

INVITED ARTICLES

Marthinus S. BADENHORST*

SOUTH AFRICA (2009) – SALIENT CONTEMPORARY FEATURES IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Abstract: South Africa is a demographically diverse country where many divisions (still) tend to coincide with racial boundaries, beset by a wide range of socio-economic problems typical of developing countries and otherwise stemming from its colonial past and a discriminatory past policy of apartheid. The paper describes the country's salient features in facts and figures in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of society in terms of demography, education, employment, public health care, poverty, housing, crime and the economy. The picture presented tends to be on the dark side, but also hopeful for the future thanks to *inter alia* a strong globalised economy.

Key words: South Africa, demography, economy, socio-economic problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a very diverse country, often described as a 'world-in-one'. All the cleavages and differences typical of the world at large, run right through South African society – be it race, culture, unequal distribution of wealth, varying development levels or whatever. Her people are representative of all the major population groupings and cultures in the world. There are 11 official languages and all the world's major religious traditions are practiced, including African traditional churches which form the biggest single grouping. Lifestyles range from 'traditional' in the deep rural areas where a large portion of the population, mostly Africans, try to eke out a living through subsistence farming, to post-modern in cities reminding one more of the best in America than Africa.

* Marthinus S. BADENHORST, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Pretoria, South Africa, e-mail: msbaden@iafrica.com.

The economic landscape ranges from ultra-modern pockets of excellence and wealth to vast rural areas of commercial inactivity, the people from being well-educated to illiterate, from being filthy rich to desperately poor and services from the best money can buy to some of the poorest imaginable the public sector can deliver. It is also a country where, according to an erstwhile prime minister, General J. C. Smuts, the worst could happen at any moment but somehow just never does.

To complicate matters further, South Africa has a chequered history where black people's access to education, economic and other opportunities had wilfully been restricted for political-ideological reasons, first under colonial influence and between 1948 and 1994 under the policy of apartheid. This has institutionalised and exacerbated existing cleavages and differences in the population which has left its scars on society, as is evident in the ensuing description of society's salient features.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

South Africa's population is officially classified into four categories, viz. Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. Collectively the former three groups are referred to as 'blacks'. The classification was a resurrection of racial classification under apartheid in terms of the Population Registration Act which had been abolished in 1991 (see Johnson, 2009, p. 113). Racial classification forms the basis for *inter alia* the Employment Equity Act which sets stiff racial targets for every level of the workforce, black economic empowerment and a host of other measures aimed at preferential treatment in order to set right previous disadvantages blacks had suffered under apartheid.

In 2008, South Africa had a population of 48.7 million people, of which 38.6 million (79.2%) were African, 4.5 million (9.2%) Whites, 4.4 million (9%) Coloureds and 1.2 million (2.6%) Indians (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 6). As will become clear, the characteristics of the individual groups vary much. However, because of the large share of Africans in the population, their demographic and other characteristics increasingly come to represent that of the entire population as such. The population nonetheless reflects a number of positive as well as disconcerting features.

Firstly, population growth came down rapidly from an estimated 2.4% in the period 1970–1995 (CSS, 1997, § 3.2) to 1.25% per year in 2001 and 0.97% in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 14). Population projections for the two decades between 2001 and 2021 put the increase for Africans, Coloureds and Asians at 15.1%, 17.9% and 7.5% respectively, while Whites are projected to experience negative growth of –8.1% (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 12).

Secondly, in 2008, the population reflected a youthful age structure, with 32% of the population (34.2% of Africans and 17.7% of Whites) being under the age of 15 years (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 1), which is 10% lower than the 42% registered in 1990 (see Badenhorst, 1992, p. 72). At the same time, only 7% of the total population (6.5% of Africans and 12.3% of Whites) were over the age of 60 years (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 8). The youthful age structure holds obvious implications for future population growth in the poorest and least educated population sector.

