



Guerrilla Tactics, Entrepreneurship and Ancient History: The Real Story of Economic Marginalisation and the Making of Zama-Zamas

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Abstract.

Purpose To uncover the real story behind zama-zamas and the entrepreneurs behind their work: A Tale of Sustained Exploitation

Context Limpopo villages are ensconced by 108 mining sectors that contribute 72% to GDP by 2021 estimates totalling annual revenue of R237, 7 billion. Yet, poverty is almost 77% and the villages have to bear the brunt of devastation on their socio-ecological space which puts them at considerable economic risk given that rehabilitation of disused mines is poorly handled at the government level plus communities use the dwindling land for agricultural and pastoral purposes which means the impact of mining operations affect the livelihoods of neighbouring villages who benefit very little from mines. These are the breeding grounds for zama-zamas who are exposed to real exploitation because they have no access to the legal market.

Research Methodology To uncover the real story of zama-zamas, there is a need to take a historical perspective, do Desktop research and conduct semi-structured interviews with select numbers of zama-zamas and members of the local communities where mining occurs.

Findings (i) The mining sector in Africa is ancient and began in the 15th century when the Portuguese colonisers discovered gold on the coast of modern-day Ghana while in South Africa it started in 1867 when diamond was found on the banks of Orange River. (ii) Most zama-zamas are driven by desperation and live in chronic poverty despite that this illicit mining sector is making R14 billion in the legal market. (iii) Zama-zamas have to negotiate the dark side of nefarious mineral cabal that benefits the very avaricious oligarchy.

Keywords: Zama zamas, Mining sector, Limpopo Village, entrepreneurs, socio-ecological

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1. Introduction

The enlightenment era of 1543 marked the onset of the European invasion of territories it identified as vital for its prosperity and Africa was ready for colonisation given its immense, poorly-utilised natural resources. The mega-strategy was simple:



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- Search for valuable minerals across the world in particular Africa where deposits of large minerals were found. For instance, In South Africa, it was discovered in 1867 (De Wit, 2010) and resulted in imperialist competition which led to the Anglo-Boar War and the 1910 agreement between European colonisers. According to Terreblanche in his book, *A History of Inequality in South Africa 1652-2002*, while democracy led to the extirpation of political apartheid and colonialism, it failed to address the egregious socio-economic conditions that breed inequality. It created the reality that is in Limpopo Province where there are 108 mines with a turnover revenue of R237,7 billion and a poverty rate of 77%. The only critique of the book is the dangerous myth it creates that South African history started in 1652. Mellet (2020) in his book, *The Lie of 1652: A Decolonised History of Land*, debunks this myth that South African history started in 1652. In defence of Terreblanche, my sense is that he began in 1652 because that is when inequality was introduced. Moeletsi Mbeki in his 2009 book called *Architects of Poverty: Why African Capitalism Needs Changing* argues that of the 1 billion people in the world that live in abject poverty, a significant number live in Southern Africa. Mbeki further argues the following:
 - Democracies in Africa including South Africa are about the creation of the African elite that serves as a buffer for entrenched European oligarchic elites. They are about the blatant and rapacious pursuit of greed instead of justice and social equity. In South Africa, this buffer came in the form of Black Economic Empowerment (BEC) subsequently called Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBB-EE) whose intentions were to generate African millionaires drawn from former liberators to squash the transition to democracy that is domination-free, just and pursues social equity.
 - Regional economic integration occurs in a skewed way where South African and other multinational companies operate businesses in neighbouring countries but then very few companies from these neighbouring countries have access to South African markets.
 - The South African former liberators use struggle credentials to amass wealth for themselves and abandon the real struggle for justice and social equity.
 - The shift from European colonisers' exploitation of African resources to the combined exploits of European colonisers and African political elites. Terreblanche (2012, ix) suggests that the post-apartheid democratic dispensation under the ANC has a:



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“strong preference to black elites formation and to promoting the interests of local and foreign corporations while it has shamelessly neglected the impoverished black majority as a consequence, not only has the PUI (poverty, unemployment and inequality) problem become more severe – it is more unsolvable.

This is the main problem of the democratic dispensation that breeds zama-zamas and justifies their existence. When the ANC abandoned the real struggle of Africans and chose to be manipulated into the capitalist American-British corporations narrative that favours private ownership and breeds avaricious oligarchy which includes select African elites. Hence, the post-apartheid choices of the ANC further marginalised Africans and placed a huge number of Africans on unsustainable social grants that served only to avert a revolution. It also explains the 77% of chronic poverty in the Limpopo Province which boasts 108 mines with a revenue turnover of R237 billion. This is the practical level of the choices the ANC made post-apartheid. It purports to align itself with the impoverished African majority but secretly drives neo-liberal economic policies. The only critique of the book is its introduction of the concept of African capitalism, an oxymoron to think of it. Africans have always employed an economic system of communalism, an ideology that instils shared responsibilities and equal share of resources collectively accumulated with emphasis on collective accumulation and equal sharing of resources collectively accumulated via *letsema/ilima* and *vukusenzele work ethic* (active citizenry). Capitalism is a Western concept that reroutes resources to private ownership yet these resources are collectively accumulated. Equitable sharing and Indigenous citizens payment from mining proceeds would arrest chronic poverty.

- Indoctrinate the indigenous people to devalue these mineral resources to allow free looting of their natural resources. So, first devalue their knowledge, culture, and heritage and obliterate their history through the introduction of Western systems of formal knowledge. Second, eviscerate their cognitive content and replace it with Western-centred epistemology based on manufactured realities of Western civilisation, impose Western lifestyles and let Africans use Westerners’ 400 years old Gregorian calendar based on the Northern Hemisphere instead of their own *Inzalo Yelanga* calendar which is a 75000-year old and is based on the Southern Hemisphere sun



movements (Figure 1 below). Dogon people, Egyptians and Ethiopians also had their own calendars based on the Southern Hemisphere. These calendars are based on ethno-astronomical knowledges. Colonisers also sought to proselytise Indigenous people into Christianity so they aspire for a peaceful place called heaven when the West incessantly loots African resources and creates their own heaven right here on earth. Indoctrination in the form of menticide and mendaciloquence has developed in Africans the capacity to live with the absurdity of abandoning their identities, culture, creates and knowledge and embracing uncritically the Western persona.

