

**The Making of ‘The Poor’
in Post-apartheid South Africa:**
*A Case Study of the City of
Johannesburg and Orange Farm*

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*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in
Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
October 2010.*

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

Abstract

This thesis offers an overview of the functions served by various mobilisations of ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ across the histories of capitalism. It shows how ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ come to be shaped as governmental categories in the interests first of encouraging the acceptance of wage labour in industrial society, and then in encouraging the acceptance of a logic of individual responsibility and entrepreneurship as wage labour declines in post-industrial society. It also examines the deployment of discourses of poverty within social movements, showing the close relationship between the elaboration of governmental discourses and resistance in the contested process of the ‘making’ of ‘the poor’. In particular, it explores the increased mobilisation of discourses of poverty in post-apartheid South Africa, where, it is shown, ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ are shaped as governmental categories that aim to fashion particular forms of life for that population group identified and targeted as the poor, and become ways for poor people to make demands of the state in the context of the adoption of neoliberal policies, such as cost recovery, privatisation, and the flexibilisation of labour. Through a close exploration of state policy formulation and community struggles in the sphere of the delivery of basic services, this thesis presents the contested field of signification and production that emerges around the meeting of the basic needs of the poor in the City of Johannesburg and Orange Farm (a particularly disadvantaged part of the city) as a case through which to think through contemporary mobilisations of ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ in relation to processes of subjectivation and the possibilities for the production of subjectivities antagonistic to the logic of capital. Focusing on the City’s most recent return to indigent management as a strategy to contain and address the needs of the poor, in the context of organised resistance on the part of poor communities, this thesis offers an experience of a process of neoliberalisation as a contested process, in which attempts to shape and deploy ‘the poor’ and ‘poverty’ as governmental categories come up against mobilisations of ‘the poor’ in challenge of the dominant logic of commodification, the market, and ‘individual responsibility’.

Acknowledgements

While a PhD usually forces one into a mode of individual and solitary intellectual engagement and production, I have been fortunate to have my periods of ‘alone time’ interspersed with rich interactions with other individuals and collectives in different spheres, making my learning experience one that went far beyond the ordinary academic exercise. I have also been able to engage in this kind of intellectual production due to the efforts of many others in periods that precede the process towards the attainment of my formal degree. While I accept full responsibility for the contents of this thesis, I nevertheless acknowledge that its production would not have been possible without the support, help and other contributions of the people listed below.

My parents, Dillie and Poonie, for giving me tools for learning that continue to serve me well, and for nurturing in me a desire to learn; to learn in ways that are meaningful to the generation of new knowledge and new ways of learning, and to learn in ways that build individuals and collectives that are able to challenge what is unjust, unequal and oppressive in the world.

My sisters, Sanushka and Kalnisha, for being my first partners in learning and experimenting in and with the world, and for continuing to share in my often confused (and confusing) paths of exploration.

My extended family and friends, for putting up with my endless absences (and excuses) from gatherings over the last while, and for supporting my intellectual pursuits no matter how far removed they have been from their own interests and lives.

My teachers, who instilled in me ways of reading and writing that I will always cherish – Marlene Roberts (my high school history teacher), Brigid Du Bois (my high school English teacher), Ulrike Kistner and Reingard Nethersole (both lecturers in Comparative Literature, which I completed my Honours in at Wits University in the late 1990s).

My fellow ooltras, with whom I have learnt much about the movements to which we have belonged, and about each other, often making sense of the world through our nonsense – Nicolas Dieltiens, Daniel Hutchinson, Heinrich Bohmke, Molefi Ndlovu, Franco Barchiesi, Peter Van Heusden, and Rebecca Pointer – and those from whom, despite parting ways, I have nevertheless learnt – Ashraf Cassiem, Anna Weekes, and Richard Pithouse.

My comrades at Khanya College, in particular Oupa Lehulere, for providing me with a space in and through which many of the ideas which this project is based on were generated, and for teaching me much of what has allowed me to pursue some of the arguments made here.

My comrades in the Anti-Privatisation Forum's Research Subcommittee, with whom many of the ideas presented in this thesis were first broached, and who allowed for my own thinking about the issues contained in this thesis in and through participatory and collective research processes.

My comrades in the Anti-Privatisation Forum, in particular John Appolis, Nina Benjamin, Dale McKinley, and Richard (Bricks) Mokolo, for being partners in intellectual engagements about many of the issues discussed in this thesis.

Various comrades in the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Concerned Citizens' Forum, the Landless People's Movement, the Abahlali Basemjondolo, Indymedia- South Africa, and the global Indymedia and activist networks, with whom I have learnt much about struggles and movements of the poor.

Andy Clarno, Claire Decoteau, Pier Paolo Frassinelli and Antina Von Schnitzler, for the many evenings of intellectual engagement in our Brixton reading groups.

All interviewees and focus group participants, who gave up of their time so willingly for this project.

Richard (Bricks) Mokolo for assisting with the setting up of interviews and focus group discussions, for giving up so much of his time and knowledge for this project,

and for giving me access to an archive of memories about Orange Farm and anti-apartheid struggles that I could not have found in any library or official store.

Gladys Mokolo for giving up her time and providing much knowledge about Orange Farm, as well as for providing a space and catering for focus group discussions.

The Itsoseng Women's Project and the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee for putting up with my presence in their everyday lives for long periods of time.

Patrick Bond for providing the means for me to re-enter academia in a manner that brought me into contact with a number of interesting and significant activists and thinkers in a global community grappling with the effects of neoliberal policies through the Centre for Civil Society, for providing academic supervision for this project, and for understanding and assisting with confronting the difficulties encountered in undertaking a PhD whilst engaged in a number of other activities.

The late Dennis Brutus, Ashwin Desai, Michael Hardt, Gillian Hart, Naomi Klein, Avi Lewis, Joel Kovel, and David Szanton, for providing advice, knowledge and/or support at different points in the course of this work.

The South Africa-Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in Development (SANPAD), for funding my participation in a MA/PhD programme.

The Centre for Civil Society, for providing an intellectual home for me during this project, and for giving me access to a number of academic and activist networks, as well as discussions, debates, conferences, and so on.

The Carnegie Transformation Fund at the University of the Witwatersrand for providing me with the funds to buy myself out of six months of teaching, during which I was able to complete the process of upgrading my MA dissertation to this PhD thesis.

Roger Southall for stepping in at the last minute as mentor, and providing much appreciated support in the final stages of this thesis.

My other colleagues and students in the Department of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, for providing a context conducive to the completion of my degree, and support in the final stages of this project.

And, finally, Ahmed, not just for being my life partner, comrade and best friend, but for being my teacher too, without whom I would probably never have got back on this road. But mostly just for being here, and so keeping me on this road.

Introduction

Contested Histories in the Present

For what is it but distress and poverty which can prevail upon the lower classes of the people to encounter all the horrors which await them on the tempestuous ocean or on the field of battle? (Townsend, 1787, quoted in Polanyi, 1946: 121).

The only non-localisable 'common name' of pure difference in all eras is that of the poor. The poor is destitute, excluded, repressed, exploited - and yet living! It is the common denominator of life, the foundation of the multitude. (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 156).

Reading through accounts of 'the poor' and 'poverty'¹ across the histories of capitalism, two distinct ways of imagining and describing the poor stand out – those that approach the poor as a population group to be treated and managed so as to encourage its members to behave in ways conducive to the needs of capitalist society, and those that emphasise the limits to social stability and order that the poor represent in capitalist society; those that treat the poor and poverty as objective categories with universalising ends, and those that view the poor as signifying the presence of difference to the logic of capital at the very heart of capitalist society. This thesis is an attempt to understand these different approaches to poverty and the poor in terms of their relationship to the contested histories of capitalism, through the specific experience of struggles around the delivery of basic services in post-apartheid South Africa.

Embarking on a critique of "historicist"² accounts of capitalist development, Dipesh Chakrabarty returns us to two central concepts in the writings of Marx – "abstract

¹ I use inverted commas when referring to 'the poor' and 'poverty' to highlight that they do not refer to a subject or conditions that are uniformly and objectively defined, but that their meanings are the very subject of processes of contestation. Having noted this, the rest of the thesis will not repeat this use of inverted commas.

² Chakrabarty argues that historicist accounts "all share a tendency to think of capital in the image of a unity that arises in one part of the world at a particular period and then develops globally over historical time, encountering and negotiating historical differences in the process" (Chakrabarty, 2000: 47). He gives as examples to illustrate his point, E. P. Thompson's arguments made in the essay

labour” and “the two histories of capital” – to show how capital is constituted on the basis of an *attempted* sublation of differences (antagonisms) that are central to it. (Chakrabarty, 2000: 2).

Exploring how, in Marx, the concept of abstract labour emerges as “a way of explaining how the capitalist mode of production managed to extract, out of peoples and histories that were all different, a homogeneous and common unit for measuring human activity”, Chakrabarty argues that abstract labour “may thus be read as an account of how the logic of capital sublates into itself the differences of history” (ibid: 3). He goes on, however, to illustrate that this process of abstraction is one that is not linear or uniform, but contested, a process characterised by Marx as reflective of “the two histories of capitalism” - “a past posited by capital itself as its precondition - History 1”, and a past that emerges from “relationships that do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital” and are outside of capital's “life processes” - History 2 (ibid: 16).

In this way, Marx “writes into the intimate space of capital an element of deep uncertainty” (ibid: 18). Chakrabarty writes:

In the reproduction of its own life-process, capital encounters relationships that present it with double possibilities. These relations could be central to capital’s self-reproduction, and yet it is also possible for them to be oriented to structures that do not contribute to such reproduction. History 2s are thus not pasts separate from capital; they are pasts that inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the run of capital’s own logic. History 1, argues Marx, has to subjugate or destroy the multiple possibilities that belong to History 2. There is nothing, however, to guarantee that the subordination of History 2s to the logic of capital could ever be necessarily complete or total. (ibid).

‘Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, and theories of uneven development. In both cases, Chakrabarty argues, capitalism is viewed as “a force that encounters historical difference ... as something external to its own structure” (ibid: 48). He further elaborates that in such historicist accounts, capital, in the course of a struggle with difference, “eventually cancels out or neutralises the contingent differences between specific histories” (ibid).

For Chakrabarty, then, the value of Marx's notion of History 2³ lies in its account of difference not as something external to capital, nor as something subsumed into capital, but as something that "lives in intimate and plural relationships to capital, ranging from opposition to neutrality" (ibid: 66). He writes:

History 2 does not spell out a programme of writing histories that are alternatives to the narratives of capital. That is, History 2s do not constitute a dialectical Other of the necessary logic of History 1. To think thus would be to subsume History 2 to History 1. History 2 is better thought of as a category charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalising thrusts of History 1. (ibid).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the two histories of capitalism are evident in attempts to entrench the logic of commodification in the sphere of the delivery of basic services, and in struggles against such attempts. In the writing of History 1 (commodification), attempts have been made to identify and categorise that population group unable and/or unwilling to abide by this logic, and interventions developed that target members of this population group in ways that aim to encourage them to accept this logic. At the same time, however, members of this population group 'constantly interrupt the totalising thrusts' of commodification by challenging this logic in various ways, both in organised protest actions and in their everyday lives. In these contestations, how the poor and poverty have come to be imagined, defined, mobilised, and deployed by the state and private enterprises, as well as by poor people, plays a central role in determining the nature of the histories that are written today.

Spaces of Subjectivation

While Chakrabarty highlights Marx's rooting of resistance "in a process through which capital appropriates the will of the worker" (ibid: 11) through a number of

³ Chakrabarty points out that this idea of History 2 is "undeveloped" in Marx, and sets out to expand it in the context of his own reading/writing of the history of India.

disciplinary processes that are enforced in the factory and “in the way the law ... imagines labourers through biological/physiological categories such as adults, adult males, women and children” (ibid: 7), he also argues that “the idea of History 2 suggests that even in the very abstract and abstracting space of the factory that capital creates, *ways of being human* will be acted out in manners that do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital” (ibid: 20).

It is to these “affective narratives” that make up History 2 that this thesis turns in trying to understand the “analytical history” (History 1) of poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa (ibid: 71). In post-apartheid South Africa, however, as wage labour has declined, it has become important to look beyond the factory walls to understand how individual subjects become part of the everyday grid of existence that sustains capitalism. This thesis presents the experience of contestations over poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa as an example of how subjects are increasingly constituted (and subjectivities produced) outside of the discipline of the factory and the wage today.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that “the regime and discipline of factory production ... is no longer limited to a particular site in society”, but “has insinuated itself throughout all forms of social production, spreading like a virus”, with all of society “now permeated through and through with the rules of the specifically capitalist relations of production” (Hardt and Negri, 1994: 9-10). They go on to argue that this has been accompanied by “a change in the nature and quality of the labouring processes”, with labour in late capitalist society “tending toward immaterial labour – intellectual, affective, and technico-scientific labour” (ibid: 10).

For Hardt and Negri, these new forms of labour “are immediately social in that they directly determine the networks of productive co-operation that create and re-create society” (ibid: 10), and hold the potential to produce value outside of capital’s command or “self valorisation”.⁴ They argue that these new labouring processes produce “alternative circuits of social valorisation and ... new subjectivities” (ibid:

⁴ Hardt and Negri argue that the labour theory of value no longer holds as immaterial, intellectual, affective, and technico-scientific labour becomes the dominant form that labour assumes with the development of capitalism, that is, that labour time no longer serves as the common measure by which value is attributed in society.

12), which are often antagonistic to the logic of capital. For them, the specificity of the form of affective, immaterial, and technico-scientific labour, “far from being closed onto itself, is exemplary of how labouring processes constitute the production of subjectivity” (ibid: 13). They point out, however, in ways that resonate with the concept of the two histories, that “the subject ... is at the same time a product and productive, constituted in and constitutive of the vast networks of social labour”, and that “subjectivity is defined simultaneously and equally by its productivity and its producibility, its aptitudes to produce and to be produced” (ibid: 12). This will be explored more closely through the specific experiences of the income generation projects, organisations and social movements that have been established by poor people in Orange Farm in refusal of the inferior quality and standards of living that have been prescribed for them by the state and private enterprise.

Hardt and Negri explain their understanding of capital in ways that reflect Chakrabarty’s reading of Marx, and that bring to the fore the antagonistic and subversive potentials they apprehend in actions and imaginings of the poor, shifting the focus of the discussion back to the question of the production of the subject and subjectivity:

Capital, of course, is not a pure form of command but a social relation, and it depends for its survival and development on productive subjectivities that are internal but antagonistic to it. (Hardt and Negri 2009: ix).

For Hardt and Negri, and a much broader tradition of autonomist Marxists, it is the writing of these antagonistic subjectivities (History 2s) that is important in exposing the limits of capital, of history, the law, and the state. As this thesis will show, in post-apartheid South Africa the making of the poor and poverty unfolds as a space of subjectivation/subjectification, that is, a terrain where experiences of oppression and resistance, and social investments of desire (e.g. in cultural practices, morals, beliefs and values) meet and define common meanings, symbols, languages and practices. Emerging in autonomist and post-structuralist writings about the subject and processes of subjection, the term ‘spaces of subjectivation’ (or ‘subjectification’) has come to signify the open-ended processes of becoming subject (including resistance)

that have been seen to characterise the development of capitalism, as opposed to economic and structuralist approaches that have prioritised subjection, neglecting to explore the expressions of power by those in processes of being subjected. (Berardi, 2003; Foucault, 2003 [1976]; Hardt and Negri, 2009).⁵

Struggles against Commodification in Post-apartheid South Africa

As wage labour in the traditional form declines in the lives of many as the structuring force of their everyday lives, contestations over how the poor ought to live outside of wage labour become an additional space of subjectivation. This thesis, then, is an attempt to read (and write) the two histories of capitalism in the space of subjectivation that is produced in and around struggles for basic services in post-apartheid South Africa, where the poor and poverty are mobilised as governmental categories in the attempted subjection of a particular population group designated the status of the poor, and where members of this population group resist such attempts and imagine themselves beyond and outside of the limits imposed by these categories.⁶

This is shown through an overview of state strategies and approaches to poverty and the poor and resistance to them across the development of capitalism, followed by a closer exploration of struggles of poor people and specific governmental approaches to poverty and the poor that have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa. It does this through a close examination of the evolution of policies related to the delivery of water, sanitation and electricity services in the City of Johannesburg (CoJ), one of South Africa's wealthiest municipalities, and their attempted implementation and reception in one its most disadvantaged areas, Orange Farm. In this way, it offers a reading of the entry of neoliberal policies in a particular part of the South as a contested process in which local actions and knowledges contribute towards the particular ways in which neoliberal policies are implemented.

⁵ See also Veriava (2010).

⁶ Ahmed Veriava (2010) has done important work in this regard, attempting to theorise how resistance rebounds on and shapes relations of power in a political context increasingly characterised by struggles over forms of subjection. Martin J. Murray (2008) has also given some centrality to resistance in his characterisation of Johannesburg as "a disorderly city".

As the post-apartheid state embraced the fundamentals of neoliberalism, the delivery of basic services would be restructured to meet the needs of cost recovery and other business principles.⁷ This would mean that a logic of payment for services would have to be enforced, particularly in the context of black communities having resisted payment of rents and services under apartheid and commitments made in the liberation movement to free basic services for all⁸, and in the context of growing unemployment, rising inequality and urban poverty an increase in flexible forms of labour, and increasing precarity overall (Leibbrandt et al., 2010). Punishment for non-payment, in the form of cut-offs from services like electricity and water and evictions from houses, would result in resistance from poor communities, resulting in the formation of social movements identifying themselves as poor people's movements or movements of the poor. In this way, a field of contestation has emerged over what constitutes the basic levels of resources necessary for survival, over whether the poor deserve to live in conditions better than those of mere survival, and over whose responsibility the fate of the poor is.

Attempting to enforce a logic of commodification and payment in the delivery of basic services, the CoJ's indigent management policy has evolved to target those identified as the poor for assistance with their debts in return for their signing onto prepaid systems of delivery and accepting the responsibility to pay for any services consumed over and above the free 'life lines' provided by the state. In this way, defining and targeting the poor has become a way of separating 'the can't pays' from 'the won't pays'⁹, and enforcing a rationality of restraint, conservation, and payment for basic services amongst communities previously without access to services and/or refusing to pay for services. By providing only those resources and services deemed necessary for survival to the poor, the so-called 'pro-poor' policies of the CoJ work to

⁷ This is not to suggest that neoliberal policies were not adopted prior to 1994. As will be shown later on in this thesis, neoliberal policies were first implemented by the apartheid government in the 1980s. The principle of commodification was also adopted by the apartheid government; however, its enforcement was not very successful in black areas as a result of the rent and services boycotts.

⁸ There has been much debate about whether the promise of free basic services for all was indeed made in the liberation movement, in particular over whether the RDP held this promise. However, the ANC made explicit its commitment to free basic services during the 2000 municipal elections.

⁹ These categories/terms have emerged in state policy discourse to refer to those in society who are genuinely unable to afford to pay for the basic services required for their survival ('the can't pays') and those who can afford to pay but are not willing to pay for various reasons ('the won't pays'). They appear here in scare quotes to signify that they are terms/categories constructed in policy discourse that will be shown to work towards producing particular interventions designed to produce particular forms of life for the different population groups that they identify and classify.

further entrench inequality and relegate large sections of society to conditions inappropriate to a decent quality of life. While struggles of movements have evolved to include contestations at the level of the law, state policy has evolved to include some of the demands made by movements e.g. increasing free allocations for water and electricity for poor households. State policy has also responded by adopting more targeted approaches, with its latest policy, *Siyasizana*, categorising the poor according to three bands of poverty and allocating free services accordingly. Struggles outside of the law have also continued in the form of illegal reconnections, marches, and so on.

While many¹⁰ have portrayed community protests around service delivery in South Africa as ‘struggles for survival’, occurring ‘spontaneously’ and lacking any theoretical bases or substance, the experiences explored in this thesis suggest that these struggles, while emerging out of survival needs, nevertheless reflect a common sense of injustice that exists amongst a group of similarly affected people. Building on E.P. Thompson’s notion of legitimating practices that exist amongst members of a mob that result in particular actions, such as food riots, this thesis shows how the identity of the poor is mobilised strategically by marginalised people in post-apartheid South Africa who knowingly seek to change their conditions of life by challenging the ways in which their status and position in life is defined, determined by and through state policy.¹¹

¹⁰ Khanya College, the Socialist Group, and Keep Left are examples of organisations whose members hold this position.

¹¹ This thesis will continually return us to this tension between notions of survival and notions of life. While survival refers to activities related with keeping oneself alive, life points to activities geared towards securing access to the resources that permit an unrestricted life beyond the limits of the conditions of survival. As state policy begins to fashion itself around the provision of the very minimal resources to the poor, considered necessary for their survival, the production of life beyond these conditions has come to be portrayed as the responsibility of individual citizens. And, struggles for access to basic services have come to reassert the rights of poor people to a quality and standard of life beyond that of survival. Ahmed Veriava (2010) argues that survival (activity devoted to keeping oneself alive), defined in relation to the grid of everyday practices, is almost always grounded in a particular form of life (or bios). Through an exploration of struggles around the delivery of water in post-apartheid Soweto, Veriava mobilises the concept of “life strategies” to illustrate (and to valorise) that intensity (as potential) according to which life, even in its most abject forms, moves towards creating forms of life. For him, power’s significance lies in its attempts to produce subjects aligned with this distinction between survival and qualified forms of existence (life), and in acts of resistance against such attempts.

In Orange Farm, for example, the legitimating practices that have brought people together to resist the implementation of neoliberal policies and to make demands of the state seem to lie in the common history of struggle shared by many South Africans whose positions of hardship endured under apartheid have remained the same or deteriorated post-apartheid. With a particular standard and quality of life being imagined as being fought for in the liberation movement, the minimal prescriptions for life for a certain section of society being made by the African National Congress (ANC) government would not be accepted easily.¹² In Thompson's terms, what emerges, then, is a "moral economy" (see *Chapter One*), in which contestations occur over what the commitments of the liberation movement indeed were, and, in this way, over the role of the ANC government in the present with regard to 'its people', represented as the poor, and the forms of life made possible for the poor. Often, the moral economy has been directed by struggles over what constitutes the minimal levels of access to resources necessary for survival or what the maximum income level should be that determines who is considered poor¹³. And, the poor have been characterised as morally tainted, in particular as bearing the trait of laziness or idleness, thereby shifting responsibility for their plight away from the state and back onto the individual poor person or the culture of poverty (see *Chapter One*). In this contested moral economy, then, we see movements identifying themselves as movements of the poor challenging the ways in which the language, symbols, slogans, songs, and traditions of the broad liberation movement have been mobilised by the ANC and the state in service of the policies and principles of neoliberalism.

In this moral economy, *the duty to pay* for basic services has also been emphasised by the ANC government in its setting out of the characteristics of responsible citizenship. Poor people have argued that unemployment and poverty result in services being

¹² I do not mean to suggest here that the policies of the ANC prior to 1994 held the promise of equality and freedom for all. However, the representation of its policies as holding this promise continues to feature in its discourse today, and certainly featured in the statements made by movements of the poor and poor people interviewed for this project as defining their political imaginaries. In the latter case, the framing of demands for free basic services has often entailed reminders to the ANC of its commitments which include redistribution of wealth, freedom from poverty for all, equality for all, and so on.

¹³ While there is no doubt that recent struggles situated on the plane of the technical have the potential to result in tangible improvements in the lives of disadvantaged communities (e.g. increasing the free allocation of water from 6kl to 10kl), it is also important to consider the ways in which their prioritisation can result in a re-emphasis in struggles away from the question of what constitutes a decent life to a focus only on securing the conditions of survival for the poor, and in the acceptance that the state's responsibility ends in its provision of those resources necessary for mere survival.

unaffordable to them, and movements of the poor have argued that commodification of the resources necessary for life works against the interests of the poor and of society in general, entrenching inequality, and individualising and marketising social relations with regard to resources previously held and enjoyed in common. The ANC government has, however, chosen to adopt the neoliberal logic of institutions like the World Bank, which argues that “the poor are willing and have the capacity to pay for services that are adapted to their needs” (World Bank, 2001). In establishing access to basic services for poor communities, then, the ANC government has mobilised a language that encourages all citizens, including the poor, to assume responsibility for paying for services above those amounts provided free by the state, and that explains its provision of differential and unequal levels of access to services dependent on ability to pay.

Theorists have analysed post-apartheid movements engaged in struggles for basic services in different ways – as reflecting the potential for the creation of mass political parties that will work towards contesting state power and establishing socialism; as spaces through which unemployed people can collectively organise themselves to make demands of the state and/or to produce alternative forms of production (often income) for themselves; and as signifying the subversive potentiality of poor people to collectively resist attacks on life and to create relationships that do not produce capital, outside of the party form and antagonistic to the state. In the latter case, the poor have not been homogenised in singular definitions and ideological frameworks, but celebrated as the emergence of “different voices, experiences, traditions and practices that show a new kind of politics through their diversity and acceptance of different organisational forms and tactics, and new ways of imagining possibilities for life” (McKinley & Naidoo, 2004: 10). In this way, the particular imagining of the poor contained in the latter case has presented a challenge to the old political traditions of the South African left (which has historically celebrated the organised industrial working class as the political subject responsible for change in modern capitalist society) as well as to the South African government and ruling party, refusing the individualisation of life and its commodification.

Method

As Andries Du Toit has pointed out, studies about poverty¹⁴ in the social sciences tend to emphasise technical, economic, and quantifiable aspects with the aim of producing objective analyses. Where qualitative approaches are adopted, they too tend to work towards painting objective pictures, maps, and models. But, Du Toit argues that the aim of objectivity is a “myth”, and argues for studies about poverty to “come to grips with the extent to which the structural configurations of poverty are *socially meaningful*; shaped through and through by the complexities of culture, identity and agency” and begin a process of “re-imagining and re-framing of the way in which inequality and poverty are conceptualised in the first place” (Du Toit 2007a: 1-2; emphasis in original). Taking Du Toit’s concerns into consideration, this project set out to understand the struggles over the meanings given to poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa, the rationalities behind different approaches to poverty and the poor, and the different ends to which econometric models of poverty work. In the method set out below, it is hoped that a start has been made towards developing alternative ways of studying poverty and the poor.

Trying to understand the constitution of poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa as the product of a contestation between History 1 and History 2s, from the position of one who has been closely involved in and with poor people’s movements¹⁵, it was decided that the best possible method to adopt would be an adaptation of Michael Burawoy’s “extended case method” (Burawoy, 1998). Privileging participant observation and a somewhat open-ended theoretical engagement in, with and through ethnographic investigation, as opposed to a distant, non-reflexive, positivist approach, Burawoy allows for the conditions of the particular and the contextual to give meaning to existing theories and to produce new theories about universals, such as labour, resistance, poverty, and the poor.

Different from ‘grounded theory’, in which distance and objectivity are foregrounded as necessary for the analysis of subjects along rigid, pre-determined frameworks and grids, the extended case method begins with particular theoretical questions, grounds

¹⁴ Du Toit makes his arguments in the specific context of his own research into the concept of chronic poverty, and its relationship and mobilisation in opposition to the concept of structural poverty.

¹⁵ I am a founding member of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and Indymedia-SA, the latter seeing me work with the Concerned Citizens’ Forum (CCF), Landless People’s Movement (LPM), Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), Social Movements Indaba (SMI), the Anti-War Coalition (AWC), and the Coalition Against Xenophobia (CAX).

them in particular case studies, and then extends out to comment on these theoretical questions, allowing for both researcher and subjects being studied the potential for contributing towards the shaping of theories. In the latter case, traditional ways of ensuring representativity, generalisability, and the like, are not always possible, and the particularities of each experience studied determines specific approaches to these questions.

While Burawoy attempts nevertheless to reinscribe the extended case method within a closed science that is able to classify, categorise, make general observations, and comment on general trends, the value of the extended case method for this project lies in its opening up of the research process to allow for meaning and depth of understanding to be given to a specific experience of a general theory or set of arguments without the need to always prove general trends. In this thesis, the case study of struggles for basic services in Orange Farm and the CoJ provides a space for the exploration of contestations over poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa, providing experiences of neoliberalism, constitutions of poverty and the poor, resistance, and changing modes of power from the particular context of a country in the South. While the experience of the CoJ and Orange Farm are not the same as other cities and townships in South Africa, the CoJ is considered a leader in developing local capacities for indigent management, and aspects of Siyasizana are recognised as a national pilot for the National Integrated Social Information Service (NISIS). Orange Farm is also significant in that it is in many ways both a remnant of apartheid planning and an experimental space for post-apartheid planning, and because it is one of the CoJ's most disadvantaged townships (including several informal settlements that have recently sprung up inside its borders).

The thesis facilitates such an analysis by providing an overview of theories about the constitution of poverty and the poor, and the history of approaches to poverty and the poor in capitalist development, followed by the specific engagement of questions thrown up by this overview through the experience of South Africa, in particular Johannesburg and Orange Farm, and struggles for basic services. In doing this, it sets

out to avoid providing “a history by analogy”¹⁶ (Mamdani, 1996: 8-9), analysing the particular experiences of South African society and state from the perceived threat of ‘multiracial poverty’ and responses to it in the forms of segregation and apartheid, to today’s neoliberal attempts at making the poor ‘know their place’ (see *Chapter One*). While it draws mainly on theories from and about western societies, it speaks to them through the particular experiences of Orange Farm and the CoJ.

Looking both at how state policy and struggles in the sphere of the delivery of basic services work to produce ‘the poor’ and ‘poverty’ as contested sites of signification and production, the policy agenda of the *Johannesburg municipality* in the delivery of basic services, and the struggles of residents of *Orange Farm*, a township falling within the Johannesburg municipality’s jurisdiction, formed the two major sources of information and provide the basis for a broader discussion about the poor in post-apartheid Johannesburg (and South Africa).

Archival work formed the major part of the research into the policy agenda of the Johannesburg municipality. City documents (including minutes, legal documents, press releases, discussion documents and research reports) from 1994 to the present were sourced from the local government library and the City’s website – www.joburg.org.za. These were complemented by investigations into the national policy archive, accessed through the government website – www.gov.za - as well as discussions and debates about the state’s policy agenda contained in newspaper articles, and documents produced by academics, NGO workers, and activists working in the development sector. With the organisational structure and managerial staff of the City changing so often over the period under review, it made sense that the archive would provide the primary source for tracing the evolution of policy.

Beginning as a Masters project, research for this thesis spanned an initial period of intensive archival and fieldwork between 2004 and 2007, followed by the period during which upgrading of the dissertation to a PhD thesis took place (2008-2010),

¹⁶ Mamdani argues that many accounts of the development of capitalism in Africa fall into a pattern of measuring what happens in African countries according to the grid of capitalist development in Europe and the rest of the western world, thus neglecting the specificities of the African experience in the shaping of modernity. In this way, they produce “a history by analogy”, that is, a narrative of social and political life in African countries that exists only in relation to a picture of development and progress defined by western ideals, values, and the history of countries in the west.

through a process of more intensive reading of theoretical and historical texts, further archival work, and the conduction of a limited number of follow-up interviews and focus group discussions. It is significant that these two periods correspond to changes that happened in the CoJ that relate directly to the object of study. Between 2004 and 2007, the City introduced its two major debt write-off indigent management programmes (Municipal Services Subsidy Scheme – MSSS – and Reathusa), and in 2008, a revised indigent management programme (Siyasizana) was introduced. It also underwent related institutional changes that are discussed further on in the thesis. This has allowed for this thesis to evolve in direct relation to struggles and policies as they have evolved.

It is also significant to note that in the case of the CoJ, interviews with key City strategists and leaders were not granted prior to the final outcome of the court case led by residents of Phiri, Soweto against the CoJ and Johannesburg Water in challenge of the installation of prepaid water meters, that is, during the period of the Masters research. While it was intended that in-depth interviews would be conducted with key City officials, the nature of the research and the fact that the supervisor of the project was closely associated with the court case, prevented this from happening. Just two interviews were conducted with middle-level managers who signed consent forms and granted the interviews without questioning the ends to which the research would be used. However, when, at the start of a group interview, consent forms were presented to three of the most senior managers in the City's Central Strategy Unit (responsible for the major reorientation of the City towards its Human Development Strategy), the potential interviewees decided not to allow the interview to proceed on the basis that the researcher's supervisor (Patrick Bond) was a witness for their opposition in the court case. They stated that the issue of the City's indigent management policy, which they had been informed they would be interviewed about, was central to the case, thus allowing this witness privileged information that they would have made available in the interview. This resulted in the initial piecing together of the evolution of city strategy and policy from minutes, research reports, discussion documents, press releases, and newspaper reports. In 2010, an interview was granted with Director for Community Development in the CoJ, Jak Koseff, who both confirmed much of the analysis already made, and offered new information related in particular to the recently launched Siyasizana.

Access to state officials at the level of the Orange Farm municipal office, was much easier. A local councillor's cell phone number was obtained from one of the Orange Farm residents active in the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC – see below), and contact was made with an extremely helpful councillor who not only consented to being interviewed, but also arranged for contact to be made with an administrative clerk dealing with payment for services and issues of indigency, and community development workers (CDWs). Orange Farm has four elected councillors, all of whom are representative of the ANC. It was decided that it would not be necessary to interview all four councillors as they would all represent similar positions. The councillor interviewed was also the most relevant to this project as she is responsible for the ward from which residents mounted protest action for service delivery in late 2006, and 2010. A follow-up interview was conducted with Councillor Simango in August 2010 to find out about any developments with regard to the delivery of basic services in Orange Farm and the roll-out of Siyasizana. In addition, the administrative clerk responsible for the Siyasizana registration process in Orange Farm, Ms Tstotetsi, was interviewed in August 2010.

While formal interviews and focus groups were set up prior to their conduction with the above individuals, being physically present at the municipal office in Orange Farm also opened up opportunities for other unplanned interviews. For example, someone known from previous activist work in the area was working as a volunteer¹⁷ in the local housing department, registering shacks in informal settlements in Orange Farm and other parts of the south, and agreed to being interviewed. Other youth leaders waiting to meet with the councillor were also spoken to, and meetings and interviews set up. In developing relationships with some of the youth leaders, access was also gained to a workshop being held between community representatives and the regional municipal management team about the future of a community skills development centre. The three days spent at the municipal offices in Orange Farm were therefore invaluable in providing the opportunity for in-depth interviews, focus

¹⁷ Being a 'volunteer' usually implies that one is not considered to be employed (in a job), but offering a service outside of one's usual employment. However, in South Africa, 'volunteer' has come to signify a particular form of unprotected, part-time, low-wage 'job' that does not deserve the benefits of a full-time job as it is to be viewed as 'preparation' for a 'real job'. It is thus not unusual for people to say that they are working as volunteers, a contradiction in terms. This is explored in greater detail in *Chapter 5*.

groups, and participant observation that provided many insights into the ways in which ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ are being mobilised today.

In trying to understand the history of Orange Farm, and the struggles of its residents and their relationship to the concepts of ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were the main form of investigation. Through prior research and activist work done in the area since 2001¹⁸, substantial existing knowledge of the area and contacts with people and organisations already made, could be drawn on in the setting up of these interviews and discussions. Bricks Mokolo, Chairperson of the OWCC, provided an invaluable asset in setting up the majority of community focus group discussions.

In trying to understand the contestation that happens and the diversity of views amongst residents and groups living in situations of socio-economic hardship, it was decided to bring together different groups of residents facing different situations of hardship and those who have come together to find solutions to their problems in separate discussions to probe their life histories as people identified as ‘the poor’ and their responses to their problems. A focus group discussion was held with residents living in bonded houses in Drieziek Extension 2 that were built by their former employee, Premier Milling Company. Having lost their jobs as the company underwent various processes of ‘transformation’, they now suffer the experience of

¹⁸ I first came to work in and meet people from Orange Farm in 2001, as part of my employment at Khanya College as co-ordinator of its gender programme. Over two years, I co-ordinated a participatory research project with the Kganya Women’s Consortium (consisting of thirteen income generation projects established by women living in Orange Farm) looking at the effects of GEAR on the lives of women in the area. After leaving Khanya College in 2002, I have maintained contact with some of the organisations making up the consortium. I have also provided organisational assistance to the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) since its inception in 2002 when members of some of the projects of the consortium came together to fight electricity and water cut-offs facing their members. In April 2002, I was contracted by the Centre For AIDS Development, Research and Education (CADRE) to conduct a short qualitative research project into the impact of the LoveLife Y-Centre in Orange Farm on the youth of the area. This brought me into contact with a completely different group of residents, giving me new insights into the area. As a member of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), I have also remained in close contact with the OWCC, which is an affiliate of the APF. In 2003, as co-ordinator of the APF Research Sub-Committee, I helped co-ordinate a participatory research project with members of the APF, the Coalition Against Water Privatisation and Public Citizen into the effects of prepaid water meters on the lives of residents of Orange Farm. All of these experiences have led to the building of relationships with a number of people living in Orange Farm and with the OWCC and Kganya consortium, in particular. It has also meant that I have been able to experience this community for a much longer period of time than the duration of this project. In writing up this thesis, I have been fortunate enough to return to the original data gleaned from the household surveys, interviews and focus groups conducted for all the above projects.

not being able feed their families or to afford to pay for the services that their houses are equipped to enjoy. A second focus group was held with residents who had been employed and retrenched by a refuse removal company providing services to Pikitup¹⁹. In addition, focus groups were convened with members of the Kganya Women's Consortium (consisting of thirteen income generation projects), and the OWCC, the only organisation in Orange Farm that has been formed in direct response to water and electricity cut-offs. Through contacts made during visits to the municipal office in Orange Farm, a focus group discussion was set up with youth volunteers of an NGO set up by the municipality in order to assist its CDWs, called Hlanganani.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a selection of residents, chosen from the different groups of residents participating in the focus groups. Residents were selected based on their contributions made in the focus groups, that is, if it was felt that they deserved more in-depth probing about particular issues coming up in the focus groups.

In addition, individual residents met during the course of the research who seemed interesting and important to speak to, were interviewed. For example, while waiting for the councillor to arrive for her interview, an interview was set up with the Chairperson of the Lebone Skills Development Initiative, who happened to be waiting to see the councillor too. While the focus groups and interviews conducted at community level do not make up a scientifically representative sample, they do reflect a significant enough number of voices and experiences to explore the contestation that takes place around the making of 'the poor' and 'poverty' at community level. They are also representative of a set of attitudes and responses to 'poverty' that exist amongst 'the poor' that resist neat categorisation and analysis. And it is precisely the method of the in-depth interview and focus group that allowed for the contestation that happens amongst 'the poor' to be revealed and explored, in and across all groups and organisations included in this study.

¹⁹ Pikitup is the company established in 2001 by the City of Johannesburg and owned by it, that is responsible for refuse removal in its residential areas. In Orange Farm, Pikitup has a record of outsourcing many of its duties to local companies notorious for poor treatment of their workers, usually local residents employed on contract (Samson, 2003; Focus Group, Retrenched Refuse Removal Workers, 31/05/2007).

With the exception of the two interviews conducted with officials from the City's Credit Control Department, which lasted no more than thirty minutes and were directed towards obtaining very particular kinds of information due to the limited time made available by interviewees, all other interviews and focus groups were conducted in a manner that allowed participants to speak as freely as possible in response to questions that probed very broad areas of the research and individual attitudes and ways of being, living, and responding to hardship and policy. A significant attempt was made not to impose the researcher's own preconceived views on discussions by allowing questions to be remoulded in the course of the interview or group discussion. The overall exercise was thus led by both the researcher and the experiences of the interviewee or focus group participants. In the main, interviews and discussions would begin with respondents sharing their life histories. Responses would emerge in various forms, and then be used as the basis for the shaping of questions about the history of Orange Farm, the work of residents in their different groups, their relationships to employment, the state, NGOs, and so on. In addition, participants would be asked about their attitudes to and understandings of 'poverty' and 'the poor'.

Focus groups went on for between two to four hours, and the majority of interviews lasted between one and three hours. A few interviews were conducted over a number of days, in different sessions of two to three hours. Rather than conducting a larger number of interviews and focus groups in which respondents would be expected to provide answers to a set list of questions aimed at producing particular kinds of knowledge to fit a pre-determined theory or set of theories, a smaller set of 'intense conversations' were held in which participants were guided in the telling of their stories to speak to the particular issue of 'poverty' and 'the poors'. In this way, the voices of interviewees and focus group participants have not just provided the information through which a discussion on 'poverty' and 'the poors' may take place, but they have participated in the discussion. In this way, those traditionally considered 'informants' in the research process become 'discussants' and producers of the knowledge ultimately contained in this thesis.

In 2010, one focus group was conducted with members of the OWCC to find out their knowledge of Siyasizana and if anything had changed with regard to their work and struggles. Three in-depth interviews were conducted with key members of the OWCC. Random individuals were stopped and asked of their knowledge of Siyasizana outside the municipal office and at the Itsoseng project in Orange Farm on two days in May and August 2010. With Siyasizana being the only real change at a collective level for residents of Orange Farm, it was felt that attention should only be given to this aspect in fieldwork conducted as part of the follow-up research towards the PhD.

It is hoped that the above approach has addressed some of the concerns raised by Gillian Hart (2002) in her critique of discourses of globalisation that conceive of the process in terms of an 'impact model'. She argues that globalisation is "typically framed in terms of the impact of 'the global' on 'the local', described in ways that "conjure up inexorable market and technological forces that take shape in the core of the global economy and radiate out from there" (Hart, 2002: 13). Hart argues that such discourses are 'disabling' as they do not recognise the potential for the contestation and constitution of global processes from and through the local, the latter understood as the product of contested and "multiple trajectories of socio-spatial change" (ibid). She further clarifies her use of the word "trajectories" as being "to convey the ongoing processes through which sets of power-laden practices in the multiple, interconnected arenas of everyday life at different spatial scales constantly rework places and identities" (ibid). This thesis is an attempt to bring together the multiple trajectories that have shaped current approaches to the questions of poverty and the poor in South Africa through the specific experience of Orange Farm and Johannesburg.

Writing this thesis in the third person has thus far been easy. But it, at this point becomes more difficult, and it would be disingenuous to erase my position as the researcher in this process of exploration and narration, my own history, class position, and experience being both beneficial to the project and posing certain challenges for me. Gaining access to members of any community that one is not a part of is almost always a difficult process, more so when doing research. This was not, however, the case with different groups in Orange Farm.

Through my previous work in Orange Farm, already described above, I had already built relationships with members of the OWCC and the Kganya Women's Consortium, two forms of collective responses to the socio-economic hardships facing residents. In addition to allowing access to the broad membership of these two structures, contact was facilitated through these organisations with the St Charles Lwanga Advice Office (set up by the Roman Catholic Church), and other groups of unemployed residents outside of any formal organisations. My long history with these formations would, however, pose a challenge for me with regard to the question of my own personal biases and connections with particular individuals threatening to cloud the overall analysis. In this regard, I attempted to include many more individuals and organisations unknown to me prior to this research project commencing, in my list of interviewees and focus group participants, and to ensure that the opinions and experiences of members of the OWCC and Kganya Consortium did not undeservedly overshadow those of members of other organisations and unorganised residents in the final discussion. Contacts facilitated through the CDWs and time spent at the municipal offices assisted in this regard. In addition, similar sets of questions guided all interviews and focus group discussions, and special efforts were made to include organisations and individuals from within the ANC Alliance. It is hoped that this is reflected in the discussion on Orange Farm further on in this thesis.

Entering a disadvantaged community, such as Orange Farm, with a certain amount of privilege that comes with a middle-class background, strikes up immediate interest from residents who identify one as an outsider. In my case, this worked mostly to my advantage, especially when I was unaccompanied by people known to me or acting as facilitators or mediators for me in between or on my way to interviews and focus group discussions. Conversations were, in this way, struck up with ordinary residents, unplanned, lending another layer to my overall research experience that allowed me to compare the views and experiences being heard in interviews and focus groups with those heard on the streets, in shops, in taxis, my car (giving people lifts), and so on. These informal observations and interactions have lent significant value to the outcomes of the overall research project.

It is also difficult, when entering a disadvantaged community, with a certain amount of privilege, to escape individuals' expectations that your presence or engagement with them will lead to some form of material gain on their part. At the beginning of all focus groups and interviews, the purposes of the research and my own position as a student were explained to participants. The majority of interviews and focus groups were conducted at a central venue in Orange Farm, the Itsoseng Women's Project in Drieziek Extension 1, that kindly allowed me to use their space free of charge. Transport money was given only to those participants living in distant extensions requiring taxi rides, and a light finger lunch was provided at focus groups happening at this venue. Other focus groups took place at the municipal offices and the Lebone Skills Development Centre, which also kindly offered up their spaces free of charge, and no transport money or lunches were provided here. The reason for this was that participants would have been at these venues regardless of the focus groups taking place. In this way, there is no claim that can be made against the research findings that focus group participants or interviewees may have been coerced into participating through promised material benefit.

At the start of all interviews and focus group discussions, participants would also be given the chance to ask any questions about the research process. In the majority of cases, participants would want to know what the ends of the research were and whether they would have access to the findings. I would explain the nature of an MA project as well as the details of the research design, and commit to returning to Orange Farm at the end of the process to present the findings to participants. In some cases, such as a focus group that comprised unemployed men who had been retrenched in the last ten years from a major company, Premier Milling, I was asked whether I would be able to assist with the provision of jobs for individuals. I would obviously respond that this was not possible, but that I would allow for this thesis to be used by groups in Orange Farm in campaign work being taken up around the issue of employment. Participants were always satisfied with such responses, and I will have to live up to my commitment to return with my findings and arguments and to make them open to critique, debate and use by residents.

'The informal' also presented itself as an important source of information from time to time, when individual participants from focus groups decided to continue

conversations with me well after the group discussions had been concluded, or when my own sources of privilege began to be tapped into for the work of organisations or individuals. For example, I gained great insights into the difficulties faced by CDWs by giving a lift from Orange Farm to Johannesburg to one of the CDWs needing to attend a meeting in the city, and into the hardships of the income generation projects when asked to make donations of food for HIV-positive members or to offer assistance with media work for campaigns.

The research process has been an open-ended one, with certain delineations in terms of area of focus and questions to be probed, but without predetermined answers or theories requiring fulfilment. Archival work has been brought together with the experiences of individuals and organisations, and the outcome has been one in which my own individual views have been able to interact and engage with an extremely wide range of experiences and theories. It is hoped that this method of investigation has allowed for the next few chapters to provide material substantiation for the arguments outlined in earlier sections of this introduction.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One explores different ways in which poverty and the poor have been approached in capitalist society, highlighting the relationship between wage labour (and its decline) and the constitution of poverty and the poor, from early industrial capitalism to the present neoliberal world order. It also offers a historical overview of approaches to poverty and the poor in South Africa from segregation to apartheid, similarly showing the relationship between wage labour and state approaches to poverty and the poor, and laying the basis for the discussion of post-apartheid South Africa that follows. In doing this, it presents a number of theoretical approaches to the constitution of poverty and the poor through which it will attempt to think through the questions of poverty and the poor in the specific experience of post-apartheid South Africa, in particular Orange Farm and greater Johannesburg, in the remainder of the thesis. The chapter presents an analysis of the development of capitalism, as the product of a contestation between History 1 and History 2s, offering definitions of concepts, such as neoliberalism, and putting forward analyses of changes in labour that are related to the constitution of poverty and the poor/s.

Chapter Two shows how the poor (and the poorest of the poor) come to feature in the discourse of the African National Congress (ANC) (and the state) from the early 1990s as it changes its commitment to its people from that of delivering the ‘better life for all’ to that of enabling the individual citizen to help him/herself to move closer towards attaining this ‘better life’. It will also show, how, in the case of struggles embarked on against the policies and logic of neoliberalism, the poor has come to signify both a challenge to state definitions and measures aimed at promoting conditions of survival for the poor, and the possibility for alternatives to neoliberalism and capitalism.

Chapter Three shows how the proliferation of statistics, and debates and discussions around them, geared towards defining just how the state fulfils its minimalist role, has shaped the governmental categories of the poor and poverty to produce a ‘field of knowledge and intervention’ through which particular standards of living, practices, and kinds of behaviour are imposed on and/or encouraged for that population group in society identified as being unable to provide for themselves, such that the direct rule of the state over its citizens is replaced by a sphere or field of intervention through which the state ‘enables’ the individual citizen to assume responsibilities previously assumed by the former.

While the first three chapters outline the broad context of the making of the poor in the history of capitalist development in the west, and in post-apartheid South Africa, the rest of the thesis focuses on the delivery of basic services through the specific experience of the evolving policies of the City of Johannesburg and their attempted implementation in Orange Farm.

Chapter 4 outlines the history of policy development related to basic service delivery in the CoJ, focusing on the evolution of its Human Development Strategy (HDS) and Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) from its first attempts at neoliberal restructuring begun in 1999 with the adoption of iGoli 2002 (and iGoli 2010), followed by Joburg 2030, as well as its return to indigent management policies, which have undergone several revisions, resulting in its most recent form, Siyasizana, or the Extended Social Package (ESP). The chapter engages primarily with the ways in

which the poor and poverty have been crafted and shaped as governmental forms of intervention in the lives of a particular population group in order to encourage them to behave in certain ways and accept certain inequalities and responsibilities.

The experience of Orange Farm, shared through *Chapters Five and Six*, will show how the conditions of survival imagined for black people by the apartheid government in the form of its policies of ‘organised urbanisation’ and ‘controlled squatting’ that produced places of ‘permanent informality’, such as Orange Farm, are today being perpetuated by the incremental logic of service delivery in the commodified and privatised system being championed by the ANC government. While *Chapter Five* focuses on the way Orange Farm was imagined and made as ‘a place for the poor’ in and through apartheid and current state policies and actions, *Chapter Six* highlights the many different ways in which Orange Farm has represented the potential for a life beyond survival, a life outside of the constraints and boundaries imposed by capitalism. It also explores how this struggle for a different life is often itself intimately bound to the struggle for survival. In the attempts at making the poor in Orange Farm, then, we witness the contestation of the category from those its targets, and the limits in its implementation that result from the inability of residents to afford even the conditions of survival proposed by the changed indigent management policy.

Chapter 1 – The ‘Making’ of ‘The Poor/s’: A Process of Contestation

Introduction

The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time.

It was present at its own making. (E. P. Thompson 1965: 9).