Thirdly, life expectancy dropped rapidly from 62.8 years in 1991 (CSS, 1997, § 3.10), to 56.2 years in 2000 and 50.5 years in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 38). Neighbouring Zimbabwe's 43 years (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 39) do no longer appear very distant. The major contributor to the decrease is of course HIV/Aids and its accompanying illnesses.

Fourthly, because of influx-control measures the urbanisation of specifically Africans was restricted under apartheid. The rate for the entire population has, however, increased from 54% in 1996 to 57.2% in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 1). The results of the increase are clearly visible in *inter alia* the increase in informal settlements and overnight appearance of squatter camps and pressure on public services. Africans were 48.6% urbanised in 2007, Coloureds 83.9%, Indians 97.4% and Whites 92.2% (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 25).

Fifthly, the population is very unevenly distributed between the nine provinces for historic, economic and a variety of other reasons. Most populous in 2008 was Gauteng Province where 21.5% of the population resided, and the least populous province was Northern Cape with only 2.3% of the population (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 25). The population density in the two provinces were 572.3 persons per km² and 3 persons per km² respectively (SAIRR, 2008a, p. 20).

Lastly, almost one-quarter of South Africa's under-18s are growing up without one or both their parents (*Fast Facts*, 2009a, p. 1). According to the same source, the number of double orphans, i.e. children who have lost both their parents, has doubled from 352,000 to 701,000 between 2002 and 2007. The numbers are expected to rise in line with adult deaths from HIV/Aids. This has contributed much to the higher prevalence of child-headed households, i.e. families where the oldest child is younger than 17 years old. Between 2002 and 2007 such families increased from 118,000 to 148,000, of which 146,000 are African (*Fast Facts*, 2009a, p. 8).

3. EDUCATION

South Africa's top schools are as good as the best in the world and some wealthy foreigners even enrol their children in these schools because they are much cheaper and every inch as good (see Editors Inc, 2009, p. 56). At the same time, however, some 60–80% of (effectively all black) schools are dysfunctional (see

inter alia Bloch in *Beeld*, 5 September 2009), reflecting virtually all ills imaginable, such as high rates of teacher and pupil absenteeism, drunk teachers, general lack of discipline, drugs and alcohol abuse, high rates of teenage pregnancies, corruption and maladministration (Johnston, 2009, p. 462). Only recently the state president deemed fit to reprimand teachers in these schools for teaching (only) three and a half hours per day on average against six and a half hours in 'formerly white' schools (*Beeld*, 3 September 2009). No wonder that voices are increasingly being raised by venerable persons in the black community like Professor Mamphela Ramphele, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town and Director of the World Bank, that so-called 'Bantu-education' during the apartheid-era had been superior to what African children are presently receiving (see *Beeld*, 21 August 2009).

Unequal and neglected education for blacks during the apartheid-era, and now failure by their own government, has left deep scars on the educational structure of the black population. (It must also be borne in mind though, that between 1976 when the schools riots against apartheid broke out and 1994 when the country's first democratically elected government was installed, black education was completely disrupted when learners were drawn into the struggle under the slogan 'Liberation before Education'). The cumulative effects of all these factors are partially reflected in the fact 13% of Africans over 20 years (2006) had no schooling and 15.3% were illiterate (SAIRR, 2008b, pp. 13, 15).

Judged solely by budget allocation, education clearly enjoys high priority in post-apartheid South Africa. This is reflected in the fact that 17.6% of South Africa's total government spending goes to education, which is 5% more than for instance Poland and 6% more than the UK (see SAIRR, 2008b, p. 10).