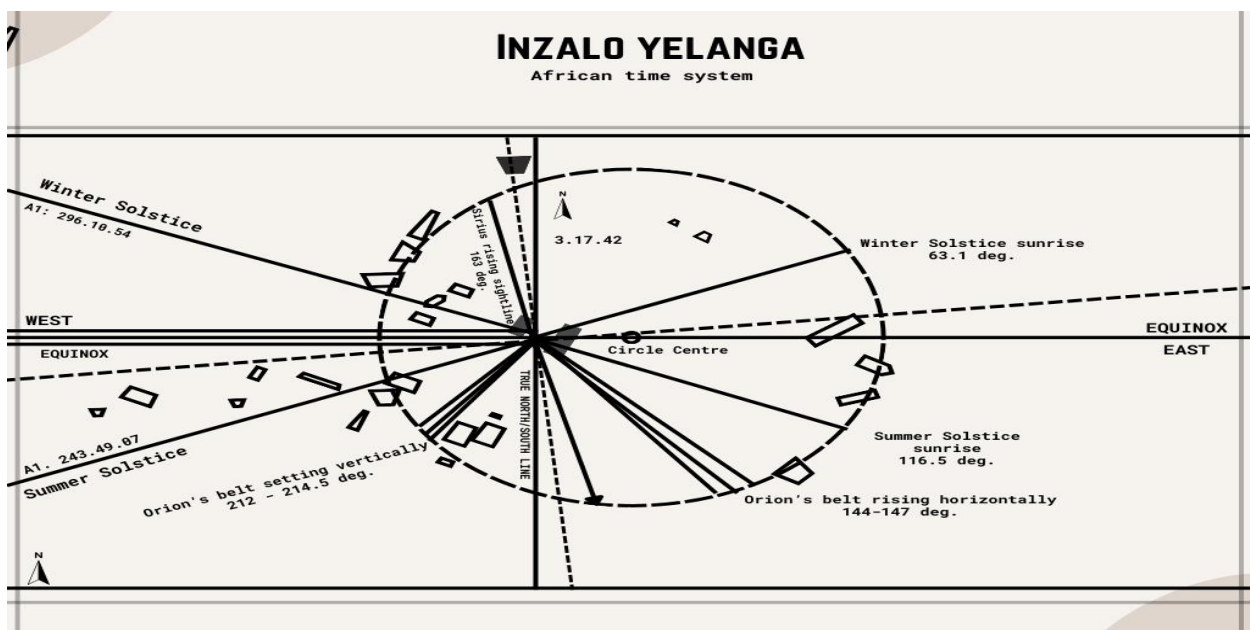


Figure 1: Southern african *Inzalo Yelanga* Calendar

- Select only those African leaders that support their capitalist agenda and are called in township lingo *mdlwembe*, unashamed collaborators with the colonial system. Ruha Benjamin, the Sociology professor at Princeton University in the YouTube clip where she is addressing a graduation audience argues that our blackness and womanhood are not in themselves trustworthy given their potential to collaborate with the oppressive systems that beget social inequality and the Gini Coefficient of more than 60% in Africa. Gini Coefficient measures income inequality. She further talks about conscripted Africans who unashamedly do the bidding of a rapacious system of greed.



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- Gradually make formal education inevitable as a smokescreen and precondition of participation in economic activity and ensure that creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are poorly developed in all sectors of education to limit the expectations of ordinary citizens. In the longitudinal study NASA conducted to determine the creativity of students, NASA tested students' creativity when they were five years old, 15 years old and when they entered university. The study shows that at five-years old, children show 98% of creative genius, at 15-years old it is reduced to 12% and once they enter university then it is further reduced to 2% (Kerley, 1994; Bushnell, 2022). Ruha Benjamin upon addressing an audience on imagination as also citing this study and recorded on YouTube argues that creativity is schooled out of us not inevitably but predictably. Predictably suggests a deliberate act of sabotage because it is undesirable to the capitalist system to have people they cannot control and people whose creative genius is intact are difficult to control and manipulate (Pitso, 2011). They also seek to destroy future competition as creative people are equally entrepreneurial.
- Later on, introduce neo-coloniality and neo-cyber-coloniality to sustain western looting of African resources. This explains why, 30 years into democracy, more than half of melanin-strong communities in South Africa still live in chronic poverty and unfair patterns of economic distributions remain intact. In ensuring the perpetuation of this anomaly, a huge infrastructure of institutions of learning including universities, churches and foundations named after their own “heroes” were established and continue to be sustained to drive the false narrative of mass deception to obfuscate the glaring weaknesses of a capitalist economic system.

2. Research methodology and methods

Taking a historical stance and using a Desktop research approach, the study sought to trace and map the historical context that gave birth to zama-zamas. The study further probed the many ways poverty could be studied and analysed so we could place the zama-zamas and village communities in Limpopo Province in their rightful place and debunk the myth of a homogeneous poor. People are poor because they have been marginalised from mainstream economic activity. They have been made to believe the five myths of entrepreneurship as expounded by the National Commission on Entrepreneurship (NCE):



- The risk-taking myth. While risk is intrinsically intertwined with business success, it has been presented as an obstacle to a successful launch of new ventures. It scares the hell out of most Africans. Moeletsi Mbeki in a YouTube video clip argues that most of the successful post-apartheid entrepreneurs are direct beneficiaries of European-designed Black Economic Empowerment that served to cushion entrenched avaricious apartheid-created entrepreneurs. This means that unlike entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs, most South African entrepreneurs have not most of the time taken any risk. That start-up entrepreneurs have to take calculated risks to succeed is not supported by evidence as most of our millionaires have received substantial support from the government both during apartheid and post-apartheid in the form of BEC/BBB-EE.
- The high-tech invention myth. This erroneous idea that all entrepreneurship begins with an invention breakthrough of a technical nature. A breakthrough invention is not necessarily a precondition for building a successful enterprise.
- The expert myth. There is no basis to suggest that formal education, huge business experience and advanced skills would necessarily lead to successful start-ups.
- The strategic vision myth. The idea of a well-researched business plan with a clear strategic plan as the basis for launching new ventures has no basis whatsoever.
- The venture capital myth. The perception that a start-up requires millions in venture capital to start is baseless and misleading.

