

From Colonisation to Global Economy – black women workers in South Africa and the Northern Territory, Australia.

Abstract:

This presentation looks at the similarities between the experiences of black women entering the colonial workforce in Australia and South Africa. It explores the concept of work, identity and social organisation through the period of colonisation through to the present period of black economic empowerment. It will discuss the ways in which black women have been positioned in terms of European constructions of race.

Finally the paper will discuss the values underpinning the discourse of the working family of the current Australian Labor government, the policies of education and welfare which are driven by it and impact of their application through the NT intervention, on Indigenous women in the NT Australia.

Key words: colonisation; race; working class; identity; black economic empowerment; the working family.

Background to the presentation:

I have been undertaking a research project over the last 4 years looking at the educational experiences of people of the Mandela generation in South Africa, who after a decisive military defeat, used education, and politicisation to drive the struggle against colonialism. I came to South African politics and society as a volunteer cadre of the ANC and since 1990 as a makgoti or daughter-in-law of a South African family, a family from the educated African elite who have participated in the anti-colonial movement from the time of white settlement, a movement.

During the course of this research, which has been conducted from the perspective of the Xhosa, I have identified the foundation of that political drive which resulted in 1994 South African constitution and the relatively non-violent transition to a concept of sovereignty which was inclusive of 'all who live in [South Africa] (from the Freedom Charter ANC 1955) was a set of values, a *sensus communis* on which actions, not just outcomes were and are judged.

Prior to the introduction of grand apartheid in 1948, there was the development of an African elite, black middle class, many of whom maintained their commitment to the traditional values of ubuntu while engaging with modernity and the international economy. For many of these leaders, the democratic elections of 1994 and the subsequent democratic constitution was the beginning rather than the end of the real struggle against colonialism and neo colonialism.

At the same time, living and working in the NT with Aboriginal people engaged in a similar struggle I saw the parallels between the two places and the NT intervention as the final stage in the colonisation or the re-colonisation of Aboriginal people of the NT.

Employment – aieesh – that is the main thing

Employment or unemployment is the issue identified in social conversation, as one of the most fundamental political issue in South Africa. Some sections of the population suggest that affirmative action has meant that there is still a racial bias in terms of employment, but this time against whites. The statistics and recorded experiences of Africans do not necessarily support this. However what has happened is that many of the structural advantages previously experienced by those classified as white, particularly the white working class have been withdrawn or reduced in order to make them more inclusive of the whole population.

These have included supporting mothers benefits, housing and other allowances for the employment of domestic workers which have likely impacted in women. Comparison of the statistics between 1996, the first census of the South African population ever conducted and 2001 indicate that there had been a decline in labour market participation by those between the ages of 15 and 65 in all areas of the population apart from white and Asian women in which there had been a marginal increase. Although Statssa warns of an overestimate of unemployment. (Statssa)

Current discussions suggest a figure of around 28% of unemployment. The labour report of 2008 reports a figure of 35% employed in what they describe as the informal sector. The largest sectors within the informal sector are domestic employment in private households and trade where the skill levels are elementary and productivity low and nearly a quarter (22.3%) in time related underemployment.

Results of a recent review suggest that of the 12million employed in South Africa, only about 5 million are paying tax with 14 million on social welfare payments. These payments well below the cost of living in formal economy and consist mainly of means tested old age pensions of R1010 a month and child support payments for dependent children under 15 of R240 per month. ¹

There are a number of factors which could suggest that these figures are trends rather than real figures including a continuing history of African people not submitting taxation returns to the government or avoiding tax based on the principle of no taxation without representation.

Discourse of black economic empowerment in post apartheid South Africa (M Mbeki 2009)

- Share ownership in large public companies – the creation of black millionaires
- Black empowerment partners: increasing the number of black people in professional and management positions in business and industry

¹ For the old age pension this includes an assets test and an income test: single R23544 per annum and married R43704 per annum. The means test for child support for children is R28800 and combined income of double that. RZA=\$Au 6.7

- Reliance on global economy (china) for cheap consumer products
- Industries such as manufacturing and textiles mainly declined – impacting on women workers
- Economy based on mining – mainly male industries;

The shortfalls of the current electoral system negotiated in 1994 in which the parliament is elected on a system of proportional representation rather than by direct electoral representation are now being felt by all sections of the population. Two reviews recommending such changes to the electoral system have not been implemented by the ANC, the only party with sufficient representation in parliament to do so.

