Chapter 1
Introduction

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South Africa is a kaleidoscope of different races, ethnic groups and cultures. Due to
colonisation, different nationalities settled in the country and became part of its
landscape. Also, South Africa comprises various families that are descendants of
different racial groupings. First, most of the population comprises the indigenous
African population with its various ethnic groups, namely, the San, Khoi, Venda,
Tsonga, Ndebele, Tswana, Sotho, Zulu, Swati, Pedi and Xhosa. Second, there is a
significant number of people of European descent, such as the Dutch, English,
Belgians, Germans, French, Italians and Portuguese. Third, there are descendants of
Jews, especially from Eastern Europe. Fourth, there are the Indians and Malay
group (from present-day Indonesia), who are the descendants of former indentured
labourers and Malay slaves, and fifth, the Chinese, who descend from Chinese
labourers and merchants (Department of Social Development, 2011, p. 24). All
these races are defined and held together by human relationships. Whether these
relationships are healthy or not is a bone of contention, and this book will try to
provide some explanations related to this. Given this diverse racial and ethnic pro-
file, it can be argued that human relationships in South Africa are quite complex as
they are predicated on different cultures, traditions, value systems and mores. They
cannot be treated as homogenous but must be seen as diverse. This can be both
exciting and challenging at the same time. If well managed, diverse human relation-
ships have the potential to unleash the creative spirit of South Africans and propel
the country into prosperity. The opposite to this is that if human relationships are
undermined and corrupted, as in the past, they can be very dangerous to a country’s
standing and result in all sorts of discord.

Before colonisation, there was no country called ‘South Africa’. The name South
Africa is a colonial invention. It is noteworthy that prior to colonial rule, the

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indigenous and pre-colonial societies had their own sociopolitical and economic systems. They also had their own religions and forms of worship and were informed by their Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). Therefore, pre-colonial societies were patterned according to the way IKS and other systems were created and utilised by their peoples. The Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) (2018) states that the earliest inhabitants of this land were Stone Age hunter-gatherers. They were the Khoikhoi and San. Although collectively known as the Khoisan, they are often thought of as distinct peoples. The former were those who, 2000 years ago or more, adopted a pastoralist life-style herding sheep and, later, cattle. Whereas the hunter-gatherers adapted to local environments and were scattered across the sub-continent, the herders sought out the pasturelands between modern-day Namibia and the Eastern Cape, which generally are near the coast (GCIS, 2018). At around the same time, Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists began arriving in southern Africa, bringing with them an Iron Age culture and domesticated crops. After establishing themselves in the well-watered eastern coastal region of southern Africa, these farmers spread out across the interior plateau, or ‘Highveld’, where they adopted a more extensive cattle-farming culture. Kingdoms arose, based on control over cattle, which gave rise to systems of patronage and hence hierarchies of authority within communities (GCIS, 2018).

1.1 Pre-Colonial Human Relationships and Social Welfare Systems

South Africa’s pre-colonial landscape was communal in character, whereby human relationships were defined by the notion of sharing and mutual obligation. Shoring up these human relationships were families which were extended by nature. Extended families encompassed immediate family members such as the father, mother and children, and then grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins. It is important to note that these family forms were also further defined along clan and kinship lines. In this sense, the family was not only the primary institution of socialisation, but also, it was a system that protected its members from adversities and life-cycle shocks. Furthermore, families were the cornerstones of indigenous social welfare systems. The former were predicated on the mutual-aid system which was defined by general ties of mutual obligation and reciprocity. Kinship ties were strong, and therefore, family members looked after each other. The old and infirm were protected from adverse social conditions by this family form. These systems are the ones that guaranteed and promoted healthy human relationships among the peoples of pre-colonial South Africa. There was a general understanding that people could not survive alone, and therefore, individualism did not resonate with South Africa’s pre-colonial era. Rather, what was very strong at the time was communal existence, whereby everyone in the society depended on each other. In this era, *Ubuntu* defined human relationships. *Ubuntu* is an African...
principle of caring for each other’s well-being through a spirit of mutual support. Thus, each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual’s humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen (Ministry of Welfare & Population Development, 1997).