Good progress is recorded in the reduction of the numbers of persons (of all races) over the age of 20 years who had no schooling. Their numbers came down from 14.1% in 1998 to 10.4% in 2006 (SAIRR, 2008b, p. 12). The percentage for Africans dropped from 17.8% to 13% and for Coloureds from 7.8% to 4.4%. Significant increases have also been recorded in the number of learners who complete high school and university. In 1998, 27.9% of the population (20+ years) held a high school diploma, against 32.4% in 2006 (SAIRR, 2008b, p. 14). According to the same source, the figure for Africans increased from 18.9% to 26.7%, for Coloureds from 24.0% to 29.6%, for Indians from 46.6% to 55.8% and for Whites from 74.9% to 79%. School leavers who qualified for university entrance, however, dropped from 17% in 2002 to 15% in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008b, p. 43). Particularly disconcerting is the fact that of the 467,985 pupils writing the school-leaving examination in 2004, only 39,939 sat higher grade mathematics, only 24,143 passed it and of these only 7,236 were African (Johnson, 2009, p. 462). An unsuitable (outcomes based) education model (see Bloch in *Beeld*, 5 September 2009), declining education standards in general and

declining literacy and numeracy proficiencies in particular, are issues that presently cause great concern among all stakeholders (see Editors Inc, 2009, p. 57).

Good progress has also been recorded in the case of persons aged 20 and older who have completed higher education. In this case Africans increased their share from 0.9% in 1998 to 1.7% in 2006, and Whites from 11.7% to 15.9% (SAIRR, 2008b, p. 14).

The best proof of quality in the higher education sector remains the standard of its universities. South Africa has 2 universities among the top 500 universities in the world, altogether 6 amongst the top 1,000 and a total of 11 amongst the top 2,000. This represents a significant down-slide in position since 1994. In continental context no fewer than 12 out of the 14 top universities in Africa are South African, the other 2 being Egyptian (www.webometrics.inf/top100_continent.asp.asp7cont=se_asia).

4. EMPLOYMENT

In 1997, the Economic Active Population (EAP) stood at 9,787,000 workers which almost doubled to 16,919,000 in 2007. Africans represented 94% of the increase and 73% of the total EAP (SAIRR, 2008d, pp. 11–12). In 2008, the total number employed amounted to some 13.7 million, compared to 12.7 million in 2007 (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 148), of which 71% were employed in the formal sector, 20% in the informal sector and 7% domestic workers.

Unemployment (March 2007) stood at 38.3% with the highest incidence (53.5%) in Limpopo Province (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 211). ‘Discouraged’ work-seekers, i.e. work-seekers who gave up looking for a job, grew by 108% between 1994 and 2007 peaking at 3.5 million in 2005. The highest unemployment rate (2007) is among Africans (44.1%) followed by Coloureds (29.1%), Indians (20.6%) and Whites (7.5%) (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 14).

South Africa’s labour force is massively underskilled in many areas. This left the new government with a huge dilemma when it embarked on a programme of affirmative action in order to open opportunities (and give positions) to ‘previously disadvantaged persons’ with the ultimate aim that the workplace should reflect the demographic profile of the country at large. The programme did, however, produce disastrous results, and ‘speedily crippled the state machine and the parastatals, collapsing the standard of services’ (Johnston, 2009, p. 112). Nowhere is it more evident than in infrastructure which is rapidly collapsing due to, amongst others, a ‘lack of capacity’, despite billions in unspent budget allocations. To illustrate the effect on the road network: in 1998, 1% of paved national and provincial roads were very poor and by 2008 it was 27%; in 1998,

41% of the roads were classified as 'good' and 30% as 'very good'. By 2008 the two figures dwindled to 11% and 5% respectively (*Fast Facts*, 2009b, p. 5). It is, however, on the municipal level, particularly smaller towns and cities, that total collapse is looming (see *Beeld*, 2 September 2009), resulting in ever increasing protest marches which often turn into bloody violence.

5. PUBLIC HEALTH

South Africa's health care system shows a sharp contrast between the private health care system which is by all standards world class and relatively cheap, and the public healthcare system which is beset by a wide array of problems, of which mismanagement is probably the most important. Since 1994, famous hospitals like Grootte Schuur, where the world's first heart transplant was performed, and Chris Hani-Baragwanath in Soweto, the world's biggest hospital, fell into complete neglect (see *inter alia* Johnson, 2009, p. 467). In many instances public hospitals have even become a threat to human lives because of a lack of, amongst others, infection control procedures. Acute linen shortages, outdated equipment, poor safety levels, misconduct, low morale and violations of patient's rights are all 'problems exacerbated by staff shortages' (Johnson, 2009, p. 467).