Thompson’s painstaking account, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, of the participation of those named ‘working class’ in their own production as a collective force recognisable and shaped through various common customs and cultural practices, beliefs and values, and in the broader development of capitalism, is important in bringing into view those written into history through classification yet seldom seen to have contributed to the writing of history themselves. Setting out “to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘utopian’ artisan ... from the enormous condescension of posterity” (ibid), Thompson tells the story of the emergence of the working class as political subject central to the development of industrial capitalism in England, not just as passive recipient of laws, prescriptions, orders, and dictates or reactant to economic stimuli, but as active participant in the shaping of the development of society.

By encouraging us to think of class as “something which ... happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships”, rather than as “structure” or “category” (ibid), Thompson offers us an alternative²⁰ reading (and writing) of the history of the working class in early industrial capitalist England as “an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning” (ibid). While he explores the customs, beliefs, values and practices that predispose certain individuals and groups to the discipline of wage labour, he also points to instances of resistance and contestation of the modes of being and forms of life prescribed for the working class by capital. In this way, Thompson shows how a group of individuals in society comes to be known, seen and treated as a homogenous entity, objectified under the sign of ‘working class’, through an active process of contestation, both of

²⁰ Thompson sets himself apart from political economists who tend to prioritise the structural over the subjective aspects of society, often neglecting questions of human agency in their analyses of the development of capitalism.

signification and of material conditions. In this chapter (and the thesis more broadly), as we try to understand the effects of the decline of wage labour in late capitalist society on the working class, especially the renewed attention being given to that group in society identified and named ‘the poor’, Thompson’s use of the term ‘making’ seems appropriate, allowing us to describe the contested process and field of signification (after Barchiesi – see below) that is produced by and through engagement about poverty and about/by the poor in post-apartheid South Africa.

In Thompson’s (1965; [1967, 1971] 1991) attempts to understand the English working class in the early years of industrial capitalism, poverty and the poor also feature prominently, particularly in his discussions of resistance to incorporation into wage labour and in his writings on the crowd, which we will explore later on in this chapter. Read together with other analyses that emphasise governmental logics behind the uses and shaping of poverty and the poor (explored below), Thompson’s particular treatment of the poor allows for the very processes in which the poor and poverty emerge as lived experience, and as discursive categories, to be understood as makings – processes of contestation over the meanings given to poverty, and the life forms imagined for the poor in which the poor are active subjects. Such an approach is even more significant today as we apprehend not only the increasing attention to poverty and the poor in state, party political, and general policy discourse, but also as we are confronted with the increasing mobilisation of the poor as a political identity by groups of people coming together to demand access to those resources necessary for life, having to survive outside of the protections of a decent wage and adequate welfare, and diminishing social support networks.

In doing this, it offers some analysis of transformations in the mechanisms of power in capitalist society, as the nature of labour and social relations have changed since the advent of capitalism. It is by no means comprehensive, but seeks, through a few popular examples, to provide some context and some history for an analysis of the ways in which poverty and the poor come to be made in post-apartheid South Africa.

From Poor Laws to the Welfare State

Zygmunt Bauman (1998) argues that poverty and the poor are characteristic of all societies. With those identified as the poor most often being seen to pose a threat to the order and norms of society, governmental approaches to poverty and the poor have generally been crafted in response to such supposed threats. While, as Bauman shows, the poor of pre-modern Europe were treated as “an essential link in the ‘divine chain of beings’”, their suffering being viewed as “repentance for original sin and a warrant of redemption”, and the provision of relief to the poor understood as a means to individual salvation, modernity brings with it “the scrutiny of reason” which replaces the ‘divine chain of beings’ with “the projects of order and the norm”. In modern societies, Bauman goes on to argue, “the presence of the poor became a problem... The poor were a threat and an obstacle to order; they also defied the norm.” (Bauman 1998: 87). Depending on the model of order and norm specific to each society, however, Bauman shows how each “constructed its poor in its own image, offering different explanations of their presence, finding a different use for the poor and deploying different strategies of tackling the problem of poverty” (ibid: 86).

Common to most societies, however, is a differentiation that is made between two groups of people living in conditions of poverty – the poor and paupers (the latter also called the indigent, referring to the destitute, that is, those unable to provide for their basic necessities through their own labour), and the former referring to the able-bodied who remain in situations of socio-economic deprivation in spite of their capacity to labour (Bauman 1998; Hufton 1974; Iliffe 1987; Katz 1989; Poynter 1969). Michael Katz (1989) points out that the designation ‘pauper’ appears first as an administrative category in England and the USA, designed to identify those members of society receiving public relief²¹. With time, it would come to refer usually to the aged, the sick, the disabled, and orphans (those understood to be unable to provide for their own basic needs through their own mental and/or physical activity). He writes that this distinction between poor and pauper “originally attempted to separate the genuinely needy from rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy

²¹ John Iliffe highlights that the distinction between the poor and the indigent appears across cultures, from France to Greece to Africa (Iliffe 1987: 2).

beggars... It translated over time into the restriction of aid to the impotent and the exclusion of the able-bodied” (Katz 1989: 12).

John Iliffe points out that across cultures this distinction in poverty can be seen to correspond with “the long-term poverty of individuals due to their personal or social circumstances” (structural poverty) and “conjunctural poverty, which is temporary poverty into which ordinarily self-sufficient people may be thrown by crisis” (Iliffe 1987: 4). Iliffe argues that in land-rich societies, structural poverty is characterised by a lack of people’s access to labour (their own through disability, illness or age, and that of others, for example, family), whereas in land-scarce societies the very poor include such people as well as those among the able-bodied who lack access to land (or other resources) and who are unable to sell their labour power at a rate adequate to the meeting of their basic needs. Before capitalism, then, Iliffe argues, structural poverty in Europe was characterised by the lack of access to labour. Capitalism, with its forced removal of people from lands held and worked in common in the process named by Karl Marx as ‘primitive accumulation’, produces a structural poverty characterised by a lack of access to land and a lack of access to wage labour sufficient to the meeting of an individual worker’s family’s basic needs. With regard to conjunctural poverty, Iliffe argues that its chief cause in Europe (until the seventeenth century) was insecurity with regard to the climate and the political situation, which might result in mass deaths from famine (ibid: 6). However, he shows that the incidence of poverty due to such circumstances declines with the development of capitalism and the welfare state, and the ability to predict and prevent such crises. In the most recent phase of capitalist development, however, it could be argued that we are witnessing the conversion of the conjunctural poverty caused by the instability and precarity of the labour market becoming structural as the decline of wage labour continues.

The administration of the principle of separation between the indigent and the poor proved, however, almost impossible to implement, with both England and the USA exhibiting increasing costs for poor relief in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, resulting in critics being convinced “that in fact the able-bodied had penetrated the relief rolls, and a great object of poor law reform in both countries became to remove them” (Katz 1989: 12). While writers show that there was usually

no disagreement in society about the provision of relief to the destitute (the impotent/the indigent/‘the deserving poor’), they are quick to point out that relief for the able-bodied was an entirely different matter. In fact, the need to ensure that relief was being provided only to those in need of it can be shown to have produced a particular stigmatisation of the poor. In the words of a preacher, opening a new chapel at a poorhouse in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1834:

... poverty is an unavoidable evil, to which many are brought from necessity, and in the wise and gracious Providence of God. It is the result, not of our faults, but of our misfortunes ... Pauperism is the consequence of wilful error, of shameful indolence, of vicious habits. It is a misery of human creation, the pernicious work of man, the lamentable consequence of bad principles and morals. (quoted in Katz 1989: 12).

For Katz, this “transmutation of pauperism into a moral category tarnished all the poor,” (Katz 1989: 12) and, in spite of attempts to maintain distinctions, “increasingly poverty itself became not the natural result of misfortune, but the wilful result of indolence and vice” (ibid: 14). According to Katz:

The redefinition of poverty as a moral condition accompanied the transition to capitalism and democracy in early nineteenth century America. It served to justify the mean-spirited treatment of the poor, which in turn checked expenses for poor relief and provided a powerful incentive to work. In this way the moral definition of poverty followed also from the identification of market success with divine favour and personal worth. Especially in America, where opportunity awaited anyone with energy and talent, poverty signalled personal failure (Katz 1989: 14).

The relationship between labour, the poor and poverty, and the development of capitalism has been explored in some depth in the writings of Karl Marx ([1939] 1973; [1976] 1979), Friedrich Engels ([1886] 2005), Karl Polanyi (1946), Mitchell Dean (1991), Zygmunt Bauman (1998), and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2002,

2004, 2009), inter alia. Most of these authors relate aspects of approaches to poverty and the poor that are central to that process that Marx described as “primitive accumulation” (Marx [1976] 1979: 873). For Marx:

The capital-relation presupposes a complete separation between the workers and the ownership of the conditions for the realisation of their labour. As soon as capitalist production stands on its own feet, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a constantly extending scale²². The process, therefore, which creates the capital-relation can be nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his own labour; it is a process which operates two transformations, whereby the social means of subsistence and production are turned into capital, and the immediate producers are turned into wage-labourers. So-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as ‘primitive’ because it forms the pre-history of capital, and the mode of production corresponding to capital (ibid: 874-875).

While Marx focuses on the forceful expropriation of land owned by individual peasants, the enclosure of lands held in common, the production of legislation to prevent forms of life independent of wage labour (e.g. anti-vagrancy and –begging laws, wage regulation), and the elaboration of a system of poor relief, all of which are shown to act as mechanisms that coerce independent labouring subjects into wage labour in different ways, Mitchell Dean argues that Marx does not pay enough attention to the non-coercive, governmental strategies that emerge to ensure that those

²² Several theorists (De Angelis 1999; Harvey 2005) emphasise the continuous nature of primitive accumulation, pointing to the re-emergence of “extra-economic strategies of dispossession” (Harvey) and the forced separation of producers from their means of (re)production (De Angelis) in responses to crises of capitalist accumulation in this neoliberal phase of capitalist development e.g. in processes of commodification of basic services, such as water. Ahmed Veriava (2006; 2010) has offered an analysis of the debates around the continuous character of primitive accumulation in the context of the commodification of basic services in South Africa, which is significant for its argument that “any analysis of processes of commodification must seek to understand how such processes are caught up in a wider transformation of the relations that structure social life” (Veriava, 2010). It is hoped that this thesis adequately illustrates this in the chapters that follow.

who are ‘freed’ from their land as property are made to accept the discipline of wage labour (Dean 1991: 211)²³. In addressing this apparent neglect in Marx, Dean explores changes in governmental approaches to the poor and poverty from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, showing how such shifts relate to changes in capitalist development as mercantilism makes way for industrial society, and wage labour in the factory becomes the dominant mode of social inclusion.

Dean offers us an analysis of the workings of the Elizabethan Poor Laws in England, and debates leading to their amendment in the form of the New Poor Laws of 1834. He shows how the set of laws regulating the poor in England from the sixteenth century until the nineteenth century produced a “discourse of The Poor”, accompanied by a “police of The Poor²⁴” (Dean 1991), through which the driving goal of “increasing the wealth of the nation” was met by ensuring that as many of the poor as possible were “set to work” according to the needs of a mercantilist society (ibid). Dean shows how the popularly held view that the greater the numbers of working people belonging to a nation, the greater that nation’s wealth, contributed to the elaboration of a set of laws, penalties and policies aimed at counting up “the numbers of The Poor”, classifying them according to their relationship to work, that is, according to the categories ‘those who cannot work’ (the impotent/indigent²⁵), ‘those who will work’ (the able-bodied and willing poor) and ‘those who will not work’ (the idle poor), and setting the idle to work (ibid: 25, 26). The latter was prescribed through various means, including the lowering of wages and the increasing of prices, laws such as the Vagrancy Acts, and the establishment of workhouses²⁶,

²³ While Marx does not go into the detail that Dean does with regard to the changes in the Poor Laws from the sixteenth through to the nineteenth centuries in England, he does signal pauperism and poor relief as means through which a labouring subject under the discipline of the wage is produced in capitalist society. Dean thus contributes towards Marx’s analysis of primitive accumulation by showing that the poor and poverty held a more central place in the production of the wage labourer than they have been given in accounts of this period.

²⁴ ‘Police’ in this instance refers to “the goal of the reformation of the social order by the regulation of all the activities and relations within a political unit” (Dean 1991: 61), being applicable to English society since feudal times. Dean notes a shift in the notion of police in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries where “the object of police shifts from the conservation of the feudal estates or orders to the administration of the *population*” (ibid, emphasis in the original). Dean points out that this later notion of police coincides with Foucault’s notion of biopolitics as a “political power which had assigned itself the task of administering life” (Foucault 1979 quoted in Dean 1991: 61).

²⁵ Under the Elizabethan Poor Laws, familial responsibility was enforced with regard to the “maintenance of ‘poor, lame, blind and impotent’ family members (Dean 1991: 31).

²⁶ In a very direct way, the workhouses linked the setting of the numbers of the poor to work to the increasing of the wealth of the nation – they produced locally goods that were previously imported.

each implemented “to stimulate the labourer to a regular and industrious mode of existence.” (ibid: 27). The administration of relief in the form of aid to the poor and the workhouses fell to the local parishes.

For Dean, it is important to note that these laws and policies were designed “not to relieve the sufferings of those in a condition of poverty but to formulate the numbers of The Poor in such a way as to promote most effectively the policy objectives of increasing the strength of the nation.” (ibid).

Dean then shows the emergence of a series of debates and a proliferation of literature about poverty and the poor in the late eighteenth century that mark a shift in discourse away from a focus on *the numbers* of the poor to *the condition* of poverty, as it comes to be argued that the wealth of the nation rests no longer on increasing the numbers of its working population, but on ensuring that the numbers of its general population do not exceed the finite means of subsistence available to it. Dean attributes this emergence of the treatment of poverty as a condition to a number of key figures, primarily Thomas Malthus (through his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, 1798), Morton Eden (through his three volume survey of the poor, 1797), and Jeremy Bentham (through his 1843 treatise, *Pauper Management*).

As England was faced with the effects of war, an agrarian crisis and soaring grain prices in the 1790s, individuals, such as Joseph Townsend (1787) and Thomas Malthus (1798), began to argue against measures in support of the ‘uncontrolled proliferation’ of the population as society had finite ‘means of subsistence’ available to it, and so influenced moves towards amending the relief-providing Poor Laws. After all, as Friedrich Engels shows, it had become the commonly held belief and view held by government officials that “relief fosters laziness and increase of ‘surplus population’” (Engels [1845] 2005: 283).

In the *Grundrisse* ([1939] 1973), Marx takes issue with Malthus’ contention that there is a direct relation between overpopulation or surplus population and means of subsistence (“the necessities of life”), that is, the contention that if the population were allowed to grow unrestrained, there would not be enough resources to sustain all of humankind. Marx argues that “in history overpopulation is ... a historically

determined relation, in no way determined by abstract numbers or by the absolute limit of the productivity of the necessities of life, but by limits posited rather by *specific conditions of production*” (Marx [1939] 1973: 606, emphasis in the original). He quotes the example given by Ricardo that the quantity of grain available in society has no meaning for the worker who has no employment, to illustrate this. For Marx, then, the relationship between population (or overpopulation) and means of subsistence is socially mediated. In capitalist society, this relationship is mediated by the wage relation, as without the income from a job “the necessities for life” cannot be produced and/or purchased by the individual. Marx writes:

It is already contained in the concept of the free labourer²⁷, that he is a pauper: virtual pauper. According to his economic conditions he is merely *living labour capacity*, hence equipped with the necessities of life. Necessity on all sides, without the objectivities necessary to realise himself as labour capacity. If the capitalist has no use for his surplus labour, then the worker may not perform his necessary labour; not produce his necessities. Then he cannot obtain them through exchange; rather, if he does obtain them, it is only because alms are thrown to him from revenue. He can live as a worker only in so far as he exchanges his labour capacity for that part of capital which forms the labour fund. This exchange is tied to conditions which are accidental *for him*, and indifferent to his *organic* presence. He is thus a virtual pauper. (ibid: 604, emphases in the original).

Marx proceeds to show that with such an understanding, the surplus population is central to capitalism’s development, contrary to Malthus’ view that the surplus population is a “superfluous population”, that is, unnecessary and, therefore, dispensable to capital (Malthus 1798). Showing that surplus value is realised through the extraction of surplus labour time in industrial society, Marx argues that greater surplus value is realised when necessary labour time is reduced. Capitalism,

²⁷ Marx uses the word ‘free’ to refer to the fact that the labourer was ‘freed’ from the ownership of his land, and free to sell his labour power. It is, of course, ironic that this freeing does not lead to the individual freedom of the human being, but to greater exploitation.

therefore, thrives on reducing necessary labour, thereby increasing the surplus population:

Since it is further the condition of production based on capital that he produces ever more surplus labour, it follows that ever more necessary labour is set free. Thus the chances of pauperism increase. To the development of surplus labour, corresponds that of the surplus population. (Marx [1939] 1973:

In *Capital*, Marx uses the term “the industrial reserve army” to refer to this surplus population produced as an essential feature of capitalist accumulation and functioning so as to keep the level of wages low.

Engels characterised Malthus’ ‘law of population’ and the New Poor Law (which he also saw as being framed by the former) as “the most open declaration of war of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat”. He argued that Malthus’ theory shifted debate in society away from the problem of “how to support the surplus population” to “how to restrain it as far as possible”. He writes:

Malthus declares in plain English that the right to live, a right previously asserted in favour of every man in the world is nonsense. (ibid: 282).

Malthus, in particular, called for the laws to be amended in such a way that the poor would be encouraged to exercise “moral restraint” (Malthus (1798) quoted in Dean 1991: 99), one of his prescriptions being the restraint of marriage amongst the poor and the denial of relief to illegitimate children. Malthus and others (Townsend; Bentham; Defoe (1704)) would also argue that the system of poor relief produced behaviours and practices amongst the poor that were not conducive to the interests of the general population, for example, idleness, laziness, alcoholism, having too many children, and so on. Mitchell Dean argues that the notion of moral restraint formed “the core” of Malthus’ approach, seeking “to construct adult males as breadwinners, i.e. as agents responsible for the subsistence of themselves, their wives, and their children” and aiming to “remove the barriers for the operation of this agency as a

natural condition” (Dean 1991: 99). The functioning of the New Poor Law, then, “established the institutional conditions by which adult males and those they had contracted as their dependants would have no legitimate claims for subsistence except inside the deterrent institution of the workhouse” (ibid).

As mercantilism gave way to industrialism as the defining feature of capitalist society, with the crafting of a new order beginning to happen through the new norm of wage labour, the arguments that were being mounted against poor relief at the end of the eighteenth century in England were to be directed towards the harnessing of the population and its making in the interests of the new needs of capitalism. Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation* (1946) offers an important observation in this regard, that is, that the abolition of poor relief, embodied in the amended New Poor Laws of 1834, was central to the stimulation of a self-regulating labour market, necessary for capitalism to develop further and flourish at the end of the eighteenth century in England.²⁸ Polanyi explains:

Eighteenth century society unconsciously resisted any attempt at being made into a mere appendage of the market. No market economy was conceivable that did not include a market for labour; but to establish such a market, especially in England’s rural civilisation, implied no less than the wholesale destruction of the traditional fabric of society. During the most active period of the Industrial Revolution, from 1795 to 1834, the creating of a labour market in England was prevented through the Speenhamland Law. (Polanyi 1946: 82).

On 6 May 1795, the justices of Berkshire, meeting at the Pelican Inn in Speenhamland, “in a time of great distress,” introduced a law which stated that “subsidies in aid of wages should be granted in accordance with a scale dependent upon the price of bread, so that a minimum income should be assured to the poor

²⁸ It is important to note that while Polanyi argues that it is essential for a self-regulating market to emerge for capitalism to develop, he also argues that society reacts to the negative effects of this market by protecting itself in various ways, leading him to characterise the development of capitalism as “a double movement” (Polanyi 1946: 133). Resistance, increased protections on the part of the state for its citizens (the welfare state), and fascism have been furnished as examples of society’s reactions to the market.

irrespective of their earnings.” (ibid: 83, emphasis in the original). While under Elizabethan law the poor were forced to work for whatever wage they could get and relief was restricted to those who could not find work, under the law of Speenhamland relief was granted to any man whose wages fell below a particular level, determined by the price of bread. Polanyi argues that while this law embodied a “right to life” (ibid: 82), it also meant that “no labourer had any financial interest in satisfying his employer his income being the same whatever wages he earned” (ibid: 84). He goes on to describe how this regime of payment for labour quickly led to the productivity of all labour sinking to “that of pauper labour” (ibid), this, in turn, removing any incentive for employers to raise wages above the level at which the rates would be paid. According to Polanyi, the administration of this law resulted in widespread pauperism in the long run, its consequences “ghastly” (ibid: 85) for the common person. Viewed together with the enclosure of lands previously available for subsistence activities, Speenhamland produced a situation where the majority of the poor were forced onto “the rates” and remained on them for life (ibid).

Under Speenhamland society was rent by two opposing influences, the one emanating from paternalism and protecting labour from the dangers of the market system; the other organising the elements of production, including land, under a market system, and thus divesting the common people of their former status, compelling them to gain a living by offering their labour for sale, while at the same time depriving their labour of its market value. (ibid).

Polanyi then argues that it was the abolition of the Speenhamland law in 1834, through the removal of all forms of outdoor relief and the restriction of the administration of poor relief to the workhouse that facilitated the emergence of the first national self-regulating labour market.

Dean, while in agreement with Polanyi, argues that it is not just the abolition of the Speenhamland Law, but also a number of other reforms, that set the conditions for a self-regulating labour market to emerge. He shows that there were six different types of outdoor relief shown to be abused in the *1834 Report from the Commissioners for the Inquiry into the Poor Laws*, with the report concluding that only relief to the aged,

sick and widows were not abuses of the system. Dean argues, therefore, that the focus of the 1834 report and reforms that followed were not restricted to Speenhamland, but included all forms of relief provided to able-bodied males in support of their families and themselves.²⁹ For Dean, then, it is not the abolition of a single law, but the congealing of a number of laws, policies, discussions and debates to produce poverty as a condition, that serves to facilitate the emergence of a self-regulating labour market.

In addition to the views of Malthus and Townsend outlined above, Dean explores the writings of Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Morton Eden, and Jeremy Bentham to illustrate how this approach to poverty as a condition emerges. Without going into the various debates that existed between these different contributors here, it is significant that Dean shows how this treatment of poverty as a condition comes to play the role of providing, in the form of pauperism, a deterrent to people wanting to live off poor relief and remain outside of the discipline of wage labour. By removing all forms of outdoor poor relief, confining the receipt of relief to those living in workhouses and ensuring that their conditions of life and work were of the lowest standards necessary for survival, Dean argues, the condition of living off relief (poverty) was made undesirable, thus discouraging the practice of the able bodied refusing wage labour. Also significant in the literature reviewed by Dean, is the recurring focus on separating the indigent from the able-bodied poor, and transforming the workhouse into a place in which only the truly destitute would 'want' to live.

With regard to the able-bodied poor, the literature of this period is also striking for its lack of sympathy and humaneness when prescribing mechanisms for ensuring that those who can, do enter into wage labour, evidence that the crafting of the condition of poverty, like the Discourse of The Poor, happens not in the interests of changing the living conditions of a group in society, but to induce a particular form of life from the poor. Many writers of the time unashamedly explained the need for a certain

²⁹ Dean points out that it is interesting that while widows were permitted relief, women who were separated from their husbands or the fathers of their children were less likely to receive relief. He argues that the change in the Poor Laws do not, therefore, mark a break in the dominance of patriarchy.

section of the population to be kept in situations of poverty, and even hunger for some:

It seems to be a law of nature, that the poor should be to a certain degree improvident, that there may always be some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, and the most ignoble offices in the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased, whilst the more delicate are not only relieved from drudgery, and freed from those occasional employments which would make them miserable, but are left at liberty, without interruption, to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions, and most useful to the State... There must be a degree of pressure, and that which is attended with the least violence will be the best. When hunger is either felt or feared, the desire of obtaining bread will quietly dispose the mind to undergo the greatest hardships, and will sweeten the severest labours. (Townsend (1786) quoted in Poynter 1969: xvi-xvii).

Closely linked to such discussions about how to get the poor to enter wage labour were attempts to determine the minimum levels of the basic resources (primarily income and food) that were necessary for a pauper to survive. Peter Linebaugh tells of how an amount of money that would serve to entice the poor into wage labour without leading them to amass enough wealth to revert to 'idleness' became a subject of investigation and concern in the seventeenth century:

Money must both excite and hurt. The point of quantitative equilibrium between these apparently opposite purposes became the subject of inquiry. Matthew Hale, in 1683, calculated that 10 shillings a week, or 26 pounds a year, could provide a small family with a level of maintenance that guaranteed continual working. William Petty found the realities to be beneath this standard: 8 dimes a day for husbandmen and 16 dimes a day for tradesmen. (Linebaugh 2003: 55).

Historians have pointed out that it has been impossible for economists to explain just how the poor managed to live on such meagre sources of income (ibid).

It could, then, be argued that the 1834 amendments to the English Poor Laws sought “to convert paupers into ‘independent labourers’, a form of life with characteristics such as industry, frugality in matters of domestic economy, and foresight with regard to marriage and procreation.” (Dean 1991: 14). Explaining that “a form of life³⁰ is the grid of everyday existence which is constructed through a multiplicity of governmental practices, one aspect of which defines the division between a sphere of private responsibility and autonomy and a sphere of public responsibility and intervention” (ibid), Dean describes pauperism as “an event³¹” through which wage labour is made the only reasonable choice for the able-bodied, the latter conditioned in the ways of being conducive to wage labour, and the norm through which the new order of industrial capitalism thus being imposed.

For Dean, what is important about this period of English history is the transformation in the mode of government towards a “liberal mode of governance” in which promotion of a particular form of life is encouraged for the majority of people. Dean also speaks of “the conduct of life” coming to feature more prominently (Dean 1992: 218). He describes this liberal mode of government as “an historically specific ensemble of discursive, legal, administrative, and institutional practices, which crosses and seeks to co-ordinate dimensions of the state, philanthropy, households, and the economy, with the objective of promoting particular forms of the conduct of life” (ibid). Significant to the realisation of this mode of government is how it “extends the boundaries of rule by placing limits on the action of the state” (ibid). Dean argues further that these limits are “specified not foremost by a domain of

³⁰ Dean explains that this concept is different from Weber’s notion of a ‘conduct of life’ (*‘Lebensführung’*) whose genesis is located in Christian asceticism and is based on the rational pursuit of a divine calling (Dean 1991: 14-15).

³¹ Dean describes pauperism as an event to signify that it is “about the relations between specific forms of theoretical and strategic knowledge”. He writes, “It is about the practical inscription of ‘scientific’ discourse within specific policies and means of administration of poverty. It will lead us not to uncover the social determinants of knowledge ... nor to analyse discourse simply as an autonomous, self-referential structure, but to show the effects of knowledge in so far as it embodies a programme towards social reality.” (Dean 1991: 1-2).

inviolable rights of the person but by a division of responsibility for subsistence between categories of individual actors, the state, and other authorities” (ibid).

Here Dean is pointing to the emergence of techniques of self-regulation that come to be encouraged through the shaping of governmental categories and strategies that target those most vulnerable, and therefore potentially most volatile, in society to behave and live in ways conducive to a society in which wage labour is accepted as the predominant means of survival for the able-bodied. In highlighting the emergence of the liberal mode of government in the shift between two different approaches to the administration of the poor and poverty in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, Dean uncovers the emergence of a sphere of responsibility over which contestation comes to take place between the individual (often organised in groups, organisations, unions or movements) and the state over who should assume its reins.

Building on the work of Michel Foucault, Dean also makes the observation that it is in this period of English history that we see greater attention being given to the phenomenon or concept of population. Beginning in the era of the Discourse of The Poor and government of the police, Dean shows how various kinds of knowledge are collected in order to survey, regulate and control the poor. In the debates leading up to the 1834 Amendments to the Poor Law and in the period inaugurated by these changes, Dean shows how this attention to population increases. For example, he outlines how Bentham’s *Pauper Management* begins to treat the poor as a population group to be acted on in particular ways and to be made to act in particular ways.

Michel Foucault, trying to understand changes in the ways in which power comes to be exercised in European society, writes:

From the eighteenth century onward (or at least the end of the eighteenth century onward) we have, then, two technologies of power which were established at different times and which were superimposed. One technique is disciplinary; it centres on the body, producing individualising effects, and manipulates the body

as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile. And we also have a second technology which is centred not upon the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events...or at least to compensate for their effects. " (Foucault, 1976, in *Society Must Be Defended*, 2003: 249).

Foucault names this latter form of power “governmentality”, and argues that it completes a “triangle” of power in society, existing side by side with the modes of “discipline” and “sovereignty” (Foucault 2002). In describing the nature of governmentality, he further elaborates that this form of power functions by shaping “a milieu” (such as the terrain of engagement around poverty) so as to produce “a field of intervention”, which does not affect “individuals as a set of legal subjects capable of voluntary actions” (as would be the case of sovereignty) nor does it affect them “as a multiplicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances, and of required performances” (as in the case of discipline), but “tries to affect, precisely, a population”, by trying to reach “precisely the conjunction of a series of events produced by these individuals, populations, and groups, and quasi natural events which occur around them” (Foucault 2007: 21).

With regard to the period under discussion, then, various technologies have been shown to have emerged for the collection of different kinds of knowledge about that population group identified as the poor, those members of the population living in poverty, in the creation of a field of intervention through which this population group has been encouraged to adopt that form of life conducive to a society in which wage labour was becoming dominant. The crafting of the governmental categories of poverty and the poor in post-apartheid South Africa will also be shown to constitute a field of intervention, working to encourage particular techniques of self-regulation amongst the poor and to enforce particularly inferior standards of living for the poor, in the remainder of this thesis.

What Dean misses, however, both in his definition of ‘form of life’ and in his presentation of the constitution of poverty in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, is the effects of resistance on the implementation, shaping, and ultimate success of governmental practices³². Indeed, the Discourse of The Poor and the condition of poverty, as elaborated by Dean, could be said to emerge in response to the social threat perceived to be posed by the poor. In the words of Mantoux (1928) the Poor Laws “amounted to an insurance against revolution” (quoted in Polanyi 1946: 125). It was also in this period that the terms “the dangerous classes” and “lumpen proletariat” became popular, referring to those outside of the discipline of wage labour.³³ Friedrich Engels, writing about the intent of Malthusian changes, remarks quite plainly on the fact of resistance on the part of the poor:

If, then, the problem is not to make the ‘surplus population’ useful, to transform it into available population, but merely to let it starve to death in the least objectionable way and to prevent its having too many children, this, of course, is simple enough, provided the surplus population perceives its own superfluousness and takes kindly to starvation. There is, however, in spite of the strenuous exertions of the humane bourgeoisie, no immediate prospect of its succeeding in bringing about such a disposition among the workers. The workers have taken it into their heads that they, with

³² Although Dean acknowledges that his work does not “link its findings in a systematic way to the history of popular struggles” and that such an undertaking is vital to grasping “the full intelligibility of governmental transformation” (ibid: 10-11), he argues that this omission is “a deliberate theoretical strategy to attempt to displace conventional historical and social-theoretical accounts and hence establish the nature of liberal transformation of governance on a sounder footing” (ibid). As this thesis will argue, any analysis of governmental transformation that does not account for the presence of resistance is incomplete as it is in the first instance in response to the threat of social unrest on the part of the poor that social policies are crafted to contain them.

³³ Gaining popularity through the writings of Marx and Engels, the ‘dangerous class’ or ‘lumpen proletariat’ has become identified with conservatism, and reactionary ideas. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, it is described as “the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.” (Marx and Engels, 1848 - <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communistmanifesto/ch01.htm>, accessed 20/06/08). While Marx and Engels tended to focus on the potential for conservative and reactionary behaviour on the part of those outside of wage labour, more recently, autonomist Marxists have emphasised the potential for the production of life forms antagonistic to capitalism, amongst those outside of the discipline of wage labour. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in particular, celebrate the subversive potential of ‘the dangerous class’ described as ‘the poor’ (Hardt and Negri, 2002; 2004). This will be taken up in more detail and discussion later on in this chapter and in *Chapter Two*.

their busy hands, are the necessary, and the rich capitalists, who do nothing, the surplus population. (Engels (2005[1886]): 282).

Maurice Bruce (1961) argues that it was finally the labourer's revolt of 1830 that catalysed the amendments to the Poor Laws made in 1834. Although, as he shows, parliamentary committees had sat to consider the question of poor relief in 1817 and 1824, but "concerned lest any sudden change of policy should provoke revolutionary agitation through despair, had found no acceptable remedy" (Bruce 1961: 77). With the "risings, spontaneous outbreaks of rick-burning, rioting and machine-smashing" (ibid) occurring primarily in those places in which the Speenhamland system was in place, Bruce points out that there was no mistaking the relationship between the riots and the inadequacy of the system in the context of economic stress, and discussions and processes were set in motion towards the amendment of the Poor Laws.

E.P. Thompson also refers to the centrality of collective acts of resistance in the transformations that English society was undergoing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, riots against increases in the price of bread. An important contribution Thompson makes through these analyses, particularly in an essay entitled 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd' (in Thompson 1991[1971]), is that of the notion of "legitimizing practices" existing amongst participants in 'mob action', to counter "the spasmodic view of popular history" in which the actions of "the common people" are seen as "compulsive, rather than self-conscious or self-activating", "simple responses to economic stimuli" (ibid: 185). He writes,

It is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth century crowd action some legitimising notion. By the notion of legitimization I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community. On occasion this popular consensus was endorsed by some measure of license endorsed by the authorities. More commonly, the consensus was so strong it overrode motives of fear or deference. (ibid: 188).

Examining the eighteenth century food riot as “a highly complex form of direct popular action, disciplined and with clear objectives”, Thompson argues that while “riots were triggered off by soaring prices, by malpractices among dealers, or by hunger”,

these grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking, etc. *This in its turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. An outrage to these moral assumptions, quite as much as actual deprivation was the usual occasion for direct action.* (ibid, my emphasis).

For Thompson, then, struggles of the poor were not just spontaneous responses to hunger and the need to survive, but the result of complex relations and systems of belief and customs that determine how individuals engage with the dominant logic of the state and the market as they try to control and discipline the poor.

In his work on peasant uprisings in South-East Asia, James Scott also used the term ‘moral economy’ in reference to the underlying beliefs and values which led peasants ‘to risk everything’ in “indignation and rage” (Scott 1976: 3). He described the moral economy of peasants as “their notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation – their view of which claims on their product were tolerable and which intolerable” (ibid). In Scott’s view, this moral economy of the peasant was focused on the right to subsistence, and to preventing the accumulation of any risks to this right. Perceived threats to this right would lead to mass uprisings. While Scott spent some time exploring how what he terms “the ethic of subsistence” (ibid: 4) determines when collective protest happens in peasant societies, his later work (Scott 1985, 1986, 1987, 1990) highlights the need to conceive of resistance more broadly than in its mass, visible, collective forms.

Continuing to focus on peasant movements of South-East Asia, in particular Malaysia, Scott points to “hidden forms of resistance” that emerge in contestation of the status quo, outside of any organisations or movements, often at an individual level, and often mobilised in ways that do not see the state as the central force for change. Finding existing theory about social movements and collective action lacking with regard to such forms of engagement, Scott writes:

The historiography of class struggle ... has been systematically distorted in a state-centred direction. Everyday resistance does not throw up the manifestoes, demonstrations, or pitched battles that normally compel attention. It makes no headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do thousands of individual acts of insubordination and evasion create a political and economic barrier reef of their own. There is rarely any dramatic confrontation, any movement that is particularly newsworthy. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck (for example, a fiscal crisis) itself and not to the vast aggregation of petty acts that made it possible. It is seldom that perpetrators seek to call attention to themselves. Their safety lies in anonymity. It is also extremely rare that officials of state wish to publicise the insubordination. To do so would be openly to confess that their policy is unpopular and, above all, to expose the tenuousness of their authority... (Scott 1987: 422).

For Scott, then, it is not always in the most visible forms of protest that the secret to understanding societal change lies. In his work, Scott examines “the *ordinary* weapons of relatively powerless groups: footdragging, dissimulation, false-compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage and so forth”, which he terms “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1986: 6; emphasis in the original). He encourages a reading of peasant societies that takes into account such everyday forms

of resistance, which can in their own mounting produce revolutions, and/or serve the needs and interests of the peasantry between revolutionary mobilisations.³⁴

It was in the context of resistance, then, that wage labour nevertheless became the dominant mode through which individuals could secure the basic means to their survival and life. And, over time, resistance would come to take place over the nature, conditions and pay of wage labour, rather than against incorporation into it. Although there are examples of organised workers' protests prior to this, it is only in the 1870s that trade unions received legal recognition and protection (Bruce 1961: 69). It is also important to note here that until 1885 "acceptance of any form of poor relief, even if it were only treatment at a hospital, had disqualified a man from the franchise, on the grounds that no one should have a share in the election of those who were responsible for relieving him" (ibid: 103). With the granting of the vote to the poor, and the recognition of working class organisations in the form of unions, contestation over the nature of the sphere of responsibility enunciated by the advent of the liberal mode of governance would come to take on a more formal and continuous character.

In the years following the 1834 amendments to the Poor Laws, the problems of pauperism did not disappear. Important figures in society began to point to the growing severity in the conditions of the elderly, disabled, and children without family support. In addition, the problem of unemployment persisted, and there were still many able-bodied poor living in conditions of squalor and deprivation. Gradually concerns about the 'deserving poor' began to resurface, and policies began to be re-crafted with the aim of addressing these needs in society.

In 1886, Charles Booth, a wealthy Liverpool shipowner, "with a profound interest in social problems and a flair for investigation" began "a detailed survey of conditions in London aimed at bringing out not only the varied employment but the degree of affluence and poverty of its people, with all the social influences that told upon

³⁴ For more that has been written on hidden forms of resistance in the industrial workplace in Africa, see Cohen (1980) and Sitas (2004).

them³⁵” (Bruce 1961: 144). Setting out to disprove what he considered “some of the more extreme estimates of the amount of dire poverty prevailing”, Booth ended up confirming many of them (ibid). His study focusing on “the problem of the rather fewer than ten per cent of the ‘very poor’, amounting in all to some 300 000 people, who were for various reasons, and especially through irregularity of employment, incapable of supporting themselves and their families” (ibid: 145), Booth concluded that society, in its own general interest, should “take charge of the lives of those who are incapable of independent existence up to the required standard” (Booth (1894) quoted in Bruce 1961: 145).

In 1899, Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree, son of the world-renown businessman and philanthropist, Joseph Rowntree, began a study of poverty in York in order to compare conditions in a country town with those of London. Through an examination of needs and costs, Rowntree established a minimum level of income necessary for the bare maintenance of physical health, and showed that 28 per cent of the population lived below this standard, a figure only slightly smaller than that reached by Booth for London (ibid: 146). The study also showed that, as in London, there was a greater incidence of ill health and a higher death rate amongst the poor. Published in 1901 as *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, Rowntree’s investigation would lead him to comment:

That in this land of abounding wealth, probably more than one-fourth of the population are living in poverty, is a fact which may well cause great searchings of hearts. (Rowntree quoted in Bruce 1961: 146).

Maurice Bruce argues that the studies conducted by Booth and Rowntree provided evidence for an already growing deep consternation in British society about the generalised conditions of pauperism, leading to politicians and policy makers rethinking the approaches to governing the poor that had emerged in the entrenching of the order of industrial society in England. He argues that these two studies “were to be the driving force” (Bruce 1961: 146) of a series of reforms that were put in

³⁵ The study was only completed in 1903, seventeen years and seventeen volumes later (Bruce 1961: 143).

motion by a liberal government from the early twentieth century. And, he points out that the central concern of this liberal programme of reforms was “with the prevention of the poverty that Booth and others had so glaringly revealed, poverty due not to drink or moral inferiority, as many in the nineteenth century had unthinkingly believed, but ... to old age, sickness, the death of a breadwinner or unemployment” (ibid: 149). In keeping with the ideology of liberalism, however, these reforms did not relate to the redistribution of wealth, but to ensuring that a minimal standard of living be possible for all citizens. While the wage would serve as the main vehicle through which such means of subsistence could be secured, the state would also provide certain resources to ensure a basic level of survival for those unable to work for their own care and those unable to secure wage labour for themselves (the unemployed).

Reforms of this period happened in response both to this growing perception of the problem of pauperism in society, and to struggles waged by an increasingly organised working class for better conditions of work and life inside and outside the factory. One of the oldest reforms was the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, which provided some relief for the unemployed, marking a change in societal attitudes towards unemployment, now no longer viewed as a purely personal problem but a social one (ibid: 11). In 1908, old age pensions were introduced; however, they were denied to anyone who had “habitually failed to work” (ibid), and a national health insurance scheme in 1911. The sphere of responsibility inaugurated by the liberal mode of governance seemed to be shifting once again, with the state admitting to a greater share in this than in the period after the abolition of Speenhamland. However, relief or aid or welfare (as it would come to be called) continued to be aimed at encouraging a form of life amongst the majority of citizens conducive to wage labour.

As British society would come to bear the effects of two world wars, this fledgling system of social welfare would expand, and, in the context also of increasingly organised and militant working class movements, the state’s role in the sphere of responsibility would grow, producing what we have come to know as the welfare state, characteristic of the form of most European and US states during the greater part of the twentieth century (Bruce, 1961; Cleaver, 1979).

The welfare state would come to characterise developed industrial capitalist societies, with wage labour serving as the norm, that is, the primary form of social inclusion, through its provision of the means for a decent life (Barchiesi 2005; Esping-Andersen 1990). Gosta Esping-Andersen builds a comparison of three types of 'welfare regimes' through his mobilisation of the concept of decommodification. According to him, decommodification takes place when "a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 22). For him, the existence of social assistance programmes does not guarantee "significant decommodification" if they "do not substantially emancipate individuals from market dependence" (ibid). Calculating the "decommodification score" of different welfare states according to criteria including levels of income replacement, benefits provided and rules for eligibility to receive benefits, Esping-Andersen identifies three welfare regimes – liberal welfare states, characterised by means-tested provisions, some universal transfers and social insurance targeted at low-income earners; corporatist welfare states, in which entitlements and provisions are linked to employment status; and social democratic welfare states, exhibiting high levels of decommodification, and the universal allocation of social benefits without them being tied to employment status.

In all of these societies, the state would provide for that category in society traditionally referred to as indigent, that is, unable to secure the basic needs for their survival through their own physical and/or mental ability, and levels of decommodification beyond this would be the outcome of struggles on the part of the organised working class and the poor (Cleaver, 1979; Negri, 1988, 1989). Welfare policies would develop for the provision of the elderly, the disabled, the sick, and orphans. Mostly, the poor as imagined and portrayed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would disappear, only to rise up again as a threatening force in times of heightened unemployment and a decreased national fiscus. In such times, welfare (or relief) would be provided, but, as critics have pointed out, in order to ensure the continued reign of wage labour and the maintaining of the population of able-bodied poor in situations such that they are ready for work when it becomes available again.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, in their 1972 *Regulating the Poor*, provide evidence for their contention that relief giving is functional in “regulating the political and economic behaviour of the poor” (Piven & Cloward 1972: xv). They write:

Historical evidence suggests that relief arrangements are initiated or expanded during the occasional outbreaks of civil disorder produced by mass unemployment, and are then abolished or contracted when political stability is restored... [E]xpansive relief policies are designed to mute civil disorder, and restrictive ones to reinforce work norms. (ibid).

They also point out that much relief work seeks to deal with “the much more fundamental problem” of “the erosion of the work role” and related fears about its social consequences (ibid: 343). In their words:

When large numbers of people come to subsist on the dole, many of them spurning what little low-wage work may exist, those of the poor and near-poor who continue to work are inevitably affected. From their perspective, the ready availability of relief payments (often at levels only slightly below prevailing wages) undermines their chief claim to social status: namely, that although poor they nevertheless earned their livelihood. If most of them react with anger, others react by asking, ‘Why work?’ The danger thus arises that swelling numbers of the working poor will choose to go on relief. (ibid).

Franco Barchiesi’s work on the relationship between wage labour and social citizenship as a “contested field of signification” is particularly significant here (Barchiesi 2005: 1). As he notes the opening up of a terrain of struggle over access to decommodified services traditionally distributed through the wage with the decline of wage labour, Barchiesi highlights the empty promises of signification that manifest with regard to the sign of wage labour. As wage labour (in the form of well-protected and paid, permanent work) declines, the signifier’s promise is unable to be fulfilled in society, and space opens up for resignification “from above and from below” about

what work is, about state and individual responsibilities, and about how politics is imagined and happens (ibid: xvii). Barchiesi's work is particularly significant when read together with theorists focusing on the ways in which everyday life and subjectivity are shaped by the relationship of individuals to fulltime waged employment.

Pierre Bourdieu (1979) is exemplary here, showing, through observation of Algerian workers before and after they lose their jobs, how their relationship to their jobs determined the structure of their daily lives and social relationships through the disciplines and regularities they imposed. In particular, Bourdieu points to the ways in which an individual's relationship to and understanding of space and time change with the loss of a job. Not only does one no longer have a place to go to every day in order to perform a set of regular tasks, but life outside of the workplace also undergoes changes as a result. Other theorists (such as Michelle Lamont, 2000) have highlighted how an individual's sense of self (subjectivity) is affected, particularly in contexts where success is measured in terms of one's access to a job and a career. Theorists have also focused on the ways in which masculinity has been constructed around the notion of being a breadwinner for a family through working, and the stresses placed on gender relations as a result of job losses.

While Barchiesi's work focuses on the subject of recently retrenched and casualised workers, this thesis looks primarily at the unemployed, in the main those who have never held a fulltime job and those who have been out of permanent employment for more than ten years.

Returning to the discussion of the relationship between state policy in the field of welfare and struggles of the poor, Piven and Cloward explore how relief functioned during two periods of US history, the Great Depression of the 1930s and the period of mass unemployment in the 1960s. In both these periods, as the threat of the erosion of wage labour as the norm reared its head, discourses of poverty and the poor reminiscent of past eras were mobilised by politicians and policy-makers. For example, "the war on poverty" became a popular slogan of the US government in the 1930s and 1960s (Carson 1991: 15, 16). Once again, however, it is shown how these mobilisations of the 'war on poverty' discourse were closely related to the regulation

of people, in particular the able-bodied poor, and the perpetuation of the dominance of wage labour as the norm structuring social order. And levels of welfare were often set according to levels of struggle for particular resources by particular groups.

It has also been shown how a discourse of ‘the culture of poverty’ emerged to reinforce cultural and racial stereotypes of poor people and to explain the persistence of poverty in spite of state policy commitments to eradicate it (Katz 1989: 16-35). Writing about the turn to the culture of poverty discourse by US social scientists in the 1960s, Michael Katz argues:

The culture of poverty did not have the classification of poor people as its primary purpose. Still, it served the same end. For most writers observed that the culture of poverty did not capture all poor people. Rather, it placed in a class by themselves those whose behaviours and values converted their poverty into an enclosed and self-perpetuating world of dependence. Although some exponents located the sources of poverty in objective factors such as unemployment, the new concept resonated with traditional moral definitions. The culture of poverty could not quite sanitise the poor; their ancient odour seeped through the antiseptic layers of social science. They remained different and inferior because, whatever their origins, the actions and attitudes of poor people themselves assured their continued poverty and that of their children. (ibid: 17).

The idea of a culture of poverty was introduced to the social sciences in the work of the anthropologist, Oscar Lewis, in particular his ethnographical studies of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. For him, the culture of poverty was different from “economic deprivation” or “the absence of something”. It was a “way of life ... passed down from generation to generation along family lines” that could be found in both rural and urban areas, as well as different regions and nations (Lewis 1966: xliii – xlv). Lewis identified a number of features of a culture of poverty, including “the lack of effective participation and integration of the poor in the major institutions of the larger society” (ibid: xxlv-xxlvi) and their resultant apathy and hostility; the low level

of organisation amongst those living in a culture of poverty; family life characterised by the absence of childhood, early initiation into sex, free unions, and a relatively high level of the abandonment of wives and children; and strong feelings of marginality, helplessness, inferiority and/or dependence at an individual level. Lewis also stressed the difference between poverty and a culture of poverty, arguing that not all poor people lived in or according to a culture of poverty.

While Lewis acknowledged the potential for groups of poor people to act outside of the culture of poverty characterisation through, for example, their mobilisation by charismatic and committed leaders, he focused on the “pathos, suffering and emptiness” that he saw amongst those who live in a culture of poverty (ibid: lii), arguing that it was important to acknowledge the real conditions of the culture of poverty that pervaded the lives of the majority of the poor in order to change it. Michael Katz argues that in spite of his intentions, Lewis’s definition of the culture of poverty “lent itself easily to appropriation by conservatives in search of a modern academic label for the undeserving poor” (Katz 1989: 19).

Michael Harrington was one of the first writers to apply Lewis’s concept to the USA (ibid: 20). In a book entitled *The Other America*, Harrington described the poor in the US during the 1960s as “those who, for reasons beyond their control, cannot help themselves”, and that “poverty in the US is a culture, an institution, a way of life”. Identifying differences between the family structure of the poor and the rest of society, Harrington argued that there is “a language of the poor, a psychology of the poor, a world view of the poor” (Harrington quoted in Katz 1989: 20). Katz contends that “Harrington’s call to action against poverty lacked Lewis’s appreciation of the potential of organised militance and assumed the passivity of the poor” (Katz 1989: 20). In this way, Harrington’s position relied on “the intervention of sympathetic elites ... to lift poor people out of their degraded and helpless condition” (ibid). For Harrington, then, the solution to poverty lay in arousing “the conscience of the nation” (ibid), a task of his book.

While several aspects of the 1960s ‘war on poverty’ in the USA can be shown to focus on elimination of a culture of poverty (Katz 1989), it was perhaps the racialisation of poverty by President Lyndon B. Johnson in a speech made on 4 June

1965 that drew attention most starkly to the conservative character and potential of the concept. Basing his remarks on a confidential report, 'The Negro Family: The Case for National Action', which had been submitted to him in March 1965 by its main author, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then assistant secretary of labour in the Office of Policy Planning and Research of the Department of Labour, Johnson declared that the:

great majority of Negro Americans – the poor, the unemployed, the dispossessed are another nation. Despite the court orders and the laws, despite the legislative victories and the speeches, for them the walls are rising and the gulf is widening ... The isolation of Negroes from white communities is increasing, rather than decreasing, as Negroes crowd into the central cities and become a city within a city ... Negro poverty is not white poverty. Many of its causes and many of its cures are the same. But there are differences – radiating painful roots into the community, the family, and the nature of the individual. (Johnson quoted in Katz 1989: 24).