1.2 South Africa’s Historical Tangents

It must be noted that the main theme of this book, which relates to healthy human relationships, is not only topical but points to their centrality in any society’s development. Thus, scholars and practitioners alike should be preoccupied with the task of understanding this phenomenon. Recasting light over this issue, especially in the case of South Africa, a country that has been in transition from colonialism and apartheid, to democracy, in the last 26 years, is crucial. In this text, it is argued that healthy human relationships should be taken as the pillars of South Africa’s well-being and development in the democratic era. Also, it is noted in the book that South Africa’s development or stability is dependent on the fact that it has healthy human relationships while bearing in mind that if they are not existing then the country will find it difficult to prosper. To this end, human relationships should be harnessed, strengthened and nurtured by both the state and civil society, and then made healthy by the former as well as the citizens of South Africa. Therefore, the topics covered in this book are very important to the country and beyond, and they need to be examined by social scientists who are both academics and practitioners. Even if they are contemporaneous, they have antecedents in the country’s history, which the authors of the chapter constantly refer to. Indeed, for slightly over 350 years, black South Africans disproportionately witnessed the most gruesome acts of violence, oppression and dehumanisation, which were perpetrated by a colonising and occupying force. In this book, the term black refers to the indigenous African population, which constitutes the majority people of this country as well as ‘Coloureds’ or mixed-raced persons and Indians. Regarding the colonisation of South Africa, it can be noted that this form of occupation was somewhat unique from the conventional colonialism that was obtaining, at the time, in almost all of Africa and Asia.

Hence, colonialism in South Africa can be referred to as *colonialism of a special type*. Colonialism of a special type defines the coexistence and articulation of a colonial relation between black and white people and a developed capitalist economy within the confines of a single national state (Wolpe, 1988). This is a form of internal colonialism. To this effect, internal colonialism owed its origins to the ‘decolonisation’ of South Africa in 1910, when the Union of South Africa came into being as an ‘independent state’ because of the South African Act, which was passed by the British Parliament in 1909. The reality, however, was that national sovereignty was vested in a white state and racially exclusive system (Wolpe, 1988, p. 29). What was ‘special’ or different about the colonial system as it obtained in
South Africa was that there was no spatial separation between the colonising power (the white minority state) and the colonised black people. But in every respect, the features of classic colonialism were the hallmark of the relations that obtained between the black majority and white minority. The special features of South Africa’s internal colonialism were compounded by the fact that the white South African state, Parliament and government were juridically independent of any metropolitan country and had a sovereignty legally vested in them by various Acts of the British government, according to the African National Congress (ANC) (1987, p. 1). In addition, the way this type of colonialism was enforced and entrenched in South Africa was through highly draconian means, with the former’s key attribute being the annexation of the indigenous people’s lands, accompanied by high levels of violence and mass incarceration of blacks. Arguably, the initial phase of establishing European settlements sowed the seeds for corrosive patterns of human relationships which still exist today. These were and are exemplified in social challenges such as racism, ethnicity, gender discrimination, xenophobia, among others.

This book’s chapters cover the foregoing and other wide-ranging issues. It is noteworthy that human relationships, whether they are healthy or corrosive, need to be located in the tangents of South Africa’s history, and this book’s discussions continuously bring this issue to the fore. Arguably, one of the most divisive issues in the history of South Africa and which continues to polarise the country in contemporary times is land. Due to colonial conquest and subjugation, the land of the majority African people was forcefully taken from them. To this effect, land dispossession in South Africa was facilitated via the Natives Land Act of 1913. According to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (2020), the Act became law on 19 June 1913 and had limited African land ownership to 7% and later 13% through unjust laws such as the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act of South Africa. The Act restricted black people from buying or occupying land except as employees of a white master. Also, it opened the door for white ownership of 87% of land, leaving black people to scramble for what was left. In 1948 and after, the apartheid government began the mass relocation of black people to the poor so-called Homelands and to poorly planned and serviced townships. No longer able to provide for themselves and their families, people were forced to look for work far away from their homes. This marked the beginning of socio-economic challenges the country is facing today such as landlessness, poverty and inequality. The Land Act was finally repealed when the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act of 1991 (Act No. 108 of 1991) came into force on 30 June 1991 (RSA, 2020).

