

BOOK REVIEWS

African muckracking: 75 Years of investigative journalism in Africa

(Jacana Media, 2017, 347 pp. ISBN 978-1-4314-2586-0)

Anya Schiffrin & George Lugalambi

Thembani Hlatshwayo

University of KwaZulu-Natal

iteshlatshwayo@gmail.com

The relationship between journalism and history has always been acknowledged, although with reservations. Indeed, some have gone as far as labelling journalists “historians of the present”. While these two disciplines are obviously distinct, there is no reason to question the assertion by Yves Lavoine that “journalists and historians know that they have one point in common: they both play a part in defining how events are presented in society.” This is the thought that came to me as I read *African muckracking: 75 Years of investigative journalism in Africa*. The book reminded me of the important arguments on how journalists play a significant role in shaping history as much as historians themselves do. That is why I read this book with great interest, even though I am in the field of history.

From reading the title of the book alone, the reader obtains an idea of its contents while also creating positive curiosity. Some of the questions I immediately had to do with which countries are featured in the book and what kind of corruption was investigated. Indeed, the cover gives a hint of some of the journalists in the book – some identifiable titans in African journalism. The table of contents presents the structure of the book which further addressed my curious questions before I even started reading.

African muckracking contains over 7 chapters organised into themes that give an idea of the kind of issues that were investigated. The themes are “The struggle for independence”, “The struggle for democracy”, “Health, rural affairs and the environment”, “Corruption”, “Mining”, “Women” and “Human rights”. As evident from the themes, most of the cases of muckracking are from post-colonial Africa. The editors admit this fact and claim that this is so because journalism as a field in general is still developing and not much muckracking would have been done during the colonial period.

The seven themes cover over 40 sections, each dealing with a specific case of journalism that exposed the hidden facts on a particular topic. Each of the themes has an introduction done by expert journalists on the issue under focus. The introductions create a very useful contextualisation for the themes. The cases present excerpts of or full articles on the exposé. The different articles not only show different writing styles and genres but also reveal some of the major challenges journalists have faced in trying to provide news on sensitive issues.

In its efforts to cover the continent, the book has cases from over 20 countries. Admittedly, the book could not have possibly covered all 54 African countries. Still, there is an admitted bias in the choice of countries – with South Africa having most of the cases (eight) while Nigeria is second with six. Such a decision is not well explained, leaving the reader to speculate whether South Africa has the most number of cases because it has a lot of corruption, because it may be easier to operate there or because the book is published in the country.

The first case in the book is an excerpt from Sol Plaatje's *Native life in South Africa*. It is introduced by Catherine Higgs who quotes Plaatje's biographer Brian Willan to have described the book as "the classic black political statement." Clearly, this was not a classic case of investigative journalism, but he being a journalist can be considered to have informed his writing of the book. It therefore conceptualises some of the first critical anti-colonial journalism in Africa, and certainly in South Africa.

The last case is the harrowing case of how a Tanzanian father sold his son, Adam Robert, for US\$6 000. Sadly, this is just one case amongst many showing the travails of people living with albinism in many African countries. The case of Adam reveals some how people living with albinism are condemned even by their parents from birth, yet they are highly sought after by superstitious people who believe that their body parts can be used to enhance supernatural powers. This case also claims that Tanzania has the highest rate of attacks on people living with albinism. Richard Mgamba's investigative report led not only to the arrest of the perpetrators, but government action such as appointing people with albinism in positions of political power.

Although the book is thick, it is easy to access for the ordinary reader. Since most of the writings are little excerpts, the book does not become a huge and cumbersome dossier on one issue. Instead, the editors managed to find stories that get straight to the point to get the reader's attention. Yet, the short cases

leave the reader not only intrigued but also curious to conduct their own further research on the cases that are covered. The reader can also pick themes of personal interest and does not have to read the entire book, although I would recommend it.

African Muckracking is a book that can be very valuable for history teaching and learning. Its content covers not just political, but also economic and social topics. The major advantage of such journalism-rooted writing is that it provides alternative narratives on topics that may seem to be glossed over in official history books, particularly school textbooks. This gives history teachers and students a chance to expose themselves to multiple narratives and engage with them critically. Schiffrin and Lugalambi's book is definitely worth reading.