While Moynihan's report did not refer to a culture of poverty or any of its theorists, it bore several similarities to Lewis's arguments, focusing on the African-American population as its subject (Katz 1989). With Moynihan drawing attention to the breakdown of the African-American family as a reason for increased welfare dependence in African-American communities, he would draw the anger of the growing civil rights movement and come under severe criticism from several quarters. In spite of Katz's contention that such criticisms resulted in the disappearance of culture of poverty discourses in the USA for some time thereafter, similar moralistic undertones that accompanied the culture of poverty discourse re-appear today in talk of 'a culture of entitlement' amongst the poor in neoliberal society.

South African discussions about poverty and the poor abound with illustrations of this. For example, in a critique of post-apartheid state strategies to improve the

position of the poor in society, Mamphela Ramphele (a Managing Director of the World Bank during the 2000s, and former Black Consciousness activist) wrote:

The whole approach of the post-apartheid government was to deliver free housing, free this, free the other. This has created expectations on the part of citizens, a passive expectation that government will solve problems. It has led to a 'disengaged citizenry' coupled with a style of leadership in the previous administration that neither accommodated nor welcomed criticism. Thus when people's expectations are not met, they revert to the anti-apartheid mode of protest which is destroy, don't pay, trash. We are yet to grasp the role of citizens as owners of democracy. (Ramphele cited in Green, 2009).

Similar sentiments have been expressed by ANC government ministers and leaders in the context of struggles for basic services in South Africa, and will be explored in more depth later on in this thesis.

Piven and Cloward's later work, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1977), was also important in showing how the discourse of the war of poverty emerged in response to movements of poor people protesting their living conditions and demanding of the state that it provide for their needs in the context of mass unemployment. Focusing again on the period following the Great Depression in the 1930s and that following the second world war in the 1960s in the USA³⁶, Piven and Cloward argue that it is only in periods of extreme economic and social distress that groups of poor people come together to act politically in their own interests. For them, the periods following the 1930s and 1960s in the US produced a "scale of distress" high enough to produce collective protest action, resulting in policy changes to conciliate and contain the potential social threat presented by organised groups of poor people (ibid: 1-10). They go on to argue that it is in moments of protest or "insurgency" that movements of the poor pose the greatest threat to social and political order, losing their effectiveness as they are transformed into formal

³⁶ During the 1960s, mass unemployment was experienced particularly by African Americans who were forced off the land and into urban ghettos (Piven and Cloward 1977: 12).

organisations that are encouraged to participate in forms of governance less threatening to the order and norms of everyday life under capitalism.

Poverty and The Poor in Neoliberal Times

As the capitalist world economy was thrown into crisis at the end of the 1970s, the functioning and organisation of society would undergo further transformations (Harvey 2007). And, there would be fundamental shifts in approaches to poverty and the poor.

Theorists writing about these changes have characterised this period as one of ‘neoliberalism’ (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 2007; Saad-Filho and Johnstone (ed.) 2005), that is, a return to (and a refashioning of) some of the liberal principles defining the functions of the state, the role of citizens, and the nature of society, the economy and politics that had characterised the governments of the nineteenth century in Europe and the USA prior to the birth of the welfare state, in a new context. While the “intellectual roots” of neoliberalism can be traced to the writings of Friedrich Hayek (1960) and Milton Friedman (1962), the practice of neoliberal policies and approaches began to first grow and become prominent in the late 1970s and early 1980s “as a strategic political response to the sustained global recession of the preceding decade” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 350). Brenner and Theodore write:

Faced with the declining profitability of traditional mass-production industries and the crisis of Keynesian welfare policies, national and local states throughout the older industrialised world began, if hesitantly at first, to dismantle the basic institutional components of the postwar settlement and to mobilise a range of policies intended to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout all sectors of society. In this context, neoliberal doctrines were deployed to justify, among other projects, the deregulation of state control over major industries, assaults on organised labour, the reduction of corporate taxes, the shrinking and/or privatisation of public services, the dismantling of

welfare programmes, the enhancement of international capital mobility, the intensification of interlocality competition, and the criminalisation of the urban poor. (ibid).

In a recent reader on the subject, 'neoliberalism' is similarly said to refer to a set of political and economic practices that seek to extend the logic and rule of the market into all aspects of life (Saad-Filho and Johnstone, (ed.) 2005). There is general agreement amongst theorists that since the 1970s, there has been a trend in the world economy and politics away from the model of the welfare state (with features of strong state regulation of the economy and several social protections for citizens) towards greater 'market freedom' and the erosion of state protections and provisions for its citizens in the interests of opening up avenues for capital investment and accumulation for the benefit of private interests organised largely in transnational corporations. This has resulted in the permeation of the logic of the market into all spheres of life, including in many instances the pricing of basic services, such as water, often working against attempts at subsidising such necessities for poorer groups of people (Bond 2010). This will be explored in greater detail through the specific example of struggles over the delivery of water in South Africa later on in this thesis.

In this scenario, the role of the nation-state has changed to facilitate the restructuring of politics and the economy in these interests, and it has submitted its workings to the rule of international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Through a system of loans to developing countries, often termed structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) or, more recently, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the IMF and World Bank have 'exported' the logic of neoliberalism to the developing world (Harvey 2007: 92). These programmes have usually included the standard set of prescriptions for the economy, including export orientation, trade liberalisation, privatisation and other forms of commodification, cuts in social spending including welfare, and labour flexibilisation.

In the world system produced by the UN, IMF and World Bank, a discourse of fighting poverty has emerged in which the neoliberal principles of economic growth

are lauded as the answer to the problems of the world's poor. This discourse is defined largely by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 by 147 heads of state during the UN Millennium Summit, which commit their countries to the achievement of eight identified quantitative targets with regard to the eradication of poverty by the year 2015³⁷, and which have come to define how state commitments to social welfare are described and measured. Two leading theorists in the field of policy related to the global economy and questions of inequality and poverty (Jeffrey Sachs and Paul Collier) offer different prescriptions for addressing poverty in areas still plagued by it, that emphasise the role of global institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank, and powerful nation-states, such as the USA, in 'assisting' countries of the developing world, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, out of their 'poverty traps'³⁸.

Sachs (2001) argues for institutions, such as the UN, and nation-states, such as the USA, to play a greater and more pro-active role in providing aid to countries trapped in poverty through material resources as well as policy guidance, in order to prevent any negative developments with regard to the economy and politics that might affect the developed world adversely. In relation to the potential threat posed to the stability of the USA by political unrest and/or economic crises in poorer parts of the world, he writes:

It is time to reconstruct a strategy of foreign assistance that is commensurate with US strategic interests. The US should urgently lead an international effort to help sub-Saharan Africa escape from a poverty trap that has led to a downward spiral of disease, falling living standards, and increased conflict, during the past 20 years. More generally, the US should harmonise the decision-making of different parts of the US government, including the Departments of

³⁷ These are: to reduce extreme poverty and hunger by half relative to 1990; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women; to reduce child mortality by two-thirds relative to 1990; to improve maternal health, including reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters relative to 1990; to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; to ensure environmental sustainability; and to develop a global partnership for development (UN 2000).

³⁸ A "poverty trap" is "a condition, seemingly paradoxical, in which a poor country is simply too poor to achieve sustained economic growth" (Sachs 2001: 189).

Treasury and State, as well as the Office of the US Trade Representative, to rebuild our national capacity to support economic development abroad as a vital component of US foreign policy. (Sachs 2001: 197).

For Sachs, external aid becomes necessary when nation-states are unable to prevent economic failure of various forms, and must both provide the financial resources necessary for economic recovery to begin, as well as the policy guidance to ensure that the correct (neoliberal) economic policies are adopted to ensure that economic growth occurs.

Paul Collier (2007) also argues that aid must be accompanied by strict requirements for economic policy change. Trying to understand why it is that absolute poverty has declined everywhere in the world but in Africa it has increased, Collier discovers that “the challenge of poverty reduction in Africa is of a different order from that elsewhere and will require different strategies” (Collier 2007: 16764). He argues that Africa has to break out of its “economic stagnation” caused by its lack of economic growth and its low levels of income preventing it from addressing questions of poverty adequately. This, he argues, should happen through varying degrees of foreign aid accompanied by economic policy changes that bring states closer in line with neoliberal principles.

But prescriptions such as those of Colliers and Sachs are implemented in contexts of varying complexity, related to existing bureaucracies, belief-systems, resistance, and so on. As Harvey (2007) and Brenner and Theodore (2002), amongst others, argue, there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach when trying to understand how and why neoliberal policies are adopted and implemented in different places. Rather, as Harvey explains:

A moving map of the progress of neoliberalisation on the world stage since 1970 would be hard to construct. To begin with, most states that have taken the neoliberal turn have done so only partially - the introduction of greater flexibility into labour markets here, a deregulation of financial operations and embrace of

monetarism there, a move towards privatisation of state-owned sectors somewhere else. Wholesale changes in the wake of crises (such as the collapse of the Soviet Union) can be followed by slow reversals as the unpalatable aspects of neoliberalism become more evident ... Any moving map would therefore feature turbulent currents of uneven geographical development that need to be tracked in order to understand how local transformations relate to broader trends. (Harvey 2007: 87).

Significant in this excerpt is the use of the word 'neoliberalisation', as it highlights the ongoing and open-ended nature of the implementation of neoliberal policies and the entrenching of neoliberal rationalities, as presented by Harvey, Brenner and Theodore, and others.

In a similar vein, Brenner and Theodore describe these ongoing processes of neoliberalisation through the concept of "actually existing neoliberalism", which they use to "illuminate the complex, contested ways in which neoliberal restructuring strategies interact with pre-existing uses of space, institutional configurations, and constellations of sociopolitical power". Arguing, therefore, that "neoliberal programmes of capitalist restructuring are rarely, if ever, imposed in a pure form", they write that "the evolution of any politico-institutional configuration following the imposition of neoliberal policy reforms is likely to demonstrate strong properties of path-dependency, in which established institutional arrangements significantly constrain the scope and trajectory of reform" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 361).

The particular forms assumed by processes of neoliberalisation are, then, to be viewed according to the particularities of context with regard to history, pre-existing institutions and ideologies, and socio-economic and political relations and resources. In addition, they argue that neoliberalisation takes place differently at different levels of scale, that is, local, national and global. However, neoliberalism also presents challenges to the traditional separations that are made between these different levels of scale. Brenner and Theodore show how "the geographies of actually existing neoliberalism" transform "capitalist territorial organisation from the nationally configured frameworks that prevailed during the Fordist-Keynesian period to an

increasingly ‘glocalised’³⁹ configuration of global-national-local interactions in which no single scale serves as the primary pivot for accumulation, regulation, or socio-political struggle” (ibid: 363).

A similar understanding of this dynamic relation between these different levels of scale in the production of life and meaning resonates in the work of Gillian Hart (2002), who argues for approaches that conceptualise change today in terms of “multiple trajectories of socio-spatial change” (see *Introduction* of this thesis). Hart’s significance lies in her emphasis on subjectivity and contestations over meaning in trying to understand the world. James Ferguson’s (2006) critique of representations and discourses of Africa with regard to globalisation offers a similar approach to that described above, in his presentation of the experiences of neoliberalism in Africa being heterogeneous and productive of (as much as responsive to) the ways in which neoliberalism unfolds in different contexts.

It is with this approach that Brenner and Theodore understand the different phases of neoliberalism identified by Peck and Tickell (2002). Peck and Tickell show how neoliberalism has changed since the late 1970s, from a relatively obscure set of economic principles and means to ‘roll back’ Keynesian welfarist protections (1980s), to “most recently, a reconstituted form of market guided regulation intended not only to release short-term bursts of economic growth but also to manage some of the deep socio-political contradictions induced by earlier forms of neoliberal policy intervention” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 362).

Brenner and Theodore go on to argue that particular attention must be given to the scale of the local in the form of the city, as experimentation with neoliberal policies is increasingly seen to take place at this level. With regard to analyses of the city and changes in its form and governance, they argue that the shift from the “welfare city” to the “neoliberal city” should not be seen as “a linear transition”, but as the result of “multifaceted processes of local institutional change” that “involve a *contested, trial-and-error searching process* in which neoliberal strategies are being mobilised in place-specific forms and combinations to confront some of the many regulatory

³⁹ This term has also been used in this manner by Eric Swyngedouw (1997), from whom Brenner and Theodore borrow much in their analysis.

problems that have afflicted advanced capitalist cities during the post-1970s period” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 375, my emphasis). Such an analysis will be shown to be true also of the City of Johannesburg as we explore the evolution of its strategies towards entrenching the principle of commodification in the delivery of basic services in *Chapter Four*.

In relation to the City, privatisation is a particular aspect of neoliberalism that has been experimented with. In their analysis of water privatisation in Southern Africa, David McDonald and Greg Ruiters develop an understanding of privatisation that expands its strict definition, which they state is “the outright sale (divestiture) of state assets” (McDonald and Ruiters, 2005: 2). Instead, they define privatisation “to refer to non-state actors involved in water [service] delivery (including NGOs and community organisations) where the transfer of ownership and/or decision-making responsibility to private interests occurs (in part or in total)” (ibid). In this way, privatisation also refers to public-private-partnerships (PPPs) and other such arrangements, in which there is “a transfer of ownership and/or control that changes the operational calculus of a service from ‘public good’ to ‘private profit’” (ibid: 3). They also expand the definition of privatisation to include “commercialisation”, which they explain as “a process that refers to the more general pattern of running water services ‘like a business’ and that can be implemented without any private sector involvement at all” (ibid). By this logic, “corporatisation”, that is, “the creation of independent business units financially and managerially ringfenced from all other sectors in a municipality” would also qualify as a form of privatisation.

Importantly, McDonald and Ruiters argue that “underlying all of this activity ... are the broad forces of commodification: the transformation of all social relations to economic relations, subsumed by the logic of the market and reduced to the crude calculus of profit” (ibid). McDonald and Ruiters’ expanded definition of privatisation, then, allows us to view the implementation of privatisation in its various forms as contributing towards the path-dependent, context-specific, and multiple processes of neoliberalisation. As such, studies of the implementation of different processes of privatisation, such as this thesis, offer a contribution to analyses of the broader processes of commodification and neoliberalism.

With regard to poverty and the poor, literature on neoliberalism shows the convergence of these multiple, path-dependent processes of neoliberalisation in the production of increasing inequality and poverty on a global scale, and the emergence of the figure of the global poor or “underclass” (Bauman 1998; Katz 1989; Davies and Ryner (ed.) 2006). In the search to lower costs of production, fulltime waged employment has declined and flexible, unprotected forms of labour have become dominant, with casualisation and unemployment becoming a feature of an increasingly global labour market. Theorists have pointed to the emergence of a global “precariat” (Bourdieu, 1998; Standing, 2009), that is, the replacement of the traditional proletariat with an increasingly vulnerable and mobile pool of labourers engaged in seasonal, part-time, casual, contract and informal jobs, their social positions characterised by uncertainty. Significantly, as neoliberalism has occurred in a context in which socio-economic and political relations have taken on a global character, this precariat has come to be composed of individuals from different nationalities, many crossing national borders in order to find employment.

Theorists also point out that for many “the global poor are a potential source of resistance to current global policies, while for others they are a threat to stability, wealth accumulation, power and privilege” (Harrod in Davies and Ryner (ed.) 2006: 39). Jeffrey Harrod argues that “the urban poor, in all their religious, ethnic or antisocial configurations” is today’s feared ‘mass’, as the peasants were in the 1960s, and the organised working class was in the 1980s (ibid). Existing side by side with this image of the immoral, violent mass of the poor to be feared is the figure of the suffering, supplicant poor to whom society is urged to contribute in helping out of his/her poverty.

Zygmunt Bauman points out that the term ‘underclass’⁴⁰, when first used by Gunnar Myrdal in 1963, did not bear any of the moral judgements that it would come to in later, neoliberal times. Rather, it pointed to “the dangers of de-industrialisation, which ... was likely to make growing chunks of the population permanently unemployed and unemployable; not because of deficiencies or moral faults in the

⁴⁰ See also Veriava (2010).

people who found themselves out of work, but purely and simply because of the lack of employment for all those who needed it and desired it” (Bauman 1998: 68).

However, by the late 1970s its use would seek to connote moral degradation and chosen social exclusion on the part of a particular group in society. Bauman adds to this the fact that the underclass would also come to be portrayed as that class of individuals in society beyond the social discipline of wage labour (and the work ethic), that is involved in “anti-social behaviour”, and that “generally feels excluded from society, rejects commonly accepted values, [and] suffers from *behavioural*, as well as *income* deficiencies” (Ken Auletta quoted in Bauman 1998: 69, original emphasis). Bauman argues that such a discourse works so as to “wash clean all the hands and consciences inside the accepted boundaries of society of the guilt of abandoning a large number of their fellow citizens to permanent redundancy”. “Purity of hands and consciences is reached by the twin measure of the moral condemnation of the poor and the moral absolution of the rest.” (Bauman 1998: 72).

Bauman’s argument makes sense when examining the crisis of wage labour, described above, together with the accompanying rollbacks in the role of the state (versus the individual) in the sphere of responsibility that we saw inaugurated with the birth of the liberal mode of governance in the nineteenth century. As state spending on social welfare decreases, and wage labour (in the form of fulltime permanent formal sector employment) declines, individual responsibility is increasingly emphasised with regard to accessing the resources necessary for a decent life. The casting of the poor in moral terms serves, then, to instil amongst the poor an ethic of care of the self and individual entrepreneurship over dependency on the state or other external institutions.

Bob Jessop, for example, argues that in a neoliberal world the welfare system has taken on the characteristics of a “workfare regime in so far as it subordinates social policy to the demands of labour market flexibility and structural or systemic competition” (Jessop 2000: 19). Under this regime, recipients of welfare, particularly in Britain and the USA, would be subjected to compulsory participation in various work programmes through which services could be delivered to the state, the community and to the private sector without the need for proper wages to be paid or

any of the costs of according labour protections and security needing to be incurred. Arguments in support of workfare over welfare thrived on the very moralising discourses described above that functioned to make the poor responsible for their own plight in society and to accept the task of improving their situation as individuals with the very minimal assistance of the state. As Jessop writes, these changes in the roles assigned to the state and the individual within the sphere of responsibility, represent:

a major reorientation on the part of the state to the making and remaking of the subjects who are expected to serve as partners in the innovative, knowledge-driven, entrepreneurial, flexible economy and its accompanying self-reliant, autonomous, empowered workfare regime (ibid).

As wage labour declines in its role as the vehicle through which social inclusion occurs under neoliberalism, a discourse of individual responsibility and moralising distinctions between 'the deserving poor' and 'the undeserving poor' emerge once again, this time to impute from the poor a form of life conducive to the needs of a neoliberal world. How this takes place must be understood according to the particularities of different contexts.

Nikolas Rose and Thomas Lemke have celebrated, in Foucault, the notion of 'governmentality', which they use to try to explain the operations of 'neoliberal rationalities', uncovering different ways in which these rationalities come to take root in the choices that individuals make in life. Understanding neoliberalism becomes, then, for them, an exploration of a new modality of government. As Lemke explains,

From the perspective of governmentality, government refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation, namely 'technologies of the self' as Foucault calls them. (Lemke, 2001:201).

Describing the rationalities underpinning neoliberal government, Rose explains that governmentality today is:

predicated on interventions to create the organisational and subjective conditions for entrepreneurship – not only in terms of extending the 'enterprise model' to schools, hospitals, housing estates, and so forth, but also in inciting individuals to become entrepreneurs of themselves. In addition, this process of 'responsibilisation' often goes hand in hand with new or intensified invocations of 'community' as a sector whose vectors and forces can be mobilised, enrolled, deployed in novel programmes and techniques which encourage and harness active practices of self-management and identity construction, of personal ethics and collective allegiances (Rose quoted in Hart, 2005: 12).

Theorists of the governmentality school have come under criticism for being “quite limited” (Hart, 2005: 11), in particular for their neglect of the constitutive place of resistance in the implementation of neoliberalism. Drawing on arguments made by O’Malley et al. (1997), Gillian Hart points to the potential for governmentality studies to “degenerate into 'ritualized and repetitive accounts of ‘governing’ in increasingly diverse contexts”, as a result of their “tendency to define politics in terms of 'mentalities of rule,' emphasise the programmatic nature of rule, and rely heavily on texts of rule” (Hart, 2005: 11). She goes on to write:

Deliberate distancing from 'messy processes of implementation' means that the constitutive role of contestation drops out of sight, and what remains is an 'insular and episodic vision of rule'. (ibid).

Gupta (also quoted in Hart, 2005) further argues that "governmentality is itself a conjunctural and crisis-ridden enterprise" that "engenders its own mode of resistance and makes, meets, moulds, or is contested by new subjects.” (Gupta, 2001: 69). The CoJ’s experiments with enforcing a logic of commodification in the delivery of basic services and resistance to this from poor communities, studied in this thesis, provide ample evidence for Gupta’s contention. In this way, it may be argued that any attempt to understand how social inclusion occurs in society today cannot neglect the central place played by resistance, both organised and collective as well as unorganised and at an individual level.

Zygmunt Bauman, looking at societies in the developed world, argues that consumption becomes the means through which social inclusion (and exclusion) occurs as the nature of labour changes and as all aspects of society become commodified under neoliberalism. In such societies, the poor exist as “flawed consumers”:

In a consumer society ... having no access to a happy or merely a normal life means to be consumers *manquees*, or flawed consumers. And so the poor of a consumer society are socially defined, and self-defined, first and foremost as blemished, defective, faulty and deficient – in other words, inadequate – consumers. In a society of consumers, it is above all the inadequacy of the person as a consumer that leads to social degradation and ‘internal exile’. (Bauman 1998: 38).

In this way, the market and the spectacle of consumption become the means through which a particular form of life is encouraged for individuals, a form of life that produces the consumer. Bauman’s argument makes sense in a different manner for South Africa, as will be discussed later on in this thesis through the example of the encouragement of the duty to pay for basic services amongst the poor. Rather than the spectacle of consumerism serving as the sphere through which suitable subjects are induced, the sphere of the consumption of the very basic resources necessary for survival becomes the vehicle through which a particular form of life is encouraged amongst the poor, a form of life that produces subjects willing to be entrepreneurs of themselves and to pay for their necessities in life.

It is also significant how, in this society of spectacular consumption, ‘fighting poverty’ has become a market itself, with percentages of sales of particular products and services being donated to various poverty alleviation schemes in massive marketing campaigns in which big name celebrities endorse the buying of brands in the name of the poor, and free advertising time is bought through large-scale radio and television phone-in pledge programmes (such as the music reality television programme, American Idol, which ‘gives up’ one of its slots to raising funds for

celebrities' favourite charities, usually in Africa). And while Simon Cowell (the founder and producer of American Idol) was able to retire with a bank balance probably big enough to buy off an African country or two, a couple thousand more African people received mosquito nets or a few-days supply of mealie-meal. Once again, the eclipse of persistent and growing inequality in the world by a minority's act of charity in the name of the poor.

Once again, however, theorists point out that processes of neoliberalisation cannot be understood without accounting for the agency of those at the centre of the changes, that is, workers and the poor. Louise Amoore writes:

...[D]espite increased recognition of the importance of poverty for world politics, the policy and academic literature lacks a sense of the way in which the global poor contribute as subjects to world politics via production and work relations (Amoore in Davies and Ryner (ed.) 2006: 14).

As fulltime, permanent jobs become scarce, production and work relations are no longer necessarily defined and/or imagined in terms of the wage. This results in a large number of activities undertaken by the poor in order to live that might lie outside of the traditional definitions of production and work relations, resulting in their non-valorisation in the world. For example, many of the global precariat turn to different forms of waste collection in order to survive, their contributions hardly being reflected in popular representations and discussions of economic production and growth, or conservation and ecological sustainability. Undertakings by groups of unemployed workers to take control of abandoned factories and get them running in the interests of collectives in Argentina would be another example.

In many instances, such collective undertakings by groups of poor people to find ways of surviving, result in broader collective mobilisations that challenge political arrangements and prescriptions, forcing their acknowledgment by the dominant and the mainstream. Much has been written about acts of resistance on the part of the poor from early capitalist societies to the present, some of which we have already commented on (Piven and Cloward 1977; Scott; Thompson). With regard to the

current neoliberal phase of capitalist development, resistance has been theorised in relation to changes in the nature of work, the state, and strategies for mobilisation and redress that are characteristic of this period. While an overview of a selection of these theories that relate to our overall discussion of the poor and poverty follows, many of the questions that they pose will be explored in greater detail through the specific example of South Africa in the remainder of the thesis.

As neoliberal forms of government have come into being, theorists have tried to understand the forms of resistance that have emerged, both in response to the effects of governmental interventions on particular targeted population groups, and in the context of the political terrain being shaped by the dominance of such governmental modes of engagement in society. Writing about India, Partha Chatterjee argues that while the formal structures of the state permit all citizens equal rights, particular population groups demand special attention outside the accepted spheres of bourgeois politics, namely civil society, as they lack access in real terms to these rights. Chatterjee writes:

Most of the inhabitants of India are only tenuously, and even then ambiguously and contextually, rights-bearing citizens in the sense imagined by the constitution. They are not, therefore, proper members of civil society and are not regarded as such by institutions of state. But it is not as though they are outside the reach of the state or even excluded from the domain of politics. As populations within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, they have to be looked after and controlled by various government agencies. (Chatterjee 2004: 38).

He goes on to argue that these activities “bring these populations into a certain political relationship with state” that does not “always conform to what is envisaged in the constitutional depiction of the relation between the state and members of civil society” (ibid). For Chatterjee, this relationship unfolds in that particular space in society in which the strategic negotiation, struggle or contestation takes place between “those who govern” and “the governed”, what he calls “political society”. Political society is that arena in which those individuals and groups targeted by governmental

categories, such as ‘the poor’ or ‘the indigent’, struggle over the meanings and forms of life entrenched by these categories, outside of traditional civil society (ibid: 39-40). Chatterjee writes:

What happens then is a negotiation of these claims on a political terrain where, on the one hand, governmental agencies have a public obligation to look after the poor and the underprivileged and, on the other, particular population groups receive attention from those agencies according to calculations of political expediency” (ibid: 40).

Although Chatterjee provides an easy analysis for how organised groups of poor people make and win demands of the state, it could also quite easily be appropriated towards the elaboration of strategies for engagement with the state that reproduce neoliberal logics and so entrench social inequalities and divisions. This, particularly in a context in which it has become somewhat of a mantra that there is no alternative to neoliberalism.

Autonomous Marxist theorists, such as Hardt and Negri, argue that there is an alternative to neoliberalism, that they understand as being produced by the very changes in labour and capital that characterise the neoliberal period of capitalism. As capitalism develops, they argue, the command that capital has over ‘living labour’ (through the wage relation and the discipline of commodity production located largely in the factory) becomes less dominant as labour tends towards more immaterial, affective and intellectual forms, produced outside of the factory. Hardt and Negri especially celebrate the poor of neoliberal society, who, they argue, hold a greater potential for “self-valorisation”, outside of the command of the wage and the factory. Understanding the production of the poor/the multitude as an immanent process, Hardt and Negri argue that alternatives to capitalism lie in the interactions and engagements of the poor, actions that cannot be anticipated, but that unfold in the collective struggles of the poor. (Hardt and Negri 2000; 2004; 2009). While Hardt and Negri celebrate the potential for joy, love and subversion amongst those who are the poor, what they do not account for is occasions when the poor act against each other, and in conservative ways.

Hardt and Negri's analyses of seventeenth century debates about the poor resonate with the work of Jacques Ranciere (1999, 2009), who argues that politics is "the specific kind of power that deals with a specific entity, a specific community named 'the people'" (Ranciere 2009: 118). He writes that trying to understand what this means leads to the realisation that:

the essence of politics is the power of the people, and that the essence of the 'power of the people' is: the power of those who have no quality to exert power. (ibid).

However, he goes on to argue, "democracy was invented as a polemical name, designating the unthinkable power of the multitude of those who have no qualification for governing" (ibid: 116). Protest (or in Ranciere's words 'disagreement' or 'dissensus') therefore "implies a struggle about what politics is" (ibid), with those excluded from the traditional means of change making themselves heard and asserting their presence as political beings. Hardt and Negri argue that Ranciere's "part of those who have no part" (those who are excluded from the traditional political sphere and make themselves be counted) may be viewed as "the party of the poor", which "is not an identity of one exclusive portion of society but rather a formation of all those inserted in the mechanisms of social production without respect to rank or property, in all their diversity, animated by an open and plural production of subjectivity" (Hardt and Negri 2009: 45).

These questions about the nature and significance of movements of the poor will be explored in greater detail through the specific experience of struggles for basic services in post-apartheid South Africa in the remainder of this thesis.

The South African Experience

Approaches to poverty and the poor in South Africa reflect its history of colonialism, segregation, and apartheid. While the governmental treatment of poverty and the poor in South Africa does relate to the driving forces examined above with regard to the need to coerce people into accepting wage labour as the norm, it exhibits features

particular to a colonial formation in which race played as much a role as class and gender in the constitution of the subjects and forms of life necessary for the sustaining of a particular capitalist society.

John Iliffe points out that any discussion of poverty in Africa in pre-colonial and early colonial times is difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly, written sources are few as “literacy was rare until modern times” (Iliffe 1987: 2) and “the impressions of poverty to be gathered from oral traditions and from generalised descriptions by foreign observers can be seriously misleading” (ibid). Secondly, concepts such as absolute and relative poverty did not come to exist amongst Africans until the 1930s. And, the third problem is “the widespread belief that until recently there were no poor in Africa, because economic differentiation was slight, resources were freely available, and the ‘extended family’ supported its less fortunate members” (ibid: 3). Iliffe argues that it is often claimed that “only with the coming of colonial rule, market economies, and urbanisation ... did things begin to fall apart” (ibid). Iliffe quotes a South African as saying:

There were no poor and rich; the haves helped those who were in want. No man starved because he had no food; no child cried for milk because its parents did not have milk cows; no orphan and old person starved because there was nobody to look after them. No, these things were unknown in ancient Bantu society. (R. V. Selope Thema, *Bantu World* May 1934, quoted in Iliffe 1987: 3).

Iliffe goes on to show how this view was widely accepted by white South Africans, anthropologists, and colonial officials, who also “transmitted it to nationalist intellectuals and international agencies” (Iliffe 1987: 3). He quotes the United Nations Regional Adviser on Social Welfare Policy and Training, Economic Commission for Africa as saying in 1972:

In rural Africa, the extended family and the clan assume the responsibility for all services for their members, whether social or economic. People live in closely organised groups and willingly accept communal obligations for mutual support. Individuals

satisfy their need for social and economic security merely by being attached to one of these groups. The sick, the aged and children are all cared for by the extended family. In this type of community, nobody can be labelled as poor because the group usually shares what they have. There is no competition, no insecurity, no big ambitions, no unemployment and thus people are mentally healthy. Deviation or abnormal behaviour is almost absent. (ibid).

Iliffe goes on to show that such a romantic view of pre-colonial African societies is flawed, and later points out that the naturalisation of such a view served the interests of the colonialists and emerging capitalists very well as it allowed for them to argue that African male workers could be paid low wages as their reproductive needs were being subsidised by the labour of women on land in the reserves. This has also been explored in discussions and debates about the articulation of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production in the early history of the development of capitalism in South Africa (Guy; Wolpe).

Iliffe argues that poverty did indeed exist but was “relatively rare” in pre-colonial Africa (Iliffe 1987: 3). As pre-colonial Africa lacked stratified classes, poverty was not visible very often, that is, as the extreme of wealth did not exist, its opposite did not exist. This did not mean that social inequality did not exist, with traditional and customary authority determining the distribution of resources. However, Iliffe argues, there were always in African societies those unable to provide for themselves through their own labour (the sick, the aged, the disabled), and that it was this group that constituted the structural poor of pre-colonial Africa. As pre-colonial South Africa was a land-rich country, it was largely those without the means (physical in terms of the individual and having family) to work the land, who remained poor. However, with colonialism and the development of capitalism, structural poverty came to be characterised by a lack of access to land rather than labour, as individual males were forced into wage labour and families were forced to survive off pieces of land that were increasingly less arable and small. While Iliffe focuses on the structural poverty caused by landlessness amongst African South Africans, Colin Bundy (1986) looks at the poverty caused by landlessness amongst the white settler

population (as well as African peasants (1988)). It is important to look at the arguments made by Bundy and Iliffe together in order to fully understand how poverty and the poor begin to be mobilised as governmental categories in South Africa.

While it is important to acknowledge the existence of poverty prior to colonial and capitalist development in South Africa (as Iliffe and Bundy have done so well in reminding us), for this thesis it is more important to point out that it is with the emergence of capitalism that we apprehend the first governmental mobilisation of poverty and the poor in South Africa. Writing against an accepted historiography in which the problem of poor whites is described as emerging only in the 1890s, Colin Bundy, in showing that “a numerically substantial class of poor and proletarianised whites existed in the Cape well before the 1890s”, demonstrates that:

the ‘emergence’ of the poor white problem in the 1890s may have been to an important degree the outcome of new ways of perceiving white poverty, that a set of perceptions and anxieties may have crystallised out in the form of the ‘poor white question’ (Bundy 1986: 103).

While Bundy shows the existence of various types of white poverty prior to early capitalist development in the form of the landless rural poor (*bywoners*⁴¹, agricultural labourers and servants); small-town, low-skilled, and low-paid wage labourers; and a *lumpen proletariat* element (labourers, people in insecure and seasonal forms of labour, and “drifters, beggars and criminals” (ibid: 104), he also states that in the 1890s “there was a redefinition of poverty (which reflected a metropolitan as well as a local ideological shift) as a social problem to be tackled by state action rather than as a phenomenon of individual failure to be assuaged by charity” (ibid). In addition, Bundy argues that poverty “became ‘ethnicised’ to a much greater extent than before: perceptions by professional, religious and political authorities of a ‘poor white problem’ helped shape public awareness ... assumptions of (white) ethnic solidarity

⁴¹ *Bywoners* was the name given to white landless individuals and/or families who lived on the farms of others under a range of tenancy agreements, also known as squatters.

rapidly replaced older forms of ideological distance and hostility along class lines” (ibid).

Bundy argues that this new attention to the question of the poor whites related not to those officially defined as indigent and receiving public funds or committed to hospitals, asylums or charitable institutions as “so stringent were the regulations governing the disbursement of public monies that the numbers of this group were in any case always small: only 115 were recorded in the 1865 Census, and 703 in that of 1875” (ibid: 104). Rather, they related to “the various types of propertyless, low income poverty experienced in much larger numbers among the settler population in the Cape” (ibid), including the rural landless poor and artisans and small tradesmen, “once self-employed but increasingly unable to support themselves” (ibid: 116), who became casual labourers on farms and in small towns or beggars, vagrants, and criminals. Bundy argues that this “underclass formed a clearly visible component of Cape society”, being referred to as “people of the poorest sort” or “men of the lowest class”, and “frequently denigrated for their idleness, licentiousness, drunkenness, and other vices” (ibid) by whites of a higher social status. Bundy shows how another feature of this period was the fact that “many well-to-do white farmers and other employers were conscious of a great social distance between themselves and poorer whites” (ibid: 117), pointing to the significance of this period for the emergence of particular class attitudes amongst whites.

Bundy also highlights the growing attention given to race in characterisations of poor whites. For example, citing evidence from the 1893 Labour Commission, he relates how many of the witnesses spoke of increased ‘mixing’ between black and white, interracial marriages, and other ways in which black and white culture were being assimilated with each other. Several farmers and middle class whites are quoted as calling for laws such as the Vagrancy Act of 1897 and the *Strop* Act (Masters and Servants legislation) “to be applied more rigorously against poor whites” (ibid: 118). With the establishment of the Department of Public Health in 1891, several reports were produced of the unsanitary living conditions of poor whites, in particular problematising the cohabitation of poor whites with blacks. Bundy concludes that “there took place in the Cape colony in the 1880s and especially the 1890s a major shift in ruling-class perceptions of the nature of poverty that was analogous to

ideological developments in metropolitan Britain, and partly derived from them; and that in the colonial context these altered perceptions tended to be expressed in racial terms” (ibid: 119). These developments in Britain, Bundy argues, relate to the period after 1880 when thinking about poverty shifted from the view that defined the 1834 reformed Poor Laws (that poverty is the result of moral failure on the part of individuals) to one that now acknowledged the physical and economic environments as causes of poverty.

John Iliffe argues that this sudden attention to white poverty in the form of “the poor white question” in the 1880s and 1890s must be understood as a response to the existence of “multiracial poverty” or “the multiracialism of South African poverty” which “in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was most obvious in the towns” (Iliffe 1987: 114). In the 1830s the poor of Cape Town included Coloured people of Khoi origin, freed slaves, and struggling white men, “all huddled into multiracial slums” (ibid). While, Iliffe argues, the next forty years saw a decline in inter-racial marriage, an increase in residential segregation, and the granting of voting rights and educational opportunities to white men that were superior to those enjoyed by black men, these changes were felt least amongst the poor. From the 1830s on, the numbers of the poor in Cape Town also increased tremendously through the first major immigration of Africans. Iliffe points out that while some of the new arrivals settled separately from whites on the edges of the town, a large number of Africans settled in the multiracial slums. For Iliffe, it was because of this “African influx” that demands for “greater segregation and social control” started to be made in the 1880s and 1890s (ibid: 115). Iliffe shows in some detail how multiracial poverty comes to be characterised as a moral and social problem, and the steps taken by each of the major South African cities to try to eradicate it from the 1890s on.

Significant for this thesis is Iliffe’s characterisation of Johannesburg as “the most revealing illustration of multiracial poverty in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (ibid: 116). He shows how just two years after its establishment, Johannesburg’s Sanitary Committee marked out a separate area for African residence (an “African location”) in 1886; however, the fact that the law did not force people to live there and the remoteness of the location meant that many Africans chose not to settle in this location but rather in areas closer to the city centre, in particular the

racially mixed slums of Ferreira, Vrededorp, Newclare, Fordsburg and Brickfields, where Indians, Coloured people, and “the most impoverished white men, who were chiefly Afrikaners” lived (ibid). Here, brickmaking, domestic service, transport, and sex work provided employment for all race groups, but the quality of life was poor due to the kinds of wages, protections and stability afforded by such occupations. In 1896, Iliffe writes, “demonstrations by needy Afrikaners obliged the authorities to abandon the old distinction between deserving and undeserving poor and create a public works programme and relief fund confined to whites” (ibid). At the same time, attempts were made to regulate the lives of African workers in employment in the city and to prevent unemployed Africans from residing in the city. In the words of the Chief Inspector of the Native Affairs Department in 1902, the priority of the British authorities was:

to enforce the residence of all native employees whether in the property of their employers or in a licensed location. All unemployed natives found living elsewhere than in a licensed location should be arrested and punished under the vagrancy law. (quoted in Iliffe 1987: 116).

In spite of this, multiracial poverty continued, growing not only in the slums of the city centre, but spreading also to two freehold settlements on suburban land that had not been wanted by whites – to the west of the city centre, Sophiatown (because it was next to a dump), and to the north, Alexandra (because it was too far away). Iliffe argues that “South Africa’s rulers identified multiracial poverty as the poor white problem” (ibid). Like Bundy, he argues that “although destitute white men had long been numerous, they were first seen as a social problem – rather than victims of their vices – during the 1880s and 1890s, when new European notions of poverty as a social phenomenon mingled with South Africa’s growing concern with racial categorisation” (ibid).

This segregation of the urban poor was legislated in 1902 in the form of the Native Reserve Location Act, which designated particular areas as ‘locations’ in which African residents would be permitted (Mamdani 1996: 93). The crafting of governmental strategies towards segregating poor whites from poor blacks would

work towards encouraging the production of different forms of life for poor white and poor black, forms of life conducive to the sustenance of the racially differentiated system of cheap labour vital to South Africa's emerging industrial economy.

Several writers highlight the fact that the emergence of the poor white question in South Africa's history of capitalist development spoke in the first instance to the fears that existed amongst British authorities of social revolt by a united non-racial mass of the working poor (Freund 1992; Morrell 1992; Turrell 1992; Parnell 1992). Bill Freund, commenting on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, writes:

The ultimate nightmare of the ruling class was a class movement that would transcend the race line and unify the poor and oppressed, white and black, a nightmare that both Rhodes and Smuts expressed at times (Freund 1992: xvii).

Sampie Terreblanche argues that two pieces of legislation introduced in 1911, the Native Labour Regulation Act and the Mines and Works Act, served to assuage the fears of white workers while creating the conditions for cheap African labour to sustain capitalist development. With the Botha/Smuts government (which assumed office in 1910) facing "the difficult task of creating conditions conducive to accumulation (for mining and agriculture) on the one hand, and having to pamper the white electorate (especially mineworkers and poor Afrikaners) to prevent them from endangering the legitimacy of the new state on the other", "two important segregationist laws were passed which created a pattern that would last for decades: the one was a *repressive* measure aimed at making African labour cheaper and more docile, and the other a *discriminatory* measure aimed at protecting white miners against competition from Africans" (Terreblanche 2002: 269, original emphasis). While the Native Labour Regulation Act declared contract-breaking and striking by African workers illegal, the Mines and Works Act protected the interests of white workers in different ways, including through the reservation of certain jobs on the mines for whites only. These twin strategies of repression and discrimination will be seen to be active throughout the next period of capitalist development in South Africa.

Writing about white poverty in the eastern Transvaal district of Middelburg, Robert Morrell points out that this growing concern with the threat of social unrest by increasing numbers of poor whites pertained also in areas outside of the towns. In areas where white farmers slipped into poverty due to the fact that agriculture was becoming “unproductive and unprofitable”, various measures of aid and relief began to be offered (Morrell 1992: 2). He writes:

The other aspect of the problem concerned the political threat posed by poor whites. In order to deal with this threat failed farmers were offered new opportunities, jobs were created and relief provided. The intention was to convert ‘dangerous’ class members into conformist class members. (ibid).

Colin Bundy, in *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (1988), shows how the needs of white farmers in the commercialisation of agriculture in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, together with the demands for cheap labour by the growing mining industry, produced further policies and legislation in support of racial segregation. Inadvertently, they would also result in further class stratification amongst whites, with *bywoners* becoming more impoverished in the process. He writes:

Further brakes on the development of a dynamic commercial agriculture derived from the internal economy of South Africa: in particular, the retention of large amounts of land in relatively few hands, the establishment of quasi-feudal relations on these lands and their occupation by squatter-peasants and *bywoners*, and the continued ability of large numbers of African peasants to produce an agricultural surplus large enough to pay taxes and satisfy consumer wants. This last had a double impact on white farmers: it meant that they remained ‘victims’ of a labour ‘shortage’ at the very low wages they offered, and it meant that they encountered effective competition from African farmers. (Bundy 1988: 112).

While there were other problems facing both white and African farmers⁴² (e.g. a lack of access to capital, unfertile soils, unpredictable climatic conditions, and natural pests), Bundy argues that African peasant farmers had some advantages over white farmers in spite of their limited access to land and other resources, that allowed them to participate in the markets for labour and produce “on terms not wholly unfavourable” (ibid). These included having “specialised knowledge of local conditions and methods”, and the fact that “the peasant tended to cultivate more intensively because of the growing scarcity of land” (ibid). Bundy also argues that the African peasant’s “lower consumption costs and his use of pre-capitalist forms of labour meant that production of a modest surplus – the sale of a few bags of grain or a bale of wool – enabled him to participate in the exchange economy largely on the terms of his own choosing and without the surrender of his land, security or cultural identity” (ibid: 13). The African peasant could often, then, “produce a surplus for sale when the white agriculturalist could not” (ibid). Bundy highlights, then, that a large number of African peasants (“certainly a majority of the Cape’s African people” (ibid)) “retained at the beginning of the gold-mining era a measure of economic independence” (ibid), resulting in a number of white farmers complaining about difficulties encountered in trying to secure sufficient labour for agriculture at the low wages they were offering, to the Cape Labour Commission of 1893-4. After listening to the complaints and evidence brought before it by white farmers, commissioners concluded the following:

The mere necessities of life are few, and are obtainable with little effort. These people [African peasants] do not therefore feel impelled to work ... A cause of the insufficiency may also be found in the fact that some natives are in some sense land or rather lease-holders ... on shares as it is called. (ibid: 114).

In time, white farmers would be presented with a new problem in the form of competition for African labour from the gold mining industry (and the industries that it would spurn e.g. transport, construction and the service industries), which “created a qualitative increase in the need for a class of permanent wage earners” (ibid).

⁴² African farmers were mostly peasant farmers, working small pieces of their own land or living and working on land rented from white farmers, or as sharecroppers on white farms.

Bundy writes that mine-owners also “knew that ‘sufficient’ labour at the rates they offered would not be forthcoming while the black peasant enjoyed access to his lands and the ability to produce enough agricultural surplus to meet his cash requirements” (ibid). In the words of the President of the Chamber of Mines, in a speech given in 1911:

The tendency of the native is to be an agriculturalist, who reluctantly offers himself or one of his family as an industrial worker for just so long as the hut tax can be earned, and expects the industrial demand to expand to give him work when his crops are bad. He cares nothing if industries pine for want of labour when his crops and home-brewed drink are plentiful. (quoted in Bundy 1988: 114).

Calling for a policy that would ensure “that the surplus of young men, instead of squatting on the land in idleness ... must earn their living by working for a wage”, the President of the Chamber of Mines asked the government to “do everything to encourage the native to be a wage-earner by extending the policy of splitting into family holdings land now held in the native reserves under tribal tenure” (ibid). Bundy concludes that:

Both the farmer and the mine-owner perceived in the late nineteenth century the need to apply extra-economic pressures to the African peasantry; to break down the peasant’s ‘independence’, increase his wants, and to induce him to part more abundantly with his labour, but at no increased price. Implicit in their demands was the assumption that Africans had no right to continue as self-sufficient and independent farmers if this conflicted with white interests. (Bundy 1988: 115).

Bundy shows how, in the period between 1890 and 1913, as white farmers sought to increase their productivity and success through commercial agriculture, practices and legislation emerged to force African peasants off the land and into wage labour. In the immediate term, anti-squatter legislation and practices emerged that worked

against forms of rent and sharecropping. The 1908 Natives Tax Act forced African 'squatters' to pay a levy of 2 pounds, while labour tenants were "wooded" with a tax of 1 pound (ibid: 212). Rent 'squatters' were forcibly removed by "direct governmental action" from some farms in 1909 and 1910 (ibid).

The commercialisation of white agriculture was also "aided by a massive programme of subsidies, grants and other aid", including "fencing, dams, houses, veterinary and horticultural advice" and the cushioning of farmers "by generous rail rates, by special credit facilities, and by bountiful tax relief" (ibid: 116). Bundy writes:

This beneficence to white commercial agriculture had profound implications for black peasant agriculture (and for white *bywoners*: legislative supports for farmers did not help the small tenant farmer, nor were they intended to). In the first place, almost all of the legislation was racially discriminative, and blessed only modernising white farmers, which of itself conferred important competitive advantages on that class. These were buttressed in the second place by legislation (most particularly the 1913 Natives Land Act) aimed at curtailing the possibilities open to peasant production, at preventing the accumulation of capital by Africans and at translating independent squatter-peasants into wage-labourers. (ibid).

The significance of the 1913 Natives Land Act is undisputed in historical accounts of the development of capitalism in South Africa. While most historians focus on the Act's prohibition of the purchase of land by Africans in areas demarcated 'white', and the designation of just 13 per cent of South African land as 'native reserves' in which all Africans were to be accommodated, Colin Bundy argues that another extremely important purpose of the Act was "the reduction of rent-paying squatters and sharecroppers to the level of labour tenants" (ibid: 213). In the case of labour tenants, occupation and working of a piece of land would be received in exchange for the provision of a certain amount of labour to the owner of the land (usually a white farmer), whereas rent-paying squatters would not exchange their own labour for the opportunity to work and live on a piece of land. Bundy also argues that while the Act

might have had effects on the ability of white farmers to advance economically, it also had important consequences for African people living within the reserves. He writes:

By preventing the most obvious form of accumulation open to successful black peasants, it sought to apply a brake to the process of class differentiation in African rural areas, thus inhibiting the growing group of small commercial farmers (potential competitors with white farmers, as well as displacers of indigent *bywoners*). It sought to 'freeze' social relations in the reserves, so as to avoid the creation of a permanently landless majority of Africans, whose urbanisation would have further drained the supply of rural labour, as well as posing a political threat. (ibid).

Several theorists (Bundy, 1986, 1988; Guy, 1982, 2006; Iliffe, 1987; Mamdani, 1996; Terreblanche 2002; Wolpe, 1972, 1988) have written about the ways in which the development of capitalism in South Africa was bolstered by the organised separate accommodation of African females, children, the aged, the disabled and the sick in native reserves in which a lower standard and quality of life was considered appropriate for African people as compared with white people, and the simultaneous coercion of able-bodied African men into wage labour on the mines, white commercial farms, and the cities. Citing evidence from the Native Economic Commission of 1930-1932, and various other state documents, Colin Bundy (1988) argues that the areas occupied by African peasants had already begun experiencing "underdevelopment" by 1913: "signs of agrarian degeneration and their transformation into teeming rural slums" (Bundy 1988: 221). And in the forty years following the adoption of the 1913 Land Act, much would be written about "the nature and extent of underdevelopment in the reserves (particularly the Ciskei and the Transkei)" (ibid). With a local historian writing of the time that "natives of the Union as a whole are dragging along at the very lowest levels of bare subsistence" (Macmillan quoted in Bundy 1988: 221-222), it would seem correct to argue that the reserves served to produce the conditions of poverty for the majority of African people so as to force able-bodied African men into forms of wage labour that paid

low wages on the basis that women and land in the reserves served to provide some level of subsistence to the African worker and his family.

Writing in 1940, G. F. Findley, in a review of Alfred Hoernle's *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit*, argues:

The mines want healthy and vigorous workers who would have to have higher wages to attend to their own health and diet. It is therefore cheaper to give them hospitals, balanced diets, and even games and cinemas upon collective and dictated basis ... 'Married quarters' for Africans on the mines would be more expensive than homes in the reserves ... The vast spaces available in South Africa are a fine substitute for doles and unemployment relief as well as 'married quarters'. They serve as the sponge that absorbs, and returns when required, the reserve army of African labour. Tribal tenure is a guarantee that the land will never be properly worked and will never really belong to the natives. Cheap labour must have a cheap breeding place, and so it is furnished to the Africans at their own expense. (quoted in Bundy 1988: 242).