In order to become a real entrepreneur at any age and irrespective of your educational background, specialised skillsets, or financial standing, you need to overcome these myths, develop a unique idea, get people to support the idea, pitch it to potential investors and just start with what you have.

2.1. Desktop Research Method

Defining the Population for the Study

The study sought to find out the type of poverty that beset communities in Limpopo and how these communities despite living under chronic poverty avoid the activities of the zama-zamas. So, the communities around the mines become the focus of the study. One such community becomes the focal point of the study. The study further samples and interviews five zama-zamas of which three come from



Lesotho and two from Matatiele, South Africa. In Lesotho, there are no safety nets such as social grants yet such safety nets are available in South Africa. 31% of South Africans depend on social grants and beyond 2020 when the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) of R350 (now, R370) was also introduced leading to an additional 10,5 million dependents then the percentage of those on social grants increased to half the population of South Africa (28 million) most of which are African (Dikoko and Patel, 2023). Preliminary interviews conducted in both local communities in the Limpopo Province paint a bleak picture of PUI and people dependent on social grants and most of the youth interviewed in these communities (N=20) are on R350 (now, R370) SRD confirming the statistical analysis of South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) that 60% of those in SRD are young (Damons, 2022). It also makes transparent the weaknesses of the mining corporate social responsibility strategies. Another concerning finding is that most of the interviewed young ones from these communities are not only on SRD but have tertiary education qualifications. Damons (2022) study confirms that more than 600,000 applicants of SRD indeed have a tertiary education qualification. In addition to interviews with zama-zamas, local community members fitting the description above based on preliminary desktop research analysis were also interviewed. Category 1 of interviewees involves pensioners who are in the majority in the community, category 2 entails youth and category 3 is about SMEs that seek to benefit from mining BBB-EE policy or feel unsupported by the corporate social responsibility unit of the mining company that ensconces their village. Those entrepreneurs seeking assistance from the mining sector add another layer of support to entrepreneurs who seek to establish small businesses on grounds of tenders secured from big brand companies such as Murray and Roberts, Anglo-American and the mining sector. These layers of government-supported presumed entrepreneurs initiatives plus the schooling-out of our innate creativity are inimical to the creation of real entrepreneurs and account for the low to average real entrepreneurs beyond subsistence, survivalist hustlers, prone to aggressive selling and erroneously called entrepreneurs. Sarasvathy (2008) identifies the problem as emanating from how people are taught even in MBA programmes across the world. It is this overreliance on causal, predictive logics that produce business plans that is the problem in generating real entrepreneurs. Causal, predictive reasoning, according to Sarasvathy (2008) leads to:

- Choices regarding the target market with high potential of returns. This is done via traditional market research.



- Make-vs-buy decisions in the production of a product or service.
- Choosing a portfolio with the lowest risk in finance.
- Employing the best Human Resources personnel
- Applying strategic planning is more like preparing for war.

All of these are examples of causal, predictive reasoning that has beset MBA programmes as earlier stated. Sarasvathy (2008) suggests an alternative rationality that needs to undergird entrepreneurs of the 21st century. Effectual reasoning unlike causal rationality uses the logic of ideational bricolage in that it looks at available means which contingently leads the process of creativity of the founders and initial customers to shape the product or service. Initial customers also become potential investors in the business. Ideas in effectual reasoning are initiated via three very specific questions:

- Who am I? focusing on traits, passion and abilities of co-founders as sources of ideas generation (asset bricolage, internal resources).
- What resources do I have? (asset bricolage, internal resources)
- What do I know? paying attention to education, training, experience and insights gained over time by co-founders (asset bricolage, internal resources).
- Whom do I know? social and professional networks of co-founders as potential investors (social bricolage).

These distinctions are necessary to delineate and differentiate various people who serve as research participants and distinguish them so their data is not contaminated and an accurate picture can emerge (see Table 1 below):

Table 1: Research Participants Permutations

	Pensioners	Youth	Entrepreneurs	Zama-zamas
Means	Mostly social grants	SRD	Mostly subsistence entrepreneurship	Hustling
Type of Living	Survivalist	Survivalist	Survivalist	Survivalist
Personal capabilities	Mostly illiterate	Mostly Tertiary education	Mostly primary or secondary school	Mostly primary



			dropout	school to secondary school dropouts
Education & Training	Mostly no or little primary school	Mostly post-school qualifications	Mostly secondary school	Mostly secondary school
Networks	Mostly stokvels	Mostly unorganised	Mostly work alone, not supported by government or mining	Gangsters

Source : Author's work

Defining the Community under Investigation

One such community was identified for investigation from Limpopo Province in South Africa around Mokopane. The mean age of the targeted respondents was beyond 60s (N=5), above 50s (N=3), youth (N=8), and business owners (N=3). Research assistants (N=4) were taken from the same community and each conducted interviews with select respondents. The interviews were recorded on mobile phones to avoid tainted data. These data were transcribed and interpreted. Research questions focused on:

- Sustainability in particular on the economic impact of mining on the well-being of local communities measured in terms of community activities before mining operations, how they were impacted, what mining contributed to mitigate these negative impacts on local communities, what number of mining employees are employed.
- Impact on the socio-ecological space of local communities. In other words, mining takes a huge chunk of the community's land affecting their agricultural and pastoral activities thus directly affecting their livelihoods. The mining operations also affect groundwater significantly and what are the mitigation strategies



- What local business opportunities are created by mining operations and how is mining uplifting local businesses?
- How are stakeholders consulted and incorporated in the mining activities?
- What plans are there for rehabilitation post-mining?
- What role does mining BBB-EE policy play on local communities' businesses?

Desktop Sources

The following documents formed part of the Desktop research:

- Social Grants and Livelihoods
- Social Grants, Livelihoods and Poverty Responses of Social Grants Beneficiaries in South Africa.
- Lost in Transformation
- History of Inequality in South Africa
- Architects of Poverty
- Mineral and Mining Development Study of the Molemole Local Municipality in Limpopo Province.
- NASA Creativity, Ideation, Invention, and Innovation
- Race after Technology
- Loss of Land and Livelihoods from Mining Operations, A Case in Limpopo Province, South Africa.
- Conceptualizing Chronic Poverty
- Dying to Live: Residents of Ga-Molekana Village Live in Fear of Mining Operations
- Community Perceptions on Environmental and Social Impacts of Mining in Limpopo South Africa and the Implications on Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Provincial Bulletin: Provincial Review Limpopo 2022.

