

# Psychological Turmoil and Political Upheaval: Analysing the Link between Youth Mental Illness and Coup D'états in Africa- A Literature Review



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## ABSTRACT

Evidently, the 55 years of coups d'état in Africa have been characterised by poor service delivery, socio-economic constraints, leadership crises, corruption, terrorism, violent extremism, and limited civil liberties. The socio-economic challenges faced by Africa are not only similar but also contribute to poor mental health outcomes, which in turn encourage school dropouts, a lack of interest in political affairs, an inability to comprehend complex societal challenges, and early deaths, creating avoidable orphans. Insurrections, it seems, are consequences of issues such as inter alia, bureaucratic corruption, exploitation, oppression, and inequality. Fanonism recognises that socio-economic deprivation and alienation are forms of violence inflicted on Africans by colonisers, intended to subject them to horrific and traumatic experiences to force them into submission. A comprehensive review of scholarly journal articles and literary works was conducted using the following sources: Google Scholar, NIH, ResearchGate, Frontiers, Unisa Press Journals, SciELO SA, and ScienceDirect. The conclusion drawn is that injustices are manufactured by the West through agencies such as inter alia, the IMF, which advocates for privatisation. Furthermore, Western entities are aware of the mental health disorders experienced by Africans. Therefore, all European ideological constructs must be reconsidered within the framework of African realities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Evidently, the 55 years of the coup d'état epidemic in Africa has revolved around poor service delivery, socio-economic constraints, leadership crises, corruption, terrorism, violent extremism, and limited civil liberties.<sup>1</sup> Without a doubt, a coup d'état violates Article 4(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as it is an emergency that threatens the life of a nation.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is inconsistent with Article 16 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which affirms the right to optimal physical and mental health and obligates States Parties to implement measures that safeguard public

<sup>1</sup> Adeoye O. Akinola and Ratidzo Makombe, "Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, January 27, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231224680>.

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius Yordan Nugraha, "Human Rights Derogation during Coup Situations," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 2 (February 7, 2018): 194–206, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1359551>.

health and guarantee medical care for the ill.<sup>3</sup> Man-made issues have fragmented African healthcare systems, manifesting themselves in dilapidated health institutions, human resource shortages, financial barriers, and poor service integration.<sup>4</sup> This is in contrast to Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which asserts the right to the highest achievable standard of physical and mental health.<sup>5</sup> In addition, this has led other countries, such as Nigeria, to lose 2 billion US dollars in medical tourism.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, there has been an increase in governments of national unity (GNU) due to instability.<sup>7</sup> Unambiguously, political instability results in socio-economic challenges such as inter alia, poverty, inequality, and ethnic and religious tensions.<sup>8</sup> Even in nations like South Africa, which has a commendable constitution, the levels of inequality remain significantly elevated, with the majority living in poverty.<sup>9</sup> Knifton and Inglis postulate that the social, environmental, and economic contexts significantly influence individual behaviour, which elucidates the detrimental relationship between poverty and inequality, as it engenders adverse mental health outcomes through social stressors, stigmatisation, and trauma.<sup>10</sup> If there exists a correlation between poverty and mental health, the subsequent representation articulated by McLachlan and Aikins elucidates the predicament, as Central Africa presents the highest incidence of extreme poverty at 54.8%, followed by Southern Africa at 45.1%, while Western and Eastern Africa register rates of 36.8% and 33.8%, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

Bearing this in mind, African countries with political stability, such as South Africa, have a 45.5% unemployment rate among young individuals who are desperate for means to defeat poverty.<sup>12</sup> High levels of socio-economic challenges make it easy for the marginalised to participate in illegal activities, as observed in the July 2021 unrest in South Africa, including mass movements such as the Arab Spring.<sup>13</sup> Most of the time, coups enjoy public support due to experienced mental disorders like depression, anxiety, peniaphobia, sclerophobia, and substance misuse.<sup>14</sup> Undeniably, poor public healthcare exists in most African countries<sup>15</sup> leading to insufficient healthcare intervention that results in avoidable deaths including preventable deaths.<sup>16</sup> An examination of mortality rates by age in South Africa, as presented by StatsSA in 2020, reveals that the predominant demographic of deceased individuals consists of elderly

<sup>3</sup> Olufemi Timothy Adigun, "Predicting the Feasibility of Data Collection for Disability-Related Research in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 10, no. April (2024): 100988, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100988>.

<sup>4</sup> Obinna E Oleribe et al., "Identifying Key Challenges Facing Healthcare Systems In Africa And Potential Solutions</P>," *International Journal of General Medicine* Volume 12 (November 2019): 395–403, <https://doi.org/10.2147/IJGM.S223882>.

<sup>5</sup> Annelie J. Sundler et al., "Unmet Health-care Needs and Human Rights—A Qualitative Analysis of Patients' Complaints in Light of the Right to Health and Health Care," *Health Expectations* 23, no. 3 (June 18, 2020): 614–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.13038>.

<sup>6</sup> Oleribe et al., "Identifying Key Challenges Facing Healthcare Systems In Africa And Potential Solutions."

<sup>7</sup> Akinola and Makombe, "Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa."

<sup>8</sup> Tsegayehu Admasie, "The Effect of Political Instability on Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan African Countries: A Dynamic Simultaneous Equations Modeling Approach," *Ethiopian Journal of Business and Economics (The)* 9, no. 1 (2019): 95–127.

<sup>9</sup> David Francis and Edward Webster, "Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Critical Reflections," *Development Southern Africa* 36, no. 6 (November 2, 2019): 788–802, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2019.1666703>.

<sup>10</sup> Lee Knifton and Greig Inglis, "Poverty and Mental Health: Policy, Practice and Research Implications," *BJPsych Bulletin* 44, no. 5 (October 3, 2020): 193–96, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjb.2020.78>.

<sup>11</sup> D. McLachlan and E. R. Aikins, "Africa Is Losing the Battle against Extreme Poverty" (Institute for Security Studies., 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Stats SA, "Youth Unemployment Still High in Q1: 2018," Data Stories - Department of Statistics South Africa, July 15, 2018, <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=11129>.

<sup>13</sup> Noluthando Phungula, "Understanding the Dynamics of South Africa's July 2021 Social Unrest," *Journal of Nation-Building and Policy Studies* 8, no. 1 (2024): 71; Collin Olebogeng Mongale, "Social Discontent or Criminality? Navigating the Nexus Between Urban Riots and Criminal Activities in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces, South Africa (2021)," *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities* 4 (May 11, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsc.2022.865255>; Akinola and Makombe, "Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa."

<sup>14</sup> Akinola and Makombe, "Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa"; Jibrán Y. Khokhar et al., "The Link between Schizophrenia and Substance Use Disorder: A Unifying Hypothesis," *Schizophrenia Research* 194 (April 2018): 78–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2017.04.016>; René Garcia, "Neurobiology of Fear and Specific Phobias," *Learning & Memory* 24, no. 9 (September 16, 2017): 462–71, <https://doi.org/10.1101/lm.044115.116>; María José González Moreno, Juan Sebastián Fernández Prados, and Cristina Cuenca-Piqueras, "Fear for All Women: European Women's Fear of Harassment and Aggression in Public Spaces," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 7–8 (April 13, 2022): NP4160–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520958390>.

