

And yet, camps' relationship to nation and history may be utilized to critique national forms of knowledge and to open new opportunities for dialogue and recognition" (p 227f).

Namibia, as this study through a vast body of resources utilised convincingly documents, is a case in point *par excellence*, which might serve as a motivation and invitation to test if this is the case to a similar degree in other Southern African countries governed by former liberation movements.

Endnotes

1. Akawa, M (2014), *The Gender Politics of the Namibian Liberation Struggle*. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.
2. Suttner, R (2008), *The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976. A Social and Historical Study*. Auckland Park: Jacana.
3. Trehwela, P (2009), *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the Exile History of the ANC and SWAPO*. Auckland Park: Jacana 2009.
4. Williams misses the opportunity to introduce Suttner's insights as reinforcing aspects for some of his arguments. But his case remains strong enough.
5. Williams makes detailed reference to several personal accounts of those who were victims of the repressive structures, including most prominently and importantly the books by Keshii Nathanael and Samson Ndeikwila, as well as the unpublished accounts by the late Salatiel Ailonga, but misses out on the relevant additional insights by Beukes, H (2014), *Long Road to Liberation. An Exiled Namibian Activist's Perspective*. Johannesburg: Porcupine Press.

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Southall, Roger, *The New Black Middle Class in Southern Africa*. Auckland Park: Jacana 2016, xix & 296 pp.

According to figures recently presented by a research project at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa's population classified as middle class increased from 12.8 per cent in 1993 to 16.6 per cent in 2012. Two-thirds of these are categorised as 'black' (Indian, Coloured,

African). In contrast, 55 per cent of the population remain poor, 23 per cent vulnerable and 5.2 per cent can be considered as elite.

A middle class in such a socially segregated society merits closer attention as to its definition and its further deconstruction. Which are the characteristics (such as employment, income, savings or debts, pensions and related material indicators), the aspirations, the self-definition, but also the consumption patterns, the cultural, religious and political orientations of such a group, and how homogenous is it?

Inspired by the rereading of a pioneering study by Leo Kuper,¹⁾ Southall's analysis adds considerable insights to the already existing body of knowledge on (middle) class behavior in South Africa. The approach is rigorously analytical, recollects historical evidence and remains not like so many other contributions at the descriptive surface. Southall digs much deeper, since "if we want to explore the meaning of 'middle class', we have to locate that term in a wider body of theory" (p 1). Not surprisingly, he therefore opens with introductory reflections on the contributions by Karl Marx and Max Weber "to provide a preliminary guide to the varied ways in which the middle class has been understood, in terms of its origins, dynamics, motivations and relations with other classes and strata in society" (p 21).

This is followed by a historical excursus on South Africa's black middle class from 1910 to 1994, before shifting emphasis on size, shape and structure of the black middle class in post-*apartheid* South Africa. Southall shows that historically the black middle class was a politically progressive force, while at the same time quite uneven: "at different times, in different situations, in different locations it was variously (and sometimes simultaneously) liberal, conservative, nationalist and radical. It might even be argued that the only consistent thing about the black middle class was its political inconsistency" (p 219).

The formation of a black middle class under the ANC (chapter 4), the role of education in upward social mobility (chapter 5), the black middle class at work (chapter 6), and the social world of this class (chapter 7) are complementing perspectives, followed by an assessment of the politics of such middle class (chapter 8). Southall argues, "that the black elite and middle class now in positions of power, privilege and profit are not likely to bite the hand of the party-state that feeds them. The more dependent they are upon the ruling party for their welfare, the more they are likely to support it" (p 203).

However, as he also suggests: "while the most powerful segments of the black elite and middle class remain strongly aligned to the ANC's party-state, the black middle class as a whole is becoming more heterogeneous. However much they come out of an ANC background, many younger black middle-class voters are becoming increasingly critical of the performance of the ruling party" (p 215). One therefore should not take it for granted that black middle class loyalty to the ANC's party-state remains: "A financial meltdown will bring major fractures ... and the party will strain the loyalty of many within the black middle class. The political direction or directions in which the black middle class chooses to go will prove an important factor in shaping the country's future trajectory" (p 219).

One should, however, not take for granted that this would be a more democratic trajectory. A middle class behavior is not necessarily principled beyond acting in the own interest, but rather pragmatic and opportunistic. Southall therefore warns that, "the black middle class may back a drift towards 'competitive authoritarianism', a hybrid form of governance in which democratic forms belie a reality of authoritarian rule" (p 220). The verdict is pending. Southall ends with an afterword (chapter 9), putting South Africa's black middle class in a wider African context and returns to methodological and theoretical challenges confronting an adequate analysis.

While not a decisive element in South African politics, black middle class is a new factor, which might have considerable impact not only in terms of its significantly growing purchasing power, but also with regard to its future (re-)positioning in domestic politics. The municipal elections in early August 2016 might present new indications and insights, to which extent the voting behavior of the new middle class might shift the influence of political parties in local administration, that is, the services provided (or lacking) in meeting the demands of an aspiring class as regards their daily living predominantly in bigger cities.

Endnotes

1. Kuper, L (1965), *An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class and Politics in South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

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