Community Visits & Purposive Sampling

Semi-structured Interviews

- Community members
- Zama-zamas

2.2. Findings

Anatomy and Critique of the Mega-strategy – the Evidence



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Discovery of Minerals and Exclusion of Most Africans from Economic Wealth: and the Mis-Social Grants

Prior to 1867 which was the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly, South Africans depended on agriculture and pastoral living. In 1867, diamonds were discovered in Kimberly and Mining started which boosted not only economic exports but shifted subsistence farming to commercial farming (Terreblanche, 2002). In 1884, gold was discovered around the Witwatersrand area which substantially improved the South African economy (Terreblanche, 2002). However, all these economic advances benefitted Afrikaners and the English resulting in the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Africans were reduced to mine workers staying in hostels (labour reserves later called townships) and away from their families in the rural areas earning slave wages, a trend that continues to this day which birthed the Marikana massacre of 2012, that is, under a democratic dispensation (Terreblanche (2002). Terreblanche (2012) and Mbeki (2009) map a grim picture of inequality and poverty under democratic dispensation and blame it on the ANC pro-oligarchic policies and abandoning the struggle rhetorics and the interests of the majority of Africans on his behalf the struggle was waged since 1912 when the ANC was formed. In 1913, the Land Act of South Africa was passed which dispossessed Africans, the rightful owners, of their land. They were not allowed to buy and own land except to occupy it as farmworkers, a trend that continues to this day. 72% of the land is in the private hands of the Europeans despite constituting 10% of the population. Africans in 2024 own a mere 25% of farmland (Sihlobo and Kirsten, 2024). This is an indictment of the democratic dispensation and its abandoning of the ANC erstwhile liberation rhetorics. As earlier stated, poverty and inequality have been exacerbated since 1994 when the ANC chose policies that favour neoliberalism and abandoned the genuine struggles of the poor. Despite suffering heavy losses in the recent polls, it continues on a similar path of supporting neo-liberal economic policies that continue to support avaricious oligarchy which now includes the African elite. The formulation of the policies that support the creation of African post-apartheid elites such as BEC and its variant, BBB-EE suggest, as Mbeki (2009) alludes happens at considerable costs to the plight of the African majority who are languishing in the cesspool of chronic poverty. Chronic poverty is a statistical measure of deprivation occurring over five years or more leading to generational poverty where deprivation is not able to be overcome by an individual (Hulme, 2003). Variables to measure per household or individuals as factors that determine poverty status defined as persistent deprivation include:

- Household or individuals income



- Restricted consumption
- Literacy and educational level
- Tangible assets owned by individuals or households
- Racialised and gendered deprivation
- Relative or absolute deprivation
- Five-tier categorisation of poverty (always poor, usually poor, churning poor, occasionally poor, never poor). These categories in turn are aggregated as chronic poor (always poor, usually poor), transient poor (churning poor, occasionally poor) and non-poor (never poor). See Figure 1 below as adopted from Hume (2003).

Using this analytical tool to assess people of this select community in Limpopo, the picture of deprivation that emerges is that of chronic poverty, that is, this community is consistently poor, that is, always and usually poor. The interview data from zama-zamas reflect a similar pattern of deprivation as the community. The difference is location. Those in South Africa are on social grants and those outside the country have no such a safety net. Indeed, social grants cover certain individuals such as pensioners over sixty years, children, disabled and the one introduced to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic called Social Relief of Distress (SRD) and are currently continuing to perpetuate the myth of a caring government.

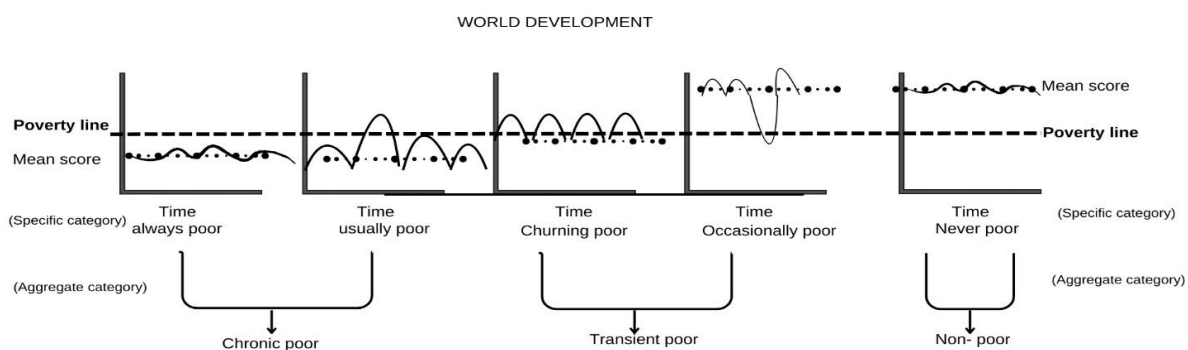


Figure 2: Permutations of Poverty
 Source: Adopted from: Hume.(2003)



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Manipulation of the African mindsets

Formal education and Christianity were used in such a way as to alter the mindsets of Africans. Both are systems designed carefully to:

