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Mapungubwe was an important supplier of gold in global trade networks between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (23)

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MISTRA's Monthly Briefing is a newsletter from the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection. It aims to inform MISTRA's partners about the Institute's research, strategic reflections, published papers, and other news relating to the network of people and organisations committed to MISTRA's strategic engagement with the issues facing South Africa. The briefing is issued monthly.

In issue Number#33 we report on:

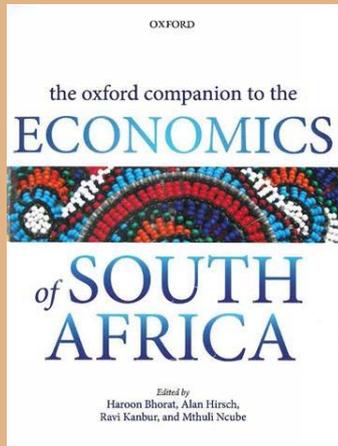
- MISTRA and Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice (GSDPP), University of Cape Town joint launch of *The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa*.
- The launch of the research report on *The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy*, a *Roundtable on Energy Choice and The Evolution of Systems of Innovations in South Africa*, the *Sixth European Conference on African Studies (ECAS6)*, the *Science&You Conference*, and the *7th South African AIDS Conference*.
- A range of articles and interviews, including: *Western language helps cultures meet halfway* by Thad Metz, *No easy answers* by Danielle Bowler, *The rise and decline and rise of China: searching for an organising philosophy* by Hester du Plessis, *Survival of the unfittest* by Velaphi Msimang, and *State must risk investment to keep new technology in SA* by Radhika Perrot.
- The appointment of Khangwelo Tshivhase as the intern in Knowledge Economy and Scientific Advancement (KESA) and the appointment of Solomon Thoka as the Intern in Consultancy Services.

We hope you find our Monthly Briefings informative and invite you to visit our website, where you will find more information on our research, key papers, media on MISTRA, as well as information on participating in any of the Institute's research projects.

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# MISTRA STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

## The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa Johannesburg Launch



MISTRA and Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice (GSDPP), University of Cape Town will jointly co-host the Johannesburg launch of *The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa* on the **14th August 2015**.

This highly-anticipated volume provides a unique perspective on the last two decades, and on the challenges faced by South Africa as it moves to translate political freedom into economic prosperity and inclusion.

*The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa* was designed with a view to contributing to the policy and analytical debate in South Africa by pulling together perspectives on a range of issues—micro, macro, sectoral, countrywide and global—from leading economists working on South Africa. These eminent economists, from within and outside of South Africa, were drawn from academia, the policy world and from international and national level economic policy agencies. The editorial team consists of four global leaders in development economics and in African and South African economic analysis and policy.

The book was edited by:

- **Ravi Kanbur**, T.H. Lee Professor of World Affairs, International Professor of Applied Economics and Management, and Professor of Economics, Cornell University
- **Haroon Bhorat**, Professor of Economics and Director of the Development Policy Research Unit, School of Economics, University of Cape Town
- **Alan Hirsch**, Director, Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice, University of Cape Town, and
- **Mthuli Ncube**, Professor of Public Policy at Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford.

Renowned international economist, and co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa*, **Ravi Kanbur** will join fellow editors, **Alan Hirsch** and **Mthuli Ncube** at the launch on **Friday 14th August 2015** from **9.00am - 1.00pm** in Woodmead, Johannesburg.

Spaces are limited, so please confirm your intention to attend by emailing: [asandal@mistra.org.za](mailto:asandal@mistra.org.za)

[To view an Executive Summary of \*The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa\* click here.](#)

[For more info on \*The Oxford Companion to the Economics of South Africa\* and biographies of the editors click here.](#)

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## Launch of the research report on *The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy*

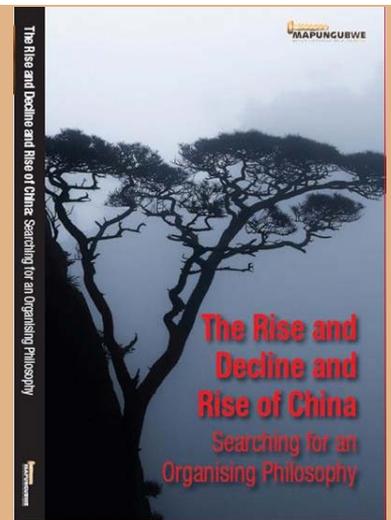
On the 28th July 2015 MISTRA launched its research report titled *The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy*.