This aforementioned unjust law was the centre piece of the colonial and apartheid project as it built the foundation upon which subsequent racist laws that separated the races were anchored, for instance, the Group Areas Act of 1950. It also gave credence to the creation of so-called Homelands or ‘Bantustans’ where Africans were cramped into unproductive and economically depressed areas which served as reservoirs for cheap labour. It can be speculated that in these places, establishing and maintaining healthy human relationships was a challenge because they were created not to have such positive outcomes. Due to their unconducive living conditions that militated against proper socialisation and healthy social interaction,
blacks, especially Africans, were disadvantaged in all respects and, therefore, could not adequately promote healthy human relationships in their communities. Arguably, the defining and patterning of human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa are to a greater extent still influenced by the way the land of the indigenous population was annexed, that is, through violent conquest. To date, the bulk of South Africa’s human relationships are typified by high levels of violence, distrust and rancour. This fluid social setting is where social ills and various forms of abuse thrive. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that the cited history of conquest, oppression and land dispossession gave birth to unhealthy human relationships which weigh against national efforts aimed at building strong communities, families and engendering national social cohesion, among others.

In addition, the above-mentioned history has translated into day-to-day unequal and unhealthy relationships manifesting across the social, economic, political, race, class and gender divides. Therefore, healthy human relationships are in most instances, not a natural occurrence, more so in a country, like South Africa, with such a tortuous past. Rather, healthy human relationships have to be deliberately engendered and then nurtured by all in society, especially by the government and social service professions. Hence, when South Africa became a democratic country in 1994, it was crucial for the new African National Congress (ANC) government to begin building a nation which was non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous; which was based on justice, equality, the rule of law and informed by the notion of the inalienable human rights of all as enshrined in the country’s Constitution. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (Act 108) secures and gives meaning to the promotion of healthy human relationships in the country. It is the supreme law of South Africa. It was approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996 and enacted on 4 February 1997. The Constitution has a Bill of Rights that entrenches socio-economic rights. To this end, Section 26 focusses on the right to adequate housing and Section 27 entrenches the right to health-care, food, water and social security. Section 29 of the Constitution proclaims that everyone has a right to basic education, including adult education and further education. However, the provisions in these sections of the Constitution are subject to the state taking reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of the rights enshrined in the former. Previously, the Interim Constitution of 1993 served to guide the country’s transition to democracy.

For a quarter century, South Africa has sought to create an inclusive society through various macro policies, legislation, and individual and community interventions. The ANC-led government has pursued actions and initiatives, in the same period, to make South Africa a truly free, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and successful country. This stance was derived from the long and protracted liberation struggle which was waged by the ANC and other liberation movements. The decision to organise and mobilise against colonial rule was taken by Africans after their land was annexed and all their civil liberties curtailed. After this, the ANC was formed on 8 January 1912, to fight against colonial occupation and subjugation. For generations, the ANC and other progressive formations in the country which were
collectively referred to as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) waged a spirited struggle against colonialism and apartheid which eventually gave birth to a new democratic dispensation in 1994. However, despite the country attaining its freedom, it can be argued that many South Africans are not truly free as they remain encumbered by various social ills, such as gender-based violence, abuse of children, crime and violence, which not only heavily weigh on the quality of human relationships in contemporary times, but more importantly, which were inherited from the eras of colonialism and apartheid.

Due to the foregoing history, the country is facing a lot of challenges because in the main, human relationships are not as healthy as they should be. Indeed, South Africa cannot move forward without fostering and maintaining healthy human relationships. It can be argued that human relationships in South Africa are still, to a larger extent, influenced by its past. Today’s human relationships are inextricably bound up with the country’s history of colonial oppression and apartheid subjugation. To say that South Africa’s past is riddled with many violations of people’s rights and dignities is an understatement. This is because South Africa was brutally colonised by European forces that sought to impose their will on various indigenous polities, as earlier observed. It can be speculated that this past of colonialism corrupted and undermined healthy human relationships in fundamental ways. For example, race was one issue that was weaponised by the colonial and apartheid systems, and to date, it stands out as a major stumbling block in the building of a non-racial society. This issue is discussed at length in Chap. 2 of this book. Ironically, 26 years into democracy, racism is actually on the rise across the country. Racism and racist acts have been detrimental to the safety and well-being of especially blacks, and it seems that the main perpetrators of racist acts are whites.

