

HOW CAN THINGS BE DIFFERENT IN SOUTH AFRICA'S MINING INDUSTRY?

**IF WELLBEING IS THE MAIN GOAL OF THE ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE,
HOW DOES MINING FIT IN?**

**HOW CAN WE SHIFT AWAY FROM THE LOW-SKILLED,
LABOUR-INTENSIVE MODEL?**

**HOW CAN MINING-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES, AND THE NATION,
BENEFIT EQUITABLY FROM THE COUNTRY'S MINERAL ENDOWMENTS?**

**WHAT ARE THE LINKS BETWEEN MINERAL EXTRACTION
AND INDUSTRIALISATION?**

HOW CAN WE USE TECHNOLOGY TO DIG DEEPER AND LESS DANGEROUSLY?

**WHAT ARE THE IDEAL ROLES OF THE STATE, PRIVATE CORPORATIONS
AND UNIONS IN A 21ST-CENTURY MINING INDUSTRY?**

**HOW DO STRUCTURES OF MINING IN THE PAST TAINT THE POSSIBILITIES
OF MINING IN THE FUTURE? IS THERE A FUTURE IN MINING?**

The future of mining in South Africa is hotly contested. Wide-ranging views from multiple quarters rarely seem to intersect, placing emphasis on different questions like these, without engaging in holistic debate.

The first of its kind in South Africa, this book aims to catalyse change by gathering together fragmented views into unifying conversations. It highlights the importance of debating the future of mining in South Africa and for reaching consensus in other countries across the mineral-dependent globe.

It covers issues like the potential of platinum to spur industrialisation, land and dispossession in the platinum belt, the roles of the state and capital in mineral development, mining in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the experiences of women in and affected by mining since the late 19th century, and mineworker organising: history and lessons and how post-mine rehabilitation can be tackled.

It was inspired not only by an appreciation of our country's extensive mineral endowments, but also by a realisation that, while the South African mining industry performs relatively well on many technical indicators, its management of broader social issues leaves much to be desired. It needs to be deliberated whether the mining industry can play as critical a role going forward as it did in the evolution of our economy.

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THE FUTURE OF MINING IN SOUTH AFRICA **SUNSET OR SUNRISE?**



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THE FUTURE OF MINING IN SOUTH AFRICA **SUNSET OR SUNRISE?**



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Preface

HOW CAN THINGS BE DIFFERENT in South Africa's mining industry? How can a shift away from the low-skilled, labour-intensive model change the work and workings of the industry? How can mining-affected communities, and the nation more broadly, benefit equitably from the country's mineral endowments? What are the links between mineral extraction and industrialisation? What are the ideal roles of the state, private corporations and unions in a 21st century mining industry?

This research project was born of these big questions. It was inspired not only by an appreciation of South Africa's extensive mineral endowments; but also by a realisation that, while the South African mining industry performs relatively well on many technical indicators, its management of the broader social issues leaves much to be desired. Critically, the principle needs to be debated whether, going forward, the mining industry can play as critical a role as it did in the evolution of the South African economy.

Collectively, the authors pursue these questions with a transdisciplinary lens, in line with the defining principles of the

research endeavours of the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA). Questions about the interplay of mining with the environment and climate change come into the mix. So do issues around the experiences of women – arguably the ‘lesser gender’ in the mining industry more than in any other major industry.

At the same time, the way in which the historical roots of dispossession take shape in mining industry dynamics today are examined, whether in the desperation and ‘illegality’ of informal mining or the trials and tribulations of mining-affected communities. Beyond this is the critical challenge brought out sharply in the sprawling mining dumps across the face of South Africa: what happens after mines are long gone?

This volume brings together political economists, sociologists, policy experts, environmental experts, community activists, historians and labour activists. The process of producing the volume was highly collaborative. The authors first gathered to conceptualise the chapters collectively and then assembled to hear one another’s findings and to refine these, both collectively and individually. The editor played the role of interlocuter, prodding the contributors to consider relevant insights from other contributors in the multiple rounds of chapter drafting.

In the course of these interactions, new issues came to the fore. For instance, while the history of South African mining is treated against the backdrop of gold mining, the decline of the latter has coincided with the emergence of platinum group metals (PGMs), of which South Africa is estimated to have some three-quarters of world reserves. Currently, though, this sub-sector is facing serious headwinds of low prices, high costs, community unrest and uncertain trajectories of global demand. However, viewed against the emergent hydrogen economy and growing demand for jewellery, PGM mining does seem to have a long-term future barely appreciated.

More often than not, workers in the mining industry, as in most other economic sectors, are treated as an appendage, a cost to be managed down. In appreciation of their central role, the issue of their involvement at all levels of the industry – from the bowels of the earth to the skyscrapers where the product of their labour is apportioned –

has to form a critical part of the examination of the political economy of South African mining. All matters to do with raising the mining sector onto a higher trajectory have to place workers at the centre, including skills development, the opportunities that should come with the development of a mature mining cluster and the organisational adaptations required of a labour union of the 21st century.

As this book goes to press, the debate on the Mining Charter, meant to improve the sector’s inclusivity, has reached a crescendo. This is understandable, given the weaknesses identified in several chapters in this volume. At the same time, the spate of accidents in South African mines has intensified; there is concern that, after a steady decline in the past 10 years, worker fatalities may be trending upwards.

It is the hope of the authors that the issues raised in this volume will encourage broader discussion on the role of mining in a South Africa that is striving to improve its growth and development. Nay more, if the ideas contained in this volume were to serve as catalyst for action, MISTRA would have more than achieved its ambition.

MISTRA wishes to express its profound appreciation to the team that put this volume together, from the authors to the peer reviewers, editors and project coordinators. Our gratitude is also extended to the Department of Science and Technology, Anglo American and AngloGold Ashanti who funded this project, as well as the many other contributors to MISTRA’s operations and sustainability.

– Professor Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo
Chairperson: MISTRA Board of Governors