

using its physical, politically and financial might not only to co-opt but also to punish perceived dissident social groups. According to Thebe, this unfortunate process alongside natural and economic events after 1990 left certain regions politically and economically disenfranchised and underdeveloped as development stalled.

Issues of development and identity remain sensitive in the former white settler states of Southern Africa. Chapter 8, 'The Politics of Land Ownership in South Africa', by Wendy Isaacs-Martin explores whether backyard dwellers perceive that racial identifiers are linked to spatial planning and (re)distribution, as issues of spatial (re)distribution are contentious and emotive in South Africa, particularly for backyard tenants. Backyard dwellers are individuals or families who rent and reside in the yard of main houses, usually council-owned properties, in temporary homes made of wood, plastic and corrugated iron. These are impoverished areas composed predominantly of a single ethnic racial group, the Coloured (people of mixed race). This chapter adopts a desktop research method, conducting structural content analysis of national newspapers following the democratic elections of 1994. Newspaper articles associated with the topic were retrieved from the NewsBank Access South Africa database using a stratified random sample and analysed. An electronic IOL database was used to supplement NewsBank. The period under consideration is from 1997 to 2014. According to Isaacs-Martin, perceptions of entitlement and relative privilege are linked to issues of identity in these impoverished areas. Coloured backyard dwellers perceive this as the reason why they do not have access to land and housing, and that this exclusion and marginalisation is responsible for their economically depressed predicament.

The last three chapters in this book deal specifically with challenges afflicting African families in relation to social policy issues, socioeconomic and cultural barriers to marital unions, threatening diseases and abuse of seniors receiving old-age pension grants. Chapter 9, 'Understanding the Conceptualisation African Families', by Busani Mpofu is an introduction to the ongoing study on the conceptualisation of a family policy in South Africa, focusing on the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo Provinces, which were identified as containing the majority of poor and more child-headed families. Mpofu argues that developing an African family policy from an African perspective is even more crucial now because black African families in South Africa are in a state of crisis, which manifests itself in the form of escalating family breakdowns and very negative effects on children and the youth (see Holborn and Eddy 2011). The major source of concern here is that while the *White Paper* acknowledged that various kinds of families exist in the

country, it concluded that the nuclear family is the most common type in South Africa (Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa 2012: 15). The problem with this assumption is that, at the end, the Western nuclear family, which is regarded as the norm due to the hegemony of Western imperialism, continues to be the basis of many social policies, despite the fact that this family form is not the most dominant among black African families (Sunde and Bozalek 1995: 65). This chapter argues that living in nuclear households in urban or semi-urban areas should not be conflated with having a nuclear family. A historical understanding of the conceptualisation of a black African family, which was incorrect at certain levels, is necessary before one can think of conceptualising about a family policy.

Can Africa's current problems be divorced from the limitations of its historical development (precolonial as much or more than colonial)? In order for real progress to occur, does social and cultural life in Africa have to change? This is Busani Ngcaweni's subject of discussion in Chapter 10, 'Socioeconomic and Cultural Barriers to Marital Unions and HIV Incidence Correlates'. Ngcaweni explores socioeconomic and cultural barriers to marital unions and HIV incidence correlates in South Africa. He argues that the cultural practice of *lobola* (payment of a dowry) forms part of the causes of low marriage rates among Africans because *lobola* is overpriced and out of reach of most unemployed and underemployed Africans. This leaves more black Africans unable to marry and more exposed to the risk of HIV, as recent studies have shown that single and cohabiting individuals tend to have higher exposure to HIV compared to married people. The chapter therefore asks whether or not, if marriage presents some 'form of protection' against HIV, the national government should actively promote marriage as a public policy response to the HIV pandemic. In addition, should government and other concerned stakeholders actively engage with traditional leaders and other role players to address concerns about the abuse of *lobola* and therefore depressing marriage rates among Africans who happen to be the most afflicted by the AIDS epidemic?

While Ferguson (2015) highlighted the increasing importance of cash pay-outs in the Southern African region, some intended beneficiaries may not benefit much from them. This is the subject of discussion in the last chapter of this book, 'Old-Age Cash Grant Pay-out Days', in which Gloria Sauti argues that seniors (the elderly) attract unprecedented attention just before or during the Old-Age Pension or the 'Old Age Grant' pay-out days in South Africa. Vendors, local stores and taxi drivers claim to significantly reduce prices in their stalls, shops and transport fares respectively around grant pay-out points in order to attract seniors. Some

seniors are forced to become 'money lenders' by family members who borrow from them. In order to survive for the whole month, seniors have to eventually borrow and thus fall victim to loan sharks or the so-called 'machonisas' who charge exorbitant interest rates. Seniors are abused in the process, a situation to which the government and other humanitarian actors seem oblivious. Sauti demonstrates how this abuse of the old-age grant jeopardises the government's goal to combat poverty and improve the wellbeing of seniors.

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Note

1. For more information on the main causes, responses and effects of the 2008 global financial crisis, see Robinson (2014).

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