With China poised to become a major global power in the 21st century, it is fitting to examine the factors which have contributed to the rise, once again, of this multifaceted country and notable civilisation. *The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy* is the culmination of research undertaken by MISTRA, which set out to investigate the multifaceted factors that accompanied and influenced the evolution of Chinese society over the centuries.

The Launch programme included the following speakers and topics:

Introductory Remarks: **Dr Anil Sooklal** - DIRCO

*China as a Civilisational Project*



- **Dr Hester du Plessis** – MISTRA
- **Mr Koos Bekker** – NASPERS

*China's Society, Politics & Economics*

- **Dr Ross Anthony** – Stellenbosch University
- **Prof Garth le Pere** – University of Pretoria
- **Dr Martyn Davies** – Frontier Advisory
- **Dr Paul Tembe** – Stellenbosch University
- **Amb. Faizel Ismail** - South African Ambassador to WTO



Thematic areas covered in the research report include examination of China as a 'civilisational-state', its societal characteristics, complex political structure, success as a state-led economy, and its economic relations with developed and developing regions including Africa.

*The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy* covers the following topics:

- The 'Civilisational Project' of China - **Hester du Plessis and Gauhar Raza**
- Values in China as Compared to Africa - **Thaddeus Metz**
- Science and Society in China - **Hester du Plessis and Gauhar Raza**

- The Politics of China - **Garth le Pere**
- China's Economic Transformation – What Lessons Can Africa Learn? - **Daouda Cissé**
- Chinese Society in Flux – A Study of Ethnicity, Guanxi, and Urbanisation from the Late Imperial China Until Today - **Maxime Lauzon-Lacroix and Ross Anthony**
- China's Involvement with Africa - **Kevin Bloom and Richard Poplak**
- The role of Land in China's Economic Development - **Yongjun Zhao**
- China's Special Economic Zone Model – The Fire-starter of Industrialisation in Africa - **Martyn Davies**

[Click here for an Executive Summary of \*The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy\* and for details on ordering the book.](#)

[Click here to watch \*\*Dr Paul Tembe\*\* and \*\*Kevin Bloom\*\* discussing \*The Rise and Decline and Rise of China: Searching for an Organising Philosophy\* on CNBC Africa.](#)

## Sixth European Conference on African Studies (ECAS6), Paris

From the 8th to 10th July 2015, **Barry Gilder**, MISTRA's Publications Manager attended the **Sixth European Conference on African Studies (ECAS6)** in Paris.

The theme of the **ECAS6** this year was *Collective Mobilisations in Africa: Contestation, Resistance, Revolt*. Barry Gilder presented a paper titled *From the Outside Looking In: Building an Underground from Exile*.



### From the Outside Looking In: Building an Underground from Exile. by Barry Gilder

Sometimes, 30 years later, I still dream of Gaborone post office boxes. Serried rows of them. Military green, or a deep blue, or blood red. Spread out before me with beckoning keyholes. Or sometimes, in my dreams, just a few of them, rusted and scratched, built low down into rough rocks that I have to kneel on the hard ground to get to. And, in my hand, a huge bunch of keys, like a jailor's. And in my dream, moving from box to box, desperate and anxious, I just cannot get any of the keys dangling from the huge chain to fit any of the boxes. I can't remember the box numbers I'm supposed to service. And panic rises.

[To read more click here.](#)

## Roundtable on Energy Choice and the Evolution of Systems of Innovations in South Africa

MISTRA, in partnership with the **National Advisory Council on Innovations (NACI)**, hosted a roundtable on Energy Choice on 17 July 2015. With the advent of frequent power outages in the country which is leading to the prioritization of several interventions that are expected to reinforce electricity supply and lower energy demand. The Roundtable aimed to examine the availability of energy options and institutional capacity to bolster electricity supply and lower energy demand. In a parallel session, it also dealt with draft chapters for the MISTRA research project on South Africa's innovation system.

