ntholeng.

"Domestic workers are the most exploited workers, and they can't unionise because they are isolated from each other. You know, it's not like they work in a factory or in a mine where they can form a union whenever they need when their rights are violated," says Nomusa Makhubu, associate professor of art history and visual culture at the University of Cape Town.

A BLACK FEMALE INSTITUTION

Ntombela writes that domestic work in South Africa is characterised by women's subordination and is intertwined with class and race differences. "It is an extremely feminised and low-status job sector."

Domestic work is mainly a black female institution, which is made evident by advertisements promoting domestic worker uniforms, Ntombela writes. The advertisements often use photos of black African women dressed as domestic workers.

"One can say, on the one hand, that any uniform is simply pragmatic: It is how you dress to do your work efficiently and neatly, whether you are a policeman, a fireman, a waiter, a chef, a soldier. Sometimes, Freud said, a cigar is just a cigar," says Prof Lou-Marié Kruger, chair of SU's department of psychology.

However, uniforms are more complex than this. They often serve as a symbol of power. "It is [a] way of indicating who is the powerful and who is the powerless. It also, inevitably, is then a way in which to dehumanise the wearer of the uniform. It also is an indicator of identity, who is who and who is [on] whose side," Kruger adds.

Domestic workers make up a large sector of the labour force. Stats SA's quarterly labour force survey (QLFS) for the second quarter of 2024 recorded that of the roughly 16 652 000 people who are employed in South Africa, around 843 000 of them worked as domestic workers.

Domestic workers in post-apartheid South Africa are often identified by the uniform they wear. This was also the case during the apartheid era, according to Dr Alude Mahali, chief research specialist in the inclusive economic development programme

A graphic inspired by Mary Sibande's exhibition, "Long Live the Dead Queen". GRAPHIC: Erinma Nedum

at the Human Sciences Research Council. She writes this in a 2016 journal article titled "Maid to serve: 'Self-fashioning' and the domestic worker trope in contemporary South Africa" published in the *Journal of African Media Studies*.

THE POLITICS OF UNIFORMS

In the early days of South Africa's democracy, domestic worker uniforms were still heavily loaded from the past, symbolising an "us versus them" divide. "Now, it seems like [a] domestic worker uniform signals profession, no different than a police officer or a flight attendant," says Mazibuko-Ntholeng.

"In the case of domestic work – an institution fraught with contradictions, paradoxes, and ambiguities – there is a constant negotiation of power and vulnerability. The domestic worker is dependent on the employer for work, but the employer is also dependent on the domestic worker; not only for the work she does but also because of the intimate knowledge she has about the household," says Kruger.

"My current employer gave me a choice to either wear a uniform or my own clothes when I first began working with her. And I chose to wear a uniform," says Eunice Sbongile Mthembu, who has been a domestic worker in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal for nine years.

Her uniform does not make her feel othered. She and her employer have a mutual respect for and an understanding of each other. There is no discontent, indifference, or malice between them, so there is not a reason for her to feel oppressed, says Mthembu.

"There is no way I would work in [my personal clothes]," says Mthembu. "I am here to do a job and to fulfil a specific role. To me, my uniform is part of that job in the same way other jobs have uniforms that are a part of their job."

Many people who are part of the domestic workforce in South Africa prefer to wear uniforms, according to Kirstin Tsaperas, co-founder and owner of Della Uniforms, a workwear and uniform apparel company.

"Having done research and spoken to many [people that are part] of the domestic workforce, we came to understand that [...] they in fact do want a uniform. A uniform that is professional and inspiring; one they can look forward to putting on everyday," says Tsaperas.

"People do love to wear a uniform to work, not only in the domestic field but in many job spaces. It gives a sense of purpose, professionalism, and empowerment to the role in which one works," claims Tsaperas.

"I think there [is] a great deal of convenience and practicality. Uniforms mean not [having] to think about what to wear. [...] There is also a rise of companies making domestic worker attire, which is indicative of the demand. Just a quick Google search will enlist a number of suppliers," says Mazibuko-Ntholeng.

PHOTOS: Ubaid Abrahams

There are varying depictions of domestic workers in South African art. A notable example is Mary Sibande's exhibition, "Long Live the Dead Queen", which featured large, photographic murals on the side of buildings and other structures in the city of Johannesburg from 11 June to 11 July 2010. Sibande is a multidisciplinary visual artist.

In Sibande's sculptures, she depicts a woman that appears to be a domestic worker, but her dress has characteristics of the Victorian era, with some of her sculptures adorned with colourful jewellery.

"The notion of "Long Live the Dead Queen" is particularly significant, because it reminds us that those legacies of servitude [from apartheid] have remained. But this character that she creates, manages to transcend them,"
says Makhubu.

RE-BRAND, RE-IMAGINE AND RE-FASHION

The domestic worker trope has taken on a new meaning in contemporary South Africa. This has been reinforced by the Economic Freedom Fighters' deliberate political reinterpretation of the domestic worker uniform, according to Mahali in her 2016 journal article.

"The story that EFF is 'self-fashioning' is one of resilience and defiance. [...] By appropriating the red domestic worker dress - *iduku*, overalls and hard hats - as their official party uniform, the EFF highlight a domestic worker's role in public and turn a piece of clothing into a politically significant symbol of solidarity., giving domestic workers influence and meaning in the political domain. By adopting the colour red, the EFF claim [to identify] with the blood of workers, as well as historical association with socialists and communists," writes Mahali.

DOMESTIC WORK IS REAL WORK

A domestic worker may choose to wear a uniform because she wants to protest and show that, "although I am in your intimate spaces, I am not really a human in this space and to show this I will wear a uniform", says Kruger. So also in the case of domestic work, the wearing of a uniform can indicate power, identity, but also can serve to dehumanise the wearer, says Kruger.

"Uniforms are interesting. In wars we can only kill people if they and us are wearing uniforms and we don't have to think of each other as humans," says Kruger. "That may be the case with domestic workers as well." ●

GRAPHIC: Erinma Nedum

THE SOUTH AFRICAN *queens* ARE HERE

The South African drag scene is a vibrant world with queens who navigated the underground scene during apartheid, and went on to compete in numerous drag pageants. These pageants became spaces where queens could embrace their queer and drag personalities, in dazzling costumes, and performances ranging from dancing to stunts, culminating in a crowning moment.

Mia Oliver

In 1970s District Six, Sandra Dee was 11 years old when she dressed in tights, an oversized shirt, and a wig - getting ready to go to a party. Feeling like the epitome of beauty, Dee set off, but was stopped by her mother who grabbed her little 'boy', and redirected Dee to the local police station because she felt like the way Dee presented herself was wrong.

"This is my son." Dee recalls her mother telling the police this. The officer's eyes travelled over a young Dee. "Are you drunk?" he asked Dee's mother. "How can this be a boy, you can see it's a girl."

Dee's mother insisted that the child she was presenting to them was her son. The officers handled Dee violently, hitting her while her mother watched. Bruised and rejected, Dee ran away. She tried to find some sort of belonging in the streets of Cape Town, where she could freely express herself, far from the rejection of her family in District Six.

Dee, a South African transgender woman who has been doing drag for over 53 years, was at the forefront of the struggle to be both a queen and a transgender, coloured individual during apartheid. Growing up in District Six, Dee recalls feeling abandoned by her community.

THE QUEENS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE

The South African drag scene of today is owed to the queens of the past, says BB Vahlour, a prominent drag artist in South Africa. It is the older drag queens who should be glorified for starting the very first pageants, according to Vahlour.

"It started very underground. [...] No one sees [...] the struggle or the growth," says Vahlour, who has always looked up to queens like Dee.

The drag scene has become popularised in recent years, with podcasts

and shows like the *Tit for Tat Show*, *RuPaul's Drag Race*, and *DragMakeUp*, drawing on a larger audience and appreciation of drag.

However, in South Africa, as much as the drag scene may exist, it does not receive much appreciation or acknowledgement, says Maxine Wild, a drag queen in Cape Town. Local drag queens believe that the art form does not get the attention it deserves. Where many may be familiar with popular figures like Manila von Teez, there is a greater story of the journey of drag within the country, says Wild.

Dee, and other iconic drag figures from District Six like the late Kewpie and Samantha Fox, who has been doing drag for almost four decades, laid the foundation for today's drag scene by starting these drag pageants underground, says Vahlour.

'WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE WE SHOULD STOP ASKING FOR ACCEPTANCE AND JUST TAKE UP SPACE. I'M NOT GOING TO LOWER MYSELF TO ASK YOU TO ACCEPT ME'

As she lights a cigarette, Fox recalls her drag pageant days, where she wore elaborate costumes and proudly strutted across the stage, all while seeking smaller spaces where she could embody her true self in a more indifferent nation.

When Fox and Dee met in the late 1970s, every corner of Hillbrow, Johannesburg was a club that created an atmosphere for queer people to be their true selves, says Fox. Where most places in South Africa were unwelcoming, Hillbrow was the one place where you could go from one club to another, regardless of who you were, Fox recalls.

"[Dee and I] dressed up like [women] every day [...]. We looked like women."

While Hillbrow has become unsafe, Cape Town has become a more accepting space for queer communities these days, according to Fox.

THE QUEENS OF TODAY

As series like *Beaulah: Queens van die Kaap* produced by POP24, and well-established pageants such as Miss Gay Western Cape gain prominence, South African drag culture is increasingly stepping into the spotlight.

Vahlour is from Lavender Hill, Cape Town. She was raised with her mother hosting drag pageants within her community. She also grew up with her aunts in her household, with makeup, wigs and dresses all around her. This is how her love and appreciation for the art form of drag began to manifest. Vahlour believes that the drag community is still growing.

"It's a bit undiscovered. [...] It's still peeking underneath the blanket without knowing what's actually underneath the covers," says Vahlour.

Wild was lucky enough to have grown up in a community that fully accepted her. She is aware of communities that she claims are still "very uneducated and narrow-minded and homophobic or transphobic".

However, Wild believes that not having a supportive community allows you to choose your own. "We live in a world where we should stop asking for acceptance and just take up space. I'm not going to lower myself to ask you to accept me."

A drag queen sits in the midst of conversation, surrounded by queens who are preparing for the upcoming pageant that is being held in Delft, a large township in Cape Town. "[Drag] is strong here in Cape Town, but I would like [...] for the rural areas and smaller communities to grow and be strong as well," says Envic Booysen, who entered the drag scene in 2021.

WHAT DRAG SHOULD BE

The drag space in South Africa is no longer as censored or suppressed as it was 30 years ago.

"That's where I come from [...] those

PHOTOS: Ubaid Abrahams

years [were] hide-and-seek," says Dee. Now, there is no need for these "hide-and-seek" manoeuvres anymore, compared to when she was a queen on stage. Dee and Fox needed to find spaces where they could express themselves freely, and this had to be done carefully – to be themselves was not something that could occur in the open.

Nowadays, drag performances are still limited to places that are known as queer spaces, says Wild. Just like local artists perform at bars, queens should be able to perform in all spaces – it should become the norm, she says.

Bars and clubs such as Zero21 in Cape Town have become designated queer spaces, where drag shows take place every weekend and on some weeknights.

Shows are making headway and the culture of drag as an art form is growing, says Nazeem Southgate, the owner and managing director of The Drag Cartel, a talent management agency based in Cape Town that speaks to the modern drag space of South Africa.

OWNING THE STAGE AND CAPTURING THE SPOTLIGHT

These drag and queer spaces are finally taking shape, driven by companies like The Drag Cartel, says Southgate. With the majority of their signed individuals being drag queens, the one-year-old company has seen immense growth, according to Southgate. Having recently reached over 38 000 followers on their TikTok page, it seems that people want to see more of the South African drag space.

As Southgate sits on the couch, speaking to the aspirations of The Drag Cartel, Vahlour adjusts her wig across from him. Wild meticulously arranges the sequins on Vahlour's handmade costume for the pageant that is mere hours away. Once her wig is in position, Vahlour fusses with her lash extensions – they need to be as glamorous as her stage persona. Southgate watches whilst speaking about the process that the queens go through to get ready for a show. He believes that elevating the status of drag in South Africa should be taken seriously.

"A lot of people take for granted the process of what a drag artist actually goes through," says Southgate. The queens need to be able to hold themselves to a standard, he says.

According to Southgate, drag artists need to stop accepting what they are given and be more demanding of their talent and work. While people might follow popular international shows like *RuPaul's Drag Race*, no one knows what South African drag looks like, says Southgate. Part of the mission of The Drag Cartel is to get local queens on the international stage, to show the world "that the South African [queens] are here". ●

BB Vahlour, a prominent drag queen from Lavender Hill, invited SMF to her home as she prepared for a pageant. Vahlour begins the process of applying her makeup and getting into costume.
PHOTOS: Mia Oliver and Ubaid Abrahams



pretty
BY ELIZABETH
INSTANT FIRMING
PRESSED POWDER

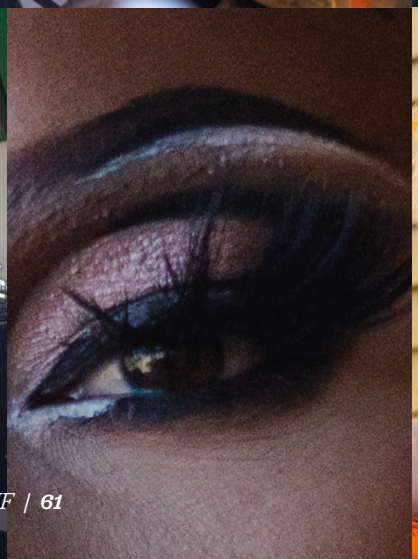











BEING AN AFRIKANER

The term 'Afrikaner' has become a symbol of historical complexity, cultural pride, and controversial debate in South Africa's emerging post-apartheid society. This contradictory term has become a contentious and loaded concept, sparking discourse regarding its role and significance in contemporary South Africa.

Antoinette Steyn

Johann van Wijk sits in his apartment in Stellenbosch, surrounded by books that bear witness to his journey of self-discovery. A self-identifying Afrikaner in his mid-twenties, Van Wijk embodies the complexities and contradictions inherent to the identity of *his* people.

"I was eight when I first heard the term 'apartheid' at school," says Van Wijk. "At home, it was a word whispered with shame, but at school, it was part of our history lessons." He explains how difficult it was to make sense of these different versions of the same story.

Van Wijk's story is not unique. Grappling with the weight of a past marked by colonialism, oppression and the enduring legacy of apartheid, Afrikaners have had to confront their history and re-evaluate who they are in contemporary South Africa.

WHAT DOES 'AFRIKANER' MEAN?

If you take a scientific viewpoint, you will find that the genetic origins of Afrikaners come largely from the Netherlands, since the Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in the Cape. This is according to Dr Christoff Erasmus, who obtained his PhD in genetics from the University of Pretoria. Erasmus says that Germany and France are the other two countries that contributed most to the genetic makeup of Afrikaners.

"After the European countries, East and West Africa made the largest contributions, [followed by] the Khoisan populations. People from the East also contributed to a small extent to the genetic origins of the Afrikaners," says Erasmus.

Erasmus points out that ancestry tests can add to your genetic information, but this should be seen as interesting extra information and not proof of who you are. "Cultural identity is something that each person adopts, regardless of what their genetic background is. Just as there are people who describe themselves as Afrikaners, but do not look like Europeans at all."