The introduction of the principle of one-man-one-plot, the limitation on plot size, and the closing of the free market in land worked to ensure that the reserves would remain under-developed for the purpose of providing the cheap labour necessary for the emerging industrial capitalist society, in particular the mining industry, and keeping the African majority docile. For Bundy, the 1913 Land Act, then worked "to preserve ... an under-developed peasantry: a peasantry whose productive capacity had been so inhibited, whose access to land so confined, whose access to markets rendered so unfavourable, that its members must have recourse to labour for white employers even at the very low wage levels prevailing" (Bundy 1988: 242). It also benefited white capitalists in other ways. Bundy argues:

... the ability of the reserve inhabitants to supply a portion of their subsistence through peasant production conferred direct benefits upon urban employers – particularly the mines – in the form of low

wages, cheap housing, the avoidance of welfare considerations for workers' dependants, and a brake on the growth of an urban proletariat (ibid: 243).

But, as capitalism flourished through the system of the reserves and their (re)production of cheap labour, underdevelopment in the reserves would also produce a steady stream of African men and women into urban areas in search of new livelihoods. With anti-squatting legislation working also against the security of white *bywoners*, poor whites would also swell the numbers of urban slums in the early part of the twentieth century. And the multiracial poverty identified by Iliffe would continue, particularly in urban slums. So too would segregationist legislation and policies, with attention to the poor white question increasing.

Sue Parnell, in her study of the city of Johannesburg between 1920 and 1934, shows how increases in the numbers of poor whites living side by side with poor blacks in slums "moulded the state's approach to the issue of working class residential segregation" (Parnell 1992: 115). While the mining companies provided hostel accommodation for their male contract labourers in compounds, the permanence of Johannesburg saw a growth in the non-mining sectors of the economy, and the arrival of women and families of men working on the mines and in other jobs in the city. With the inability of existing hostels to meet the needs of the changing composition of the city, a housing crisis quickly emerged. Parnell writes, "... while Randlords constructed elaborate colonial mansions for their brides, poorer folk sought out a room in a slumyard of the city in which to establish their family residence" (ibid: 116). And, by 1914, "Johannesburg had a slum legacy that cut across the colour bar" (ibid).

Parnell shows how the housing crisis became a major political issue locally, with the Labour Party taking it up in the municipal election of 1919, arguing for subsidised housing for whites, and winning the election. With white workers earning little more than black workers at the time, Parnell argues that white workers would not have been able to afford shelter of a standard higher than that of slum conditions without state assistance. Within weeks of the Labour Party winning control over it, the Johannesburg Council "had endorsed the principle of a white public housing scheme

provided by the local authority ‘so that the mixing of poor whites and blacks could be remedied’” (ibid: 118). Parnell then shows how, in spite of this commitment, resources are not immediately accessed for such an approach. Instead, attention to the white working class housing question “was subsumed in efforts to get the Natives (Urban Areas) Act proclaimed and enforced in the city” (ibid: 119). She writes:

The proposed provision of a white housing scheme was dropped as the most important item on the council’s agenda, and replaced by the drive to rid the inner-city of all blacks. The focus on the removal of Africans from slums, however, was not inconsistent with the council’s concern for white housing needs. For the council, the white housing problem had been defined as a problem of residential integration, and could therefore be solved by the removal of ‘the native menace’ (ibid).

Such prioritisations with regard to strategy would have been guided by the recommendations of the Stallard Commission of 1922, which once again berated the mixing of Africans and whites in slum conditions, and called for the strict regulation of Africans in urban areas:

The native should only be allowed to enter urban areas, which are essentially the white man’s creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefore when he ceases so to minister. (quoted in Posel 1990: 40).

Mahmood Mamdani argues that the Stallard Commission went beyond calling for racial segregation to make “segregation the basis of representation” (Mamdani 1996: 93), recommending that each local authority establish a Native Affairs Department that would assume responsibility for the administration of its own segregated residential location, and, at the same time serve as “unit of representation, being a Native Advisory Board staffed by African legal residents but chaired by a white superintendent of locations” (ibid). Formalised in the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, this was, according to Mamdani, “a piece of legislation that for the first time

crystallised not only residential segregation but a comprehensive administration of urban Africans along separate racial lines, thus constructing a Chinese wall between native and white civil society” (ibid: 93-94).

Between 1923 and 1927, 30 000 African people were forcibly removed from the city, setting up home in “unproclaimed remnants of the city”, including Sophiatown, Newclare and Martindale, as well as municipal hostels and locations (ibid: 120). However, Africans returned to slum areas, and new migrants to the city occupied slums next to poor whites in spite of the Johannesburg Council’s efforts at segregation. More importantly, however, is the fact that the number of poor whites in the city increased dramatically. Nationally, those defined by government as poor white rose from 106 000 in 1916 to 120 000 in 1921 and 300 000 in 1933, with “a large proportion of these newly urbanised poor” seeking “a niche in Johannesburg” (ibid). As the living conditions of these increasing numbers of poor whites deteriorated on a scale that could not be ignored by the authorities, specific attention turned towards the establishment of state-subsidised housing for poor whites. Sue Parnell argues:

The most difficult aspect of ridding slums of whites proved to be finding suitable alternative accommodation. Political imperatives of wooing poor whites, combined with elitist notions of the inherent superior potential of whites as opposed to blacks, made it essential that whites be provided with housing that would encourage their social upliftment. As the private sector was unlikely to initiate housing of the standard required at a cost within the means of poor whites, the state intervened to make available funds for public housing schemes. In this way, the establishment of council housing for whites was seen as crucial in eliminating racial mixing in cheap quarters of the city. (ibid: 129).

In 1930 the Central Housing Board was authorised to grant sub-economic loans for white housing schemes; a low rate of interest was introduced to allow for low rentals to be charged. And, in 1934 the Slums Act was passed, giving local authorities the powers to seize whole areas considered to be slums without the need to obtain

eviction orders (which demanded that alternative accommodation be made available to the affected residents). Parnell illustrates that it was made quite clear that the strategy of authorities was to remove all slum-dwellers and to re-house only the whites.

This racialised approach to poverty and the poor would come to characterise state policy in the years to come, culminating in the policies of apartheid from 1948 to 1994. Between 1929 and 1930, the poor white problem became the subject of a report, funded by the Carnegie Foundation, which serves as an important historical document with regard to poverty in South Africa. The report of the Carnegie Commission painted a pitiful picture of white poverty, both in the countryside and in the growing urban areas, making reference to the various conditions of poor whites described above through the work of Bundy, Iliffe and Parnell. The report portrayed white poverty as the structural poverty of landlessness, combined with the poverty of low wages and unemployment, and the burden of large families. It also emphasised that the destitute were a separate category, still generally including the sick, the disabled, widows, and those who had lost the family breadwinner. Significantly, the report concluded that “agriculture offered no solution to the poor white problem and that ‘the best prospects for the family as a whole are offered by the bigger industrial centres’” (Iliffe 1987: 119), drawing on the experiences of poor whites who “only most unwillingly” left the countryside (ibid).

Iliffe points out, however, that the Carnegie Commission’s report, being based on research conducted before the depression, was too optimistic in this regard as it “ignored the white poverty caused by incapacitation and unemployment” in the towns (ibid). Looking at a study conducted in the first half of 1933 by the Cape Town General Board of Aid, Iliffe shows the existence of high levels of poverty amongst the able-bodied, ‘assisted’ by inadequate levels and systems of relief in urban areas during this period. Iliffe argues that the Carnegie Commission and the Cape Town investigation “agreed that existing attempts to alleviate white poverty by charity and relief were inadequate, misguided, and unnecessarily complicated” (ibid: 120).

Each province had its own system of poor relief as the South Africa Act of 1909 had designated poor relief a provincial responsibility. In the Cape, both municipal and

provincial administrations financed the Cape Town General Board of Aid and provided match funds to the amounts spent by charitable organisations; the Transvaal spent large amounts on poor relief, but left the fate of Johannesburg's poor to the Rand Aid Association and other private charities; the Orange Free State spent generously on poor relief, with a quarter of the monies spent being distributed to Africans, and all of its funds going to private charities; Natal insisted that poor relief for Africans was a Union (national government) responsibility, distributing nearly all its funds to charities working in white communities (ibid). The role of the Union government in welfare/relief provision was initially limited, with its most significant service being the provision of free medicine to the poor, and its responsibilities extending to miner's phthisis and workmen's compensation. In 1913, the Children's Protection Act introduced at a national level the provision of maintenance grants to white and Coloured destitute children, orphanages and children's homes, and mothers and grandmothers in need. In 1928, old age pensions were introduced for indigent whites and Coloureds. In terms of private charities, more than 1 000 voluntary welfare organisations are said to have existed in 1939. A survey of them showed that "roughly one-half dealt with general relief and welfare, more than three-quarters concerned themselves only with Europeans, and there was a heavy concentration in large towns" (ibid: 121).

John Iliffe points out that the Carnegie Commission "complained that amateur relief bodies pauperised poor whites by indiscriminate charity" (ibid). The Commission looked towards the experiences of social welfare in the USA, which "had stressed the need to investigate each case and grant relief only in a form which would rehabilitate rather than pauperise" (ibid), 'rehabilitation' referring to the individual's ability to become productive through entry into wage labour and caring for himself and his family. In response to these concerns from the Commission as well as the Cape Town investigation mentioned earlier, the Union government established a Department of Social Welfare within the Department of Labour in 1933. In 1935, these were linked in the creation of the Department of Labour and Social Welfare, and in 1937 an autonomous Department of Social Welfare was established with the Cabinet-defined function to "rehabilitate the socially unadjusted or poorly adjusted individual or family" (ibid). In 1940, the Department took over the relief functions of the provinces (with the exception of Natal), and "ordered that every application [for

poor relief/welfare] must be thoroughly investigated, only one agency must provide relief in any area, relief must normally be given in kind and only to those wholly destitute and without close kin, recipients must where possible render some return service, and assistance must not be made attractive” (ibid: 121-122). Private charities were also discouraged from providing general relief, being encouraged instead to cater for specific categories of the poor.

Between 1939 and 1945, the Department of Social Welfare’s work involved primarily the administration of the Children’s Act of 1937, old age pensions, and the extension of certain welfare provisions in imitation of welfare state models in Britain and New Zealand (ibid: 122). In 1933, a Social Security Committee proposed unemployment, disability and other benefits. While Europeans, Coloureds, Asians, and long-term African wage-earners who elected to join would receive full benefits at “rates graduated by race” (ibid), most Africans would only receive old age or disability pensions and other minor benefits. While the total cost was estimated at an annual figure of 30 000 pounds, Iliffe notes that “Parliament drastically reduced the proposals, especially for non-Europeans, and in 1945 Government abandoned a comprehensive scheme in favour of *ad hoc* improvements” (ibid). For whites, the “chief gains” were unemployment benefits and family allowances (ibid).

Iliffe argues that one possible reason for scepticism towards proposals for greater welfare provisions was the fact that the poor white problem was diminishing. While Afrikaner nationalist mobilisations of relief for poor whites had not eradicated the problem and welfare measures could be described as nothing more than palliative, the real amelioration came “by providing jobs for whites at African expense” (ibid). But, Iliffe argues, such measures did not provide the long-term solutions required to ensure that poor whites were able to escape their inferior living conditions permanently. The poor white problem would only, in the longer term, be settled through the fact that poor whites “had the vote and succeeded after 1945 in pressuring their rulers into transferring their poverty to poor blacks” (ibid).

Until the 1940s, food rations for the permanently indigent and short-term emergency relief given in the form of food or work were the primary forms of state aid to the African poor, administered by the Native Affairs Department. Institutional care was

also provided in the form of subsidising care at the Bantu Refuge at Germiston (established in 1927 in a deserted mine compound as a home for “aged, infirm and maimed natives and for children who have no relatives capable of supporting them” (Department of Native Affairs quoted in Iliffe 1987: 140); the Elandsdoorn rural settlement for the aged and infirm; and to insane asylums. However, conditions at these institutions were so bad that many preferred to try to survive outside of them. For example, in 1940 the Bantu Refuge at Germiston had space for 200 men and 54 women, but housed only 60 men and 21 women, with Iliffe quoting from the Native Economic Commission that the Refuge’s “depressing cheerlessness encouraged the poor ‘to make their living on the streets’” (Iliffe 1987: 140). Most responsibility for aid to the African poor was left to municipalities, with some large towns forming social welfare branches and setting up almshouses in the 1930s and 1940s. A few private charities were also involved; however, they relied largely on public funds. Overall, very little relief was provided to the African poor. Iliffe notes that in Johannesburg in 1936, only 5 per cent of charitable expenditure happened by organisations servicing African needs in any meaningful way (ibid).

In addition to poor relief, the state granted compensation to African workers who had contracted phthisis and silicosis from 1911, and the Workmen’s Compensation Act of 1934 extended compensation to deaths and disabilities resulting from work in other industries. Although the Blind Persons’ Act of 1936 excluded Africans from receiving pensions, the Native Affairs Department started paying a monthly pension to blind Africans soon afterwards. In 1944 the Act was amended to include black South Africans. (Iliffe 1987: 141). Iliffe argues that it was the central role played by Jan Hofmeyr, who became Minister for Social Development in 1937, that led to the extension of some welfare rights to poor Africans. In 1944, Hofmeyr insisted on extending the functions of the Department of Social Welfare under the Children’s Act (i.e. the provision of maintenance grants) to small numbers of Africans, “an important step because it broke the South African tradition that services for Africans must be provided separately and through the Native Affairs Department” (ibid). Based on arguments emerging from the report of the Social Security Committee of 1944, Hofmeyr also campaigned for “permanently employed or urbanised Africans should receive the same range of benefits as other races, although generally at lower rates” (ibid). The primary benefits, it was argued, should be old age pensions, family

allowances, invalidity pensions, and unemployment benefits. All other Africans would be expected to pay lower taxes and enjoy fewer benefits; however, these should include invalidity payments and old age pensions. When government abandoned plans for such extensions, Hofmeyr “salvaged the most important African benefits by including them in his budget” (ibid). These included the extension of old age pensions, invalidity pensions, and disability grants to Africans.

Controversy also erupted over unemployment benefits, introduced in 1947 for permanent urban employees, including Africans. As white opposition to this policy grew, with white men arguing that unemployed African men be assigned to work on farms requiring labour and that white working men were unfairly subsidising the interests of Africans, the legislation was suspended as “refusals to contribute grew and an election approached” (Iliffe 1987: 141). When the National Party won the election in 1948, the legislation was amended “to exclude all lower-paid Africans” (ibid). Apartheid would see the further institutionalisation of racial segregation, with the National Party determined “to check African urbanisation, redirect labour to farms, and ensure that those Africans indispensable in towns should live not in freehold townships or squatter settlements but in segregated, orderly, and easily controlled locations” (ibid: 260).

Apartheid legislation would be crafted that completely changed the urban landscape. In 1950, the Group Areas Act marked out separate areas for residence by different race groups in urban areas, and gave apartheid authorities the powers to forcibly remove black people from their places of residence to areas designated for occupation by blacks. The Native Services Levy Act of 1952 made it compulsory for white employers who did not provide accommodation for their African workers to pay a weekly levy to the municipality. And urban development under apartheid would work to forcibly separate the population along racial lines for the benefit of a thriving capitalism. For example, in 1955, the Witwatersrand town of Benoni would become one of the first to have its own new African township created, financed by the National Housing Commission. It was linked by electric rail to workplaces eleven kilometres away, and made up of two- and three-room concrete houses with free electricity, divided into eight ‘tribal zones’ with schools teaching in the different vernacular languages (ibid). In Johannesburg, with the exception of Alexandra, from

1955 onwards all squatter settlements and freehold townships were demolished and their residents forcibly removed to Soweto, thirteen kilometres south-west of the city. In both Alexandra and Soweto conditions of overcrowding and poverty would persist.

While segregationist legislation was crafted to govern the urban black population, additional laws would be created to try “to remove and consign the poor to the most remote countryside” (ibid). In 1951 the Bantu Authorities Act, and in 1952 the Bantu Laws Amendment Act, were passed, allowing for apartheid authorities to deport Africans to nine (later ten) ‘homelands’ or reserves, that is, areas of land designated as suitable for African occupation, and created ‘tribal’ authorities. Together these acts also increased the powers of the chieftancy, “giving them financial powers to levy and collect taxes to finance their own costs” (Mamdani 1986: 101). In 1959, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act was passed, allowing for the transformation of the reserves into self-governing ‘bantustans’, effectively arguing for the separate governing of African people along ethnic or tribal lines. John Iliffe, arguing that this legislation marked clear efforts to remove the African poor to separate places of residence as well as to produce a separate system of welfare and administration of the African poor writes, “The transfer of the poor to the homelands was integral to apartheid” (Iliffe 1987: 275), involving the transfer of responsibility for the well-being of the African poor away from central government to native authorities in the homelands. Discourse of the time would revive old notions of African society as a caring society in which communities and families took responsibility for ‘their own kin(d)’.

In the words of the Minister of Bantu Affairs in 1955:

We want to evolve a system whereby we reinstate the natural obligations of Bantu authorities and Bantu children in regard to their old people, with the support of an equal amount of money to that which we now spend wrongly in caring for them. (quoted in Iliffe 1987: 276).

This view was one that dominated not only state discourse, but permeated white society. Writing in the *Journal of Racial Affairs* in 1950, J. L. Sadie remarked that

“the outstanding problem, dominating all others, is the relative numbers of the different races constituting the Union’s population, and their differential rates of growth” (Sadie 1950: 12). He went on to write:

For in the long run the numbers must count. In this connection it is the numerical relation between Europeans and non-Europeans, and in particular between Europeans and Natives, which commands our attention. A complacent attitude towards this problem on the part of the Europeans, who as a minority still rule the country, is, to say the least, irresponsible. (ibid).

Outlining the social dangers of allowing the numbers of the African population on South African soil to outdo the numbers of the white population, as, Sadie argues, will be the case if the white settler population continues to provide for the welfare of the African population⁴³, he makes the case for the removal of all forms of welfare provision for Africans and their removal to homelands with their own authorities:

If the Europeans do not want themselves to be swamped – and it may be in the interest of the Native too that the Europeans are not so swamped, at least during the next fifty or hundred years – the Natives will have to be put into a position where they are themselves responsible for their own well-being. Which does not mean that the white man is completely divested of all responsibility. On the contrary. But integration of the Natives into the European economy have to be revitalised. But the barriers to multiplication need not be the bare Malthusian subsistence minima any more. They may contain all the elements of a decent standard of living. But that is perhaps for the Native to decide, under the help and guidance of Europeans. (ibid: 17).

⁴³ In Sadie’s mind, the South African white settler population was superior to other colonising peoples who used their superior weaponry to get rid of their native populations. This would eventually, according to Sadie, however, pose a threat to the survival and well-being of the white population as the numbers of the African population would exceed those of the white population.

What followed was a period of shutting down “wrongly situated institutions” and “devising social and welfare services for the Bantu on their own lines” (Iliffe 1987: 276). Residents of mental asylums, places of refuge and other state institutions housing Africans were removed to the homelands. Homeland authorities assumed responsibility for the provision of care to the sick, the disabled, the aged, orphans, and the destitute generally. Responsibility for the distribution of old age pensions was also gradually transferred to them.

By 1981 almost eighty per cent of South Africa’s poor lived in the homelands (Iliffe 1987: 269). This is significant both in that it illustrates that eighty per cent of South Africa’s poverty was experienced by African people concentrated on thirteen per cent of its land, and that the administration of poverty and the poor happened largely outside of the ambit of central government through decentralised forms in these areas. It would appear that the scourge of multiracial poverty identified as a threat to social stability and a barrier to economic development at the end of the nineteenth century had effectively been dealt with. Mahmood Mamdani argues that this “reorganisation of the state under apartheid was principally the recasting of a relationship between the central and the local state through two simultaneous and seemingly contradictory moves” in trying to deal with the problem of “native control” (Mamdani 1986: 100-101). While “apartheid removed the Native Affairs Department from rural areas and replaced it with a decentralised form of Native Authority administration”, “the Native Affairs Department emerged full blown in the urban areas” where it “displaced local authorities in the administration of all aspects of Bantu Affairs” (ibid). For Mamdani, then, the policies of racial segregation, as they unfolded in South Africa from the late nineteenth century, marked both the need for economic change and the need for strategies to control an ever-growing and increasingly resistant urbanised African population.

Apartheid social welfare policies are clear examples of how racial segregation was entrenched in all aspects of life. Nattrass and Seekings (2006) show how welfare spending by the apartheid government in its early years decreased as a proportion of overall government expenditure, largely as a result of cutbacks in spending on African people. The Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act of 1949 introduced the requirement that “African workers have a very high income in order to participate

in the state-subsidised unemployment insurance system” (ibid: 130), resulting in a “near-total decline” (ibid) in unemployment benefits paid out to African workers, whose average wages would not rise to meet this requirement until 1967 (ibid: 131). Natrass and Seekings argue that “perhaps the most visible attack on the embryonic universalistic welfare system was the widening gap between old-age pensions paid to the different race groups” (ibid). While the maximum value of the old-age pension for African pensioners remained steady in real terms from the mid-1940s to about 1970, the real value of the pension paid to white pensioners during the same period increased, doubling in real terms in the 1950s and 1960s. The gap between the maximum pension values therefore widened steadily, with the African pension reaching its lowest value (R3.70 a month in the mid-1960s or 13 per cent of the white pension), which according to government’s own estimates was insufficient to cover the costs of the minimum food needs of an individual (ibid)⁴⁴.

While the policies and legislation explored above have been shown to have been crafted in response to resistance to incorporation into wage labour by both black and white peasants and to perceived threats of resistance from the poor, apartheid would be characterised by the growth of organised resistance against the many restrictions on and prescriptions for life amongst South Africans, in particular the black population. But the ideology of separate development would allow the central apartheid state to absolve responsibility for African poverty, its authority being provoked only by the refusal of African people to accept their subjection to the inferior quality and standards of living in the homelands. This authority would be exercised through repressive and forceful means, the instruments of the police and army being mobilised to prevent the movement and acting of black people outside of the laws designed to consign them to the status of second-class citizens, rather than through the crafting of governmental policies. For the white population, however, an expansive programme of state protections in the form of job reservation and social welfare provisions would unfold under apartheid.

By the 1970s, however, as a result of increasing resistance and changes in the South African economy (Marais), “the apartheid project had shifted” (Natrass and Seekings

⁴⁴ While pensions for Coloured and Indian pensioners were on average higher than African pensions, their maximum values also decreased in relation to white pensions (Natrass and Seekings 2006: 132).

2006: 147), with the deracialisation of several state policies or attempts to reduce or remove “explicit racial discrimination” (ibid). Nattrass and Seekings write:

New opportunities opened up for some African people to earn higher incomes. By the end of the 1970s, all statutory job reservations outside of mining had disappeared; the industrial conciliation machinery was about to be reformed to include the (now legalised) black trade unions. Shares of national income by race shifted drastically. Welfare payments to African pensioners were increased in real terms, as were expenditures on African schools (ibid: 148).

However, Nattrass and Seekings also point out that unemployment grew during this period, resulting in overall inequality remaining pronounced.

As the problem of poverty became an inescapable feature of everyday life in South Africa, in both rural and urban areas, a number of different interests⁴⁵ converged in a research process about poverty and the poor in South Africa that spanned the years 1980-1984, culminating in a conference in 1984, and the publishing of its findings in the form of a book in 1989, that is, the second Carnegie Commission into poverty, of the 1980s. The Carnegie Commission was significant in highlighting, for the first time, the extent of African poverty, and the need for concrete measures and interventions to eradicate it. Francis Wilson argues that the commission was important in showing the need for proper measures of poverty; the need for wide-ranging and inclusive definitions of poverty and the poor; for attention to be paid to the relationship between employment and poverty; and for policy-makers and politicians to listen to the poor (Wilson 2009 in Huschka and Moller 2009: 21-22).

He goes on to write:

⁴⁵ The second Carnegie Commission gathered together “some 450 academics and other knowledgeable people from 23 universities and other places around Southern Africa” (Wilson in Huschka and Moller 2009).

The Carnegie Report, when it was published in January 1989, seemed to be whistling in the wind. The apartheid government was firmly in power and looked, to most observers, as if it was still there for a long time to come. And an attack on poverty was certainly not at the top of its agenda. But within a year, on the second of February 1990, the new leader of the National Party and President of the country, F.W. De Klerk made his dramatic speech in Parliament. Political prisoners were all to be released; exiles were permitted to return; and the African National Congress was to be unbanned. Four years later democratic elections were held and the ANC led by Nelson Mandela swept to power, with a mandate that was focused particularly on the eradication of poverty. (ibid: 23).

The following two chapters will explore how this mandate to fight poverty unfolds in the context of the embrace of neoliberal policies by the ANC government.

Much has been written about the many organisations, movements, and collectives that emerged in resistance to apartheid policies (Karis and Gerhart 1997; Dubow; McKinley; Seekings), many emphasising the diversity and multi-class nature of collective action. The African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF), which came to define the transition from apartheid to the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation (GNUR), were ‘broad-church’ formations, bringing together people from different classes and races. And while struggles of the poor would continue (for example, in the form of squatter movements), sustained organisations would emerge in the form of trade unions and the mass labour movement, civics in townships, and political organisations that would emphasise the racialised subjugation of all South Africans. In struggles against apartheid, then, we find the emergence of political subjects in the form of ‘the working class’, popularised in and through the labour movement, and in the form of ‘Black’ (the racialised subject⁴⁶). And questions of poverty are addressed largely within the

⁴⁶ This is perhaps best evident in the writings of Steve Biko and the philosophy and practice of Black Consciousness, in which the oppressed subject is encouraged to imagine himself/herself in positive terms, against the negating force of the ‘non’ in ‘non-white’, as Black, signifying antagonism and

overarching frame of racial inequality, the large majority of the oppressed being subjected to conditions of poverty.

The remainder of this thesis explores the emergence of the poor as a political subject in post-apartheid South Africa, as apartheid's segregationist logic is attempted to be undone under the mantle of neoliberalism and its attendant growth in conditions of precarity and poverty. Significant for the discussion that follows is the relationship between wage labour and approaches to poverty and the poor that has been explored in this chapter.

production of a subjectivity that does not conform to any essentialist notions of blackness, but to an open-ended production of meaning in and amongst people united in common struggles (Biko (2004); Naidoo and Veriava in Mngxitama et al. (2009)).

Chapter 2 – The Politics of Poverty

Introduction

On and around 17 May 2010 all major print, radio and television news bulletins in South Africa featured a ‘surprise’ visit of President Zuma to a shack in an informal settlement next to Orange Farm called Sweetwaters (*News24* 18 May 2010 - <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Zuma-nearly-reduced-to-tears-20100518>, accessed 23/06/2010; SABC News (television) 17 May 2010; *The Star* 19 May 2010). Evidently, the President had been brought close to tears as he contemplated the fact that human beings were still living in such squalor and poverty (“like pigs”), saying: “It is not almost every time I feel like crying during my visits... You could swear no-one lived in that shack” (*News24*, 18 May 2010). Listening to the President on SABC News, one could swear that the President had never opened a South African newspaper or watched a South African news bulletin or even just driven around the country he leads. Driving or flying into any major South African city, it is almost impossible not to notice the numerous shacks that litter and border these cities and their suburbs, stubborn reminders of apartheid’s attempts at control over the black population and of resistance from black people against these attempts; reminders also that an ANC government has not been able to eradicate poverty and inequality.

But it would seem that President Zuma believes the rhetoric of his own government and party, that is, that in spite of levels of poverty and inequality continuing to be high, much progress has been made with regard to improving the lives of the general population. Or, could it be that moments such as the one played out above by Jacob Zuma serve the specific purpose of portraying a widespread occurrence as the exception? President Zuma was also quoted as attributing the poor living conditions of this particular household to the segregationist policies of apartheid and to the failure of local councillors and municipalities to deliver the services necessary to ensure that a decent quality of life is ensured for all South Africans (ibid). In this way, his tears served to reinforce the perception that the country’s President, its national government, and the ANC remain committed to the eradication of poverty,

unable to comprehend that its policies have allowed for a single household to be living in a shack like the one visited by the President. Rather than its policies and commitments becoming the focus of inquiry, reflection and critique, it is the implementation of these policies and the individuals and institutions responsible for driving this that are blamed for the continued experience of conditions and standards of living considered 'indecent'.

President Zuma's visit above is just one of many attempts of government ministers and ANC party officials to address the age-old moral imperative that society's most vulnerable be assisted in ways that allow them to live decent lives. In South Africa, the ANC government would carry the additional pressures of delivering on the commitments made in the liberation struggle to improving the quality of life for all those who had been disadvantaged, oppressed and exploited by apartheid.

Under apartheid, exclusion of the black majority from the right to vote, and severe repression and control of the black population meant that the sphere of the political was characterised by creative antagonism and experimentation with forms of organising and action outside of the traditional imaginary of what politics is.⁴⁷ With the dismantling of apartheid, however, collective commitments to ungovernability and antagonism towards the state apparatus would have to be undone and remade towards co-operative governance, reconciliation, and the building of a unified nation through the cultivation of a 'partnership' between a democratic state and 'responsible citizens' seen to be able to express themselves politically through the vote (McKinley, 1997; Robbins, 2008).

But, as this chapter will show, efforts to address the inequalities and injustices entrenched by apartheid within a neoliberal framework would result in resistance from affected groups, many identifying themselves as 'poor people's movements' or 'movements of the poor', often expressing themselves outside of the electoral and legal systems. With such protests highlighting the exclusion of the poor from the newly constituted, 'reconciled' nation, state and party discourse will be shown to give

⁴⁷ See Naidoo and Veriava (2009) for more commentary on this. For an excellent illustration of this, through the case of Alexandra township in Johannesburg, see Belinda Bozzoli, 2004, *Theatres of Struggle and the End of Apartheid*.

priority to demonstrating its commitment to the poor. While the national sphere has set in motion a number of debates and processes around defining and measuring poverty, the sphere of local government has been pressurised to address these commitments to improving the lives of the poor within a framework of cost-recovery, privatisation, and reduced state spending (particularly in the form of intergovernmental transfers, such as the equitable share⁴⁸ and the generation of municipal 'own revenue' from charging for services). In attempts by the state to commodify basic services, such as water and electricity, a contested field of signification has emerged over the needs, rights and forms of life of the poor. As this has happened, inequality as a focus and frame has receded in discussions and debates in spite of it being shown to increase as levels of poverty increase (see below). And particular interventions crafted for that population group in society identified as poor and therefore deserving of state assistance. This chapter explores how these categories are shaped and evolve in a context of struggle led by poor people in post-apartheid South Africa.

'Poverty' Emerges as a Priority in the Transition

In the policy documents and commitments made by the ANC government since the early 1990s, there is a consistent move away from approaches that prioritise the provision of a decent standard and quality of life for all disadvantaged South Africans over the interests of the market, towards a logic through which there is an incremental meeting of the most basic needs of the most marginalised in order to 'enable' them to become 'self-reliant' and 'help themselves' out of their 'poverty traps'. This happens within a context of the commodification of basic services, the introduction of the individual duty to pay for services, and the flexibilisation of labour. In this way, 'the better life for all', promised in the slogans and election paraphernalia of the ANC, has come to be portrayed by the state as a process in progress through a 'partnership' between itself and its citizens.

This 'partnership' would require that the state provide those minimal resources necessary to 'enable' the individual citizen to improve his/her own life by assuming

⁴⁸ Equitable share refers to that portion of the national budget transferred to municipalities in order to assist the latter to meet the service delivery needs of those members of their jurisdiction identified as indigent or unable to afford the necessities of life.

the responsibility to find income and to pay for basic services. In the discourse produced to entrench this logic, a figure has emerged in the form of the poor that has come to signify that population group in society through which the state defines its minimalist role in the lives of its citizens and for whom it encourages and entrenches a particularly inferior standard and quality of life and prescribes the 'duties' of paying for basic services above those free 'lifelines' provided by the state, accepting flexible forms of work and/or becoming entrepreneurs, and 'living within one's means' (i.e. being cautious when consuming basic services, budgeting carefully, and exercising self-restraint generally).

While there is no doubt that the general values, beliefs and principles upheld by the liberation movement committed those struggling against apartheid to the eradication of poverty as a state of economic deprivation and lack, through its various resolutions and charters that characterised apartheid as a racist system designed to produce a servile, black underclass, it is in the 1990s that poverty as a concept and word, and the poor and the poorest of the poor as categories come into more frequent and repetitive use, as the ANC prepares to participate in and extend the sphere of governance to those previously excluded by the apartheid state.

In the Freedom Charter (1955), widely held as the founding document of the Congress Alliance, the word 'poverty' is hardly mentioned. However, the document characterises the apartheid state as one built on inequality and injustice. It commits the movement to struggling for equality and justice, both concepts that would require the elimination of an underclass in society. The document also commits the movement to fighting for a situation in which "the people shall share in the wealth of the country" and "the land shall be shared among those who work it", both being read by many as speaking to the need for nationalisation and redistribution in the interests of the elimination of inequality and injustice. Speaking to the need for secure, protected, and well-paid jobs; decent and affordable housing; free education; and the protection of human rights, the Freedom Charter speaks of a vision of a free, fair and equal society governed by a contract between South African citizens and a democratically elected government committed to building a non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic nation.

The 1990s saw the building and shaping of this contract as the ANC assumed the role of ruling party in a democratically elected 'government of national unity'. Happening at a time when neoliberal policies had gained ascendance in the world, this contract would have to be shaped according to a logic of export-oriented growth and the 'fundamentals' of privatisation and corporatisation, the principle of 'user pays', flexibilised labour, and greater individual responsibility, necessitating a change in the language and commitments of the ANC in the crafting of this contract. In 1994, the RDP was adopted as the programme outlining the vision for a democratic transition by the Alliance, cementing its adoption of a 'mixed-economy' approach including a number of Keynesian and redistributive prescriptions (e.g. with regard to basic services), but also committing South Africa to an export-driven, market-oriented economy in the interests of boosting investor confidence, trade liberalisation and other mechanisms for greater deregulation of the economy (Barchiesi, 2005; Bundy, 2004; Gelb, 2004).

For many theorists, the RDP was reflective of an earlier "trade-off" (Bundy, 2004) or "implicit bargain or accommodation" (Gelb, 2004: 2) between white big business and the ANC, "involving the ANC committing to macro-economic stability and international openness and business agreeing to participate in 'capital reform' to modify the racial structure of asset ownership, which would come to be called 'black economic empowerment' (BEE). The broad outlines of this accommodation emerged in 1990, and policy planning and implementation of trade and financial liberalisation began well before the 1994 elections." (ibid.).

But the growth path adopted by the RDP was not what was showcased. Instead, its more redistributive and democratic aspects were celebrated in the galvanising of popular support for the ANC as it prepared to govern. Patrick Bond argues that the RDP could be read in at least three ways – "from Left (or 'socialist'), Centre ('corporatist') and Right ('neoliberal') perspectives" (Bond, 2000b: 91). The commitment to international competitiveness; the absence of any discussion on private property rights; and arguments made that the meeting of basic needs would be opened up to the private sector could be characterised as Centre-Right perspectives contained in the RDP and its interpretation. Bond argues, however, that organisations such as the SACP were also able to interpret the RDP as providing spaces for the

adoption of policies that argued for forms of decommodification and universalisation of access in the sphere of basic services, for example. It is perhaps this characteristic of the RDP for multiple and contested interpretations that has allowed for it to be mobilised so successfully at a rhetorical level by the ANC, holding the promise of progress in the lives of the majority at a symbolic level, yet remaining contested at the level of interpretation and implementation.

It was on the basis of the RDP that the ANC would be elected into power in April 1994. In the document, poverty is identified as an enemy to be eradicated, and the problems created by apartheid are collapsed into the singly understood scourge of poverty:

Poverty is the single greatest burden of South Africa's people, and is the direct result of the apartheid system and the grossly skewed nature of business and industrial development which accompanied it. Poverty affects millions of people, the majority of whom live in the rural areas and are women... It is not merely the lack of income which determines poverty. An enormous proportion of very basic needs are presently unmet. In attacking poverty and deprivation, the RDP aims to set South Africa firmly on the road to eliminating hunger, providing land and housing to all our people, providing access to safe water and sanitation for all, ensuring the availability of affordable and sustainable energy sources, eliminating illiteracy, raising the quality of education and training for children and adults, protecting the environment, and improving our health services and making them accessible to all. (ANC, 1994: 14).

Significantly, the RDP characterises poverty as a threat to sustainable democracy, stating,

Without meeting basic needs, no political democracy can survive in South Africa (ibid: 15).

In acceptance of the 'realities' of the world economy, the RDP sees the ANC Alliance beginning to approach transformation and redress according to a logic of the progress possible or attainable within the workings of the neoliberal market, and the fashioning of a field of intervention for the state in the form of poverty and a figure to be assisted by the state in the form of the poor and the poorest of the poor. By proposing the meeting of certain basic needs for a targeted group in society as an approach to solving this problem identified as poverty, the RDP also sets in motion a process of debate, discussion, research and policy formulation that comes to dominate the discourse of poverty in South Africa, a process that becomes increasingly technicist and technical, and that in itself produces particular understandings of poverty and the poor in society based on specific contestations of what constitutes minimal levels of service and access to essential resources necessary for the survival of those considered most poor. In calling for “people-driven development”, the RDP would also elaborate a discourse of “lifeline tariffs” and the meeting of basic needs to facilitate “the participation of people in their own development” (ibid).

Bond (2002: 185-186) points out that neoliberalism entered post-apartheid state policy discourse⁴⁹ in a number of documents, including the *Housing White Paper* of November 1994 (Department of Housing), the *Water Supply and Sanitation White Paper* of November 1994 (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry -DWAF), the *Urban Infrastructure Investment Framework* of March 1995 (Ministry of Reconstruction and Development), the *Urban and Rural Development Strategies* of October 1995 (RDP Ministry), the *Urban and Rural Development Frameworks* of May 1997 (Departments of Housing and Land Affairs), the *Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework* of July 1997 (Department of Constitutional Development - DCD), the *Local Government White Paper* of February 1998 (DCD), the April 1998 *Policy Paper on Intergovernmental Finance* (Department of Finance), the August 1998 *Draft Regulatory Framework for Municipal Service Partnerships* (DCD), and the December 1998 *White Paper on Energy Policy* (Department of Minerals and Energy Affairs).

⁴⁹ This is not to suggest that the implementation of neoliberal policies had not already been experimented with by the apartheid government. As will be shown in chapters that follow, elements of privatisation and commodification were introduced in the sphere of the delivery of housing and electricity (including prepaid meters) in black townships in the 1980s and 1990s.

It is interesting to note that the drive towards developing 'proper measures' and means of knowing and tracking poverty, while it begins in the early 1990s, increases as the ANC and government's approach to the economy changes, with the adoption of a much more overtly neoliberal macro-economic framework in 1996, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), which marked a clear shift away from the RDP's logic of 'growth through redistribution' towards that of 'redistribution through growth'. The RDP, while itself shying away from detailed definitions of poverty and the poor, does emphasise the need for the development and evaluation of "key indicators" for measuring its own success (ibid: 17).

As macro-economic policy comes to be fashioned by the neoliberal principles of GEAR, this drive towards measuring and defining the beneficiaries of the most basic provisions for survival provided by the state, would increase. It is also within contexts of attempting to implement the neoliberal policies espoused by GEAR that we begin to see the development of ways to measure the minimal levels of service and access to resources necessary for the poor to survive and 'participate in their own development'. As growth becomes the mantra of the ANC government, the need to show that the growth enjoyed by the South African economy is 'pro-poor', that is, that its benefits 'trickle down' to the poor, becomes paramount. This in itself necessitates the development of techniques to measure where 'pro-poor' interventions are necessary and where the poor are indeed benefiting from growth.

In fashioning poverty and the poor as a field of intervention and knowledge for the neoliberalising state, the discipline of statistics and 'getting the numbers right' (see *Chapter 3*), has also allowed for the proliferation of a revealing political discourse. While claiming to want to eradicate poverty, governmental representatives continue to approach its actions in an incremental manner, arguing that the state should take responsibility only for the provision of the minimal, most basic resources to those so poor that they are 'trapped' in their debilitating positions, in order that they are able to help themselves out of these 'poverty traps'. 'Escaping' these 'traps' would take both efforts from the state to provide these minimal requirements, and the individual, supported by his/her family and community mobilising their own resources to complement those provided by the state. This language of 'self-reliance', 'individual responsibility', 'the centrality of the family unit', and 'the importance of the

community' in assisting people out of their 'poverty traps' would come to define the general approach of the ANC government to addressing the needs of those outside of the formal labour market and the market economy, particularly as it began to shape policy in the sphere of social welfare in the form of a White Paper in 1997.

'Escaping poverty' would come to be viewed as enabling access to the market economy through access to jobs or economic activity, with the state's role being to facilitate access to the very basic resources deemed necessary for the poor to become "self-reliant", and the individual, family and community becoming partners in the delivery of "developmental social welfare" (RSA, 1997).

Several commentators (Bond, 2007; Du Toit, 2007b; Hart, 2008; Veriava, 2011) have highlighted that policy discourse about the continuing problem of poverty in post-apartheid South Africa has "been dominated by the notion that poor people stay poor because they are trapped in a 'second economy'" (Du Toit, 2007b: ii). First introduced by President Mbeki in August 2003 in his 'Letter from the President' published on the ANC's website, the thesis of the 'two economies' has come to characterise how poverty and inequality are spoken about in the public sphere, designating the co-existence in South Africa of a 'first world economy' with a 'third world economy'.

Andries Du Toit argues that the mobilisation of the two economies thesis by Mbeki marked a shift away from "the assumption that GEAR on its own could serve to eradicate poverty and cleared the way for much greater emphasis on the role of a 'developmental state'" (ibid: 3). It also marked, for him, an acknowledgement of the possibility that "poverty was not simply a disappearing legacy from the past but might be perpetuated by features of the *post-transition* order" (ibid; emphasis in original). Identifying the call for the state to develop specific interventions targeted at members of the second economy to assist them to develop the skills and access the resources necessary to become part of the first economy, Du Toit, however, offers the critique that the two economies thesis does not problematise the functioning of the first world economy itself, making Mbeki's analysis "reminiscent of very familiar – and largely discredited – dualist and liberal conceptions of the South African and other 'developing' economies" (ibid).

Du Toit (2007b) and Hart (2008) also point out that the strict separation between the two economies implied by Mbeki's thesis is not born out in practice, but operates rather as an inappropriate metaphor. They argue that the South African economy, while highly differentiated and productive of glaring inequalities, must be viewed as an integrated system, with the exploitation of large numbers of unemployed and semi-employed people occupying positions of extreme precarity continuing to contribute towards the continued enrichment of a small, secure layer of rich people.

Veriava (2011), building on Hart, argues that the official deployment of the two economies thesis should be viewed both in relation to the specific governmental challenge that it reflects on (that is, the poor) as well as the imperatives that accrue in confronting this challenge in nationalist discourse. Through an exploration of struggles for water in post-apartheid Soweto, Veriava illustrates how the two economies thesis comes to be elaborated in "government's shifting 'tactical approach' at the intersection of the delivery of basic services, and poverty alleviation and indigent management strategies". He writes:

what is at stake in the two economies thesis is not that 'level of abstraction' that Marxist political economists treat under the sign of 'the economy', but a particular subject and 'the milieu' to which it belongs. It is therefore no coincidence that, while the public deployments of the thesis have drawn reference from the characterisation of an informal sector, more often than not, what are indexed in reference to a second economy are less forms of economic activity, than *the conditions of life* of those said to be "trapped" in a second economy. (Veriava, 2011).

It is the aim of this thesis to elaborate, through the experiences of Orange Farm, precisely this political subject in the form of the poor/s, produced both in and by state policy discourse and in and by movements of the poor.

Franco Barchiesi (2004; 2005; 2007) has shown how contestation over basic needs and the rights of the poor emerges in the context of the decline of formal sector wage

labour and the traditional reliance on wage labour as a conduit for social citizenship rights in post-apartheid South Africa. In spite of the promises of GEAR that its policy proposals would increase the production of formal sector jobs, by 2006 government was admitting that it was nowhere near its goal of halving unemployment by 2015 despite increased growth (Mlambo-Ngcuka quoted in *Business Report*, 7 November 2006).

In fact, formal sector employment in sectors such as mining and manufacturing have declined, and flexible forms of labour (casual, contract, part-time and seasonal jobs) have been introduced as global competitiveness and trade liberalisation have demanded particular changes to the organisation of production and the market (Barchiesi, 2005). The service sector, in which more flexible forms of labour are common, has, in addition, shown growth (Barchiesi, 2005; Kenny, 2001). Recent research has also pointed to the fact that 44% of workers occupy jobs that are considered ‘informal’, that is, without job security and benefits, with 80% not having formal employment contracts (Devey and Skinner quoted in Barchiesi, 2006). With wage labour being viewed historically as a means through which individual citizens are able to meet their requirements for a decent quality of life in the form of decommodified health, welfare and basic services, its decline has necessitated new ways of thinking about the provision of these resources by the state. As neoliberal principles have come to dictate the workings of the state, provision for the social, welfare and basic needs of the growing number of unemployed and informally occupied citizens would be represented as the responsibility of the individual citizen, with the minimal assistance of the state in the form of the discourse of ‘developmental social welfare’.

Describing the emergence and evolution of the use of the latter term through an exploration of the first years of the Department of Welfare and Population Development formed under the democratically elected government in its first term in office, Barchiesi writes,

The White Paper (RSA, 1997) reaffirmed the notion of “developmental social welfare” as geared towards providing citizens with an “opportunity to play an active role in promoting their own

well-being”. The priority on individual self-activation, under the guise of ‘empowerment’ discourse, was combined with a view of social security and social services as “investments which lead to tangible economic gains” (RSA, 1997: 1.8). (Barchiesi, 2005: 382).

The expansion of public spending expansion was also seen as dependent on economic growth, and “market forces, productivism and individual responsibility came therefore to provide strict constraints to redistributive and decommodifying policy interventions” (ibid).

But these approaches that spoke only of providing ‘safety nets’ in order to assist people out of their ‘poverty traps’ would not withstand the growing demands of movements of the poor and broader civil society for more far-reaching interventions to address the problems of inequality and lack of access to basic resources. In January 2000, Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, proclaimed that South Africa was facing “a time bomb of poverty and social disintegration” with “the potential to reverse the democratic gains made since 1994” (Department of Social Development, 2000). A ‘ten-point programme’ was announced to improve the welfare system. In Barchiesi’s words, “the call for comprehensive social security was there combined, in stark departure from the developmental social welfare approach” (ibid: 400). In March 2000, the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa was appointed by the Cabinet, chaired by Professor Vivienne Taylor, comprising 18 ‘expert’ members, and coming to be known as the Taylor Committee.

While the Committee’s final report (2002) would reaffirm previous quantitative measures of the extent and reach of poverty in South Africa (see *Chapter 3*), it would mobilise them to slightly new ends, and support them with data gleaned from public hearings at which sections of the poor could speak about their experiences. It would highlight that 60 per cent of those measured as being poor were not receiving any social security, and that relying on access to formal employment to eradicate poverty was not a viable option in South Africa where unemployment was so high and new jobs being created offering little protection from vulnerability. The report spoke, then, not just of the unemployed poor, but also of the working poor, and of the need

for “comprehensive social security” in South Africa, arguing for universal provision of certain goods and services rather than the prevailing targeted system of interventions aimed only at the poorest of the poor.

More concretely, the report proposed that a Basic Income Grant (BIG) be provided to all South Africans to enable the poor, both working and unemployed, to gain some measure of stability and ability to survive and become economically productive. The report also argued strongly for the state to begin approaching the problem of poverty through the introduction of a “social package”, understood to be a way of achieving “a degree of balance between measures focused on reducing income, services (capability) and asset poverty” (ibid: 41).

Using the ‘capabilities approach’ developed by Amartya Sen, Nobel-laureate and renowned author, the report argues that the content of the Comprehensive Social Package (CSP) give centrality to basic services, incomes, and assets as essential in enhancing the capabilities of ‘the poor’ to change their living conditions (ibid: 42).

Despite these apparent shifts in discourse, the report would again call for the development of a nationally accepted quantitative model for the definition and measurement of poverty, and for interventions to provide access to certain minimal levels of resources calculated to be adequate for survival or that quality of life deemed appropriate to enable ‘the poor’ to become economically active (ibid: 56).

The Committee’s report also re-emphasises the importance and centrality of the family unit and the community in ensuring that social assistance becomes useful in making the individual ‘self-reliant’ and ‘responsible’.

It is also no different from the earlier developmental approach to welfare in its prioritisation of the calculation of and agreement on minimal levels for interventions to be made, and makes a strong argument for why the BIG should be set at a minimal level so as to discourage ‘laziness’ and the potential refusal to work. It argues:

The level at which a BIG is set will be crucial. At the very least it should address destitution. By providing such a minimum level of

income support people will be empowered to take the risks needed to break out of the poverty cycle. Rather than serving as a disincentive to engage in higher return activities, such a (and irrevocable) grant could encourage risk taking and self-reliance. Such an income grant could thus become a springboard for development. (ibid: 61).

While the Taylor Committee report certainly marked a shift in terms of some of the arguments that were being made with regard to the kind of social welfare that the ANC government should provide, it reinscribed the 'rule by numbers', as even its calls for a CSP would be tempered by calls for proper statistics and measures to enable this CSP to work. In addition, it would reassert the need for nationally agreed on minimal levels to be determined in the discussion about poverty eradication. With regard to the BIG, it allowed the state to determine its implementation according to its fiscal situation. Over time any discussion about a BIG would fade from state concerns.

While the Taylor Committee would open up a debate about the state creating universal access to a basic income grant (BIG) not tied to wage labour, it would itself point to the current 'fiscal constraints' of the state in meeting this prescription. It would also very clearly argue for a BIG in the interests of promoting the ability for the individual to actively seek work and the self-activity and entrepreneurship capacities of the individual. In this way, decommodified access was being argued for in order to stimulate participation in the market.

In a more recent discussion document released by the Department of Social Development in November 2006, entitled, *Linking Social Grants Beneficiaries to Poverty Alleviation and Employment*, it is very clearly argued that any recipients of decommodified provisions from the state need to be encouraged to become part of programmes that encourage wage labour or economic self activity and entrepreneurship. Prescribing a number of mechanisms for the identification and targeting of recipients of social grants and the exposure of them to employment and entrepreneurship development programmes, the document concludes that "the drive to get all South Africans working when they are able to do so must become a central

preoccupation” of the state as “a central pillar of building social cohesion and inclusiveness”.