Aluta Contnua – the struggle continues.

Moving forward: ubuntu –the African concept of humanity in South Africa

The concept of Ubuntu has been used as a tool not just for reconciliation but for moving forward by providing an understanding of a shared future, one community. Ubuntu is generally translated as: *I am because we are*, an understanding that the individual exists both because of and as a result of the community, the collective. That it is a concept which is about process, and the striving for balance and harmony within society. (see Mkihize 2008; for further discussion and definition of Ubuntu) Interestingly much of the contemporary discussion of Ubuntu is within the literature on management and as a concept runs the risk of allowing the most patient and most disempowered sections of the population to continue to take the weight of the struggle.

However, I want to explore this concept further to see how it does work as a value which could potentially either empower or disempower individuals, particularly as it relates to work. Bejon (in Maruve 2008) claims that historically the value of work in a society underpinned by the concept of ubuntu is as part for its roles in providing the opportunity for self actualisation, a basic part of being human and capacity to bring people together rather than the product itself or the idea of being paid for the work.

It was in the value that work contributed to the clan's community life, its humanizing dimension which was emphasised. Work did not exist merely for the sake of getting rich. Although there was a clear connection between work and quality of life, in terms of housing, and food.

Ali Mazrui claims that the economic system introduced by colonisation and imperialism, western capitalism was introduced without this humanising dimension of work. There is, therefore, a fundamental contradiction between the two systems: Ubuntu which expressed the value of work to the community and western capitalism which stressed that the well-being of society was based on the well-being of the economy. Mazrui does not suggest some Utopian idea of an equal African society, rather he acknowledges the prestige motive within African societies in which one strove for the approval and sense

of belonging of the community. He suggests that this prestige motive is incompatible with the principle in western capitalism that an individual should only act in the interests of others after calculating the costs and benefits which would accrue to these actions. (in Mvuo 2008)

According to Marx, it was in the interests of the bourgeoisie not to support the traditional relationships of interdependence and the responsibilities which this accrued to the 'natural superiors'. The introduction of Malthusian discourse in Victorian times which suggested that welfare provisions which British workers had long had access to in the Poor Laws contributed to poverty taking away the drive to take individual responsibility for one's own situation. Prestige motive comes from need for communal belonging – from fear of social disapproval to the

I have included this discussion on dependency and interdependency as there is within current political democracies a negative connotation attached to dependency and cultures of dependency especially welfare dependence. Fraser and Gordon (in Dean 1999) identify a number of different genres of dependence and point out that these are assembled and experienced differently in different kinds of societies.

I introduce the idea of different genres of dependency to try to illustrate some of the ways in which the situation of black women is different from that of white middle class women, a point which black women have long maintained.

Black women in the space between patriarchies and class.

There have been no real attempts in South African struggle discourse to reify traditional African societies as being the embodiment of Ubuntu and equality. There has been acceptance that they have been patriarchal societies and that women have generally been dependent on men within their family and community to do the right thing in terms of their human rights and justice. (Freedom Charter 1955, Sachs 1990, 1992, Okin 1989),

Typically men controlled the polity or public life while women maintained the home and family. People live in scattered extended family groups around an identified leader. If individuals or smaller family groups did not feel that their interests were being met within the group they could and would break off to and re-constitute themselves around another. These groupings are revealed in one's surname, clan name or isibongo. Men, therefore, had the responsibility to ensure harmony of the group through the joint governance with others within an extended language or geographical group.

Marriage within this system was an alliance between families formalised through an economic exchange, lobola. This was generally through an exchange of cattle, the primary assets of the Nguni society to the woman's family. This exchange of assets was never intended to mean that the man's family owned the woman but to recognise her value. Typically the assets were meant to be there also as a surety for the wife should she have to return to her family in the case of her husband or his family's failure to provide for her and her children. Payment of lobola made any children from the union both

the issue and the responsibility of the father's family. It was a system which attempted to provide a framework for both rights and responsibilities within a gendered framework. Polygamy acted to share the domestic and agricultural tasks of women (Mtusu and Stuart 1925). Women also had access to the products of their agricultural work.

Intersection of race and gender throughout the period of colonisation and urbanisation

The first contact with Europeans by South African societies was through missionary contact. While many of the traditional features of South African family life, remained intact, including lobola, polygamy was one of the first to go as it was considered an anathema to missionaries and not to be truthful, it had to be a wealthy and clever man who managed it well.