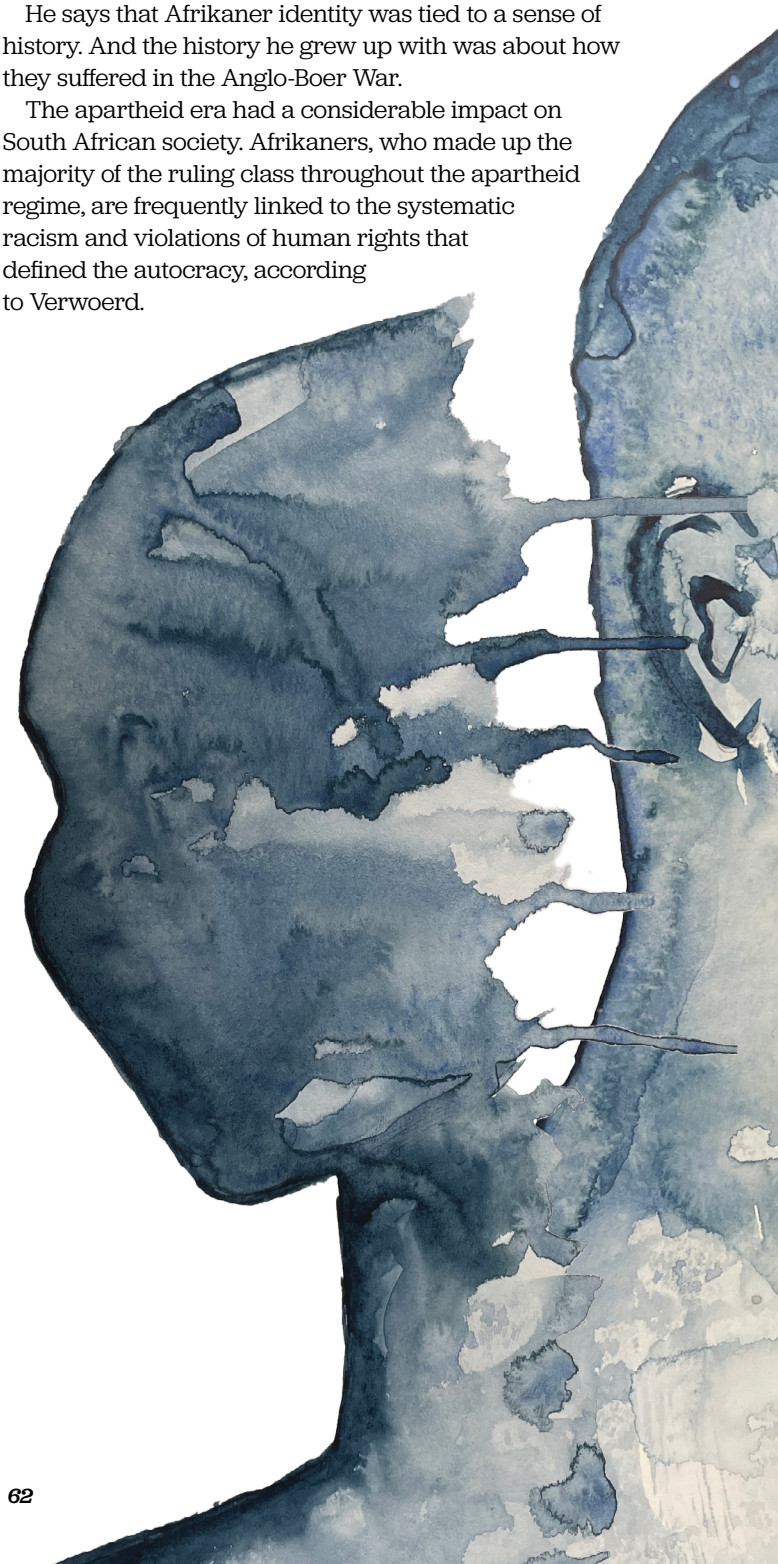
So, if you cannot rely on your genetic makeup to define you, what then?

Dr Wilhelm Verwoerd, senior researcher for the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ) at Stellenbosch University, and grandson of Hendrik Verwoerd, also known as the 'father of apartheid', explains the idea of the Afrikaner that he grew up with.

"[It is] the idea of a separate Afrikaans-speaking, white, Christian-nationalist minority group – a threatened minority group in South Africa – with a painful history of suffering under the British," he explains.

He says that Afrikaner identity was tied to a sense of history. And the history he grew up with was about how they suffered in the Anglo-Boer War.

The apartheid era had a considerable impact on South African society. Afrikaners, who made up the majority of the ruling class throughout the apartheid regime, are frequently linked to the systematic racism and violations of human rights that defined the autocracy, according to Verwoerd.



"You know, [Afrikaner identity] was associated with the colour of our skin, and in the process, many people were hurt and suffered greatly, and many people are still suffering. So it is very difficult to accept the historical responsibility that still rests with us," says Verwoerd.

Verwoerd highlights the poverty and inequality within South Africa, which cannot be separated from its history. "Many [Afrikaners] actually represent the 'have[s]', and many of us have access to the wealth that, for many people, is associated with historical injustice."

POLITICAL TO CULTURAL

The origins of the Afrikaner identity are inherently political. This is according to Rabia Abba Omar, a joint master's fellow at AVReQ and Exeter University, and a researcher working towards a master's in visual studies at Stellenbosch University. She has also completed her master's in heritage studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The term Afrikaner initially developed as a symbol of opposition against Dutch colonialism, says Abba Omar. It stems from the belief that they, the 'Afrikaners', had been living in this country and working the land for a long time, she explains. Therefore they were not Dutch; they were something else, says Abba Omar.

"And I think then it became very cultural," she says, referring to the development of the Afrikaans language and the divides that followed the South African War, previously called the Anglo-Boer War. "It was a real fight for who has legitimacy and validity," Abba Omar says. This encompassed an assertion of racial validity against the British, based on white supremacy, she says.

NEW CULTURAL PRIDE

"You can be proud in the sense that, in South Africa, we have achieved something that very few people in the world have – recognising a painful past, taking responsibility for it, and trying to create a different kind of future," says Verwoerd. He describes a sense of moral integrity among many Afrikaners who have said that "the system we believed in was wrong; we want to be part of a South Africa where all people can have dignity".

Verwoerd also says that Afrikaners are 'bridge builders', since their roots lie in Europe, but they strongly identify with this part of the African continent. "There are very few people in the world that look like us and have that ability."

The Afrikaans language is also something Verwoerd says Afrikaners must be proud of. "[...] Not just white Afrikaans, but the dynamic nature of Afrikaans and the type of poetry and literature that exists within it, and the art that emerges from it – it flourishes."

Renowned historian and author of "The Afrikaners: Biography of a People", Prof Hermann Giliomee, has done extensive research on the evolution of the Afrikaner, which encompassed linguistic, ethnic, and historical factors that have shaped the identity of the Afrikaner community.

The Afrikaans media shows some of the best quality journalism in the country, says Giliomee. "The fact is that Afrikaans literature and newspapers have become so good, we can't have this small shameful mindset about Afrikaners' place in this country anymore."

However, it is important to note that the largest portion of Afrikaans media stems from the Nationale Pers (Naspers), which was founded to

GRAPHIC: Antoinette Steyn

promote Afrikaner group identity and fuelled the apartheid agenda. This is according to Dr Sethunya Mosime, senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Botswana in a 2014 *Global Media Journal* article titled "Naspers Media Group: Ethnic Past and Global Present".

THE IDENTITY DEBATE

What makes an Afrikaner? It used to be that Afrikaners were the state's "favourite citizens", says Giliomee. Now, it seems to be whatever people choose for themselves.

Abba Omar says that she is not an Afrikaner. Her mother comes from an Afrikaans coloured household, but never taught her the language. "My initial experiences of an Afrikaner culture was coming to Stellenbosch as a student in my first year," says Abba Omar. "I [felt] so out of place here."

The welcoming period was a strange experience for Abba Omar. When she was introduced to Afrikaners, it was a "very gendered thing". The girls had to look pretty and *ordentlik* (decent) and had to sing to the boys as part of welcoming practices, she says.
A lot of the *skakels* (socials) with the men's residences involved things like speed-dating, which Abba Omar could not make sense of.

"I [kept] being told it's the culture," says Abba Omar. "[But] how is so much of [the] culture dependent on gender performativity?"

Afrikaner as a political term had transitioned into an exclusive cultural identity, which Abba Omar was not a part of.

Van Wijk says that he still feels the struggle between his pride for his culture, and his shame for the misdeeds of his forefathers. For a long time, he tried to distance himself from his identity as an Afrikaner. He believed that if he did not think about it or identify with it, he would not have to carry the associated guilt. "I was massively in denial," he says.

However, these feelings of guilt and shame can be a positive thing, according to Verwoerd. "Because it is a sign that you are someone with a moral conscience, you are someone who is sensitive to the suffering of others."

LOOKING AHEAD

It turns out that Stellenbosch is quite an apt setting for Van Wijk to share his experience. It is where the term Afrikaner was used for the first time.

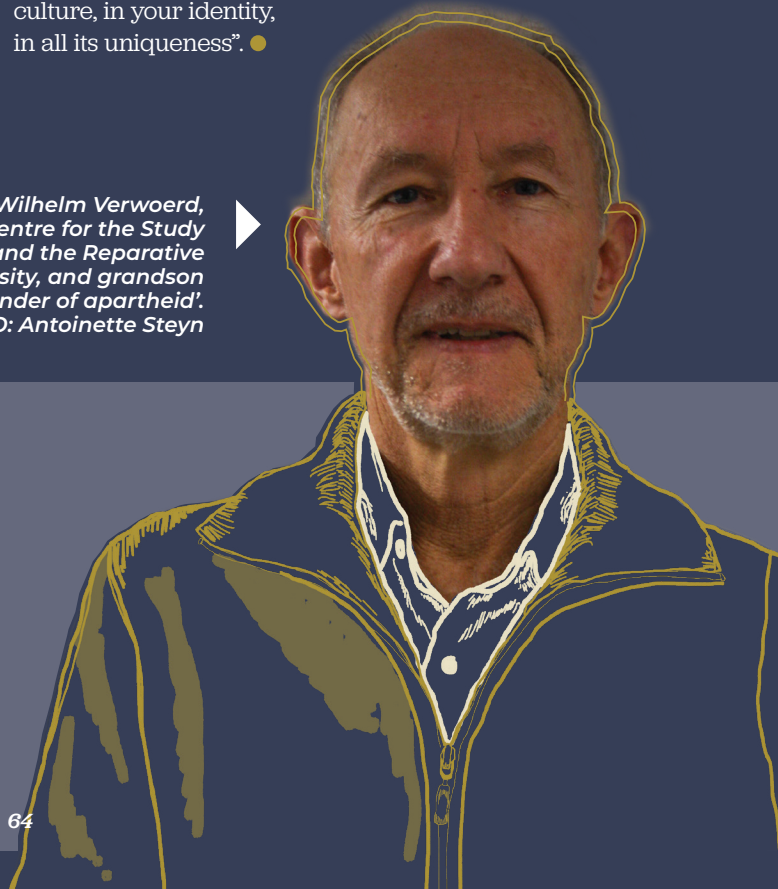
Hendrik Biebouw was one of four young men who were apprehended by a magistrate in March 1707 for being inebriated and unruly on the streets of Stellenbosch. In response to the magistrate's caning and scolding, Biebouw yelled: "I am an Afrikaner!"

It was the first documented instance of a European in South Africa referring to himself as an Afrikaner, according to Giliomee.

Van Wijk puts down his now empty coffee mug. "Now, I am 26. I am not ashamed of being an Afrikaner, but I know that it means something different to many people," he says. "It's not always easy, it can be uncomfortable [...] but it's definitely necessary. If we want the Afrikaner identity to continue to exist in a positive sense, then we must be willing to put in the hard work."

Abba Omar says she hopes to see a stronger Afrikaans counterculture among the young generation. "I think we always fall into a trap when we have monoculture societies and everyone is perceived to be homogenous, and that's not the case, right?"

There is a darkness and a "heaviness" linked to Afrikaners' identities, says Verwoerd, but if people can work with that, "then there is a type of homecoming in your humanity, in your spirit, in your culture, in your identity, in all its uniqueness".



Wilhelm Verwoerd, senior researcher for the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest at Stellenbosch University, and grandson of Hendrik Verwoerd, the 'founder of apartheid'. PHOTO: Antoinette Steyn

> 'THEN THERE IS A TYPE OF HOMECOMING, IN YOUR HUMANITY, YOUR SPIRIT, YOUR CULTURE, YOUR IDENTITY, IN ALL ITS UNIQUENESS'

ESSENCE OF MAKING

STORIES

TOLD THROUGH A LENS

Photography plays a crucial role in telling South African stories. Visuals from the past serve as a reminder of where we came from and where we are now. By exploring new approaches towards photography as a form of documentation, a shift towards personal storytelling within the medium emerges.

Abigail Baard

Born and raised in Soweto, Andile Bhala played soccer until 2010. However, when his international soccer scholarship was cancelled, he realised that he had to discover something new. That was when he began walking around Soweto, revisiting the places where he used to play the sport. And with his brother's analogue camera, he started to 'make' pictures.

"The idea for me was to document my life, and my life was the township. My life was Soweto," says Bhala, who focuses on documenting "the everyday life of everyday people".

For Bhala, it is a conversation between the subject and the photographer that qualifies the photographer to tell the subject's story. He avoids using a longer lens when photographing people on the street, because it requires the photographer to be far away from the subject, he explains. He believes that the photographer should be close to the subject.

If a photographer captures an individual from a distance, without having a conversation with them, they essentially take that person's story from them, says Bhala. "You did not *make* a picture, you *took* a picture."

For this reason, Bhala 'makes' photographs using a shorter lens. "I need to be next to the person, and people need to know I am photographing them," he says.

Bhala's approach to transparency emphasises his personal position within his photography. For a moment, he takes up a role in the lives of those he photographs, fully embracing his positioning within the subjects' lives and subsequently his position within his photographs.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS

Documentary photography, social documentary photography, and photojournalism share a common purpose which is to document reality, says Ashley Walters, coordinator and photography lecturer at Stellenbosch University's visual arts department.

In the early 1990s, social documentary photography was the focus in South Africa, says Khona Dlamini, programmes and project manager at The Market Photo Workshop, a photography school, project space, and gallery, founded by South African photographer, David Goldblatt. This photographic approach fostered conversations about the way South Africans should tell their stories.

"Documentary photography broadly captures daily life," says Walters. It can be used for personal records, creative projects as well as historical documentation, Walters adds.

In contrast, social documentary photography is considered to be a more specialised form of photography, that focuses on "raising awareness on issues of social injustices, inequality, and human rights", says Walters.

When social documentary photography was the focus, South African photography found itself within a space that was overtly political. Race, tribalism, HIV/AIDS, and gender were at the forefront of conversations, says Dlamini. "[Social documentary photography] was in a box. I think it wasn't very flexible."

30 years later, documentary photography is "a little bit looser, [and] people are experimenting more with the medium of photography itself", says Dlamini. However, the stories told today are not always about the "obvious politics". Rather, young photographers are looking for new ways to tell these stories, says Dlamini.

FROM PRINT TO 'PERSONAL REFLECTIONS'

Not only did photography as a form of documentation become more flexible, but over the years, professional photographers have found themselves having to adjust to a world in which anyone can document an event.

The immediacy of cellphone photography was a contributing factor to these changes. Anyone can take photographs of an incident and send it straight to news publications, says Walters. This contributes

PHOTOS: Abigail Baard

Andile Bhala, a photographer from Soweto, Johannesburg. PHOTO: Abigail Baard

'THE IDEA FOR ME WAS TO DOCUMENT MY LIFE, AND MY LIFE WAS THE TOWNSHIP. MY LIFE WAS SOWETO'

to shifts in the photojournalism industry's demand and supply, resulting in many photographers losing their jobs because the market no longer requires photojournalists, he says.

Throughout her career, Edrea du Toit, photojournalist at Media24, witnessed the shrinking of photography desks in newsrooms. When she first began her career, she worked with a team of 12 photographers; now almost 20 years later, she works with a team of three.

Because of these changes within the industry, photojournalists have had to adjust. "You can't just be a photographer anymore [...] those days are gone," says Du Toit.