Accompanying these policy prescriptions has been a moral imperative for the individual not to ‘expect handouts from the state’ and to take responsibility for his/her own life. In an interview given to *City Press* newspaper in November 2007, Gauteng MEC for Housing, Nomvula Mokonyane, spoke about the need for “moral regeneration” in order to address the problems faced in the delivery of housing, arguing that people “should stop the culture of complete dependence on government”.

She said,

People should stop being dependants of government because it will destroy them. Going through free schooling, then underperforming to a point where they don’t qualify for bursaries and loans or even pass matric, then falling pregnant and depending on social grants to raise these children and waiting for RDP houses similar to those they grew up in is not right... That’s why, during housing protests, you see young people – who can study and work – instead of old people. We need to instil morals in our children because solutions for the housing backlog relate to education, poverty and moral regeneration. (Mooki, V, *City Press*, 18 November 2007).

In the logic underpinning the MEC’s words, those who make demands of the state as the poor should accept responsibility for their plight and work themselves out of these situations. By expecting the state to provide for them, they become ‘immoral’, living beyond their means and outside of the logic of restraint, conservation, and hard work. Completely erased is any sense that the plight that the poor find themselves in and struggle to change is a result of the very policies that the apartheid state and the post-apartheid state have entrenched.

Gillian Hart (2007) and David Everatt (2008) have characterised state policy discourse after 1994 as reminiscent of the New Poor Laws of 1834 England (see Chapter 1), highlighting the increasing attention paid towards separating ‘the

deserving poor’ from ‘the undeserving poor’ in post-apartheid South Africa. Pointing out that neither of the above writers go beyond pointing out the vague sense of resemblance between contemporary governmental frameworks and the Poor Laws, Ahmed Veriava (2011) writes that the proper value of an analogical use of the Poor Laws lies in “the ways in which it allows us to recognise that, if one side of the processes of commodification are forms of enclosure, its other side is the foreclosure of strategies and forms of life resistant to the self-disciplining regimes of the market”. He adds that such a perspective also “implies rethinking the notion of the common beyond natural and material commons (such as land or water – what might be enclosed for instance), to include a consideration of their relation the socially productive networks and forms of community that, whether institutionally sanctioned or not, function to produce the conditions of life”.

In similar ways to which the Poor Laws of 1834 served to encourage greater responsibility for the care of the self by the individual in the inauguration of a liberal mode of government by categorising the poor according to the moral attributes of willingness and commitment to work (see discussion of Dean and Foucault in *Chapter 1*), this thesis will demonstrate how state policy in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in the sphere of the delivery of basic services, works to classify the poor according to their willingness and ability to pay for basic services, as well as the willingness and ability to work and/or to engage in small-scale entrepreneurial activities. It will also show how policies that seek to improve the lives of the poor in post-apartheid South Africa also attempt to make those identified and targeted as the poor behave in ways conducive to the logics of neoliberalism, such as paying for water and electricity before consuming them by accepting the measurement of their supply in the form of prepaid meters (see *Chapters 4 and 6*).

Since the mid-1990s, then, as neoliberal policies have come to be accepted and encouraged by the ANC government, a discourse of the poor and poverty has emerged through which the state has attempted to carve out a field of intervention through which it has tried to limit its roles and responsibilities to that of providing the very minimal resources deemed necessary for survival, often portrayed as those resources necessary for the individual to become economically active in society. Its mobilisation of these categories has also served to encourage and entrench minimal

standards of living for those on the margins of society, to restrict those identified as the poor to particularly inferior and indecent standards of living, and to produce a particular form of life for the poor. But ordinary people, holding the ANC government to its promises of ‘a better life for all’, have increasingly refused their disciplining and control by these categories, also employing these terms to make demands against the standards and quality of life prescribed by them (see below).

Transformed into a field of intervention, the poor and poverty have become ‘sites of struggle’ as the state attempts to govern that population group ‘excluded’ from post-apartheid society through their lack of a job or other decent means of income, and as increasingly vulnerable people come together under the sign of the poor to demand that the state permit them more than the basic resources necessary for survival and/or to make lives for themselves that constitute more than survival. In these contestations, some of which will be explored in the remainder of this thesis, a moral economy (see discussion of E.P. Thompson in *Chapter 1*) has emerged in which the state has argued that it is only right for the individual to take responsibility for the care of herself in a context of fiscal constraint, and movements have demanded that the ANC government deliver on its promise of ‘a better life for all’ and remain true to the collective commitments of the liberation movement to equality for all.

In the context of a collective imaginary of liberation, made concrete in demands developed in the movement; a culture of resistance; and the unfulfilled promises of the ANC felt in the everyday lives of people, a moral economy in post-apartheid South Africa has increasingly come to be defined by the position of the state in relation to those excluded from the circuits of economic (re)production, that is the poor. In the contestations constituting this moral economy, the slogans, language, flags, colours, songs, principles, and policies of the liberation movement have been struggled over, their aims, on the one hand, being reduced to ensuring the success of the electoral democracy according to the plans of elected party leaders, and, on the other, being understood as reminding elected leaders and the ruling party of the commitments made in the liberation struggle to equality, freedom and justice for all.

While *Chapter 4* offers a closer exploration of this contested field through the experience of the formulation of policy in the sphere of the delivery of basic services

in Johannesburg, showing the influence of struggle on policy and vice versa at a *local* level, discourse and policy have also demonstrated, at a *national* level, an increased attention to poverty and the poor, as protests have persisted by those unable to afford the costs of living today. Most recently, this has taken the form of the 'War on Poverty', launched in his February 2008 State of the Nation address by then-president Thabo Mbeki, emphasising the need for an accelerated pace in implementing poverty alleviation strategies.

Without evidence of any concrete plans accompanying the broad statements made by Mbeki and popularised through government press releases and media campaigns, the War on Poverty remained little more than a rhetorical device, serving to reassure, in the context of resistance, that the state remained committed to meeting the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Only six months later, in August 2008, government announced its creation of a 'war room on poverty', a nationally driven effort to target the poorest households and assist them through specific interventions aimed at providing them with the very basic resources necessary to enable them to find work or become otherwise economically active in taking individual responsibility for the improvement of their lives.

The 'war room on poverty' recommits the state to a national poverty alleviation programme that targets those households deemed to be 'most vulnerable' for particular minimal interventions by the state through which the logic of individual responsibility, 'partnership' with government, conservation, self-restraint, and payment for basic services is encouraged. Significant in this move is the increased attention now being given to the production and maintenance of proper indigent registers or 'registers of the poor' in an effort to 'target appropriately' and to track and monitor individual households unable to meet their basic needs. (Bua News, *South Africa to Launch War on Poverty*, 28 July 2008 - <http://www.southafrica.info/about/social/poverty-280708.htm>, accessed 31 July 2008). A survey of media reports about the War on Poverty suggests that, at a national level, it is the symbolic opportunities presented by the War on Poverty discourse that have been employed mostly at a national level, with Deputy-President

Kgalema Motlanthe playing a leading role in showcasing this war.⁵⁰ However, the work of experimenting with ways of measuring and targeting the poorest in society, as this thesis will suggest, is happening more quietly at municipal level. While the further entrenching of inequality takes place through the crafting and honing of indigent management strategies at municipal level, the discourse of fighting poverty continues in abstract terms at a national level, giving a positive spin and militant air to these policies and programmes unfolding at a local level.

Movements of ‘The Poor/s’

While the promise of a democratically elected ANC government and its implementation of the RDP held hope for many of those marginalised and disadvantaged by apartheid and its economy, the decisions made by the ANC in its first years of governance, particularly with regard to economic choices, were to prevent its realisation of its commitments which had fuelled people’s hopes. In fact, acceptance of the neoliberal orthodoxies holding sway globally would mean that while life would improve for some of the population, life would also deteriorate for others.

As market-driven, export-led growth became the solution of the ANC government to all the problems inherited from the apartheid regime, job losses would increase in parts of the formal economy, such as mining and manufacturing, with a large number of black male South Africans losing their full-time, protected, secure jobs, often held under apartheid and then lost in the first few years of democracy, as well as in the footwear and clothing industries, where a large number of black women were to be found in full-time jobs with security and protection. The kinds of jobs available to the majority, and in particular to women, were increasingly those of the part-time, casual, contract, and seasonal type. (Bhorat and Van Der Berg, 1999; Kenny, 1998, 2001; Barchiesi, 2005).

Accompanying rising unemployment was the introduction of the duty to pay for basic services, such as water, electricity, and housing. While this ‘duty to pay’ might have

⁵⁰ For examples of Motlanthe’s role in this regard, refer to the introduction to Maharaj et. al. (eds), 2010.

existed under apartheid, payment was never really enforced in poor, black communities, which also engaged in boycotts of such payments. In a national campaign led by the United Democratic Front (UDF), called ‘Asinamali’ (‘We Have No Money’), black residents of townships refused to accept the lower standard and quality of services provided by the apartheid government, demanding equality and justice in their lives as South Africans, envisioning, in the collective, a kind of life for all South Africans that would allow for decency, dignity, and the pursuit of one’s dreams and goals to the best of one’s potential. Imagined in the liberation movement, then, was a life free from want, for all.

When, in the first few years of ANC governance, this expectation of ‘a better life for all’ began to be compromised, with rising unemployment and the enforcement of the logic of payment for services, felt in the form of water and electricity cut-offs and evictions, as well as other effects of the implementation of policies crafted within the framework of GEAR, criticisms emerged of the ANC government, and groups of people adversely affected by ANC government policy changes began to rise up in protest against them. In the period between 1994 and 1999, such criticism and opposition often came from within parts of the MDM, such as SANCO, COSATU and SASCO. Bond writes that between 1994 and 1996 there was a “surge of shopfloor, student and community wildcat protests” (Bond 2000: 216). A number of government ministers and policies also came under fire from “radical civil society” (ibid: 217). And, the ANC Alliance would respond by attempting to “*demobilise* the left-flank movements, or when not demobilising them (for instance, in giving SANCO more than a million rand during the mid-1990s so as to keep it alive), *controlling* them (ibid: 223; emphases in the original).⁵¹ As MDM formations became embroiled in internal debates and fights, and as they became constrained in their actions by the dictates of the process of negotiations and ‘participatory’ policy formulation under the leadership of the ANC, protests would emerge from outside of the organised and regulated structures of the ANC and broader MDM, initially outside of any formal organisations.

⁵¹ For a closer analysis of processes of ‘demobilisation’ see Naidoo’s account of the South African Student’s Congress (SASCO), *Something Your Grandmother Might Have Made: Tradition and SASCO*, and Zuern’s (2004) exploration of the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), *Continuity in Contradiction? The Prospects for a National Civic Movement in a Democratic State: SANCO and the ANC in Post-apartheid South Africa*.

In early 1997, "intense riots" broke out in the low-income Coloured township of Eldorado Park, with residents demanding lower municipal rates in a day-long protest that resulted in the deaths of four people. In August 1997, East Rand and Pretoria townships, the Mpumalanga town of Secunda, and Butterworth in the Transkei flared up in protests over service payments (Bond, 2000a: 366). During the last three months of 1997, water cut-offs (due to non-payment) increased from 11 729 by the 220 largest municipalities in the three months prior, to 19 162, while those households in these areas able to reconnect increased from 6004 to just 7065. Electricity cut-offs in late 1997 amounted to 58 678 with reconnections sitting at the figure of just 35 113. (ibid: 367). Bond argues that by mid-1998, such actions on the part of the authorities had resulted in conflicts that reached deep into townships of the East Rand and smaller rural towns, with municipal offices and a post office being burnt in Witbank and Tsakane after residents were stripped of their personal property through evictions. He writes, "Everywhere urban alienation and rural despondency were on the increase (ibid).

In fact, for the many years to come, protests by communities and groups of affected people would continue across the country, escalating at different times and taking different forms, each time demanding particular concessions from the state with regard to its responsibilities related to meeting the needs of the most marginalised in society. As the problems experienced by poor communities grew in the years following the adoption of GEAR, groups within communities became more organised, and began to be narrated, both through the production of their own media, and through increased profiling by the mainstream media as well as researchers, academics, and film-makers. A language of struggle amongst poor people in post-apartheid South Africa came to be easily apprehended, and the phenomenon of 'new social movements' came to be produced.

Some of the most prominent new social movements that have been profiled from the late 1990s onwards include the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF – Durban), which grew around struggles of the communities of Chatsworth, Wentworth, and Mpumalanga (Hammanskraal) against evictions, and cut-offs; the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC – Cape Town), which emerged as communities facing eviction on

the Cape Flats came together to try to defend themselves; the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF – Gauteng), which saw university students, workers, and community members come together in 2000 to protest against the various effects of the privatisation being implemented by the University of the Witwatersrand and the City of Johannesburg and grew into a provincial formation co-ordinating the activities of twenty two community affiliates and other members; the Landless People's Movement (LPM), a national movement emerging in 2001 to protect the interests of farmworkers and to demand immediate land redistribution; the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), a national movement bringing together activists from all walks of life to demand free anti-retroviral treatment for HIV-positive South Africans as well as for the South African state to improve its approach to the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and the Abahlali Base Mjondolo (ABM), a movement of shackdwellers emerging in Durban in 2005 to demand that the precarious situation of the homeless be addressed by the state. (Ballard et al. 2006; McKinley and Naidoo 2004; Robbins 2008).

Much has been written about new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, in the form of newspaper articles, academic papers, different forms of literature produced by and from within movements, and a few edited collections of articles and books. Ashwin Desai's *We Are The Poors*, published in 2002, was the first book to be written from within a movement by an activist/academic⁵² attempting to give voice to the concerns of those experiencing the first effects of the post-apartheid state's neoliberal commitments. Written from first-hand experience and engagements with other activists, Desai tells the story of one of South Africa's first social movements to be born in the post-apartheid era, the Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF). While the book is rich in its account of new forms of organising and the manifestation of antagonism towards the ANC government from those who had voted it into office, its significance for this thesis lies in its declaration of the birth of a new political subject in post-apartheid South Africa in the form of 'the poors'. In the book, Desai tells how a simple remark by a protesting resident of Chatsworth (a predominantly Indian township in Durban) to a government official gave birth to an identity for an incipient

⁵² The term 'activist/academic' has emerged from within movements to describe middle-class members of movements who are both active in these movements, and work within academia simultaneously.

movement that had, since 1999, been resisting evictions and cut-offs from water and electricity:

As the Council officials retreated, a defining moment in the struggle for Chatsworth occurred. One of the designer-bedecked (African) councillors began castigating the crowd. She had once lived in a shack, she screamed. Why were Indians resisting evictions and demanding upgrades? Indians were just too privileged. One elderly aunty, Girlie Amod, screamed back: '*We are not Indians, we are the poors*'. The refrain caught on as councillors hurried to their cars. As they were leaving they would hear the slogan mutate as Bongiwe Manqele introduced her own good-humoured variant, '*We are not African, we are the poors*'. Identities were being rethought in the context of struggle and the bearers of these identities were no respecters of authority. The particular identity congealing in this moment had no grand ideological preconditions and so could not be co-opted by government. It was organised around the primary realisation that resistance had to be offered against the hostilities being visited on the poor. (Desai 2002: 44, my emphases).

Under the sign of 'the poors', Desai brings together a number of movements and struggles emerging in post-apartheid South Africa to contest the various provisions and restrictions being made on the lives of the poor – "unemployed, single mother, community defender, neighbour, factory worker, popular criminal, rap artist and genuine ou (good human being) ... have all come to make up the collective identities of 'the poors'" (ibid: 7). Different in their geneses and make-up, the similarities of these movements are shown up in their common antagonism to the ANC government and in their demand that alternatives be found to the various instances of neoliberal restructuring in motion. Desai ends his book with the coming together of these new social movements and various NGOs in protest of the ANC government's policies at the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), the first international UN conference to be hosted by the South African government after 1994, in Durban in 2001. While the celebratory tone of *We Are The Poors* served an important purpose

at the time of its publication and release in providing a counter-argument and opposing picture of new social movements to the images emerging in the mainstream media⁵³, it also ignored several important problems within and amongst new social movements that would erupt later on in their history⁵⁴.

As new social movements emerged across the country, a few progressive NGOs and academic institutions made funds available for research to be conducted on these movements, resulting in a number of research reports being produced by activist/academics working in movements and independent researchers and academics. The Centre for Civil Society (CCS) provided a significant portion of its general research funds towards projects on new social movements, including *Remembering Movements: Trade Union Movements and New Social Movements In Post-Apartheid South Africa*, a report about the APF by two of its members, Naidoo and Veriava (2005); *The Contentious Politics of the CCF*, by Peter Dwyer (2004), an independent researcher and socialist activist; *The Landless People's Movement and the Failure of Postapartheid Land Reform* by Stephen Greenberg (2004), an activist/researcher working with the LPM; *Subjectivity, Politics and Neo-Liberalism in Post Apartheid Cape Town* by Peter Van Heusden and Rebecca Pointer (2005), both members of the AEC; *A Short Course in Politics at the University of Abahlali Basemjondolo* by Raj Patel (2006), an academic working with the ABM; and *'Our Struggle is Thought on the Ground Running': University of the ABM* by Richard Pithouse (2006), also an academic working with the ABM. These reports were each published in different volumes of the CCS's research report series. In addition, the CCS made available funds for participatory research projects in various new social movements, including the APF, the AEC and the LPM, also resulting in the production of a number of reports about movements from within movements.

In 2004, the first edited collection of articles about new social movements in South Africa was produced by activists and researchers working in and/or with these movements, as a special edition of the journal, *Development Update*, co-produced by Interfund and the South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). Entitled,

⁵³ For an example of this see Haffajee, F. 2004. "Fact, Fiction and the New Left", in *Mail and Guardian*, 11 June.

⁵⁴ For an account of such problems within the Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF), see Dwyer, P (2004) *The Contentious Politics of the CCF*, Research Report for the Centre for Civil Society.

Mobilising for Change: The Rise of New Social Movements in South Africa, it was edited by McKinley and Naidoo, both founding members of the APF. Through a number of workshops with members of the different new social movements about the various themes covered in the journal, writers produced articles that spoke to the diversity of views within these movements about various questions, such as the relationship of movements to the state; forms of organising; attitudes to the electoral representative system; strategies and tactics; and so on. While the journal provides a rich source of the commonalities that hold movements together as well as their differences, it is also striking that the majority of its writers are middle-class, non-African members or associates of movements, highlighting a problem that is a constant feature of engagements within new social movements and their representation, that is, that those who traditionally hold access to resources and skills within movements tend to determine how they are portrayed outside of movements.

The establishment of the Independent Media Centre of South Africa (IMC-SA/Indymedia-SA) during the WCAR in 2001 provided spaces autonomous from the mainstream media, political parties and organisations, and corporations for new social movements to write about themselves and their movements, in the form of a website with auto-publishing features (<http://saindymedia.org>); facilities for the production of community newsletters, press releases, and statements; video production; and a short-lived radio station (in Soweto). While Indymedia-SA was particularly effective during high-profile campaigns of movements and during times of extreme repression, particularly in the period 2001-2004, it could not overcome the problems of differential access to resources and the need for some members of its collectives to appropriate parts and property of the collective for the ends of individual income generation.⁵⁵ Since 2004, while Indymedia collectives have sprung up from time to time in different parts of the country, in particular Johannesburg, these have been short-lived and without the effectiveness of work done during the earlier period. Nevertheless, its existence allowed movements to be creative in their own representation and in the representation of their struggles and demands, outside of and often against the mainstream media. At many times, however, Indymedia-SA also

⁵⁵ For a more thorough account of the history of Indymedia-SA, its successes and problems, see Naidoo, P. 2008. 'Indymedia South Africa: An Experiment in Production', in *Third Text*, Volume 22, Issue 5, pp. 569 – 573.

provided material for the mainstream media, for example, during the WCAR and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in 2002, thereby helping to sometimes shape mainstream representations of movements and struggles, and to producing an image of new social movements as movements of the poor.

In these many accounts, a rich picture of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa emerges, one in which the interplay between ‘old’ and ‘new’ forms of organising, and the diversity of approaches, tactics and strategies, tend to be emphasised. Looking through pamphlets, pictures and video footage from protests undertaken by different new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa since 2001, there are many moments in which people are seen to be defending their claim to particular songs, slogans, colours, commitments, and traditions of the liberation movement, and, often, giving new meanings to them. In the case of the APF, for example, founding members included activists from the Johannesburg central branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP), the University of the Witwatersrand branch of the South African Students’ Congress (SASCO) and local of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (NEHAWU), the Anti-iGoli Forum, the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), all part of the Congress-aligned Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). While the APF would always be openly antagonistic in its stance towards the ANC, its early years would also be characterised by a discourse of demanding that the ANC remain true to the commitments and societal vision of the liberation movement, and contestation of the ANC’s attempts to recast the symbols, language, icons, and traditions of the liberation movement in the interests of neoliberalism (Naidoo and Veriava, 2005).

As the ANC government continues to frame its new policies in the language of old traditions and customs, commitments and promises, forged and made in the liberation struggle, groups and communities making demands of the state or refusing to accept its changing logic have mobilised this same language, insisting that government fulfil its promises and remain true to the idea of a just society embodied in the struggles of the anti-apartheid movement. While protesting groups have mobilised notions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ in judgement of the actions of the state based on past ideas, values and commitments, the ANC government has begun to fashion new notions of ‘right’

and ‘wrong’ that mobilise the language of the past in service of the logic of responsible citizenship through payment for basic services, the ‘reciprocal duties’ of the state and the citizen, and the changing responsibilities of the individual and the state in the context of a changed neoliberal ‘reality’ that ‘cannot be escaped’. In this contestation, what constitutes ‘the best interests of the nation’ has come to be struggled over. As government argues that payment for services, finding employment or becoming an entrepreneur are necessary at an individual level for nation-building to succeed as it fulfils its role of providing the ‘enabling environment’ in which this can happen, poor communities and activist groups argue that a successful nation can only be built through greater responsibility being assumed by the state for its citizens.

While contestation of what the past was and how the present ought to be meeting past commitments makes up a large part of the moral economy in post-apartheid South Africa, resistance and struggle also take place around categories, institutions, and processes that are very much products of the present. With regard to the study of poverty and the poor in particular, the next four chapters will show just how those groups targeted by the state mobilise the very governmental categories that aim to regulate them in order to make particular demands of the state. In this manner, the moral economy can be seen to emerge in post-apartheid South Africa, both in the assertion of particular traditions, customs, values, beliefs, and commitments held in common in the past, and in demands made of the state by groups it targets that seek to challenge or change the very governmental categories and strategies aimed at defining their quality and way of life in the present. In this way, mobilisation of the categories of ‘the poor’ and ‘the poorest of the poor’ has happened in strategic ways as those unable to accept the new conditions of survival imposed by the state challenge the very limitations attempted to be inscribed through definitions of these categories.

Struggle over the old has, however, been tempered by the failure of traditional models of organisation (the party and the trade union)⁵⁶, resulting in experimentation with new forms of decision-making, leadership, and direct action. In the case of the APF⁵⁷,

⁵⁶ For a proper discussion of this argument, particularly in relationship to the APF and Johannesburg-based movements, see Naidoo and Veriava (2005).

⁵⁷ Beginning as an activist forum bringing together members of the Wits University branch of the South African Students Congress (SASCO), the Johannesburg central branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP), the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) of the

its own structures of decision-making, elected leadership and appointed administrators has evolved since its emergence, from a small open activist forum with a rotating chair, to a fully-fledged organisation with over 22 affiliates (in the form mainly of mass community based organisations and small political groupings⁵⁸) with elected office-bearers, an appointed and paid co-ordinator and administrator, subcommittees⁵⁹, and regular meetings representative of all parts of the organisation at which decisions affecting all members are taken. The APF has also, however, always allowed for individual activists who do not belong to any formal organisations or groupings to participate in its activities, resulting in a mix of representative and non-representative forms of engagement existing within the organisation.

While the APF was formed by the coming together of a large number of activists already active in political formations, many with particularly defined political orientations, its later growth would depend on the emergence of struggles in various communities against water and electricity cut-offs and evictions which coalesced into community forums and crisis committees. In particular, the act of reconnecting residents illegally to their supplies of water and electricity when cut off for non-payment, and returning them to their homes when evicted, would come to characterise

Johannesburg city, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the National Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the anti-iGoli Forum⁵⁷, and members of various ANC branches in and around Johannesburg, the APF brought together a number of different individuals from diverse political backgrounds, as well as races and classes to organise protest actions against a conference being hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand in partnership with the City of Johannesburg in July 2000. Named 'Urban Futures', the conference, at which several world renowned academics (such as Saskia Sassen and Immanuel Castells) would be making presentations about urban regeneration and development, served as the backdrop to the unveiling of the first plans to restructure the city and the university along neoliberal lines, iGoli 2002 and Wits 2001 respectively.

⁵⁸ Members of small political groupings operating within new social movements tend to hold the view that the initial acts of resistance that led to the formation of movements were 'spontaneous' and required the intervention of more skilled and learned individuals to provide political education to community members to enable them to understand their 'spontaneous' actions in terms of their political context and so translate these 'outbursts' of anger and frustration with issues related to their survival into more 'meaningful' political actions that can be sustained and built over time into a programme of action against the status quo. This view is quite clearly enunciated in literature produced by Khanya College, as well as members of the Socialist Group (SG) and Keep Left, all three spaces strongly influenced by Trotskyists.

⁵⁹ Five years ago, the APF decided collectively to dissolve all subcommittees, partly as a result of them becoming spaces in which individuals were attempting to defraud the organisation of money. This highlights the open nature of the APF's organisational form, able to change in response to its own internal needs.

the APF and its affiliates, as well as other new social movements in other parts of the country, such as the AEC in Cape Town and the CCF in Durban.⁶⁰

While campaigns against cut-offs and evictions defined the early focus of movements like the APF, over time, as longer term visions and strategies began to be crafted, debates would ensue over the political orientation of the movement, in particular its attitude to state power. Led by small socialist groupings, debates would focus the attention of the movement on whether to transform into a political party and/or whether to field candidates in the contestation of elections, with affiliates being divided on more than one occasion over this issue.⁶¹ In particular struggles, such as against prepaid water meters, the immediacy of the plight of families living without water as a result of their resistance to the installation of meters, together with the advice of lawyers and debate amongst activists in the movement, led to the prioritisation of legal strategies over illegal acts of bypassing and reconnection. In these moves, rights-based frameworks have been privileged over demands for decommodification, universal access to, and/or self-management of the delivery of basic services, and any potential for subversion contained in the act of reconnection have been foreclosed, able to be imagined only as a tactic, a means to an end. But in the prioritisation of the courts in its latest campaign, the APF, together with the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, has produced from the state an ‘answer’ to its complaint that the needs of the poor have not been included in its plans in the form of the targeted delivery of basic services for the poor. And, with increases in amounts of water and electricity allocated to the poor and provision being made for emergency supplies for the sick, it is going to be difficult to answer for the persistence of illegal reconnections and acts of bypassing meters in townships. These questions will be explored further in *Chapter Six* through the experience of Orange Farm. In the case of Johannesburg, it would appear that the City has appropriated the language of movements identifying themselves as movements of the poor to refine further its strategies of cost recovery (see *Chapter Four*), posing a question for the value in using the poor strategically as a political identity in such rights based struggles.

⁶⁰ The CCF and AEC adopted much less formal organisational models, with their lack of structure producing different sets of problems (see Dwyer 2004 with regard to the CCF, and Pointer and Van Heusden 2004 in relation to the AEC).

⁶¹ In 2004, a group of affiliates of the Johannesburg region of the APF, led by Trevor Ngwane and the SECC, launched the Operation Khanyisa Movement (OKM), a political party, to contest the local government elections. This caused significant division in the movement.

With the growth and evolution of new social movements have come problems, both common to all and particular to each. Repression on the part of the state has been a common response to all forms of collective protest that have taken place outside of and/or in question of the ANC.⁶² This has, in some instances, led to the focus on legal strategies for change, and activists' mobilisation of rights based discourses over demands for decommodification, universal access, and/or self-management, narrowing the imagining of the possible to the prism of 'the practical'. Repression, together with the need to sustain campaigns with largely unemployed membership base, new social movements also quickly became reliant on funds and other resources from external sources, such as international donor organisations and research institutions. While critiques have been raised from within all new social movements about the negative influence and effects of such assistance on movements, no new social movement in South Africa has not and does not accept such aid. In the case of the APF, access to large amounts of money has meant that some members have approached the movement as having the potential to generate income for themselves as unemployed people. While this was debated in the APF, with the resolution to establish a subcommittee dedicated towards exploring possibilities for establishing income generation projects in APF communities, nothing much has come of this, and from time to time individual members do try to use spaces of the movement to access funds for themselves. With new social movements consisting largely of unemployed people, questions of organisational form and sustainability inevitably come up against the need to provide for its own members.

The question of an approach to unemployment and questions of labour has also generated debate and division within movements like the APF. While all affiliates support campaigns for the creation of more jobs, some, like the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) have also established their own income generation projects in the context of the absence of formal, permanent jobs. This experience will be explored in greater detail in *Chapters Five and Six*.

⁶² See McKinley and Veriava (2005) and Freedom of Expression Institute (2003).

Within the APF, differences in approach to questions of labour have manifest in the form of differences with regard to the kind of language used in political speech. For example, while members of the SECC speak in reference to ‘the working class’, members of the OWCC refer to ‘the poor’ and ‘the poorest of the poor’. This reflects a strong influence in the SECC of the Trotskyist grouping, the Socialist Group, led by Trevor Ngwane, which argues strongly for the orientation of all struggles towards those of the organised working class and the uniting of new social movements with organised labour in the toppling of the ANC government and the establishment of a socialist state. The OWCC, on the other hand, consists largely of members with backgrounds in the Black Consciousness Movement and Pan Africanist Congress, as well as ordinary church members and unemployed people without any history in political organisations, who emphasise the potential for self-emancipation and self-organisation of the poor.

Franco Barchiesi writes:

Class-based discourses and practices retain a crucial relevance for community movements that are contesting the neoliberalisation of the South African transition. South Africa’s ‘politics of the poor’ questions, however, both the incorporation of the waged working class in the ANC-driven ‘national democratic revolution’, and its centrality as an agent of change in socialist discourse. The co-existence of traditional left organisations with local struggles that are highly diversified in terms of subjects, structures and ideas *defies*, in the final analysis, an ‘ontological’ understanding of South African social movements as premised on a homogeneous agent of social transformation. More attention is therefore needed for the processes of politicisation where a multitude of actors discovers commonalities, elaborates strategies, confronts power, becomes political. (Barchiesi 2006: 240; my emphasis).

The exploration of the OWCC in *Chapter Six* offers some account of the complex ways in which new subjectivities and collectivities are produced in the processes of

subjectivation that accompany those defined by wage labour and the factory, and in the politics of the poor.⁶³

In spite of this potential, however, post-apartheid movements of the poor seem to conform to Piven and Cloward's (1977) contention that the moment that movements become formal organisations marks the demise of protest action and their "insurgency". In the case of the APF, a certain rhythm has set into the organisation, with few campaigns having any significant impact since the loss of the case against the installation of prepaid water meters, and much time being spent dealing with internal problems. As 'service delivery protests' have become an annual feature on the South African calendar, with several new communities rising up each year, often including ANC members, the APF has connected with very few of these, its affiliates often embroiled in resolving problems internal to their formations.⁶⁴ What continues to be a feature of new uprisings is the mobilisation of the sign of the poor in demand of change and in coming together.

Aside from the literature emanating from within movements, two edited academic collections that have gained some prominence⁶⁵ are *Voices of Protest*, edited by Richard Ballard, Adam Habib and Imraan Valodia, academics in the School of Development Studies at the University of Kwazulu-Natal,, and *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Nigel Gibson, academic at Emerson College, Boston, and editor of the Journal of African and Asian Studies (JAAS), both published in 2006.

The first collection attempts to evaluate a set of movements selected by the "informed intuition" of its editors according to a grid of gains and losses, successes and failures with regard to changes they are able to effect through their approaches to engagement with the state, the building of alliances and coalitions, and their chosen definitions and

⁶³ For a sense of some of the debates that have taken place within new social movements about ways of relating to the organised working class and approaching questions of labour, see Martin Legassick (2007: 537-546).

⁶⁴ Gillian Hart has coined the term "movement beyond movements" to refer to "vitaly important processes taking place largely outside the scope of new social movements" (Hart 2008).

⁶⁵ *Voices of Protest* formed part of the taught syllabus for a second level sociology course with the title 'Organisations, Movements and Change', taught at the University of the Witwatersrand from 2007 to 2010.

processes of framing of themselves. The identified “antagonism” of movements like the APF, the CCF and the AEC is measured against the “more diverse” and “less confrontational” tactics adopted by TAC in its relations with the state. And the ability of movements like TAC to build alliances with COSATU is held up against the resistance of movements like the APF towards alliances with COSATU. There is very little space to imagine or recognise new forms of organising that might be emerging amongst activists within these movements, in particular approaches that might be anti-state or argue for a different role for the state or for different forms of political engagement in society. This is evident particularly in the chapter on the APF by Sakhela Buhlungu, who misses the diversity so characteristic of the organisation.

In the second collection, while greater attention is given to the diversity within and between movements, the potentialities opened up for non-state-facing politics explored in more depth, it is quite striking that the editor’s introduction and the chapters written by Patrick Bond and Richard Pithouse speak of the influences of ‘socialist’ and ‘autonomist’ influences in movements like the APF (in particular the SECC), CCF, AEC, LPM and ABM. Conducting no research whatsoever with so-called ‘autonomist’ factions within movements and spending very little or no time in the movements that they write about, these authors provide sad caricatures of the actual debates which emerged within movements in relation to forms of organising, approaches to the state, political parties, and so on, basing their theories on the views of particularly prominent individuals within or related to movements.

Much has been written in critique of the ways in which academics have related to new social movements, and, in particular of the romanticisation of movements in their writings, ironically often by academics who have re-presented movements in their own work (Bond 2008; Bohmke 2010a&b; Desai 2006, 2008; Desai and Pithouse 2004; Pithouse 2006; Sinwell 2010; Walsh 2008). Missing from all these critiques is a self-reflexiveness that is able to problematise the very structures of representation and valorisation (re)produced in and by academic writing and academia.

The question posed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay of the same title, 'Can The Subaltern Speak?' (Spivak in Chrisman & Williams, 1994: 66-111) is an important one to consider here. What Spivak points us to in asking her question, is

the swift eclipse of the power imbalances inherent in the act of representation, in 'the giving of voice' to 'the subaltern'. She shows how a need to apprehend 'the pure consciousness' or 'voice' of the subaltern results in the dual meaning of 'representation/re-presentation' (i.e. both to portray ('darstellen') and to speak on behalf of ('vertreten')) being run together, and thus removed from view in the practice of 'allowing the subaltern to speak'. Not only is Spivak critical of the invisible mediating role of those claiming to 'give voice', but she also highlights the ways in which subaltern subjects are represented in various dominant (con)texts so as to be understood according to logics valorised by the west or Europe. Defining 'the subaltern' as "the position of being without access to the lines of social mobility," (Spivak 2004), different ways of living, giving value, making meaning, and being, that might be practiced amongst subaltern groups, are not able to be read in/by the dominant script of global hetero-patriarchy, and the subaltern subject is always being made to speak in the register of the dominant.

Spivak offers us the example of the suicide of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, a young Indian woman involved in a revolutionary movement, as a possible speaking by a subaltern woman against her own inscription in the dominant script of Sati and suicide (in western texts professing to 'save' Indian women and in Hindu scriptures refusing women the same status as men in discussions on sanctioned suicides). Bhuvaneswari, a middle-class Indian woman by birth, conducts her suicide making deliberate choices to ensure that her act is not read in particular ways (e.g. she kills herself while menstruating to ensure that people don't think that she acted out of fear of being pregnant out of wedlock). But Spivak does not succeed in finding an example in Bhuvaneswari of a subaltern woman speaking. Instead, Spivak leaves us readers (both of Bhuvaneswari and of Spivak) uncertain of exactly what Bhuvaneswari's intentions were and of what Spivak intends to do with the example. Instead of a clear reading of Bhuvaneswari's act of suicide (quite obviously carefully planned and designed), we are left with a number of possibilities for the reasons for her death. What is clear is that our own attempts to make sense of her suicide, through Spivak's lenses, can only contribute to the foreclosure of meaning inherent in her act, the foreclosure of her speaking.

Rather than claiming to make Bhuvaneshwari speak, Spivak uses the uncertainty of meaning inherent in the act to encourage us not to seek 'a pure voice' or 'pure consciousness' of the subaltern, but to allow the voices of subaltern subjectivities to exist as difference, as antagonism, incomprehensible in the dominant script and logic of capitalism and patriarchy. In placing Bhuvaneshwari's act in conversation with the voices of French intellectuals, Indian intellectuals, and British colonisers, Spivak also encourages us not to ignore the privileged positionalities of 'intellectuals' and 'interpreters', positionalities also produced by capital, whose own relevance and meaning is derived from and dependent on the creation of specific notions of the subaltern.

For Spivak, then, it is not the task of the intellectual to 'allow the subaltern to speak' or to 'give voice to the voiceless' or 'to apprehend the voice of the subaltern' or even 'to make the silences speak'. Instead, in acknowledging one's own privileged voice as an intellectual, it becomes one's task to enter into conversation with subaltern groups and voices as they emerge, and not to seek to represent these voices in any homogenising images or constructions that work towards various ends. The task of the intellectual becomes that of 'putting the economic under erasure' (Spivak in Chrisman & Williams, 1994: 75), the economic referring to that task of defining, making rational, making intelligible within the dominant logic of the academe and of capitalist, patriarchal society. And, importantly, the task becomes one of investigating 'what the text cannot say' rather than trying to 'make the silences speak' (ibid.)⁶⁶. For Spivak, the act of 'speaking' in an unchanged society seems to be riddled with the problems of having to make oneself understood and be heard and read according to the very script that one is challenging. What the example of Bhuvaneshwari seems to illustrate is the fact that every act of speaking from a subaltern position must be understood as taking place and being heard within its specific conditions of the unchanged script of capitalism and patriarchy. As hard as she tries to ensure that Bhuvaneshwari's act will not be read within this dominant logic, not even Spivak (the post-colonial woman intellectual - herself sometimes considered subaltern) can offer the 'real meaning' of her act to us.

In a public address given at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 2004, Spivak explains how she has come to respond to her own critiques in her own life by “learning to learn from below,” seeking to understand the different terms on which different collectives make meaning and give value to and in the world, rather than trying to translate and ‘give voice’ in and according to the dominant ways of defining, understanding, and valorising. She goes on, however, to argue that “the subaltern has become greatly permeable,” providing the example of the transformation of indigenous knowledge systems into intellectual property in South Africa as evidence of the increasing incorporation of subaltern knowledge/s into the dominant frames in/by which knowledge is given value and shared. Highlighting the difference between ‘seeking to know’ and ‘wanting to learn from’ subaltern groups, Spivak again argues for the embrace and production of diverse ways of understanding, translating, and living (in) the world, such that our ‘learning from’ happens on terms set by the logic/s and reason/s of those from whom we are learning.

Such a reading of Spivak does not permit for the recuperation of academic spaces for the representation of movement voices, as Desai and Pithouse (2004) suggest is possible. Instead, academia must be seen as producing particular forms of thinking about and writing (about) the poor. In much of the literature that has been produced about the relationship between academia and movements, very few people have asked where knowledge about the poor is being produced, and who is doing this production. Reviewing the book, *Voices of Protest*, Ahmed Veriava writes⁶⁷:

Rather than trying to find analytical models to which to fit the movements that the group of academics chose to write about, a more valuable exercise would probably have been to try to write with and not simply about these movements. This is a challenge that faces all “progressive academics” today; a writing ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ or ‘for’, and an intellectual approach with something of the openness of a conversation. It is a difficult challenge, as it requires first and foremost the acknowledgement of the privileged and powerful positions occupied by the

⁶⁷ For a more in-depth analysis of *Voices Of Protest*, see Veriava (2008).

academic in shaping and directing the processes of narration and knowledge production about movements. (Veriava 2008: 487).

While the debate about the role of academics in new social movements continues, struggles of the poor continue. As movements transform into organisations, new movements mushroom, and new forms of subversion emerge, sometimes hidden from view, evading arrest and punishment. What is certain is that post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed the acclamation of a new political subject in the form of the poor/s, a new process of subjectivation in the form of contestations over the forms of life possible for that population group identified as the poor.

Chapter 3 – Measuring The Poor

Introduction

It doesn't mean that if you live in Sandton, you can't be poor one day. You can be poor tomorrow. Actually, there are people living in Sandton who have more debt than me. This guy's got minus R200 million in his bank account, but because his accountant knows how to balance the figures, he can sustain that kind of life that's seen as rich, but he's living with a massive debt. Whereas me in Orange Farm, I'm owing my shonisa [local money lender] R200 and I'm the one who's being called poor! (Thando Ngoma, interview, Orange Farm, 16/10/2007).

Imagine a poverty eradication strategy targeted at all those individuals with debts over R100 000, based on a definition of poverty that takes individual debt, rather than lack of income, as its determining indicator. Consumption patterns of these 'poor' might be monitored in an attempt to 'rehabilitate' their 'excessive spending patterns' and interventions might be designed to encourage these poor to live within 'their means', their struggles with the state revolving around whether owning one or two cars, or having a swimming pool, constitutes an 'essential need' and the like. Quite an unlikely scenario, but an interesting exercise that highlights just how mutable definitions of and categories such as 'the poor' and 'poverty' are.

Since the first attempts in seventeenth century England to develop a measure of the standard of living below which people could be said to be poor or living in poverty, income as a reflection of absolute poverty⁶⁸ has dominated as the primary way of identifying the poor and conditions of poverty in spite of the production of numerous critiques of it over the years (Du Toit, 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Green, 2006; Green and Hulme, 2005; Reddy, 2006, 2008; Reddy and Pogge, 2010 (forthcoming); Sen, 1982, 1988). A poverty line determined by income has been popularised in development policy through the approaches to poverty alleviation of global institutions like the

⁶⁸ Absolute poverty refers to the number of people living below a minimum income threshold.

World Bank, as it has sought to demonstrate the success of its interventions in this regard in a globally comparative manner (Green, 2006; Green and Hulme, 2005). This has usually meant the calculation of the cost in monetary terms of a basket of goods and services considered essential to the survival of an individual⁶⁹.

However, amongst the many critiques that have been put forward, several writers have argued that experiences of poverty and the poor are not homogeneous, as definitions based on income tend to suggest; that there are several other indicators that need to be considered in addition to income, such as health and education levels; that inequality is not reflected when absolute poverty is prioritised to the neglect of relative poverty; that income measures technicise processes of defining and intervening in the lives of people; that such technicisation silences or excludes the voices of those being defined; and that the prioritisation of the economic in such definitions excludes important elements of the experience of poverty in terms of its social and political aspects. Nevertheless, it would seem that the development of poverty lines are simple ways in which to identify, intervene, monitor, and demonstrate success rates in what has become a business of alleviating poverty, resulting in their continued use.⁷⁰

As the problem of poverty and the figure of the poor became increasingly prominent in post-apartheid South Africa, mainstream debates and discussions became preoccupied with the technical aspects of defining and measuring 'poverty' and 'the poor', with the stated long-term objective of intervening to address this objectively defined scourge. Deciding whether poverty is defined by an individual income of \$1 a day or R322 a day or whether 6kl or 10kl of water should be the minimal level of access provided by the state to the poor seems to be the dominant nature of discussions about poverty today. As the state insists on its new role as providing just the very minimal resources deemed necessary for survival, demands for free basic

⁶⁹ It has been shown that richer countries set their poverty lines at higher levels than poorer countries, suggesting that the setting of these lines is socially influenced (Green 2006). The influence of struggles on the part of the organised working class have also been shown to shift the setting of poverty lines within the frame of relative poverty rather than absolute poverty, that is, insisting that levels of inequality be considered and so the redistribution of wealth (Cleaver).

⁷⁰ An exception to this line of approach is the work being led by Andries Du Toit at the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), in which attempts are being made to develop models for the study of chronic poverty that go beyond and challenge narrow "econometric" models.

services, for example, are slowly transformed into debates about how high 'life-lines' should be or what the cut-off individual income should be for determining who qualifies for such 'life-lines'. And what was previously a highly contested field of political engagement has become a space about making particular gains within the sphere of the technical rationalities naturalised by the discourse of statistics and 'measuring poverty'. As this technical field works increasingly to set out the minimal levels of service provision considered the responsibility of the state, 'a better life' becomes a dream each must individually aspire towards, and the role of the state becomes one of 'enabling' the individual to accept and perform the task of assuming responsibility for the care of one's self.

This chapter explores how the apparently 'neutral' and 'objective' production of statistics, definitions, and other measures through which to understand and intervene in the lives of the poor works to provide the means to define a particular standard and quality of life for that population group in society identified as being unable to provide for itself, and thus to support the development of programmes to regulate and shape their everyday grid of existence and its possibilities. In directing struggle in this arena towards engagement about these minimal levels and standards of living, these processes contribute to the naturalisation of conditions of survival defining the lives of those designated 'the poor'.

A 'Field of Intervention'

As the terms of the transition were being negotiated and the ANC prepared to govern, a number of independent researchers and policy think-tanks, assisted and funded by the World Bank and other international aid organisations, began the process of defining and trying to apprehend in concrete terms the reach of socio-economic hardship in South Africa, named poverty. This was seen as important as apartheid had neglected to produce any meaningful statistics about poverty amongst black people as it had largely neglected the welfare needs of this population group, consigned to a system of separate government in the homelands. As the structural inequalities left by apartheid would necessitate state interventions in order to correct them, policy analysts and academics argued that 'proper statistics' were needed in order for appropriate interventions to be crafted to this end. Trying to make poverty a

measurable set of quantities and the poor an easily identifiable group in society, these individuals would contribute to the naturalisation of these categories in discussions and debates as finite, closed, and knowable so that those identified by them could be acted upon or made to act in particular ways.

The discussion that follows will illustrate how the practice of defining poverty and the poor through the employment of statistics in South Africa since the 1990s has worked to shape a particular “milieu” in the production of a “field of intervention” (Foucault 2002, 2007 – see *Chapter 1* of this thesis) for the state through which it has chosen to provide certain minimal amounts of resources to those identified as the poor in the hope that these will ‘enable’ them to become ‘self-reliant’ through their participation in the market economy. Key to the success of such governmental approaches is the ability to identify, know, and affect the poor.

Concerned with the business of 'getting the numbers right' (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006), most of those involved in discussions aimed at defining poverty and the poor would assume their role in society to be that of providing the state and civil society with 'proper' quantitative measures to be able to define and track the development of the 'well-being' of individuals in society over time. For the most part, standard measures would be developed and agreed on by which the numerical expression of poverty and 'well-being' (defined in relation to these measures) could be calculated and tracked over time. This would generally be understood as being necessary to allow the state and other actors to make proper and appropriate interventions to alleviate and/or to eradicate poverty. The nature of such interventions would depend on the nature of the definitions of poverty espoused by particular processes, and their 'success' would be determined according to particular changes measured within an overall understanding of what numbers constitute the accepted definitions of poverty in a process or society.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with the generation of statistics and quantitative models to try to address issues, when preceded by a context in which particular fiscal rationalities and economic possibilities are already decided, such models are often geared towards determining and entrenching minimal levels of access and standards of living for particular sections of society. In South Africa, discussion has focused on the need for broad definitions, for the adoption of specific

poverty datum lines, and on the development of minimal living standards for those identified as the poor in society. In the proliferation of measures for knowing and fighting poverty, income would come to dominate as the preferred indicator, and quantitative models would be prioritised over qualitative ones, reinforcing approaches aimed at determining and providing the very minimal levels of resources necessary for life to those unable to provide for themselves.

While the business of defining and measuring poverty within the South African state, civil society and academia only really gained pace after 1996, some early studies began paving the way for later programmes by initiating the development of 'base-line' figures which would later be used in discussions and debates about the success or failure of government's policies with regard to the position of the most marginal in society. In 1992, the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) was launched, managed by the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town and funded by the Norwegian, Dutch and Danish governments, with technical support provided by the World Bank. In the words of its final report,

The principal purpose of the survey, which was undertaken during the nine months leading up to the country's first democratic elections at the end of April 1994, was to collect *hard statistical information* about the conditions under which South Africans live in order to provide policy makers with the data required for planning strategies to implement such goals as those outlined in the Government of National Unity's Reconstruction and Development Programme. (SALDRU, 1995: 3; my emphasis).

Not only did the PSLSD produce a quantitative 'base-line' study against which other processes of policy analysis have unfolded, but it also pointed the way for the methodological approaches to be adopted in future studies, such as the October Household Survey (OHS) conducted by the Central Statistical Service (CSS). It could be argued that the PSLSD marked the beginning of a period post-1990 during which particular approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty began to be

naturalised amongst institutions participating in what would come to be called ‘the transition’, in particular those that prioritised or favoured large household surveys through which information related to income, expenditure and consumption measured against levels determined to be minimal standards necessary for a quality of life acceptable for ‘the poor’.

Acknowledging the need, however, for more qualitative research "to provide a fuller and more integrated understanding of poverty from the perspective of those who are poor and to fill the gaps which quantitative studies can not readily explain" (May et. al., 1998), the South African Participatory Poverty Assessment (SA-PPA) followed, led by NGOs, university-based researchers and the RDP Office, and funded by the Dutch Trust Fund managed by the World Bank and supplemented by funding from Overseas Development Administration, the latter two institutions also providing technical assistance. As one of the only qualitative research projects on poverty in this period, it would come to be referred to in most subsequent projects that would prioritise quantitative approaches to data collection and definitions and then use the SA-PPA to give qualitative ‘substantiation’ to their statistical findings, an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that would also become acceptable and widely used. It is also significant that the data collected from the more qualitative aspects of the research processes cited above have almost always served the function of giving support or adding texture to the trends and arguments emerging from the more quantitative research. Seldom have qualitative approaches dominated or framed mainstream research efforts that came to shape South Africa’s post-1994 discourse of ‘the poor’ and ‘poverty’.

The Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR), commissioned by the South African cabinet in October 1995 to be undertaken by South African researchers, and finalised in 1998, would also reassert the dominance of the quantitative model in the analyses and approaches to be adopted by the state in the years to come. It states,

One consequence of apartheid has been the lack of comprehensive social indicator data that could assist in policy formulation. For example, between 1976 and 1994 official data excluded the supposedly ‘independent’ TBVC territories, thus

excluding many poor South Africans. The PIR accordingly makes use of the 1993 Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) which provided a base-line survey, the 1995 October Household Survey (OHS), and the 1995 Income and Expenditure Survey (IES), supplemented qualitatively by the 1995 South African Participatory Poverty Assessment (SA-PPA). The PIR concentrates on the dimensions of poverty and inequality that are *easily and objectively measurable*. It uses *conventional, money-metric measures*, as *money is commonly the means people use to obtain inputs needed for their development*; such measures are therefore *practicable*, allow for comparisons between people, and are a fairly good proxy for standards of living. The PIR also uses a broader, composite indicator of deprivation to obtain a poverty profile. (ibid: 8; my emphasis).

