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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#15** we have great pleasure in announcing the completion of two research reports. The report, "**Mapungubwe Reconsidered: Exploring beyond the Rise and Decline of the Mapungubwe State**" was released on 25 May 2013 at a conference of experts and policy-makers, including **Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Joe Phaahla** who delivered the Closing Remarks. MISTRA also released the research report on "**The Concept and Application of Transdisciplinarity in Intellectual Discourse and Research**" on the 25 June 2013.

We highlight the roundtable held by MISTRA in collaboration with the Wits School of Public and Development Management, on the crisis within the South African NGO sector.

In this issue, we also report on a skafin session presented by the **Director of Publications at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Mr Solani Ngobeni**. He offered insights into the publishing industry and how researchers and scholars can get their work published.

Included in this issue is a range of media articles produced by MISTRA staff on topical issues. **Mr Joel Netshitenzhe** contributes to the debate on the National Development Plan. **Mr Yacoob Abba Omar** comments on the relationship between the United States and South Africa following President Obama's visit to SA. **Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana** reflects on the black middle class' duty to the poor, **Mr Jeffrey Sehume** writes on the transformation of discourses beyond the Cartesian revolution, and **Mr David Maimela** analyses the recent spate of attacks against foreigners in Diepsloot and the Vaal.

We also share the podcast of a discussion on Jenny Chrys-Williams show on 702, with Maanda Malaudzi and Alex Schoeman about the findings of the research project on the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe civilization.

And we're happy to announce that the full transcript of Dr Francis Fukuyama's lecture on "The Origins of Political Order" is now available on our website.

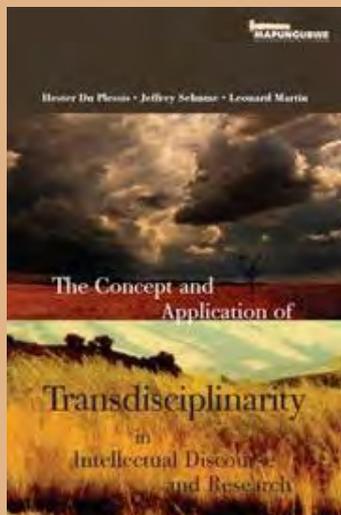
In this issue we introduce **Ms Thabiso Chiloane**, who has joined MISTRA as an intern in the Humanity Faculty and we also welcome **Ms Alexandra Davis**, a visiting scholar from the University of Delaware, USA, who will be conducting some of her research on South African small and medium enterprise development while at MISTRA.

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 an [Expression of Interest Form](#) if you are interested in participating in any of the Institute's research projects.

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MISTRA STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

Conference and Book Launch: on "The Concept and Application of Transdisciplinarity in Intellectual Discourse and Research"



On Wednesday 26 June 2013 the Mapungubwe Institute launched the final research report on its research project on the concept and application of transdisciplinarity in intellectual discourse and research. Held at the National Research Foundation (NRF) in Pretoria the book launch and conference also marked the completion of the two-year research project on transdisciplinarity.

The aim of the transdisciplinarity project was to initiate discourse on a functional framework for knowledge understanding and application within a complex and ever-changing global context. The longer-term ambition is to inform collective intellectual ideas and action-based research inputs towards practical outcomes – thereby bridging the gap between knowledge production, policy and implementation.

The conference also provided a platform to engage on the case studies examined during the course of the research project, namely: transdisciplinarity and post-colonial transformation of African universities (Fort Hare University's Transdisciplinarity Centre), applied transdisciplinarity and sustainable energy – bridging divides (University of Johannesburg's SeTAR Centre), and transdisciplinarity and the need for social justice (University of Pretoria's Centre for Human Rights).

Bottom: Left to Right: Jeffrey Sehume, Dr Hester du Plessis and Dr Leonard Martin

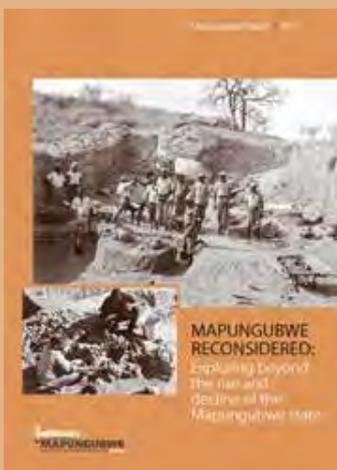


Speakers included **Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo**, (Chair of the MISTRA Board), **Dr Hester du Plessis** (Human Sciences Research Council and Transdisciplinarity project leader), **Mr Jeffrey Sehume** (MISTRA Researcher and Transdisciplinarity project co-ordinator), **Dr Otsile Ntsoane** (Indigenous Knowledge Specialist) who spoke on Knowledge Ordering & Transdisciplinarity, **Dr Mbiji Mahlangu** (University of Fort Hare), who spoke on Transdisciplinarity Curriculum at UFH, **Dr Leonard Martin** (MISTRA Humanity Faculty Head), **Dr Andrew Kaniki** and **Dr Kaluke Mawila** (both of NRF Knowledge Fields Development).