Nevertheless, it is safe to assert that South Africa has undergone a lot of changes and transformations in the last 26 years, and many of the former have positively altered the lives of the citizens of this country. South Africa is in many respects different and qualitatively better from what it was in 1994. It is now a Constitutional democracy with a three-tier system of government and an independent judiciary. The National, Provincial and Local levels of government all have legislative and executive authority in their own spheres and are defined in the Constitution as distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. These positive strides were made in the country due to the work of the governing party, the ANC and civil society formations. More importantly, the first African president to be elected in the country after apartheid, Nelson Mandela, was emphatic on this issue, and went out of his way to make sure that the nation was healed and reconciled. To this effect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 1995. Recognising that gross human rights violations and atrocities had been committed during the apartheid period, the Government of National Unity (GNU) established the TRC. The TRC sought to uncover the truth about past violations of human rights, facilitate reconciliation and grant amnesty, provided that perpetrators fully disclosed politically motivated crimes and provided evidence that led to investigations and prosecutions. The Commission recognised that there had to be reparation in acknowledgement of what people had endured and a commitment to ensuring such violations did not
occur again. Following public hearings, reparations were paid out to victims of gross violations; programmes and scholarships were established in honour of people who had lost their lives; counselling and other forms of support were provided; and amnesty was granted where appropriate (The Presidency, 2014).

Also, in attempting to erase the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, through various interventions and policies, the new Government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – an integrated, coherent, socio-economic policy framework that sought to mobilise both the people and the country’s resources towards the final eradication of apartheid, and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society (ANC, 1994). In summing up the transformation that had unfolded in South Africa, after the fall of apartheid, the Presidency (2014, p. 20) reports:

The country’s governance landscape has been significantly transformed since 1994. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) provided the foundations for building a democratic and inclusive state and is hailed as one of the most progressive in the world. Apartheid laws were repealed, and a Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution, guaranteeing all citizens’ socio-economic and human rights. Independent institutions were established under Chapter 9 of the Constitution to strengthen accountability, safeguard democracy and build a responsive state. An independent judiciary and the constitutional freedom of speech and assembly were legally established. This has enabled citizens to pursue their political views and ideals freely and to trust the decisions of the judicial system.

### 1.3 Contemporary Sociopolitical and Economic Trends

After providing the country’s historical background, it is important to highlight the current sociopolitical and economic situation. For starters, a focus on the economy is imperative as everything in the country is dependent on a robust economy. It can be seen that South Africa’s economy has not performed well in the last decade. The economy has contracted and underperformed for a significant period after 1994. The economy sharply contracted by 3.2% in the first 3 months of 2019. This decline is the biggest quarterly fall in economic activity since the first quarter of 2009, when the economy – under strain from the global financial crisis – tumbled by 6.1% according to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2019a). The economy’s lacklustre showing is to a large extent influenced by an extremely skewed economy that does not favour the poor and marginalised, who constitute the majority of the country. For instance, South Africa remains a dual economy with one of the highest inequality rates in the world and with a consumption expenditure Gini coefficient of 0.63 in 2015. Inequality has been persistent, having increased from 0.61 in 1996, and it has not tapered off. High inequality is perpetuated by a legacy of exclusion and the nature of economic growth, which is not pro-poor and does not generate enough jobs (World Bank, 2018). Furthermore, inequality in wealth is even higher: the richest 10% of the population held around 71% of net wealth in 2015, while the bottom 60% held 7% of the net wealth. Intergenerational mobility is low meaning inequalities are passed down from generation to generation, with little change in inequality.
over time. Not only does South Africa lag its peers on levels of inequality and poverty, but also when it comes to the inclusiveness of consumption growth (World Bank, 2018).

