

International Conference on
South Africa under Globalisation: Issues in Foreign Policy and Development
Organised by
African Studies Programme, Jawaharlal Nehru University and
African Studies Association of India (ASA)
11- 12 November 2009

Report

The central focus of the conference was “globalisation”. However, apart from Professor Rajan Harshe’s deliberately wide ranging keynote address - designed to stimulate discussion - there was also attempt to grapple with our central concepts of “globalisation” or “development”. While there is not, and should not be, any single perspective on globalisation, the question was raised as to what we as scholars understand by the meaning of globalisation. What balance of economic, political, technological and spatial set of processes do we bring to our understanding of globalisation? And, crucially, how do we periodize it? If we are to talk meaningfully about changes in South Africa under globalisation, then this conference provided a platform for likeminded people to come together and discuss it.

To emphasise the point about the need for precision: at one level, globalisation is taken to mean that “everything and everybody is interrelated in the global village”. At the same time the point that we are not all interrelated, or at the very least, not all interrelated in the same way was also brought about by some scholars. Globalisation in the conference was also taken to involve the local in relation to the wider global – which again implies a wider, seemingly coordinated world system. If we employ the idea of a local-global hierarchy, local would be the junior partner in the hierarchy. However, if we look from the perspective of South Africa, although we would regard South Africa as “local” in the wider world system, it might seem as if that “local” (i.e. South Africa) is the superior partner in its network of relationships in e.g. Africa. Crucially at stake are not only spatial, but also hierarchical relationships – and they do not always coincide neatly.

The different papers at the conference looked not only at theoretical perspectives on globalisation, but also, and importantly, at actors’ understandings of globalisation. What have South African players of various kinds understood by globalisation, and what have they seen themselves as doing –both within South Africa and more widely, within southern Africa, within Africa, in terms of Indian Ocean security, in terms of South-South alliances – in building (in Prof. Fred Hendricks’ paper) a South African imaginary, within the context of wider sets of world forces and relations – as they saw those sets and relations.

The scholars also created an understanding on the various and interacting visions of globalisation at work as the new South Africa constituted itself and as it has moved forward through various stages in the last 15 years. This would relate to the way the constitution was drawn up, land reform was staked out, identities have crystallised, challenges to government have arisen, foreign policy has developed - including the way

South Africa has envisaged the African Renaissance, and IBSA, as well as its military and peacekeeping initiatives in Africa.

Related to the concern with external security and state security in the conventional military sense, several papers – most explicitly perhaps that of Prof. Sanjukta Bhattacharya – made the argument for a wider lens view of security, raising the connection between security and stability within a country. Issues which impact on living standards internally, such as poverty, crime, HIV/AIDS discussed in several papers become issues of security, as they threaten socio-political stability – not only at the national, but also at the regional level. Prof. Fred Hendricks argued that poverty remained racialised in South Africa, and that this operated as a barrier to the development of a unitary imagination, based on the metaphor of land dispossession, and the perceptions of illegitimacy that go with it. Land reform has been woefully inadequate since the advent of democracy, and this remains a threat to the democratic order, as in the context of historical dispossession and sustained impoverishment, citizenship remains hollowed out. Nimi Hoffmann considered the case of two urban movements seeking to develop a rights cum citizenship based approach to conceptualising and dealing with poverty, i.e. dealing with poverty as a socio-political, security issue. All these papers locate issues of internal security and social stability within the wider context of conceptualisations of globalisation, in relation to wider sets of rights and institutions, socio-political movements, etc.

These issues of security relate to the fact that South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world, in terms of criteria such as land holding, Gini coefficient, access to health care, by its historically defined race groups. Several papers argued that there can be no talk of development, or indeed, of citizenship, without first addressing these fundamental inequalities. Poverty and citizenship are both relational attributes. This takes us, not only to the way we understand the history of apartheid, but also to the way we understand South Africa's attempts to move away from it. Why has land reform moved so slowly? Are we perhaps to understand constitutional safeguards of private property and apparent ANC conservatism in this regard in the light of broader global neo-liberal concerns? How are we to understand foreign direct investment patterns and the role of multi national companies in South Africa's development strategy and employment regimes? International trade agreements have resulted in significant job losses, inter alia in the garment industry in South Africa. Attempts to move away from historical inequality in South Africa are caught up in an ongoing set of structural inequalities and in constructions of the global order. Various papers have drawn attention to these different levels, from the local, such as the movements that Nimi Hoffmann spoke about, to the global level, such as MNCs, World Bank policy, the WTO, etc, and how they interact.