MISTRA will be interacting with the Department of Higher Education on the policy implications arising from the report.

The book on ***The Concept and Application of Transdisciplinarity in Intellectual Discourse and Research*** is now available for purchase from MISTRA.

Conference on – and completion of – project on the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe Civilisation



On Saturday 25 May 2013 the Mapungubwe Institute convened a conference to release the integrated Mapungubwe Research Report, entitled: ***"Mapungubwe Reconsidered: Exploring beyond the Rise and Decline of the Mapungubwe State"***. The conference also marked the completion of the two-year research project on the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe state.

The conference provided an opportunity for the MISTRA research team to discuss the findings with archaeologists and historians from South Africa's leading universities.

The significance of holding the conference on Africa Day, which has been marked since the formation of the Organisation of African Union, the forerunner of the African Union, was not lost on the participants.

Themes covered in the Report include trade and state-formation, the metalworking industry of Mapungubwe, heritage and environmental protection, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), gender issues and contemporary resonances.



MISTRA has started discussions with the Departments of Arts and Culture and Basic Education to examine the possibility of translating the findings into text-book material for appropriate senior Grades.

Below: MISTRA Board of Governors and members of the research team on the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe Civilisation.

[Click here to read the Executive Summary of "Mapungubwe Reconsidered: Exploring beyond the Rise and Decline of the Mapungubwe State" or to purchase a copy of the full report.](#)



Closing Remarks by Deputy Arts and Culture Minister Joe Phaahla



I am humbled and privileged to be given the opportunity to provide the closing remarks.

I want to thank the Mapungubwe Institute for focusing on our heritage of Mapungubwe in this Conference. Mapungubwe remains clothed in mystery and the unknown, but increasingly it is recognised as a heritage of outstanding universal value - and as such was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003.

It is fitting therefore that we have gathered here on this very auspicious day, Africa Day.

We have come here to discuss and debate the rich legacy that our continent's people have bequeathed us.

Today we have taken another look at the outstanding contribution of our great Iron Age communities who lived at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers, who built towns, who tilled the land, who herded cattle over huge expanses, who adorned themselves with jewellery made of their own hands in gold, who made pottery and wove fibres and fabrics and who had a philosophical understanding of the world that safeguarded their way of life over centuries.

[To read more click here](#)

Roundtable: The crisis in the NGO sector: critical reflections on civil society

In June this year, MISTRA and the Wits Graduate School of Public & Development Management (P&DM) jointly hosted a roundtable on the crisis in the NGO sector.

The roundtable brought together activists to reflect on the crisis, and speakers included **Piroshaw Camay**, (Director, Cooperative for Research & Education - CORE), **Zanele Twala** (Executive Director, Bridge Linking innovators in Education), **Reverend Mautji Pataki** (Secretary General, SA Council of Churches) and **Paul Graham** (former Executive Director, Idasa).

Deliberations centred on the crisis in the sector both in terms of substantive focus and

resourcing. Starting with a general consensus that the roots of the crisis are to be found in the period after the demise of apartheid and the consolidation of the new South African democracy various causes were highlighted: an exit or relocation of leadership, the crisis of the economy, and an inconsistent approach on the part of the state to funding NGOs. Related to all this is wide-scale funding fatigue.

Fearing total collapse, organisations have developed a variety of strategies to survive.

To read more on the "[Round Table on the Crisis in the NGO Sector](#)" by **Rachel Browne**, of MISTRA, [click here](#)

Transcript of Dr Francis Fukuyama's Johannesburg lecture is now available on MISTRA's website

On Friday 10th May 2013 MISTRA in partnership with UCT's Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice (GSDPP) hosted a lecture by Prof Francis Fukuyama, the Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI), resident in FSI's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University.



I am going to talk about where political institutions come from. I believe that this is the central issue in development, because if you don't get the politics right – and by politics I don't mean just the short term political decisions, but the actual institutions around which societies are organised – then you're not going to have economic growth, you are not going to have the right kind of social development and you're not going to have a just society.