Notably, compounding inequality is the ubiquitous poverty in the country and unemployment that have encumbered South Africa’s post-apartheid development endeavours. According to the World Bank (2018), nearly half of the population of South Africa is considered chronically poor. This section of the population is characterised by high poverty persistence. A second segment of the population, known as the transient poor, is the one that has an above average chance of falling into poverty. A third, the non-poor but vulnerable, face above average risks of slipping into poverty though their basic needs are currently being met. These latter two groups make up 27% of the population. Combining these two groups with the chronic poor suggests that for about 76% of the population, poverty is a constant threat in South African citizens’ daily lives. Another contemporary trend is the high unemployment levels in the country. South Africa’s unemployment rate increased to 27.6% in the first quarter of 2019. The unemployment rate among adults (aged 35–64 years) was 18.0% during this period, while the employment-to-population ratio and labour force participation rate were 57.4% and 70.0%, respectively, for this group. The situation seems bleak for the youth (aged 15–34 years) as they account for 63.4% of the total number of unemployed persons. In this regard, almost four in every 10 young people in the labour force did not have a job, and with the unemployment rate within this group at 39.6% in the first quarter of 2019. Just under 30% of the youth have jobs and about half of them (48.8%) participate in the labour market (StatsSA, 2019b). All these cited forces impinge upon human relationships.

1.4 Conceptual and Theoretical Premises of This Book

This book is informed by social work and social development perspectives. They form the theoretical foundations of the discussions of the various chapters. Social work partly informs the perspectives of this book. Social work practice involves interactions with and between people, which are influenced by each person’s life course and their experience and perceptions about their own life. The social work profession is based on the supposition that people can be helped and supported to change and grow as a result of their experiences (Walker, 2017). This book adopts a global definition of social work which was approved by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) at their General Assembly in July 2014. According to the IFSW and IASSW (2014), social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous
knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. Social work was imported from Europe to Africa and the developing world by the missionaries and colonial authorities. Due to this, it has at times found itself not being in sync with indigenous helping systems which are informed by local values and not European or western ones.

Social work in South Africa is further complicated by its links to the apartheid state and the welfare system of the past, which was informed by a racist ethos. In its quest to institute so-called separate development, between the races and amongst the different ethnic groups, the apartheid state used social workers to implement its policies and laws. Thus, welfare organisations were subsidised to meet the needs of the exclusive white population on behalf of the apartheid state. In this atmosphere, social work education was also not insulated from the agenda of the apartheid state. In fact, social work training was skewed towards the maintenance of the status quo of colonial apartheid and did not provide practitioners with the relevant skills to deal with the problems of the majority African population which was mainly disempowered and disenfranchised (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000). In the last 26 years, strides have been made to transform the social work practice and education landscape. However, there are still challenges, and thus, some scholars, practitioners and students are calling for the decolonisation of South African social work curricula. In this vein, Noyoo (2019) asserts that the decolonisation of social work should be engaged with the task of re-visiting the contextual and historical realities of South Africa (and by extension, of Africa). Hence, social work needs not only to be relevant but also has to adapt to the local African terrain, with all its complexity and diversity. It must be responsive to the needs of the vast majority of Africans who are marginalised, poor and voiceless. Social work education and training should be underpinned by Afrocentric and African-centred knowledge systems and knowledge bases. Hence, decolonisation of social work must be anchored on the development of theories, models and intervention methods that are underpinned by African value systems (Noyoo, 2019).

Social development is another practice approach that informs the analyses and discussions in the different chapters of this book. However, it must be noted that definitions of social development are varied and many, and they may be flexibly grouped under three categories depending on the approach they follow. One category of definitions puts an emphasis on, among other things, systematic planning and the link between social and economic development. A second group of definitions shows that bringing about structural change is the core element of social development, and a third focus is on realising human potential, meeting needs of the community population and achieving a satisfactory quality of life (Pawar, 2014). Social development is an approach that interweaves social and economic dimensions of development for a holistic and comprehensive process of development (Midgely, 1995). It is, therefore, important that social policies and economic policies reinforced each other for the ultimate development of South Africa. The two are mutually inclusive and not exclusive. Social development recognises the roles that governments and civil society formations are expected to play in raising the quality of life of the citizens. Thus, it is concerned with processes of change that lead to
improvements in human well-being, social relations and social institutions, and that are equitable, sustainable and compatible with principles of democratic governance and social justice. It puts emphasis on social relations, institutional arrangements and political processes that are central to efforts to achieve desirable development outcomes, according to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (2011).