The PIR then sets about using statistics to provide certain minimal standards of living deemed appropriate for those unable to afford a higher quality of life through the choices that it makes in how it defines ‘poverty’ and ‘the poor’ and its choice of ‘indicators’ to determine what constitutes ‘poverty’ in South African society. It states,

Poverty is characterised by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. Poverty is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid and/or secure, and fragmentation of the family. In contrast, wealth is perceived to be characterised by good housing, the use of gas or electricity, and ownership of a major durable good such as a television set or fridge. (ibid: 6).

Later on it states,

Poverty can be defined as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living, measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them. (ibid: 9).

The PIR is also quite clear about its approach to the interventions that it deems necessary to address 'poverty' and the situation of 'the poor' as it defines them. It unapologetically supports government's adoption of a neoliberal macro-economic policy in the form of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), presenting it as the best available option open to the ANC government given the prevailing play of forces in the global economy. As such the PIR argues that while growth alone cannot be expected to eradicate poverty, the prioritisation of growth is nevertheless what will produce the conditions through which the poor will be enabled to extricate themselves from their situations of poverty. To this end, the PIR advocates that the state adopt a programme that works to 'expand the capabilities' of 'the poor' through ensuring that they have access to the basic resources necessary for their survival, seen as enabling them to then participate effectively in the 'economic opportunities' made available to them by related state programmes. It states,

Expansion of capabilities focuses on the relationship of people to the resources they have and the commodities they require when meeting their basic sustenance requirements. (ibid: 5).

It is also significant that the PIR presents poverty (portrayed as a result of a lack of economic growth) as having the potential to worsen social conflict, also seen as working against further growth (ibid: 12).

Under the rationality of GEAR and its prioritisation of market-led growth, the PIR further encourages acceptance of the state's limited ability and responsibility to intervene in the lives of those most marginalised by the economy, offering them the bare minimum of resources necessary for survival, seen as enhancing their ability to enter into economic activity to help themselves out of poverty.

While the PIR acknowledges the fact that the field of statistics ignores the voices of those it studies, when it does attempt to give space to the lived experiences of ‘the poor’, it tends to portray ‘the poor’ as an homogeneous group of disempowered, weak, and voiceless people, thus undoing any earlier pretensions it might have displayed towards representing the ‘actual experiences of the poor’. It states,

Statistics say little about people’s actual experience of poverty. However, qualitative data from the SA-PPA study indicates clearly that poverty typically comprises continuous ill health, arduous and often hazardous work for low income, no power to influence change, and high levels of anxiety and stress. The absence of power is virtually a defining characteristic of being poor, and is worsened for women by unequal gender relations. Poverty also involves constant emotional stress, and violence has a profound impact on the lives of the poor. (ibid: 10).

Missing from such an account is the view expressed by those falling into the category of the poor, who were interviewed and/or participated in focus group discussions for this thesis, who spoke of the immense sense of power and resilience expressed and felt by and amongst poor people who overcome great odds. There was also the view expressed that mainstream definitions and characterisations of the poor tend to stigmatise people and discourage their progress. These views are explored in greater detail in *Chapter 6*.

Debates over Poverty Statistics

From 1995 onwards, the data sets presented by the censuses, household surveys and labour force surveys, conducted by Statistics South Africa (SSA), would provide a lot more ‘meat’ for analysts, with studies on ‘poverty’ and the related subject of inequality increasing in the context of wanting to assist the new state in meeting its stated commitments. As the measurement of minimal levels of service, income, and so on would come to characterise this growing field of ‘poverty studies’, David Everatt would remark,

Poverty is no longer seen as an execrable result of skewed economic growth compounding global, regional and local discrimination; rather, it is increasingly regarded as an unfortunate but unavoidable by-product of growth. Where fighting poverty was a cause, it has become a profession, populated by (barely distinguishable) consultants from the private and non-profit sectors. 'Development' is merely one among many services provided by government. Poverty has also been obfuscated by the "'meaning-of-poverty' industry' with competing definitions, indicators, strategies, toolkits and the like, each favourite championed by a gaggle of donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), activists and academics (Everatt, 2003: 87).

As the collection of data to measure and monitor 'poverty' and its 'alleviation' or 'eradication' grew, debates about what these statistics were saying would also grow.

In the written debate and discussion about poverty that unfolds in the process of reviewing the first ten years of ANC government in South Africa, there are two distinct periods into which analyses may be separated, based on two distinct data sets that are generally available and made use of by analysts in their discussions of changes in patterns of inequality and poverty since 1994 - the Income and Expenditure Surveys (IESs) of 1995 and 2000, and the Census of 1996 and 2001. While there have been several problems raised around the quality of the data collected in these sets (Simkins, 2003; Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2006; Meth, 2006), including "the lack of price data, the exclusion of home-grown products in consumption and significant problems with sampling" (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006: 2), the numbers have nevertheless served as the basis for a number of discussions and debates about whether poverty and inequality have increased or decreased since 1994. Using individual income as a measure of 'poverty', most analysts, even though they might use different cut-off lines for their poverty datum lines, agree that there has been an increase in poverty in South Africa since 1994. Using a \$2 a day poverty line, the headcount index increased nationally from 32 to 34 per cent between 1995 and 2000, or from 26 to 28 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Using the same poverty line, the

average poor household earned 11 per cent below it in 1995, and by 2000 this had increased to 13 per cent. The statistics also show that income inequality has increased, with the Gini coefficient rising from 0.565 to 0.577 between 1995 and 2000 and from 0.68 to 0.73 between 1996 and 2001, using the different data sets (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006; Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2006; Liebbrandt et al, 2006).

Most analysts then go on, however, to argue that income alone is insufficient in determining one's well-being and thus poverty. For most, access to basic services, health care, education, and other social services are equally important to determining whether an individual or a household is poor (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006; Van Der Berg, 2006; Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2006). Figures from the different data sets are then brought out to illustrate how the state has actually addressed poverty in ways that are not reflected in the statistics indicating income poverty. In particular, spending on social services and the provision of access to basic services are examined and quoted as evidence of the state's commitment to 'the poor', not always reflected in measures of pure income poverty and inequality. In the words of Leibbrandt et al,

This income-based approach presents only one of many dimensions of the measurement of well-being in South Africa. The narrowness and limitations of this approach are revealed when we show that, over the same 1996-2001 period, there have been important improvements in access to basic goods and services for many households. (Leibbrandt et al, 2006: 97).

Bhorat and Kanbur, supported by Servaas Van Der Berg, argue that, clearly evident from the statistics on government spending, is the "pro-poor orientation of fiscal expenditure" (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006: 8). They go on to state, "In the case of services - principally water, sanitation and electricity - the results point to a widening of access for vulnerable households." (ibid: 8). In government responses to criticisms that it has overseen a period of worsening poverty and inequality since 1994, the need to measure "the social wage" emerges, referring to those additional services provided by the state to individual households that are not counted in income poverty studies.

What these discussions neglect to consider, however, is the context in which such access was being made possible - that of cost recovery and privatisation in the delivery of basic services which ushered in the practice of user-fees for services accessed. Bhorat and Kanbur, do, however, follow their celebration of increased access of the poor to basic services with the following caution,

... recent evidence has indicated that the key drivers of aggregate inflation for poor urban households in the 1998-2002 period have been public services including water, electricity, transport and sanitation services. The provision of the asset or service, therefore, remains only a first step in ensuring that vulnerable households are sufficiently empowered to extricate themselves from permanent or transitory poverty (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006: 8-9).

While access to services may have increased, the expectation that people would pay for these services resulted in widespread cut-offs from water and electricity and evictions from the late 1990s onwards, with the figure of 10 million cut-offs between 1997 and 2002 gaining support and substantiation through research (Bond, 2004; Fiil-Flynn, 2001; McDonald and Pape, 2002). While the state would contest these figures, trying to show that conditions of 'the poor' had improved through increased access to services, those directly affected by cut-offs and evictions, those defined as 'the poor', would make their dissatisfaction with their situations of precarity and vulnerability known through protests and demonstrations.

More recently, debate has erupted over poverty statistics related to the period 2002-2004 and after (Meth 2006, Van der Berg et al. 2006). In spite of disagreements over the levels of poverty, there is broad agreement that there was a *slight* decrease in the numbers of people living below the poverty line after 2002 (Meth 2006, Leibbrandt et al. 2010, Van der Berg et al. 2006). Significantly, analysts attribute this decline to the increase in the number and value of social grants after 2002.

In January 2010, researchers from SALDRU released a report on poverty and inequality (in the form of income distribution) since the end of apartheid that made

use of national survey data from 1993, 2000 and 2008 (Leibbrandt et al. 2010). The report shows that income inequality increased in South Africa between 1993 and 2008 generally, and within each racial group. In addition, it shows that while there was an “unambiguous increase” (ibid: 14) in poverty between 1996 and 2001, there has since been a slight decrease in income poverty at an aggregate level. However, it is pointed out that poverty “persists at acute levels for the African and Coloured racial groups” (ibid: 4). The report also compares poverty in rural and urban areas, highlighting that poverty rates in the former have always been and continue to be higher than in the latter areas. However, they point out that poverty rates “increased unambiguously in urban areas between 1992 and 2001” (ibid: 15). And, they go to show that “while a much higher proportion of the rural population are poor, the proportion of the poor who are in rural areas is declining” (ibid). One of the reasons for this is the increasing migration from rural to urban areas that happened over this period (ibid).

The report also flags the fact that “intra-African inequality and poverty trends dominate aggregate inequality and poverty in South Africa” (ibid: 4), pointing to rising inequality within the labour market (due to increasing unemployment and rising earnings inequality) as the primary reasons for rising levels of aggregate inequality as they “have prevented the labour market from playing a positive role in poverty alleviation” (ibid). In this context, the report confirms, social grants, in particular the child support grant, the disability grant, and the old-age pension, “alter the levels of inequality only marginally but have been crucial in reducing poverty among the poorest households” (ibid).

But monitoring of this kind, at a more general level, has many flaws. For example, data indicating household connections to water and electricity do not always reflect actual access to running water and electricity. Another striking problem, highlighted also by the Taylor Committee Report, is the fact that none of these studies track developments within the same set of households over time. In other words, none of the national studies that state interventions have been based on have been longitudinal studies. There are just a few notable exceptions to this, for example, the local level Kwazulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS) and the Cape Area Panel Survey. While these studies go some way in trying to ensure that the same set of sources are monitored over a period of time, and in trying to include the ‘actual experiences of the

poor', these studies still fall into the pattern of wanting to know how best the most minimal interventions can be made to serve the interests of the poorest in society.

Distinguishing between 'chronic poverty' and 'transitory poverty', KIDS works with the concept of "asset-based dynamic measurement of poverty", proposed by May and Carter in 2001, predicting the conditions and resources necessary to enable the poor to escape from their 'poverty traps', in this way prescribing "a new typology of poverty" (May, 2006: 346) through which targeted interventions can be made in the lives of those at the margins of society to enable them to have access to the minimal resources deemed necessary for their survival and their ability to become economically active. While such studies purport to be studying the range of practices undertaken by 'the poor' that allow them to survive and escape their 'poverty traps', the models that they use, in prioritising market mechanisms for change, tend to neglect to study those strategies adopted by poor people that might fall outside of the market and/or the law e.g. illegal connections to water and electricity; and collective approaches to reproductive tasks at community level (e.g. shared childcare). In this way, studies such as KIDS, play a normative role in their definition and monitoring of poverty, reinforcing market solutions to the problem and neglecting more creative approaches to survival and life that emerge amongst groups of poor people.

Another interesting discussion and debate has unfolded over statistics related to the issue of unemployment, with much time and paper being dedicated towards proving that the claim that South Africa has experienced "jobless growth" since 1994 is unfounded (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006: 2). With income from employment being viewed as an important means of individual's ensuring their well-being, government and its supportive consultants, academics, and researchers have been outraged by the mobilisation of particular sets of statistics to show that unemployment has by all definitions increased since 1994, and that the growth predicted by GEAR has not been sufficient to produce the numbers of jobs necessary to alleviate poverty, that is, it has not been 'pro-poor'. In a series of arguments that highlight several statistical inconsistencies in the arguments made by those positing the 'jobless growth' thesis, Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2006) show how this notion relied on a single and incomplete data set, the Standardised Employment and Earnings (SEE) series, said to exclude

large swathes of economic activity, and in so doing misrepresents aggregate employment in South Africa”. “As a consequence, reliance on this data revealed steady decline in employment from the mid-1990s in South Africa. This result, when tested against the more reliable household and labour force survey data, has since been shown to be fundamentally flawed - with employment in fact expanding in the post-1994 period. (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006: 3).

What such statements don't state overtly is the fact that the majority of these jobs were created in the informal sector or take the form of part-time, casual, contract work. Once again, then, we see the mobilisation of statistics in a particular way, this time to show that government has indeed created more jobs. What cannot, however, be hidden is the fact that even when these jobs are considered, the levels of growth and job creation have not been sufficiently high to produce the kinds of change necessary to have effected much change with regard to levels of poverty. In the words of researchers,

Consistent with GDP growth, we find that there was little growth in per capita household expenditures during this period. Roughly 60 percent of all South Africans, and two-thirds of the African population, were poor in either year. The depth and severity of poverty increased as a result of declining expenditures at the bottom end of the expenditure distribution, and inequality among Africans rose sharply. By 2000, there were approximately 1.8 million more South Africans living on less than \$1/day and 2.3 million living on less than \$2/day. While substantial progress was made in other areas, such as access to safe water and sanitation, or coverage for social transfers like the old-age pension programme, the government's macro-economic strategy failed to generate the projected growth and create enough jobs to bring down the high rate of unemployment. Even if the projected growth rates had been achieved, it should not be assumed that substantial reductions in poverty would have

followed. Without a progressive shift in the expenditure distribution, even if South Africa grew at a remarkable annual rate of 8 percent per capita - similar to China's growth rate in the 1990s - it would take approximately ten years for the average poor household to escape from poverty. (Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2006: 87).

Bhorat and Oosthuizen have also shown how the overall growth rate of the labour force in the period after 1994 in South Africa contributes to the fact that the unemployment rate increases in spite of more jobs being created (albeit informal sector or casual and contract jobs) (Bhorat and Oosthuisen, 2006).

In the most recent attempts by the state to sell its idea of the 'war room on poverty', statistics have been wielded to show that the economic growth enjoyed by the country over the last few years has allowed for increased state spending on targeted interventions to improve the lives of 'the poorest of the poor'. In particular, increased access to basic services and employment have been shown to be key in the success of the eradication of 'poverty'. While a similar debate to the one engaged above could be entered into around these new claims, it is not the concern of this thesis to prove or disprove either sets of claims in this debate. Rather, it is to show how statistics are used to target specific population groups in society in order to prescribe particular ways and standards of living for them.

Poverty Lines and Indigent Policies

While it is clear from these debates and discussions that have come to preoccupy mainstream state, academic, and civil society discourse about poverty that the mobilisation of statistics may occur differently, in favour of different ends, allowing the position and figure of the poor to be defined and employed to different ends, the debate and discussion about what constitutes the 'proper measures' and the 'right statistics' continues as government officials, academics, consultants, and researchers persevere in their roles as providers of those figures and definitions necessary to measure their own interventions in the problem as defined by them. In fact, the debates and defences mounted during the ten year review of the ANC government

would lead to further criticisms that in spite of continued commitments in word by the state to eradicating poverty, with targets such as the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) invoked, there was no common definition of poverty nor any standard measures of poverty that would allow for 'proper monitoring' of poverty towards the ends of meeting overall goals and targets. In this world of specifying targets for intervention, and measuring progress in meeting them, an urgency would develop around developing a standard poverty line for South Africa.

In these critiques, South Africa's non-compliance with the international regulatory system has been raised, for example, the Copenhagen Programme of Action of 1995 which required each country to develop "a precise definition and assessment of absolute poverty" by 1996. In the words of Charles Meth,

Poverty is a somewhat different matter. Not only does government have the capacity to influence the number of poor directly (in particular, through the social grant system), but the poverty headcount, and the severity of their poverty, can, in principle, be determined with some precision. The fact that this has not been done is an indictment of all concerned. Calls for more 'research' may elicit groans, and reasonably so - the appeal being sometimes little more than thinly disguised self-interest at work. That would clearly not be true in the present case. The problem of poverty is of such overwhelming importance that no effort should have been spared in addressing the difficulties raised above. The government is plainly delinquent in having failed to comply with the Copenhagen Programme Of Action stipulation of building an appropriate poverty line (that should have been done by 1996). Its efforts to monitor and evaluate its anti-poverty policies are unimpressive. (Meth, 2006: 436-7).

In apparent response to such criticisms, government has, since 2007, commissioned a number of studies and papers towards the development of a national poverty line. Under the stewardship of the National Treasury, the 'Strengthening the Impact of Pro-Poor Programmes (SIP) Research Project' has been established, with financial support

from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), and has already produced a largely quantitative framework for approaching the discussion about the adoption of a national poverty line. Central to this debate is deciding what measure or set of measures are best suited to representing that minimal standard and quality of life below which one would be said to be living in poverty. In this discussion, 'experts' debate whether 'absolute' or 'relative' measures of poverty are needed; whether the international World Bank poverty line of \$1 a day is appropriate to the South African context; what goods and services reflect a standard and quality of life deserving of the poor; and what levels of access to these services determine classification as poor. Previously used and tested measures, such as the Household Subsistence Level (HSL), the Minimum Living Level (MLL), and the Subsistence Living Level (SLL) are discussed with regard to their appropriateness to the South African situation. While most of the papers published for discussion call for the adoption of multiple measures and strategies for the development of a poverty line, it is quite clear that their intention is to count up the very minimal levels of access to resources that are necessary for survival. In this counting exercise, it is largely the opinions and calculations of 'experts' that determine these levels, with little to no input from those being studied.

While the above process produced a number of papers for debate and discussion (Leibbrandt et al. 2007; National Treasury and Statistics South Africa 2007; Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute 2007), there is still no sign of consensus about a national poverty line. In a recent article David Everatt berates the "spray and pray approach" to poverty alleviation by the South African government which, he argues, must be replaced by the development of a national poverty line and proper mechanisms for targeting those truly deserving of social assistance from the state (Everatt 2008: 294). Similarly, in an interview (15 June 2010), Jak Koseff (Director of Community Development in the City of Johannesburg) vented his frustration and that of the City's in trying to implement pro-poor policies in the absence of a common national poverty line. In both cases, arguments for the development of a national poverty line support the idea that such a line should reflect the most basic resources necessary to enable an individual to survive or, resources permitting, to become economically active and self-sufficient.

It would appear that discussions about a national poverty line are currently being taken up in a participatory process of developing a national anti-poverty strategy by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and civil society partners. Drawing on arguments made by the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII), which makes the case for more than one indicator being used to identify poverty, the PSC, in its *Audit of Government's Poverty Reduction Programmes and Projects*, has categorised poverty reduction programmes in terms of causes of poverty, including income poverty, service poverty, asset poverty, capability poverty and social insurance (Republic of South Africa, Public Service Commission 2007 – *Report on an Audit of Government's Poverty Reduction Programmes and Projects*: 17). Prioritising the development of “a broader statistical definition of poverty” that “can serve the multiplicity of needs emphasised above”, it sets out the main aims of this process of dialogue as answering the following questions:

Is there an emerging consensus on how to conceptualise, define and measure poverty in South Africa?

Are we developing the data series that will adequately measure poverty and at the same time meet the divergent needs of the people who design and implement poverty reduction programmes?

Have poverty levels increased or decreased over recent years? (ibid).

While discussions continue at a national level about ways in which to measure poverty so that it may be eradicated or alleviated, the field of the delivery of basic services has seen a return to indigent management as a way of ensuring that the poor are identified as those unable to pay for their basic services and targeted for the delivery of free basic services of a particular standard. Bond argues that the introduction of neoliberal policies in the delivery of basic services, through their differentiation between different levels of service made accessible to different categories of people based on their ability to pay, has led to “class based services segregation” (Bond, 2002:191). He shows how policy processes, such as that related to the development of the Municipal Investment and Infrastructure Framework (MIIF), would aim to set minimal amounts of resources whose provision would become the responsibility of municipalities, which would base their decisions related

to increasing access for 'the poor' on their commitments to cost-effectiveness and the commodification of services and the corporatisation of service delivery, with the expectation that the provision of any access greater than that necessary for survival would be the responsibility of the individual citizen. He shows how the Urban Development Strategy (UDS), a precursor to the MIIF, released in 1995, stipulates, for example, a number of levels of service considered adequate to the needs of different income groups in South Africa.

According to the UDS, there should be "an average national distribution of 55:25:20 between full, intermediate and basic levels of services" over the ten years ahead of it, with basic services defined as "communal standpipes (water), on site sanitation, graded roads with gravel and open stormwater drains and streetlights (electricity)", and would be targeted at households earning less than R800 per month, and costed at between R35 and R50 per month. It defined intermediate services as including "water provision through yard taps on site, simple water-borne sanitation, narrow paved roads with no curbs and open drains and 30 amps electricity with prepaid meters for households", considered to be "affordable to households which earn between R800 and R1 700 per month", and costing between R100 and R130 a month. It defines full services as "house connected water supplies, full water-borne sanitation, paved roads with curbs and piped drains and 60 amps electricity provision", and costs them at between R270 and R350 per month, targeting households with a monthly income of above R3 500. (UDS quoted in Bond, 2002: 191).

While the UDS and MIIF symbolise a move by the state towards the adoption of more targeted interventions aimed at specific population groups, defined by their indigent status, the implementation of their proposals would unfold within a context of increasing resistance from communities demanding an end to cut-offs from their water and electricity supplies as the logic of cost recovery and commodification came to be felt under the duty to pay for services. In this context, minimal levels of resources and the constitution of groups for targeted interventions would come to be decided in struggles undertaken by poor communities affected by such calculated decisions in their everyday lives.

As government has been forced to show its commitment to meeting the basic needs of the marginalised in society, a terrain of engagement has opened up over what constitutes those minimal levels of access to services and resources considered necessary for survival or 'bare life'. As poor communities and groups have protested against their cut-offs from essential services, such as water and electricity, for non-payment, government has developed certain 'lifeline' amounts of water and electricity that municipalities are supposed to ensure are delivered to all households, thereby allowing those unable to afford to pay for services access to the basic minimum amounts of services necessary for survival. At present, most municipalities nationally provide 6kl of water and 50kW of electricity free per household per month. Processes of research and debate related to these minimal levels have also been opened up as a result of protests, and due to the increased attention being paid to indigent management policies at a municipal level.

In 1998, after a period of sustained community resistance in townships of Johannesburg, the municipality began implementing an Indigent Management Policy that would offer citizens able to prove that they were 'poor enough' (earning below a certain amount) certain rebates on basic services. City documents state that the 1998 policy was

a poverty reduction strategy aimed at creating a safety net for the poorest and the elderly by subsidising the supply of water below 10 kilolitres per month to households with a total monthly income of less than R800, or not more than two state pensions in the case of pensioners with the cut off of R1 080 per month" (City of Johannesburg, 2007mcase: 28).

Faced with "administrative and process problems" (ibid), only 25 199 applicants were successful, with only 30 659 applications received (Palmer Development Group, 2004a: 11).

This led to the repeal of the policy in 2002, with the adoption of the Special Cases Policy, which targeted pensioners with a family income of less than R 1 100 per month for one pensioner or R1 241 for a husband and wife; families with an income

of less than R1 100 per month, and breadwinners with full-blown AIDS or their direct orphans (ibid: 12). Its objectives included the provision of a subsidy on refuse removal and sanitation for households without the financial means to pay for these services; the establishment of a “poverty register” to inform “poverty mapping and targeted socio-economic developmental programmes”; and “to enhance credit control measures by providing a safety net for the poorest of the poor and identifying those using poverty to not pay for basic services” (ibid: 11). While the Special Cases Policy might have been more ambitious than its predecessor, it too would face similar problems, with its registration of just a fraction of those it aimed to attract (ibid; Bond, 2002: 221). Bond points out that while City officials would brag about the objectives of the Special Cases Policy to increase the access of poor households to basic services, its record of 92 400 water and electricity cut-offs between January and April 2002, told a different story (Bond, 2002: 221).

In trying to offer reasons for the failure of these initial attempts at indigent management policies, Bond and Greg Ruiters argue that such policies have stigmatising effects that prevent individuals from coming forward to claim their supposed benefits (Bond, 2002; Ruiters, 2005). This is explored in greater detail through the example of the evolution of the indigent management policies of the City of Johannesburg, in the following chapters.

In 2003, noting government’s commitment to the provision of free basic services “to address the needs of the masses of impoverished citizens of South Africa” and its constitutional obligation to provide a “basic level of service” to all citizens, as well as the numerous “difficulties⁷¹” faced in the provision of basic services, the DPLG undertook a study into the provision of free basic services in the country. Consisting of a quantitative survey of all 284 municipalities, interviews with a national sample of municipalities (28), and interviews with identified stakeholders in the sphere of free basic service delivery (e.g. Eskom and DWAF), the study found that 67 per cent of municipalities had undertaken some formal process to identify households qualifying

⁷¹ These ‘difficulties’ were said to include the fact that available statistics “did not provide a detailed picture of delivery at municipal level; that “there was a lack of information on the challenges faced by municipalities in delivering free basic services”; that the impact of free basic services on poverty was unknown; and that there was no information about which municipalities were experiencing problems or requiring support in rolling out free basic services (DPLG – Directorate Free Basic Services, 2003: 1).

for free basic services (DWAF – Directorate Free Basic Services, 2003: iii). In the report from the study it is therefore argued that “the high number of municipalities who had attempted to identify indigents indicates an interest to develop a record of indigents in their municipality” (ibid.).

It also found that a number of problems were being experienced by municipalities with regard to developing their own indigent management policies, stating:

... the qualitative interviews with municipalities showed that municipalities were struggling with the development of an indigent policy for free basic services implementation (ibid: 7).

Throughout the document the need for the development of guidelines for municipalities about their approach to the indigent is mentioned. The report would go on to show how a targeted approach, such as that of an indigent register and policy, would make more sense for municipalities with regard to cost-effectiveness, ‘efficiency’, and the ability to monitor the interventions made by government. While it would recognise that municipal managers interviewed in the study had expressed reluctance at adopting such policies because of their perceived administrative burden, the report would nevertheless make a strong case for the development of national guidelines for the implementation of indigent management policies at municipal level.

In 2004, armed with the findings of this research, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) would announce SALGA’s commitment to the registration of indigents and the provision of free basic services to this group in a ‘war against poverty’:

At today’s meeting in Kempton Park, the SALGA Consultative Assembly agreed to a campaign to register the poor throughout our country in the war against poverty. The aim of the campaign is to ensure that the most marginalised of our people - the poorest of the poor - receive a subsidy from their municipalities for basic services. This will go a long way to ensure service delivery to the poor, who are deprived of a basic amount of water, sanitation services and

electricity because they are too poor to pay for these services rather than unwillingness to pay for services." (Media Statement By The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Chairperson, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, 16/6/2004)

As poor communities rose up in refusal of the enforcement of the duty to pay for basic services, the state began to increase its efforts at appeasing 'the poorest of the poor', with indigent management policies becoming a favoured strategy.

In June 2005, in the midst of what were called 'service delivery riots' in townships all over the country, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) made public a proposed national indigent policy to set the frameworks for municipalities. Interestingly, the entire proposed indigency policy hinges on the provision of free basic services, or, at least, the provision of those services necessary for life. The proposed policy framework states,

Indigent people have in common the need to access affordable basic services that will facilitate their productive and healthy engagement in society. (DPLG, 2005).

This national prioritisation of the identification of a particular section of the population as 'indigent', that is, dependent on the state for their basic survival, has meant the proliferation of processes of research and policy formulation at a local level around what constitutes 'indigency' and 'poverty' and what minimal levels of intervention would be appropriate and necessary. The example of Johannesburg, explored in the following chapter, clearly illustrates this point.

In the state's most recent discussion document, *Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy for South Africa*, released in October 2008, commitments to targeted interventions for the poor are reaffirmed and mechanisms further outlined towards their realisation. These latest priorities of the state confirm the argument made in this chapter that statistics and other measures are being put to work in the construction of a field of intervention through which the poor are targeted to embrace particular standards of living and possibilities for their everyday grids of life.

Chapter 4 – Johannesburg's Commitment to The Poor

Introduction

*Johannesburg, my city,
dreams come here to die.
(Lesego Rampolokeng)*

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 would result in the growth of South Africa's most prosperous city - Johannesburg. Known more popularly as 'iGoli' (or 'Place of Gold'), Johannesburg, in its changing forms, would come to symbolise the dreams of many for 'a better life'. From its early days when people made their journey to the big city in search of their piece of the gold that was said to pave the streets, to current trends that see people migrating to the city in search of fame and fortune, Johannesburg has been seen as a site through which economic prosperity, a greater quality of life, and independence of individual choice, are made possible – a place in which dreams are able to be realised.

But, as Rampolokeng's words insist, Johannesburg is also a place in which people realise that their dreams are not attainable. And for many, their condition of making the city their own is the very recognition that their reason for being in the city has changed or no longer exists- their dreams dying. For the majority who first came to Johannesburg, then, seeking greater economic gain, the dream of unfettered individual success through the acquisition of material wealth would quickly disappear as the rule of wage labour and the capitalist market prevented the widespread and collective ownership of the means to the gold that produced the wealth that was quickly becoming the preserve of a few corporate elites. Instead, the majority of fortune seekers would be forced into exploitative positions of work in the mines and the subsidiary manufacturing and service industries that grew to support the gold mining industry. And segregation and apartheid would produce a city divided along rigid race and class lines, in the interests of the creation and perpetuation of a cheap and servile labour force, with Black people (and Black women) at its lowest rungs.

But the making of Johannesburg under segregation and apartheid was also marked by resistance on the part of individuals and communities, refusing incorporation into wage labour and refusing removal from the city on the basis that they were refusing waged employment (Van Onselen, 1982). And as much as the dreams of ordinary people might have come to Johannesburg only to die, it was the life created in the city by these same people that challenged the dream that was apartheid. Today, as wage labour is on the decline in the world, the country and the city, Johannesburg has become a laboratory for new state policies that seek to address the increasing vulnerability of its citizens outside of the social protections traditionally afforded by the formal wage, and new strategies of resistance against the minimal standards of living and quality of life being prescribed for these citizens.

Johannesburg is an important case study for a project wanting to understand the mobilisation of the poor and poverty in post-apartheid South Africa as it illustrates so clearly the changes in government thinking about how questions of inequality and need are addressed, and how the delivery of basic services comes to be dominated by a discourse of poverty and the poor that works towards entrenching the logic of commodification, as well as towards the production of a field of intervention for the state that allows it to reduce its role to providing the minimal resources deemed necessary for survival to a particular section. Important here is the fact that much of this evolution of policy has occurred in the context of resistance and struggle.

From Apartheid City to ‘World Class City’: Re-Imagining Johannesburg Post-1994

Johannesburg’s history is one of state-led segregation and the entrenchment of divisions along race and class lines, resulting in a city space reflecting these divisions. Until the 1980s, black people were only welcome in the city if they were workers, and then the majority only for the period in which they were employed, having to ‘return’ to their ‘homelands’ during their holidays and periods of unemployment or remain in ‘townships’ established for ‘black living’ on the outskirts of the inner city and away from the white suburbs.

The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 forced local authorities to allocate land for black occupation, resulting in the removal and relocation of black people from the

municipal jurisdiction to an area south of the city that was to become Soweto from 1924 on. It also made it illegal for blacks to rent or own property in areas designated for white occupation only.

Apartheid further entrenched these racial divisions through influx control laws and the establishment of the homeland system, as well as later legislation, such as the Group Areas Act (1953). Through such legislation, the apartheid state attempted to organise the city so that it could house its cheap black labour force away from white workers, in dwellings deserving of people thought to require a lower quality of life than whites (Parnell, 1992), and keep its reserve army of labour in the homelands, sustained largely by the reproductive labour of the homestead, or townships and hostels, where a lower quality of life would be entrenched for black people. But, the hardship of life in the Bantustans would see many unemployed black people move to the city and its outskirts illegally, with the burgeoning of squatter camps and an informal economy from fairly early in Johannesburg's history, becoming an inescapable reality and problem for the apartheid state by the 1980s. This is explored in greater detail in the following two chapters that look at the emergence of an informal settlement called Orange Farm.

By the late 1980s, then, Johannesburg was a symbol of the change forcing itself on the country – the unstoppable force of black people who had resisted influx control to settle illegally in and around the city, demanding their share of Johannesburg's wealth and comforts, and making parts of the city their own. But the apartheid state's acknowledgment of the situation of poor black people in the city would go no further than the formalisation of their informality (see next chapter), and the perpetuation of different standards of living for the urban black poor. In response to this, several campaigns unfolded from within the liberation movement to challenge the notion that black people deserved a lower standard and quality of life and to demand improved living conditions for black people.

While the ANC government would, in 1994, then inherit a city deeply divided along race and class lines, with glaring levels of inequality and differential levels of and access to services, it would also have to meet the expectations amongst the black majority for change in their interests. Many writing about Johannesburg on the brink

of democracy would comment on its potential for great prosperity as well as its need to address the problem of growing poverty and social resistance.

Writing about the changes brought about in 1994, Beauregard, Bremner, Mangcu and Tomlinson state,

As the centre of finance for South Africa, Johannesburg would thrive. It would become the gateway for South Africa's entry into the global economy. Consequently, publicists for the city touted its ostensible inclusivity and rapid transition to equal opportunity. The city adopted a strategic plan that would promote Johannesburg as a world city, an international metropolis, and even bid to become the South African nominee for the 2004 Olympic Games. Without the burden of apartheid, Johannesburg could be imagined as a global city. (Beauregard et al. 2003: xii).

But later on they write,

Although civic leaders proposed to make Johannesburg a 'globally competitive African world class city', they struggled to give substance to this vision. It seemed that before Johannesburg could join the company of world cities it would have to address apartheid's lingering consequences: enduring poverty, too few jobs, racial divisions, capital flight, low educational levels, and the other social and economic obstacles that made the city seemingly no more egalitarian and no more just than it had been before 1994. In addition, in the 1990s Johannesburg came face to face with the HIV-AIDS epidemic. (ibid: 4).

The re-imagination of Johannesburg was, therefore, "constrained by the need to balance harsh fiscal and administrative realities with growing demands for social justice", and characterised by attempts to achieve a balance between "equity and efficiency goals" (Beall, et. al., 2002: 5).

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For the entire first phase of its development, Johannesburg municipal policy would, however, prioritise the goal of increasing economic growth through greater ‘efficiency’ through which the ‘equity goals’, it would argue, could then be reached. Civil society organisations and individual citizens would proactively be encouraged to assume the logic of market-led growth, payment for services, and ‘trickle-down development’, in line with the evolving macro-economic strategy of the newly elected ANC government, and continuing on a path already adopted by the apartheid government in its period of reforms from the 1980s on.

This would be done through the drawing of pre-1994 civil society organisations (many of them highly mobilised against the local authorities under apartheid) into consensus-making forums that would lead to the establishment of the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber. Central to the process of re-imagining Johannesburg were the civics – self-organised township structures that emerged to contest the authority of the apartheid state in its many forms, in particular the establishment of black local authorities in 1982. Beauregard, Bremner, Mangcu and Tomlinson write,

The creation of the black local authorities was the first recognition of the permanence of black residence adjacent to the white cities and a tacit acknowledgement that the old policies of influx control as a way of regulating black urbanisation had failed. But the black local authorities were in an impossible situation. As illegitimate political structures and in the absence of a commercial and industrial tax base, they were to collect rents and services payments and to use this revenue base, inadequate as it was, to run the townships. (Beauregard, et. al., 2003: 8).

With the rise in campaigns from 1983 onwards, that boycotted black local authority elections and institutions, this task was made impossible. The Asinamali Campaign (‘We Have No Money’), which started in 1984 in townships of the Vaal, spreading to townships across the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal region (PWV), was particularly

significant in encouraging residents not to pay for rents and services. By the early 1990s, fifty two of eighty four councils in the Transvaal province had been faced with rent and service boycotts (ibid: 9). As negotiations between the liberation movement, increasingly represented by the ANC, and the apartheid state unfolded, a policy-making body was formed to allow decisions to be made amongst a range of stakeholders in Johannesburg through consensus – the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber.

In its final form, it consisted of fifty three organisations – the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA), local government structures, civic associations, white ratepayer and residents' associations, the ANC, and other political parties. In this manner, those previously organised in opposition to the authority of the apartheid state were drawn into 'democratising structures' that were reflective of the compromised relations being negotiated in the settlement that would end apartheid. 'Nation-building' through the creation of 'stable environments' for foreign investment and export-led growth would become the priority promoted for all citizens, who would be encouraged to become part of the various 'stakeholder-driven' forums being established as part of the drive towards building 'participatory governance' and a culture of individual and collective responsibility towards meeting the needs of the nation as it was being constructed according to the 'fiscal constraints' and market logic that had gained ground. With this thinking, 'the citizen' would come to be treated and made as 'the customer' (Ruiters, 2005), and a logic of payment and individual responsibility would come to determine the delivery of basic services.

A large part of the work of these forums came to be defined by a campaign conceptualised by the Department of Constitutional Development, called Masakhane ('We Are Building'). On 20 January 1995, the National Department of Constitutional Development launched the campaign as "part of a drive to normalise and improve relations of governance and to focus on rights and responsibilities of citizens and government" (Department of Constitutional Development, *Cabinet Memorandum No. 26*, 1996: 1). Central to this campaign was the encouragement of citizens to pay for their basic services. However, government would strive to make the campaign appear to be more than the issue of payment for services, encouraging the campaign to be viewed as reinforcing the theme of payment for services within a broader "vision of

development of communities, transformation of government and promoting sound relations between government and the people” and being “about ‘working together to get things done’ and building partnerships around development issues”, the consequences of which should include “improved service delivery and increased levels of payment” (ibid: 2-3).

In its attempts to localise the campaign and encourage joint responsibility between citizens and the state for the creation of the conditions in which payment for services would be accepted and naturalised as part of the general growth and success of the nation, government would argue that Masakhane be seen as “a joint campaign with civil society, including community groups, labour organisations, business and religious groups”, with a “shift” towards “promoting collective responsibility by means of building co-ownership with all stakeholders at local, provincial and national level” (ibid: 3).

Although short-lived, the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber marked the beginning of a period in which the role and character of the Council would be shaped according to the logic of addressing apartheid’s legacy through the corporatisation of core functions of the state in the interests of running the city like a business and making it work, primarily, in the interests of the world’s rich. Guided by the process for transformation outlined by the Local Government Transition Act of 1993, the Chamber represented the first of three phases that did away with apartheid’s unequal and differentiated system of separate local authorities governing separate racially determined areas, and began reorganising the functioning of local government according to a business logic. It would oversee the establishment of local forums to negotiate the appointment of temporary local government councils to rule until elections were held in November 1995, followed by a phase that would cover the period between the 1995 municipal elections and the design of a new local government system and the election of a new local government. The final phase began with local government elections in 2001. During the second phase, the seven apartheid era city councils (Johannesburg, Soweto, Sandton, Randburg, Dobsonville, Diepmeadow and Roodepoort) and areas falling under the jurisdiction of the former Regional Services Councils (RSCs) and the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) e.g. Orange Farm, were dissolved in the formation of the Greater Johannesburg

Metropolitan Council (GJMC) and four subsidiary Municipal Substructures (MSSs), only to be later further transformed into a single unicity with a more centralised system of governance. It has been argued that during this period of transition the City of Johannesburg “endured an extended period of uncertainty and political dispute, financial difficulties, and cycles of centralisation, decentralisation, and then centralisation again.” (Beauregard et. al., 2003: 11).

The immediate term plan that was envisioned as resolving the uncertainty and other problems of this period was iGoli 2002, which would also speak to a longer term plan called iGoli 2010.

In 1997, the problems of the city were acknowledged by the GJMC as a ‘financial crisis’,⁷² prompting the intervention of the Gauteng provincial government. On 10 October 1997, Gauteng’s MEC for local government issued a proclamation that prevented the City from new capital investment and required it to begin a restructuring exercise aimed at reducing budget deficits, improving service delivery, and enforcing the duty to pay for services. The proclamation required, in particular, that the municipality explore the possibility of ‘public-private partnerships’ in reconfiguring its service departments into business units. (Barchiesi, 2005: 196).

The proclamation also set in process the establishment of a ‘Committee of Ten’, consisting of representatives of the GJMC and the four MLCs, whose aim was to devise a plan for the restructuring of the City that would address the financial crisis and define its new functions as a unicity. The Committee of Ten later became the Committee of Fifteen, which, in turn, became the Transformation Lekgotla in February 1999, comprising the chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of the GJMC and the MLCs, and five co-opted councillors. The GJMC and the MLCs entered an ‘urgency agreement’ through which they delegated their powers to the Lekgotla, leading Barchiesi to remark that

⁷² Critics have argued that this ‘financial crisis’ was just a ruse to usher in a set of neoliberal policies through which the city could be ‘restructured’ (Barchiesi, 2005; Bond, 2000a).

in this way, an administrative unelected body assumed full policy-making powers, of which the Councils as composed of elected representatives were deprived. (ibid: 198).

In September 1998, a management team of four was appointed by the GJMC to oversee the immediate transformation plans of the City. Together with the Transformation Lekgotla, the team developed iGoli 2002, which was adopted by the Lekgotla on 16 March 1999.

With the slogan, 'Making the City Work – It Cannot be Business as Usual', iGoli 2002 was envisaged as a three-year immediate term set of plans for the City aimed at streamlining its functions and making it a more efficient and friendly place for business and the making of profits. Reiterating the belief that Johannesburg's solutions to its problems lie in its becoming 'world class' and running itself like a business, the document presented itself as a concrete set of proposals towards attaining the broad vision previously proclaimed for the City. Importantly, it again prioritised market-led economic growth as the primary solution to meeting the needs of all Johannesburg's citizens.

Under the heading 'Strategic Position of Johannesburg', the iGoli 2002 Transformation and Implementation Plan of 1999 states:

Johannesburg is and will remain the most significant metropolitan area of South Africa and the economic heart of the region. It continues to serve as the barometer for economic growth, social development, creation of opportunities and generally the well-being of the nation. The fact is that it is home to 70 per cent of corporate head offices, 55 per cent of the country's A-grade office space, producing 11 per cent of the country's GDP. Moreover, it is the key intellectual centre, responsible for development and growth. Johannesburg without being consulted is thrust with the responsibility of leading by example and being the catalyst for social and economic development in the region, and increasingly so in the continent.

If there is to be an African renaissance, Johannesburg will be at the heart of it. (City of Joburg, 1999: 1).

Seeking to harness this potential for Johannesburg in the interests of all its citizens, the document goes on to argue that

In Johannesburg the need for transformation is generally agreed as being informed by a broad vision for the city capable of meeting its people's basic needs, growing the economy, creating jobs and becoming more competitive. Transformation should address the needs of all of the varied segments of our citizens, especially the poor and involve them in a meaningful way. (ibid: 1).

In this way, earlier commitments to balancing 'efficiency' with 'equity' goals continued. However, in the characterisation of the City's problems as an overwhelmingly financial crisis requiring very specific and immediate structural (or 'practical') changes, 'equity' goals would again be submitted to an overall economic framework that would prioritise growth and the 'efficiency' required of successful businesses in the operations of the Council.

Under the heading 'Why does Johannesburg need transformation?' the document states:

Councils are presently unable to extend the provision of service to the poorest of the poor at a fast enough rate. Those who already have infrastructure are not properly serviced. In the current financial year the Councils are spending only R330 million (the optimal figure is approximately R800 million) on maintaining infrastructure while R400 million is set aside as bad debt. To address backlogs, the city should be spending R1.2 billion instead of the current R376 million capital budget. In respect of social and economic development, Johannesburg has a 31 per cent unemployment rate, an economy that grew by 0.3 per

cent over the last two years while the population increased by 2 per cent per annum. (ibid: 4).

Characterising the problem in such overwhelmingly economic terms within an overarching rationality of the 'efficiency' necessary in order to 'spend meaningfully', the document would then argue that economic growth and the reorganisation of the functioning of the City according to the logic of the market and the principles of business are the best solutions to the City's woes, solutions that would be in the interests of all Johannesburg's citizens.

In relation to the delivery of basic services, the document placed its transformation at the centre of both the financial crisis and its solution. Non-payment was noted as one of the key factors contributing to the financial crisis, with the Councils being owed R2.6 billion from services arrears and this debt growing by an average of R33 million a month (ibid: 5). In addition, iGoli 2002 argued for greater efficiency in the management of service delivery, with more attention being paid to business principles that would overcome the problem of the surpluses generated from service delivery going towards the subsidisation of other operational costs of the Council. It says:

The trading services (water, electricity, etc.) produce a R400 million surplus, which should be reinvested in improving these basic services but instead is spent on other functions of Council. The non-trading services are currently heavily subsidised. For example, the bus company with R70 million, the Civic Theatre with R20 million, the Zoo with R30 million, the existing housing stock with R134 million among others. Subsidies to non-trading services add up to roughly R700 million. If councils were reinvesting the R400 million surplus from trading services and the R650 from RSC levies into capital expenditure, the City would be able to address its capital needs. Currently, both amounts are used for Council's operating costs. (ibid: 5).

As a solution, then, iGoli 2002 would prescribe different forms of corporatisation for these different trading and non-trading services, with the basic principle being to

separate or ring-fence each service into a business unit or utility that would then operate and be run according to the logic of profit and the market. Cutting its subsidies to the non-trading entities, and arguing that they be run as separate business units, the Council argued that the surpluses be used to improve the efficiency of the trading services so that they would be able to generate greater revenue for the City. While the effects of such changes on the non-trading services is an important matter for separate research, it is nevertheless significant to note that iGoli 2002 would entrench inequalities through its reservation of certain forms of life for those able to pay for them as the arts, culture, and access to basic services would increasingly become commodified and governed by the law of the market. With regard to the delivery of water and sanitation, electricity, and waste management, iGoli 2002 proposed

the creation of a publicly owned corporatised utility, that will operate in terms of procedures laid down by the Companies Act and will be professionally managed while dividends, regulation and policy direction is kept under political control through the Council (ibid: 13).

The document also committed the City to the provision of ‘lifeline services’ with regard to water and sanitation, and electricity, stating that one of “the key challenges” is “to extend universal but individualised access” (ibid: 15) to people. Aside from a single line commitment, however, the document did not pay any more attention to this specific issue. Together with the other few references to ‘the needs of the poor’ already quoted above, iGoli 2002 laid the ground for future documents of the City that would argue more clearly for different standards of living to be made available to people based on their ability to pay.

Recognising that the planned process of restructuring would result in changes in the employment positions of staff and on the nature of work, iGoli 2002 did not spell out what these changes might be, but made several recommendations to ensure that the plan be negotiated and discussed with organised labour and with individual employees. It would also guarantee that no retrenchments would occur. It would also

offer some reasons for the anticipated changes in the structuring and organisation of work in the city:

Johannesburg is not a happy place to work in (and live in). It is plagued by a series of problems that create uncertainty, lack of job satisfaction, inequity and an uncaring environment for staff which spreads to the external environment and impacts negatively on customers in the form of poor service, low productivity and morale, bad customer care which in turn, leads to a poor image for the city, resulting in less investment, increasing the financial crisis. This forces decisions that produce an even more unhappy place to work in. (ibid: 8).

Again, the priority of making the city work in the interests of a business logic would be wielded as the primary reason for changes in the nature of employment.

In describing itself as an immediate term plan, the iGoli 2002 document would also emphasise the need for a longer-term vision, outlined in a section called 'iGoli 2010'. Here it would argue for the 'fundamentals' set in place by iGoli 2002 to be strengthened and enhanced in a ten year vision to take forward the realisation of the building of "a world class African city" (ibid: 35). Significantly, it would speak to the debate about whether to prioritise growth in its transformation strategy. Characterising the debate as one over whether economic growth or the meeting of basic needs should be prioritised, the document conveniently erases any notion of the need for redistribution that tends to feature in the discussions being cited. Instead, economic growth is presented as the answer to the meeting of basic needs, which, in turn, are said to have to be met if further growth is to occur.

It states,

An ongoing debate in South Africa, which will remain a debate, focuses on one of the key questions that must be answered in order to put together a successful development strategy. It refers to the relationship between addressing basic needs and creating

economic growth and competitiveness. Some have argued for either of these to come first. Our approach focuses on the need to address both simultaneously to ensure that the improvements in one contribute to the chances of the other benefiting. Put simply, unless we are able to generate growth and competitiveness we will not have the resources to address basic needs. It is also true that unless we address basic needs we will not create the environment and the necessary human capital to allow for economic growth to take place. (ibid: 34).

Presenting itself as bringing together interests perceived to be at odds with each other, iGoli 2010 would completely ignore the claim made by its critics that it denies the possibility for redistributive mechanisms to play any meaningful role in the transformation of the city, leaving its future, rather, to the whims of the market.

According to the document, iGoli 2010

prioritises the unserved and the poor by focusing on lifeline services, cross subsidies within services, cross subsidies between services, putting in place plans to address all current backlogs tied to performance agreements with the service providers..., and address the economic growth and financial constraints which will make available more resources to improve the operating and capital expenditure of the City. (ibid: 39).

However, critics have argued that the City's arguments for the decentralisation of the provision of basic services have facilitated the entry of policies of privatisation and cost-recovery to the exclusion of policies of cross-subsidisation. In the sphere of water delivery, for example, Patrick Bond shows how the free basic allocation of 6kl per month to households in South Africa forms part of a system in which the cost of water thereafter is more for consumers who use less water (low end consumers) than consumers who use more water (high end consumers), based on the logic of the market, that is, that the cost of provision of a larger amount of water is less than that of a smaller amount. Bond argues, instead, that this logic of the market should be

subverted through an acceptance of principles of cross-subsidisation, that are not based on the desire to generate profit, but on the duty of high end users to cross-subsidise increased access of low end users. In this way, the price of consumption would direct efforts at conserving water towards high end users, rather than towards those who already use less water, a strategy that in turn would prevent the construction of extremely expensive water supply additions, especially further Lesotho Highlands Water Project dams (Bond, 2008).