Since 1994, government focus had been on bringing (some) primary health care to the poorer people, especially in the rural areas (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 60). Theoretically this brought primary health care closer to the people. However, out of the 1,345 new clinics government had built by 2004, 60% had no properly trained nurses (Johnson, 2009, p. 464). At the same time, state care had to contend with 'a world-class' HIV/Aids and TB-crisis, a cholera outbreak and a brain drain. It is estimated that by the end of the year (2009), the country will have shortage of 3,200 doctors, 2,400 nurses and 112 pharmacists (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 559). Irony is that in 2002, 5,000 (well-trained) South African doctors and 18,000 health workers were working abroad (Johnson, 2009, p. 463). Government's solution to the problem was simply to import Cuban doctors and shorten the training period for doctors from 6 to 5 years.

The best single measure of the quality of health conditions in a country remains infant mortality rates. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births has improved slightly from 48 to 46 between 1994 and 2007. The under five mortality rate has, however, deteriorated from 65 in 1994 to 71 in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008f, pp. 5–6), i.e. seven times higher than in developed countries. Reflecting the greater ills in society at large-poverty, poor health, HIV/Aids and so on – tuberculosis cases increased from 73,917 in 1995 to 342,315 in 2006 (SAIRR,

2008f, p. 1). All this, of course, contributed to the fact that South Africa's global rating on the Human Development Index (HDI) slipped from 121st position in 2006 (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 198) to 129th position in 2009 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>).

In 2008, an estimated 5.6 million people were HIV-infected, with the highest prevalence in Kwazulu-Natal (16%), Africans as such (13.9%) and pregnant women ($\pm 29\%$) (SAIRR, 2008f, p. 1). Particularly tragic is the fact that the cumulative Aids-deaths up to date is estimated at some 2.54 million and Aids-orphaned at some 1.25 million (SAIRR, 2008, pp. 20–21). An estimated 24.5% of the workforce (2005) is HIV/Aids-infected, which is calculated to cause shrinkage to the GDP of about 2.1% annually (SAIRR, 2008f, p. 21).

6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

6.1. Poverty

Between 1996 and 2007 the number of people living on less than one dollar a day decreased from 4.3% to 2% (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 80). According to the same source, in 1993 one-half of the population lived in absolute poverty, i.e. on less than R367 (\$48.50) per month; in 1999 the figure had increased to 52% and in 2007 it had dropped to 41% (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 82). In 1996, 40.6% of the population lived in relative poverty, i.e. in households with incomes less than the poverty line (R1,023 [\$135] for single persons and R3,752 [\$495] for a household of 8 persons). This proportion had increased to 42.9% by 2007. In the same period relative poverty grew from 50.5% to 51.8% for Africans, 17.2% to 18.3% for Coloureds, 6.2% to 6.6% for Indians and 1.9% to 3.7% for Whites (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 83). Whites are clearly beginning to feel the pinch of poverty with a doubling of their numbers living in relative poverty, albeit from a narrow base. According to the Minister of Planning, on average white peoples' monthly incomes of R8,141 (\$1,074) are still ten times higher than the R845 (\$112) of black's (see *Beeld*, 26 September 2009).

At present there are a staggering 14,220,808 South Africans ($\pm 35\%$) who are dependent on social grants to survive, which benefited a total of 9,701,302 children in all (*Fast Facts*, 2009b, p. 2). This offers an indication of sorts to show how poor a large segment of South Africans really are. The unintended consequences of the grants, albeit anecdotal, are that women, including school children, are having babies for the sake of the grant, and that grants are destroying subsistence farming in the (deep) rural areas.