Social work and social development are human-centred praxes and approaches. Consequently, they are carried out within a network of human relationships. Indeed, it is human relationships and the many types of problems associated with them that are usually at the centre of social workers’ professional tasks and social development practitioners’ interventions. And it is this relational dimension in social work practice which often draws students into making it their career – fulfilling their wish to ‘work with people’. Relationships require social workers to use themselves – using the self, in the sense meant here, requires an enhanced knowledge of the self that is being used (Hennessaey, 2011). A relationship involves a series of interactions between individuals who know each other, such that each interaction is affected by preceding ones and usually by the expectation of future interactions. Neither interactions nor relationships can occur without behaviour, but of course, behaviour is not all: both are accompanied by emotions, hopes, regrets, wishes and so on. These emotional and cognitive concomitants may persist between the interactions of a relationship and play an important role in its persistence (Hinde, 1996, p. 9). Following Reis (2009, p. xiii), it is noted here that:

Although lay people and scholars alike have been interested in human relationships since at least the beginning of recorded history, it is only in the past three decades, with the emergence of what has come to be called Relationship Science, that a systematic attention across diverse disciplines has kindled tremendous growth in research and theory about human relationships. This work takes as its starting point the idea that relationships are fundamental to nearly all domains of human activity, from birth to death. When people participate in healthy, satisfying relationships, they live, work and learn more effectively. When relationships are distressed or dysfunctional, people are less happy, less healthy, and less productive. Few aspects of human experience have as broad or as deep effects on our lives as relationships do. When we refer to relationships, we mean the full gamut of human associations in which behaviour is influenced by the real or imagined presence of another person with whom one has interacted in the past and expects to interact in the future.

This book endorses the foregoing perspective relating to human relationships. Therefore, the focus of the chapters is not just on human relationships but on healthy human relationships. They are also preoccupied with the task of trying to find out and suggest how social work and social development approaches can engender healthy human relationships in South Africa. The Lexico Oxford Dictionary online (2020) refers to something that is healthy as: ‘In a good physical or mental condition; in good health’. Therefore, social work and social development should be aiming at making human relationships to be in a good condition. Furthermore, it must be noted that South Africa does not exist in isolation, from the rest of the world, and thus, the next section focuses on the role of global dimensions in shaping local conditions and also on how the latter respond to the former.
1.5 Global Dimensions

While this work focusses on South Africa, it is not oblivious to global dimensions and how they impact on local developments. As this book is being finalised, the world is gripped with fear and panic as the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has spread to all continents, with South Africa recording its first cases already. After starting in the city of Wuhan in China, the virus quickly spread to other parts of the world. The rapid spread of this disease and its severity have confounded both medical experts and national governments. So far, there is no known cure for this pandemic, which was declared as such by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Global deaths from this pandemic are already in their thousands with many individuals being infected in the process. This pandemic has no class or status boundaries, for example, Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, was tested positive for the COVID-19, and thereafter, Britain’s Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, reported that he had tested positive. Also, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justine Trudeau, and his wife, Sophie, tested positive for the virus and put themselves in self-quarantine. Similarly, Tom Hanks, the American movie superstar, and his wife Rita Wilson also tested positive for the virus. Previously, Iran’s deputy health minister, Iraj Harirchi, had tested positive for the coronavirus. Hence, Italy is totally locked down due to the infections and deaths that kept rising and thus leaving the authorities with no other choice. This country is the epicentre of the pandemic in Europe. South Africa begun its 21-day shut down from Midnight, Thursday, 26 March, to Thursday, 16 April 2020. With infections rising to over 1000 and the country recording its first two deaths, from the pandemic on the first day of the lockdown, the situation remains extremely dire. The rapid rate of infections across the globe can be attributed to mainly globalisation, as the world is now so interconnected than before. Indeed, what happens in one part of the globe is bound to affect several countries elsewhere. Therefore, globalisation is real, and it is not just an abstract construct. In the light of this book, it can be asserted that globalisation does directly or indirectly impact on human relationships and even influences the way they are patterned.