- Eviscerate Africans of their cognitive content and replace it with Western-centred epistemology and religious propaganda that misdirect Africans to worship instead of revering the Supreme Being by bestowing unto them nature and the strength to work it for their livelihoods (*letsema, vukusenzele* work ethic). Worship suggests valuing nothingness and it was used to mislead Africans into believing the manufactured realities of Western civilisation. Firstly, a perfectly aligned African spirituality and its link to ancestors as well as nature was so devalued that it made Africans detach from their own identity, culture, worldviews and knowledges. It made them loathe their very being. Drawing from Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Maldonado-Torres 2007) is at pains to show how ontology and power work which extends to how being and the history of colonial enterprise provoke in being blindness and ontological slumber. Africans, after many years of menticide and mendaciloquence emanating from *Euro-Christian traditions* (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 241) have succumbed to an absurdity. Africans have been made to live with the absurdity of persistently devaluing their own being and own knowledge such as the 75000-years calendar called *Inzalo Yelanga* still found in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa, the Dogon people, Egyptian and Ethiopian calendars that all are based on Southern Hemisphere ethno-astronomical knowledge instead follow the 400-years Gregorian calendar which is based on Northern Hemisphere ethno-astronomy as already stated. These African calendars were linked to agricultural and pastoral activities. Take, for instance, Africans celebrating Christmas in deep summer when Europeans are experiencing their winter solstice. The disconnect in terms of climate conditions is so obvious but because Africans are made to live with the absurdity and manufactured realities of Europeans, their mindset has been ruptured. Dweck in her 2016 book called *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* calls it "a *falls growth mindset*" to refer to the psychological damage that ruptured psyches suffer and the psychological wounds are still visible to this day when Africans engage in self-sabotage by attending churches and believing the Christian dogma and doctrine. The success of this false growth mindset is in:



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✓ Making Africans live with absurdity. The almost total evisceration of their own cognitive content, own identity, own culture and own history is what George Orwell calls in his book, 1984 “*a set of lies agreed upon*”. It is even sadder that Africans did not have to agree with this set of lies but were forced down our throats through the violence of a physical and psychological nature. Kimpa Vita is a quintessential example of how Christian missionaries used egregious methods of torturing the Christian message into our mindsets. Kimpa Vita together with her son were immolated by Christian missionaries in 1706 showing how Christianity was compelled into our psyche and disturbed our previously harmonised lives operating on the basis of *ubuNtu* paradigm. This is the mindset that was imposed on us what Maldonado-Torres (2007) calls *coloniality of being* which affects not only the mindset but also our lived experiences in such a way that Africans begin to lose their languages thus their identities, culture and power to take control of their lives. In the 1986 book called *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngugi O’Thiongo bemoans this loss. Egunlusi (2017) argues, similar to Du Bois (1903) who refers to African identity post-coloniality as double consciousness, that African identity is dual-natured post-colonially. Firstly, it involved evisceration of African cognitive content, Southern Hemisphere-based calendars, distortions of history to suit Western narratives, and simple facts like the first ancient universities started right here in Africa and is called the University of Al-Qarawiyyin (859 C.E). Secondly, it indoctrinates Africans to embrace and defend western doctrines of a religious and economic nature that constitute threats on African resources, environment and humans. Nwoye (2017) identifies how inferioritisation happens through formal education and even via scholarship where young adults are made to value Euro-American culture and a Eurocentric framework that deliberately devalues all that is African. It makes African young adults value all that is Western to achieve the twin objectives of marginalising all that is African including the philosophy of *ubuNtu* and signifying all that is Western via indoctrination, menticide and mendaciloquence. It is also worth mentioning that young Africans are also made to “*learn to see themselves in foreign norms and images and our specific African experiences as insignificant elements for academic scholarship*” (Nwoye, 2017: 44). This is how stupidity is weaponised and inculcated to impressionable young African mindsets by a system designed to erode African cognitive content and build in these mindsets a Eurocentric perspective as the only show in town. Teboho Pitso in his 2023 book called *The Forgotten: Reconstructing and Reclaiming African Spirituality in the Post-Truth Era* refers to this phenomenon as an *othered self* meaning that an African is made to abandon all cognitive content that is African and embrace all that is Western.



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✓ Extirpation of African personhood by eliminating the basic postulates of an African worldview, an Afrocentric theory of human motivation, moral Visions influential agents and socio-cultural processes in the formation of African personhood (Nwoye, 2017). African worldview includes interpersonal relations prosecuted in terms of *ubuNtu* philosophy, oneness of mind, body and spirit, inclusive family structure, African identity, and human spirituality that recognises that ancestors are very much part of our African existence and play a significant role in our family decision-making processes and the interconnectedness of humans, nature and spiritual realm (Olumbe, 2008). Singleness of mind, body and spirit derives from *Ntu* from where *ubuNtu* philosophy emanates. *Ntu* refers to our oneness as Africans (Pitso, 2023). This explains why it was necessary for colonisers in 1913 to deprive us of our land, the deprivation that persists to this day. African oneness postulates four African virtues that Africans ought to allow to ensue in their lives which reflect Ubuntu philosophy. Temperance as the base virtue similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs base physiological needs of water, air and food deriving from nature. Temperance is based on magnanimity that ensures that people cannot leave their home without a drink or food. If that happens then it is unAfrican because it violates the base African virtue of temperance and our understanding of interconnectedness and *ubuNtu* principle. In the African worldview, no person ought to sleep hungry or be so deprived as to fail to meet his/her basic needs hence Nwoye (2017) insists that the basic postulates of African worldviews need to be inculcated in our younger generation so we do not perpetuate generational indoctrination and marginalisation of African cognitive content. The inclusive African family structure consists of nuclear and extended families where extended includes the entire village hence the aphorism that *it takes a village to raise a child* (Reupert *et al*, 2022). This means that an extended family in the African worldview consists of a nuclear family, neighbours, teachers, other professionals, community members and, policymakers who are responsible for creating a safe, conducive and healthy environment for children to grow and thrive in the acme of their abilities measured in terms of reaching their innate creative genius which they are endowed with from birth and which is necessary for their survival and thriving. The longitudinal study of NASA measured the creative genius of 5-year-old and found that it accounted for 98%. The same creative test was administered when these children were 15 years old and it amounted to 12% and by the time they reached tertiary education it was a mere 2% (Kerley, 1994; Bushnell, 2022) leading to Professor Ruha Benjamin arguing in the YouTube clip that our innate creative genius is being schooled out of us predictably. This means that a system of formal education inevitably squashes our creativity. As a village, it does not create



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safe and conducive conditions for students' creativity to thrive. In a similar study I conducted on 54 advanced Engineering undergraduates I used Torrance's Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) which measures the number of ideas a student generates per given time (fluency), the number of variety of ideas a student generates per given time (flexibility) and the novelty of ideas generated per given time (originality). The results show a high rating in fluency, moderate results in flexibility and generally low results in originality. For ideation and invention, only original ideas are processed. This finding on Originality supports the NASA study that the village called formal education tends to squash our creativity leading to a false growth mindset. An African identity is reflected in our culture, our African consciousness, ontology and socio-political formations. While Western ontology is mostly manufactured it is also mechanical, that is, it assumes that people are reacting instrumental to the environment yet our African ontological outlook is embedded in the environment as we shape and construct our own realities. The African interconnectedness of humans and their nature indicates the relationship described as temperance that demands sensitivity and preservation.

