the economy; hence the impact that a GEAR, there has also been more interest government's stance on the Growth, economy, in particular the South African way that increases private investment and boosts growth. Labour market flexibility: GEAR advocates a model of "regulated flexibility" with flex-ible collective bargaining structures, varied standards and systems of "voice regula-tion". GEAR argues for wage increases moderated to match productivity. Restructuring of the public service: GEAR intends to downsizc and streamline the public service. This is obviously closely related to the cardinal principle of fiscal discipline and deficit reduction. The authors observe that while the public service is obviously riddled with problems and is inefficient at present, downsizing is not necessarily the only way of dealing with this or of delivering an effective social back-log.

Human resource development: one of the more positive aspects of GEAR is acknowl-edging the need for improved education and training and the relation of human resources to economic development. As the authors point out, the question nonetheless remains as to how human resource development will be successfully pursued in such a fiscally constrained environment.

Privatisation: This is the main premise of GEAR and was in force even before the adoption of GEAR. GEAR has adopted a rolling back of state ownership, hoping that enterprises can be more efficiently run when privately owned and also linking privatisa-tion to the raising of state revenue. This framework provides archetypal forms of an economic system modelled on the neo-liberal policy prescriptions of the Interna-tional Financial Institutions (IFI). However, in the case of South Africa, the system is self-imposed because the South African economy of 1996 did not face the macroeco-nomic imbalances that required economic re-form stabilisation measures. The South African economy had not suffered from internal or external shocks of the kind that had affected the Sub-Saharan African countries in the con-text of extreme internal and external imbal-ances such as high rates of inflation and volatile real exchange rates. This is because inflation between 1994 and 1995 was below 10 percent, that is half its rate in the early 1990s. The external current account deficit was also more than balanced by long-term capital flows.

Thus, the government’s economic overhaul, characterised by economic reform measures similar to those of structural adjustment programmes introduced in other African countries, is all the more remarkable in view of the limited, even negative, impact of such stabilisation measures, especially in Africa. Furthermore the introduction of economic reform measures is all the more significant because of the lack of evidence that the IFI had over South African policy-makers, the lack of any dramatic changes in the economic and political environment to warrant such major shifts in policy orientation, and the lack of a transparent and fully argued justification for the adoption of an entirely different policy framework, which failed to deliver the promised economic growth or to effect significant redistribution of income and socio-economic opportunities in favour of the poor. In contrast to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), GEAR as an economic reform measure did not indicate reducing inequality as a policy goal; rather it stressed decreasing unemployment, which was a RDP considered necessary but not crucial.

The authors proceed to explore the relationship between GEAR and RDP, drawing on the fact that both policies are fundamentally different in the frameworks that underpin them. As the debate unfolds, the authors have a rather more rigorous and coherent presentation of the discontinuities between the RDP and GEAR and the role of the state in the economy. It is suggested that perhaps the most radical movement towards economic reform and liberalisation was instituted when the government introduced a neo-liberal economic strategy - GEAR - as an economic reform measure. Since its initiation in 1996, GEAR has been highly controversial, and it continues to be so. This controversy has been related to whether the GEAR strategy was consistent with the ideology outlined in the ANC's manifesto and prevalent during the anti-apartheid struggle and leading up to the 1994 elections - in other words, the RDP - or whether it marked a break with the RDP and an embracing of neo-liberal economic ideas. As the authors argue, RDP and GEAR are fundamentally different. While the RDP is a people-centred development strategy focused on meeting basic needs and redistribution, GEAR’s focus was on export-oriented growth. The RDP placed redistribution as a central objective and mechanism for growth, while GEAR’s premise is that redistribution will only result from economic growth - an approach based on the trickle-down notion of growth. A further distinction is that the RDP involved broad consultation with input from all stakeholders before it was finalised, whereas GEAR was introduced as an embrace of a marketable economic strategy. Moreover, upon introduction, it became apparent that GEAR is highly technical and focuses on marketable economic strategy, which itself is not transparent to the majorities of people, even those with an economic background.

The government still point to a consistent policy development process from the RDP to GEAR; yet, there is consensus among both critics, as in the case of the authors, and supporters of GEAR, that the key features of GEAR, like those of other typically "orthodox" macroeconomic policies, are increasingly out of line with the fundamentals of post-apartheid South Africa that characterised the RDP. This differentiation by the authors reflects two interpretations of the policy approach by the new regime: either the government had moved off the old ideology and pragmatically and ideologically generated a new macro framework consistent with global economic realities; (ii) the government has been forced upon an ideologically generated neo-liberal policy which in essence undermines the goal of redressing the gross inequalities of the apartheid period.