It is important to note that the world is trying to respond to or meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs (2030 Agenda) were adopted by all United Nations states in 2015. There are 17 SDGs which serve as an urgent call for action by countries of the world in a global partnership. The SDGs recognise that ending poverty and other forms of deprivation must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, enhance economic growth and respond to the challenges associated with climate change. In the same vein, sight must not be lost of the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, which is anchored by *inter alia*: mobilisation of the people and their ownership of continental programmes; the principle of self-reliance and Africa financing its own development; the importance of capable, inclusive and accountable states and institutions at all levels, and in all spheres; and the critical role of Regional Economic Communities as building blocks for continental unity.
1.6 Purpose of This Book

This book is a collection of chapters that discuss, interrogate and endeavour to answer the question of promoting healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. It is a text that derives its title from the global social work theme of 2019. This theme was unpacked and discussed by delegates who were mainly social work educators at a conference last year. To this end, in August 2019, the Department of Social Development and the University of Cape Town (UCT) in conjunction with the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) hosted a Social Work Conference for three days, namely, 27, 28, 29. Its overarching theme was *Promoting healthy human relationships* in line with both the global and national social work themes for the year. The author was the co-chair of this conference with the then President and now immediate past president of ASASWEI. The theme for the conference was aligned with the fourth theme of the Global Agenda for Social Work, *viz: Promoting the importance of human relationships*. In its call for papers, the Chair and Co-Chair of the conference noted:

The profession of social work has always championed the centrality of human relationships, being less interested in the internal functioning of people and more interested in their interpersonal functioning within broader structures and forces. In contemporary South Africa, human relationships are under considerable threat. Despite the 1994 commitment to an inclusive and human-rights-based democracy, human relationships remain strained. This is particularly evident in the racial relations between black and white South Africans, but also in the relations between South Africans and citizens of other countries in Africa, between women and men and between rich and poor. The ideals of *Ubuntu* – that recognise and cherish the full humanity of all other people, as part of a large family – are not fully realisable in daily life (van Breda & Noyoo, 2019, p. 1).

Thus, the chapters in this book were presented first as papers at the said conference and then reworked into chapters for purposes of this book. Thus, this book’s rationale partly hinges on the proffered backdrop which served as the rationale for the 2019 social work conference at UCT. Therefore, some of the presented papers, at the said conference, which were re-worked into chapters, are brought together, for the objectives of this edited book. This text critically analyses the notion of promoting healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa, specifically from social work and social development perspectives. Critically, this edited book was conceptualised and finalised at a time when South Africa was and is still reeling from high incidences of femicide, gender-based violence and the abuse of children, as well as xenophobic violent attacks, perpetrated against mainly sub-Saharan African refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. In this regard, this book not only explores the human relationships pertaining to the aforementioned areas but other sectors of society. Also, it does not solely discuss human relationships, but *healthy human relationships* and why they are important for a democratic and transforming South Africa. Crucially, it seeks to proffer or suggest some solutions to the ubiquitous societal ills in South Africa that emanate from either corrosive or broken human relationships.
1.7 Chapters of This Book

The chapters of this book are divided into five parts with the Introduction and Overview serving as Chap. 1 of the text. Part I provides the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings as well as overview of the book. This serves as its conceptual foundation. The conceptual and theoretical anchors of the book are put forward in this section to, among other issues, guide its discussions. This section is written by Ndangwa Noyoo. Part II focusses on people-to-people interactions inherent in the South African society while casting some light on the different race, cultural, class and other issues which continue to shape and mould South Africa’s human relationships. Among other things, it shows how the breakdown or erosion of healthy human relationships in the cited areas results in social ills. The chapters in this section search for social work and social development solutions that can bring forth healthy human relationships in South Africa. It comprises Chaps. 2, 3, 4 and 5. Part II begins with Chap. 2 where Ndangwa Noyoo discusses resurgent racism and the need for healthy human relationships in South Africa. He argues in the chapter that after 26 years of democracy, there is an upsurge in racism and racist acts across the country, with some incidences resulting in the maiming and deaths of mainly Africans by whites. He examines this rising racism in the country and puts forward social work approaches as solutions that could tackle this trend and foster as well as strengthen healthy human relationships in South Africa. In Chap. 3, Lungile Mabundza-Dlamini and Boitumelo Seepamore discuss gender and the promotion of healthy human relationships in South Africa. They note that although African communities have always been regarded as respectful of the roles between men and women, the hierarchical division of labour continues to manifest in unequal power relations between genders. They show how social work can help to promote healthy human relationships in the country from a gender perspective.