It is not financially feasible for news publications or photography agencies to pay photographers a permanent salary, when it is possible to access photographs from all over the world so easily, says Du Toit. Most publications can get access to photographs shared on social media, says Du Toit. The rise of stock imagery further contributes to this supply, says Walters.

These shifts in the industry have meant professional photographers have had to adjust and discover new ways of navigating the industry, with some of them turning to more personal reflections in their work, says Walters. This new approach focuses on the photographers' own environments, a subject matter associated with vernacular photography – which is about family and community, he says.

By emphasising personal stories in his photography, the work of Santu Mofokeng, South African photographer and member of the Afrapix Collective, reflects this shift from "grand political narratives to more personal and local experiences", says Walters.

"His photography captured the nuanced realities of South African life amid social and political upheaval," says Walters. His work highlights the resilience of individuals and therefore lends itself towards "intimate and subjective storytelling", says Walters.

This more personal approach that photographers are able to adopt lies in contrast to the idea of going out on assignment, which implies that the photographer captures a piece of reality, according to Walters.

Photography in its very construction is artificial, says Walters. "It is not reality, it is fiction." The photographers' personal perspectives will always influence what they observe and, in turn, how they choose to present it, says Walters.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS STORYTELLING

Alongside the emergence of personal narratives within photography, a shift towards storytelling in South African photography and the development of photography as a contemporary art form gradually emerged, says Walters.

During apartheid, photographers used the medium as a tool for social commentary, whereas the post-apartheid "focus shifted to

PHOTO: Abigail Baard

personal and local narratives, a trend that continued into the 2000s as photography gained recognition in art circles", says Walters.

These transitions within the photography industry have provided photographers with more agency to claim and take ownership of their stories, says Walters. It allows one to look at photography as a form of storytelling rather than a documentation of reality, he says.

The way a person photographs their home, influences the way they photograph the outside of it, says Bhala. Meaning, the way one represents one's family will reflect how one represents the rest of the world, he says.

It is for this reason that Bhala finds importance in remaining close to, and transparent with, the people he photographs. "We were never taught to [...] be far from the story," says Bhala.

His photographs are a reflection of past conversations he has had with his subjects. It is these conversations that led to his work, Bhala says.

TELLING OUR OWN STORIES

"We should be able to tell our own history. We should be able to tell our own story," says Ruth Motau, a South African documentary photographer. In 1995 she was appointed a photo editor at the *Mail & Guardian*, making her the first black woman in South Africa to receive this title.

Documentary photography allows South Africans to tell the country's history and stories. Individuals from outside the country should not write or record its story, says Motau. "They won't do justice to how we feel, [and] how we see things."

It is also important for aspiring photographers today to tell their own stories, based on their context, so that they are not seen as an 'other', says Isaac Bongani Mahlangu, head of The Market Photo Workshop.

For Tshepiso Seleke, another Soweto-based photographer, his goal is to tell the stories that he sees everyday. He wants to tell them so that they will not be lost and so that people can better understand his point of view.

It is through photography that he does this.Photography in South Africa can be used to highlight changes within its democracy as well as the lack thereof, says Seleke.

'YOU CAN'T JUST BE A PHOTOGRAPHER ANYMORE [...] THOSE DAYS ARE GONE'

die klank van weerstand

**Waarskuwing: Kru taal mag in hierdie artikel voorkom.*

Deesdae is almal kwaad, maar niemand weet hoekom nie. So meen Wilco Meyer, kitaarspeler van BCOM, 'n jong rock-band van Pretoria. Is die Afrikaanse rockmusiek van vandag steeds die stem van 'n nuwe generasie se woede?

Kara le Roux

April 2006: Wynand Myburgh, baskitaarspeler van Fokofpolisiekar (Fokof), onderteken 'n aanhanger se beursie met 'n godslasterende frase wat enige Afrikaanse tannie se braaibroodjie sal laat val.

Fokof het in die vroeë 2000's die Afrikaanse musiektoneel radikaal verander met hul naam en lirieke wat wenkbroue laat lig het. "Ons rebelleer teen die eksklusiwiteit wat 'n sekere belangegroep rondom Afrikaans-wees probeer handhaaf," vertel Hunter Kennedy, Fokof-kitaarspeler en -liedjieskrywer.

Voor Fokof was daar nie 'n sub-kultuur vir jong, wit Afrikaanssprekendes buiten die hoofstroom nie, verduidelik dr. Schalk van der Merwe, Geskiedenis-lektor in Afrikaanse kultuur en -musiek aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

FOTO'S: Kara le Roux

GRAFIKA: *Kara le Roux*

Dié band se noemenswaardigheid lê in hul skerp sosiale kommentaar. "Die Goeie Ou Dae", 'n liedjie uit hul nuutste album *Dans Deur Die Donker*, gee 'n onverskrokke blik op nostalgie:

Watse deel van die goeie ou dae mis jy?
Is dit patriargie?
Of lyfstraf kry?
Nou's ons glase vol
Urbanol en alkohol
Soek net iewers om uitmekaar uit te kan val

Volgens Van der Merwe, ondersoek hierdie Fokof-liedjie Afrikaners se neiging om hul problematiese geskiedenis te herstruktureer om gemakliker in 'n multi-kulturele samelewing te kan inpas. "As Afrikaners terugkyk na hul rol in die apartheidsjare... [maak] hulle dit onproblematies. Jy kry 'n hoofstroom by wie daai idee resoneer. Fokof is die antitese van dit."

Kennedy sê dat Fokof 'n veilige ruimte probeer skep vir diegene wat verlore is of 'anders' voel. Wat Fokof se boodskap aan jong Suid-Afrikaners betref, sê hy: "Gebruik jou woede vir positiewe verandering en fok die naaier *naysayers* wat jou terughou, al is dit jy self."

Deesdae verwys die meeste gewilde Afrikaanse musiek na 'n gedrinkery, braai en sokkie, sê Van der Merwe. Volgens hom lewer Fokof kritiek op dié leefwyse van die Afrikaanse middelklas.

"Ons is die antipool van die boobs-, braai- en brandewyn-kak," sê Kennedy.

Na die beursie-voorval, het Fokof bomdreigemente ontvang voor hul Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees-optrede daardie jaar, vertel Van der Merwe. Hy het hierdie konsert bygewoon en onthou hoe, ten spyte van die omstredenheid, ongeveer 1 200 jong Afrikaanse mense opgedaag het.

"Die hele verhoog is 'n meter terug geskuif soos [wat die skare] teen dit gedruk het," vertel Van der Merwe. "Die sekuriteitsversperrings het gebreek [...] en die kondensasie van al die sweet in die venue het van die dak afgedrup. Buite staan daar ambulanse en die hele dorp se polisie." Vir hom was dit 'n oomblik wat 'n duidelike skeidslyn tussen 'n alternatiewe sub-kultuur van Afrikaners en die *establishment* geopenbaar het.

Die krag van Voëlvry

April 1989: 'n Groep wit 'terroriste' pak 'n landswye toer aan om 'n groot, vet middelvinger op te hou vir die apartheidsregering. Dié toer, beter bekend as Voëlvry, is saamgestel deur radio-DJ, Dagga-Dirk Uys en kunstenaars soos Johannes Kerkorrel, Bernoldus Niemand en Koos Kombuis, vertel Van der Merwe.

Die Voëlvry-beweging het 'n kulturele revolusie ontketen met liedjies oor diensplig, rassisme en die absurditeit van apartheid, wat mantras geword het vir diegene wat na verandering gesmag het.

Volgens Van der Merwe lewer Fokof kritiek op die leefwyse van die Afrikaanse middelklas, nes die Voëlvry-beweging destyds gedoen het. Beide Voëlvry en Fokof het rebellie en ongehoorsaamheid gebruik as instrumente van protes, met lirieke wat aanklank vind by 'n jeug wat op soek is na 'n identieit in 'n veranderende Suid-Afrika.

"Voëlvry was 'n vergestalting van hoe andersdenkende Afrikaners op 'n punt gekom het waar dit kon resoneer met 'n groot groep mense wat nie ingekoop het in Afrikanernasionalisme nie," sê Van der Merwe.

Deon Maas, 'n Suid-Afrikaanse joernalis, fotograaf, radio omroeper, regisseur en TV-persoonlikheid, sê dat die Voëlvry-beweging 'n baanbreker was. "Niemand het die pis uit P.W. Botha gevat voordat Kerkorrel dit gedoen het nie. Niemand het gesing oor dagga rook voor Koos Kombuis dit gedoen het nie," sê Maas.

In sy parodie van "Die Stem", wat destyds die volkslied van apartheid-Suid-Afrika was, het Koos Kombuis in "Swart September" gesing:

Uit die blou van ons twee skole
Uit die diepte van ons heimwee
Oor ons ver verlate Homelands
Waar die tsotsis antwoord gee

Die *establishment* slaan terug

Voëlvryers het gereeld gely onder die teenkanting van wit nasionaliste. 'n Johannesburgse dominee het byvoorbeeld destyds vir Johannes Kerkorrel van satanisme en bloed-drinkery beskuldig, sê Maas.

Dit was gevaarlik vir diegene wat die apartheidsregering gekritiseer het.

"Mense het verdwyn. Daar is mense dood wat 'gegly' het op seep in polisieselle se storte," vertel Maas. "Mense het 'per ongeluk' by vensters uitgeval in John Vorster Square. Dit was behoorlik gevaarlik om die [anti-apartheid] beweging te ondersteun."

Van der Merwe vertel dat verskeie kragte tydens die apartheidsjare 'n gevestigde hegemonie wou skep onder wit Afrikaanssprekendes; die Gereformeerde kerke, Christelike skool-kurrikulums en die weermag.

"Hulle het Voëlvry verbied om op [Universiteit Stellenbosch se] kampus te gebeur," sê Maas. Studente het daarteen geprotesteer, vertel hy verder. Die konsert is dus buite Stellenbosch in 'n hotel gehou. Owerhede het gereageer met geweld en intimidasie, tot hulle nie meer kon nie.

Maas vertel van 'n *Radio Sonder Grense*-radioprogram wat hy aangebied het oor protes-musiek.

GRAFIKA: Kara le Roux

"Ek het vir Pik Botha op die program gehad," sê hy. "Ek het vir hom gevra: 'Wanneer het die Nasionale Party besef hulle kan nie meer die deksel op apartheid hou nie?' en hy het spesifiek Voëlvry genoem."

Die regering het besef dat indien hulle nie hul eie kinders se protes kon keer nie, hulle ook nie ander mense se kinders kon beheer nie, sê Maas.

Voëlvry was meer as net konserte en musiek. "[Dit] was in 'n sin vir hulle soos 'n *crusade*, amper 'n heilige missie," vertel Van der Merwe.

"Wat Voëlvry gedoen het is om baie mense te laat besef dat hul 'andersdenkendheid' nie uniek is nie [...] Die gevolg was dat mense meer selfvertroue in hulle protes gekry het," sê Maas.

Om in te pas op die buitewyke

"As dit by die skep van identiteit kom, [...] is dit 95% musiek," sê Maas. "Musiek [is] 'n lewensfilosofie." Die krag van musiek om mense bymekaar te bring, speel 'n sleutelrol in hoe mense hulself en hul gemeenskappe verstaan.

Tog meen Van der Merwe dat daar nie plekke is waar jongmense in die nuwe Suid-Afrika bymekaar kan kom om hulself te wees nie.

BCOM, 'n jong rock-band van Pretoria, wil juis so 'n ruimte vir hul aanhangers skep. "Ons probeer die *struggles* en twyfel van vandag se jongmense identifiseer," sê Wilco Meyer, kitaarspeler van BCOM. Hy noem dat jongmense vandag teen minder tasbare dinge stry.

Dr. Leswin Laubscher, professor in sielkunde aan Duquesne Universiteit in die VSA, het in 2005 'n navorsingsartikel gepubliseer getiteld *Afrikaner Identity and the Music of Johannes Kerkorrel*. Hy sê dat Fokof, saam met ander bands soos Die Heuwels Fantasties en Spoegwolf, 'n nuwe identiteitsdinamika post-Voëlvry uitdruk.

"Die onderwerpe waarmee ons vandag te doen kry is baie moeiliker om oor te skryf en te verwoord," sê Meyer. "Nou is almal net kwaad, maar ons weet nie hoekom nie."

Rock skep 'n ruimte waar alternatiewe Afrikaners nie alleen voel nie. "Ek voel nie Afrikaans nie, maar ek praat dit," sê Kennedy. "Ek weier om te verander wie ek is om in te pas, maar waar pas ek dan in? Op die buitewyke!"

"'Afrikaner' beteken vir my *two-tone wearing* vroue-slaner, rassis, grensoorlog PTSD, chauvinisties, seksisties, egoïsties, magsbehepte, mislukking wat net soos Israel nou in die monster verander het. En ek spoeg op die graf van daai spesifieke Afrikaner-beeld," sê Kennedy. Hy verkies die idee van 'n Afrikaanse identiteit wat kultureel divers is, omdat dit Afrikaanssprekendes van alle rasse insluit.

Waarheen vir protes-rock?

Afrikaners hou van baklei, sê Maas. "Dis almal mense wat baklei met hulle bure, met hulle dominee, met hulle regering." Dié "dwarstrekker-geen" is volgens hom deel van die Afrikaanse psige.

Beteken dit dat protes-musiek dus steeds 'n toekoms het in Suid-Afrika?

"Ek dink [jongmense] het vrede gemaak met die feit dat die wêreld so opgefok is dat [hulle] dit nie meer kan verander nie," sê Maas. Kennedy stem saam: "Dit klink asof die droom nou maar net is om 'n *corporate job* in 'n ander land te kry."

Die afname in belangstelling van Afrikaanse protes-rock is volgens Maas te wyte aan 'n gebrek aan platforms waar hierdie musiek kan bestaan. "Daar is geen radio- of TV-stasies wat [rock] speel nie en geen kunsjoernaliste wat daaroor skryf nie," meen hy.

Stroming het verder die musiekbedryf se bordjies verhang. Musikante verdien min uit stromingsplatforms en moet dus meer toer, sê Van der Merwe. "Maar [...] waarheen toer jy in Suid-Afrika? Die *circuit* is redelik klein." Meyer sê nuwe bands sukkel om te groei sonder om by 'n musiekmaatskappy geteken te wees.

"Dit voel partykeer of 'n mens veg teen Goliat," meen Heinrich Buys, baskitaarspeler van BCOM.

Sosiale media het die musieklandskap verder verander. Meyer sê dit is moeiliker om luisteraars te lok omdat bemarking op sosiale media plaasvind. "Iemand sal gou na ons Instagram-blad gaan kyk en dan besluit of hulle van ons hou of nie," sê hy. Buys voeg by dat hoewel sosiale media help om 'n persoonlike verhouding met aanhangers te bou, daar 'n fyn lyn tussen 'n verhouding bou en oppervlakkige *likes* en *shares* is.

"Dis nie meer 'n vraag of daar protes in Afrikaanse rockmusiek is nie, maar of daar nog Afrikaanse rockmusiek is," sê Maas.

'n Toekoms?

Jong Afrikaanse rockers is egter positief. Buys sê dat daar nog genoeg luisteraars is wat rockmusiek waardeer. "Dis glad nie dood nie en in my opinie besig om te groei." Hy beklemtoon dat rock nooit hoofstroom sal wees nie en dat rockers dit ook nie wil hê nie. "Wat rock *rock* maak, is die feit dat jy nie luister wat vir jou gevoer word nie."

Soos die rock-toneel verander, word daar plek gemaak vir nuwe bands wat 'n nuwe generasie van rockers en rock-identiteit saam met hulle bring. Volgens Kennedy is BCOM en Shongololo onder meer rock-groepe om dop te hou.

Op die vraag of daar steeds plek is vir Afrikaanse rock, antwoord Kennedy: "As daar nie plek is nie, maak plek."