The rise of Africa's middle class: Myths, realities and critical engagements

(WITS University Press, 2017, 219 pp. ISBN 978 1 77614 082 4)

Henning Melber

Simphiwe Ngwane

Institutional Researcher at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature

ngwane23@gmail.com

How people categorise themselves influences the ways in which they experience their social location, and many have important consequences for political actions (p. 19).

Henning Melber and his contributing authors in their 2017 book, *The rise of Africa's middle class: Myths, realities and critical engagements* have produced a well-considered contribution to the much popularised research foci that is Africa's middle class. The collection is notably limited in its continental reach as it primarily focused on east coast and Southern African states. However, it still has distinct sediments; yet, common understandings permeate through the layers, although some layers have more depth than others do. Overall, the book's contribution broadens the African middle class debate, moving beyond income-based markers of class and placing vivid focus on boundary work as a contextual theoretical frame to understand Africa's middle class.

The introduction by Melber provides a critical framework and reference point for the contributions in the book. It recapitulates parts of the debate emerging on the middle class(es), its intricacies and contradictions, and looks

for a critical explanation regarding the sudden appearance of such a debate, as if classes were a new phenomenon (p. 1).

The introductory chapter begins by foregrounding more economically inclined markers of class, citing various international reports that bracket the middle class on differing income brackets. Melber argues that, what is most problematic beyond fiddling with figures is the deficiency of a rigorous definition of middle class. “Middle class” tends to be used in an inflationary manner to cover almost everything without any further internal differentiations that exist within a very broad band of income groups, thereby signifying little to nothing (p. 2). Melber argues that these examinations hardly bother to engage with the more methodological aspects of the analysis of classes, which has a long tradition in social sciences and should have an integral part of the engagement with the phenomenon now under deliberations and discussed (p. 3).

Chapter 1 by Lenz engages with the history and theory of the terms elite and middle class on the African continent. Lenz argues that the changing scholarly usages of elite and class concepts echo the socio-economic development of the continent where middle-income groups, sharing certain ‘middle-class’ values and lifestyles, have only rather recently come to the fore. Both terms were initially coined by societal actors and have since the end of the eighteenth century, become catchwords in political discourse, well before scholars defined them in any systematic fashion (p. 18).

Lenz then warns that scholars should therefore be sensitive to the complex feedback process between social science and political-cum-social practice. In order to do so in a comprehensive manner, however, scholars also need to go beyond folk terminologies, develop their own analytical categories, and critically engage with the baggage that received theoretical concepts with them (p. 19).

A pertinent concept, which Lenz foregrounds in his chapter, is that of boundary work. An important aspect of the middle class’s boundary work is the reference groups on which people draw when defining their social location (p. 27). The sometimes surprisingly diverging definitions of who belongs to the “middle” can be seen as resulting from the different frames of reference that people adopt (p. 27). The concept is contextual in its drafting, allowing it to be transplanted to different localities instead of imposing, sometimes-foreign concepts onto divergent localities.

The second chapter by Stoffel, just like all the previous and forthcoming chapters, begins the chapter by laying out the unsettled discourse with income-based markers of class. He argues that, “The arbitrariness of the different thresholds has been criticised most prominently by some scholars, trying to define middle class on a cross-country level (p. 54). The assumption that middle class living standards begin when poverty includes all people in the middle class who are not poor according to the median of the national poverty lines of 70 developing countries, which lies at US\$2 per day at 2005 PPP” (p. 55).

Stoffel’s Human Development argument supported by new assets in the Multidimensional Poverty Index mentions this proposed approach but does not detail how it would work or offer any case study to propel the argument.

Chapter three by Akinkugbe and Wohlmuth examines the role of the African middle class as a base for entrepreneurship development. The authors argue that there is a huge gap in entrepreneurial activities between the informal sector microenterprises and the large formal sector enterprises, just as there is a huge credit-granting gap between the microfinance institutions at the low end and the big commercial/merchant banks, at the high end in most of the African countries (p. 74).

The authors put forward a well-considered and aptly relevant argument on the needed minimum conditions for a transformative middle class in Africa. The authors highlight the need for a “collective identity,” which may be called “class consciousness”. In addition, Africa’s middle class needs to demand a more strategic role from the state in terms of public goods provision, and lastly; their interest should be compatible with the interest of the broader society.