<sup>15</sup> Mario J. Azevedo, "The State of Health System(s) in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities," 2017, 1–73, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32564-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32564-4_1).

<sup>16</sup> S. Dixon, "Twitter Statista," 2023, [https://www.statista.com/topics/737/twitter/#topicHeader\\_\\_wrapper](https://www.statista.com/topics/737/twitter/#topicHeader__wrapper).

people, primarily of Black ethnicity, who are disproportionately affected by a quadruple burden of diseases, many of whom serve as the primary income earners within their respective households.<sup>17</sup> Lastly, the phenomenon of poverty within colonised nations has culminated in the internalisation of oppression among marginalised Black populations, attributable to misinterpretations of prevailing legal frameworks.<sup>18</sup> Lephakga points out an evident factor: the concept of legal empowerment does not seamlessly translate into tangible socio-economic upliftment.<sup>19</sup>

Unambiguously, government maladministration shared by African states creates socio-economic challenges which contribute to suboptimal mental health conditions, thereby facilitating an increased propensity for individuals to engage in community violence.<sup>20</sup> Africa exhibits extremely high poverty levels globally, exceeding 30% manifesting as poor mental health is easily influenced.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, youth unemployment is a significant socio-political-economic issue in Africa exposing them to participation in illegal activities to avoid major depressive disorder.<sup>22</sup> The fragmented socio-political-economic system in Africa results in poor healthcare for the marginalised, which is evident in inequalities and inequities that result in avoidable mortalities, including morbidities of breadwinners.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the enforced neo-liberal approach in Africa infringes on basic human rights such as access to education, exposing individuals to anguish such as atychiphobia, germophobia, and depressive disorders.<sup>24</sup> Regrettably, coups d'état in Africa are caused, among other things, by fragmented social welfare, which allows people to be easily influenced by opportunists and populists. This paper endeavours to investigate the intricate nexus between anguish and coups d'état in the African continent, intending to illuminate the architects responsible.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the analysis of violence within African communities, including, among other things, protests and coup d'états, it is imperative to employ Fanon's theory of violence within this discourse for a more profound and nuanced comprehension. Harvard medical scholar Hilton writes that Frantz Fanon elucidates how

<sup>17</sup> StatsSA, "Measuring the Progress of Development in SA.," StatsSA, 2020, <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?m=2020>.

<sup>18</sup> Tshelo Lephakga, "Colonial Institutionalisation of Poverty among Blacks in South Africa," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 43, no. 2 (November 17, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.25159/2412-4265/1273>.

<sup>19</sup> Lephakga, "Colonial Institutionalisation of Poverty among Blacks in South Africa."

<sup>20</sup> Sareesha Pillay, "Implications of Socio-Economic Issues on the Practice of Co-Creation and Governance in South Africa," *Administratio Publica* 27, no. 4 (2019): 88–109; P. Chigora, "Zimbabwean Crises and Political, Economic and Socio-Cultural Development Impacts in Southern Africa," *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives (JPADA)* 3, no. 1 (2018): 12–28; Andrew Foell et al., "Exposure to Community Violence and Depressive Symptoms: Examining Community, Family, and Peer Effects among Public Housing Youth," *Health & Place* 69 (May 2021): 102579, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2021.102579>.

<sup>21</sup> Annamaria Milazzo and Dominique van de Walle, "Women Left Behind? Poverty and Headship in Africa," *Demography* 54, no. 3 (June 1, 2017): 1119–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-017-0561-7>; A. D. Group, "Eliminating Extreme Poverty: Progress to Date and Future Priorities.," *African Development Bank Group*, 2015; C., Mahler, D. G., Negre, M., & Prydz, E. B. Lakner, ".How Much Does Reducing Inequality Matter for Global Poverty?," World Bank, 2020; Knifton and Inglis, "Poverty and Mental Health: Policy, Practice and Research Implications"; Justė Lukoševičiūtė-Barauskienė et al., "Adolescent Perception of Mental Health: It's Not Only about Oneself, It's about Others Too," *Children* 10, no. 7 (June 25, 2023): 1109, <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10071109>.

<sup>22</sup> William Baah-Boateng, "The Youth Unemployment Challenge in Africa: What Are the Drivers?," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 27, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 413–31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304616645030>; Brian Tavonga Mazorodze, "Youth Unemployment and Murder Crimes in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa," *Cogent Economics & Finance* 8, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 1799480, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2020.1799480>; Sohrab Amiri, "Unemployment Associated with Major Depression Disorder and Depressive Symptoms: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics* 28, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 2080–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10803548.2021.1954793>.

<sup>23</sup> Bridget Kenny, "The South African Labour Movement," *Tempo Social* 32, no. 1 (April 15, 2020): 119–36, <https://doi.org/10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2020.166288>; Endalcachew Bayeh, "The Political and Economic Legacy of Colonialism in the Post-Independence African States," *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (2015): 90; Aslan Kh. Abashidze et al., "Socio-Economic Inequality as a Barrier on the Path of Sustainable Development: 'Institutional Traps' and Perspectives of Overcoming Them," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 41, no. 1/2 (March 8, 2021): 62–75, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-03-2020-0069>.

<sup>24</sup> Kathomi Gatwiri, Julians Amboko, and Darius Okolla, "The Implications of Neoliberalism on African Economies, Health Outcomes and Wellbeing: A Conceptual Argument," *Social Theory & Health* 18, no. 1 (March 26, 2020): 86–101, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41285-019-00111-2>; Lynn VAN DER ELST et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized," *Association for the Development of Education in Africa*, 2012, 1–39.

psychological oppression imposed by governmental authorities culminates in communal aggression.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to use Frantz Fanon's theoretical framework on violence to critically analyse the manifestations of violence within African societies in a practical context.<sup>26</sup> Fanon's theory of violence unpretentiously enunciates prevalent community violence—coups d'état, insurrections, and mass protests in African countries—as ramifications of European oppression, exploitation, and discrimination embedded in laws that benefit the few, frustrating the marginalised and resulting in violence.<sup>27</sup> Fanon theorises that inequality, including injustices, is systemic in Africa and requires intellectuals to ensure success in addressing them so that the common agitators do not hit the wrong target and blindly destroy what has been properly established.<sup>28</sup> Typical of inequality, South African Black people bear a quadruple burden of disease; only 9.9% have access to medical insurance compared to 72.9% of white people, and South African public healthcare is poor compared to the private sector.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Fanon's theory of violence aptly elucidates that violent community groups in Africa—such as Al-Shabaab, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Boko Haram—are a result of the persistent oppression and deprivation of Africans by the colonisers.<sup>30</sup>

Fanon's theory of violence recognises that socio-economic deprivation and alienation are forms of violence inflicted on Africans by colonisers to subject them to abuse and traumatic experiences to force them into submission, which is the root cause of community instability.<sup>31</sup> A perfect example of this is the coup d'état that took place in Burkina Faso in 2022.<sup>32</sup> Before that, poverty rose from 41.4% in 2018 to 43.2% in 2021, with precariousness in youth employment.<sup>33</sup> Another practical example is the severe limitation of physical, economic, or social access to food in Kenya, which affects more than half of the population and causes youth-led unrest in 2022.<sup>34</sup> In addition, in 2024, Kenya encountered yet another youth revolt, precipitated by the repudiation of a financial bill, following observations of politicians and their associates and relatives indulgent in a life of opulence while being implicated in corrupt practices, all while a significant proportion of the youth grapple with the challenges of poverty and unemployment.<sup>35</sup> BBC News reporter Farouk Chothia, in his article of 21 July 2024, articulated that the youth of Uganda exhibited a state of unrest, commonly referred to as anti-corruption protests, articulating their grievances regarding the detrimental impact of governmental corruption, which exacerbates their experiences of unemployment and poverty. When the masses can no longer breathe, they revolt.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Fanon views violence as instrumental in colonialism to make the colonised feel inferior by consciously alienating them from themselves and declaring humanity based on zones where settlers are found, zones protected by police barracks.