'ONS IS DIE ANTIPOOL VAN DIE BOOBS-, BRAAI- EN BRANDEWYN-KAK'

PHOTO: Ubaid Abrahams

FOR THE GROOVISTS

FROM KWAITO TO AMAPIANO

South Africa's musical landscape has evolved from kwaito's revolutionary spirit to amapiano's genre-defying vibe. For the groovists, music is not just entertainment but a powerful expression of identity and connection.

Iva Fulepu

Disclaimer: This article contains language that some readers may find offensive

Growing up in townships in the early 2000s, one would certainly remember the popular kwaito hits that used to blast on cassette radios. People would dance along to Trompies hits like *Bengim'ngaka* regularly. This music did not just play in the background, it was an integral part of everyday life.

Fast forward to the present day, and the musical landscape has transformed dramatically. The generation of kwaito was during South Africa's transition to democracy, filled with hope and promises of a new future, says Dion Eaby-Lomas, a lecturer at the University of Cape Town's South African College of Music. This era shaped a unique atmosphere, with newfound freedom influencing the music and its surrounding culture, he says.

Now, many young people in townships still face the same issues their parents did, despite those early hopes for a better future, says Eaby-Lomas.

"I think the current generation is very different [from the 90s generation], but I would say that it's different in the same ways."

"I do not think amapiano holds the same space as kwaito. Because kwaito implied risk," says Dr Thokozani Mhlambi, South African musician and composer.

He cites examples such as Boom Shaka's remix of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* and Arthur Mafokate's use of a derogatory term.

In the aftermath of apartheid, kwaito emerged from a context of severe censorship, while amapiano – despite incorporating kwaito elements – does not carry the same level of risk, says Mhlambi.

However, Thebe Lenyora, a veteran in the kwaito music industry, sees amapiano as an "extension of kwaito". He highlights that while the risk may be different, amapiano carries forward the distinctly South African beats and the vernacular lyrics that define its roots.

"We had just gotten our freedom, and it was a chance to express ourselves musically without fear of censorship. We got to celebrate our freedom through song and dance," Lenyora adds, reflecting on kwaito's origins.

KWAITO – BORN FROM THE STRUGGLE

"Kwaito is often seen as the 'after-party' of apartheid," says Eaby-Lomas. Kwaito reflects the hopeful phase of transitioning to democracy, while amapiano speaks to a period of disillusionment about democracy where little has changed for black township residents, he says.

"Although many people expected kwaito musicians to sing and rap in a 'conscious way', [...] what actually happened is that kwaito musicians in the 1990s and early 2000s pretty much ignored social problems and instead experimented with sound in exuberant, strange, and unexpected ways," says Gavin Steingo, Prof of music at Princeton University.

Kwaito, unlike the politically charged struggle songs of earlier decades, reflected a time of transition, capturing the energy and optimism of a country stepping into democracy, notes Steingo in his 2005 journal article titled "South African Music After Apartheid: Kwaito, the 'Party Politic,' and the Appropriation

of Gold as a Sign of Success", published in *Popular Music and Society*.

The self-proclaimed 'king of kwaito', Arthur Mafokate, released his hit single '*Kaffir*' from his first extended play (EP) in this time of transition, when the African National Congress was elected to govern a newly-constituted South Africa, according to Steingo's article. In the hook of the song, Mafokate sings, "*Baas*, don't call me *kaffir*, *awuboni kuthi ngiyaphanda maan*? *Awuboni kuthi ngiyaspana maan*?" (Boss, don't call me *kaffir*, don't you see that I am hustling? Don't you see that I am not from hell?)

The single was Mafokate's first hit and the message behind the song was very powerful, according to Steingo. However, the song was banned by several radio stations across the country because of its use of the derogatory term.

Despite being a controversial personality, with songs like *Sika Lekhekhe* criticised for misogyny, Arthur's extensive output greatly influenced the kwaito scene, and he is still regarded as the "king of kwaito" amid his controversies, says Eaby-Lomas.

THE SOUND OF A NEW GENERATION

Kwaito laid the foundation for new black township music, with its fun and convivial approach traced back to earlier genres like bubblegum, says Eaby-Lomas.

"In a way, amapiano is just an offshoot of kwaito," says Steingo.

Tacita Nydoo, who goes by the stage name DJ Teecita, is a house and amapiano DJ based in Florida, Gauteng. She says during the early days of her career she was influenced by RnB, but now her sound has shifted to house and amapiano music. These genres capture the essence of South Africa's landscape and its culture, she says. According to her, they convey the diverse experiences of people from all backgrounds and struggles, celebrating the country's collective journey.

"I appreciate it more because of its authentic sound of *ekasi* (township) which connects us all, you know? And that hits more to me due to the fact that it brings hope and connection to us as a nation," says DJ Teecita.

Through her evolving sound, DJ Teecita exemplifies the powerful role of music in reflecting and shaping the South African experience.

THE PULSE OF SA CULTURE

Ofentse Chauke, who goes by the stage name O.S. Tailor, says his early musical influences were shaped by bacardi and Tsonga music.

He believes kwaito played a significant role in influencing amapiano, particularly in its rhythmic patterns.

As an amapiano DJ, O.S. Tailor says his main priority at first was creating music for black people in Stellenbosch, where he currently resides, as there was not much music catering to them in the area. He played at parties for primarily black and coloured audiences. However, as amapiano gained popularity, he started playing for more diverse crowds – including white people, he says.

"There's this one white guy I saw on campus a few weeks ago, he was singing *Yebo Lapho*, but he had no idea what it meant. So I just feel like amapiano is a catchy genre, you know?" he says.

'THOSE WHO GET IT, GET IT. FOR THOSE WHO DON'T, THEY GET IT LATER'

The universality of amapiano, according to O.S. Tailor, reflects its ability to connect people across different cultures and backgrounds.

For Tsels DJ, whose real name is Kamogelo Mabitsela, his music is

GRAPHIC: Iva Fulepu

PHOTOS:
Ubaid Abrahams,
Iva Fulepu

a way to bring people together. He calls it art and he tries to unify people through his music.

"It's hard to actually have diversity [...] You'll find a group of white people in one place [and] a group of black people in one place. So, imagine if you tried to do an event and then you put them together," he says. "Those who get it, get it. For those who don't, they get it later."

AMAPIANO TO THE WORLD

The phrase "amapiano to the world" is a phrase that emphasises an ambition; an inspiration to reach as many people globally as possible, and showcase the genre's world-class quality, according to Eaby-Lomas.

"It's a very inclusive phrase. 'Amapiano to the world', [...] it's for everyone [...] there's no gatekeepers. And I think that's also very beautiful about it," says Eaby-Lomas.

The typical lyrics of an amapiano track vividly capture the excitement of dance floors and street parties. These tunes sometimes feature playful lines like "Piano, *asisalali emakhaya ngenxa yakho*," (Piano, we don't sleep at home anymore because of you) from *Emcimbini*, a hit by DJ and producer, Kabza De Small, and DJ Maphorisa.

Some amapiano lyrics carry spiritual themes, such as Kabza De Small and Mthunzi's song *Imithandazo* (Prayers), which has become an anthem among young black South Africans, symbolising perseverance and hope. Palesa Nqambaza explores this in her article, "Born of Struggle", published on the Africa Is a Country website.

Some amapiano songs are about having a good time and they emphasise the carefree energy of amapiano. This is reflected in songs like *Sgudi Snyc*, where De Mthuda, Da Muziqal Chef, and Eemoh sing about wanting to stay on earth a little longer just to enjoy more drinks. These lyrics are set to a smooth, catchy beat.

A SOUNDTRACK TO DEMOCRACY

"There was a strong sense that internationalism or cosmopolitanism were important affective qualities of music in that period," says Steingo.

House music had a significant influence on kwaito, especially during its early days in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when it was often referred to as "international music", he adds.

Amapiano builds on this legacy but remains distinct in its organisation and reach, says Eaby-Lomas. He also notes that some amapiano artists, like Kabza De Small and Kwesta, reference kwaito in their work, blending elements of both styles.

However, while some might see amapiano as "the new kwaito", Eaby-Lomas argues that it is something entirely different and new, though part of the same musical trajectory as kwaito and earlier house music.

Scan QR code to listen to the "For the Groovists" playlist on Spotify

Argiewe: Gereedskap vir nasiebou

Argiewe is die bewaarplek van Suid-Afrika se gedeelde geskiedenis en speel 'n belangrike rol in die bou van 'n gesamentlike toekoms. Só verduidelik Aubrey Springveldt, 'n Suid-Afrikaanse familie-navorser.

Rachel Jonker

Daniel Jacobs het van jongs af belang gestel in geskiedenis. Hy onthou die opwinding van 'n gesinsuitstappie Gauteng toe, waar sy pa 'n vergadering moes bywoon. Vir 'n jong Jacobs was hierdie reis egter veel meer as sy pa se werksverpligting... Dit was 'n avontuur.

Op pad na sy pa se vergadering het hul gesin allerhande geskiedkundige landmerke besoek, soos Paul Kruger, voormalige president van die destydse Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, se huis in Pretoria. Die gidsboekie van dié museum het Jacobs se hart gesteel. Hierdie boekie het 'n skat geword – iets wat hy gekoester het asof dit die verlede self was.

Jacobs het die museumboekie verloor tydens die 1981 vloed in Laingsburg. Hy is egter tot vandag toe nog lief vir geskiedenis en daarom het hy 'n argivaris geword. Hy werk tans by Babylonstoren se argief. Sy oortuiging is eènvoudig: "Hoe meer ons mekaar se stories hoor, hoe meer vrede sal daar in die wêreld wees, want as jy begrip het vir 'n ou se agtergrond, gaan jy moeiliker met hom baklei."

DIE FEITE SOOS DIT AANGETEKEN IS

Argiewe is 'n historikus se belangrikste bron, sê prof. Matilda Burden, 'n kultuurhistorikus en navorser wat na haar aftrede steeds betrokke is by die Universiteit Stellenbosch se argiewe. "Jou argiewe is ontsettend belangrik om mense op te voed oor wat presies gebeur en hoekom," vertel sy.

Dit is in staatsargiewe waar feite, sowel as die gesindheid en beleidsrigtings van vorige regerings, bewaar word, sê Burden. "Daar gaan jy nou gesindhede kry, [...] nie jou voetsoolvlakmense se gesindheid nie, dis jou regering se gesindheid." Staatsargiewe dien dus as stil getuies van die besluite wat ons geskiedenis gevorm het, verduidelik Burden. Hulle bewaar elke besluit, elke dokument, soos die wet dit vereis, maar ook soos wat die geskiedenis dit verdien.

Danksy sy ervaring as argivaris, kan Jacobs ook hiervan getuig. Gedurende sy 22 jaar by die grondeisekommissie, moes hy onder meer vanaf 2008 tot 2010 help om navorsers binne die kommissie op te lei. Dié navorsers moes bepaal of grondeise geldig was deur te verseker dat onteiening rasgebaseer was en nie vir 'n ander rede gebeur het nie.

Tydens hierdie opleiding het Jacobs en sy span by die Wes-Kaapse Argief- en Rekorddiens een van die oudste dokumente in Suid-Afrika bekyk. Dit was die notule van Jan van Riebeeck se eerste vergadering met die Verenigde Oos-Indiese Kompanjie (VOC) se ander afgevaardigdes.

Hy vertel oor die verwondering wat een van sy kollegas oorval het: "Ek dink 'n mens het soms 'n emosionele behoefte om iets tasbaar te hê, want [...] dit verteenwoordig iets van die persoon [wat afwesig is]."

DIE VERLEDE BOU DIE TOEKOMS

"['n Instelling se] argief is hul versameling van hul papierrekords wat nie regtig ter wille van die geskiedenis opgegaar is nie, maar eerder vir hul eie gebruik. Dit word sistematies gestoor op so 'n wyse dat dit in latere jare vir historici van waarde is,"

Argiewe is 'n belangrike bron vir die bestudering van die geskiedenis sodat hedendaagse probleme beter verstaan kan word en oplossings daarvoor gekry kan word, sê Matilda Burden, 'n kultuurhistorikus verbonde aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch se argiewe. FOTO: Rachel Jonker

Digitale kommunikasie en dokumente word nie so getrou gestoor soos kommunikasie tydens die analoogtydperk nie, verduidelik dr. Justin Pearce, senior dosent in Geskiedenis aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. FOTO: Rachel Jonker

sê dr. Justin Pearce, senior dosent in Geskiedenis aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

Buiten vir historici, gebruik talle ander navorsers, soos familie-navorsers, mediese navorsers en mariene-ekonome ook argiewe, vertel Aubrey Springveldt, 'n familie-navorser. "[Argiewe] is dinamies. Daar is altyd dinge wat gebeur. Mense kom van oraloor om baie interessante navorsing daar te doen," sê hy.

BEHOUD EN BEVORDERING VAN TALE

Klankbeelde uit die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaai Korporasie (SAUK) se argiewe word gebruik om sagteware op te lei wat in howe gebruik word om inheemse tale te transkribeer, vertel Jean le Roux, 'n senior ondersoeker by Graphika, 'n Amerikaanse sosiale netwerkanalise-maatskappy, na aanleiding van sy ondervinding as regsgeleerde by die Menseregtekommissie.

Large Language Models (LLMs) is digitale programme wat gekodeer word om sin te maak van taal, of dit nou is om taal te ontsyfer of om self ook taal te skep, met byvoorbeeld iets soos ChatGPT, volgens *Altexsoft.com*, 'n sagteware inginieursfirma se webtuiste.

"Daar is 'n professor by [die Universiteit van Pretoria] wat besig is om 'n klomp plaaslike LLMs te doen. Hy het [...] met die SABC in verbinding getree om hulle argiefmaterial te kry sodat hy LLMs kan *train* op daai argiefmateriaal," sê Le Roux.

Hierdie klankbeelde is veral waardevol vir die transkribering van kleiner inheemse tale, soos Sepedi, aangesien daar min mediums is wat dié tale akkommodeer, sê Le Roux. Argiewe soos dié van die SAUK help om tale, kulture en geskiedenisse, wat andersins verlore sou gaan, te bewaar en op te bou.

SISTEMATIES EN SONDER VOOROORDEEL

Argiewe word nie lukraak saamgeflans nie, verduidelik Burden. 'n Instelling se argief stoor inligting van alledaagse bedrywighede volgens 'n sisteem en sonder vooroordeel. Dit probeer nie om alle moontlike inligting stoor nie, merk Burden op.

Volgens Jacobs word 'n argief se dokumente volgens medium en dokument-tipe gestoor en nie noodwendig volgens temas nie. Daar word dan 'n reeksnommer aan elke dokument toegeken. So verskil 'n argief van 'n bibioteek waar media hoofsaaklik volgens inhoud georganiseer word.

Om hierdie rede sukkel meeste mense wat 'n argief besoek om spesifieke inligting te kry, verduidelik Burden. Jy moet presies weet watter dokumente jy wil bestudeer, sê sy. "Enigeen kan [by 'n argief] ingaan, maar nie enigeen weet hoe om daarmee te werk nie," meen Burden.

GESKIEDKUNDIGE ERFENIS

Jacobs wys op die uitdagings wat gepaard gaan met die opteken van geskiedenis in Suid-Afrika. "Die papierrekord is deur die veroweraars geskryf, maar ek sien nogals meer en meer dat daar moeite gedoen word om mondelingse bronne by te werk. Maar met elke generasie gaan daar inligting verlore," vertel hy.

Jacobs sê die stories van sommige Suid-Afrikaanse bevolkingsgroepe is doelbewus nagelaat. "So dit wys vir

'n Argief se leeskamer is soos 'n studeerkamer, sê Daniel Jacobs, argivaris by Babylonstoren.
FOTO: Rachel Jonker

jou hoe subjektief ons ook was en nog steeds is."