6.2. Housing

South Africa's housing supply covers the entire spectrum from 'the most lavish and imposing in the world to [...] high-density shanty towns and so-called informal settlements that blight not only the approaches to cities and towns but also the lives of the occupants' (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 55).

Housing delivery in South Africa faces huge challenges due to rapid household formation, historic backlogs and low incomes. Between 1996 and 2007 households increased by 12.5 million, i.e. 38%, and families residing in formal dwellings by 51% and those in informal dwellings by 24% (SAIRR, 2008e, p. 1). The housing budget itself has risen from R4.2 billion (\$554.1 million) in 2002 to R10 billion (\$1.32 billion) in 2009 (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 56).

Government's inherited housing backlog in 1994 sprouted from mainly apartheid policies that inhibited the urbanisation of Africans. It stands to government's credit that they took on the challenge and in the past year alone had delivered more than 248,000 homes to poorer communities and more than 2.6 million homes since 1994 (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 55), which is no mean feat by any standard. Regrettably, many of the houses turned out to be of such poor quality that they had to be demolished after a few years.

In the final analysis, housing also includes infrastructural and other services. In this regard government has performed equally well to improve residential quality for millions, albeit highly unsustainable in a great many instances. For instance, between 1996 and 2007 houses with piped water inside the dwelling increased from 4 million to 5.9 million; dwellings with electricity from 58% to 80% and with flush or chemical toilets from 50% to 58% (SAIRR, 2008e, p. 1). The apartheid pattern of low-cost housing areas on the periphery of the urban areas has, however, been extensively reinforced since 1994 because of the cost and availability of land on the city edge.

6.3. Crime

Crime is without a doubt the biggest problem besetting ordinary South Africans and the main reason for emigration cited by the more than one million Whites and large numbers of Indians who had emigrated by 2006, resulting in an immense brain drain (Johnson, 2009, p. 114).

Crimes against children and old people are everyday occurrences and fraud, theft and bribery in both the public and private sectors have virtually become a way of life. Even more perturbing than the high crime rate is the cruelty and callousness with which it is committed. The violent nature of the criminals and their disrespect for the law are partly reflected in the fact that in 2007 on average more than two police officers were murdered every week (see SAIRR, 2008c, p. 1).

Serious crimes increased from 2.02 million in 1994 to 2.04 in 2007. In 2004, South Africa had the highest homicide rate in the world, namely 38.6 per 100,000 according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (SAIRR, 2008c, p. 1).

Back in 1998, altogether 54,000 rapes were reported (Johnson, 2009, p. 446). The real figure, including unreported rapes, was, however, estimated by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders to be 935,000, while the South African Law Commission put it at a staggering 1.637 million cases (see Johnson, 2009, p. 446). In 2007/2008 reported rapes dropped to 36,190 (SAIRR, 2008c, p. 11). Rape, more often than not, results in a death sentence for the victim because of the high prevalence of Aids. Victims range from few months old babies to 103 year old grandmothers.

It is the crimes committed against children (under 18 years) that really define the nature of (future) South African society. In 2007, a total of 72,457 crimes were reported against a population of some 17,764,360 under 18-year olds (calculated from SAIRR, 2008a, p. 15), segmented as follows: 1,152 murders, 22,625 rapes, 20,445 severe assaults ('grievous bodily harm'), 4,710 indecent assaults and 23,525 common assaults (SAIRR, 2008c, p. 23). From this can be calculated that the reported rate for all crimes against children was 408 per 100,000 in the under-18 years category. According to the official crime statistics, an increase of 34.7% in crimes against children was recorded between 2002 and 2007 (SAIRR, 2008c, p. 23).

It is of course not possible, nor does it fall within the ambit of this paper, to conclusively explain the high crime rate, and particularly its violent nature. There is, however, no denying that the deterioration of the entire criminal justice system, the police and the prisons, as well as affirmative action appointments, lie at the root of the problem(s).