<sup>25</sup> Blake T. Hilton, "Frantz Fanon and Colonialism: A Psychology of Oppression," *Journal of Scientific Psychology* 12, no.1(2011): 45–59.

<sup>26</sup> Zenon Ndayisenga, "Fanon on the Arbitrariness of Using Violence: An Inevitable for Both Colonialism and Decolonization," *Journal of Black Studies* 53, no. 5 (July 13, 2022): 464–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219347221077273>.

<sup>27</sup> Emmanuel B Eyo and Amambo Edung Essien, "Frantz Fanon's Philosophy of Violence and the Participation of Intellectuals in the Advancement of Social Liberation in Africa," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 3 (2017): 62–75.

<sup>28</sup> Eyo and Essien, "Frantz Fanon's Philosophy of Violence and the Participation of Intellectuals in the Advancement of Social..."

<sup>29</sup> Stats SA, "Quarterly Employment Statistics (QES)," 2020,

<https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0277/P0277andQuarterly2020.pdf>; David Mhlanga and Tankiso Moloi, "The Stakeholder Theory in the Fourth Industrial Revolution," *International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies* 12, no. 2 (2020): 352–68.

<sup>30</sup> Eyo and Essien, "Frantz Fanon's Philosophy of Violence and the Participation of Intellectuals in the Advancement of Social..."

<sup>31</sup> Fidelis Chuka Aghamelu and Emeka Cyril Ejike, "Understanding Fanon's Theory of Violence and Its Relevance to Contemporary Violence in Africa," *IGWEBUIKE: African Journal of Arts and Humanities* 3, no. 4 (2017).

<sup>32</sup> Viljar Haavik, Morten Bøås, and Alessio Iocchi, "The End of Stability – How Burkina Faso Fell Apart," *African Security* 15, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 317–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2022.2128614>; S.D. Ali and S. Siembou, "Saving Groups in Burkina Faso," in *Transforming Africa: How Savings Groups Foster Financial Inclusion Resilience and Economic Development*, ed. D.T. Redford and G. Verhoef (United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing, 2022).

<sup>33</sup> Group, "Eliminating Extreme Poverty: Progress to Date and Future Priorities. ."

<sup>34</sup> Emily Mutea et al., "Shocks, Socio-Economic Status, and Food Security across Kenya: Policy Implications for Achieving the Zero Hunger Goal," *Environmental Research Letters* 17, no. 9 (September 1, 2022): 094028, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac8be8>; E. Goat, "Youth-Led Anger over Unemployment, Debt and Corruption Reflects Tensions Simmering across the Continent," 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Raju Vaishya, "Advancing Medical Knowledge Through Diverse Research in *Apollo Medicine*," *Apollo Medicine* 21, no. 3 (September 17, 2024): 189–189, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09760016241256163>; Brian Kang'ethe and Wilfred Odoyo, "Case Study of the Reject Finance Bill 2024," *Social Influence*, 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Constance Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*, vol. 36 (Springer, 1963).

As a result, Black people have successfully internalised oppression. Therefore, Fanon's theory of violence holds that community violence is inevitable as the natives endeavour to liberate themselves.<sup>37</sup> Undeniably, shared African country instability—such as the Mau Mau uprising, the Soweto uprising, and the Arab Spring—are consequences of mass population suffocation due to socio-economic difficulties experienced by the natives. For effective, relevant, and reliable problem-solving services, social workers must comprehend the theory of oppression, plus Fanon's theory of violence as the source of society's barbarousness and offer better interventions.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, social workers must also use chaos theory, as it pushes them to examine the systems in which they function and the systems in which their clients operate.<sup>39</sup> The phenomena of coup d'état, widespread protests, and insurrections represent manifestations of societal violence that arise when the social welfare of individuals is inadequately addressed, thereby jeopardising their mental health. Consequently, social workers must engage in addressing these issues across various levels, including micro, macro, meso, and chrono-levels. The imperative to undertake the decolonisation of university curricula and academic frameworks has garnered significant momentum as a reaction to the inadequacies inherent in colonial educational systems, which frequently result in graduates being inadequately prepared to engage proficiently with Indigenous communities.<sup>40</sup> This manuscript advocates for a transformative approach to the training of social work professionals in Africa, which has resulted in the emergence of social workers inadequately prepared to address the complex social challenges prevalent across the continent.

## METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive examination of scholarly journal articles and literary works was conducted to scrutinise the correlation between anthropogenic-induced psychological doldrums and coups d'état within the African continent. The existing literature review revealed a scarcity of scholarly articles that address the disjoint socio-political and economic frameworks in Africa, which contribute to the emergence of mental health disorders and the interrelations that facilitate the occurrence of insurrections. Surprisingly, very little has been written about the fragmented social welfare system in Africa as the root cause of public participation in insurrections and support of coup d'états. This paper has successfully addressed this gap in the following manner, by following Wee and Banister's guide to literature review, which advocates for reading a wider range of peer-reviewed published scholarly work using different research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, review analysis, and mixed methods for added value.<sup>41</sup> This paper adopted this approach to ensure verifiable and reliable information, which is the fourth step in the six-step process.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, to substantiate this, the paper is heavily cited when articulating gaps, utilising authentically published work to allow accessibility.<sup>43</sup>

For credibility and validity, the paper mirrored the six steps of conducting a review analysis as outlined by Kajiita and Kang'ethe.<sup>44</sup> For dependability, the first step involved formulating clear research questions. These are the questions that this literature review paper addresses: (1) What is the mental health impact of the fragmented socio-political-economic system in Africa? (2) How does the suboptimal mental health condition prevalent among Africans engender voluntary behaviours that support coup d'états and facilitate participation in insurrection? The second step involved using key phrases such as

<sup>37</sup> Aghamelu and Ejike, "Understanding Fanon's Theory of Violence and Its Relevance to Contemporary Violence in Africa."

<sup>38</sup> S. P. Robbins and T. A. Judge, *Organizational Behavior, Update* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2022).

<sup>39</sup> Steve Campbell, "Perspectives: Method and Methodology in Nursing Research," *Journal of Research in Nursing* 21, no. 8 (December 2016): 656–59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987116679583>.

<sup>40</sup> Johannes Seroto, "Dynamics of Decoloniality in South Africa: A Critique of the History of Swiss Mission Education for Indigenous People," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 44, no. 3 (2018): 1–14; Amy Mullin, "Children's Hope, Resilience and Autonomy," *Ethics and Social Welfare* 13, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 230–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2019.1588907>.

