

SALT 2021

HOKMA TRILOGY CONFERENCE

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POPE JOHN PAUL II (PJPII) CONF CENTRE (WUSE 2, ABUJA)

30 Sept–2 Oct 2021

EXTENDED CONFERENCE . . .

**FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS (Ends: 20 August) &
FINAL REGISTRATION (Ends: 20 August)**

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SOCIETY FOR AFRICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT—SALT

**Note: No membership is required to attend the 2021 SALT conf.*

Scholars and professionals are invited to submit engaging papers for the full closing Trilogy SALT conf., on the theme: **Modeling the neXt Economy** (sub-topic: *'Beyond contestation to a new critical conceptualization'*). (*Please, find the theme description given below).

All papers must adhere to the standards governing their research and writing for the specific field or discipline. Papers and panel discussion should reflect adequate historical background consideration, from antiquity to (post-)modernity, beside other treatment/analysis given the topic itself. A panelist or presenter must strive toward a more integrated or holistic understanding of their subject and treatment of the theme (e.g., 'economy' should not be understood solely in pecuniary or financial terms); other factors must weigh in here. Presenters should also explore constructive areas and critical issues within the broad range of the main theme and its sub-theme.

In order to participate as presenter or panelist, the SALT Conf Registration form must be completed and returned to Hokma House by **20 Aug**. Presenters or panelists should submit a 300-word abstract or summary of paper or forum discussion. Conf paper submission should be sent in word file to: hokma.salt@gmail.com; and ptachin@noun.edu.ng; cc: hokmahouse.conf.2000@gmail.com before **20 Aug**. The Paper or Forum's Panel summary should include:

- A. Name of presenter or panel convener; if a forum's panel, give full names of discussants;
- B. Exact topic(s) as on reg form, plus word count—length of final paper: **4000-5000** words (word & pdf);
- C. Desired program format: plenary/lecture, seminar, workshop, panel, symposium, consultation, etc
- D. Brief institutional/org profile for presenter or panel convener and each discussant;
- E. Specific contribution of presentation to the SALT mandate, or other aspects of SALT.

The SALT Mandate

1. Engaging with African issues past, present and future in a multidisciplinary context;
2. Giving focus, depth and direction to contemporary African discourses;
3. Exploring new mission frontiers in the expanding knowledge economy, which would promote integrated human flourishing in Africa;
4. Serving as a catalyst for contemporary African (Christian) communities' critical engagement with the world;
5. Forming a Christian theological resource-base for realizing a new social ordering of society for Africa and new social offers for citizens.

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↔ **CLOSING THE RSA (STELLENBOSCH) 2018 SALT THEME**

Theme and Description

**MODELING THE NEX T ECONOMY:
BEYOND CONTESTATION TO A NEW CRITICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION**

The power of 'economy'—whether local or global—looms large over our world, societies and lives, as to suggest its relative importance in human and governmental functioning, esp. when 'economy' is centrally defined by 'financial flows'. As a 'tool' of governance, 'finances' form a triad with 'law' and 'military', and the implication of this union, from ancient times, is borne out by the oft-quoted example that illustrates a definition of 'politics', viz.

‘in the conduct of global politics, economic status must be backed by military capacity’ (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Angus Stevenson, 2010:1375). This notion anticipates a regnant conception of the economy as the triad of ‘production, distribution and consumption’. These *activities* are presumed best ‘managed’ by the government via ‘laws’ and the agents that are supposed to enforce them.

In re-conceiving the true relation between the triads in any combinations, we must unveil the *hidden* ideologies which frame them. In judging the current state of our world economy, its re-conceptualizing must proceed via critical analysis of human, cultural, social, religious, political and economic *structures* associated with (Africa’s) largely undeveloped ‘rural’ villages, as opposed to its equally unplanned emerging ‘urban’ centers. The above triads are manifestly operative in both *settings*, as to suggest a further constructive engagement with their respective ‘economies’ and the way for the future of Africa. In shaping the next (global) economy, we must identify for engagement spheres of operation of each triadic element in Africa—e.g. the (neo-)patrimonial/patron-client system—and their regnant values or dominant beliefs. The controlling ideologies of the triads are engaged beyond agitation about their colonial or cultural origins, to proposing a constructive solution to the political and economic predicament of Africa, via the triads’ critical *re-conceptualization*.

