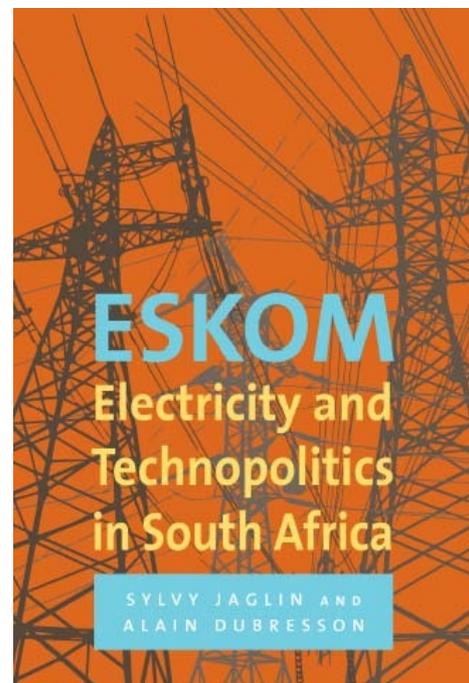


Eskom (WebPDF)

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About this Publication:

Africa's leading producer of electricity, Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd, is also a vertically integrated monopoly, owned by the South African state. This national champion was shaken in 2008, when it was obliged to introduce 'load shedding', or rolling blackouts, and again in late 2014. Since then, there has been an accumulation of grid dysfunctions, scheduled blackouts and blackout warnings.

Trying to understand how and why one of the iconic pillars of South African state capitalism is now in distress, the authors of this book argue that the so-called electricity crisis is in fact a public monopoly crisis. Moving beyond technical aspects, they explore the relationship between state power and Eskom before, during and after apartheid. From this perspective, they suggest that the current technical and financial troubles of this public utility are illustrative of the weakening of its technopolitical regime, of how national institutions have governed Eskom's technological development, and of the pursuit of political goals in the production of electrical power. Without a clear industrial strategy during the 2000s, Eskom became a powerful tool of Broad-Black Economic Empowerment as well as a neopatrimonial system which generates profits captured by the ruling party. As a result, crisis in Eskom shakes the whole political edifice.

Inefficient and its finances increasingly under scrutiny, this state-owned enterprise's existence as a monopolistic public utility is regularly a subject of debate. The authors propose that the solutions for dealing with the crisis all point in the direction of de-integrating this public monopoly and allowing its current technopolitical regime to enter a planned or natural decline.

Contents Include:

- Chapter 1 From Escom to Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd: metamorphoses of a public monopoly
- Chapter 2 The reform of the electricity sector: Eskom in the storm
- Chapter 3 From electricity for all to electricity crisis: the failure of Eskom
- Chapter 4 Restoring generating capacity: the technical and financial challenges
- Chapter 5 Eskom and Africa: from continental involvement to a narrowing focus on the SADC