<sup>41</sup> Bert Van Wee and David Banister, "How to Write a Literature Review Paper?," *Transport Reviews* 36, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 278–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2015.1065456>.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Mutemi Kajiita and Simon Murote Kang'ethe, "The Dynamics Embedded in COVID-19 Pandemic Responses in South Africa: Implications for Public Healthcare Delivery," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies* 4 (May 28, 2024): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijss-2024.vol4.09>.

<sup>43</sup> Wee and Banister, "How to Write a Literature Review Paper?"

<sup>44</sup> Kajiita and Kang'ethe, "The Dynamics Embedded in COVID-19 Pandemic Responses in South Africa: Implications for Public Healthcare Delivery."

"coup d'état, mostly in Africa", "mental disorders presented by poverty", "unemployment of youth in Africa", and "health inequalities as the cause of avoidable deaths" in reliable sources such as: Google Scholar, National Institutes of Health, ResearchGate, Frontiers, Unisa Press Journals, SciELO SA, and ScienceDirect, among others. The third step led to the inclusion of only peer-reviewed published work from the past 10 years (2015-2024) to ensure the relevance of the data presented in this paper.

The final two stages of the six-step methodology encompass the extraction and subsequent analysis of data, which facilitates the formulation of themes derived from the gathered and synthesised findings. These themes pertain to the mental health disorders that have been systematically imposed on Africans due to a disjointed socio-political-economic welfare framework and oppressive socio-economic adversities, thereby creating a conducive environment for the occurrence of coups d'état and insurrections. The illumination of the externally induced detrimental mental health conditions prevalent among Africans may necessitate a comprehensive reevaluation of the social welfare system and the professional development of social workers. This is evident in the coup d'état against Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 and the same in Libya in 1969.<sup>45</sup>

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section aims to elucidate the connections that contribute to poor mental health, which result in community violence, coups d'état, insurrections, and violent community protests in Africa, as articulated by Fanon. Each thematic discussion will elaborate on the contributing factors to the mental health status prevalent among many Africans. This examination will highlight the socio-economic injustices endured by Africans, who often lack the requisite knowledge and resources to effectively address these issues due to the pervasive acceptance of oppression—undeniably, a successful colonial project.

This analysis does not condone societal violence nor advocate for it, as Fanon did; rather, it calls for a re-evaluation of the social welfare services and knowledge that have been consistently marginalised. The aim is to improve mental health, with frameworks such as the August 1997 South African Social Welfare White Paper being potential solutions to the instability faced by African communities.

### *Poverty in African Countries*

Undeniably, a paradox exists in Africa, as it is one of the mineral wealthiest continents, with South Africa holding 50% of the world's gold.<sup>46</sup> Empirical evidence asserts that nine out of ten children in Sub-Saharan Africa live in some form of poverty.<sup>47</sup> Despite several initiatives, such as the declaration of food security as a basic human right in 1948, the World Food Summit of 1996, the Millennium Development Goals of 2001, and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, food insecurity persists.<sup>48</sup> Child poverty extends beyond the money metric; it encompasses social amenities such as adequate housing, access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, access to good health care, adequate nutrition, education, information, and leisure.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, Fonta et al. state that 67% of children living in the Sub-Saharan region are multidimensionally poor and reside in areas experiencing insurrection, such as Nigeria, where children are exposed to poor access to food and health services.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, a concerning factor is that children exposed to poverty suffer from mental constraints, social exclusion, mortality, and poor health outcomes in adulthood, and are more likely to remain poor throughout their lives.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the abundance of natural resources, 60.9% of the Nigerian population lives in absolute poverty, half of the population of Sudan lives in poverty, and a substantial portion of the South African

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<sup>45</sup> Akinola and Makombe, "Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa."

<sup>46</sup> Paul A. M. Nex and Judith A. Kinnaird, "Minerals and Mining in South Africa," *The Geography of South Africa: Contemporary Changes and New Directions*, 2019, 27–35.

<sup>47</sup> Cynthia L. Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa," *BMC Public Health* 20, no. 1 (December 31, 2020): 149, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-8254-3>.

<sup>48</sup> Mutea et al., "Shocks, Socio-Economic Status, and Food Security across Kenya: Policy Implications for Achieving the Zero Hunger Goal."

<sup>49</sup> Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa."

<sup>50</sup> Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa."

<sup>51</sup> Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa."

population (62.7%) lives in.<sup>52</sup> Poverty in Mali is particularly high, with around 42% of the population living on less than \$2.30 per day and in Burkina Faso, 81% of the population lives below the poverty line.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Nigeria has an unemployment rate of 14.2%,<sup>54</sup> while South Africa faces an alarming youth unemployment rate of 45.5%.<sup>55</sup> In Sudan, 60% are unemployed and in Zimbabwe, unemployment is around 93%.<sup>56</sup> Undoubtedly, acts of corruption within the government sphere are the root cause of poverty and unemployment.<sup>57</sup> One of the alarming consequences of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is malnutrition, which accounts for infant mortality.<sup>58</sup> Of the 10.9 million paediatric fatalities annually, 50% occur in Africa.<sup>59</sup> To make matters worse, the long-term health consequences of inadequate nutrition are enormous, as they impact the work capacity and intellectual performance of adults.<sup>60</sup>

Undeniably, corrupt acts by both the government and private sector violate the basic human rights guaranteed in the United Nations Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 18, paragraph 7, which states that all humans have an equal right to life, education, and health.<sup>61</sup> Corruption by politicians and public administrators results in a lack of service delivery, which elucidates the 28.6% adult literacy rate in Burkina Faso due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. Axiomatically, education is an important factor in mitigating poverty and in South Africa, this violates Section 29 of the Constitution.<sup>62</sup> As Fanon recognises, socio-economic suffocation inflicted by the coloniser is the source of societal instability.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, in 2022, Burkina Faso experienced a coup d'état led by Ibrahim Traoré and distanced itself from France.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Inadequate Healthcare***

Empirical evidence suggests that 15.6 million out of 19.3 million deaths in 2016 in Low-Middle-Income Countries were preventable.<sup>65</sup> This can be explained as follows: In Burkina Faso, 78% of the population

<sup>52</sup> Muhammad Jami Husain et al., "The Crowding-out Effect of Tobacco Expenditure on Household Spending Patterns in Bangladesh," *PLoS One* 13, no. 10 (2018): e0205120; Nada Fadul, Mohamed E. Hussein, and Abdelaal A. Fadul, "Re-Opening Sudan: The Balance Between Maintaining Daily Living and Avoiding the Next Peak of COVID-19," *Current Tropical Medicine Reports* 8, no. 3 (September 29, 2021): 231–37, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40475-021-00237-2>; Ernest Tooche Aniche, "African Continental Free Trade Area and African Union Agenda 2063: The Roads to Addis Ababa and Kigali," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 41, no. 4 (2023): 377–92; Chansoo Kim et al., *The Role of ICT During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy Note* (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1596/40679>.

<sup>53</sup> V.M. Zubok, "Myths and Realities of Putinism and NATO Expansion," in *Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to the Russia-Ukraine War* (Cham: Springer International Publishing., 2023), 145–59; Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa."