Sommige mense verkies om die onaangename realiteite van Suid-Afrika se geskiedenis te ignoreer, wat volgens Springveldt 'n groot fout is. "Gaan ons [onaangename realiteite] eerlik aanspreek, of gaan ons kop in die sand steek?" vra hy. Springveldt voer aan dat dit belangrik is om die verlede te verstaan, omdat dit steeds in die hede voortleef.

Die patriargale stelsel wat ontstaan het in die era van slawerny, is volgens Jacobs 'n voorbeeld van 'n onaangename realiteit wat steeds voortleef. In dié stelsel is plaaswerkers as 'n uitvloeisel van plaasfamilies behandel, omdat daar 'n interafhanklikheid was tussen die werkgewers en hul werkers. Jacobs meen dat hierdie instelling steeds algemeen is.

Volgens Chulu Makapela, 'n derdejaar Geskiedenisstudent aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch, wat op die oomblik leer oor argiewe se rol in die behoud van geskiedenis, kan argiefbronne help om versoening te bewerkstellig.

Besluite wat in die verlede geneem is, vorm ons samelewing. Argiewe verduidelik die redenasie agter hierdie besluite.

"Sommige mense glo as iets in die verlede is, hoef hulle hulle nie meer daaraan te steur nie [...] Hulle vergeet dat die geskiedenis 'n nalatenskap het wat voortbestaan in dinge wat vandag nog gebeur, [dit] vind net anders plaas," sê Makapela.

Hoewel Suid-Afrikaners vandag steeds die impak van ons geskiedenis ervaar, gaan nie almal verantwoordelik met die geskiedenis om nie, sê Makapela. Hy verduidelik dat mense wat vlug van die verlede se waarhede, vir hulself 'n strik span.

Deur die verlede se waarheid te vermy, verwerk hierdie mense nie die seer daarvan nie en bou dus nie begrip vir hul medemens nie.

Die ware weergawe van geskiedenis moet bewaar word juis sodat mense mekaar beter kan leer verstaan, meen Jacobs.

DIT WAARVAN DAAR NIE 'N REKORD IS NIE

Alle staatsinstellings moet, volgens die Wet op Nasionale Argiewe en Rekorddiens van 1996, argiewe hou.

Pearce is bekommerd dat die kontemporêre oorgang na digitale kommunikasie, skade kan berokken aan historiese rekords. "Ek dink die probleem met digitalisering is dat daar minder moeite gedoen word om dinge sistematies te bewaar," verduidelik hy.

Jacobs lig 'n ander sy van dié probleem uit: Fisiese bronne is moeiliker om te vervals as digitale bronne, aangesien die egtheid daarvan makliker ontleed kan word. "As jy 'n dokument het wat eg lyk en jy twyfel [of dit werklik eg is], kan jy die ink laat ontleed en jy kan die papier laat ontleed," sê Jacobs.

Toe die Parlementsbiblioteek in 2022 saam met die Parlementsgebou in Kaapstad afgebrand het, is sommige oorspronklike papierweergawes van die Parlementsittings se notules vernietig, vertel Jacobs. Hy sê dat daar wel kopieë van sommige notules bestaan, maar dat die meeste egter verlore gegaan het.

"Hoe meer bronne daar is, hoe meer materiaal is daar om by die 'waarheid' uit te kom," sê Jacobs. As argiewe tot niet gaan, moet historici ander bronne raadpleeg. Sonder argiewe is dit moeiliker om bewyse op te spoor wat dié sekondêre bronne ondersteun, meen Burden.

"Die uitdaging is [...] om dit wat in die verlede gedoen is, wat opgeteken is, te verwerk sodat [mense van vandag] meer toegerus is om die huidige uitdagings te hanteer," sê Springveldt. "Ons soek antwoorde op die vraagstukke waarmee ons vandag gekonfronteer word," sê Burden oor die studie van geskiedenis.

Vandag word Jacobs steeds betower deur geskiedenis. Nou, as 'n volwassene en argivaris, verstaan hy die belangrikheid daarvan om alle stories, selfs die stiltes, te bewaar.

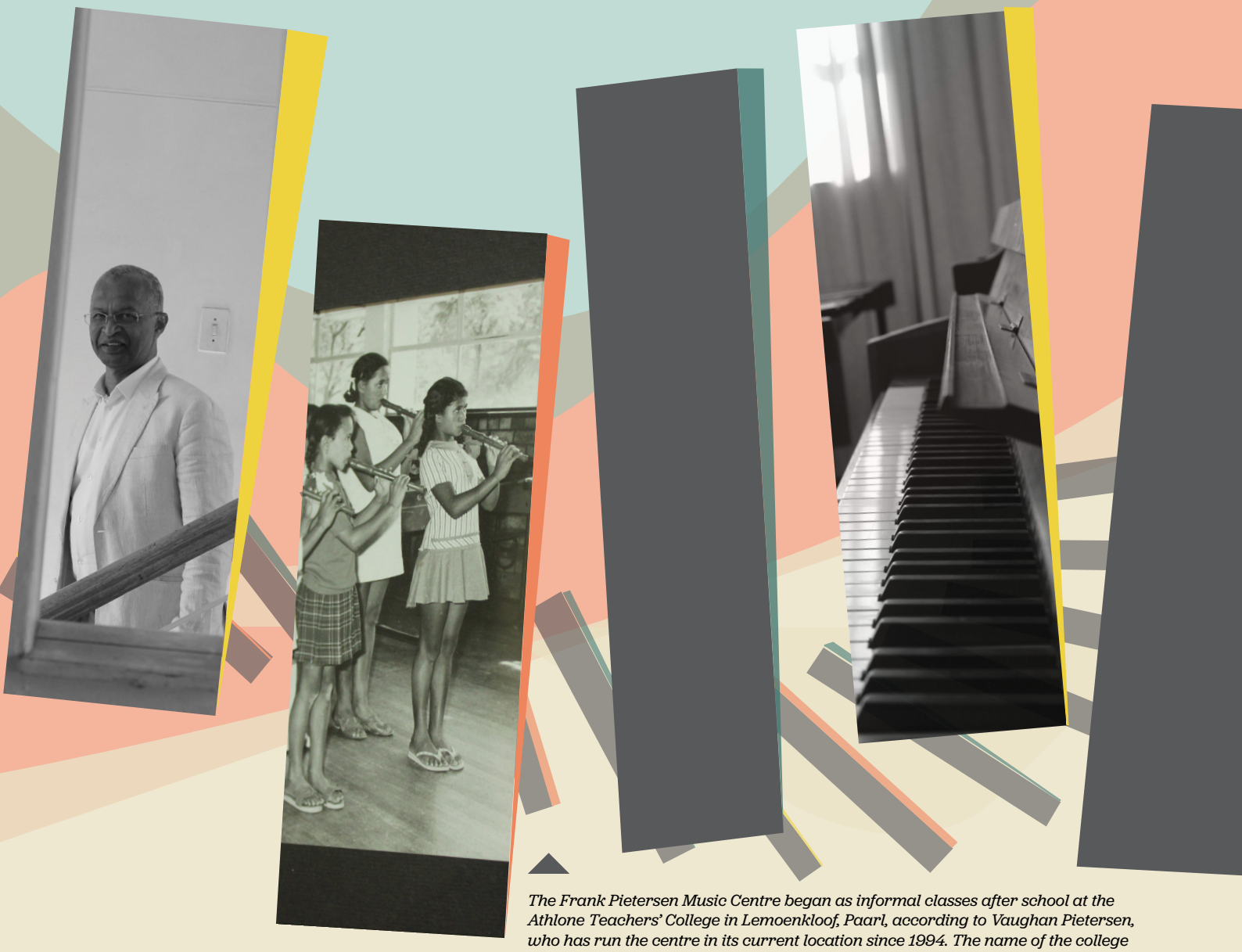
"As jy nie die bronne het nie, verbeur jy die instrument om mense wat in konflik met mekaar is, begrip te gee vir mekaar," sê hy.

CROSSING THE BERG RIVER

The Frank Pietersen Music Centre began in no particular place. At first, the school functioned after school hours in the classrooms of the Athlone Teachers' College in Paarl. Today, Vaughan Pietersen, the son of the school's founder, takes great care in creating a space that his students can be proud of.

Nicola Amon

21 Sanddrift Street, Lemoenkloof, Paarl. This was once the address of the Athlone Teachers' College. The name remains above the front entrance as a tribute to the history of the building, says Vaughan Pietersen, current principal of the centre. The bold metal letters stand out against a strip of white paint, a satisfying reprieve from the busy wall of red brick that surrounds it. Steps lead up to French sliding doors which open to a reception area. The floors gleam with polish, the space is neat and well-lit. Styrofoam letters are arranged on the wall ahead of the entrance: "Music is life, that's why our hearts have beat".



The Frank Pietersen Music Centre began as informal classes after school at the Athlone Teachers' College in Lemoenkloof, Paarl, according to Vaughan Pietersen, who has run the centre in its current location since 1994. The name of the college remains there as a tribute to its historical value, says Pietersen.
PHOTOS: Nicola Amon

GRAPHIC: Maliza Adendorff

BEHIND THE BERG RIVER

The Frank Pietersen Music Centre, originally named the Paarl Schools Music Centre, started in 1970 as a small group of teachers offering informal music classes after school, according to Pietersen. His father, Frank Pietersen, had a friendly relationship with many teachers in Paarl, who then granted him access to use their classrooms for his music students.

Once Athlone Teachers' College had closed up for the day, the music teachers Frank Pietersen had trained would arrive to move desks and stack chairs, making space for their students. Children from the surrounding community attended recorder, violin, rhythmic, and melodic percussion lessons, and choral training.

"In the evenings we had to restore the room back to its original form for the next day's classes," says Pietersen.

The music centre was relocated to Paarl East after the coloured community was forced to move under apartheid legislation, according to Pietersen. Lemoenkloof was classified a white area.

Without sufficient funding and equipment, and with the frustration felt by the music teachers trying to run the centre in a borrowed space, Pietersen says the centre eventually went into a period of recess in 1988.

Separated from Lemoenkloof by the natural feature of the Berg River, Pietersen waited for the day he could reopen the music centre.

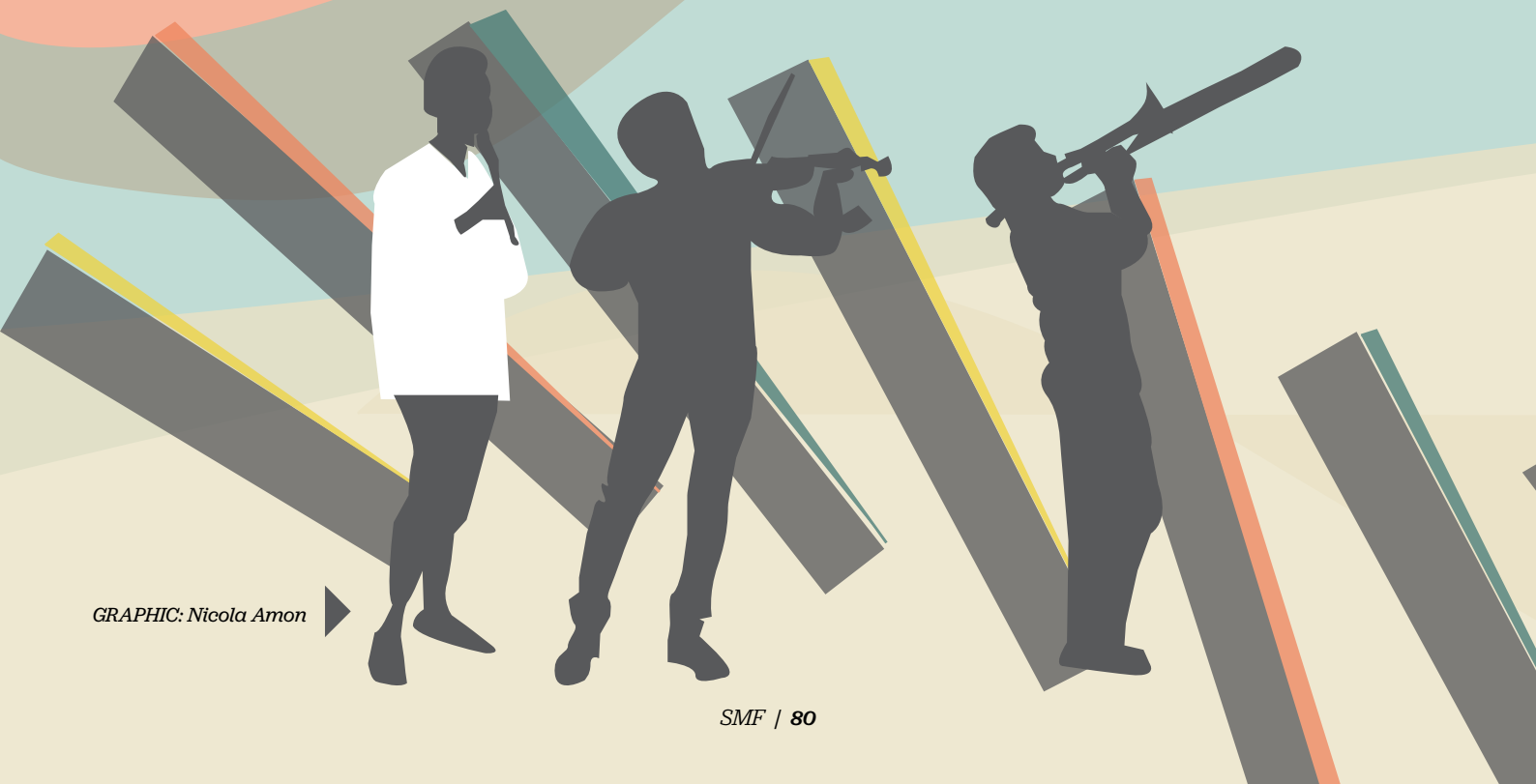
Due to a lack of resources and an inferior education system under apartheid legislation, Pietersen says "the perception was always that we are behind".

"I always said, 'Remember, if the Berg River dries up like the Red Sea, then we must be ready. We must be ready to cross the Berg River'."

PERMITTED TO PLAY

Michéle Williams grew up in Gqeberha. As a girl classified as coloured, from a musically talented family, she too, was looking for a space to advance her skills during the height of apartheid. Much like Pietersen, Williams' past experience of classical music consisted of moving into "white spaces", where she says she felt uncomfortable.

Williams remembers being dropped off at the gate



GRAPHIC: Nicola Amon

of a white school in 1967 to rehearse for the then Port Elizabeth municipal orchestra, an amateur orchestra.

Williams says that she cherished the opportunity to play, even though she needed a permit to get onto the grounds and attend the rehearsal.

Sitting on stage, she looked to the back of the hall where her parents sat watching her perform. They were not permitted to sit beyond the last two rows, says Williams.

THE WORLD BEYOND THE BERG RIVER

Williams was the first person of colour to play for the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra (CTSO), she says. She auditioned for an ad hoc position in 1976. Her full-time employment came in 1980. After her audition, Williams says she was in earshot of the examiners and heard them discuss the benefits of employing a person of colour, which they believed would effectively immunize them from accusations of racism from resistance groups.

Affirmative action in democratic South Africa has an effect on the confidence of musicians of colour, says Williams, who was later employed by the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) in 2001. In an already competitive and elitist space, Williams believes musicians of colour are perceived as products of 'window dressing', rather than products of their talent.

"Young musicians still need to work hard to prove that, with open opportunities, they can achieve what they set out to do. [You] not feeling like you are good enough? It has a huge impact on your playing," Williams says. "Playing is emotional, so whatever you are feeling comes through."

A SPACE OF BELONGING

John Minnaar-Msimang recently took up the post of education and youth development manager at the CPO. He played cello for the Miagi orchestra, which originated at a community centre in Soweto, for 17 years, he says. Robert Brooks, Miagi's executive director and co-founder, describes the orchestra as part of a wide landscape of non-profit initiatives directed at developing the skills of young musicians from disadvantaged communities.