Chapter 4 by Hellsten challenges the assumptions that the expansion of the middle class will somehow “automatically” steer Africa towards democracy and good governance (p. 95). The chapter promises to deconstruct the myth of the African middle class but generically focuses on the political loyalty of the African middle class, without delving deep to any empirical sources.

Chapter 5 by Neubert, highlights the scepticism regarding the democratic attitude of the middle class leads us to ask whether the members of the middle class share a common political vision and how this is related to the middle class consensus (p. 110). Although large parts of the middle-income stratum cannot be sure whether they will keep their position, and this stratum is marked by upward and downward mobility – there is a group living in moderate prosperity and a group is less well-off. They lack joint class consciousness,

but share an important feature: they have the ability to consumer above and beyond the fulfilment of their basic needs (p. 118).

Neubert further argues that the middle class shares with the poor a feeling of uncertainty because the social position of the largest part of the middle class is not secured and they risk falling down the social ladder, even when there is at the same time the chance to climb (p. 123). Against this background the Kenyan middle class does not develop particular political interests because they lack a peculiar structural position that many be the foundation for a distinct joint political orientation (p. 124).

Chapter six by Orji, contributes to the understanding of the role of the role of the new middle class in African by looking at the political activism of the Nigerian middle class. The new middle class in Nigeria has embraced new digital technologies, particularly social media and is using them to widen the boundaries of political participation. The chapter lacked in illustrating how the Nigerian middle classes usage of social media made them activist.

Chapter seven by Schubert presents the experiences of some inhabitants who might be termed part of a new, emerging urban middle class, to interrogate the analytical and conceptual usefulness of the term in a context like Angola (p. 147). The chapter comes across as sporadic and its construction does not aid the reader understanding the sample selection and how their realities can be seen as political subjectivities.

Chapter eight by Sumich examines the middle class of Mozambique and further traces the formation and political embeddedness of a middle class in Mozambique from independence to present (p. 161). The middle classes of Mozambique and Africa more generally do not necessarily act autonomously from the political system, checking its overweening ambitions, but are largely an outgrowth of the state that created them. The middle class is dependent on political structures they do not trust and are vulnerable to be a volatile economic situation (p. 166).

Chapter nine by Ngoma examines South Africa's black middle class professionals and it is empirically based on a qualitative study that explores how such black professionals construct their class and political identities (p. 170). Importantly, the dominant and underlying analytical point in these arguments is that class has superseded race as a social and identity marker (p. 171). The second analytical outcome derives from the pervasive argument that the ANC's aggressive new affirmative action policies, BEE and EE have directly, if not singularly, created

the new black middle class resulting in its support of the ANC (p. 171). The chapter argues that the high intra-racial inequality maintain the Black Middle Classes' (BMC) racial alliances rather than class alliances (p. 177). Instead, it seems more plausible that segments of the new BMC have an identity that is historically defined and that might be reinforced by the continued dominance of white capital (p. 177). Income allows a person to be middle class, but debt strips away affordability and therefore, middle class status. Credit access was a defining marker in being middle class (p. 179).

Chapter 10 by Shule is truly lacking and is very disappointing. The author cobbles together a weak argument about Tanzania's middle class-elite unwillingness to consume Kiswahili video-film and Bongo movies and this lack of consumption will shrink the industry. There is no ethnographic analysis of the sample, why the Tanzanian middle class should consume the movies, the significance of them consuming or not consuming this genre and what this all tells us.

The conclusion by Melber draws the books multiple threads and illustrates that what is lumped together as middle classes represents at best an opaque awareness if not about themselves, then at least about society and their position, aims and politics (p. 202). Melber is upfront about the books limitation and future angles that the topic should be directed towards.

Virtually all historical and anthropological studies on the global middle classes agree that economic definitions of the middle class through its location in the occupational structure or its income and expenditure do not suffice, and can even be misleading (p. 27).