The role of missionaries in the colonisation of South Africa is the subject for debate amongst South Africans within the struggle. There is seen to be a difference between the discourse of Christianity (Luthuli 1987, Seme in Jordan 1988) as a cosmopolitan discourse of equality of man and that as a tool of colonisation.

Essentially colonialism in South Africa became an internal colonisation based on race with black, coloured and Indians within the geographical area of the union of South Africa becoming a series of hierarchical subordinate classes based on race and restricted land ownership. (Meer 1989)

European societies and families were also based on patriarchy and the bourgeois evolution of Europe also differentiated between men who worked and acted in the polity and the public sphere and women who managed the family or the private sphere, dependent in socio-legal, economic and political registers, of dependence. The dispossession of the African populations of their land, the introduction of taxes, and the development of an industrial and mining industries led to the development of a South African proletariat which was landless, male and black.

However as in Europe, women worked, but the work was reserved to the private/domestic sector or the manufacturing sectors which were close to this kind of work: domestic work, agriculture, child care, textiles, food. Ironically it was often the black domestic worker who served to support the position of white women within their patriarchy, releasing them from the burden of domestic work and child care to undertake a life of leisure, or of work according to their choice.

Apartheid South Africa based on the reconstruction of a tribal society and absorbed white patriarchy, whittling away the traditional democracy and security of traditional African societies and emphasising vertical power and patriarchy. In addition to the oppression shared by all black people laws have been interpreted in ways that reduce African women to the status of minors. (Sachs 1990)

Family structures were broken down through the use of the system of migrant labour and the pass laws. Application of the pass laws to women meant that there was no possibility of women and children maintaining connection with their husbands and fathers. Men often had two families – those at home and those in the areas in which they worked. Women and children were mostly unprotected by family law – as traditional, common law and non-Christian marriages were not recognised publicly. In the 2001 census, 52% of men and 46% of women claim never to have been married.

While the practice of lobola did continue, it was often commercialised and the concept of a woman being bought and therefore, owned by her husband and his family, became more prevalent. Illegitimacy which had hitherto been minimal, controlled not only by the lobola system under which a woman's family could claim reparations but also by systems in which sexual experimentation and prostitution were recognised and conducted publicly. As young men and women, but especially young men moved away from home to work in all-male enclaves, lines of responsibility and accountability back to the family and community weakened and broke down.

Constructions of masculinity weakened by the loss of their political, moral-psychological, economic and even their socio-legal independence, and based on constructions of African culture which emphasises the rights of men, rather than their responsibilities saw a rise in domestic violence and sexual abuse and an emphasis in on the role of the African woman, and wife to 'serve' and care for her husband.

Black South African women, occupying the intersection of racism and patriarchy without the limited protection of traditional family and social structures becoming the victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, the levels of which still remain unknown but are reflected in the statistics on violence and rates of HIV/AIDS infection.

Education

Education was identified at the end of the 19th century after a fairly convincing military, social and psychological defeat as the new tool to fight colonialism and by the time of the introduction of apartheid in 1949, there was a significant educated elite educated largely through a missionary system based on an English grammar school education and with a small but significant number of graduates of overseas universities with experience internationally.

A restricted curriculum, known as Bantu education was introduced by apartheid to ensure that Blacks knew their place in an economy based on a racialised hierarchical division of labour. Education restricted to levels and skills which would equip Africans for the level of employment – basic literacy; three languages: own language; Afrikaans; English; history some geography; theology. Technical education was limited, partly because of the costs no doubt, but also because in this labour market, blacks needed only hand skills, not full trade skills. Technical and skill training was given on-the-job to the level to which the employer required.

Since 1994, it would have to be judged that there has been little or no success re-structuring the education system. Education is compulsory but not free: so there must be a question as to whether it can be compulsory. Children are dependent upon their adults to make money for fees available. This can be risky in a society in which the lines of responsibility have broken down. Interestingly there are not large differences between the participation of males and females in education generally. However only 20.4% of South Africans have completed secondary schooling. Fifty percent of women. Roughly five percent of these women go onto higher education. (see appendix for these stats) Those who have some secondary education – 30% including 32% of women have much more opportunity of participating in the formal employment sector.