This conference adds a faith-dimension to the understanding of the relation of the triads, from historical and theological standpoints. It seeks to navigate the issues via a Christian theological articulation of the relation of politics and economy; and a theological critique of production, distribution and consumption, with their mechanisms and end-users.

A major goal of the conference is to articulate an integrated, robust vision for a transformed African economy, holistically defined; and for its agents, both individual and corporate *citizens*, who are defined by the emergent *urban* area, being carriers of a vision to affect the politics or economy of their *cities* of origin or residence positively.

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OPENING THE NIGERIA (ABUJA) 2021 SALT THEME ⇄

2021

SOCIETY FOR AFRICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT CONFERENCE

... is pleased to announce its first

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

SALT CONFERENCE (30 Sept-2 Oct) @ VENUE (WUSE 2, ABUJA)

Theme & Exposition:

TRANSFORMING AFRICA’S ECONOMY THROUGH EDUCATION

The ‘economy’ of Africa has enthralled myriad scholars, writers, analysts/critics, observers, reporters and discerning students; and each one of them has described or viewed Africa’s *economy* from very widely divergent standpoints. Those who are not so captivated by it have rashly ‘dismissed’ it as an unqualified object of study, often based on an ill-fated, contrived criteria or tools of ‘scientific’ analysis. Those who are seemingly ‘sympathetic’ to the ‘economy’ have also resorted to understand the throes of the continent against the backdrop of a resilience displayed by African culture(s) or people(s). Whatever may be the *status quaestionis* of the subject, there is a need to reckon with the modern global stakes in Africa, which have inevitably redefined the economy per se on newer terms, and rendered submerged economies of the world as *capable* of being described as open emerging societies, in relation to the current global economy and taxonomy. In the global processes thus set in motion, emergent economies also undergo transformation—however judged—as part of a universal phenomenon describing a natural and human *growth* process.

Beyond all the intricacies of determining economy are more pressing questions: What is Africa’s *economy* really about, and what substantive issues centrally define it? What (or, *whose*) *ideas* shape this economy in its traditional and contemporary forms, and what is their provenance? How are the ideas as *values* generated, circulated (via what medium), and how do they shape African society and its people for good or for ill? What are the institutional carriers of

the ideas and how do the ideas shape or define the social or cultural *institutions* themselves or vice versa? And what is the combined long-range impact of the interaction of *cultural ideas or values and social institutions* on the long-term development of Africa? Finally, in determining the place(ment) of Africa's economy on the global economic map or landscape, what *intent* (or purpose), in heuristic terms, might it achieve externally for the society, and internally for the people? If the urge to transform is best achieved via such global placement, then what new institutions, ideas or values would Africa need to emerge with a transformed economy for its society and people? There is no retreat on this matter!

Education plays a critical role in the process of transforming people, society or economy. The power of education is a given, but its actualization has always been problematic. Apportioning blame to the government, public and private sectors—education's major stakeholders—only shows their common predicament. We must exploit education's capacity to solve the multifaceted *problem of civilization* for Africa once for all. If the problem is equated with advancing human *and* social development, then the path toward an *integrated* solution becomes clearer: for no person or society can 'develop' at the expense of the other. Critical attention then must be given to *why* Africa's development (or achieving an integrated economy) in the 21st century has stalled.

If one concedes the argument that the future of Africa is inexorably *urban*, then a foremost issue here is the entrenched *structural (natural) division* of 'rural vs urban areas' of nations across Africa. It is axiomatic that the rural sector, epitomized by the (traditional) 'African village' is incapable of driving the new African economy, as opposed to the 'city' that *globally* drives the economy (even if critics view the city as a 'glorified village'). The structural isolation (or geographical remoteness) of the African village limits its level of education to primary and or secondary; but, technically, not as a feeder institutional center for the higher education institution (HEI) that are normally located in the (semi-)urban areas (major towns/cities), which also operate similar and often better schools.