"[Miagi] will really enhance, and support, and nurture your natural talent, and make you feel comfortable in your own skin," says Minnaar-Msimang. "For me, it was a stepping stone to being free."

As a part-time and non-profit orchestra, Miagi does not carry the same climate of competition and comparison as the CPO, says Minnaar-Msimang. Brooks says the orchestra is not subject to affirmative action.

"Each musician is accepted based on their talents, with 80% of the orchestra consisting of people of colour," says Brooks.

Williams now teaches at the CPO outreach programmes that Minnaar-Msimang manages. "It helps to have people of colour teaching," says Minnaar-Msimang, "because of the language benefits as well".

'IF THE BERG RIVER DRIES UP LIKE THE RED SEA, THEN WE MUST BE READY'

Aside from demonstrating that classical music is not something that needs to be interpreted as foreign, Minnaar-Msimang says having a teacher from a similar cultural background helps children of colour relate to the music and the instrument.

"They can play tunes they [have known since] childhood. And with something explained to you in your mother tongue – it makes [a] world of difference," says Minnaar-Msimang.

Minnaar-Msimang was the grandson of labourers on a farm in Bloemfontein. He says he was introduced

GRAPHIC/PHOTOS: Nicola Amon

to classical music when he went to visit the farmer's children at the main house. "I never realised my skin colour until I went to school," he says.

"It was only when we stepped off the farm that I realised classical music was seen as elitist. It was a shock," says Minnaar-Msimang. "Miagi is where I learnt to play South African indigenous music on [the] violin. I think it was only after that that classical music [...] became less frowned upon in the townships around Bloem."

PRIDE IN PLACE

Vaughan Pietersen says he finally received the keys to the Athlone Teachers' College building at the end of 1993.

"You could see the layers of polish on the floors," he says. "We scraped the floors down and repolished them. This space must be different from [the students'] homes. For my learners to come into this building, that must already be an educational experience for them."

The Frank Pietersen Music Centre runs an outreach program for 281 children from Paarl East and surrounding townships, says Pietersen. With only two small Volkswagen Kombis provided by the education department, Pietersen says the centre struggles to bring the children to the other side of the Berg River. The centre auditions children from the outreach program, Pietersen says, and at the end of the year, they put on the Frank Pietersen 'Extravaganza Concert'.

"We [...] use such a flamboyant name so that everybody will see it's not a development or outreach concert," says Pietersen. "We don't want to bring the word 'outreach' [into it]."

No longer making use of borrowed space, the Frank Pietersen Music Centre now inhabits the whole school building.

"When the learners are dropped off at the bottom of the steps and they walk up the steps to the main door, you can just see: They are proud. What happens here changes them totally."

'MORE OF ME MUST COME'

The perception that classical music is elitist is a remnant of the attitudes of people who did not participate in classical music spaces, says Ncebakazi Mnukwana, music lecturer at Stellenbosch University.

"That is why transformation is slow," she says, "because there's a resistance to let go."

If you're good at what you do, your time will come, says Mnukwana. "You just have to be prepared to prove yourself seven times more as a person of colour, but the quiet elephant will [stomp] softly until the end."

"The country has changed and if you're going to take 30 years [or] 50 years to realise that, I'm not going to wait for you," says Mnukwana. "I'm not going to wait for you to be comfortable with who I've always been. [...]It's just that more of me must come."

FROM THE GROUND UP

FOOD APARTHEID

South Africa's access to food – physically, economically, and nutritionally – has long been compromised. Industry professionals believe that the legacy of apartheid can still be seen in issues such as access to nutritious food, to the rights of informal traders, and high levels of food waste.

Amy Lindström

Adam Merrington, 31, has been a fixture at Bergzicht Taxi Rank in Stellenbosch for nine years, providing essential fresh produce to commuters. The informal food retail sector has created real opportunities but it has also created real threats and risks within the South African food system, says Scott Drimie, the director of Southern Africa Food Lab. PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION: Amy Lindström

Living in South Africa without worrying about hunger is a privilege, reflecting security and wealth. To many South Africans, food security remains unattainable.

For Adam Merrington, food is a right that always feels uncertain.

He works with food day-in and day-out, selling fresh produce at the Bergzicht Taxi Rank in Stellenbosch. He has done this for the past nine years. Like the customers he serves, Merrington finds himself buying what he can from the informal food vendors at the taxi rank.

This reality, according to Prof Jane Battersby, a research associate in urban food security at the African Centre for Cities in Cape Town, is born out of South Africa's apartheid and post-apartheid history.

"What we have has been artificially and intentionally created," claims Battersby.

As Prof Scott Drimie, director of the Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL), explains, South Africa's food system is complex, involving a web of interconnected systems that reflect the country's turbulent history.

The South African food system did not just appear, "but it [came] from a very, very long history which is important to recognise", says Drimie.

MAKING SENSE OF THE SYSTEM

The South African food system is characterised by a paradox. "The paradox is that at [a] national level we have these surpluses of food, particularly in staples, and we are a food producing country, [...] yet whilst nationally we may have all these wonderful figures, at a very local level there are terrifying figures, specifically when it comes to nutrition," Drimie explains.

Drimie became the director of SAFL in 2013, after its founding in 2009. Under his leadership, SAFL has focused on finding creative solutions to hunger through collaborative efforts and dialogue among diverse stakeholders, according to their website.

"No one department or sector we have can actually try and control it, or erect it through policy. There [are] so many moving parts and components," says Drimie.

Battersby indicates that the South African food system's complexity, marked by high concentration – meaning only a few corporations have sole power within the system – and interconnected networks, is a direct legacy of apartheid and post-apartheid reformative policies.

"Apartheid and post-apartheid decisions have shaped the food system, they've shaped the urban system. They've shaped the employment, and education system," says Battersby.

Budget allocations for housing have perpetuated apartheid-era spatial patterns, which continue to fuel food insecurity in South Africa, says Battersby. The historical dispossession of land has also affected agricultural practices, leading the new government to consolidate smaller farms into larger holdings. While this policy aimed to improve efficiency, it underscores the ongoing challenge of overcoming deep-seated inequalities, she says.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL GRANTS

South Africa's social grant system, intended to provide cash assistance and other forms of support, acts primarily as an economic stabiliser, says Drimie.

Drimie points out that while these grants may help prevent complete destitution, they are not enough to address the root causes of food insecurity or to lift people out of poverty.

ILLUSTRATION: Amy Lindström

"In South Africa, arguably, we got on top of hunger in around 2007. With the massive expansion of social grants, we managed to take hunger from 25% and we lowered it quite considerably [...] to 10% for a good 10 years," says Drimie.

Despite the new South African government's attempts to address historical problems of oppression, the country has seen a rise in food insecurity in the past few years, particularly after Covid-19.

"We've seen hunger go up again. [...] One in five people [in South Africa experience] some form of hunger, or worry about hunger, every day," says Drimie.

The percentage of South Africans experiencing limited access to food has increased from 19.5% in 2019 to 26.2% in 2023, according to Stats SA in their general household survey from 2023. Comparatively, the World Health Organisation estimated in 2024 that around 733 million people faced hunger globally in 2023.

However, there is a critical role that the township economy, particularly spaza shops, play in ensuring access to affordable food for lower-income South Africans, says Drimie. He highlights that these shops are not just convenience stores but are lifelines for many who might otherwise struggle to afford food.

"The township's economy provides very good access to cheap protein, [...] and with that, hopefully, affordable and relatively healthy food," says Drimie.

However, Battersby criticises the social grant system for channelling money into large-scale food businesses rather than supporting the informal food sector. She believes that this misallocation means that the money often ends up benefiting large retail chains rather than local economies.

"The social grants are [also] doing a lot of good, but they're not actually pitched at a level that's really affecting change," says Battersby.

The majority of those who receive social grants in South Africa spend the bulk of their money on food, energy and transport, according to the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute's policy brief published in 2012.

However, they note that income received from the grants does not remain in circulation within the local economy.

"Essentially, the social grants and the ways that they get paid out are effectively channelling money into the large-scale food businesses," claims Battersby. "So when you drive around the country and you see the kind of rise of the shopping mall in rural areas, [...] that's all to capture the social grants."

SMF reached out to the South African Social Security Agency, who did not respond by the time of publication.

'WHAT WE HAVE HAS BEEN ARTIFICIALLY AND INTENTIONALLY CREATED'

A DUAL CRISIS

Looking specifically at nutrition in the lives of children, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries found, in 2011, that over 1.5 million children under the age of six have been stunted by malnutrition in South Africa. This has lasting effects on the person that follows them into adulthood, which they will carry with them throughout their lives, according to Drimie.

The first 1 000 days of infant nutrition are of utmost importance for a child to benefit from education one day, says Drimie. "It means that they will always pay the price for the rest of society's neglect of that issue."

Furthermore, the national food security statistics for South Africa often fail to reflect the true state of nutrition at the local level, says Drimie.

FOOD HISTORY

For Dr Amy Rommelspacher, a historian and archivist at the Dutch Reformed Church Archives in Stellenbosch, delving into the history of food in South Africa is crucial for grasping the intricate and multifaceted reasons behind the persistent hunger that continues to affect many in the country today.

"Food history is a very under-researched field in South Africa and Africa in general," says Rommelspacher. "I think if we understand one aspect of history, we can understand a whole range of other things."

Rommelspacher believes that food security involves myriad systems and that each system intersects to play a role in an individual's access to nutritious food.

"Food [...] doesn't exist in isolation. There are always people involved, there are systems involved, there's water involved, there's politics involved," says Rommelspacher.

For example, something like electricity forms a large part of food insecurity, says Rommelspacher.

"There are many people who don't have a fridge or who don't have a stove that's safe. And so [...] food preparation and even access to that can be a privileged thing," she says.

Furthermore, she questions South Africa's exclusion of alternative foods at the cost of nutritious diets. This includes sorghum, which is a grain that is gluten-free but also has many other vitamins and a higher protein content than something like maize, she says.

"Are there things that are more nutritious for [South Africans] that are not expensive that we could be thinking about eating?" asks Rommelspacher.

The informal food retail sector provides a lifeline for many who might otherwise struggle to afford food, says Scott Drimie, director of Southern Africa Food Lab in Stellenbosch. PHOTOS: Amy Lindström

"You're looking at a situation where 60% to 70% of people are not able to afford a nutritious basket of goods," says Drimie. "It's a travesty actually."

Drimie also believes that there is clear evidence that South Africans eat too much of certain foods, like salt or sugar. Part of the problem, according to Drimie, is the taste and convenience of processed foods.

"Sugar's not used because it's a benign carbohydrate; it's used because it tastes good and you can entice people to buy and use it [...]," says Drimie. "Very difficult choices are being made but, in fact, some of these choices aren't real choices. People are being directed in a very particular way."

There are a lot of things that drive food choices, but people make decisions based on what is most feasible in terms of budget and spoilage, says Battersby.

NEGLECT OF A SECTOR

Battersby says that it is imperative that local governments start to become more inclusive of the informal food retail sector in South Africa.

"The City of Cape Town is undergoing a review of its informal trade bylaws. And within that, there is some discussion about how to have a better food incorporation," says Battersby. "It's coming up in bits and pieces in policy and official documents."

However, there has always been a semi-benign neglect of this sector by the government, particularly in the context of Covid-19, says Battersby.

Stellenbosch Transparency, a media activist project that started in 2013 in response to the eviction of traders from their site of occupation in Stellenbosch for over 17 years, echoes this concern. Directors Paul Hendler and Michael Hyland highlight the challenges of designating official trading sites and ensuring that informal traders are supported within Stellenbosch specifically.

Although the Stellenbosch municipality designates trading areas, the interpretation of the Business Act 71 of 1991 – which allows municipalities to officially designate trading sites through permits – complicates the process, claims Hyland and Hendler.

"[...] it also has a lot to do with the right to trade and how limiting that access takes away from the livelihoods of people, which then also affects food," says Hyland.

According to Stuart Grobbelaar, spokesperson of Stellenbosch Municipality, the relocation of traders from the Rhenish Mission Church to Bergzicht Taxi Rank was a well-considered move to an area with higher foot traffic and proximity to commuters.

Stellenbosch Municipality has also implemented a progressive informal trading bylaw, says Grobbelaar.

HOW THEIR COOKIE CRUMBLED

"We take for granted that we have people to lean on [...] there's so many people in the country that don't have someone to lean on. They don't have someone to just show up for them and that's not their fault," says Chich Nyama, a Stellenbosch-based digital content creator.

Nyama started the Lovemore Initiative in 2023, with the hope of providing those less fortunate in Stellenbosch with access to food and second-hand clothing. Being able to contribute meals to those in need is the driving force behind the initiative, she says.

She also highlights an important issue, specifically in Stellenbosch, but one that can be applied throughout the country.

"I think that generally people in Stellenbosch are intimidated by the food crisis because we're in such an affluent town with such big differences in wealth," Nyama says. "I think it can be hard to give back or intimidating to give back."

Bridging the gap between the affluent and systemically oppressed is just one way to begin to curb South African food insecurity.

"We're all just humans dealing with the hand that we've been dealt and we're all trying our best every day," says Nyama.

BEYOND THE

EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As budget cuts bear down on the South African education system, access to quality education remains unequal. Schools, the government, and the private sector endeavour to flip the script through collaboration.

Aurelia Mouton

There are two distinct systems of schooling in South Africa; that of the quintile four and five schools, which account for roughly 20% of the schooling system, and then the lower quintiles that make up the remaining 80%, according to Prof Jonathan Jansen of Stellenbosch University's (SU) education department.

Quantile four and five schools are better off and get better educational outcomes than quantile one and two schools. Quantile one and two schools are schools where parents either do not pay school fees or cannot afford the fees. Those schools are worse off, in terms of the number of students in a classroom and the availability of textbooks as well as in terms of every single indicator. This is according to Jansen.

This produces "vastly different educational outcomes" and the quality of education is "really different" when compared, according to Jansen.

"We still have not yet overcome the huge disparities in both inputs – that is resources, but also outputs – that is results, between this upper tier 20% of schools, and the [...] largely ordinary and often dysfunctional schools in the bottom 80%."

A HYBRID SOLUTION

In this context, schools such as Apex Stellenbosch and Calling Academy in Stellenbosch endeavour to provide consistent, high-quality education for all.

"In 2015, the founders of Calling Education started dreaming about a new school for Stellenbosch that would address the disparity between the quality of education available to those with significant financial resources and those without such resources," says Werner Cloete, CEO of Calling Education, the independent schooling organisation that founded Calling Academy.

Dr Philip Geldenhuys, co-founder of Calling Education, was completing his PhD in social work with his thesis, "High School Boy Dropout in Low-income Communities of the Western Cape", which "gave further impetus to pursue a school that would provide better academic outcomes for low-income boys", according to Cloete.

Cloete says that parents at Calling Academy are required to pay a school fee of R7 320 for the year 2024 (R610 per month). This low-cost fee qualifies the school for the maximum subsidy from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), which amounts to roughly R10 000 per learner for the 2024 year, he says. Donations from individuals and companies supplement the income of Calling Education, according to Cloete.

"The financial model of the school brings an independent education within reach of the low-income community without sacrificing quality. Outstanding teachers are sought and remunerated fairly to ensure that they can be retained," says Cloete.

"The WCED conducts monitoring visits to [collaborative schools to] ensure that the standards to be maintained by the schools will not be inferior [to] the standards of similar public schools and that the school complies with the registration conditions," says Millicent Merton, deputy director of communication for the WCED.

A BETTER BLUEPRINT

Apex Stellenbosch follows a similar financial model, incorporating hybrid education, which is a combination of face-to-face and online classes, to enhance the offering of the school. This is according to Robyn van de Rhede, founding principal of Apex Stellenbosch.