7. THE ECONOMY

It is an undeniable reality that after 15 years of democratic rule, the South African economy is still firmly in the hands of the white population group. It is equally true that the three racial minorities, and especially the Whites, 'remain, to use the ANC's language, South Africa's motive force' (Johnson, 2009, p. 506). This is reflected in, amongst others, their share in the professions, the entrepreneurial and managerial class and ownership of the economy. For instance: in 2003, Whites owned 69% of the equities listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE), foreigners 27% and Blacks, despite massive black economic empowerment transactions, only 4% (McGregor in *Time*, 19 April 2004).

South Africa is a medium-sized, middle-income developing country with a GDP (2008) of 2,304 billion Rand (\$303.96 billion) and a GDP *per capita* of

R47,310 (\$6,240) (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 108). The country's share of global GDP is 0.4 compared to 0.5 for Poland (J P Morgan, 2009). The economy reflects all the features of a developed modern economy in which the Tertiary Sector contributed 64.9% to GDP in 2008, the Secondary Sector 23.6% and the Primary Sector 11.5% (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 119). According to the same source (2009, p. 120), the four main contributors to GDP were: Finance and Business Services (22.1%), Manufacturing (18.2%), General Government Services (14.7%) and Trade, Retail and Wholesale (13.4%). Similarly, Mining and Quarrying contributed only 8.4% and Agriculture a mere 3.2%.

It appears that all the major automobile manufacturing companies in the world have production/assembly plants in South Africa (Mercedes-Benz has been in the country for more than 50 years) (www.mercedes-benz.co.za). Before the recent economic crisis set in, the industry was chasing a production target of one-million units per year (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 130) with a strong export component. (In August 2008, a total of 27,083 units were exported). (*Beeld*, 3 September 2009). Export earnings from the automotives industry exceed that of gold and total employment exceeds 300,000, compared to 455,000 in mining (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 130).

In 2008, South African exports amounted to R663.1 billion (\$87.5 billion) and imports R727.6 billion (\$96 billion) (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 108). According to the same source, main imports consisted of machinery, transport equipment, manufactured goods, chemicals and oil. The main target sectors for exports were Manufacturing (including automobiles parts and full assembly), Tourism, Finance (including call centres), Transport and Communications, i.e. products characteristic of a modern economy.

The JSE is over 100 years old, and ranks among the top twenty in the world (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 184). In October 2008, there were 428 companies listed on the JSE and market capitalisation reached a record high of R6.3 trillion (\$831 billion) in May of the same year. The 27% share of equities owned by foreign investors on the JSE offers a good indication not only of the attractiveness of the local economy as a good investment opportunity, but indirectly also the business atmosphere in the country. In the latter regard South Africa is rated 32nd in the world for 'ease of doing business with', after Singapore in first position, the USA in third and France in 31st (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 166).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in South Africa increased from R328.9 billion (\$43.4 billion) in 2000 to R751.9 billion (\$99.2 billion) in 2007 (SAIRR, 2008g, p. 54), i.e. by 128.6%. South African investment in other countries, i.e. outward investment, jumped from R38.64 billion (\$5.1 billion) in 1995, to R478.9 billion (\$63.2 billion) in 2000 and R937.4 billion (\$123.7 billion) in 2007, i.e. by 95.7% between the latter two years (SAIRR, 2008g, p. 54). The primary source of FDI was the United Kingdom (69.7%), followed by the USA

(6.2%) and Germany (5.5%) and targeted mainly Mining (40.9%) and Finance (26.6%) (SAIRR, 2008g, p. 54). The figures attest to the (continued) close historical link between Britain and South Africa existing since colonial times.

There are numerous South African-based corporations which are successfully engaged in the global marketplace while dozens more companies, large and small, operate throughout Africa and compete successfully with international rivals. Of these the biggest one is British American Tobacco P.L.C. with a market capitalisation of R438 billion (\$57.8 billion), Anglo American (R193 billion) (\$25.5 billion) in the fourth place and Impala Platinum (R95 billion) (\$12.5 billion) in the tenth place (see Editors Inc, 2009, pp. 189–191). Other South African companies of international significance cover a diverse range and include banking, insurance, information technology, telecommunications, commodities, steel, tobacco, paper and pulp and so on (see Editors Inc, 2009, p. 191–193).