Our next major theme related to issues of governance and empowerment with various papers drawing attention to the complexities of identity in the context of the transformations occurring in South Africa. We were reminded of the need to accommodate more localised cultural and regional identities within the broader national (unity) project, and always to be aware of their evocative power. This included the possibility of them emerging under conditions of material hardship, uncertainty and

competition – including within the ANC itself. Within what contexts were such more specific sub-national assertions of identity likely to arise. Well, at one level, they were likely to arise around units of governance or organisation, particularly when central government was showing increasing inability to deliver basic services. Papers drew attention to problems developing around the functionality of local government institutions. Recent and ongoing service delivery protests throughout South Africa constitute a crisis for the Zuma leadership, and in the longer term, for the future of its focus, and even for the future of the tripartite alliance. Speaking directly to government's struggle to deliver services, notably health and education, several papers considered the role of what is loosely termed "civil society", and its potential role in promoting the enabling conditions for citizens to participate in their own governance. Wider questions arise as to how we are most usefully to understand by "civil society" in the post apartheid context, and how we are to conceptualise the challenges confronting such groupings, both in relation to the ANC de facto one party state, as well as how they position themselves vis-a-vis their international counterpart movements and capitalist donors?

If the conference as a whole had been asking questions about South Africa within the context of understandings about, and constructions of globalisation, our concluding session did so in a more specific way, linking matters back to the wellspring of this conference. How, in the South African situation, were we to understand India's unique contribution to globalisation: the Indian diaspora? Indeed, in the South African context, was it still legitimate to speak of an Indian diaspora? Prof. Rehana Valley, as a South African of Indian origin, did not seem to think it was any longer the case. While focused on the South African case, the session raised issues of relevance to diaspora situations more widely. Was there a time when one could legitimately have spoken of an Indian diaspora in South Africa, i.e. when people of Indian origin still defined themselves in relation to India? What led to this diasporic identification falling away? Did the identification with South Africa happen by choice or by default? This raises the question for diaspora studies at a comparative level :what are the set of/kind of events at a wider level that influence whether people see themselves as part of a diaspora or not? This took us to Prof. Ajay Dubey's observations concerning how diaspora is constructed within the wider context of globalisation. It is crucial whether the flow of people/relationships, skills and capital are seen in longer term processual and resource –cumulative terms by the various parties concerned; governments, 'diaspora' communities, 'host' communities. Diaspora is a relational and because transnational, a deeply political reality, in which a range of players and understandings are involved – which reality has been heightened by the recent calls, from certain quarters, for the 'africanisation' of the South African cabinet.

In conclusion, if we are to build on this very bold and important initiative, there are some issues we do need do address in going forward. It is imperative to move away from a reliance on internet and policy based survey type literature, which leaves one dependent upon official versions. There is also a need to engage with the critical literature, with the relevant case material, at the very least to engage via email interviews with the key players. It is essential to engage in correspondence with scholars beyond India who are also working on Africa, to open up to work and ideas, as well as to comment and possible

co-authorship, from beyond India. This could lead to publishing in journals located more widely. Most importantly, it is necessary for Indian researchers to negotiate funding to go to (South) Africa to spend research time and to familiarise themselves with something of the complexities of the situations about which they are writing. However, such an initiative to hold a conference of this depth which could bring about scholars from African studies to come together is remarkable.

Programme

11th November

Registration- 9:30 AM

Inaugural Session	10:00 am- 10:45 am
Chair	Prof. Y. K. Tyagi, Dean SIS, JNU
Welcome Address	Prof. Ajay Dubey
Keynote address	Prof. Rajen Harshe, Vice – Chancellor, Allahabad Central University
Chair Remark	Prof. Y. K. Tyagi, Dean SIS, JNU

Tea Break- 10:45 AM- 11:00 AM

Session I

South Africa's Foreign Policy under Globalisation	11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Prof. Aparajita Biswas	<i>South Africa's Foreign Policy : Challenges and Limitations</i>
Mr. Surjit Kumar	<i>Determinants of South Africa's Foreign Policy</i>
Ms. Ruchita Beri	<i>South Africa and IBSA</i>
Dr. Bijay Pratihari	<i>South Africa's Africa Policy</i>
Prof. Katsuhiko Kitagawa	<i>Determinance of Japanese Perception and Policies Towards South Africa</i>
Mr. Janardan	<i>South Africa's Engagement with Brazil under Globalisation : Issues and Challenges</i>