Speakers included:

- [Words of welcome and Introduction](#): **Mr Joel Netshitenzhe** (Executive Director, MISTRA)
- Keynote Speaker: **Sir Mark Walport** (Chief Scientific Adviser, United Kingdom Government)
- [Energy Technologies](#): **Mr Kevin Nassiep** (NACI Council Member)
- [Opening Remarks](#): **Ms Tshilidzi Ramuedzisi** (Chief Director: Planning, Department of Energy)

**PANEL DISCUSSION:** *The nuclear and shale gas policy orientation and implications (including relevance to the IRP and NDP).*

- Legal, environmental and social ramifications of fracking and nuclear: **Dr David Fig** (Biowatch SA)
- [Economics of Nuclear Energy and Technologies](#): **Mr Tom Harris**.
- Development of the gas market in South Africa: **Ms Wrenelle Stander** (Sasol)
- Questionable nuclear build commitment, not aligned with the IRP and NDP: **Ms Ellen Davies** (WWF)
- [Environmental effects of shale gas fracking in the USA, Botswana and South Africa](#): **Mr Jeffrey Barbee** (Alliance Earth)
- [Economics of Renewable Energy \(solar and wind\)](#): **Dr (Professor) Tobias Bischof-Niemz**

[Click on the link for more on the Energy Roundtable.](#)

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## Science&You Conference, Nancy



From the 1st - 6th June, **Hester du Plessis**, Faculty Head: Humanity attended the *Science&You* (science communication) conference in Nancy, France

Hester du Plessis is a member of the Steering Committee of the Journées Hubert Curien International Conference on Science&You. The Conference was hosted by the University of Lorraine at the Centre Prouvé in Nancy and was attended by 50 countries with some 700 presenters. The Science&You Conference Centre recorded 10,000 visitors during the week of this event.

Hester du Plessis hosted and presented a paper for one of the sessions based on the topic: Political challenges for science communication: perspectives from Africa, India, Canada, France and Europe. She was joined in the session with presentations by Prof Joelle Le Marec, Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the Centre de Recherche Lettres Arts Cinéma (CERILAC) at the University of Paris, Diderot; Professor Bernard Schiele, Science communication specialist, University of Quebec in Montreal and Professor Gauhar Raza, Science Communication through Multi-media. NISCAIR, CSIR, India.

[For more info click here.](#)

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## 7th South African AIDS Conference



From the 9th – 12th June, **Yacoob Abba Omar**, MISTRA's Director Operations, attended the **7th South African AIDS Conference**.

Yacoob Abba Omar's paper is titled *No easy path for HIV/AIDS*.

As the Deputy DG of Government Communications I served on the Inter-Ministerial Committee on HIV/AIDS, chaired by then Deputy President Mbeki. When the first South African National AIDS Council was appointed I served on that august body more or less until my diplomatic posting in 2003.

When I was asked by my boss, Joel Netshitenzhe, Executive Director of the Mapungubwe Institute, if I would stand in for him at this conference, I did so with some trepidation. On one hand, I was looking forward to becoming once again part of a community, part of a cause which I had worked with during the period I was in GCIS. But I also had my own demons to deal with.

It is fifteen years since the Durban International AIDS Conference but I still relive the intensity of that conference. No one can forget the words of Nkosi Johnson at that conference: "Care for us and accept us - we are all human beings. We are normal. We have hands. We have feet. We can walk, we can talk, we have needs just like everyone else - don't be afraid of us - we are all the same!"

[To read paper click here.](#)

## MISTRA IN THE NEWS

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### **Western language helps cultures meet halfway** by Thad Metz

IT IS in many ways unfortunate that English dominates academic discourse across the globe. On the other hand, there is some use in having a lingua franca. One clear advantage is that people from different cultures can easily exchange ideas.

Over the past three years, I have been part of two projects based in South Africa that have sought to relate sub-Saharan African values and interests to those in China. Although English has been our medium of communication, we have avoided mediating comparison of these two societies with the West.

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[To read full article click here.](#)

**Originally published in The Sunday Tribune on 2 August 2015**

**\* Thad Metz contributed to MISTRA's research project on China**

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### **Survival of the unfittest** by Velaphi Msimang

The debates around shale gas and nuclear power are generating more heat than light, and stifle the creativity necessary to advance more sustainable approaches, writes Velaphi Msimang

When questioned about his reason for visiting South Africa, Jeff Immelt, the Chief Executive of General Electric, answered that he was here because of the country's plans to build nuclear power. Immelt added that South Africa seems focused on complicated solutions to our urgent energy constraints, instead of being more practical and prioritising the implementation of easier options.

Listening to Immelt - the head of one of the oldest corporations in the world,



and a pioneer with the most extensive experience in designing nuclear power plants – you know you're not hearing from an anti-nuclear zealot, and that there's a need for a rational discourse about the feasibility of this technology in the energy mix. In highlighting the difficulty of building nuclear power plants along a relative scale of complexity ranging from 0 to 10, Mr Immelt put it at 12. Nuclear power plants are clearly no equivalents of World Cup stadiums.

[Read full article here.](#)

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## Warning on nuclear energy deal.