What has happened is that the old system of educational privilege has continued but based on economic position, language, location and culture rather than race. The 'former' white model C schools remain elite albeit multi-racial. [There is a bit of joke that the former Indian and coloured schools are full of black students paying between 8000 and 24000 Rands per year (> \$au1000 – 3000) for schools which are seen to have better facilities; Indians are in the former white schools and the whites are in Australia]

Many of the schools in the rural and the townships/black areas have limited resources including physical and teaching resources. The limitation of resources such as toilet blocks tend to disadvantage female students beyond puberty. The high levels of teenage pregnancy and the breakdown of the systems of responsibility has led to a practice of girls expelled. The majority of students, both boys and girls or should I say, men and women are older than the usually school leaving age. This has been typical of African participation in schooling since as they were required to participate in traditional economic activities such as herding for the boys and family responsibilities for the girls. Even in educated urban African households in which girls live with their families traditional educated homes teenage boys might sit with their elders while the teenage girls are expected to assist and at times take over domestic duties such as cooking and serving on top of their homework. Marriage at an early age²— means that young women are dependent upon their husbands for both, money for fees and for time to study.

Resistance on the personal level: Introducing Mma Qoco (Aunty³, hero of the struggle.

Mma Qoco was born in urban Johannesburg in 1938 in the Orlando area which was later to become Soweto. She was in fact, the daughter of an immigrant worker who had come to Johannesburg from what is now known as Zimbabwe and worked as a wood worker. Her mother was from the Transvaal and worked as a domestic worker. Mma is multi-lingual but expresses her

² statistics record marriages from the age of 15 although the constitution legally allows for marriage from the age of 16

³ Name changed. According to cultural protocols, I call her Aunty or Ma.

identity as Nguni, a linguistic grouping which includes Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Ndebele and crossing at least three current national borders. She married a Xhosa man and maintains her role in maintaining a traditional homestead and practices in the ancestral country of her husband and her children.

After a primary school education in a church hall in Orlando, Mma was educated to Junior School Certificate (Year 10) at English language boarding schools in Kwa Zulu Natal. The curriculum at the time was a liberal arts curriculum incorporating English literature, maths, science and language as a subject. This was a curriculum which produced by year 12, African students with similar academic outcomes to white students: the longer the students stayed within the schooling system, the closer the results came. (Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in Native Educational Institutions 1947) This is consistent with contemporary results of students who undertake bilingual education: the longer the students maintain tuitions in both languages, the closer the results to mon-lingual speakers become. It was an education which was criticised by many whites as producing 'educated Kaffirs who were more trouble than the red-blanket idlers.' It was the education system which produced Nelson Mandela, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ma Sisulu, Charlotte Maxeke, Lilian Ngoyi and many others.

By the time she completed her schooling, in the early 1950's, the Nationalist government elected by white electorate had introduced legislation to reserve certain jobs for whites only and to relegate blacks to be 'drawers of water and hewers of wood', Voerwoed. Blacks were consigned to 'nations' based on a European construction of tribalism and to develop within their own.

As a native born in Soweto, Aunty was able to remain in Soweto, growing up in Orlando and adjacent Dube, the homes of the nascent black middle class removed from Johannesburg so that the 'whites would not be swamped'. These were the homes of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and the leadership of the Aunty started training as a nurse, earning Her husband was a graduate of the Jan Hofmeyr school of social work but together they were unable to earn enough money to feed themselves relying on the extended family structures to support themselves and their family.

She soon realised that if she was going to get anywhere, she had to go into business. She began work in the HR section of a major fashion house, eventually becoming the head of HR. The black urban proletariat was not only to provide the engine, that drove the industrialisation of South Africa, it also provided a market for consumer goods.

One day, a friend said to her, '*Hey you are sleeping. We need to get into business*' and thus she and her friend set up a small general store and butchers shop in a shopping centre in Soweto, where there were few shops, little transport for a work force who spent hours away from home each day. She was later to run two taxis as well.

Throughout this time, although living a lifestyle which others saw as 'affluent' (per come) she maintained her commitment to the downfall of the apartheid

economy participating in the protests against the apartheid government believing that.....

We were trying to force the government to liberation to release Mandela so they he could come and liberate the people.

Yea but by these constant marches and strikes, we knew that the main aim was to cripple the economy of the country ...EEEH, eeh who was the other one

Botha??? Then de Klerk??