<sup>54</sup> Gouher Ahmed and Nabeel Al Amiri, "An Analysis of Strategic Leadership Effectiveness of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Based on Dave Ulrich Leadership Code," *Journal of Islamic Studies And Culture* 7, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.15640/jisc.v7n1a2>.

<sup>55</sup> Francis and Webster, "Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Critical Reflections."

<sup>56</sup> Fadul, Hussein, and Fadul, "Re-Opening Sudan: The Balance Between Maintaining Daily Living and Avoiding the Next Peak of COVID-19"; Inocent Moyo, "Zimbabwe's Unemployed Youth: On Waithustlinghood, Struggle for Survival and Political Activism," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 8, no. 1 (2023): 100535, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100535>.

<sup>57</sup> Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa"; E A Mantzaris, "Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia," *African Journal of Public Affairs* 9, no. 8 (2017): 15–30.

<sup>58</sup> Luchuo Engelbert Bain et al., "Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burden, Causes and Prospects," *Pan African Medical Journal* 15 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.11604/pamj.2013.15.120.2535>.

<sup>59</sup> Samuel Ayofemi Olalekan Adeyeye, Abiodun Omowonuola Adebayo-Oyetoro, and Hussaina Kehinde Tiamiyu, "Poverty and Malnutrition in Africa: A Conceptual Analysis," *Nutrition & Food Science* 47, no. 6 (November 13, 2017): 754–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/NFS-02-2017-0027>.

<sup>60</sup> Bain et al., "Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burden, Causes and Prospects."

<sup>61</sup> Mantzaris, "Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia."

<sup>62</sup> Mantzaris, "Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia"; Fonta et al., "Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa"; Bain et al., "Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burden, Causes and Prospects"; Van Der Elst et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized."

<sup>63</sup> Aghamelu and Ejike, "Understanding Fanon's Theory of Violence and Its Relevance to Contemporary Violence in Africa."

<sup>64</sup> Ismaila Rimi Abubakar and Umar Lawal Dano, "Socioeconomic Challenges and Opportunities of Urbanization in Nigeria," *Urbanization and Its Impact on Socio-Economic Growth in Developing Regions*, 2018, 219–40.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret E Kruk et al., "Mortality Due to Low-Quality Health Systems in the Universal Health Coverage Era: A Systematic Analysis of Amenable Deaths in 137 Countries," *The Lancet* 392, no. 10160 (November 2018): 2203–12, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31668-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31668-4).

lacks access to health services in Sudan, only 43% of health facilities are equipped to provide essential medications and one in every five children in Mali succumbs before reaching the age of five.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, these preventable deaths could have been averted through proper primary prevention within the health system.<sup>67</sup> Inadequate healthcare quality directly contributes to mortality, a consequence of the malfeasance of politicians, bureaucratic officials, and private sector entities, which hampers service efficiency.<sup>68</sup> This also exacerbates deficiencies in road infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.<sup>69</sup> Hence, 51% of deaths in Low-Middle-Income Countries are attributable to infectious causes.<sup>70</sup>

Despite efforts to strengthen healthcare systems through sustainable development goals, low-resource regions, such as the Eastern Cape in South Africa, continue to face severe shortages in mental health resources.<sup>71</sup> The 3.6 million estimated deaths in nations like Kenya result from inadequate healthcare access, exacerbated by poor road infrastructure and the high financial cost of medical care.<sup>72</sup> Another undeniable contributing factor to mortality in Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, and Guinea is the high cost of treating non-communicable diseases.<sup>73</sup> Infrastructure deficiencies, including a lack of laboratories, an insufficient workforce, and the fragility of healthcare systems, significantly hinder the effective implementation of health programmes, thus limiting efforts to combat diseases.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, access to potable water is fundamental in controlling communicable diseases. Despite some positive national trends, persistent inadequacies in water, sanitation, and hygiene continue to impose a substantial burden, particularly in diarrhoeal fatalities. Sufficient access to uncontaminated water and sanitation facilities is also essential to control the transmission of pathogens, reduce the need for antibiotics, and prevent the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).<sup>75</sup> Similarly, nations such as Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, and Guinea are experiencing a rising prevalence of obesity, with type 2 diabetes, cancer, bacterial infections, including foot ulcers, and associated complications emerging as significant concerns. Non-communicable diseases increasingly place a substantial burden on healthcare systems.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Fonta et al., “Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa”; Fadul, Hussein, and Fadul, “Re-Opening Sudan...”

<sup>67</sup> Kruk et al., “Mortality Due to Low-Quality Health Systems in the Universal Health Coverage Era...”

<sup>68</sup> Kruk et al., “Mortality Due to Low-Quality Health Systems in the Universal Health Coverage Era...”; Mantzaris, “Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia.”

<sup>69</sup> Fonta et al., “Decomposing Multidimensional Child Poverty and Its Drivers in the Mouhoun Region of Burkina Faso, West Africa.”

<sup>70</sup> Bain et al., “Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burden, Causes and Prospects.”

<sup>71</sup> Duane Booysen, Phumeza Mahe-Poyo, and Rosemary Grant, “The Experiences and Perceptions of Mental Health Service Provision at a Primary Health Centre in the Eastern Cape,” *South African Journal of Psychiatry* 27 (August 13, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajpsy.27i0.1641>.

<sup>72</sup> Nyamai Mutono et al., “Impact of Traffic Congestion on Spatial Access to Healthcare Services in Nairobi,” *Frontiers in Health Services* 2 (November 16, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/frhs.2022.788173>.

<sup>73</sup> Esmita Charani et al., “In Transition: Current Health Challenges and Priorities in Sudan,” *BMJ Global Health* 4, no. 4 (August 21, 2019): e001723, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001723>; Mutsa P. Mutowo et al., “The Hospitalization Costs of Diabetes and Hypertension Complications in Zimbabwe: Estimations and Correlations,” *Journal of Diabetes Research* 2016 (2016): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2016/9754230>; Sujha Subramanian et al., “Cost and Affordability of Non-Communicable Disease Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment in Kenya: Patient Payments in the Private and Public Sectors,” *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 1 (January 5, 2018): e0190113, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190113>; Statistics South Africa, “60.6 Million People in South Africa,” 2023, <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15601>; Stine Byberg et al., “Diabetes in Urban Guinea-Bissau; Patient Characteristics, Mortality and Prevalence of Undiagnosed Dysglycemia,” *Global Health Action* 13, no. 1 (December 31, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2020.1802136>.

<sup>74</sup> Charani et al., “In Transition: Current Health Challenges and Priorities in Sudan”; Mutowo et al., “The Hospitalization Costs of Diabetes and Hypertension Complications in Zimbabwe...”; Subramanian et al., “Cost and Affordability of Non-Communicable Disease Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment in Kenya: Patient Payments in the Private and Public Sectors”; Statistics South Africa, “60.6 Million People in South Africa”; Byberg et al., “Diabetes in Urban Guinea-Bissau...”