The RDP envisaged an integrated and unified labour market. Politically, the document represented both a consensus across different interests and a compromise between competing objectives. Economically, the RDP was successful in articulating the main aspirations of the movement for post-apartheid South Africa, which are growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution in a consistent macroeconomic framework. While the government’s embrace of a GEAR, this political debate it can evaluate whether the South African “experiment” with neo-liberal economic policy has achieved its objective of consistent macroeconomic framework for reducing unemployment and ensure a more equitable distribution of income and wealth between races and genders.

On the impact of GEAR on women, the authors argue that women are only specifically referred to twice in the entire body of the GEAR document, and gender is not even mentioned at all. While this not in itself a barometer for GEAR’s approach to gender, it is reflective of a complete lack of policies aimed at addressing women’s needs. The above argument by the authors indicates that GEAR as an economic reform policy is gender-blind in the formal economy and does not even start with the disadvantaged structural position of women in the economy. This is because trade policies and tariff reductions due to economic reform policies by GEAR have negatively affected the labour-intensive industries of manufacturing (clothing and textile) which coincidently have seen the highest levels of feminisation of the workforce. This theoretically innovative article indicates that two main consequences of South Africa’s GEAR on women are as follows.

Firstly, the employment effects are impacting most negatively on those sectors of the economy that employ large numbers of women and are labour-intensive. Secondly, these labour-intensive industries have resulted in massive job losses in the sectors that have traditionally employed large numbers of women. These negative employment effects are being generated primarily through a typical macroeconomic policy strategy of rationalisation and restructuring of the industrial and corporate processes, which have led to the in- formalisation of women’s work.

Secondly, the long-term trajectory of the South African economy is moving towards capital-intensive production, thereby favouring the employment of men in the formal sector of the economy whereas women are increasingly being subjected to part-time and informal employment. Thus the pattern that unfolds here is that the short-term trade liberalisation and economic reform are being borne disproportionately by women, whilst the potential long-term employment benefits of reform and liberalisation processes favour men.

In the end, the central lesson from the article under review is that neo-liberalism and ignorance of harmonisation of gender, work and the economy exert a heavy price in the case of GEAR. For these reasons, the text provides an innovative way of understanding the gendered dynamics of economic policies and the development of the national economy. As pointed out by the authors, the challenge therefore is to develop a gendered economic analysis and gender-sensitive
economic policies that recognise and value women’s contributions to the formal and informal economy and thus deepen services to address women’s needs. By developing gender-sensitive policies, a holistic and integrated approach is critical since it is women’s position in society and structural inequalities in the economy that disadvantage them. Strategies that simply attempt to alleviate the position of women without fundamentally challenging the source of their oppression are bound to fail.


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**Sudan Peace Process: Challenges and Future Prospects**

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**Sexe, genre et société. Engendrer les sciences sociales africaines**


Ayesha Mei-Tje Imam, du Nigeria, est actuellement coordinatrice, pour l’Afrique et le Moyen-Orient, d’un programme d’action et de recherche sur les Femmes et les Lois, regroupant 26 pays, pour le réseau de solidarité international “Femmes dans les économies et des cultures africaines”.

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Amina Mama, chercheur de nationalité nigériane, est l’auteur de Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity, Routledge (1995), The Hidden Struggle Statutory versus Voluntary Sector Responses to Violence Against Black Women, Londres (1989). Elle est titulaire d’un doctorat de psychologie appliquée et a enseigné dans un certain nombre d’institutions européennes et internationales.

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**THE CRY OF WINNIE MANDELA: A novel**

*Njabulo S. Ndebele*

Ndebele portrays four women whose lives have been spent waiting for their men to return, like Odysseus’ Penelope. They question themselves and each other about why they waited and what did this waiting do to them. This leads them to imaginary conversation s that reveal something of the always unattainable truth.

Nadine Gordimer, South African Writer and Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature 1991

“Ndebele represents a rare breed of a writer: he combines political awareness with a sensitivity towards context, language and characterisation. The result is a gift offering to the present time...”

Dr Ato Quayson, Director, African Studies Centre, University of Cambridge, UK

“For so many decades South Africans have been thirsting for this text. I feel privileged to be of the country where it has originated.”

Antjie Krog, South African writer.

Njabulo S. Ndebele is the author of the celebrated Fools and Other Stories, a children’s book Bonela and the Peach Tree, and The Rediscovery of the Ordinary, a collection of highly influential critical essays. He is currently vice chancellor of the University of Cape Town.