Instruments of Coloniality

- Formal Education serves the purpose of entrenching the 19th-century Western scientific plinth and the knowledge produced that way. It has over centuries been implicated in the evisceration of African cognitive content, identity and culture. The colonial strategy was simple:
 - ❖ Dehumanisation. Take away the Africans' dignity and unity through systematic undermining of their identities, distortions of history, cultural extirpation and loss of a sense of being human. This is achieved via ethnicising and racialising people, that is, using artificial categories of ethnicity and race to demarcate space and access so that the status of privilege and non-privilege (deprivation) determine where a particular race is positioned in terms of the physical spatial situatedness, what type of education to receive, what infrastructural capacity is fit for a particular race, what resources (land, mineral resources to gain, pastoral benefits). The second level of dehumanisation is access to what will benefit a certain racial group and which racial group shall be deprived. In South Africa today, there is a raging debate on land redistribution since Africans were denied access to land since 1913. The matter of land which includes access to mineral resources remains unresolved creating conditions for the bizarre situation that prevails in Limpopo



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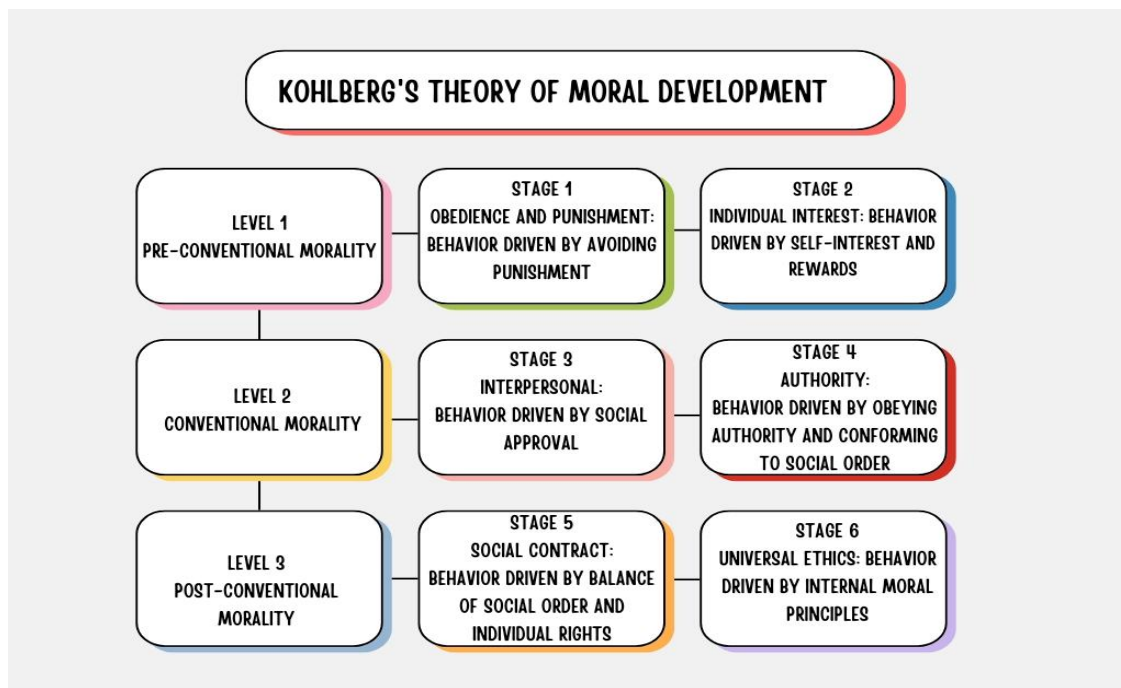
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Province where mining produces R237,7 billion amidst a sea of chronic poverty standing at 77%. Limpopo Province has all the hallmarks of a revolution yet social grants delay the obvious. Somehow, the ANC government has convinced mostly Africans that they can survive on social grants while a small cohort of former liberators has joined the privileged class (Terreblanche, 2002, Terreblanche, 2012, Mbeki, 2009). The majority of Africans are denied the right to human dignity and reference to the human species as Haslam (2006: 252) suggests: *“a consistent theme...is likening people to animals. In racist descriptions Africans are compared to apes and sometimes explicitly denied membership of the human species”*. At formal education they achieve similar effects by using Behavioural Psychology postulates of Pavlov and Skinner that reduce to this day, the education enterprise up to university level to ratomorphistic tendencies that extrapolate animal behaviour to regulate human behaviour. In trying to understand how formal education up to university level continues to apply ratomorphistic behavioural constructs, Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development suffices (see, Figure 3 below). While it is critiqued for its origin in Development Psychology and failing to prove that its presumed phases are actually Hierarchal and follow logically (Gibbs, 2019), it is widely used. It shows stages of moral development in three phases: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional which each consists of two stages: The pre-conventional phase consists of stage 1 regulated via obedience, incentives (rewards) and punishment while stage 2 is defined as by narrow self-interest. The conventional phase contains interpersonal behaviours regulated by social approval while stage 4 is determined by obeying authority and confirming social order (law and order). Post-conventional phase has social. Contract stage 5 and universal ethics stage 6. Humans need to regulate their behaviours at least at stage 5 but ideally have to be at stage 6 where principles of social and economic justice are debated and settled. Yet, modern politics demand level 4 law and order. Religion seeks to regulate adult behaviour at stage 1 so adults are treated as children hence the concept of “born again”. Formal education uses incentives and rewards to regulate the human behaviour of young adults (students) hence the idea of pass/fail/throughput rate as well as the use of the concept of pedagogy (*paidos=child, agogos=lead*) even in higher education where young and matured adults learn, use of rewards for excellence in teaching and research as well as NRF ratings. All of these are an *infra dignitatem*, below the dignity of young and mature adults thus representing dehumanisation



packaged as formal education and Christianity. Human beings regulate behaviour at a social contract and ethical principles level to discuss issues relating to social and economic justice.