<sup>75</sup> Charani et al., “In Transition: Current Health Challenges and Priorities in Sudan”; Mutowo et al., “The Hospitalization Costs of Diabetes and Hypertension Complications in Zimbabwe...”; Subramanian et al., “Cost and Affordability of Non-Communicable Disease Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment in Kenya: Patient Payments in the Private and Public Sectors”; Statistics South Africa, “60.6 Million People in South Africa”; Byberg et al., “Diabetes in Urban Guinea-Bissau; Patient Characteristics, Mortality and Prevalence of Undiagnosed Dysglycemia.”

<sup>76</sup> Charani et al., “In Transition: Current Health Challenges and Priorities in Sudan”; Mutowo et al., “The Hospitalization Costs of Diabetes and Hypertension Complications in Zimbabwe...”; Subramanian et al., “Cost and Affordability of Non-Communicable Disease Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment in Kenya...”; Statistics South Africa, “60.6 Million People in South Africa”; Byberg et al., “Diabetes in Urban Guinea-Bissau; Patient Characteristics, Mortality and Prevalence of Undiagnosed Dysglycemia.”

The inability of Low-Middle-Income Countries to address the health challenges facing the majority of their populations results in preventable deaths.<sup>77</sup> South Africa, for example, has 2.3 million orphans due to factors such as the presence of only 8 palliative care units that serve a population of 59.89 million.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, 17.3 million children under the age of 18 years have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, with approximately 90% of these orphans living in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>79</sup> Given the elevated mortality rates prevalent throughout Africa, death anxiety is recognised as a transdiagnostic construct that significantly contributes to various psychological disorders, including panic disorder, anxiety disorders, and major depressive disorder.<sup>80</sup> The experience of bereavement poses a considerable risk to mental well-being.<sup>81</sup> The correlation between death anxiety and psychological distress is significant and warrants further attention.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, additional stressors that exacerbate these conditions often include non-death-related losses, such as financial difficulties, social isolation, and substantial occupational or personal changes. All of these factors have considerable potential to deteriorate mental health at a population level.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Adolescent African Joblessness***

Statistical analyses indicate that the youth demographic comprises approximately one-fourth of the global population, totalling 1.8 billion individuals; over 70 million of this cohort are currently experiencing unemployment amidst severe economic, and social conditions. A significant proportion of this young population resides in developing nations, with a noteworthy contingent located in Africa and the Middle East.<sup>84</sup> Youth unemployment in Sudan accounts for about 24.5% 67% in Kenya South Africa stands at 45,5% (StatsSA, 2024), Burkina Faso exhibits 7.8% Zimbabwe more than 55% Mali displays 6.73%, and Guinea accounts 62%.<sup>85</sup>

Given these unpleasant African youth unemployment statistics, Mavimbela posits that suicide represents the primary contributor to disability, with one in five adolescents contemplating this tragic outcome.<sup>86</sup> Again, Mavimbela puts to the fore that disengaged youth are predisposed to suicidal behaviour as a result of experiencing profound psychological distress, pervasive hopelessness, and social isolation.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, unemployment is a significant precursor to the onset of mental health disorders; the deterioration of mental well-being frequently follows job loss, with these psychological afflictions serving as mediators between suicidal thoughts and actual suicide attempts, a situation further complicated by the challenges associated with job searching.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, the Kenyan president declared

<sup>77</sup> Kruk et al., "Mortality Due to Low-Quality Health Systems in the Universal Health Coverage Era..."

<sup>78</sup> Consumer Price Index (CPI), "Statistical Release P0141," Stats SA, 2020, [www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141December2020.pdf](http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141December2020.pdf). Agnes Hamilton-Baillie et al., "Palliative Care in a Rural Subdistrict in South Africa: A 4-Year Critical Review," *African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine* 16, no. 1 (January 21, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.v16i1.4047>.

<sup>79</sup> Hebert Sihle Ntuli Ntuli, "The Role of Women in Shaping and Sustaining the Zulu Monarchy in the Late 18th and 19th Centuries," *Gender and Behaviour* 18, no. 1 (2020): 14885–96.

<sup>80</sup> Rui M. Joaquim et al., "Bereavement and Psychological Distress during COVID-19 Pandemics: The Impact of Death Experience on Mental Health," *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences* 2 (November 2021): 100019, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2021.100019>.

<sup>81</sup> Joaquim et al., "Bereavement and Psychological Distress during COVID-19 Pandemics..."

<sup>82</sup> Joaquim et al., "Bereavement and Psychological Distress during COVID-19 Pandemics..."

<sup>83</sup> Joaquim et al., "Bereavement and Psychological Distress during COVID-19 Pandemics..."

<sup>84</sup> Shamila Suliman Latif, "Integration of African Traditional Health Practitioners and Medicine into the Health Care Management System in the Province of Limpopo" (University of Stellenbosch, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> Latif, "Integration of African Traditional Health Practitioners and Medicine into the Health Care Management System in the Province of Limpopo"; World Bank, "Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Improving SMEs' Access to Finance and Finding Innovative Solutions to Unlock Sources of Capital," 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance>; Sayouba OUEDRAOGO, "Determinants of Employability of Young People Aged 15-29 in Burkina Faso," *Applied Economics and Finance* 5, no. 5 (July 16, 2018): 10, <https://doi.org/10.11114/aef.v5i5.3450>; Moyo, "Zimbabwe's Unemployed Youth: On Waithustlinghood, Struggle for Survival and Political Activism"; Peter Raymond Sabelo et al., "Exploring Competency Development Among Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leaders and Tutors: A Comprehensive Investigation of Program Involvement," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, January 15, 2024, 1664–77, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202341323>.

<sup>86</sup> Mavimbela Awam, "Bio-Psycho-Social Challenges Experienced by South African Youth Triggering Suicidal Ideation: A Case of Eastern Cape, South Africa," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, September 5, 2024, 1731–46, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20245119>.

<sup>87</sup> Awam, "Bio-Psycho-Social Challenges Experienced by South African Youth Triggering Suicidal Ideation..."

<sup>88</sup> Awam, "Bio-Psycho-Social Challenges Experienced by South African Youth Triggering Suicidal Ideation..."

mental health a national priority.<sup>89</sup> The rationale behind this was the heightened mental disorders amongst youth such as alcohol use, suicide, mental health concerns, low self-esteem, drug and substance use, sexually transmitted infections, anti-social behaviours, risky sexual behaviours, depression, stress, anxiety disorders, and a higher likelihood of dropping out of school.<sup>90</sup>

Unemployment shares a relationship with poverty, that manifests psychological doldrums such as peniaphobia.<sup>91</sup> These statistics are quite high and of interest, particularly in this period, where the main goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to end poverty by 2030. Undeniably, the cause of this is the prevailing corruption among politicians and government administration.<sup>92</sup> The youth statistics on African nations presented herein pertain to those countries characterised by a government of national unity, instances of coup d'état, or those that have historically experienced insurrection, regardless of whether such insurrections were successful or unsuccessful, which does not constitute an academically pertinent inquiry. Fanon elucidates that the socio-economic adversities encountered by African populations are strategically exploited by politicians to secure the support of the lumpen proletariat when they ascend to the podium.<sup>93</sup> As a result, the African National Congress, along with various political entities vying for governmental authority, shares several common objectives articulated in their manifestos, including, among other priorities, the eradication of unemployment and poverty.