Recent history clearly reveals this as truth. What was the problem in Russia after the breakdown of the former Soviet Union? It was the fact that the Soviet State collapsed. The new Russian state could not even do something like privatisation, moving towards a market economy fairly and cleanly, because it did not have a state with capacity.

If you think about the difference between Norway and Nigeria, both oil rich countries, one of which is building a very sustainable trust fund for the future, the other which has actually seen increasing levels of poverty over the same period that oil revenues have flowed in: the entire difference is really in the quality of the governance there.

And then if you think about East Asia, the miracles that have been beginning in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and now in China, it is my view, and I will talk about this at greater length in a moment, that a lot of this has to be located in the quality of the state institutions. That is one of the historical legacies of Chinese history. So politics matters. It matters to my country, the United States, because in the course of these two invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, all of a sudden the United States found itself needing to build state institutions in areas of a collapsed state, and it turned out we had no idea how to do it.

And I think many of the policy failures in American foreign policy over the past decade stem from this lack of awareness of the importance of institutions, the fact that we take them for granted so there is really a kind of gap in our knowledge of where they come from. This thus is going to be the subject of my talk tonight.

[To read more click here](#)

MISTRA Skaftin on Publishing

Director of publications from AISA (African Institute of Africa), Mr Solani Ngobeni, presented to the MISTRA team on scholarly publication in South Africa. This skafitin was for the benefit of MISTRA researchers, to assist them with guidelines and tips on how to successfully publish their work. Besides giving technical advice on the rules for submitting manuscripts and draft papers, Mr Ngobeni offered insight into the nuts and bolts of the publishing industry in South Africa.

Mr Ngobeni's presentation provided a context to the publishing industry in Africa and the challenges faced by publishers and authors who would like their work published. South Africa has, arguably, the biggest publishing industry in Africa. University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), University of Witwatersrand and the University of Stellenbosch are just some of the university presses that operate in SA.



Despite this advantage, there are several factors that hinder the growth of the African publishing industry and the number of titles produced in Africa. Often, African authors tend to publish their work in Northern hemisphere countries. Their work then belongs to the country of publication. These books are then imported to Africa and in turn become too expensive for most people living on the continent.

Other encumbering factors on the continent include: limited numbers of publishing houses, a general lack of reading culture, low budgets allocated to university presses, advancement of the internet and a shift into electronic publishing, and obstacles in distribution of books. And the fact that some publishing houses continue to chase the bottom line over quality.

Mr Ngobeni urged writers and researchers to challenge the obstacles and to reclaim the process of knowledge production on the continent.

MISTRA IN THE NEWS

Obama – a strategic partner for South Africa?

By Yacoob Abba Omar

Obama – a strategic partner for South Africa?

Special to The BRICS Post

June 28, 2013, 6:10 pm

Of all the differences between US President Barack Obama and former President Nelson Mandela, there are many things they have in common: both are tall, slim, former lawyers, and both were the first black president in their countries.

So it is a real pity that Mandela will not be in the room when the South African and US heads of state meet. We have no doubt he would have a lot to instruct and scold the young leader of the 'free world' who lands in Johannesburg as part of a three-nation African tour.

Y Abba Omar

Y Abba Omar is a former South African ambassador. He is currently the Director Operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.



Top News & Views

Indian president clears world's largest food subsidy plan

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Perhaps because of Madiba's current state of health, there hasn't been quite the same frisson of excitement, which accompanied former US President Bill Clinton's official visit of in 1998. Or, perhaps, the South African layperson has learned to temper down expectations of a president that most of this continent adopted as its own.

But neither has the critique of US policies during Obama's presidency reached the level of decibels recorded when former US President George W Bush visited in 2008.

**Published on the BricsPost on 5 July 2013*

[To reach more click here](#)

Moving beyond the Cartesian revolution

By Jeffrey Sehume

NEARLY 400 years have passed since René Descartes revolutionized the understanding of human thinking and action. The effects of his statement, "I think, therefore I am", transformed discourse on human consciousness and our interactions with science, technology, nature, innovation and identity.

Before the Cartesian revolution, humanity was arguably content to live within a narrow religious authority. Descartes contemplated the power of the human mind to rule over its destiny. It can be argued that he helped inform impressive developments in the evolution of human society: 19th-century industrialization, locomotive transport, longer life expectancy, medicines to curb epidemics, and the worldwide web.

** Published in Business Day on 18 June 2013.*

[To Read full article, please click here](#)



Black middle class' duty to the poor

By Mcebisi Ndletyana

Black middle class' duty to the poor

'BLACK Americans have become more monolingual and fewer of them have any kind of mastery of Standard English," notes Henry Louis Gates Jr, a Harvard based literary scholar in an option piece for the New York Times of September 30, 2004.