The rise of Africa's middle class offers itself as a multiple lens to examining Africa's middle class. It prompts the reader to always enquire who is doing the defining of middle class and what their intentions are. The book furthers what Deborah James in her 2014 book, *Money from nothing*, contends as; "a young middle-class aspirant today is burdened with multiple expectations" (p. 26). The proffered boundary work framework, which the book foregrounds as being innately sensitive to context, is a much-needed nuance. Melber and the contributing authors have foregrounded key insights into Africa's middle class debate, primarily the east coast of Africa. It would have been worthwhile to also hear voices from West African and the interior regions.

Teaching and learning History and Geography in the South African classroom

(Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria, 2018, pp. 488. ISBN 978 0 627 03502 9)

Elize van Eeden & Pieter Warnich (Editors)

Aubrey Golightly (Consulting Editor)

Arend Carl

Emeritus Professor, Department of Curriculum Studies

Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University

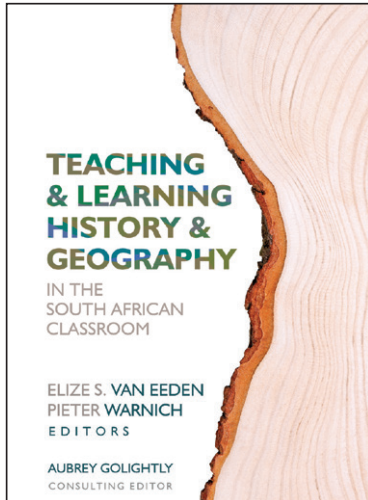
AEC2@sun.ac.za

When I started my academic career in 1983, I was also involved in the training of potential History teachers. This book, a first of its kind, is unfortunately 35 years too late for me, but it currently addresses in a scholarly way a much-needed and long overdue need for the training of History and Geography teachers in the South African context. It covers both the pre-1990 and post-1990 era and brings together a most valuable body of knowledge which is necessary for the training of Social Science, History and Geography teachers.

In the present era of decolonisation, this book is very opportune for the South African context. The value of this multi-authored book also lies in the fact that it was compiled and edited by experts in their respective fields. This book is not a practical tool or a manual on how to train History and Geography teachers, as it provides a sound theoretical underpinning in each chapter on what the teaching and learning of Social Sciences (as well as History and Geography in the FET phase) is all about. The scholarly approach as well as the in-depth research that was done makes this a most valuable resource in the training of Social Science, History and Geography teachers. The book is based on relevant research and makes a rich contribution to the body of knowledge on the teaching and learning in these disciplines. The practical aspect and the theory complement each other and are finely balanced. This useful aspect will certainly help potential teachers to engage in a critical way with the curriculum they need to teach.

A strong point of the book is the emphasis on teaching and learning as an integrated process. The focus is not just on the teacher, but also on the learner and how both these role players can collaboratively engage with the Social Science, History and Geography curriculums.

NEW PUBLICATION



Teaching and Learning History and Geography in the South African Classroom

Editors: Elize van Eeden & Pieter Warnich
 Consulting editor: Aubrey Golightly
 ISBN: 978 0 627 03502 9; R555.00
 eISBN: 978 0 627 03503 6; R499.50
 Page extent: 520
 Publication date: January 2018

This book guides readers through developments in the History and Geography fields, new focus areas and some teaching and learning possibilities unlocked by technology. Drawing on prodigious research, experts in these fields impart recommendations for teaching, understanding, learning and assessing these subjects purposefully.

Teaching and learning History and Geography in the South African classroom is aimed at scholars, educators and prospective educators in Social Sciences, History and Geography programmes.

Table of contents

Chapter 1 Unpacking the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Social Sciences

Part A: History

Section 1: Remembering (one's own) History

Chapter 2 Reflections on writing and teaching History in South Africa

Chapter 3 Textbooks, History and teaching

Chapter 4 Practicalising local and regional histories in History curricula

Chapter 5 Feeling like a historian

Section 2: Facing controversial history

Chapter 6 Teaching controversial issues in History

Chapter 7 Miracle Rising® as source for teaching and learning controversial issues in History

Chapter 8 Facing emotions and controversies of the past and present in South African Social Sciences and History classrooms

Section 3: Teaching, doing and assessing History

Chapter 9 Thinking historically: Beyond names and dates towards historical understanding

Chapter 10 Cognitive development strategies within the History classroom

Chapter 11 Enhancing History teaching through the integration of technological devices and online teaching

