

# The future is already here...

Two of the School of Journalism and Media Studies' most important projects get into high gear in July and August: the Highway Africa conference and the Rhodes Journalism Review. And for a great many years now the two have had an important association as well as being important vehicles for our engagement with the continent of Africa and its journalists, editors, media owners, policy-makers, researchers, theorists, educators and innovators.

In 2015 we bring two new editions of these projects to you: "Journalism and the City" – the 19th edition of Highway Africa and Rhodes Journalism Review number 35 – which for the first time is an online-only publication.

As the geographers will tell you the city is our future as humanity, agencies like the United Nations track such things and they tell us that 3.5-billion people already live in cities and that this number is growing and growing and growing. But the way that cities themselves grow is through slums, informal settlements and encroachments into surrounding available land. The fact that nearly half of the world lives in a city does not mean that that half all share the same standard of living and the same access to a city's resources. In fact, our cities are becoming the sites of the most unequal, most unfair distribution of resources as this inexorable movement of humanity takes place.

This is absolutely a topic for journalism and for this conference as we ask whether our cities (especially in Africa) are enabling or disabling environments for the majority of humankind.

At the IAMCR (International Association for Media Communication Research) conference this year I attended a fascinating session on "the commons" in which political economy theorist Graham Murdoch compared the systematic enclosure of land over the centuries with the systematic enclosure of the internet. These are big issues which we must keep our eyes on, and we can test and assess the way they play out particularly on the local stage, which is the city.

Our contribution in these pages to thinking cities comes in the form of photographs from Jodi Bieber who spent three months travelling 7 000km through Soweto capturing the actual daily lives of the millions who live there on the outskirts of Johannesburg. These are published in a collection called [Soweto](#).

Marikana and the shocking events on that mine have become a new signpost in our post-apartheid life warning us that real change social and political change is still high on the agenda. We carry Jack Shenker's essay and Jason Larkin's photographs from their recently-produced called Platinum. Fourthwall Books has kindly allowed RJR to republish it.

Rhodes Journalism Review has always aimed to keep reporting from the coal face as new technology shifts journalism's homebase and engagements with the internet, the digital and the mobile. As a Menell fellow I attended the latest MMX in Johannesburg in June (Menell Media Exchange, organised by Laurie Bley based at Duke University where the fellowship takes place) and as a result have brought the thinking, ideas and debates from that gathering of hundreds of South African journalists into the pages of Review for wider consumption. Gathered under the section [Journalism Next](#) you'll find some very interesting analytical considerations of the condition of journalism as well as some bold experiments in sustainability in an uncertain world.

Some important research finds its way into the pages of Review 35: Jos Kuper updates us on the SA media landscape, Indra de Lanerolle takes stock of the internet internationally, Glenda Daniels reveals the state of the newsroom, Arrie de Beer tells us how journalists feel about their profession in [Journalism Now](#), Julie Posetti reports on protecting sources in the post-Snowden era.

Then in [Journalism New](#) we bring you the experimental (and very exciting): GroundUp, The Daily Vox, student projects and mapping.

The [Final Word](#) is by Vanessa Malila and focuses on the youth. It's a good place to end as we think about the future.

**Anthea Garman**  
Editor