Chance Chagunda discusses in Chap. 4 the promotion of healthy human relationships with sub-Saharan African refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. He argues that refugees and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan African countries have experienced hardships and unnecessary exposure to violent attacks by some South Africans, which have hindered their healthy human relationships. He notes that it is important to enhance healthy human relationships mostly among vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, as this is one catalyst for social development and social cohesion with locals. In Chap. 5, Ndangwa Noyoo, Thabisa Matsea and Nomcebo Dlamini explore the issue of sub-Saharan immigrants and the promotion of healthy human relationships. They also investigate how healthy human relationships can be promoted between sub-Saharan immigrants and locals from a social work perspective. They then propose social work interventions to foster healthy interactions and ultimately healthy human relationships between sub-Saharan immigrants and locals.

Part III discusses issues related to individuals, families, groups, and communities and vulnerability. It begins with Chap. 6 which focuses on promoting healthy human relationships for children in post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter authored by
Lauren-Jayne van Niekerk and Eric Atmore reviews literature on the importance of healthy human relationships for children in contemporary South Africa and explores contextual factors that foster and hinder these bonds. It also looks at practical social development solutions to promote healthy caregiver–child relationships. In Chap. 7, Mziwandile Sobantu sheds light on the question of promoting healthy human relationships for older persons while using a social development perspective. He argues that social work interventions that are anchored on the social development approach are more likely to create healthy partnerships, link older persons to the broader society and the economy and advocate rights-based interventions for senior citizens. Laetitia Petersen advances the notion of fostering healthy human relationships with people with disabilities in post-apartheid South Africa in Chap. 8. She argues that the post-apartheid democratic dispensation responded to the plight of disabled persons by raising their quality of life through various policy and legislative instruments. In driving her point home, she proffers a historic overview. Francine Julia Masson explores in Chap. 9 the importance of the family unit in developing future healthy human relationships in a traumatised society. Different theories and discourses about family structure and functioning are provided in relation to the South African context. She also highlights the role of the government, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, as well as social work practitioners in promoting healthy families and thus healthy human relationships. In Chap. 10, Kefilwe Johanna Ditlhake and Ntandoyenkosi Maphosa unpack the issue of fostering healthy human relationships at a community level in post-apartheid South Africa. These authors focus on community development efforts that enhance healthy community social relationships through the development of social capital, formal and informal associations in townships and villages, and community social networks or virtual communities. Recommendations for macro social work practice in pioneering innovative solutions to enhance relational-oriented communities are provided towards the end of the chapter.

Thulane Gxubane closes Part III with Chap. 11 that focusses on a developmental social work practice framework that can help to promote healthy human relationships for and amongst youth in South Africa. It explores and cites the effects of absent fathers, poverty and unemployment, youth gangs, substance abuse and crime, as some of the major sources of conflict which generally contribute to difficult human relationships. He advances a developmental and restorative practice framework which could promote resilience and healthy human relationships for and among youth. Part IV which focusses on policy and legislation finalises the book’s discussion. It begins with Chap. 12, where Ndangwa Noyoo explores how social policy, social welfare, social security and social work have helped to spearhead the promotion of healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. Chance Chagunda argues in Chap. 13 that social protection has a potential to promote healthy human relationships in the country. He does this by presenting historical evidence that traces the evolution of the social protection agenda in post-1994. He then demonstrates how the post-apartheid government promoted healthy human relationships through social protection. In Chap. 14, Mpumelelo E. Ncube elucidates how developmental social work practice and social welfare perspectives have
been critical in building healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. Ndangwa Noyoo sums up and concludes the book’s discussions in the final chapter, which is the Conclusion.

1.8 Conclusion

The chapters in this book bring forth fresh perspectives pertaining to the promotion of healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. They shed light on many positive developments since the advent of democracy in 1994. The chapters also uncover certain forces that impede or nurture healthy human relationships in South Africa, while relying on the bodies of knowledge of social work and social development. The theoretical frameworks of the former also help to sharpen the authors’ tools of critical analysis. In this regard, this edited book examines and discusses human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa, from social work and social development perspectives. More importantly, this endeavour is undertaken while bearing in mind the country’s conflictual and divisive past which was informed by colonialism and apartheid. This book’s approach endeavours to bring to light many issues, prospects and challenges in regard to the promotion of healthy human relationships in post-apartheid South Africa.

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