"For example, a traditional school of 1 000 learners with 30 classes requires 30 teachers. If a teacher costs R450 000 per year, this amounts to an annual teacher salary cost of R13.5 million. In contrast, a blended learning school of 1 000 learners with 10 classes requires 10 teachers at R450 000 and 20 facilitators at R110 000 each. This amounts to an annual teacher and facilitator salary cost of R6.7 million – half that of a traditional school," says Van de Rhede.

This funding model makes it possible to run a school at an operating cost of R17 000 per learner per annum while retaining the same number of employees, according to Van de Rhede. Van de Rhede says that this is achieved by reconfiguring the classroom and redefining the role of the teacher whilst leveraging technology to halve teacher salary costs.

Apex and Calling Academy are addressing a gap that the WCED and Department of Basic Education (DBE) have not yet filled.

GRAPHIC: Emma Hamman

BASICS:

This gap is the need for new schools in the area, according to Anne Tarr, principal of A.F. Louw Primary School, a public school in Stellenbosch following a traditional model of teaching and funding.

"Going forward, I do not think that either the WCED or DBE will have the funding to fully support new schools or additional classrooms and educators. I believe that private-public partnerships are the future," says Tarr.

The state of the South African education system has recently come under scrutiny following news that approximately 2 400 teaching posts will be scrapped due to significant budget cuts to the WCED by the national government, according to *News24*'s Natasha Bezuidenhout.

Tarr believes that the collaborative nature of partnerships between schools and the private sector allows for more funding, regular feedback and improvements, and the potential for staff and facilities development through operational partners.

SOLUTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF TOMORROW

Electronic devices, such as tablets that can be moved between classrooms, and stable WiFi connections throughout the school building, would allow for greater access to digital educational media for a school like A.F. Louw, according to Tarr. "We have textbooks, but they alone cannot teach a child."

"The funding model of education is what needs to be fully investigated in [South African] schools," says Tarr.

The WCED, in collaboration with Wesgro, launched Edu Invest, a public-private collaboration that "seeks to not only drive investment into the education sector but also ignite innovation", in October 2023, according to Merton.

"The initiative focuses on attracting investments in new private schools, including those that serve learners in poor communities, to create more classrooms and alleviate overcrowding in schools.

This step is crucial for improving access to quality education and enhancing overall educational outcomes," says Merton.

Independent schools that provide high-quality education at a relatively low cost have a valuable part to play in building South Africa, according to Stephen Taylor, director of research, monitoring, and evaluation at the DBE.

"Education is a societal matter and while government has a primary role to play in making education accessible, we need a multitude of partners contributing in various ways," says Taylor.

Jansen, however, emphasises that while privately funded schools alleviate pressure on the education system, it cannot accommodate the over 12 million school-aged children in the education system, and "can only cover small areas for the lucky ones".

"[...] it would cost too much, from a private sector point of view," says Jansen. "This is a multi-million rand enterprise and no amount of small-scale [initiatives], welcome as they are, [are] going to change the systemic situation."

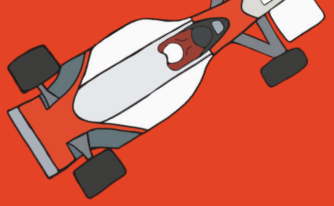
Jansen reiterates that in order for these alternative funding models to truly work beyond just "the lucky few", the government must come up with a reform plan that includes the entire national education system.

"Apex Stellenbosch is much more than just our first low-cost private school. It serves as a blueprint of what quality education in South Africa can look like for the majority of our country, not just those who can afford elite institutions," says Van de Rhede.

PUMPING THE BREAKS ONCE AGAIN

The only Formula 1 Grand Prix in Africa, hosted at Kyalami race track, operated from 1967 and was cancelled in the 1990s. Locally, the blame is placed on South Africa's economy, but internationally, it is attributed to politics. Conversations to bring the race back, are once again halted by these factors.

Emma Hamman



It is June 2023. A sports bar in Stellenbosch is buzzing and tables are packed. In the background, the television broadcasts the familiar voice of British commentator David Croft's "lights out and away we go" as the Formula 1 (F1) Grand Prix commences.

The usual chatter of pitstop-times is replaced by irritated students who are experiencing the impacts of South Africa's economic and political landscape for the first time. The Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) withdrew from talks to bring F1 back to South Africa, according to an article by *RacingNews365*. Before this announcement, these students had never given Russia, the economy, or BRICS a single thought. To them, the sport is what matters most.

The absence of F1 in Africa is mostly attributed to the state of the South African economy, as hosting a Grand Prix, meaning 'grand prize' in French, is expensive.

"Even Formula E failed to find funds in 2023 and 2024. The minimum required as a start for Formula 1 was R500 million," says Tim Reddell, the chairman of Killarney International Raceway, the home of the Western Province Motor Club. There is however another facet to this, which is politics, according to *RacingNews365*.

Kyalami racetrack creates petrolhead poetry

F1 fans liked going to Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit, in Midrand, home to one of the most beloved race tracks, because it wasn't so formal. This is according to Roger McCleery, former commentator at the South African Grand Prix, who is now in his 80s.

"It was easier [for fans] to get in the pits and talk to the drivers or see their cars, [...] and the drivers loved the informality and the sunshine as [the race] was always held at the end of the year," says McCleery.

McCleery recalls a conversation he had with Jack Brabham, who won his third and final world championship in South Africa in 1970. "I asked him what he thinks about Kyalami [race track]. [...] He says "this is one of my favourite circuits in the world" – the other two being the Belgium Grand Prix circuit and the famous Monaco [circuit]."

The drivers used to stay at the Ranch Hotel just below the circuit. McCleery says they later had to pick drivers up with a helicopter as the crowds were queuing to go into Kyalami on race days. He recalls how people used to camp outside the circuit, days before the race.

Politics waved the chequered flag

"The big thing about putting on a Grand Prix was the cost of it," says McCleery. "We couldn't organise Grand Prix because [our government and track owners] didn't have the money to do it."

The original circuit was in use from 1961 to 1988, according to the Circuit's website, when the apartheid government was internationally criticised. The South African Grand Prix was eliminated as sanctions were introduced. "In the apartheid era it became politically difficult to organise races," says McCleery.

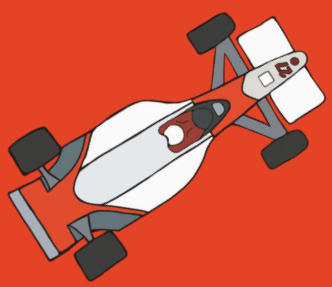
In 1985, the FIA president Jean-Marie Balestre, cited apartheid as the reason that F1 would not return to South Africa, according to an article by *TimesLive*.

In 1992, two years after Nelson Mandela walked out the gates of Victor Verster Prison, the South African Grand Prix reappeared on the World Championship Calendar.

When the race returned, the circuit was changed and very little of the original charm of Kyalami was left as only two of the original corners remained, says McCleery. The new track was slow and was considered dangerous as there was a lack of run-off space, according to McCleery. The Grand Prix only returned to South Africa once more in 1993, and then abandoned the circuit.

The South African Grand Prix was a classic in F1, says McCleery. He believes that Kyalami race track was one of the most beloved old circuits. Some believe F1 stained its reputation by continuing to race at

GRAPHICS: Emma Hamman



Kyalami well into the '80s, as international pressure on the then ruling National Party to end apartheid, was rising.

Alex Lomnitz, former member of the F1 Society at Stellenbosch University, says that the FIA continues to implement sanctions on nations on the basis of human rights abuses. He says Saudi Arabia and Qatar, where the *kafala* system is in place, are examples of this. This system gives private citizens and companies in Jordan, Lebanon, and most Arabian Gulf countries almost total control over migrant workers' employment and immigration status, according to the Council on Foreign Affairs website.

TEUN STEVEN

'Adding South Africa would ensure that each continent has at least one Formula One race'

According to the *Entertainment and Sports Programming Network* (ESPN), the FIA cancelled the Russian Grand Prix when the Russian military invaded Ukraine in 2022. South Africa forms part of the BRICS organisation – with Russia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and India – and has failed to denounce Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to the FIA.

Hamilton's call for an African Grand Prix

In 2023, conversations about a South African Grand Prix picked up speed when Lewis Hamilton, seven-time F1 world champion, said he wanted a race on the African continent.

"That's a really big dream for me. To have raced in South Africa and on the African continent in my career," Hamilton told *ESPN*.

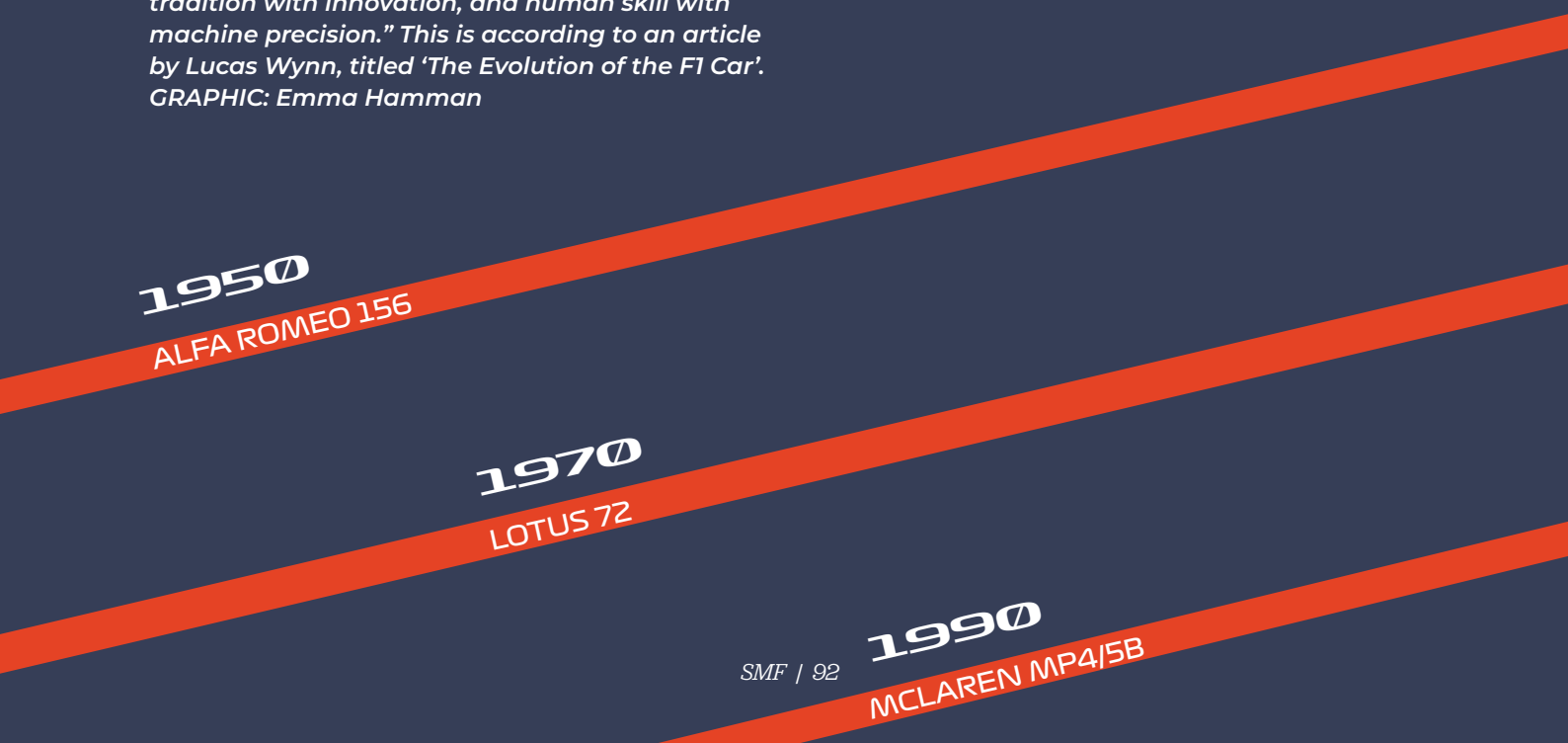
Teun Steven, the founder of the F1.line Instagram account, echoed this by mentioning that the F1 championship excludes Africa. Steven is based in the Netherlands and creates daily F1-based graphics.

"I find [this] unacceptable. Adding South Africa would ensure that each continent has at least one Formula 1 race," says Steven. His preference is also for the Kyalami Grand Prix.

"From a fan perspective, I think it would be amazing if the sport returns [to Kyalami race track]. It would make attending races a lot easier but [...] I don't think [it will return]," says Natanya Leigh, a South African F1 content creator.

THE EVOLUTION OF F1 CARS

"The sport continually pushes the boundaries of what is possible, marrying speed with safety, tradition with innovation, and human skill with machine precision." This is according to an article by Lucas Wynn, titled 'The Evolution of the F1 Car'. GRAPHIC: Emma Hamman



"With [...] the amount of [maintenance] that will need to take place on the track, teaching volunteer marshals, and ultimately investing a lot of money into the destination itself to prepare for thousands of tourists visiting – I personally don't think our country is able to accommodate or invest in the sport right now," says Leigh.

History repeats itself

When the FIA joined in on the conversation, it was made clear that economic reasons were not the only motivation to stop negotiations.

"I think [F1] really tried. The fact that Stefano Domenicali came down to the track to check the upkeep and approved it as an FIA second-grade track, I think they were quite disappointed that the South African government did not show any interest," says Leigh. Stefano Domenicali is the current CEO of the F1 Group.

Gayton McKenzie, minister of sports, arts and culture, was present at the 2024 Azerbaijan Grand Prix to ensure that F1 returns to South Africa.

"We strongly believe that having it back [in South Africa] will be a huge boost to the country," says Cassiday Rangata-Jacobs, media liaison officer for the ministry of sport, arts and culture.