Botha and de Klerk could change their mind and liberate the people. By the economy...once the economy of the country had decline then things were going to work differently (Interview Soweto 2008)

The struggle of this time and the period of transition have left their scars on her as well as others and she became quite agitated as she spoke decalring:

that during the apartheid regime when your father went into exile we and our children here we did not just sleep and say one day they are going to redeem us eeh they are going to lead us from the apartheid regime...we are also fighting the apartheid regime, we are toy-toying every day ..the boer were killing our children....we marched in 1961 for passes...you know the dumbas...we used to callit dumbas...thethethe identity (is quite agitated) document..we marched totototo Union building in Pretoria to protest against the passes women had to carry Dompasses.

A lot of people were killed there. It originated from Veereeninging(sp) – a lot of people were killed there, they lost their lives, God is good because we were on a dormant side, you know we were not in front of everything. Most of those who were in front died....but you know whenever somebody died we used to march and bury them in dignity. If there's a rally or anything, we used to attend the rally, if there's a march we used to attend the march to the police station, to all those government departments to fight for our rights until ...and we used to fight for Mandela to be released from Robben Island to take his place totototo lead us against the apartheid regime

The in response to comments about the changes in their people made by my father and mother when they returned from exile, Aunty explained:

*There was a **lot** of violence because of starvation, because there were two sides, others were on the side of the oppressors, others wereat the same time to get a piece of breadand be on the liberation side you see*

AJP: They were having to walk a really tight line

Mma Qoco Actually you see that there days nobody's going to work , we were all marching. No work, no pay and people would feel that without a pay when my children are at school and I can't make a living and then they would go to work and when they come back they are being punished

AJP: MMM

Mma Qoco: They are being called sellouts.. At times it is not to say they are sellouts, there are circumstances which compel to that mmmm [Interview Soweto 2008)

On the death of her husband in 2004, after 50 years of marriage, Mma Qoco felt that she was no longer in a position to maintain her retail business. She explains that her reasons for doing this were economic: *from there 1994 when we were given liberation and everyone wanted to stretch their arms, there were a lot of spaza shops everyone had to ..you know because there was a lot of unemployment in South Africa...* (pers com 2008) However, there are perhaps some cultural reasons for this as well. While she talks about this business as hers, her husband played an important public role both in the shop and in the network of African business people in Soweto. I recall one Sunday, when Uncle and his business associates, met together at their house. Aunty and her two eldest daughter, both tertiary educated women, spent the day in the kitchen preparing and serving food. As the day wore on and more arrived, Aunty began to express her frustration as she continued to pull out more and more of her month's food supply to provide for the visitors.

Her daughters who had to work the next day, left to return home and she was left with only me to assist. She could not send me into serve the visitors because I did not know the protocol for serving. Finally left with no option she sent me forward with very clear instructions on who took precedence: all the men took precedence over the women. At no time did she cause shame to the household by displaying her frustration or impatience. Clearly they were a team. Her sons have told of being brought before their uncle to account for the breakup of their marriages; and for him to claim children on behalf of the family from unofficial relationships. Mma Qoco and her family demonstrated the way in which the patriarchal system had provided a supportive framework.

Certainly together, they enjoyed a material standard of living not vastly different to those of us in the middle class in the West, their children, including two children from her husband's extended family had all had some level of tertiary education.

At the death of her husband, she sold her general dealership and developing in its place a catering and events management business for funerals, weddings and other cultural events, a business which she runs largely from home and fits more within the gender division of labour. It is a large and complex activity involving the hiring and setting up of marquees, provision of napery, cutlery cooking equipment. The business builds on her extensive networks and social capital as a senior matriarch within the African community in Soweto.

It also means, however, that her client group, her market, is largely the community of Soweto who have limited income. . She charges, for example, 1R for one unit of cutlery (consisting of 20 items) and 4 R (<\$Au1) for each chair. She also acts as a mentor for other younger African women starting out in the sector.

She has recently with a small group of women begun to develop a network for providing accommodation and tours of Soweto for the opening international tourist market provided by the Confederation Cup in 2009 and the World Cup in 2010. She remains committed to being an independent black business woman, within the community of Soweto.

Mma Qoco currently employs one full-time live-in female helper who assists with the housework but also the washing and cleaning of the napery, cutlery and pots and pans. In addition, two male labourers are employed to do the driving and physical work involved in setting up the marquees. Nazareth pays the minimum wage to all her workers, paying them on a weekly, rather than monthly basis as is the usual pattern. This is at their request as they live '*from hand to mouth*'. It is unlikely that she pays workers compensation insurance, holiday pay, or superannuation.