Figure 3: Kohlberg's Theory



❖ Inferioritisation is the deliberate and calculated positioning of other humans purely on the grounds of their race, ethnicity or gender to lower social hierarchies leading to social inequality and deficient self-esteem (Neckel, 1996). It refers mainly to the social construction of deficient individuals who lack self-esteem where the self is othered, eviscerated of its own cognitive content to implant others cognitive content. Inferioritisation involves essentially the generation of social inequality to justify treating otherness with disdain and marginalising it from social benefits and make people understand to live with deprivation and the indignity of living with socially constructed disadvantage and deficient individuality. These processes of Inferioritisation and social inequality are intended as it were to render those considered inferior powerless for the sake of control, indoctrination and manipulation. Formal education uses Inferioritisation for reasons of intellectual capture and marginalisation of legitimate cognitive content and



signifying western-centred epistemology. It is skewed social relations that deprive people of their basic dignity and allow them to sink and wallow in a cesspool of chronic poverty and social inequality purely on grounds of race, ethnicity and gender. To overcome inferiority whether coming from formal education or religion, it is important to deal with authority bonds even when regulated via benefit/deprivation nexus or incentives/punishment. Authority bonds occur at four levels and each has its own mode of control and manipulation. When one recognises these levels of authority bond then one can extricate oneself and be free:

- Attachment bonds are based on the interconnectivity of emotions and affections amongst individuals that nevertheless get managed through unequal relational authority. For instance, in marriages. Once the subordinated partner recognises the bond of authority then the marriage is likely to collapse.
- Commitment bonds are based on certain obligations, responsibilities and formal agreements. For instance, financial contracts, employment and affiliations. Once, one realises that an authority bond exists and is arbitrary then getting out is easy.
- Belief bonds as in religion, politics and cultural groups. These are bonds based on shared values, shared opinions and ideologies. Once the authority bond is recognised for its lack of evidence or reasoned logic then apostasy follows.
- Identity bonds are formed through race, culture, ethnicity and even gender. Once the authority bond is identified and the narrowness of such bonds then apostasy follows.

The source of Inferioritisation is the emphasis placed on authority bonds.

2.3 Zama-zamas: Pawns in the Egregious Scam

In attempts to survive in a hostile economic environment, zama-zamas, artisanal miners targeting largely closed mines negotiate a complexity between meeting the needs of nature which are inexorable and inevitable or meeting the demands of human laws founded on Roman-Dutch laws which are mostly arbitrary. The aphorism that necessity is the mother of invention applies in this zama-zamas situation. Their economic activities emanate from abject poverty. I had the privilege of interviewing about five of zama-zamas from their own homes and contexts which are both within South Africa and in the immediate



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neighbouring Southern Africa in particular Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Their economic situation, experienced first-hand, is dire and these mainly men have families to feed and operate in highly exploitable and regulated economic environments. The need to resolve immediate physiological needs propels most of them to ideational conflict. Dagostino (1999) defines ideational conflict as a clash that emerges when in the process of finding a solution to a pressing need, an enterprising individual is compelled to consider a risk which could delay devising a plan to resolve the pressing need. In my interviews with five zama-zamas, I found that most are faced with the challenges of feeding their families, societal communities, legal implications of their envisaged plan and pressures of being a man who ought to provide for their families. Faced with these disparate positions, necessity demands dealing with the demands of immediate physiological needs and this reduces the risk involved which is of Roman-Dutch laws imposed on South Africa by colonisers who have imposed an economic system that denies most of them the right to irk out a living leading to an *infra dignitatem* of depending on social grants if you are South African and almost nothing if you come from neighbouring countries. In fact, some of those from neighbouring countries have seen their own parents or relatives toiling long and hard in the mining sector as cheap labour dying without any money and perpetuating generational inequity. One of them audaciously stated:

“if I was to choose between staying here and die with my family and risking prison back in South Africa, I would choose the possibility of prison because the risk is worth it. I will go down as one who chose respect instead of dying without trying”

This view is shared by those who live with nothingness, poverty so extreme that it leads to loss of millions of lives annually across the globe (Sachs and MacCord, 2018). These households suffer immeasurable damage at a physical, emotional and psychological level.

“seeing other families, other children, other wives in cars, buying groceries hits hard when you are poor”

This is the enduring pain of persistent deprivation and dehumanisation that makes men to transcend their fear of the authority bond based on obligations to respect the law and honour the inexorable laws of nature one of which is hunger. Given a choice between inexorable laws of nature and arbitrary and even laws based on Roman-Dutch postulates and applied to justify inequality and uneven economic distribution or maintain the status quo then one has no choice at all. It is Hobson’s choice.



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3. Critical Discussions

Is the possibility of a domination-free society that aspires to be just reachable in this century? The domination-prone colonially-imposed society is unjust, breeds inequality, marginalises other human beings, applies menticide and mendaciloquence to perpetuate itself and sustains the atrocities of disadvantage and deprivation. It is based on manufactured realities and alienates people from nature. The essential mission of coloniality was twofold. Assimilation and enforcement. Through assimilation, Coloniality sought other Africans via epistemic violence by the evisceration of African cognitive content and replacing it with western-centred epistemology drawing from 19th century western scientific plinth. For this type of assimilation, formal education up to university level is implicated to this day. One of the producers of inequality are universities and assimilationist machine are universities. Assimilation also sought to transform Africans to mimic European manufactured realities, assume European consciousness, comportment, behaviours and dress code (Pillay, 2021). Another way of enforcing and reinforcing differences in terms of race, ethnicity and culture is via neo-modernity which mostly perpetuates ancient coloniality in the 21st century through epistemic reconstitution. Racism in neo-modernity is reconstituted in privileged Western episteme at formal education including universities and churches as well as in internet-based advanced technologies such as variants of chat-GPT which privileges Western episteme (Benjamin, 2019). Epistemic reconstitution also includes race as a structure of formal education where origins of science and knowledge are reconstituted as originating from Western civilisation yet we know that most originate in North Africa which the West in particular the Greeks invaded and stole. For instance, Plato and Aristotle fought in such wars as hoplites, and citizen-soldiers leading to what George James in his 1954 called *The Stolen Legacy: The Egyptian Origins of Western Philosophy* traces meticulously the origins of Western philosophy from North Africa. We also know that chemistry emanated from North Africa as alchemy and is derived from *khemia* which means black land. Physics origins derived from the work of Avicenna, a Muslim philosopher, who discovered the first law. All this knowledge is reconstituted as Western-centred epistemology. Pillay (2021: 395) succinctly captures epistemic reconstitution and neo-modernity as:

“racism is a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the lines of the human’ that has been politically, culturally and economically produced for centuries by the institutions of the capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system”.