Further entrenching the rural-urban wedge is the virtual absence of a thriving economy beyond the largely subsistence level, as rural areas are basically non-industrial(ized). This datum holds the key to the established 'patronage' (patron-client) system of African governments for rural areas and their (poor) dwellers. To achieve an integrated economy for Africa, it is crucial to probe why the African 'village', hitherto, has remained a major force in the lives of myriad Africans, or a factor militating against 'urban' development itself. Critical core issues at stake here are: the ancestors as tribe's progenitors/cultural pact; a (fixed) identity oriented toward land; cultural life rooted in clan/tribe; village as boundary of existence (opposed to city); immutable traditions or taboos rooted in cultural practice; hoary sexual division of labor, etc; terminal patriarchy as the social norm, often parallel to national (or foreign) polity, that is viewed as 'alien other'; a concern to protect or preserve, promote the vernacular (dialect) among 'indigenes' for communication; and a religious worldview shaped by people's lived reality, with its communalistic life 'sustained' largely through a subsistence economy.

These sketches contrast markedly with the (emerging) urban environment and global economy, with which other extant sub-economies are to be integrated. *Educationists in Africa must reinvent the integrated African society and economy for its new citizens, with their corresponding social offers and obligations.* A transforming education, then, must critique extant social structures *on all fronts*; re-conceptualize the economy beyond the present (pecuniary) impasse of a ill-shaped society; and re-create new urban spaces or social settings where persons or groups can navigate and re-negotiate old sodalities as a new citizenry. For such a task to proceed and succeed, some key critical mandates for achieving a robust, transformed economy via education must govern it:

- A. Redefining education in relation to the responsibility, interests, purposes and major functions of the nation's private, public and governmental spheres of operation;
- B. Linking the institutional providers of education to the new global industry and labor (or, the labor industry) and to the sum-total of the labor force, under the 3 domains of the nation (above), in the bid to solve the perennial problems associated with labor and productivity;
- C. Developing critical thinking, research and technological curricula, apparatus, skills, capacities and intra/extra curricular programs to deal constructively with persistent practical problems of society;
- D. Creating enabling laws/policies that will promote new experimentation in *restructuring* society for:
 1. mapping, forming and developing secure, integrated new urban settlements/suburbia and centers;
 2. facilitating integrated national administration at the provincial/state-city/county governing levels;
 3. increased mobility within constituted democratic spaces, contingent upon the educational needs/aspirations, professional demands or business occupations of African citizens;
- E. Articulating a philosophical framework for a new democratic deal, social space and citizens—beyond the supposed gains or liabilities of the old order—governed by new ideals and values to grow the new global economy of Africa. The philosophical grounding is given focus by both historical and faith reasoning.

Scholars/experts may focus on any area(s) of this exposition and submit a full or working paper (also to *KIC: A Multi-disciplinary Journal of African Life and Thought*) that will further critical discussion on a new society and economy of Africa, driven by a concentrated education in the 21st century—the *impetus to cross the threshold of development.* (Authors may present their papers first in a seminar/workshop at the *SALT* conf before finally submitting them).

SALT 2021—KEYNOTE LECTURE

Theme and Description

THE PROBLEM, PROGRESS & PROSPECT OF EDUCATION MAPPING EDUCATION'S JOURNEY FROM ANTIQUITY TO (POST-)MODERNITY

Moderns customarily 'filter' times or eras via the lens of their 'Computer Age', where the PC, presumably, has revolutionized our world—as micro, digital, global, virtual world! Aside its problematic rating of historical eras as regressive (e.g. the ancient world) and theirs as progressive, modernity has a distinct distaste for the 'past' from which it radically disengages, in order to 'invent' itself in the present, and 'impact' the future. To be sure, the modern bias has been faulted or engaged philosophically.