Until recently the male outside workers have been managed by her youngest son, who at 28 had never been employed in the formal sector despite tertiary qualifications in IT. Recently he obtained his first job in the formal economy and it has been difficult to replace him. He works seven days a week assisting on weekends with the physical work. To replace him she requires consistency, and a driver's licence which at a cost of R300 is not always easy for people to obtain. In addition like much of the work in the informal sector, it is not necessarily full time work. If she wishes to extend her business beyond the Soweto community, she requires someone with an education, the ability to speak English and an understanding of aspects of marketing and government regulation. With limited working capital it is likely that this will have to be a family member prepared to work for the family in the first instance.

Ausi,⁴ her female worker is an immigrant worker from Lesotho and lives in. She speaks little English and has had little formal education.. While Mma Qoco has a twin tub washing machine, Ausi still spins and rinses all the washing by hand outside. She frequently gets confused with the different electrical appliances in the kitchen and would certainly be described as having limited skills and productivity.

She is described by Mma Qoco as a 'helper' or as her daughter. She accompanies, Aunty on social events, is provided with medical treatment when required and has regularly rostered time off for her own entertainment. We see in this way, that the paternalistic principles of ubuntu in action. We can ask what of Ausi's own husband and children and how is looking after them but presumably this is again a family sacrifice for the benefit of even some small monetary income.

You could not say that this business provides any kind of security for employees. They are dependent on the resilience, agency and drive of Mama

⁴ Ausi Literally translated means sister

Qoco. The business itself is precarious in the current South African environment, but does provide some employment.

Mma Qoco provides a case study of a black woman who has negotiated the racist, colonial society while maintaining some continuity with traditional African values and ethics. She has used personal attributes of resilience and accumulated social capital from the traditional system in which she and her husband grew up. That the understanding of this system in terms not only of practice but of the underpinning values it is meant to support, has been a key component in this social capital.

A grammar school or academic style education to junior secondary level provided her with the skills and underpinning knowledge to understand the political situation in which she lives and to underpin a sense of personal agency in negotiating a racist, modern economy.

Recognising some of the issues and policies in NT

As I have gone through this presentation, I am sure you can recognise easily many of the issues as they are lived out here in the Northern Territory particularly around the issue of sovereignty in the Modern Australian state and how these have been borne often by Indigenous women.

There can be no going back as one of my South African informants said to me; but there needs to be some recognition of the values and ideology which underpin the discourses of contemporary liberal democracies, in particular that of cultures of the Working Family or Hard Working Australians. What is work and what role does it play in individual's lives.

Non-Indigenous Australian society has not acted in any way to support the harmony or balance of Indigenous societies. Once again Indigenous women have fallen into the space created by patriarchy and racism. It could be argued that in the last half century in Australia the government has acted to do away with all genres of dependency through the welfare system and the granting of political citizenship and sovereignty. However the realities of the marginalisation of indigenous people physically, economically and socially from the development of Australian society has meant that these rights are not really embedded in the society with any sense of mutual responsibility.

The latest intervention has acted to actually take away the political and economic independence by removing the anti-discrimination act, and controlling the way in which people in certain locations can spend their money. While the re-imposition of old forms of dependence might have been justifiable as a short term intervention, it is difficult to see how it can be justified into a third government.

What it has served to do is to entrench the notion of dependence or interdependence being somehow pathological while ignoring the support given through the tax system and social infrastructure such as education, transport, health to certain sectors of the community. We have seen little recognition of

Indigenous systems of knowing, being and doing and the ways in which gender is constructed and preparedness to work with Indigenous men and women to negotiate this. There has been little preparedness to work with Indigenous men, particularly young men. There have been few attempts to recognise the rights of individuals or communities to make decisions and take responsibility for how the level at which they interact with national and global economies

There has been a decline in the ability of the education system provide the skills required to act with any sense of agency as an Indigenous person. There have been few options for Indigenous people generally and Indigenous women specifically that to take on the option of becoming part of an urbanised proletariat – becoming an Australian working family – high levels of marriage to working white men taking on another patriarchy.

But as Jack Davis, said in 1928, after he received his citizenship tags, I'm always gonna be a blackfella.