Gates didn't deem monolingualism a problem in itself, especially in a predominantly English-speaking America. Rather, it is the one language, ebonics, that most Afro-Americans speak that Gates considered problematic.

Ebonics is an informal language, a derivative of English invented by slaves as a common language with which to communicate among themselves and with their slave masters. The language has since been passed in various forms from generation to generation, including the present generation. Because it's informal, inherited by its immediate environment, ebonics is spoken by individuals who inhabit the same residential space.

Individuals that speak ebonics and with "outsiders", ebonics is hard to learn in a residence of ebonics. First, it is hard to learn in a residence of ebonics. To illustrate the point, Gates makes an example of one famous actor, Tim Mathis, who, in his own defence, said "My homies and my crew I respect the language, but I respect the language."

Without the mastery of standard language, Gates shows the difficulty faced by a monolingual Afro-American outside the context of a

The end of apartheid saw an accelerated residential and class segregation among blacks, with the rich not identifying with the plight of the less fortunate, writes Mcebisi Ndletyana



abandonment of standard English within the American ghetto, which Gates explains as "the result of residential segregation... that poor blacks tend to live with poor blacks."

"But, it's also compounded by demographic, which ended up separating the black poor from the middle class."

Poor black people, Gates explains, tend to "live in the same areas, often adjacent to each other, with people like themselves."

In other words, within a certain class black neighbourhood, the black middle class represents an alternative identity. This alternative identity is spreading the world, the middle class and those monolingual world, on the one hand, and the broader, middle class world, on the other.

To their poor brethren, the middle class Afro-American has what it takes to make it outside the ghetto. University graduates in the workplace, for instance, especially those that tend to be in managerial employment, elsewhere, tend to be "middle class."



LIVING IT UP: Johannesburg businessman Kerevo Kerevo celebrates his 40th birthday in

the converted services would then seek to, ensuring the alternative that the white man was not so bad after all.

And, they did. Through the gospel, but the stories did not last. Before they faded to become the promise of equality, a betrayal that turned many converts against their former benefactors. They turned their own churches and organisations, and would settle for nothing less than total liberation from white rule.

For the church, a crisis did not arise, and the church was not to be troubled by the quality of slaves in the houses of turned rebels. Some joined the social liberation movements which often questioned the fight itself. There was a class conflict again, an underclass initiative.

But, the subsequent end to this system has seen black residential segregation accelerating, coupled with lack of identification with the plight of the black poor. And,...

any regarding their kids' identity. And, because we don't get an education only to train them, the educated but class divide which becomes of an unequal society that offers no hope to its disenfranchised. Believing that poverty are longer careers for them, they turn against it. Any complaint, however marginal, begins their to resist other, and world's masters, learning and developing their property and staying those who dare question their methods.

For this reason, to know that their social consciousness is not defined who they are. They are impoverished, not ungrateful. They have transcended their social circumstances, just as the educated blacks have done. Interacting with the world, black folks strengthen their resolve. So it is to be known of what is possible. This enables them to believe.

For their part, classes of Part II, Gates's Edward Lumsden Combs, however, are confused with their...

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* Originally published in *The Sunday Independent* on 16 June 2013

[To read full article, please click here](#)

Reject Afro-Phobia By David Maimela

THE recent events in Diepsloot and the Vaal where foreign nationals were violently attacked and their property vandalized or looted has generated much interest across South African society. Understandably, the country's leadership and political parties responded with disapproval and condemnation, and the public responded in various ways depending on their sense of reality or perception. The media and some quarters of society were quick to label these incidents of violence as yet another spate of xenophobic violence and a rekindling of similar sad incidents the whole world witnessed in 2008.

One is, however, skeptical to reduce every form of violence between different national groups to xenophobic violence, tempting as it may be.

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One is, however, sceptical to reduce every form of violence between different national groups to xenophobic violence, tempting as it may be.

For instance, the violence in Diepsloot allegedly came in the aftermath of a shooting of two Zimbabweans by a Somali



Recent violence in Diepsloot and the Vaal should not merely be labelled xenophobia, writes **DAVID MAIMELA**

society in relation to co-habiting the national space (boundary) with foreign nationals.

Let me start with the latter and return to the former.

Although historically South Africa has its own indigenous population, over time the space we have come to know as South Africa has become a home to various non-aboriginal peoples, even if this may have happened through colonialism, conquest, wars, domination and various forms of migration – all of them processes of nation formation.