Pillay (2021: 394) paints a grim picture of neo-modernity:

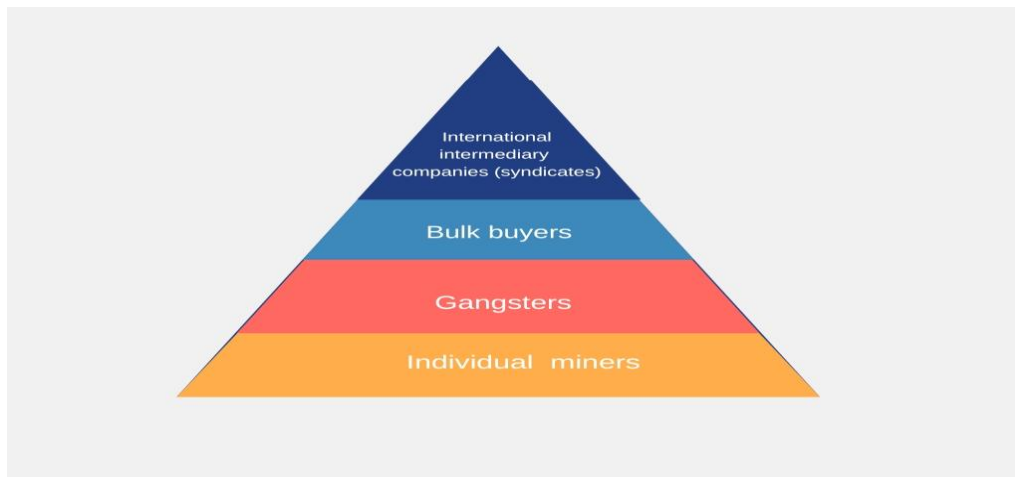
“The rhetoric of modernity is the constant updating of the rhetoric of salvation hiding the logic of coloniality – war, destruction, racism, sexism, inequalities, injustice, etc. All the things people notice today in the world cannot be changed to improve while modernity/coloniality remain in place”.

The neo-modernity and neo-coloniality albatross on the neck of Africans is hidden from them and operates insidiously to protect imperialist objectives which are essentially racist and lead to inequality and chronic poverty amongst Africans. While the rhetoric of neo-modernity and neo-coloniality pretends to be for the poor, especially from political parties such as the ANC, the recent formation and ease that the Democratic Alliance (DA) joined the Government of National Unity (GNU) shows the length to which those who have narrow interests to protect imperialist agenda can go to protect those interests. The DA is only interested in shepherding the ANC towards safeguarding the imperialist agenda hidden nicely in neo-modernity which creates scenarios such as those in Limpopo Province where 108 mines generate more than R237 billion and chronic poverty levels affecting mostly Africans stand at 77%. In the 2024 national elections, the ANC received 73,4% in this impoverished province that is surrounded by 108 mines.

Zama-zamas react to these immensely deprived economic conditions emanating from neo-modernity and neo-coloniality that pursue unashamedly racist imperialist agenda and reroute resources generated from the deep belly of Africa to Europeans while Africans are economically marginalised. It is these inequalities and, this chronic poverty which Pillay (2021) argues would not change until the economics of neo-modernity are vehemently challenged and changed. The entrepreneurs behind zama-zamas are leading the way. In the 2011 biography of Steve Jobs, Walter Isaacson dispels the following entrepreneurial creation myth: The risk-taking myth. In order to understand how risk is distributed in the zama-zamas enterprise, the entire network has to be made more transparent. At the helm of the zama-zamas enterprise resides the real mafia in the form of international intermediary companies who are the real buyers of the proceeds of the zama-zamas (see, Figure 4 below).



Figure 4: Risk Distribution Taxonomy: Revealing the Real Entrepreneurs



Similar to neo-modernity and neo-coloniality, the zama-zamas enterprise really knows how to hide itself from the glare and attention of the public and sidestep legality. Often those exposed to the public and legality are the zama-zamas as individual miners negotiating a space somewhere between illicit mining and small-scale artisanal mining with the highest risk and lowest financial returns. They take the greatest risk yet receive meagre financial returns. The real money goes to international intermediary companies who also take the lowest risk as shown in the following risk permutations and have access to legal markets:

- Lowest financial return = highest risk
- Low to average return = above moderate risk
- Average to high return = moderate risk
- High return = less risk

The owners of these International criminal syndicates called International Intermediary Companies are the real entrepreneurs applying guerrilla tactics to enrich themselves. Guerrilla tactics involve taking calculated risks and knowing how to distribute risk, which is an intrinsic part of any business so that risk is managed more successfully. Successful companies whether matured or new ventures succeed on the strength of risk distribution. Companies involved in the zama-zamas enterprise include personal physical risk, turf wars (Martin, 2016), risk of arrest, risk of spending years in prison, risk of being publicly misunderstood and rejected and risk of being on the radar of law enforcement units. These risks are taken up by the zama-zamas for meagre financial returns. The risk is further distributed above moderately to gangsters and then



moderately less to, bulk buyers who, in turn, sell to international criminal syndicates who are never touched by law enforcement units such as Interpol. In this food chain, the greatest beneficiaries are mostly European criminal syndicates called International Intermediary companies. Hoffman (2000) suggests that in guerrilla warfare, a pawn can win you victory hence zama-zamas in this enterprise of illicit mining are no more than pawns in the greater scheme of this criminal network of syndicates conceptualised as illegal mining operating within legal markets.

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