### ***Anguishes of the African People***

One of the common factors shared by African countries is their failure to combat mental challenges, even with their well-thought-through mental health policies.<sup>94</sup> This is due to maleficence, which delays service delivery.<sup>95</sup> The ramification is that Africa has 1.4 mental health workers per 100,000 people.<sup>96</sup> Owing to this, there is graduate youth unemployment among health workers and social workers in countries such as South Africa.<sup>97</sup> A study conducted in Nigeria shows that Africans do not even know they have mental disorders.<sup>98</sup> Unquestionably, contributing factors are issues such as, in Sierra Leone, where 98% of people are estimated to lack access to mental health care.<sup>99</sup> In terms of the state of African mental health status, empirical findings state that Central Africa has the highest extreme poverty rate of 54.8%, followed by Southern Africa at 45.1%. Rates in Western and Eastern Africa are 36.8%.<sup>100</sup> The nexus between poverty and the deteriorating mental health of those who experience and are affected by it cannot be ignored.<sup>101</sup>

The psychological well-being of individuals is profoundly influenced by the sociocultural, environmental, and economic circumstances within which they are born, develop, engage in professional activities, and age.<sup>102</sup> Consequently, socioeconomic disadvantage and deprivation serve as critical factors that determine the social and behavioural development of children, as well as their mental health in adulthood.<sup>103</sup> Empirical evidence exposes the truth that they are exposed to anxiety, depression, suicidal

<sup>89</sup> Philip Baiden et al., "Association between Sexual Identity, Health Risk Behaviors, and Mental Health Outcomes among Black Adolescents: Findings from a Population-Based Study," *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports* 12 (April 2023): 100511, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadr.2023.100511>.

<sup>90</sup> Baiden et al., "Association between Sexual Identity, Health Risk Behaviors, and Mental Health Outcomes among..."

<sup>91</sup> Simon Kangethe, "Occupational Care Giving Conditions and Human Rights: A Study of Elderly Caregivers in Botswana," *Indian Journal of Palliative Care* 16, no. 2 (2010): 79; Van Der Elst et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning..."

<sup>92</sup> Mantzaris, "Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia."

<sup>93</sup> Fanon, Sartre, and Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>94</sup> Aderinto Nicholas, Opanike Joshua, and Oladipo Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa: Current State, Efforts, Challenges and Recommendation," *Annals of Medicine & Surgery* 81 (September 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amsu.2022.104421>.

<sup>95</sup> Mantzaris, "Corruption as a Violation of Basic Human Rights in South Africa and Russia."

<sup>96</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>97</sup> Z., Ludolph, N., & Malan, M. Kunene, "This Is Why the Health Department Cannot Employ New Doctors." (Business Day, , 2024).

<sup>98</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>100</sup> McLachlan and Aikins, "Africa Is Losing the Battle against Extreme Poverty."

<sup>101</sup> Knifton and Inglis, "Poverty and Mental Health: Policy, Practice and Research Implications."

<sup>102</sup> Knifton and Inglis, "Poverty and Mental Health: Policy, Practice and Research Implications."

<sup>103</sup> Knifton and Inglis, "Poverty and Mental Health: Policy, Practice and Research Implications."

ideation, agoraphobia, anthropophobia, emetophobia, achluophobia, bacteriophobia, and autophobia.<sup>104</sup> Increased demand for mental health on the continent, resulted in the exploration of spiritual interventions because mental health illnesses are frequently linked to cultural and ancestral roots.<sup>105</sup> The underlying factors are peculiar public health barriers, which are attitudinal, such as financial and care availability, treatment facilities, staff, sociodemographic factors, and pitifully inadequate government support.<sup>106</sup> Africans view tradition plus spiritual methods as affordable, even though their pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics questions are not addressed.<sup>107</sup>

Consistent with the above information, mental disorders are associated with high-risk factors for mortality. The unavoidable factor contributing to this is that individuals with mental disorders have high rates of adverse health behaviours, including tobacco smoking, substance use, physical inactivity, and poor diet.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, these behaviours contribute to the high rates of chronic medical conditions among people with mental disorders.<sup>109</sup> Utilising South Africa as an example, Marx et al. postulate that, in 2015, the total per capita alcohol consumption in SA was 11.5 L of pure alcohol, and alcohol consumption per drinker was 27 L of pure alcohol, one of the highest levels of alcohol consumption in the world.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, imbibing and risky sexual behaviour have taken centre stage among South African youth.<sup>111</sup> Poor mental health makes individuals not care about issues surrounding them, such as exercising their civil rights. As a result voter turnout was 46% in South Africa 52.33% in Zimbabwe,<sup>112</sup> 59.79% in Burkina Faso,<sup>113</sup> 63.22% in Sudan,<sup>114</sup> 36.76% in Mali,<sup>115</sup> 60.24% in Chad,<sup>116</sup> and Gabon reported 59.95% voter turnout.<sup>117</sup>

## Discussion Summary

Africans face many mental disorders due to socioeconomic challenges, political instability, educational illiteracy, police brutality, inequality, socio-demographics, financial challenges, and maleficence.<sup>118</sup> African countries with their progressive mental health policies lack the resources to address them.<sup>119</sup> A typical example is the hideous picture painted by Aderinto et al. that Egypt has a total of 15 mental health facilities distributed throughout the nation, with inpatient departments collectively accommodating fewer

<sup>104</sup> Kangethe, "Occupational Care Giving Conditions and Human Rights: A Study of Elderly Caregivers in Botswana"; Nomusa F. Mngoma et al., "Distress, Desperation and Despair: Anxiety, Depression and Suicidality among Rural South African Youth," *International Review of Psychiatry* 33, no. 1–2 (February 17, 2021): 64–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2020.1741846>.

<sup>105</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>106</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>107</sup> E. Mandizadza and G. Chavunduka, "Antiretroviral Treatment in Sub Saharan Challenges, Prospects and Lessons for Zimbabwe," *Antiretroviral Treatment in Sub Saharan*, n.d., [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281064508\\_Traditional\\_Medicine\\_and\\_HIV\\_and\\_AIDS\\_Treatment\\_Challenges\\_Prospects\\_and\\_Lessons\\_for\\_Zimbabwe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281064508_Traditional_Medicine_and_HIV_and_AIDS_Treatment_Challenges_Prospects_and_Lessons_for_Zimbabwe).

<sup>108</sup> Virginia L. Walker and Carol G. Smith, "Training Paraprofessionals to Support Students with Disabilities: A Literature Review," *Exceptionality* 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 170–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09362835.2014.986606>.

<sup>109</sup> Walker and Smith, "Training Paraprofessionals to Support Students with Disabilities: A Literature Review."

<sup>110</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *On Religion* (Courier Corporation, 2008).

<sup>111</sup> Cassandra Carels et al., "Youths' Perceptions Of The Relation Between Alcohol Consumption And Risky Sexual Behaviour in the Western Cape, South Africa: A Qualitative Study," *Child Indicators Research* 15, no. 4 (August 20, 2022): 1269–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-022-09913-9>.

<sup>112</sup> Election Guide, "Election Guide," 2023, <https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/35/>.

<sup>113</sup> Election Guide, "Election Guide."

<sup>114</sup> Election Guide, "Election Guide."