Experts warn government not to take economic risk, writes **Rapula Moatshe**

Experts in the energy industry have cautioned the government about the economic risk of forging ahead with the nuclear energy deal. They said the country could incur huge debts should it go ahead with the deal, which South Africa hopes to conclude by next March. At a roundtable discussion in Arcadia yesterday, the energy sector experts warned about the huge costs of securing the nuclear power. The event was organised by the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection and the National Advisory Council on Innovation and attended by environmentalists, academics, policy makers and government officials.



[Read full article here.](#)

\* Originally published in The Pretoria News on 18 July 2015

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## No easy answers

Different experiences of citizenship cannot be explained away or solved by nationalism, writes **Danielle Bowler**



I never thought I would find myself standing in an aisle at a grocery store, poised between various household items, pondering my identity. And yet there I was, 21 and frozen to the spot, thinking about what it meant to be coloured, and wrestling with why this seemed to matter in a post-apartheid and personal context.

The luxury of having time and the means to think about this, and the hilarity of the setting did not escape me then, and still does not.

Around the same time, I came across a quote by Dabydeen in Pumla Gqola's book *What is slavery to me* that reads: "I have a multiple identity. There is no crisis. There is a kind of delight in jumping from one identity to the next." Back then, it astounded and confused me, and now makes much more sense. Yet, a few years later, I am still turning on similar questions of coloured identity. The only difference now is that I self-identify as both coloured and black, a personal rebellion and definition that I have explained before.

[To read article, click here.](#)

\* **Danielle Bowler is a part-time researcher at MISTRA**

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## The rise and decline and rise of China: searching for an organising philosophy By Hester du Plessis

The impact of the current turbulence in the Chinese stock market may well have a lasting impact on China's politics, economy and social order, writes Hester du Plessis. But to understand any society beyond transient events, it is the long view that is required.

Within an ever changing geopolitical landscape where we see inter alia the rise of religious intolerance and sharp adjustments in economic eminence, the rise of China as a global force needs to be appreciated.

It is with this in mind that the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (Mistra) undertook a study on the 'Rise, decline and rise of China: searching for an organising philosophy'. Preceded by a study on the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe society, this is part of Mistra's focus on the evolution of civilisations.

The main objective was to understand the complexities of the Chinese past in order to contextualise the economic and socio-political aspects of Africa and China in their interaction with each other.

[To read full article click here.](#)

\*Published in Daily Maverick on 21 July 2015.



## State must risk investment to keep new technology in SA

By Radhika Perrot

The government has, for the past few years, failed to play the leading role it should have in creating technological and knowledge opportunities, and building industries and skilled jobs.

Although there is still much to be understood about the role governments can play in economic and industrial policy, evidence from other countries shows that it is governments, rather than the private sector, that have always made the necessary risky investments in research, and dared to think about the challenges of creating new industries and jobs. Without governments investing in very risky ventures, such as steel, railways, air travel, silicon-chip technology, biotechnology and nanotechnology, there would have been none of these industries.

One example of the many missed industrial opportunities for SA is a low-cost solar photovoltaic technology developed by the University of Johannesburg and that the City of Johannesburg could have embraced and offered support to industrialise. Instead, Johanna Solar Technology was sold to a German company, with manufacturing rights given to a Chinese company.

[To read the full article click here.](#)

\*Published in Business Day on 16 July 2015.



## MISTRA PEOPLE

### Khangwelo Tshivhase joins the MISTRA as the Intern in Knowledge Economy and Scientific Advancement (KESA)

**Khangwelo Tshivhase** is an Environmental Management graduate from University of South Africa and joined the MISTRA team in June. He is also a postgraduate (Honours) student in Environmental Management at the same University. In 2014 Khangwelo was awarded an Honours Scholarship from National Research Foundation through the University due to his hard work. His career objectives are to identify and assess different implications of the various underlying issues that affect our environment, while implementing new approaches on how the environment should be protected in mining, engineering and construction. He is very happy to be a part of this research Institute as he will be able to pursue his career.



## Solomon Thoka joins MISTRA as the Intern in Consultancy Services



Solomon Thoka holds a BA in Social Science & Health Science from the University of South Africa (UNISA). He is currently doing his Honours in Psychology at the same university. He has a strong passion for human behaviour and human transformation and intends to further his studies and wishes to complete his Masters in Clinical Psychology.

One of his outstanding works was his research proposal on studying the relationship between mental health and child development conducted for assignment purposes.

Before joining MISTRA as an Intern, he worked as a Library Assistant at UNISA and also worked as a Peer Helper at the University Student Support from the same university.

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