Since the end of apartheid, government has sought to achieve a more equitable distribution of national wealth and employment opportunities ‘without impeding economic growth’ (Editors Inc, 2009, p. 172). Hence a programme of ‘broad-based black economic empowerment’ (B-BBEE) was introduced which sets goals for the transfer of shares and the appointment of blacks in companies above a certain size and dates for achieving them. Between 1995 and 2007, a total of 1,738 major BEE-transactions to the value of R437.8 billion (\$57.8 billion) had been concluded (SAIRR, 2008g, p. 119). It did, however, not benefit blacks beyond a small elite group and what is generally referred to as ‘tenderpreneurs’ (see *Beeld*, 15 September 2009). This is partly corroborated by the Gini co-efficient (2007) for Africans (0.62), against Whites (0.46) and nationwide (0.67) (SAIRR, 2008d, p. 63). The biggest difference between rich and poor is now amongst Africans themselves, and no longer between whites and blacks.

8. CONCLUSION

South Africa clearly is a varied and complex country, hosting a diverse population with a wide array of demographic, social and economic features. What makes it even more unique, and problematic, is that observed differences in many instances coincide with ethnic boundaries and cover the entire spectrum of whatever is scrutinised.

At the heart of many of the differences lie cultural factors, historic reasons which have to do with unequal access to urban areas, housing, equal opportunities and resources, including education and jobs, which severely hampered black

people's upward social mobility. There is obviously only one way to address the wrongs of the past, and that is through affirmative action. This in turn leads to a rather challenging situation because the people to be affirmed do not come from a small minority but represent almost nine-tenths of the total population. On top of that, South Africa's economy is a sophisticated modern industrial economy. The problems associated with integrating such large numbers of 'previously disadvantaged' persons with limited skills into the economy, speaks for itself.

There are numerous problems facing the country, many which are a direct result of the country's past history while others are more difficult to apportion. Topping the list, however, is crime. Other major problems include large scale unemployment, (growing) abject poverty, urban squalor, housing shortages and lack of municipal services, and in the majority of cases, properly functioning schools. Lack of proper maintenance has left the country's once outstanding physical infrastructure in a parlous state. Ill-considered affirmative action for the mere sake of proportional racial representation, amongst other things, has greatly impeded the capacity to deliver services, particularly on the local level where service delivery protests have become more frequent (and violent) and a great concern for future political stability.

REFERENCES

- BADENORST, M. S. (1992), 'The State of the Nation: A Quantitative Look at Constraining Realities in a Post-Apartheid Society', *Economics/Economie*, 6 (2), pp. 71–85.
- BEELD (2009), 26 September, 15 September, 5 September, 3 September, 2 September, 21 August.
- CSS (Central Statistical Services), (1997), *Statistics in Brief*, Pretoria: Central Statistics.
- EDITORS INC (2009), *South Africa at a Glance*, Johannesburg: Paarl Print.
- FAST FACTS (2009a), July, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- FAST FACTS (2009b), September, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- J P MORGAN NEWS RELEASE (2009), 1 July.
- JOHNSTON, R. W. (2009), *South Africa's Brave New World: The Beloved Country Since the End of Apartheid*, London: Allen Lane.
- SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008a), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Demographics Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008b), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Education Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008c), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Crime and Security Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008d), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Business and Employment Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008e), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Living Conditions and Communications Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008f), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, Health and Welfare Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations), (2008g), *South Africa Survey 2007/2008, The Economy Online*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

TIME MAGAZINE (2004), 19 April.

WEBSITES: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>; www.mercedes-benza.co.za; www.webometrics.info/top100_continent.asp?cont=se_asia.