<sup>115</sup> Vimbai Chaimba Kwashirai, "The Movement for Democratic Change Was Number One Enemy in 2000," in *Election Violence in Zimbabwe: Human Rights, Politics and Power* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2023), 128–58.

<sup>116</sup> Election Guide, "Election Guide," 2021, <https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/35/>.

<sup>117</sup> Election Guide, "Election Guide"; Varkey George, Lynette Jacobs, and Merle Hodges, "Virtual Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity Development in Higher Education Projects: Lessons for the Future.," *Bulgarian Comparative Education Society*, 2022.

<sup>118</sup> T. Elwell-Sutton et al., "Socioeconomic Position and Depression in South African Adults with Long-Term Health Conditions: A Longitudinal Study of Causal Pathways," *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* 28, no. 2 (April 14, 2019): 199–209, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796017000427>; Nigel Walsh Harriman et al., "Racial Disparities in Psychological Distress in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Results from the SANHANES-1 Survey," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 57, no. 4 (April 6, 2022): 843–57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-021-02175-w>.

<sup>119</sup> Baiden et al., "Association between Sexual Identity, Health Risk Behaviors, and Mental Health Outcomes among Black Adolescents..."

than ten beds for every 100,000 individuals within the population.<sup>120</sup> Adding to that, Nigeria is equipped with seven government-operated mental health institutions, which do not provide more than four inpatient beds for each 100,000 population.<sup>121</sup> In Uganda, there exists a single national mental health facility, with an availability of 1.64 beds per 100,000 individuals in its inpatient departments.<sup>122</sup> This implies that African governments lack commitment to tackling what affects their citizens. Forgetting that violence and poor mental health are connected. Hence, Mavimbela's argument that injustices are manufactured by the West through their agencies such as the IMF which speak of privatisation which when explored from all angles does not accommodate Africans but rather suffocates them.<sup>123</sup> To advance the discourse, it is apparent that Western entities possess a cognisance of the mental health disorders experienced by individuals in Africa; however, they strategically align their actions with their agendas, employing these issues to instigate coups d'état, foment insurrections, or divert the focus of Africans toward various social concerns such as LGBTQIA, substance abuse, criminality, abortion, religion, and xenophobia. This diversionary tactic serves to redirect attention away from critical issues such as the extraction and exploitation of mineral resources.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

Axiomatically, the Western world derives significant advantages from the extraction of minerals, the development of pharmaceuticals for African ailments, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Illiteracy prevents one from comprehending intricate societal issues that would help society to progress. In addition to that, poor mental health contributes to one's not having the ability to contribute and comprehend complex issues when raised. Initiatives designed to address mental health disorders, particularly those related to social work, necessitate a fundamental transformation that prioritises the investigation of the underlying factors contributing to the deterioration of the African social welfare framework. It is conceivable that the perspective held by certain academics, which posits that mental health practitioners are largely ineffective in rural areas, is not solely rooted in traditional paradigms but is also a reflection of the enduring influence of Western epistemological and ontological frameworks, along with their corresponding theories. These frameworks have marginalised alternative perspectives and have positioned their lifestyle as the standard. It is crucial to acknowledge that the detrimental mental health conditions prevalent in Africa are readily exploited by entities that are orchestrating the proliferation of such mental health issues. Moreover, as long as these conditions persist, societal stability remains unattainable. What is primarily needed is an integration of innovative and traditional mental health educational approaches. All European ideological constructs must be recontextualised within the framework of African realities, as their inception was significantly shaped by European contexts.

### **CONCLUSION**

Frantz Fanon's scholarly contributions, particularly his theory of violence, facilitate a nuanced comprehension of the intricate interrelations among prevailing societal issues such as poverty, which significantly contribute to detrimental mental health outcomes and subsequently foment societal violence. A salient and illustrative case study is the historical context of the South African youth protests of 1976; after a thorough analysis, it becomes evident that the underlying factors contributing to these upheavals included substandard living conditions, pervasive poverty, and inadequate healthcare provisions, exemplified by a staggering ratio of medical officer to patient 1:91000 African patients. Furthermore, the statistical data regarding youth unemployment in South Africa commenced in the year 2000, revealing an alarming rate of 53.5%, thereby indicating that both unemployment and its concomitant, poverty, were prevalent during the apartheid era, significantly contributing to numerous instances of civil unrest within South Africa, which are integral to the nation's liberation history.

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<sup>120</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa: Current State, Efforts, Challenges and Recommendation."

<sup>121</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>122</sup> Nicholas, Joshua, and Elizabeth, "Accessing Mental Health Services in Africa..."

<sup>123</sup> Awam, "Bio-Psycho-Social Challenges Experienced by South African Youth Triggering Suicidal Ideation..."

Apartheid, when traced properly it is a product of the West, which forcefully excluded whites and blacks in schools, health, and living areas. With the scientific data existing between the private sector and public, such as inter alia, private healthcare accommodates mostly white people, as more than 70% have medical insurance, and 9.9% of blacks have medical insurance. The majority of private education has more white learners compared to black learners. This goes into successful private companies. Therefore, everything that speaks of the private sector speaks about advancing whiteness. You then have a Western organisation advancing privatisation, which already mentally suffocates black people is simply requesting unrest in the future. A typical example is the South African July unrest, which simply educates us that when masses are mentally suffocating, it is easier for them to be mobilised by opportunists.

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## ABOUT AUTHORS

Mavimbela Awam is one of the youngest intellectuals to emerge as a Clinical Social Worker from Walter Sisulu University. He has engaged in advancing Clinical Social Welfare in the Eastern Cape through both practical and academic avenues. Consequently, in this huge unemployment situation in South Africa, he has been headhunted to participate in a multi-disciplinary team in implementing palliative care at various hospitals in the O.R. Tambo Region. He is currently involved in the decolonisation of Palliative Care Social Work training for better quality of life. At a young age, he has significantly impacted both practice and academia in advocating for marginalised communities in health care. Mr Mavimbela is frequently recognised by peers as an exceptional individual within his cohort. Recently, Mr Mavimbela has

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Mkululi Galindaba is currently pursuing a Master's in political science at the Walter Sisulu University, Mthatha, South Africa. His ultimate objective is to become a powerful, influential leader in his community and an inspirational writer. Beyond academics, he is passionate about community participation and gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy. He has a diverse personality, which includes ambition, generosity, and thoughtfulness. He is a determined and vigorous individual who remains pleasantly calm with a firm believe in fighting for what you want and believe in God as his guide with God. He also enjoys playing sports, which helps him maintain balance, discipline, and overall well-being in all aspects of life.

Kanyiso Zweni is a dedicated psychology master's candidate at Walter Sisulu University and an emerging scholar committed to advancing knowledge that addresses pressing societal challenges. With a deep passion for academic research and community impact, Kanyiso strives to bridge the gap between psychological theory and practical solutions that promote social well-being and positive change. As a growing academic, Kanyiso is focused on developing innovative approaches to understanding human behavior and mental health, aiming to contribute meaningfully to both the academic community and society at large. Driven by a commitment to lifelong learning and scholarly excellence, Kanyiso actively engages in interdisciplinary research and collaborative projects that foster inclusive and sustainable development.