With decentralisation prioritised, however, ‘meeting the basic needs of the poor’ becomes tied to a logic of profit and commodification, and city planning becomes based on long-term financial plans that seek to reorganise work and operations along the lines of a business. iGoli 2010, then, calls for this kind of planning that puts the interests of good budgeting and careful spending over the need to spend created by the inequalities entrenched by apartheid spending and planning. It states,

A financial plan which does not seek to increase the financial burden but rather one that focuses on collecting revenues owed to the city, removing non and under billing problems, reducing operating costs, substantially reducing avoidable wastage, tackling fraud and theft, creatively identifying new sources of income, innovatively reducing our costs of capital, better cash management, improving access to new capital and leveraging greater intergovernmental fiscal transfers. The financial plan will result in adequate operating expenditure to ensure adequate service delivery, improve capital expenditure to address maintenance and backlogs and the building of a cash-backed capital development fund to be able to finance the big public investments that grow our city. (Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1999: 39).

While the document would argue that a long-term strategy for the city “should be jointly produced by all its stakeholders so that they can share both the vision and the commitment to turn it into reality” (ibid: 9), city officials and the ANC government dealt harshly with critics of its plans, and did little to understand or engage with the

increasing resistance against iGoli 2002. In 1999, local ANC Councillor from Pimville, Soweto, Trevor Ngwane, was expelled from his job and the party for publicly criticising the plan. In 2000, protesting workers from the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) were arrested and dealt with violently by police as organised actions against iGoli 2002 broke out. As the ANC Alliance leadership closed ranks around those within the ANC, the SACP and COSATU (and its affiliates, in particular SAMWU) who were critical of iGoli 2002, individuals from within these formations began to come together outside of the Alliance in various groupings e.g. the Anti-iGoli Forum (consisting of aggrieved SANCO, SAMWU, SACP and ANC members, as well as unaffiliated community members). Discussion and debate around iGoli 2002 within Alliance structures was closed down in a similar manner to that about the adoption of GEAR in 1996⁷³, and many members of Congress formations began to feel constrained and silenced, looking to alternative spaces through which to make their voices heard and more effective. (See Desai, 2002; Naidoo and Veriava, 2005).

In 2000, students belonging to the South African Students' Congress (SASCO) at the University of the Witwatersrand, workers organised in the NEHAWU Wits Local, municipal workers organised in SAMWU, members of the Anti-iGoli Forum, the Johannesburg central branch of the SACP, and community members came together in protest of a conference called 'Urban Futures' that was being organised by the City and the University to showcase their respective plans for privatisation. From the relations entered into in protests of the conference, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) was formed. The APF would quickly grow from a small activist forum to a formal organisation with over twenty affiliates in the form of community organisations and a few small political groupings. Importantly, the APF would represent a period of heightened and politicised protest against the ANC government. In the struggles of the movements comprising the APF, as well as the many other community struggles that would emerge outside of the APF's influence, a language would be mobilised consisting of references to the status of poverty characterising the membership of these movements, and demanding redress and attention on the basis of

⁷³ In 1996, President Nelson Mandela, in the midst of growing criticism of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), a clearly neoliberal macro-economic policy framework proposed for South Africa, declared that its adoption by government was "non-negotiable".

this status. In making these demands, these movements would also refer to the commitments and promises held and made in the struggle for liberation, holding the ANC government to its historical commitment to meeting the needs of all its people, especially the poor.

In spite of these criticisms and growing resistance to the effects of the implementation of iGoli 2002, by now being felt by people, the City would release an even longer-term vision, unqualifiedly claiming the city for the world's rich and envisioning a city built around the priority of market-driven growth. Released in October 2001 and consisting of a vision statement, foundation report, and strategy document, Joburg 2030 would "articulate what the City of Johannesburg can viably look like in 2030" (Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 2001: 2). Reading the document, it becomes clear that the stating of this long-term plan is also, at many times, a response to many of the claims being made in struggles against the restructuring of the city, making its statements in the form of arguments against particular claims or demands being made by movements, groups and communities.

While iGoli 2002 claimed to be 'making the city work' for everyone, Joburg 2030 unashamedly envisions the city as working as a global city and for the world's rich, stating that "In 2030 the quality of life of a citizen in Johannesburg will have more in common with the quality of life of a citizen in San Francisco, London or Tokyo than that of a citizen in a developing country's capital city" (ibid: 10).

In opposition to its popular characterisation as a struggling 'African city', the 2030 document states:

... Johannesburg will strive to become a world class city which operates in line with the highest internationally benchmarked norms and standards so that it can compete on a worldwide scale and ensure economic growth. As such it will offer the same services, at the same standards with the same efficiency as New York, London or Tokyo. Simultaneously, the City will be an African city, not simply as a happenstance of its geography and citizenship of its people, but as a positive statement of what is

different, special and unique about our people, their lifestyles, their history, their endeavours and dreams, and the environment in which they work and live. (ibid:13).

In order to attain this vision, the document argues that Johannesburg should

no longer seek to operate as only a provider and administrator of services to the City but to be a key agent of economic development. (ibid: 5).

It would also spend a significant amount of time and space explaining its prioritisation of market-led economic growth, speaking directly to demands for the state to deliver basic services freely. Commenting on over twenty vision statements from cities across the world consulted in its drafting, Joburg 2030 says about them,

It was fascinating to note that, at a general level, all were identical, expressing the desire to achieve a ‘better quality of life and higher standard of living for all its citizens’. What was more interesting was that each of these vision statements had identical qualifying statements linked to them – namely: a better quality of life and higher standard of living, *to be achieved by sustainable economic growth*. These international case studies, as well as academic research, fundamentally establish a pattern of causality and a modus operandi with respect to how city governments must place economics centre stage and grow the local economy as a crucially necessary but insufficient condition for the attainment of a better city. This view is not readily accepted in South Africa or Johannesburg. Due to the unique distortions faced by the post-apartheid government and the very real socio-economic backlogs which accrued under apartheid there is a popular expectation that a ‘better city’ and a ‘better quality of life’ can and should be immediately funded fiscally through direct government intervention and delivery of essential services such as water, electricity, housing as well as jobs. There are

three arguments which must be made in relation to this debate. First, sufficient evidence exists that government is not always capable or the most efficient deliverer of certain of these products or opportunities. Second, the ability and rate at which government is able to provide such services is directly related to its tax revenue and hence economic growth will assist government in delivering such goods and services as it will have more resources at its disposal. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, economic growth allows individual households and businesses to decrease their reliance on government for such provisions, and allows them to purchase such goods and services, privately at market related prices. In other words, economic growth will empower individuals, be they businesses or households, to be able to autonomously chart the course of their futures. (ibid: 4-5, original emphasis).

Joburg 2030 is also very clear about its approach to basic services. Wanting to ensure that the city “is perceived as a world class business location internationally” (ibid: 6), the document presents a list of opportunities that the city should provide for business. In describing these opportunities, it offers basic services up to the market, saying,

Our utilities will offer electricity, water, sanitation and waste services to industry which comply to international standards of service and reliability and which are cost-effective and internationally price competitive (ibid: 6).

Once again, the profit motive and business logic are promoted over the interests of redress and redistribution.

It also deals with the issue of poverty in a very matter of fact way, treating it as an expected but manageable ‘aside’ to the main business of growing the economy, stating that “poorer communities will continue to exist but their size will decrease and they will be more concentrated in special needs areas” (ibid: 9). Stating that income inequalities will continue to exist in the city, and that “poverty eradication is

probably an unrealistic goal”, the document goes on to argue that in 2030 there will nevertheless “be fewer households living in poverty than at present, and for those who are still struggling there will be substantial relative improvement in their quality of life”, with “hope and opportunities, previously absent, for them to move away from their current predicaments” (ibid: 11).

Joburg 2030, then, envisions changes in the labour market reflecting its overall vision of a city driven by the priority of export-oriented economic growth, and meeting the needs of the world’s corporations. It states:

In 2030 our economic landscape will be dominated by service sector activities rather than productive activities and specifically by enterprises whose cost structures fit into the business environment of the City. Mining, primary good production and much of the manufacturing sector will no longer be key contributors to the City’s economy, with financial and business services, transport, communication, trade, accommodation and catering and the utilities being the main providers of employment and GGP value added. Productive activities in the City will have a strong export focus and those positioned for the international market outside of Africa will be high value added producers. (ibid: 8).

Importantly, it imagines that a future Johannesburg will no longer be home to low-skilled workers, migrant workers, or a large informal sector, claiming that the labour force “will be dominated by white and blue collar workers with a culture of numeracy, technology and high service standards” in 2030, with “the skills mismatch between industry needs and labour force supply” having been “substantially reduced” and “imbalances in the representivity of management” having been addressed. The document also argues that “lower skilled migrant workers will no longer migrate as extensively to Johannesburg as they did when mining activity was a major contributor to the local economy”, and that although an informal sector will continue to exist, it will be “substantially reduced in size and fundamentally different in character”. It states:

Survivalist informal sector operators will either no longer be resident in the City or will have found secure formal sector employment. Remaining informal traders will operate as such by choice, rather than necessity, and will play an important cultural role in maintaining the African essence of our City. (ibid: 9).

Grounding itself in the set of fiscal ‘realities’ already outlined in the earlier iGoli 2002 plan, Joburg 2030 would argue for the progressive realisation of its vision over a thirty year period, stating that this would be the minimum amount of time required for its growth path to begin bearing fruit. With this logic, patience and sacrifice would be expected from the majority of citizens, as time would be given for the plan to take its course. Interestingly, the document casts the need for patience and sacrifice in the mould of the sacrifices made in the liberation struggle, thereby equating the patience and sacrifices required for economic growth to ‘trickle down’ and succeed for all, with the tenacity of freedom fighters:

By growing the economy of the City, and, by basing our dreams of a better life for all our citizens firmly on economic growth, we are aiming to confer to the citizens of the City the economic freedom equivalent of the political freedom which they achieved in 1994. Just as political freedom came with a heavy price tag (borne more heavily by some than by others), so too will economic growth and economic freedom achieved by sacrifice, patience and commitment. (ibid: 5).

Extending this comparison to explain the importance of waiting this thirty year period out, the document states:

It is understood that this is a sufficiently long time horizon, that many of the outcomes will not benefit this generation of households and businesses, many of whom are in dire straits. Rather, the realisation of this vision will be our legacy to the next generation, just as our generation is enjoying the legacy of pioneers of the Freedom Struggle. (ibid: 5).

In the face of the demands of movements that the ANC government remain true to its promises of a quality of life for all above the standards of basic survival and decency that were shaped in the liberation movement, Joburg 2030 would recast these commitments in terms of the neoliberal ‘realities’ of the present, calling for patience and time to be allowed to take its course as the basic needs of all would only be met incrementally within this rationality.

Including The Poor

As communities rose up in organised actions aimed at putting an end to the punitive actions being taken against them for non-payment for services, and in demonstrations directly aimed at ending the plans for Johannesburg’s restructuring, the City would be forced to reconsider its overwhelming focus on making the city ‘world class’ through export-led growth alone, or, at least, to begin framing and showcasing its plans differently – to speak to the needs of the poor as a central part of these plans. In the context of increased protests against water and electricity cut-offs (and the resultant growth in new social movements, such as the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF)), the rise in reconnections and the failure to entrench a ‘culture of payment’ for services in townships - the refusal of the poor to ‘know their place’ - the City was forced to admit that its policy of ‘growth first, all will follow’ was not appropriate to the needs of all of Johannesburg’s residents.

Between April and June 2003, the City conducted its first Residents’ Satisfaction Survey (RSS) in an attempt to measure its progress and review its performance in the eyes of its residents, and to begin assessing and addressing some of the criticisms being laid at its door. Through a process of conducting and analysing 3 300 interviews with individuals representative of Johannesburg’s eleven regions and community types, it was found that there were significantly high levels of dissatisfaction with the delivery of basic services, particularly in informal settlements and the region of Ennerdale/Orange Farm.

The report from the survey, released in September 2003 states:

This relatively large perception that services are declining in informal settlements warrants urgent attention. (Palmer Development Group, 2003: ii).

In 2004, the City commissioned a number of research projects that resulted in the following documents being released in June of the same year: *Developing a Profile of Urban Poverty in the City of Johannesburg* (by the Palmer Development Group); *Voices of the Poor: Case Studies of Urban Poverty in the City of Johannesburg* (by the Community Agency For Social Enquiry – CASE); *Social Services Package* (by the Palmer Development Group); *HIV-AIDS* – by Richard Tomlinson; and *Women in the City of Johannesburg* (by Mirjam Van Donk).

Each of these documents speaks to its place in the longer term development of a Human Development Strategy (HDS), contributing towards the City's attempts to understand and develop ways of intervening in the problems of marginality, precarity, and vulnerability present in the lives of the majority of its residents – those it would name 'the poor'. Employing methodologies like those explored in *Chapter Two*, these projects began to carve out a 'field of knowledge and intervention' in the form of poverty and the poor for the City of Johannesburg that would entrench inequality and lower standards of living for those declared to be the poor, increasingly those unable to afford the basic necessities for survival.

Quantifying poverty in the city and giving it a human face, these documents began to argue for the adoption of a development strategy that would place human beings at the centre of its growth plans. And 'development' would come to mean the meeting of the very minimal survival needs of people to enable them to become 'economically productive' members of society. Explaining human development as an essential partner to economic development, these reports frame an approach for the city that would eventually replace Joburg 2030 and speak a language, in some ways, quite different to that of the iGoli era. In the documents that the City produced from 2004 onwards, a language emerges that seems to speak much more directly to those making claims on the state for greater attention – poor communities, many organising

themselves on the basis of their material position as the poor – in a manner that sees the elaboration of policies specifically targeting them as a separate group in society, a society that continues to be viewed in terms of its potential to grow as a ‘world class African city’. Significantly, this change is acknowledged overtly by the City as being necessary in the context of the threat of resistance.

For example, the City’s Human Development Strategy (HDS), launched in 2005, makes a clear departure from the smugness with which iGoli 2002 and Joburg 2030 argued that growth would be the answer to poverty, understanding the need for this shift in terms of the threat of resistance (‘social instability’). It states:

... the City cannot afford to maintain the status quo, nor be slow to act. Unless direct and urgent interventions are made, projections show that poverty levels will worsen and the likelihood of social disruption will increase. Action must be taken or Council will be faced with an increasingly unpredictable social, political and economic environment. Poverty must be tackled head on or the ability of the City to deliver services to all its residents will be diminished and financial sustainability will be seriously compromised. Economic growth cannot be optimised in a context where a substantial proportion of the city’s population is living in hardship. (City of Johannesburg, 2005: 12).

The HDS would sell itself as “Joburg’s commitment to the poor” and be developed as “partner to its economic development strategy”, Joburg 2030 (ibid: 2). In the key strategic changes adopted by the City from 2004 onwards, the categories of poverty and the poor become increasingly prominent in both descriptions of the City’s problems and in interventions envisaged for its transformation. In the City’s own presentation of these changes, the ideal of ‘an African world class city’ still exists; it is now, however, dependent not only on economic growth, but on the gradual eradication of poverty. The HDS would, therefore, see a change in the city’s slogan to “A world class African city for all – this is Joburg’s commitment to the poor.” (ibid: 4).

Remaining committed to the vision of Joburg 2030, of a city speaking in the first instance to the interests of the world's corporate interests, the later documents' renewed commitments to and greater focus on the position of the poor and the problem of poverty are bound to a logic of export-oriented and market-driven growth, and the interventions designed in their regard are fully within a logic of fiscal restraint and the market. In this way, any prescriptions said to be in the interests of the poor must be understood within the broader goal of enhancing growth and making the city efficient for better business. As the need to address the problem of poverty arises in the context of the poor making demands for neoliberal policies to be halted and the state to accept greater responsibility in ensuring redress and redistribution to meaningfully address levels of inequality and hardship in the city, the HDS and other documents post-2004 pose solutions that seek to prevent social instability that arises from poverty as it poses a threat to economic growth. The plight of the poor is not, then, the primary reason for changes in their favour. Rather, their position demands address only because of the threat that it poses to economic growth.

With economic growth, then, still clearly the driving force behind changes, interventions prescribed by the City in these documents for the poor speak to the most minimal requirements necessary to ensure social stability. It is interesting that social stability is characterised in terms of access to basic services and an economic livelihood (a job or enterprise), demands that have been clearly enunciated by movements of the poor. The research commissioned by the City and the policy documents that follow to suggest interventions to address the problem of poverty, then speak to the production of knowledge around what constitutes the most minimal requirements for individual survival, which, in turn, comes to be portrayed as those resources necessary to enable an individual to become economically productive (i.e. get a job or start a small business, etc.). For example, one of the research documents produced in 2004, *Social Services Package*, states,

Inadequate access to a sufficient supply of water of good quality and poor sanitation creates increased risk of disease, with diarrhoea being the most prevalent. Considering the relative costs of benefits of improved water supply and sanitation, the

most important step is that which provides a properly functioning, properly managed service at a basic level (25 litres of water per person within 200 metres of the home and a VIP toilet, for example). This step thus represents the greatest public benefit per unit of money invested. *There are health benefits in increasing service levels beyond this*, notably by providing water on site and having a toilet in the home. *But typically the marginal health benefits of the next steps are smaller in relation to the total cost of the service.* (Palmer Development Group, 2004a: 38; my emphases).

Later on it states, "... the primary trading services tend to yield higher public benefits when the focus is on providing basic levels of service" (ibid: 41). In this manner, a language emerges that allows the City to commit itself to the eradication of poverty through an unchanged commitment and overall strategy that prioritises economic growth and the logic of neoliberal fiscal restraint and business efficiency in the delivery of basic services. 'Individual benefits' are measured against 'public benefits', which are understood within the rationale of 'making the city work along business principles', and the field of intervention that poverty and the poor become, are used to entrench a logic of commodification and market principles amongst those struggling against it as they feel their effects in their daily lives.

The HDS is, however, very different from Joburg 2030 in the ways in which it foregrounds poverty and acknowledges the poor as a central part of Johannesburg's community rather than treating poverty as something that economic growth would 'naturally' eliminate or no longer 'draw' to Johannesburg. Instead, adopting a perspective of 'human development' it recasts the plans for the city in more 'humane' terms that speak to the concerns and criticisms raised against them in struggles of communities feeling the early effects of its policy changes. It states,

The intention of the HDS is to provide a framework within which other city policies can accommodate a human development perspective and address conditions such as poverty, inequality and social exclusion on a city scale. (ibid: 2).

The HDS is also strikingly different from Joburg 2030 in that it describes and acknowledges the problem of poverty as a central focus of the City, stating,

Currently, more than half the households in Johannesburg earn R1600 or less a month and almost one in five residents does not have formal housing... For the poor, Johannesburg is a dangerous place. Many go from day to day without adequate water, sewerage and electricity, and they live in overcrowded and hazardously dilapidated buildings. These daily realities, compounded by the devastating impact of HIV-AIDS, sharp inequalities between rich and poor, and an increasingly unstable population are among the challenges facing the city. A human development perspective of the HDS recognises that people are the city's biggest asset and that they need to be supported and encouraged to realise their full potential and become fully-fledged urban residents. (ibid: 2).

Situating itself within the broad parameters of the developmental perspective adopted by the United Nations, the HDS explains its understanding of development,

The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and change over time. People often value achievements that do not show at all, or immediately in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and a dense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. (ibid: 4).

In its prioritisation of export-led economic growth, this perspective would, however, as already shown above, be submitted to an overall logic of fiscal restraint and

business efficiency central to neoliberal policies. ‘Enlarging people’s choices’ would, then, have to be met within this logic, and interventions to ‘assist the poor’ would increasingly be defined within the logic of getting the poor to pay for services and encouraging self-reliance through small business development and individual entrepreneurship or the uptake of casual, part-time jobs in the growing service sector. It is important to note how this discourse of self-help emerges in the broader context of the neoliberal withdrawal of the state from the field of responsibility in relation to its citizens, and the decline of formal sector waged employment in Johannesburg and more generally in South Africa and the world. As already discussed in *Chapters One and Two*, Franco Barchiesi highlights how this decline in wage labour results in the removal of the guarantee of social citizenship rights in the form of decommodified services provided through the benefits accompanying wage labour. In this context, policies emerge that encourage individual responsibility, self-help, and self-reliance on the part of the individual citizen, with minimal resources being provided by the state. Increasingly, this discourse has also come to encourage market mechanisms for becoming self-reliant and accessing the resources necessary for life. The example of Johannesburg clearly illustrates how this discourse has come to take effect.

In summary, then, the HDS proposes three broad fields of intervention to address the position of the city’s poor. Firstly, under the heading ‘Safeguarding and Supporting’, the HDS argues for improvements to be made to Johannesburg’s safety net in order to address household poverty by expanding the current social package of subsidised basic services and rates rebates for lower income property owners, as well as for measures to enable access of residents to social grants (administered provincially). Secondly, under the heading ‘Championing Rights and Opportunities’, it proposes several measures to improve the position of potential entrepreneurs and job-seekers by exposing them to economic opportunities, and measures to address the position of women and children in accessing the benefits of the city. Finally, under the heading ‘Building Prospects For Social Inclusion’, the HDS highlights the need to find ways of enhancing social inclusion of youth and migrants, creating public space, building community trust in the city, and supporting civic life through partnerships at community level. Unlike Joburg 2030, then, which imagined a city that would no longer attract low-skilled job-seekers and that would not have many low-income residents, the HDS very clearly accepts that the majority of the city’s residents enjoy a

monthly income below R1 600 and makes plans to include them in a manner that does not threaten the growth plan celebrated by iGoli 2002 and Joburg 2030.

The research process undertaken in 2004 and the revision of documents that followed, would also be directed towards showing how the City had already been speaking to the needs of the poor through its various social provisions in the form of a 'social package'. The document entitled *Social Services Package* would primarily serve this purpose, and suggest ways of improving Johannesburg's provision of free and subsidised services to those earning below a particular income level in the city. Changes in this regard are explored in the next section. It is again important to note here, however, that the social package comes to be seen as the minimal basket of services that the City should provide to those unable to care for themselves to enable them to survive, or to become economically active.

In 2006, in another exercise in 'long-term planning', the City released its Growth and Development Strategy (GDS). It explained its purpose thus,

At one level the HDS neatly complements Joburg 2030. However, at another level it raises the key question of whether Joburg 2030 still provides by itself the central strategic line that the City is following. The City of Johannesburg believes that it is necessary to revise its core city strategy in order to clarify and convey one central and over-arching strategic message about the development course being followed. The GDS serves this purpose. (City of Johannesburg, 2006b: 6).

As its name suggests, then, the GDS would bring together the City's plans for economic growth and human development, no longer seeing them as separate parts of its overall plan. In this manner, the GDS would build on the arguments made in the HDS, tying the potential of the poor to its model for economic development.

In quite a stark departure from the language of Joburg 2030, the GDS acknowledges the permanence of the poor in the city. One of the six principles making up its

development paradigm is a commitment to the “proactive absorption of the poor”, where it is explained that

the City of Johannesburg will not plan on the basis that the poor, vulnerable and excluded will eventually go somewhere else. It will proactively help new households, new internal and circular migrants, those in hostels, informal settlements and historical ghettos, unemployed youth, refugees, and others *negotiate access to the city and get onto the ladder of prosperity*. (ibid: 54; original emphasis).

Later on it states,

Johannesburg is already home to a large number of poor people. Through natural processes of internal growth and social transformation it is generating new poor residents and households from within. In addition, the city is a magnet for many people seeking opportunity from other parts of the country and the world. While some of these newcomers will already have skills, connections and access to capital, many will not be able to secure their livelihoods immediately. In the phrasing of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, many will probably ‘cost the local tax base more than they are able to contribute to it’, at least in the short term. If it achieves major success in development, Johannesburg is likely to see even more poor people flock to it in search of a better life. This means, ironically, that the *more successful Johannesburg is today the greater will be its developmental challenges tomorrow*. The principle ‘pro-active absorption of the poor’ communicates that the City fully understands this contradiction, and its historical mission in the face of it. (ibid: 56; original emphasis).

It is significant to note, however, that any mechanisms proposed to be undertaken in the interest of ‘the proactive absorption of the poor’ are clearly situated within the

logic of export-oriented economic growth, with the overall aim of preventing the threat of social instability caused by poverty and harnessing the potential of the poor to the goals of growth. In this way, any potential for the poor to impose or demand alternatives to the logic of the market and to live differently or antagonistically to capitalist society is attempted to be contained and redirected. While the language of the GDS suggests, then, a strong commitment to addressing the plight of the poor, it is also quite clearly committed to doing this through the logic of neoliberalism, a logic proven to worsen the situation of the poor in the first instance. This is quite clear in the ways in which the GDS describes the principle of ‘proactive absorption of the poor’. It states,

...the City owes it to current and future residents not to simply hope that the poor will go elsewhere. A large transient or floating population of poor residents, not given any chance to secure livelihoods in the city, undermines stability. It also represents a huge opportunity cost. Simply put, dynamic cities attract and incorporate. It is the presence of a large population of opportunity seekers that makes them dynamic. A failure to absorb existing poor residents and poor newcomers – many of whom have the capacity to labour, or possess energy, enthusiasm, drive and an appetite for risk, or have some capital that they wish to invest or even just the willingness to take on debt for a stake that can be put to productive use – is therefore to fail to build the city’s future foundations for development. (ibid: 58).

It goes on to state,

‘Proactive absorption’ therefore means that the City will work boldly and innovatively to address the conditions of people finding themselves in these circumstances, so that they can access basic livelihoods, start to build a core of assets, gear up for participation in the urban economy, master the demands of urban life and negotiate urban costs of living, and ultimately

thereby get onto the first rungs of the ladder of prosperity. (ibid: 59).

Interestingly, the GDS would also attempt to argue that it was not in its plans to provide merely for ‘the basic needs’ of the poor. Rather, it would find ways of

enabling the poor to access basic livelihoods, inter alia by helping them to secure social grants, facilitating skills development and basic employment opportunities, and supporting ‘self-help’ projects, start-up micro-enterprises and community based co-operatives”, and assisting them with affordable basic services, low-cost rental housing, and other basic means of ‘ensuring their inclusion’ (ibid: 59).

Implying that ‘basic needs’ refer to those resources necessary for mere survival (e.g. basic amounts of basic services such as water), the GDS would argue that the City was going beyond the provision of these ‘basic needs’ by providing other services enabling the poor to help themselves out of poverty. What it cannot deny is that even the provision of these ‘other services’ happens at minimal levels, with much research and debate taking place about what constitutes these minimal interventions necessary to be undertaken or provided by the state. It is also quite clear that the kinds of interventions prescribed by the GDS open up opportunities for the poor only at the level of becoming active through the market. Rather than broadening their choices, then, such prescriptions deny the poor the potential opened up by their being outside of the discipline and regulation of wage labour and the market by forcing them into market-related enterprises or super-exploitative forms of work, especially in the context of the duty to pay for basic services.

The GDS is also quite clear that its commitment to the “proactive absorption of the poor” should not result in the City ending up “with a bigger welfare burden”, but that “through shared growth and other measures” it will help people to help themselves “out of poverty” (ibid: 65). In this manner, poverty is portrayed as a state of being from which one should desire escape or assistance out of, and something out of which people should individually strive to escape, with the limited assistance of the state. In

this way, the eradication of poverty becomes a mutual goal of the individual poor person and the state, a state that is increasingly run according to the restraint of neoliberal spending and corporate 'efficiency'. Far from the demands made by movements of poor people for the state to assume greater responsibility in the meeting of the needs of the marginalised through redistribution and redress, the GDS's mobilisation of the principle of 'proactive absorption of the poor' provides a way of addressing the problems of the poor through the market in a manner that sees the poor assume far greater individual responsibility for the quality of their lives by accepting those minimal resources provided by the state and using them to become economically active and so ascend the ladder to 'greater prosperity'. In this manner, the GDS foregoes any notion of eradicating inequality and rather entrenches division in the city, arguing for a particular targeted set of interventions for those identified as the poor that will allow them a certain standard and quality of life considered necessary to enable them to become economically active. Access to a higher standard and quality of life will, then, be dependent on their success economically and their ability to progress so as to buy this higher quality of life.

The GDS explains this approach in terms of the theory of the 'two economies'. It states,

... Joburg 2030 does not address all development concerns. Shortly after it was published, the President of South Africa pushed to centre stage the idea that the country has 'two economies', where the opportunities for and benefits of growth in the first economy are not being shared with people still eking out livelihoods in the second economy, in large part because the two economies do not connect. The President challenged the country to address the fact that the ladders between the two floors of the economic house are broken. *Joburg 2030*, published before the President introduced the 'two-economy thesis', did not address this concern. *Joburg 2030* therefore anticipates ASGISA's focus on 'accelerating' growth, but not its equally important emphasis on 'sharing' growth. In practice, the City has done a lot in the last few years to target the second

economy. But its core strategy does not reflect this emerging practice clearly. (City of Johannesburg, 2006b: 5).

Describing the ‘second economy’ as “the myriad of ‘generative interactions’ between would-be business people that have not yet come to fruition, or which are struggling to stabilise... (ibid: 30), the GDS would, then, begin to reflect the above in its proposals for interventions at the level of addressing poverty and the problems of the poor.

Making its ‘core strategy’ for the eradication of poverty mechanisms for assisting people in the ‘second economy’ and the provision of the very basic resources to those outside of the market to become active in this ‘second economy’ with the hope of graduating to the ‘first economy’, the GDS promotes certain forms of behaviour, values and principles amongst the poor, encouraging a logic of self-help, individual responsibility, and commitment to pay for services, as well as a commitment to the logic of the market. In order to ‘escape poverty’ and ‘graduate from the first to the second economies’, the individual must live within the means afforded him/her by the state in a manner that allows him/her to become economically active by getting a job or starting a small business enterprise and slowly accumulate enough capital to ascend the economic ladder. In order to ‘escape poverty’, the individual must also pay for any services used beyond the limits provided by the state, pay his/her rates and taxes, and not make demands on the state for greater provisions or protections.

Making The Poor Pay

While the evolution of policy at a macro level resulted in the elaboration of a discourse of poverty and the poor in the manner outlined above, the implementation of these policy commitments in the context of resistance from poor communities would result in other more micro level changes in strategy on the part of the City, particularly as it came up against struggles in the delivery of basic services that would contest the logic of payment for services. As the processes of service delivery came under the processes of restructuring outlined by iGoli 2002, individual residents would once again be encouraged to pay for their services, becoming ‘responsible citizens’ in this manner. The cries of Masakhane would once again be heard, with the

City prioritising the entrenchment of ‘a culture of payment’ and the undoing of ‘the culture of non-payment’. In the context of growing unemployment and vulnerability, however, this call was not heeded, and non-payment for services persisted at township level on a wide scale. Central to the demands being made by community movements and individual residents was the call for the City to scrap the mounting debt or arrears for services in townships.

As the business logic of iGoli 2002 set in, and the responsibility for inculcating the ‘culture of payment’ became that of the private entities responsible for the delivery of water and electricity (Johannesburg Water, and Eskom and City Power, respectively), punitive actions for non-payment began to be enacted against residents. Increasingly, residents were cut off from their water and electricity supplies for non-payment. In response, residents would begin reconnecting themselves illegally to these supplies, generating the many community movements already described above, and making the business of service delivery increasingly difficult for the private entities responsible for it. As cut-offs became increasingly meaningless in effecting this ‘culture of payment’, a new strategy would be devised to enforce the logic of payment and transfer the responsibility for accessing services to the individual ‘customer’. At the height of protests against water and electricity cut-offs and the growth in the practice of reconnections, the prepaid meter would be re-introduced⁷⁴ in the delivery of electricity and water. Unlike with cut-offs, where one has access to a service before one pays for it, the prepaid meter cuts one off from a service before one can pay i.e. one has to pay before one is able to make use of the service. The prepaid meter also removes any responsibility for delivery from the state and the private sector service provider, making the individual responsible for accessing services. In this way, reconnections as a collective strategy of resistance have come under attack, with prepaid technology working to individualise the relationship of people to the resources necessary for life and foreclosing possibilities for collective acts of

⁷⁴ Prepaid meters were first introduced by Eskom in the mid-1990s as part of its initiative to electrify black townships, and prepaid water meter projects were rolled out in 1998 (in Khutsong, Hermanus, Modderspruit, Koffiefontein and rural parts of the Eastern and Northern Cape (Ruiters, 2005: 11), as well as in Mogale city (previously Krugersdorp)), but it was not until 2002 and the roll-out of a campaign called Operation *Gcin'amanzi* to install prepaid water meters in Soweto (preceded by a pilot project in Orange Farm) that the perniciousness of prepaid technology was confronted in the mainstream through protests led by residents in Orange Farm and Soweto, supported by affiliates of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), in particular the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) and the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC).

resistance to the system of commodification and the logic of profit. (Coalition Against Water Privatisation, 2004, 2006; Harvey, 2005; Ngwane and Veriava, 2004).

Significantly, the prepaid meter would be sold by the City and private companies as an efficient and practical way of delivering free, 'life-line' amounts of water and electricity to people. In this way, it was argued that the installation of prepaid meters allowed the national policy commitment to the delivery of 6kl of water and 50kW of electricity to all citizens free of charge, to be met. The prepaid meter was, then, sold as a means to effect the 'partnership' between the individual citizen, and the state and its private entities in the delivery of basic services, with the state delivering the basic amounts of water and electricity considered necessary for survival and the individual citizen assuming the responsibility to make use of this free allocation 'sparingly' and to pay for any additional amounts consumed. Studies conducted by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation and the APF (2003; 2004; 2006) have argued that the introduction of 'lifeline' provisions has entrenched inequality as a defining feature of service delivery in South Africa, and has been used by the government to prove its 'commitment' to free basic services for the poor without any acknowledgement of how minimal these provisions are if one considers the generally large average household size in communities and the restrictive role that such provisions play in the lives of people, tying all that they do to the logic of the market. These studies have also gone to great lengths to prove how much lower than the actual needs of households these 'lifelines' are. In situations, such as Phiri, Soweto, where research conducted by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation has shown that the average household size is 16, the provision of 6 000 litres of water per household can hardly cover the monthly needs of individuals. In addition, these studies have pointed to the fact that many plots in townships house two families, including renters. In these cases, 'lifeline' provisions are not increased to account for larger household size. These extremely low 'lifeline' provisions for water and electricity seem to want to ensure the permanence of the poorest of the poor as a separate group in society, unable to exercise individual choice in matters of life. More recent research conducted by the City itself points to the fact that the allocation of 6kl is inadequate due to the existence of "multiple dwelling units" in many disadvantaged areas, that is, plots on which a main dwelling and a backyard dwelling or more exist (Palmer Development Group, 2006).

More recent writings (mostly from within movements - Ngwane and Veriava, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Coalition Against Water Privatisation, 2004) have described and analysed the introduction of prepaid water and electricity meters as a response by the state and capital to the struggles of community movements, and as indicative of a new form of rule under neoliberalism, one in which individualised, commodified systems of service delivery are naturalised through techniques of "governmentality" and "technologies of the self" (Foucault). These writings argue that with the introduction of the prepaid meter, responsibility for access to water and electricity has become the individual's, with no need for any interaction between the recipient ('client') and the service provider, and absolutely no responsibility on the part of the state. In this way, there is no possibility for the accumulation of debt, removing the debt burden shouldered by private companies, and no possibility for individual access to a service without money. The state and private companies have been teaching the poor how to 'budget properly' so as to be able to afford to pay for the services that they need, and the logic of individualism and the market are spreading their roots in the lives of people as they struggle to survive under neoliberalism. In spite of this, community movements and residents have come together to resist the installation of prepaid systems of delivery.

While the introduction of prepaid electricity seems to have happened with very little resistance to it, the installation of prepaid water meters has resulted in sometimes bloody street battles that are today being pursued in a constitutional court case by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation on behalf of residents of Soweto. The reason for this difference between the responses to the changes in the two services could relate to the fact that prepaid electricity was rolled out fairly quietly in disadvantaged areas without residents being given any other choice in the method of delivery at different periods since the 1980s already, while prepaid water has been introduced in areas previously enjoying access to an unlimited supply of water metered and charged/billed according to a flat rate, in a manner that restricts users to their free 6 kl allocation and thereafter requires them to pay for further water.

Evidence also suggests that resistance to the prepaid electricity system is less overt as it takes the form of individual illegal bypassing of the meter rather than collective and

direct actions against Eskom. While initial protests against the installation of prepaid water meters took the form of direct action by residents against Johannesburg Water and the symbolic collective collection and destruction of the meters, over time, as the rollout continued, resistance took on a more individualised character, with the act of bypassing happening quietly at an individual level rather than as a collective and overtly symbolic act of refusal (Coalition Against Water Privatisation et. al., 2006). Nevertheless, resistance to and the creative bypassing of the prepaid meter have meant that the City and its private sector service providers would need to find newer ways of entrenching the logic of payment and commodification in the delivery of basic services. For this, it would take its direction from the various research processes commissioned by the City in 2004, as well as from measures adopted by Johannesburg Water in its attempts at enforcing ‘cost recovery’ practices in the delivery of water to residents in disadvantaged areas.

Through the various research processes commissioned by the City in 2004, a critique would emerge of the City’s indigent management policy, seen as a key vehicle in delivering the City’s ‘social package’ to poor residents. The 1998 Indigency Management Policy, which saw the successful registration of just 25 199 applicants, was said to have been “faced with administrative and process problems that made it difficult to implement” (Palmer Development Group, 2004a: 11), and there is little documented evidence of its experiences. In 2002, the Special Cases Policy would replace the 1998 policy in an attempt to determine

special cases in respect of payment for basic services provided by local government to those who cannot afford to pay for basic services, the elderly and HIV-AIDS patients and orphans (ibid: 11).

Its objectives would include the provision for subsidies on refuse removal and sanitation for individual households unable to pay for these services (in addition to the universal free basic provisions of water and electricity provided for at a national level); the establishment of a “poverty register to inform poverty mapping and targeted socio-economic developmental programmes”; and

to enhance credit control measures by providing a safety net for the poorest of the poor and *identifying those using poverty to not pay for basic services* (ibid: 11; my emphasis).

The research conducted in 2004 would, however, argue that

the Special Cases Policy has not been implemented in a way in which it has been able to meet these multiple objectives.” “In particular, the objective of establishing a single city-wide poverty register for targeted social welfare programmes from various parts of the City has not been met. The current application system for inclusion on the register by its nature restricts the register to formal accountholders – thereby failing to include the bulk of poor households in the City. Thus as a tool to provide a comprehensive register and map of poor households in the City the policy is not appropriate as currently constructed and is likely to lead to an under-count of impoverished households. The option does exist for the City to substantially increase the level of administrative effort applied to the Special Cases policy and thereby to develop a formal register of poor households. The administrative costs of this, however, would only be warranted if the City were to use such a register for a broader set of social welfare targeting than simply refuse and sanitation rebates. (ibid: 49).

It would, however, go on to state,

... there are sound reasons for the universal targeting approach being followed by some services (such as electricity and water) and there are possibly other reasons for the targeting approaches being followed by other welfare support of the City. In this regard it seems that at present there is no compelling argument to develop a comprehensive Special Cases register for the City through which numerous types of social welfare will be

disbursed. Further, there are potentially large problems of exclusion (people who will always fail to be included on such a register) and inclusion (people incorrectly included on the register). The existence of such a register also gives rise to possible concerns about corruption (bribing City staff to include certain people on the register) and policing (the City will have to exercise strong controls over people who falsely claim to qualify). The Special Cases policy has had limited success in providing relief to some households. However, it is evident that many poor households are not supported by this policy. Alternative policy options, such as rebates for sanitation and refuse based on broader and less administratively intense approaches should be considered. (ibid: 49-50).

But the City would not take this advice. Rather, it would work towards improving and extending the reach of the Special Cases policy, reorienting and restructuring it to fulfil the objective of knowing the poor in order to intervene in their lives in ways that encourage their acceptance of the duty to pay for services and make use of their targeted assistance to ‘help themselves out of poverty’ through the market.

As part of the roll-out of prepaid water meters in Operation Gcina ‘Manzi in Soweto, the City had approved an initiative by Johannesburg Water to progressively write off arrears in deemed consumption areas, on condition that a prepaid meter was accepted and used. In a discussion document of the City’s Finance and Economic Development Mayoral Committee, the following is noted,

Johannesburg Water advises that the implementation of the project is successful and addresses the affordability and access to water simultaneously whilst a culture of payment is engendered with the incentive of having the historical arrears proportionately written off over an extended period of time on condition that the customer manages his prepaid water meter. To leverage the positive impact of the model and bring holistic relief to the consumer from the City of Joburg, as the overarching custodian,

it is recommended that the total historical debt be brought into the progressive write off programme on exactly the same basis of performance and incentive. Accordingly, the customer will be obliged to accept a prepaid electricity meter to qualify for the progressive write off of the composite debt over the matching period. (2005: 1-2).

In the context of increased demands by township communities for the scrapping of the arrears and for the City to become more proactive in addressing the problems of inequality and poverty plaguing it, the key principles, objectives and mechanisms of the Special Cases Policy and the debt write-off programme would be brought together in the crafting of a new indigent management policy, consisting of the Municipal Services Subsidy Scheme (MSSS) and Reathusa ('We Are Helping'). Through these policies, the City would introduce 'incentives' for 'customers' to 'rehabilitate' their accounts and be offered 'a second chance' at becoming 'responsible', paying citizens. In this way, the City would also be able to strengthen its ability to sift out the 'can't pay' from the 'won't pay', and develop a proper system for the monitoring of poverty and the actions of the poor.

In April 2005, newspapers began to report talk of the City exploring the sale of its debtor's book. In these reports, the City's plans to write off arrears conditional on individuals accepting prepaid meters began to emerge. In a press release from the City, the following is said,

The City is facing a considerable challenge in that part of the debt that is owed by low-income people who, although not indigent, are unlikely to be able to afford to pay off the debt however effective credit control might be. In these cases there is a need to re-establish the compact between the customer and the City, with the emphasis on ensuring that all current amounts owing are promptly paid. If the arrears can be used as an incentive to re-establish this compact, then that would also be positive. (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 14 April 2005).

In May 2005, the MSSS was launched as “a major incentive to poor communities in Johannesburg to relieve the burden of debts but at the same time create a new culture of payment” (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 6 April 2006). It would encourage residents fitting a particular profile (outlined below) to come forward to have their arrears written off in exchange for signing a binding agreement to pay for services in the future and to install prepaid water and electricity meters for household ‘budgeting’ within twelve months of being accepted into the scheme. Its rules contained in the Special Cases Policy (approved in October 2004 with amendments adopted in May 2005), the MSSS would apply to account holders who are pensioners as well as unemployed, self-employed, or employed people with a total family income of less than R1 100 a month; account holders receiving disability grants who have a total family income of less than R1 100 a month; an account holder whose partner also receives a government pension and has a total family income of less than R1 241 per month - the equivalent of two government pensions plus R1; and HIV positive/AIDS breadwinners and/or their orphans (*Joburg City, How It Works? Subsidies* - <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/724/131/> - accessed 10/11/2007).

The MSSS would also ensure the delivery of 6kl of free water and 50kW of free electricity to households on its register monthly, and would cover refuse removal and sanitation charges. In addition, there would be no charge for assessment rates for properties valued at less than R20 001 (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 9 December 2005).

The obligation to sign onto the prepaid system would be explained by the City as a necessary way of enforcing a culture of payment amongst those “unable to afford debt” (Bongani Nkosi, Legal Officer, Department of Revenue, City of Johannesburg, interview, 20 November 2006). In line with the mantra of individual responsibility being assumed for one’s standard and quality of life, the prepaid meter would be proposed as a practical way for the poor to budget efficiently and so to ‘live within their means’. When a city official was asked whether there was any possibility for one fitting the criteria for indigency to avoid accepting the prepaid system of delivery, this was her response:

Unfortunately not. Look, if they don't want to sign onto the prepaid they will have to just spend less. They will just have to spend less because it's all a question of consumption. So, I think the best thing for them, in order to manage their monthly bill, would be to go prepaid. I mean, even the poor nowadays have prepaid phones. And they know how much to spend on these phones. So, unfortunately, and, do remember that they do get certain amounts of water and electricity free per month. So that is how we have also tried to help them. So, as I said, it's better for them to go prepaid. If they can manage their phone bills then they can manage their electricity and water. So these are the things that we are doing. And off course, it's making people more aware which is customer education really. (Nomasonto Radebe, Acting Director, Credit Control, Department of Revenue, City of Johannesburg, interview, 20 November 2006).

With the application process open from May 2005 to the end of March 2006, by 30 January 2006 the City reported that 92 000 people had registered for the scheme, with around R1.2 million in debt being written off (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006). While there have been no statistics forthcoming from the City since then, the figure quoted above is fairly close to the target set for itself by the City at the launch of the scheme – 100 000 households with a collective debt of R1.5 million (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 9 December 2005). It is also significant that while the City notes that more than half its households earn R1600 or less a month, a figure far lower than half of the 3.2 million population making up Johannesburg is targeted by the MSSS. This is discussed in more detail below.

In February 2006, the City launched what it billed as “the second phase of its programme of poverty alleviation aimed at assisting the indigent and poor in the city to rehabilitate their municipal accounts and create a culture of payment amongst its account holders” (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006). With the name ‘Reathusa’ (‘We Are Helping’), the scheme targeted municipal account holders with a gross monthly income of R6 500 or less. In the words of the City’s Revenue Department,

The principles of the Reathusa scheme are that the customer concludes a formal repayment arrangement for half their debt as well as keeping their current account up to date. If they stick to this for the period agreed to and pay their arrears, they will then have their remaining half of their debt written off. (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006).

As with the MSSS, successful applicants to the Reathusa scheme would be expected to install prepaid water and electricity meters in their homes within twelve months of acceptance to the scheme. Applications to the scheme were open between 1 February and 31 December 2006. Importantly, the City would view the Reathusa scheme as its recognition of the fact that

people with this level of income have some means to pay, but perhaps not the means to settle huge arrear debts immediately. So this programme aims to create an incentive for these account holders to begin paying their accounts regularly and in so doing, create a culture of paying for municipal accounts as a priority. (Mandy Jean Woods, spokesperson for the City's Revenue Department, quoted in Johannesburg City, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006).

While the basic principles behind the MSSS and Reathusa are similar, it is significant that a separation has been made between different levels of poverty. It is also striking that income levels significantly higher than those ordinarily associated with poverty (R6 500) are treated with the same general approach applied to those traditionally identified as the poor. In doing this, there is an increase in distinctions made between 'those who can pay and won't' ('the won't pays') and 'those who really cannot afford to pay' ('the can't pays'), with one of the aims behind both schemes being the increasing of the City's capacity to separate out 'the can't pays' from 'the won't pays'. In an interview conducted for this thesis, a city official trying to describe the thinking behind the introduction of Reathusa said,

I think the need was then identified to say let's try to sit back 'cos we've got people who cannot afford and we've got people who can afford but don't want to pay. So you've got to treat those two differently. And obviously if you can identify those people who cannot afford to pay, then you can come up with incentives as to how you can best assist those who can pay to pay. (Bongani Nkosi, interview, 20 November 2006).

Such distinctions would serve a broader moral prescription wielded increasingly by the City that services should be paid for and that 'responsible governance' of the City should be based on notions of reciprocity and 'partnership' between the City and its residents, with the City undertaking to provide the very basic resources deemed necessary for residents to become economically active and 'self-reliant', accepting the logic of payment for services and thereby contributing to the growth of the city.

This growing separation between 'the can't pays' from 'the won't pays' and its accompanying discourse of responsible citizenship through payment for services, together with the attempt to portray the MSSS as an intervention directed at a minority of the poor, work together to further reinforce the idea that access to decommodified services should only be possible for the desperate few in society who have no ability to become successful in market society. While the City's own documents state that more than half the city's population earns less than R1 600 a month, its interventions to address their plight target just 100 000 households. This alone indicates that the City's 'commitment to the poor' does not lie in any real redistributive desire, but in a concerted effort to entrench a logic of access to different standards of living and qualities of life dependent on one's individual ability to pay for them.

This has most recently been confirmed in the City's responses to the most recent struggles undertaken by residents against its roll-out of prepaid water meters. In 2007, with the assistance of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) and the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, five residents of Phiri brought a class-action suit in the Johannesburg High Court against the installation of prepaid water meters in the township, demanding that the free allocation of water be increased from 6

kilolitres per household per month to 50 litres per person per day; and that prepaid water meters be declared unconstitutional and that normal credit meters be reinstalled in homes. On 30 April 2008, in a landmark ruling, Judge Tsoka declared that prepaid water meters were “unlawful” and “unconstitutional”, ordered the municipality to begin providing 50 litres of water per person per day, and allowed all residents of Phiri access to water measured by a normal credit meter. While the Coalition seemed vindicated, the City appealed the ruling, and drew attention to changes it had begun making since 2007. In July 2007, after prolonged struggles in Phiri and greater Soweto against prepaid meters, and in the run-up to the hearing of the case, the City announced its increase in the allocation of free basic water from 6kl to 10kl per household per month for all households registered as indigent with the City. In addition, it made available 4kl of emergency water to all households on the prepaid water system, and established the special-needs water application mechanism, by which residents could make special appeal to the municipality for additional water (CoJ, Mid-term Report, September 2008: 199).

When, on 14 May 2008 Mayor Amos Masondo announced that the City would be appealing the judgement, he claimed that “the judgment was distorted as the municipality was already providing 50 litres per day to households on the indigence register and who had fewer than seven people” (Business Day, 15.05.08). In justifying the appeal, Masondo argued that the City’s bringing together of prepaid technology, and a targeted system of free basic service provision, would enable the City to begin to address the plight of poor residents by offering a targeted system of a social safety net as a first step towards realising the benefits of a full social package:

The amount of water that households get for free is not determined by prepayment meters. It is determined by the City’s package of free basic services. We call this our social package. Since 2001 and 2002 this social package has been gradually expanded over time. Residents of Phiri are in a better position than they were in June 2002. (Masondo, statement, 14/05/08)

He used the increase in the amount of free water provided as an example of how progress is being made in this regard. Later on he stated:

We want to conclude by reiterating that we believe that the introduction of prepayment meters, coupled with a dynamically expanding social package that gives poor households more and more water for free, is the best way to progressively realise the right of access to water on a sustainable basis in our context. We do not think that this approach is unreasonable and unlawful under the circumstances. (ibid.).