Chapter 12 Assessment and the History teacher: Classroom-based performance assessment in action with role-play and debating as examples

Part B: Geography

Section 4: Space, place and maps

Chapter 13 Space and place for Geography teaching and learning in the 21st century

Chapter 14 Mapping and maps in Social Sciences' Geography Education

Section 5: Facing Geography

Chapter 15 Issues-based teaching and learning in Geography

Chapter 16 The Social Sciences and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): An interdisciplinary reflection

Chapter 17 Indigenous knowledge systems and Africanisation in relation to Geography teaching and learning

Section 6: Teaching, doing and assessing Geography

Chapter 18 Field work excursions in the Social Sciences

Chapter 19 GIS, Google Earth, Google Maps and GPS as resources and their application in Geography Education

Chapter 20 Teaching and learning styles and strategies in Geography Education

Chapter 21 Assessment in school Geography



Please contact Van Schaik Publishers if you would like to prescribe this book in an alternative format.
 Our ebooks can be purchased online by visiting:
<https://store.it.si/za/home>, <https://store.snapplify.com>,
www.vanschaik.com or www.takealot.com

Posbus/PO Box 12681 Hatfield 0028 Pretoria SA
 Francis Baardstraat 1059 Francis Baard Street
 Hatfield 0083 Pretoria SA
 Tel: +27 12 342 2765 Faks/Fax: +27 12 430 3563
 E-pos/Email: marketing@vanschaiknet.com
www.vanschaiknet.com

ACCESSIBLE · AFFORDABLE · AFRICAN

The structure of the book is very logical and coherent. The book starts off by giving a theoretical underpinning and then provides contextualisation by giving a very sound foundation of the current school curriculum field (CAPS). A positive aspect of the publication is the logical structure. The different sections and chapters provide a strong coherence and there is a golden thread throughout, from Chapter 1 up to the final chapter. The extensive and impressive reference lists at the end of each chapter contribute to the strong theoretical underpinning.

The book is divided into two sections, namely Section A (p. 25) for History and Section B (p. 263) for Geography. Both Sections A and B are then divided into thematic sub-sections, with appropriate chapters under each section. This structure provides a clear roadmap for the reader. The List of Figures and the List of Tables could perhaps have been placed directly after the List of Contents, instead of after the section with the biographical information of all the authors. Each chapter starts with a description of the intended outcomes and the key terms and ends off with reflective exercises. In some cases, these exercises could perhaps have been more extensive. What is also very helpful is the name of the section at the top of the left-hand page and the chapter title at the top of the right-hand page. This helps when navigating through the book. The technical aspects of the book are thus of a high standard.

This book contributes to the debate on how to teach Social Sciences as an independent curriculum field and discipline. Teachers often claim that they teach Social Sciences, but in reality, they teach History and Geography as completely separate school subjects. This book helps to increase one's understanding of this subject discipline, without forfeiting the identity and uniqueness of each specific subject field.

The topics included in this book, as per section, address current thinking and new developments regarding the teaching and learning of Social Sciences, History and Geography and how to deal with these disciplines in the classroom. Some of the intermediate, senior and FET themes in Section A (History) include remembering one's own history and how to teach it (which includes a most valuable section on the writing and teaching History in South Africa), the teaching of local and regional history, facing and teaching controversial issues, and the teaching and "doing" of History. In Section B (Geography) a similar approach is followed in addressing relevant issues such as space, places and maps (with appropriate chapters), facing Geography, and the teaching, "doing" and assessment of Geography.

The comment made in the Acknowledgements that “History and Geography are dynamic and diverse disciplines ... have always displayed integrative abilities and combined potential in teaching and learning because human actions in spaces and places matter equally”, is evidence of the scholarly approach of this publication.

This book, a first of its kind in South Africa, will be of value to specialists in Social Sciences, History as well as Geography and contribute to the empowerment of future and potential specialists. This publication brings together and disseminates research and new developments in the teaching and learning of the above-mentioned subjects which will enhance the quality of teacher training and prepare teachers for the classroom.

I recommend very strongly *Teaching & learning History and Geography in the South African classroom* for every teacher involved in the teaching and learning of Social Sciences, History and Geography.