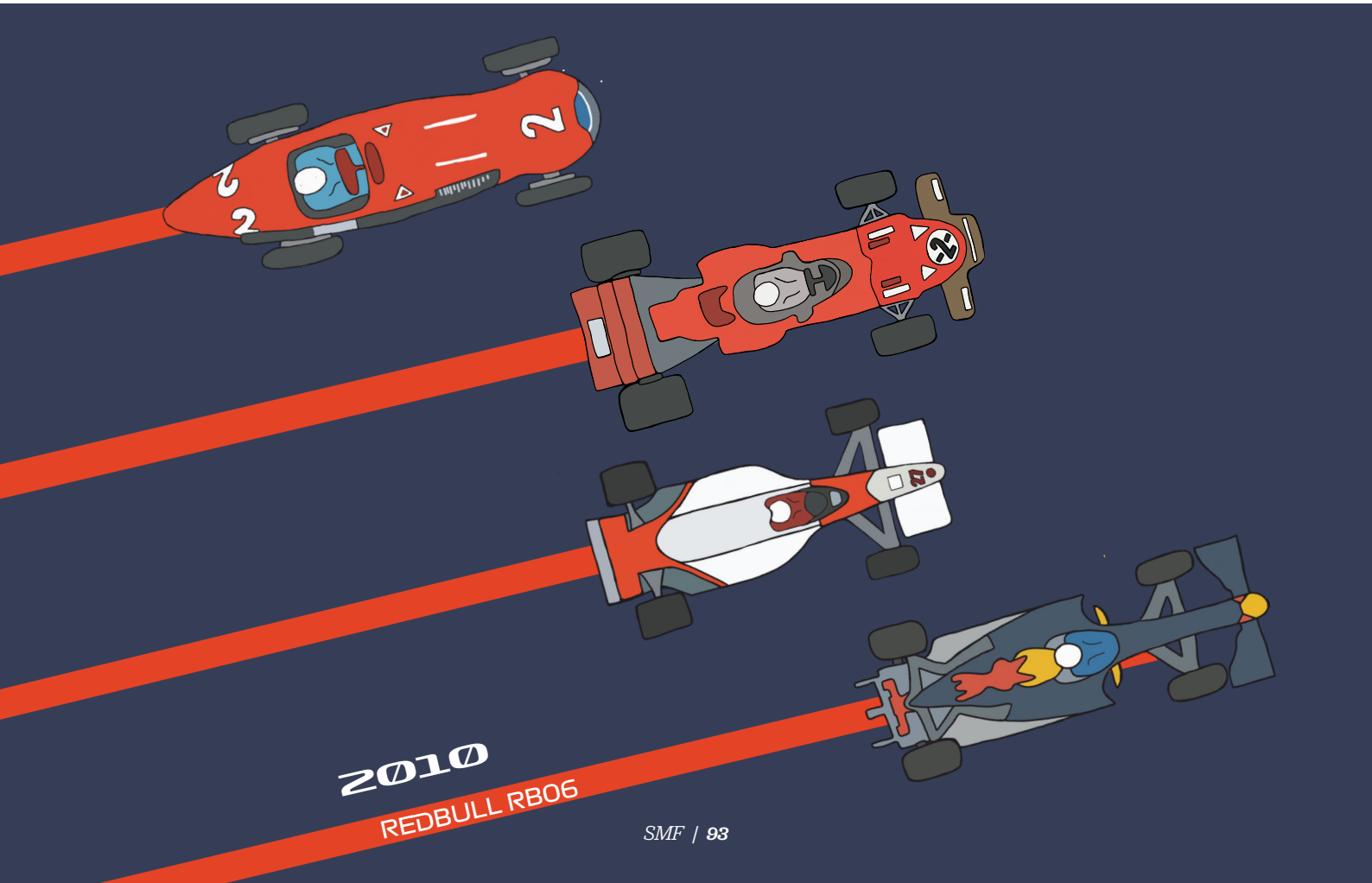
In 2023, *RacingNews365* reported a decision to abandon plans for a South African Grand Prix, allegedly due to South Africa's political and economic relationship with Russia.

Reddell does not believe politics played a monumental role in the withdrawal. "An element of Russian support may have swayed Liberty, the owners of F1," says Reddell. He believes that it was mostly an economic issue. "Money was always the issue. South Africa's support for Russia was a much later narrative."

Reddell says the bottom line is that no one could come up with the money needed to host F1 in South Africa. ●

F1 FUEL

Music and sport have always been intertwined when it comes to the global stage. In the F1 world, certain songs become intricately linked to drivers and the iconic theme song has even been orchestrated by Dutch conductor André Rieu. This playlist includes some of F1's most iconic songs:



meet the

BAYANDA GUMEDE

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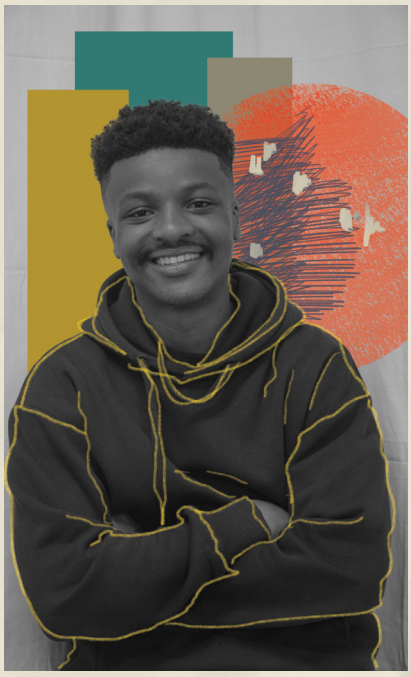

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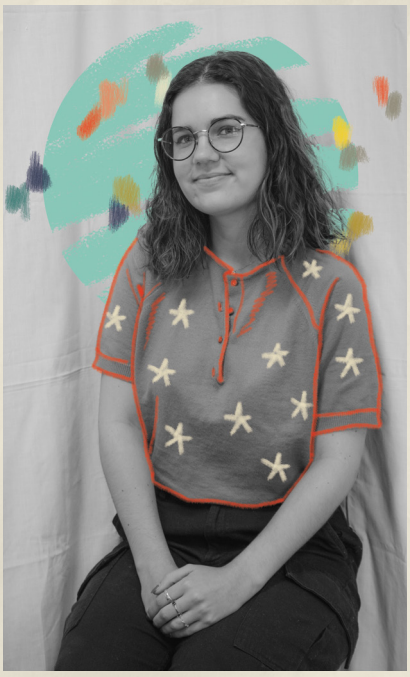

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Die museum van die *toekoms*

Tydens 'n onlangse interaktiewe aanbieding in Nederland, is die gehoor gevra om deel te neem aan 'n verbeeldingsprojek waarin 'n uitstalling vir 'n museum van 3024 saamgestel word. Wat moet in? Wat moet uit? En hoekom?

Anneli Groenewald

Jy kan nie oor die hede skryf sonder om op 'n manier die distopiese te betrek of daaroor te reflekteer nie. Só sê die Nederlandse skrywer, Joost de Vries, tydens 'n onlangse gesprek oor verbeelding in die letterkunde.

De Vries wil juis ontsnap van die distopiese wêreld waarin hy meen ons buitendien daagliks leef. 'n Wêreld waarin dit dikwels voel asof tegnologie groter is as die mens.

Daarom speel sy jongste roman, *Hogere Macthen*, af in die twintigste eeu. Dis 'n wêreld waarheen hy kan terugverbeel – 'n wêreld voordat die mensdom verstrengel geraak het in die angstigheid van konstante strome inligting op ons skerms.

VERBEEL JOU DIE MUSEUM VAN DIE TOEKOMS

De Vries het gepraat by 'n fees deur die lettere fakulteit aan die Universiteit van Groningen in Nederland.

In die lokaal reg langsaan, is drie navorsers, Manuela Ritondale, Shanade Barnabas en Mayada Madbouly, besig met 'n interaktiewe uitstalling. Die drie is onderskeidelik 'n marine-argeoloog, mede-professor in kultuur, erfenis en identiteit, en sosioloog aan die Universiteit van Groningen.

Die drie stel belang in die manier waarop mense dink oor erfenis, en hul uitstalling werk dus as volg: Daar is twee tafels vol foto's van alledaagse dinge – van basiliekruid tot foto's uit Orhan Pamuk se Museum of Innocence in Istanboel.

Dan is daar drie panele – een is gemerk "Uitstal", een "Argiveer", en een "Ignoreer".

Die versoek is dat besoekers foto's moet kies en moet besluit watter van hierdie dinge hulle in 'n museum 'n duisend jaar die toekoms in sou wou sien. En, natuurlik, hoekom hulle meen dit onthou of bewaar moet word.

WAT MOET ONTHOU WORD?

Hoe vertel 'n mens aan die mensdom van 3024 hoe die wêreld van vandag was? En wat gaan dan nog genoeg saak maak dat dit steeds onthou word?

Miskien, sê ek later die dag aan 'n kollega van Groningen, gaan dit nie soseer daaroor om klein, individuele dinge vir bewaringsdoeleindes te probeer identifiseer nie. Miskien kan 'n mens eerder na hierdie goed kyk deur tegnologie te gebruik as 'n manier om te reflekteer oor hoe die mensdom ingryp en die wêreld om ons verander.

Teen 3024 sal dit vir die mensdom haas onmoontlik wees om hulself enigsins 'n wêreld te verbeel waarin tegnologie nié 'n integrale deel van hul lewens is nie. Dit is immers reeds moeilik om 'n wêreld te verbeel of te onthou waar die slimfoon in jou broeksak nie 'n verlengstuk van jou dominante hand geword het nie.

Dink aan die fliek, *Her*, wat nou reeds meer as 'n dekade oud is. In hierdie fliek speel Joaquin Phoenix die rol van 'n man wat verlief raak op die bedryfstelsel wat sy slimfoon bestuur. Dié stelsel kommunikeer met hom in die vorm van 'n vrouestem, en leer deur middel van masjienleer hoe om die hoofkarakter se lewe vir hom beter te maak, en hom gelukkig te maak. Sy laat hom selfs lag. (Sy, ja.)

VUUR, MS-DOS, EN DIE DRAADLOOS

My generasie (wat in die 1980s gebore is) se groot tegnologiese omwenteling was die een van analoog na digitaal. Maar natuurlik is tegnologie nie slegs digitaal nie, en is dit millenia reeds deel van die mens se storie op hierdie planeet. Argeoloë beskou byvoorbeeld die teenwoordigheid van vuur en klipgereedskap as tekens van tegnologiese ontwikkeling in die lewens van ons eerste mense.

Miskien sou ons die verlede en die hede kon vertel langs die draad van tegnologiese ontwikkeling – vuur, klip, die gloeilamp, die draadloos, die vermoë om nut in metale te vind en dit te manipuleer, MS-DOS, masjienleer, vliegtuie, atoombomme, musiek.

Om soos De Vries te probeer ontsnap uit die wêreld van tegnologie, is 'n onmoontlike oefening. Tegnologie is onlosmaakbaar deel van die mensdom.

Miskien sou ons eerder om ons kon kyk en onsself afvra hoe ons, maar ook die mense om ons – die helde, die skurke, die kerkgangers, die straatslapers – daardie tegnologieë aanwend in die wêreld waarin ons woon.

Wie wend dit aan om van die wêreld 'n beter plek te maak? Wie het suiwer eie gewin in gedagte? Wie wend dit op 'n gewetenlose manier aan? Wie gaan op 'n onnadenkende wyse daarmee om?

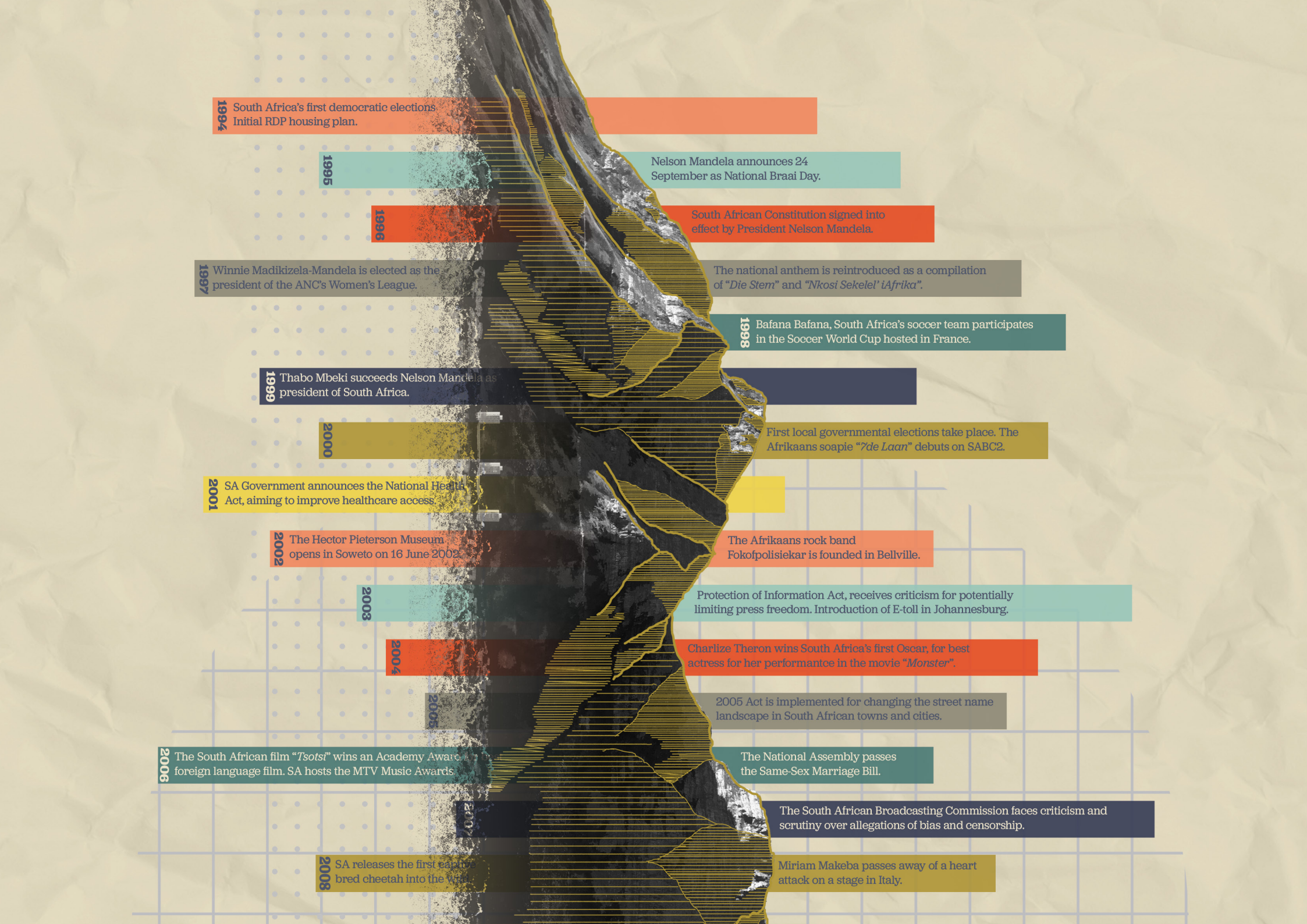
En is hierdie die soort vrae wat ek myself gereeld genoeg afvra wanneer ek besluit om 'n stukkie tegnologie – of dit nou 'n boksie vuurhoutjies is, of my skootrekenaar – op te tel en te gebruik? ●

Anneli Groenewald is 'n dosent aan Universiteit Stellenbosch se Departement Joernalistiek. Hierdie artikel is gepubliseer op uitnodiging van die klas van 2024.

PHOTOS: Ubaid Abrahams, Abigail Baard and Nkululeko Ndlovu

"We chose an editorial approach to provide a fresh perspective to complex themes. The protea organically became our motif as we explored the themes of infrastructure, arts, and culture. The stem representing a bridge, an ode to infrastructure. The bright colours of the petals, an ode to our being. The bloom, an ode to South Africa's future. Ultimately the feature stands as our interpretation of what it means to be in South Africa."

With special thanks to Anneli Groenewald, Ananda Biesheuvel and African Sun Media, Herman Wasserman, Elizabeth Newman, and Heléne Booyens.


1994
South Africa's first democratic elections. Initial RDP housing plan.
1995
Nelson Mandela announces 24 September as National Braai Day.
1996
South African Constitution signed into effect by President Nelson Mandela.
1997
Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is elected as the president of the ANC's Women's League.
The national anthem is reintroduced as a compilation of "*Die Stem*" and "*Nkosi Sekelel' iAfrika*".
1998
Bafana Bafana, South Africa's soccer team participates in the Soccer World Cup hosted in France.
1999
Thabo Mbeki succeeds Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa.
2000
First local governmental elections take place. The Afrikaans soapie "*7de Laan*" debuts on SABC2.
2001
SA Government announces the National Health Act, aiming to improve healthcare access.
2002
The Hector Pieterson Museum opens in Soweto on 16 June 2002.
The Afrikaans rock band Fokofpolisiekar is founded in Bellville.
2003
Protection of Information Act, receives criticism for potentially limiting press freedom. Introduction of E-toll in Johannesburg.
2004
Charlize Theron wins South Africa's first Oscar, for best actress for her performantce in the movie "*Monster*".
2005
2005 Act is implemented for changing the street name landscape in South African towns and cities.
2006
The South African film "*Tsotsi*" wins an Academy Award for foreign language film. SA hosts the MTV Music Awards.
The National Assembly passes the Same-Sex Marriage Bill.
The South African Broadcasting Commission faces criticism and scrutiny over allegations of bias and censorship.
2008
SA releases the first captive bred cheetah into the wild.
Miriam Makeba passes away of a heart attack on a stage in Italy.