This 'periodization' or division of history makes no room for continuity / discontinuity between eras, and how such may be critically adjudged. The 'modern' posture belies—in *con-temporary* terms—the history and existential realities of the *world* (esp its nature, forces, operations, laws, logics, geographics, demographics, endowments *and end-users*), which require us to *study* it, so as to achieve *real-time* progress. For if there's no world to live in and function *as we should*, then all that is built upon it, esp institutions of society and the elaborate government bureaucracies, would not only cease to function, but their very existence would be pointless. It is critical that we understand this about the world we cherish that seems to be perishing.

From its modest beginnings in antiquity—beyond the well-known 'alphabetic revolution'—education was in a sense rare but a thing to be desired. One would also concede education's great improvisation during these early periods of human civilization; a point greatly contrasted with its near-commercialization (or 'marketization') in much of the modern era. World population surge may be a factor in a society that bulges with (non-) human problems to be studied and solved. Between past and future eras, education has now emerged in our contemporary era as a *new enterprise*. Thus, it is exploited as a 'new-undertaking'-turned-a-'tool' for the 'modernization project' itself. The equation of both projects (education = modernity) has been defined, defied or contested via *discourses* and *dramas* of Hellenization, westernization, colonization, civilization, secularization, democratization, globalization, imperialism, contextualization and indigenization. Can the *new enterprise* be salvaged, then?

Education has not had so many contenders and bartenders in its lived history! But what was the original impetus that gave rise to the need to be educated: was it an *internal* impulse of human agents or an *external* imperative bearing on humankind? A major link is the posture education has sustained toward the *cosmos*, or the 'world system'; and learning organizations or institutions human societies have created to engage with a 'dis-orderly' but burgeoning universe of humans, animals, plants. The education-world interface may explain how some goals of education converge on (re)making the world or world citizens.

From antiquity to (post-)modernity, education has operated at various levels—(pre-) primary, secondary and tertiary (or their equivalents). But many issues are raised in this connection, for judging education's progress: how well does education at each level foster or promote a true and adequate knowledge of the self, the other and the world? What critical stances are developed toward traditions that shape or define *self*, *other* and *world* (SOW) and how are they communicated so that they impact society positively? Each level of education is either terminal at, or progressive beyond, its endpoint, while the tertiary level further subdivides into three (3) levels: what do the *gradations* in education mean or suggest about the new enterprise? Integrating knowledge in education is no more felt than now, when societies are 'dis-integrating' faster than they are able to *reform*. Beyond 'changing' *curriculum*—the 'engine' that drives education—is the need to *charge* all levels of education to 'form a life-as-end-product', shaping a *Curriculum Vita* as a *person!* This remains a great challenge to education at all times.

To affirm that all knowledge is ultimately theological, means it is not only creation-bound in time-space, but that education, as the primary transmitter, has the power to lead pupils or citizens via its institutions/stations to experience God's purposes for the world, which are imbued with creation. All acquired human knowledge is at best 'partial', without being false ('for we know in part'), but also stamped with a moral quality or capacity to 'know good from evil'—*and do the good!* As a proven path to progress, pupils and students should be *equipped* to: function optimally in a stratified world; shun all vices, pursue virtue; and *de-naturalize* social hierarchy by building bridges to 'better worlds'. Thus, the *educational* and *industrial* (labor) are linked—i.e., the redefined *new enterprise* to the *new economy* (as the totality of what makes persons/societies to flourish without sabotaging their interests or duties). A nation's prospect or dividend is contingent on the quality and strength of its investment in education *at all levels and by all sectors or stakeholders of society*.

SPECIAL NOTE

Scholars and professionals are invited to probe an aspect(s) of this theme/description via a historical or analytical framework or other approaches, and first submit an abstract or summary, before sending their full paper. Papers must exhibit a strong awareness of, and be fully conversant with, the major issues surrounding the theme and final paper topic, globally and esp on the African (regional) front. Constructive proposals on the topic are welcome for further reflective discussion at SALT conf and possible publication in the *KIC* journal. Papers which are not for the SALT conf may be submitted to the journal directly.