This is not unique to South

the same space and were exploited more or less equally.

More recently, migration patterns in Africa have been largely influenced by political instability that makes human security impossible to attain within some national borders.

Although the trend of violent conflict is declining and more peaceful means of resolving political conflict is becoming the norm, most African foreign nationals exhibit a single or double immigration status, that is as political and economic refugees.

so that we build an inclusive society on the basis of an inclusive economy.

Secondly, we need to intensify our pan-African efforts to help Africa resolve her own problems of political instability so that Africa's potential for economic growth and prosperity may be realised.

At a governance level, it is important that we move faster from immigration control to immigration management.

In other words, modernise immigration policy and management. Immigration control has the negative connotation of preventing, blocking and discouraging human movement across borders.

Free human movement was

'I do not accept there are illegal human beings on earth'

** Originally published in The Sowetan on 2nd June 2013*

[To read full article, please click here](#)

NDP: DEBATE WHILE IMPLEMENTING

by Joel Netshitenzhe

With increasingly strident pronouncements from within the ANC's tripartite alliance about the National Development Plan (NDP), it is difficult to avoid a sense of exasperation. Will South Africa ever embrace a long-term vision and doggedly pursue it?

In the mid-2000's, when the government's discussion on long-term planning and social compacting started in earnest, some argued that this was not attainable in our conditions. It would be like trying to herd a clowder of cats.

NDP an attainable vision

May 31 2013 at 01:58pm
By Joel Netshitenzhe

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In the mid-2000s, when the government's discussion on long-term planning and social compacting started in earnest, some argued that this was not attainable in our conditions. It would be like trying to herd a clowder of cats.

The inherited state, they argued, was not only in a shambles, but it was configured along British colonial lines. As in India, it would be well-nigh impossible to marshal it along the East Asian model of developmental states.

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A protester with a placard expressing his dissatisfaction with the governments National Development Plan at a May Day rally in Durban. Picture: Patrick Mtolo



The inherited state, they argued, was not only in a shambles; but it was configured along British colonial lines. As in India, it would be well nigh impossible to marshal it along the East Asian model of developmental states. The country's economy reflected a middle-income trap at which even some of the successful East Asian countries had stalled; and, at the same time, massive poverty similar to the least developed countries. Add to this the level of development of the private sector and the intense manifestations of class warfare – and the circle of the impossible would be complete.

Legend has it that, to ensure the compliance of the Korean business sector with his long-term vision some four decades ago, General Pak Chong Hui locked some of them up over a weekend. When he released them on a Monday, he outlined what was expected of them. So were born the chaebols such as Hyundai, Samsung and LG. And the rise of a nation, which has reached the advanced Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) levels of development, when in the late 1950s it was at Ghana's level, was assured. The other social sectors also cowered, inspired in part by the benevolence of the dictatorship.

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

[* A version of this paper was published in The Star on 31st May 2013 entitled: "NDP is an attainable long-term vision"](#)

Jenny Chrys-Williams interviews the Mapungubwe Reconsidered research project team

Following the launch of the Mapungubwe Conference in on the 25th May, there was much interest generated on the subject of the rise and decline of the Mapungubwe civilisation. Project team members, Maanda Malaudzi and Alex Schoeman were invited on Jenny Chrys-William's show (Talk Radio 702), to talk more closely about the findings of the Mapungubwe Reconsidered research report.

[To listen to the podcast of the interview, please click here.](#)

Thabiso Chiloane – Intern in the Faculty of Humanity

Thabiso Chiloane holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University Of Venda. Her interests lie in African history and she's passionate about understanding the history of global societies, cultures, languages, systems of government, and the dynamics that shape the world we live in.

She joined MISTRA in June 2013 as an intern in the Faculty of Humanity.



Alexandra Davis – visiting scholar from the University of Delaware

Alexandra Davis is a visiting scholar from the University of Delaware in the U.S. She is an undergraduate student studying International Relations and Public Policy and has a minor in Economics. Funded by the Plastino Scholarship from her university, Alexandra is spending eight weeks in South Africa conducting research on small enterprise development in South Africa and its connection to economic growth.



During her time in Cape Town, Pretoria, and Johannesburg, she will attempt to identify successful strategies for fuelling entrepreneurial activity across the nation and

effective support for the growth of small businesses in South Africa, as increasingly, small businesses today are being viewed as a vehicle for entrepreneurship, increased employment rates, social and political stability, and economic growth.

Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection
Tel: 27 - 11 518 0260
1st Floor, Cypress Place North
Woodmead Business Park
Email: info@mistra.org.za
www.mistra.org.za