

## ESSAY SYNOPSIS

Mosa argues that South Africa should employ strategic, temporary import tariffs to protect vulnerable domestic industries and stimulate job creation in a deeply unequal, high-unemployment economy. Selective protectionism can help stabilise industries, support domestic production and catalyse reinvestment, provided it is balanced within an open-trade framework.

Free-trade advocates argue that tariffs distort comparative advantage, raise consumer prices and may provoke retaliatory measures. However, these critiques fail to account for South Africa's structural constraints and the reality that global trade is seldom genuinely "free". Many developing economies, such as South Korea and China, have successfully used temporary protection to nurture industries before integrating more fully into global markets.

BRICS membership provides access to alternative markets, investment flows and policy flexibility. The New Development Bank has already invested over US\$100 billion in transport, energy and infrastructure, generating thousands of direct and indirect jobs. This developmental support complements tariff measures by addressing structural constraints that tariffs alone cannot solve.

Critics warn that protectionism reduces openness and risks trade wars, citing episodes such as Donald Trump's punitive tariffs on BRICS members. Yet these disruptions also highlight South Africa's vulnerability to Western unilateralism and the need to diversify alliances.

Mosa concludes that selective, temporary tariffs, combined with broader reforms, can form part of a viable development strategy. Recommendations include time-bound protection for vulnerable sectors, stronger BRICS cooperation, improved intra-African trade, closing customs loopholes, modernising industry and directing tariff revenues into youth-focused industrial funds.



# Mosa Raleting



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**Funding: NSFAS**

## More about Mosa

**Favourite subjects:** Microeconomics, Mathematics and Financial Accounting.

**Interests:** Baking, reading and youth empowerment.

**Community activity:** Baking Christmas cookies for neighbours and those less fortunate, in order to encourage kindness.

**Inspired by:** South African entrepreneur, author and businessman Vusi Thembekwayo, founder and CEO of the MyGrowthFund Venture Partners.

**What I love/hate about South Africa:** I love South Africa's diversity and spirit of ubuntu.

**In 10 years' time I see myself...** as a qualified chartered accountant (South Africa).