Lunch: 2:00 PM- 3:00 PM

Session II

Internal and External Security Issues in South Africa under Globalisation	3:00 PM – 4: 30 PM
Prof. Simon Adams	<i>Rwanda is at the End of My Street: The Xenophobic Eruption of 2008 and the Political Crisis of South Africa</i>
Prof. Sanjukta Bhattacharya	<i>Security Issues in Post Apartheid South Africa : Challenges and Responses</i>
Dr. Manendra Sahu	<i>South African Peacekeeping Operations: The</i>

	<i>SANDF's External Role</i>
Dr. Nivedita Ray	<i>South Africa's Engagement in Indian Ocean</i>

Dinner- 7:00 PM

12th November

Session IV

Economic Development and Issues of Equity	10:00 AM – 11:45 AM
Prof. F.Hendricks	<i>Black Poverty in Relation to Land Inequality</i>
Ms. Nimi Hoffmann	<i>Universities of the Poor: Learning to Fight Poverty in Africa in the Context of Global Apartheid</i>
Prof. S. N. Malakar	<i>Rural Development and Agrarian Transformation in South Africa</i>
Ms. Maushami Galvankar	<i>The Role of Multinationals in South Africa: Issues in Economic Development</i>

Tea- 11:45 AM- 12:00

Session V

Issues in Governance and Empowerment	12:00 – 1:30 PM
Dr. J. Moosa	<i>Managing Diversity Through Federal Structure in Post Apartheid Period</i>
Dr. Prahalad	<i>Local Government and Empowerment of People in South Africa</i>
Dr. Suresh Kumar & Ms. Chandrakanta Mathur	<i>Civil Society (Education, Land Reform & Health) & the Issues of Governance in South Africa</i>
Mr. Santosh Singh	<i>Issues of Civil Society Development in South Africa</i>

Lunch- 1:30 PM- 2:30 PM

Session VI

Diaspora, Culture and Identity Issues	2:30 PM- 4:00 PM
Prof. Owen Sichone and Prof. Rehana Valley	<i>Indian, Hindu or Muslim? The Indian Diaspora in South Africa in a Globalised World</i>
Prof. Ajay Dubey	<i>Diaspora as a Resource : South African Indians under Globalisation</i>
Dr. A. S. Yaruigam	<i>Socio-Cultural Dilemma of PIO in South Africa</i>
Dr. Nandini Sen	<i>Beyond Race: The Literary Saga of Post Apartheid Fiction</i>

Tea Break- 4:00 PM- 4:15 PM

Valedictory Session	4:15 PM- 5:00 PM
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High Tea- 5:30 PM

Dinner- 7:00 PM

Concept Note

Economically, South Africa has chosen for close cooperation with developed countries, who are the leading players in the world economy, and a number of whom who had been allies of the former apartheid regime. In openly opting for a market led economy, South Africa has pursued a path contrary to the vision enshrined in the Freedom Charter, and which is strongly propagated within the trade unions. While its strong economy and fiscal discipline have enabled South Africa to deliver significant services and grants to those who had not had them under apartheid, the country is still haunted by the worst inequality ratios on the planet, and by serious skills shortages.

The attempt to steer a path and to find an appropriate location between more broadly international and more regional African and southern African concerns, is also at the heart of South African foreign policy. In the African context, with the development imperative driving both domestic as well as foreign policy, new potential foreign investors in Africa, such as China and India have become a significant focus of foreign policy. This makes for a more diverse and multicentric distribution of power within the global political-ideological economy, leading to possible new alliances, and to the need to scrutinise the changing role in the global (and African) context of groupings that involve such investor countries - such as the G20, the Non-Aligned Movement, IBSA, etc.

The proposed seminar seeks to address the issues related to foreign policy and development in South Africa under globalisation. The seminar will address the following sub-themes, but will allow for papers that do not fall strictly under these topics.

1. South Africa: External Engagement under Globalization
2. Post Apartheid South Africa: Issues of Development and Equity
3. Democratic South Africa: Issues of Governance and Empowerment
4. South Africa: Security Issues under Globalization
5. South Africa: Issues of Identity, Culture and Diaspora