In March 2009, the Supreme Court of Appeal granted the municipality two years in which to change city bylaws in order to make prepaid meters legal, and stipulated that an amount of 42 litres of water be provided free to each resident per day. The City argued that its indigent residents were already receiving an amount higher than this. Appealing to the Constitutional Court, residents of Phiri were disappointed by its setting aside of both the previous orders and its finding that the City of Johannesburg's installation of prepaid water meters did not violate national policy or the Constitution with regard to the delivery of water. Rather, the final judgement argued that the City's approach to the delivery of water fell within Section 27 of the Constitution's allowance for the progressive realisation of the right to water. The Court also presented the finding that the quantifying of a sufficient amount of water was not within its jurisdiction, leaving it to government to make such a decision.

It would seem, then, that the careful crafting of an indigent management policy by the City and its representation as a means towards ensuring the progressive realisation of access to water beyond the bare minimum, was what would after five years of litigation finally win it legitimacy in the eyes of the judges of the Constitutional Court. It is interesting that the Court would choose to speak of the differential levels of access prescribed in this policy in terms of progressive realisation without acknowledging the further entrenchment of inequality through such an approach⁷⁵.

It is, therefore, likely that struggles for 'a better life' will for some time to come be characterised by contestations over what constitutes 'the poor' and 'poverty' and over

⁷⁵ In the context of such high levels of unemployment, it is more likely that those provided with the very minimal levels of access to services will remain in their unequal and inferior positions rather than being able to build on and from these. The experience of Orange Farm where large numbers of residents live without flush toilets as a result of their inability to afford the cost of installation of a prepaid water meter (which is required for connection of toilets to the main water pipes), attests to this.

what quality and standard of life is due to the poor. The experience of Orange Farm, explored in the next two chapters, is significant in that it will illustrate how, in trying to implement these policies targeting the poor, another category, ‘the poorest of the poor’, emerges to designate those who are unable to afford the conditions of being on the indigent register i.e. signing onto the prepaid system of delivery. For this section of society, an even lower standard and quality of life is provided, further separating out ‘the can’t pay who can be encouraged to pay’ and ‘those who cannot be made to pay’.

During the period of the court case, a new indigent management policy was being crafted, and has been implemented from July 2009, with a lot less publicity than the MSSS and Reathusa. Seemingly much more complex than the MSSS and Reathusa, the new scheme, called ‘Siyasizana’ (‘We are helping each other’), also referred to as the Extended Social Package, builds on the principles of targeting and minimal interventions based on need set out in these earlier policies, and continues to argue for the assumption by the individual citizen of the responsibility for the securing of access to resources over and above those minimal amounts provided by the state, primarily through becoming economically productive. It is important to acknowledge the emergence of Siyasizana in a context of heightened struggle against the prepaid water system and a problematisation of the minimal allocations determined for water and electricity. And, once again we see the mobilisation of a discourse of ‘helping each other’ in order to further displace responsibility for ‘the better life’ away from the state and onto the individual citizen.

Contrary to suggestions that the adoption of more targeted approaches or indigent management policies could reflect a move away from neoliberal policies as they offer a means for those areas without access to services to gain access and because they have been tied to debt write offs (Everatt 2008, Von Schnitzler 2008⁷⁶), the

⁷⁶ For example, Antina Von Schnitzler (2008: 903) writes, “While more recent policies, such as indigent policies and the social development packages, have stepped away from the more openly neoliberal documents like iGoli 2002 and Johannesburg 2030, the corporatisation of Johannesburg Water and the subsequent promulgation of Operation Gcin’amanzi have to be seen as part of this earlier paradigm”. What both Everatt and Von Schnitzler also miss is the fact that policies that come to be portrayed as ‘pro-poor’ evolve in response to resistance from individuals and communities identifying politically as the poor. Often, then, a ‘pro-poor’ discourse serves to quell resistance by speaking a language of changed commitment to the poor while in fact further entrenching inequality through the provision of lower levels of services and standards of living for that population group identified and targeted as the poor.

experience of the City of Johannesburg reflects clearly the further enforcement of neoliberal prescriptions of individual responsibility, self-restraint, conservation, and payment for services through indigent management. While the language adopted increasingly includes the term 'pro-poor', the provision of differential levels of service to, and the encouragement of particular forms of behaviour amongst, those identified and targeted as the poor reinforce inequality and the principle that access to higher levels of services and a better quality of life should be restricted to those able to pay.

Siyasizana puts in place a three-tiered system for determining and addressing need on the part of the poor. Introducing a new 'poverty index', Siyasizana stipulates the criteria for determining 3 'bands of poverty' for all individuals earning a monthly income of below R3 366. Band 1 would aim "at helping those on the borderline of poverty" and would provide the lowest level of subsidy; Band 2 would be aimed at "those who earn some formal income but whose earnings fall below the survival level defined by the poverty index", being granted a middle level of subsidy; and Band 3 would be "the highest level of subsidy, aimed at those with no formal income living in the most deprived circumstances" (City of Johannesburg, *Social Package* - <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/3432/168/>, accessed 20/02/2009).

According to the new system of classification, each individual applicant will be given a 'poverty score' out of 100, 70 of these points being allocated based on a person's individual socio-economic circumstances, and 30 based on the conditions of the geographical area in which the person resides. Since 1 July 2009, every adult individual resident earning below R3 366 per month has been expected to apply for indigent status, each person being classified according to one of the poverty bands described above. Every household would, thereafter, be assessed according to the number of indigent individuals residing in it and allocation of benefits from the extended social package would be determined based on the level of need determined by the overall poverty status of the household, with the maximum allocation to any

household being 15 kl of water and 150 kW of electricity⁷⁷ (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010).

Two striking differences from earlier indigent management policies are the registration of individuals who are not account-holders i.e. who do not reside in a formal dwelling, and the provision of individual benefits over and above household benefits, such as rental and transport subsidies. For non-account holders, then, registration as indigent would not result in access to the subsidies related to owning or renting a property (water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal, and rates rebates), but provide access to subsidies for transport. In addition, Siyasizana has established an institute called ‘The Job Pathways Centre’, which provides contacts to those registered as indigent for accessing employment and/or becoming economically active, including Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) jobs and “new venture creation training” (Interview, Jak Koseff, Director of Community Development, CoJ, 15 June 2010). Siyasizana clearly states that all those coming forward for registration as indigents will be encouraged to join the centre and have access to a social worker to assist them in any special needs they might have with regard to accessing employment and/or becoming entrepreneurs. Social workers are also envisaged as playing the role of determining need amongst households for accessing ‘emergency allocations’ of water, provided for by the City more recently primarily for households in which HIV- positive people reside.

Jak, Koseff, Director of Community Development of the CoJ, responsible for Siyasizana, explained that the Job Pathways programme had been designed according to the rationality of “welfare to workfare” approaches adopted in the USA, UK, Australia, and parts of the developing world, such as Brazil, Argentina and India:

So, we looked at all these experiences. We obviously have some key differences – we don’t have a universal adult grant; we don’t have a long history of warehousing poverty in gigantic council estate-type set-ups; so, therefore you don’t have nearly as much of a dependent population that can be coaxed into employment which is what most of the developed country systems do. What you do

⁷⁷ According to Jak Koseff, households in Band 1 receive 10kl of free water and 50 KW of free electricity, those in Band 2 receive 12 kl and 100 KW, and those in Band 3, 15 kl and 150 KW.

have, however, which is comparable, is a population with very limited experience of the formal labour market, very poor understanding of how to access the labour market, often with skills deficits, training deficits, and personal barriers that act against them in terms of accessing the job market, and also bear in mind that UK Job Centre Plus system operates in a condition where the poorest parts of London have 40% unemployment rates, most of them amongst the youth, with very high skills deficits, poor access to the formal economy, same things that we face. So, not all of it is purely a first-world centric view of things. Some of it can actually cross-apply. (Interview, Koseff, 15 June 2010).

Koseff went on to argue that many of the programmes in South Africa that have focused on the poor have “centred around the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) system and capital development, developing qualifications, developing certifications that the individual can then use to get themselves ahead in the labour force”. He said:

We refer to this sort of thing usually as ‘train and dump’ because you get to a certification level and either the training doesn’t meet the needs of the market or the individual can’t match himself to the market because he doesn’t understand the way it’s going; certifications often end up being ineffective in allowing individuals to exit their own poverty. So, what we instead said was ‘Let the market tell us what to do’, and we will train or screen to meet the market’s needs (usually both). (ibid).

After running a pilot with a consortium of NGOS that took on the task of co-ordinating a programme along the lines described above, “which was a massive learning curve” (ibid), the CoJ ran a formal tendering process for the management of the Job Pathways programme. The process was concluded in July 2009, with the appointment of the Workforce Group, “a really tooth and claw capitalist entity, a labour broker” (ibid) to oversee the programme. According to Koseff, “The key thing they brought to bear was a range of critical systems that could basically directly suss out and react to market need, which was what we realised the NGOs spent most of

their time doing is building their capacity to do what the private sector already had.” (ibid). He argued that the key choice that they faced was whether to “make the private sector act more like an NGO or the NGO sector act more like the private sector” (ibid). The City concluded that “since the market is the ultimate actor that needs to absorb people, it makes more sense to go with the private sector and get them to adopt the relevant NGO-type practices that will allow them to deal more effectively with the very impoverished sectors of the community” (ibid).

Assessing the short life of the programme, Koseff spoke of the realisation that “creating new ventures is not nearly as easy as government policy might have made it out to be over the last few years, not least because, to be frank about it, there’s often in the poorest parts of the city a limited cultural experience of entrepreneurship”. He said:

You know, people haven’t grown up as the sons and daughters of shopkeepers and small business owners. So, there isn’t, like, a family figure you can lean on for advice that would be there in countries say, for example, like India where a lot of this kind of thing is lived intergenerational experience. So, you’ve got to basically provide a lot of the psychology of the entrepreneur as well as the basic tools of managing your own business, etc. And, people are afraid of it because it’s poorly understood. (ibid).

In this way, individual responsibility and self-reliance have come to be foregrounded in the new indigent management policy as state interventions that target those who are unable to provide for themselves have begun to entrench levels of inequality amongst those identified as the poor, with different standards of living being prescribed for different groups of the poor based on their ability to pay and/or to be made to pay, and the state’s own role being cemented as that of providing the very minimal levels of resources necessary for the individual to survive. The overt linking of access to jobs and the development of skills for small business development, to the status of indigency has also seen the emphasis on moral attributes of ‘the deserving poor’, that is, those willing to work and become economically productive, taking responsibility for their own development and the improvement of the lives of their families.

Comparing the poor in South Africa to experiences of the poor in places like India and Brazil, where activity in the informal sector of the economy is much higher than in South Africa, Jak Koseff suggested that this could be the result of “a certain kind of attitudinal issue that needs treading, especially amongst the young, to correct efficiently” (Interview, Koseff, 15 June 2010). It is for this reason that Koseff sees possibilities opened up by jobs in the service sector, although not “ideal”, for helping to change attitudes towards work. He said:

I remember interviewing a site manager for a workforce development centre in New York. He got a lot of flack from NGO partners and a range of other commentators for sending a lot of people at the entry level of the labour force into very service sector jobs that didn’t have a lot of benefits and had long hours, etc, etc, and weren’t particularly progress-oriented. His reply was that if someone can hold down a clerical job for a year and they show up on time and they don’t get drunk and they demonstrate a record of reliability, that’s something they can sell to another employer – if they want to do customer service in another area, etc, etc. So, it’s about providing that career ladder opportunity path in a meaningful way. And, if what you’re after is *labour force attachment as opposed to human capital development*, in other words, you want to get people into economic activity so they can start helping themselves straight away, the service sector’s going to be a natural place where your efforts get directed. And it’s tricky, because the temporary work agenda is complex in SA because the market is very strangely structured. There’s a lot of movement in temporary employment. (ibid; my emphasis).

With regard to the rise in temporary employment opportunities, the CoJ has also established the ‘Preferred Candidates Pool’ programme “for the labour broking side of workforce operations” (ibid). Koseff explained the programme thus:

So, a certain number of people are enrolled in the programme that prioritises them for temporary contracts that come up stacking

shelves, doing stock-takes, data-capturing, those kinds of things. Because there is a lot of money that can be made, but not on one job, but a few sequential jobs that pile up over a certain period. So, it's a difficult exercise trying to provide economic opportunity to people, but the important thing is that they don't lose their benefits in any way unless they exit to an opportunity that then takes them out of the earnings range, in which case we feel it's fair play. We've given you the opportunity, you've got to pull yourself further along by your own best efforts, and there are a range of other programmes available to you out there. (ibid).

In this way, the CoJ encourages a particular form of life for those identified as indigent, that of entrepreneurship and economic self-sufficiency. Koseff also pointed out that the City was considering other inducements to introduce into Siyasizana, based on the experiences of cash transfer programmes in Brazil, which require recipients to show that their children are enrolled in health and education programmes, and the like. In South Africa, treatment contracts that accompany certain prescriptions of anti-retroviral therapy, have seen the introduction of such an approach. Until the Phiri court case, it could also be argued that the stipulation by MSSS and Reathusa that registered persons sign onto prepaid meters was such a mechanism to encourage a particular relationship of restraint and responsibility to the consumption of water and electricity. While the CoJ has, since the court case, ceased to roll out prepaid meters in any concerted manner, with Koseff insisting that signing onto prepaid systems of delivery is not a mandatory requirement of Siyasizana, he made a strong case for the resumption of the installation of prepaid meters in indigent households, suggesting that the City might very well return to them once legislation has been changed, in particular for those residents who do not currently enjoy access to services, such as those in informal settlements:

People in informal settlements right now don't have an accountable relationship with the city. One legitimate way to introduce this relationship is through prepaid meters because on a prepaid basis they can access services, and you can still subsidise them through Siyasizana. We don't have perfect technological

alliance, but certainly good enough to be able to distribute services through ppms, and at some stage we will probably provide a voucher system of some kind. For electricity, we do it via the backend; so the next time they touch in the benefits accrue to their accounts. With the water system, you've got to do it with the token itself. But there are ways of working around the technology to be able to distribute your Siyasizana benefits onto prepaid platforms. It's got a lot of benefits for them because it doesn't have all the credit management challenges saying 'No, no, you can't, you can't, you can't'. (ibid).

Acknowledging that there have to date been problems raised by poor residents with regard to the affordability of the cost of the installation of the meters (R2000, currently expected to be borne largely by residents), Koseff explained that the City is currently discussing proposals towards waiving the installation cost for poorer residents, possibly graduating levels of payment for installation according to the different bands of poverty determined by Siyasizana. Koseff also argued that "conversion to a prepaid customer" was preferred by poor residents:

So, we convert you to a prepaid customer. It's considered a preference by a range of households that approach our social workers. They say they would rather know that they have no debt history at the end of the month, and even if it leaves them short of electricity for two days, they know they are capable of paying for it; there's no credit balance owing. (ibid).

However, Koseff pointed out that conversion to the prepaid system should always remain a choice of the individual resident, unless it came with a debt write-off. He also argued that the requirements of the business-oriented entities of the City responsible for service delivery had to be considered in laying out the means for the delivery of basic services to the poor:

I think it always has to remain a choice, unless you want to access something like a write-off that will only be given if you take a ppm

– that’s quid pro quo; dealing with utilities you’re dealing with entities that do have to have a commercial aspect to them. At the very least they’ve got to balance their investment and their overheads with the charges they recover; so you’re never going to be able to get complete freebies out of them. But you can get a much better level of service if you say ‘ok, we’ll improve the credit management through prepaid meters’. I personally think it’s not the worst bargain in the world, especially to Orange Farm⁷⁸. (ibid).

Koseff also refuted a number of the criticisms of prepaid meters, reinforcing that they continue to be viewed by the City as an appropriate technology for the delivery of water and electricity to poor residents. Explaining that there are very few options open to a resident if they haven’t paid for services, Koseff rejected the claims made in the Phiri court case that administration of justice was denied by the prepaid meter by arguing that “if you’re cut off under a credit regime that applies with a normal meter, it’s not as if your interaction with the municipality’s that different”, with the individual having to sign up for services through Siyasizana or make a separate arrangement with the municipality. Koseff explained:

It’s tricky with historical debts, but if you’re starting with a zero debt basis, as you would be allowing the prepaid meter people to do, it’s not clear to me that a credit meter is actually preferable, especially if you consider that you might get away with a couple of months of bill-dodging, but then you’re facing a cut-off anyway, and you’re not going to be able to talk anyone out of it because you’ve incurred the last – if you haven’t registered for us, then really you would be in the same situation as if you had a prepaid meter. So, the administration of justice

⁷⁸ While the experience of service delivery in Orange Farm will be explored in greater detail in the following two chapters, it is important to note here that certain areas of Orange Farm, in which access to flush toilets has previously been absent, individual households have been given toilets and promised connection to water so that they can flush only if they sign onto prepaid water meters at a cost of R650. Unable to do this, their toilets have not been connected so that they can flush. When this was pointed out to Mr Koseff, he stated that this stipulation can no longer be enforced. However, while the CoJ workshops different proposals around payment for the cost of the installation of prepaid meters, several residents go without flush toilets.

issues, I don't think are a death blow to the prepaid meter structure. (ibid).

He went on to argue that the prepaid meter “does stop bypassing electricity (the new ESKOM green boxes, at least, are tamper proof)” (ibid). While half joking that “they won't be tamper-proof forever; nothing's tamper-proof forever”, Koseff said:

So, you're denying people the opportunity to bypass and run illegal connections. That's probably a good thing from a point of public safety alone because the amount of deaths, disfigurements, fires, etc. that are caused by the illegal connections and the wiring and so on are a huge problem. So, it does put an end to that kind of thing if you run tamper-proof metering. (ibid).

Koseff also highlighted that the CoJ had begun to deal with the criticism from the poor and analysts that tariffs for prepaid services are often higher than those for ordinary metered services, stating that while this might have been the case historically, “utilities are reversing the trend, making prepaid meters the more attractive tariff” (ibid). He argued that an additional benefit of the prepaid meter was that it did away with incorrect billing as the system did not need to rely on interim estimates of consumption and meter readers. For the City, then, the prepaid system continues to be viewed as offering several benefits. However, Koseff accepted that poor residents, such as those in Orange Farm, would continue to be critical of it:

Orange Farm, I know, there's a lot of resistance because, if you think about it, people haven't paid for years and years on end. And they're kind of expecting that there'll be a legal settlement of some kind. If that legal settlement comes in the form of prepaid meters, certainly there'll be very vocal minorities that believe that all services should be free for those below a certain income, period. They don't believe that prepaid meters are fair. I think that if you want to continue to encourage investment in the areas and actually upgrade them, you've got to have some kind of cost recovery;

you're not going to get the utilities in there without it, and I think prepaid meters are a logical way to do that. (ibid).

The installation of prepaid meters will be taken up in the specific experience of Orange Farm explored in the following two chapters.

It is also significant that Siyasizana will require individuals to re-register every 6 months. While the City argues that the only requirement for registration and re-registration is the possession of an identity document, it is likely that the administrative burden of the City will be increased through this process. All applicants will also be fingerprinted, the fingerprint serving as a means of identifying and tracking indigent members of society. It could be argued that Siyasizana marks the evolution of policy with regard to the function of security elaborated by Foucault (see *Chapter One*), allowing for the capturing of detailed information about and the close surveillance of a population group, in this case those identified and registered as 'the indigent', through which particular interventions are crafted through which forms of self-restraint, conservation, and self-discipline are internalised by targeted groups. Importantly, Siyasizana makes the responsibility for registration and re-registration as indigent, and therefore for access to free basic services and other forms of state assistance, that of the individual citizen rather than that of the state. If individuals do not apply for registration, they simply do not enjoy the 'benefits' of being declared indigent.

The evolution of the City's policies with regard to the delivery of free basic services, from the Special Cases Policy of 2002 to Siyasizana must be understood within a context of increasing resistance on the part of poor communities, as well as changing institutional frameworks and approaches at national and municipal level with regard to enforcing the duty to pay for services. This was confirmed by Jak Koseff, appointed Director of Community Development in the CoJ in 2007, at the beginning of the Siyasizana process, who acknowledged that the process of municipal policy formulation outlined above was characterised by experimentation with institutional forms and approaches in the context of heightened mobilisation and resistance on the

part of the poor.⁷⁹ Describing Siyasizana as the City's first attempt at "individual identity management", Koseff outlined how the MSSS and Reathusa, emanating from the City's Revenue Department, and being produced in the absence of a nationally agreed on poverty line, functioned primarily as debt write-off mechanisms, without developing any means for collecting "proper" knowledge about the nature of households in order to enable the crafting of household specific interventions that would assist in separating out the "unable to pay" from the "unwilling to pay". He said:

So, even when you move to 2005 with the major indigent management systems that were introduced by the MSSS policy, there is detailed take in at household level but there isn't anything done about it. There isn't the household level programming that tries to go in and say, you know, you've got a gogo living with two kids, they need a combination of services for the aged, services for vulnerable children, plus any other rebates we can give them – that kind of detailed level intervention that actually screens the household for need and tries to connect the household with the scope of available government resources wasn't really done. (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010).

Koseff went on to explain that the CoJ was constrained by the lack of progress in this respect at a national level:

To be fair to the city, it wasn't really done at national level either. I mean, the various government service areas all maintained and continue to maintain their own service regimes; they don't really share or integrate their targeting in a way that they would have one set of people approaching the household and saying, 'This, this and this needs to be done'. The Presidential project that now resides with the Department of Rural Development, the national war room on poverty, it attempted to do that but found that it is incredibly

⁷⁹ Koseff explained that the crafting of Siyasizana "hasn't been without its teething problems managerially". Arguing that these are the kinds of things to be overcome, he said, "This idea that you can plan and implement a perfect system doesn't actually exist anywhere in the real practice of public policy." (Interview, Koseff, 15 June 2010).

labour-intensive work, not least of which because you can create a to-do list of interventions that a household requires, but to actually get those interventions executed requires much more institutional kind of integration than you actually have available as one department conducting a survey of need. So the city established the MSSS policy back in 2005 against this background of still very fragmented and silo-based, to be fair, government service offerings. So, that's not necessarily the service agency's particular fault. That's the way these particular kind of services tend to be delivered in all government contexts. (ibid).

Koseff also explained how a targeted approach arose in the context of the City needing to prioritise with regard to the spending of a limited pool of resources:

Inevitably, not all potential clients can be served; therefore you have to decide which client groups are highest priority. So, once again the poverty definition, need definition question becomes a critical one. Now at the time of the MSSS and Special Cases Policy, you don't really have a proactive attempt to define poverty and therefore establish what the needs of poor households are for the purposes of trying to establish a more comprehensive intervention. That was always the intention, and the fact that it was historically called 'The Social Package' as a predecessor to the Expanded Social Package tells you that there was always the intention to create a basket of benefits, but the exact construction of that basket was a bit of an ongoing effort that was mainly led through the HDS. It wasn't really tied up with the indigent policy until the time that the Siyasizana programme takes over in mid-2007. (ibid).

He went on to show how these policy shifts were related to institutional changes, in particular the moving of responsibility for indigent management from the Revenue Department to the Department of Community Development, established in 2007:

It's important to know that 2005-2007 you've got a couple of key institutional changes that happen. Obviously you have a new mayoral administration starting with a range of new priorities. You have a new departmental alignment – the Department of Community Development, as now stands, was created including a specific human development directorate whose job it basically is to administer the HDS, and, therefore, to run both regulatory and outright programmatic facilitation and catalysing programmes that help those kinds of special needs groups. So, the needs of the various categories of the poor are once again to be taken into account by the human development directorate. The story isn't so simple because the indigent policy in general and the free basic services policy in particular was always seen as something of a revenue competency, and throughout the country if you look at it, indigent policies usually are actually maintained and managed by the finance divisions of the municipalities they work with. That's the consequence of two things because obviously it's charges for services that have to be addressed, for example for structures and rebates, and looking at affordability of services, but it's also because a lot of local governments don't necessarily have a lot of social policy experience, especially the smaller municipalities which will often rely on your provincial layer for that expertise level and the provincial layer didn't really get heavily involved in promoting a social service infrastructure at local level. So, 2005-2007 you've got the MSSS policy looking at basic services, but still there's no connect the dots operation going on with the NGO-delivered services and the service through human development. (ibid).

Siyasizana, represents, then, for the City the culmination of a long process through which it has attempted to develop a “single-view” or “single window” approach to poverty, in which “individual identity management” has become the fulcrum (Interview, Koseff, 15 June 2010). With the priority of producing individual paying, and economically active citizens,

Siyasizana aims to produce a proper administration of the poor through the elaboration of complex and highly technical systems to know and manage the poor. Jak Koseff explained why the CoJ chose to adopt such a complex system of indigent management in spite of complaints from municipal administrators that it would increase their administrative burden:

The poverty index is quite a complex instrument in itself; so people may wonder why we don't use something simpler. The cruder your measure, the more distortions it creates because it creates a world in which people will try to avoid its consequences. So, if you set things at a certain level, people may not be honest about their economic circumstances because they're trying to avoid coming in above that level, for example, or people might not take on things that would marginally improve their situation because they don't want to cross a bridge and suddenly be left facing the full cost of their lifestyle because they then void access to benefits, etc, etc. Also, you want to be able to differentially target those benefits; so you've got to be able to give less to some people to be able to give more to others; so you've got to internally prioritise within your service population to see who can receive more extensive benefits than other people would. And, therefore, who you've got to concentrate more of your other resources on to move them upwards so that they graduate your index and become non-dependent on you. (ibid).

He also explained that the fears of administrative managers that the system would be unmanageable were "not wrong; they just didn't see the full range of possibilities that we have developed today", such as the many technological developments that have allowed for the creation of a centralised, paperless, digital system that allows for all information about an individual to be traced from a single point through an identity number (and fingerprint), that aims to connect all systems at municipal, provincial and national levels. The Siyasizana database is already connected to the South

African Social Services Agency (SASSA) database, which contains all data related to individual social grant recipients, and is linked to the National Integrated Information System (NISIS), for which it is the national pilot. Koseff explained that the individual data of Siyasizana registrants is, in this way, “verified against Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) data, the grants database held by SASSA, the Home Affairs databases and the housing subsidy system”, giving the City “a fair understanding of any formal income people are earning”. However, he went on to complain that the inability to “catch and sway” individuals operating outside of the formal economy was “a compromise” that had to be accepted for now, pointing out that currently there are approximately 250 cases of fraud related to individuals whose UIF records indicate that they were claiming benefits while earning salaries, that are being investigated by the City. It is for this reason, Koseff explained, that the City has become “quite aggressive”, with the introduction of fingerprinting related to this, and in particular the need to combat identity fraud. For him, the taking of fingerprints must simply be seen as “an identity management tool”.

Koseff also offered a number of rebuttals of criticisms of the adoption of indigent management policies:

I haven’t been presented with an argument against an indigent register that stands up. I’ll give you the top three arguments that are always used. Firstly, it is reminiscent of apartheid era policies. Whether it is or not, if there are practical reasons for it, this isn’t an apartheid era policy – it’s not racially targeted, it’s not racially specified, it doesn’t consider your race a determining factor in anything. So, therefore, to my mind, it’s a disanalogy. If people have memories of apartheid it’s not in way for the same reasons – it’s not to exclude you, it’s not to send you to a Bantustan, it’s not to classify you under the Group Areas Act; it’s to give you benefits. So, that argument I don’t buy into very heavily. Secondly, that it’s an ordeal for people to register. You’ve got to balance the ordeal of registration against what can responsibly be given if people do not register because if you’re stuck with non-targeted benefits, contrary to a lot of the academic consensus on

this issue, I think you're actually in a very compromised space because you'll never be able to get to a point where you can completely manage your resource base effectively. You'll always be over-supplying and under-supplying, missing the target all of the time. The third reason given is that registers under-estimate the numbers of the poor because people won't be willing to identify themselves as poor. I understand the point, but if you're not willing to ask for help, it's very difficult to give you help, and you can't let the enemy of the perfect be the enemy of the possible. If there was some x-ray vision way of identifying exactly who was poor and who wasn't, we wouldn't need the system – true, but there's very few targeted beneficiary regimes that don't require some form of registration. Mexico, Brazil, India, and the developed countries do it, so this idea that it is somehow insulting is, to me, a little overblown. You can say that no one but the poor can speak for the poor – sure, legitimate – but, once again, if you're not willing to ask for help, it's difficult to give you help, and that, I think, is part of the problem. (ibid).

It will be interesting to see how poor individuals, communities and movements respond to this new indigent management policy. While mobilisation on the basis of being poor might have forced the state to change its stance on various policies related to the management of the poor or the indigent, increasing the amount allocated for free provision of water and electricity, for example, over time the state has come to use the very language mobilised in struggle against its neoliberal policies to push forward its logic of payment for basic services and differential levels of access based on ability to pay for services, as well as its diminishing responsibility in the provision of those resources to all its citizens to enable their enjoyment of a decent standard and quality of life.

In doing this, it has separated out various levels of the poor, limiting its role to that of providing those minimal levels of resources to 'the poorest of the poor' necessary for their survival, and levels of services to other categories of the poor based on their ability to pay for more than these minimal levels. Siyasizana might signal the time

for a re-evaluation of strategy by movements of the poor, and a need for the rejection of any classification by the state in order to access services.

These questions will be taken up through the experiences of residents of Orange Farm in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 5 - Orange Farm I: Entrenching 'Informality'

Introduction

Making one's way from Johannesburg's shopping mall suburbia and bustling inner city past its fast developing townships like Soweto, and then the slower-paced Eldorado Park and Lenasia, to the even slower smallholdings, and pockets of life that spring up along the Golden Highway (in the form of RDP housing projects or informal settlements like Vlakfontein), on to the peri-urban sprawl of shacks and ramshackle houses that appears almost out of nowhere just under an hour's drive south from the city, that is Orange Farm, apartheid's legacy of inequality and the neoliberal policies today intended to redress it, are striking – in the very real and visible differences in the socio-economic conditions of residents in these different parts of Johannesburg, and in the clearly evident signs of a logic of 'incremental development' in the delivery of the 'better life' promised by the ANC government, with the 'informal' living standards entrenched for the majority of black people under apartheid continuing to form the basis for the provision of services to socio-economically disadvantaged residents and communities in townships on the periphery of the economic hub of the city, today.

As the pace of life slows down as one moves further along the Golden Highway, away from the city, it is tempting to describe Orange Farm and the many small 'developing' settlements south of the city as part of 'the second economy', their residents confined by their inferior socio-economic status to a 'marginal' life of poorer quality than that enjoyed by the richer in other parts of Johannesburg. Indeed, it is a different set of goods and services that one has access to on the streets of Orange Farm. But there are also signs all over Orange Farm of 'the first economy' – in the slow arrival of supermarket chains, billboards and commercial branding to the township, and in the aspirations of residents for the individual luxuries and comforts afforded by a job or business in 'the first economy'. And while I would make my way to Orange Farm on many days of this project in search of people and information about the place, Orange Farm would make its appearance in my everyday goings about the inner city and its suburbs.

From the newspaper seller on the street corner in Killarney to the car guard in Braamfontein who diligently make their ways along the Golden Highway each morning to the city to earn enough money for their families' daily survival needs, it becomes difficult to sustain neat separations between a 'second economy' operative in Orange Farm and a 'first economy' to which its residents should aim to 'graduate'. Rather, it becomes apparent that the economy of Orange Farm is part of the greater Johannesburg economy, the lives of its residents as much a part of Johannesburg's economic life as the lives of those in its northern suburbs. And the representation of Orange Farm as a part of 'the second economy' (a place of 'formalised informality', a 'place for the poor') would be seen as working to entrench the idea that those who are unable to pay deserve a poorer quality and standard of life, with the benefits of 'the first economy' being accessible to those individuals who work hard and develop their entrepreneurial abilities, and the responsibility of the state being reduced to that of providing the basics necessary for survival.

While Orange Farm makes its appearance in occasional newspaper articles and with some regularity in state policy documents post-1994, it is not a place that gains prominence in any official histories of South Africa nor in any major research projects trying to understand apartheid or the transition. Under apartheid, there was one official research report on the first relocation of squatters to Orange Farm, published in 1990 by Owen Crankshaw and Timothy Hart for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

After 1994, there are only two other published research reports that have been produced about Orange Farm, both by groups of residents assisted by NGOs and other organisations - one published in 2002 by Khanya College and the Kganya Consortium (a group of thirteen women's projects in Orange Farm) that looks specifically at the position of women in Orange Farm after 1996 and the national government's adoption of GEAR, and the other in 2003 by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC), that focuses on the effects of the installation of prepaid water meters on the lives of residents of Stretford, Extension 4. This, together with the absence of any official history of Orange Farm in state documents, has made it extremely difficult to

piece together the history of Orange Farm for this thesis. While several hours were, then, spent poring over documents, searching for information about Orange Farm, little of these efforts are reflected in the following pages. Rather, it is a history made from the stories of residents, newspaper articles, and a limited selection of state documents that makes up this chapter. This must, in itself, be viewed as reflective of the ways in which Orange Farm has featured in the collective imaginary of the state and policy-makers. Unlike Soweto or Alexandra, whose histories are celebrated in the collective production of the history of the struggle against apartheid, Orange Farm appears with increasing frequency only in state policy documents and newspaper articles seeking to define and know 'the poorest of the poor'. In this way, it becomes a symbol of the interventions of the ANC government targeting 'the second economy' rather than a memory and repository of struggle against attempts at entrenching 'an informal life' for black people.

This chapter tells the history of Orange Farm as one of continued attempts at entrenching and naturalising a logic of 'informality' and a poorer quality of life for a section of the population, first black people resisting the policies of influx control under apartheid, and then, under the ANC government, those categorised as the poor. Established by the apartheid government in the context of failed attempts at disciplining black people forcing their presence in the city, Orange Farm tells the story of how state strategies for exercising power change from disciplinary mechanisms (such as the force of the police) towards 'technologies of the self' (Foucault) that encourage certain kinds of behaviour and particular forms of life amongst people e.g. self-restraint, self-discipline, self-reliance, individual responsibility, and entrepreneurship. This chapter will show how a logic of individual responsibility comes to be encouraged both by the apartheid and ANC governments as the logic of privatisation and commodification come to define the delivery of basic services and erode the responsibilities of the state in this sphere. In doing this, it will also reflect on how 'poverty' and 'the poor' come to be mobilised in service of these changes. In particular, it will explore the use of these terms by the post-apartheid state in its attempts to enforce a logic of commodification and individual responsibility in the delivery of basic services, focusing on their mobilisation within a moral economy that emerges in the transition in the context of the introduction of neoliberal policies and resistance to them. While the next chapter focuses on

contestation and resistance, this chapter tells the history of Orange Farm largely from the perspective of how it was imagined by its planners under apartheid and how it has been imagined post-1994 in the 'development' plans of the ANC government.

From Influx Control to 'Orderly Urbanisation' and 'Controlled Squatting'

While apartheid influx control policies aimed to keep non-working black people in the Bantustans or homelands by restricting urban residential opportunities to employed men (and a few women, mainly in domestic service, or those married to working men), by the mid-1980s, poor economic opportunities in the homelands and the promise of paid work in the towns, had resulted in enormous pressure being placed on South Africa's urban centres by black people, taking up residence in backyard shacks in formal townships or squatting vacant plots of land in and around the city centres. As influx controls were abolished in 1986, the apartheid government would require new means of regulating and controlling the newly urbanised black poor, a figure that came to be defined increasingly in the language that emerged to manage and direct the groups of black people who had forced their acceptance in places from which their exclusion had been attempted by the apartheid state.

In the context of failed attempts by the apartheid state to control this movement of black people to the city of Johannesburg through disciplinary measures (such as police harassment and arrest), Orange Farm emerged as a place through which power would come to be exercised in a different form. Through the provision of a basic site and services, individuals were encouraged to assume responsibility for their own well-being and become self-disciplined, accepting their poorer standards of living as a 'first step' in the process towards securing 'a better life'. It is significant to note that in the context of an absence of secure access to the basic resources necessary for survival, the provision of serviced sites became an important 'carrot' in luring individuals away from their strategies of constant resistance and illegality to more 'responsible' ways of living that posed less of a threat to the stability of the apartheid regime.

Newspaper, organisational and state archives clearly reflect that Orange Farm was imagined and established as a response to squatting and the housing crisis more

generally in the Transvaal in the late-1980s. In the late 1970s, large quantities of land were left unused as land was expropriated and rezoned for Asian and Coloured development to the south of the city of Johannesburg. As black people moved closer to the city, seeking employment, the lack of formal housing resulted in these pieces of land being squatted by the homeless poor. By 1989, there were estimated to be 1.4 million squatters in the Transvaal, with 80 per cent being found in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Transvaal (PWV) region (The Star, 27 October 1989).

While Orange Farm would eventually comprise people coming from a number of different townships and squatter camps in the Transvaal, it was squatters at a place called Weiler's Farm and another called Vlakfontein who provided the impetus for its establishment. The settlement that came to be known as Vlakfontein developed on land designated Asian, while a farm owned by the Weiler brothers began to be occupied from the early 1980s. The Weiler brothers are said to have allowed 'illegal African tenants' on their farm. By 1983, approximately 300 squatters were said to be occupying Weiler's Farm illegally. (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990: 7). In 1985, the elderly landowners left the farm, allowing the illegal squatters to remain.

As white residents' complaints grew, and the largely unemployed squatters came to be seen as a threat to the safety of white residents in the area and their possessions, the apartheid state came into conflict with various groups of squatters as it attempted to restrict their movement, activities, and very presence in the area. Between May 1981 and May 1985, there were 696 recorded arrests in Weiler's Farm (mainly between 1983 and 1985) (ibid: 7). And in late 1984, a mass removal that had been planned was overtaken by unrest and political violence in the townships of the Vaal, and hence did not take place. In spite of the repression, by March 1987, there were 800 families living in Weiler's Farm, and this number increased to 1 135 families by August 1987 (ibid: 8). This rapid proliferation of shacks in the area led to increased white opposition to Weiler's Farm and general protest from white landowners in the area in the form of petitions and mass meetings, which in turn led to an increase in arrests of squatters and the emergence of the practice of anti-squatter raids. In 1986 and 1987, Vlakfontein was similarly subjected to "traumatic raids" (ibid: 10).

But as the apartheid state had no choice but to respond to the growing number of black people demanding housing in and around Johannesburg, influx controls were abolished and Orange Farm emerged as part of the newly formulated policies of 'orderly urbanisation' and 'controlled squatting' that would replace these laws and attempt to deal with the growing urbanisation of black people in a manner that made sense for the privileged positions of white South Africans. In June 1988, Orange Farm was part of a number of portions of land in the south of Johannesburg marked as Section 6(a) areas under the Amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act i.e. areas marked for low-income housing development for black people in the form of 'informal towns'. Initially, 4 300 sites were set out at Orange Farm, under the administration of the Transvaal Provincial Authority (TPA), 2000 of which were reserved for residents of Weiler's Farm. Whereas moving to Orange Farm was made voluntary for residents of Vlakfontein, Weiler's Farm residents were given no option but to move. While the only research project conducted to evaluate the move suggests that the majority of Weiler's Farm residents were satisfied with their move to Orange Farm (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990), newspaper and other evidence suggests that some amount of persuasion was necessary on the part of the state to move squatters from Weiler's Farm and from other parts of the area. Strategies used to entice squatters to designated areas such as Orange Farm included the promise of basic services, ownership of one's site, and legality. The latter became particularly important as the state also began a targeted campaign at squatters, aiming to prevent the strategic mobilisation of its status by the poor.

In early 1988, it is recorded that attempts were made by the TPA Department of Community Affairs to levy service charges in Weiler's Farm. These were, however, met with protests from the Weiler's Farm community representative committee who recognised it as a ploy to get them to move. In their study of the effects of the move on squatters from Weiler's Farm and Vlakfontein, conducted in October 1989, Crankshaw and Hart argue "In terms of the carrot and stick approach to squatter relocation, it is expected that services in the reception area will be designed to be better than those in the settlements to be demolished. However, it is also possible to improve or to tamper with services in squatter areas. The provision of water is one example where officials can actively improve or downgrade quality of life in squatter settlements, according to their own agendas. In the case of Weiler's Farm, and in

other cases, water (or the lack of it) has been used as a device to persuade squatters to move." (ibid: 20). While the initial firm offer of serviced sites at Orange Farm split the community into two factions, by the end of May 1989, 309 families from Weiler's Farm had been settled in Orange Farm (ibid: 9) and others were continuing to move.

In the final analysis, it would seem that the promise of one's own serviced site triumphed in the decisions made by residents of Weiler's Farm to move to Orange Farm. Crankshaw and Hart show how the majority of respondents in their study, including those who were forced to move to Orange Farm, exhibited satisfaction and improvement in their lives through the move. For one of the respondents in their study, Orange Farm was seen as "the promised land"⁸⁰ (ibid: 33), primarily because it offered him so much more than Weiler's Farm with regard to services and the ownership of his own site. While there is little recorded in official policy documents and newspaper archives about Weiler's Farm after the establishment of Orange Farm, it would seem that some squatters did resist removal, and others have continued to take up residence in the area. Current documents from the City of Johannesburg, in fact, make particular recommendations for those living in Weiler's Farm today, which also officially falls under Region G.

It would also seem that, where forced removals were not the order of the day, the move to Orange Farm was less likely by squatters. For example, few families relocated from Vlakfontein, with residents of Vlakfontein demanding recognition of their permanency and formality over time in their existing places of residence. Today, Vlakfontein is one of the fastest-growing informal settlements to the south of Johannesburg, with many squatters being moved to Vlakfontein from their places of illegal occupation even today. Until as late as 1992, then, it would appear that particular efforts were made by the state to coerce squatters to move to Orange Farm. Several memoranda can be found in official archives that were distributed by the TPA to squatters in Vlakfontein, Weiler's Farm, Finetown, and other parts of the Transvaal, urging people to obtain their own sites at Orange Farm. For example, in a TPA

⁸⁰ This idea of Orange Farm as 'the promised land' resonates all over the township even today, with, for example, several businesses taking the name 'Palestine', for example 'Palestine Butchers', and the ANC branch being named the Palestine branch.

pamphlet handed out in Vlakfontein and Finetown on 1 February 1989 and 21 January 1989 respectively, the following was said,

As you would obviously like to own a permanent piece of land where you can live in peace and erect your own permanent home according to your personal means, the TPA would like to help you to get a permanent site.

In addition, the position of squatter came to be objectified and made to be loathed by the TPA, which issued firm orders for landlords to deal harshly with squatters and which gave the police unqualified powers to deal with squatters. In a press package prepared by the Department of Provincial Affairs and Planning of 7 June 1991, the following is said under the heading 'Profile Of A Squatter':

What distinguishes him from his fellow man is the fact that he has no shelter or permanent home. He occupies land on which he has settled illegally, that is, land which he does not legally own or for which he was not given permission by its legal owner to settle there. He is a squatter... As a homeless person, he and others who share his fate, place incredible strain on the existing infrastructure.

In another statement, entitled 'This Land Is Your Land, This Land Is My Land - Reporting Squatting', the Department states,

On balance, everyone is a loser in this kind of situation. In the final analysis, random and haphazard settlement is an appeal to the democratic norm of an orderly community, something which ought to be guarded jealously by all South Africans. Every individual should act as a watchdog, reporting squatting immediately, no matter where it occurs. The prevention of squatting is not only the responsibility of the government or the police. We should all make a contribution in this regard.

In this context, Orange Farm was offered as an alternative place of secure tenure and promise for squatters. In the statement of the Department dated 7 June 1991, the following is also said,

If a squatter obtains and occupies a stand in this area (a Section 6(a) area), he is no longer a squatter, no matter how rudimentary his house may be.

For the apartheid state, then, offering squatters a better quality of life was not the primary aim, but what was key was making squatters accept the responsibility of living in accepted and regulated areas, and making for themselves their own 'better lives'. For many, faced with the threat of arrest or harassment, as well as the stigma and uncertainty of being homeless and illegal, Orange Farm came to represent the possibility of some form of independence and security with regard to owning a stand and having access to basic services, and being free from harassment by the authorities. In the strategies of the state to lure people to settle in specific areas that would be manageable and controllable, the promise of tenureship, i.e. the possibility of owning one's own home, would come to feature increasingly. As the apartheid state sought to discipline and manage black communities and individuals who had defied the influx control regulations to take occupation of spaces in and around Johannesburg, its adoption of policies of 'orderly urbanisation' and 'controlled squatting' came to pivot on the promise of tenureship and basic services to individuals and communities living in situations of extreme poverty and precarity and under the constant threat of arrest and harassment by the authorities.

Over time, as the housing crisis grew worse in the Transvaal, the offer to purchase sites in Orange Farm was extended to backyard dwellers in formal townships such as Soweto and Sebokeng. With the problems of overcrowding and sharing of services growing in townships, many people would see Orange Farm as a way of improving their lives through their chance at ownership of a serviced site. In the context of cramped and under-serviced living quarters in the townships, Orange Farm, in spite of its frugality, would indeed appear to many as 'the promised land'. And in the current official profile of Orange Farm, the initial settlements of Weiler's Farm and

Vlakfontein do not get a mention as the later townships and squatter camps come to feature more prominently in its recorded (and narrated history) –

Most of the people now living in Orange Farm came from areas such as Soweto, Evaton, Sebokeng, Westrand and Bekkersdal; and from 'squatter camps' such as Mshenguville, Majazana, Johnson-stop, Chicken Farm, Sweet-waters, Kliprivier, Finetown, Vlakfontein, Walkerville, Dunuza, etc. (Orange Farm CDWs, 2007: 4).

The promise of ownership and access to services was also used to usher in a logic of 'self-help housing' and privatisation by the apartheid state, spurred on by private institutions like the Urban Foundation (UF)⁸¹ which had an interest in ensuring stability for the economy and in opening up new areas for investment by the private sector. As the increasing presence of black people in and around urban centres could no longer be controlled through the enforcement of legislation, housing of the urban black poor needed to be addressed in a manner that did not threaten, but in fact enhanced, the interests of white society, and, in particular, white business interests. It in this context that the policies of 'controlled squatting' and orderly urbanisation' emerged, to regulate the threat already being posed by black people refusing removal from the urban centres and their surrounds. In the words of Colin Appleton, speaking in 1987, as then Director of the Urban Foundation in the Cape,

Informal settlements are already with us. We have to look at developing a policy to enable us to upgrade informal settlements

⁸¹ The Urban Foundation (UF) was established in 1977 as a not-for-profit organisation by South Africa's white business community. With Anglo American's Harry Oppenheimer as its first chairperson, the UF would raise a significant amount of capital from local sources to take forward its programmes aimed at lobbying the apartheid state to change its policies and towards developing black communities economically. In particular, the UF can be credited with pushing for a business logic to be adopted in the sphere of housing delivery. The UF also takes credit for the abolition of influx control laws, having organised a significant business lobby against the apartheid government in this regard, arguing for the acceptance of the permanence of black people in South Africa's urban areas. From the late 1970s, the UF had been arguing for the granting of 99 year lease-hold for blacks in urban areas, and then for full freehold rights, which were eventually granted. It would, however, claim its greatest victories in legislative and policy changes in the form of the White Paper on Urbanisation of 1986 that introduced the policies of 'controlled squatting' and 'orderly urbanisation' (Smit, 1992), that would introduce the 'site and service schemes' that would come to characterise housing developments (Bond, 2000a).

and to provide for the establishment of further ones, on a controlled basis. (Quoted in Urban Foundation, 1987: 46).

The policies of 'controlled squatting' and 'orderly urbanisation' then laid the basis for the development of 'informal towns', such as Orange Farm, where the state's only responsibility would be to provide a site with access to very basic services. The rest would be up to the individual who would be expected to build his/her own house according to his/her personal needs, tastes and capabilities. Within this logic, then, places like Orange Farm were not viewed by the apartheid state as places of transit or 'waiting' while formal houses and full services were being made available elsewhere. Rather, informality was the final provision made by the state, after which the individual was expected to improve his/her own standard and quality of life.

State documents clearly indicate an adoption of the logic that housing development for poor black communities should proceed along market lines and should involve the state only at the level of making available the services and resources necessary for individuals to accept responsibility for their own development. In a press release from the TPA dated 27 June 1990, the following is said,

It is the policy of the central and provincial governments to establish a free market system in the sphere of housing. Implied in this policy is the requirement that sufficient land and services be made available for development.

Within this logic, the poor are expected to build incrementally on the basic site and services provided by the state in attaining better living standards for themselves. Elsewhere in the press release it is said,

It is a worldwide accepted fact that informal housing is in many cases the only form of affordable housing for the poorest sector of the community.

In another press release, dated 18 May 1990, the TPA states,

Permanence in informal towns is an important asset. There, people are enabled to improve their home or the erven they purchased as their finances allow them, and may also decide if they wish to stay there or to move to another neighbourhood, as determined by their needs and finances.

In the words of Colin Appleton,

If provided with adequate servicing and public facilities, informal settlements provide a low entry point into the housing process. As such, they form an essential component in the housing options that need to be made available. (Urban Foundation, 1987: 46).

Orange Farm therefore represents one of the first attempts by the apartheid state to introduce a logic of individual responsibility and private sector delivery in the sphere of housing provision for black people. Informality and incremental housing introduced as options for ownership and independence for black people seemed to work well at a time when there were few other options open to the urban black poor.

An additionally significant feature of the policy of 'orderly urbanisation' was that of the decentralisation of industries. In a newspaper article from 1989, it is stated,

Government and provincial officials stress that blacks have come to the cities to stay. They talk of the need to provide land and finance which would make housing affordable and promote the concept of site and service schemes. But they are still committed to a 'decentralisation' policy which assumes that the growth of the major cities should be curbed and that government should spend billions creating jobs outside them. (Joffe, H, 1989).

By this logic, job creation and development were to be stimulated in rural and peri-urban areas, in this way creating "alternative centres for urbanisation" (ibid). While Orange Farm was designated a Section 6(a) area for low income black residential

development, by 1991 an industrial area had also been zoned for Orange Farm - Portion 371IQ - for "black entrepreneurship development" (Mphaki, A, 1991). It would seem, then, that Orange Farm was imagined by apartheid planners as an 'informal town' that would keep poor black people on the periphery of the city, involved in their own peripheral economy and life, away from the protected city of whites that was imagined as Johannesburg.

From 'Informal Town' to 'Township'

While there are no statistics that allow us to trace the growth of the population of Orange Farm in its early years, it would appear that the 'orderly urbanisation' envisaged with the marking of 4 300 sites in 1989 was quickly overtaken as people flocked to Orange Farm in the 1990s. By 1990, there were already 5 200 households (Mavuso, 1990: 1). And by the time the ANC government was elected into power in 1994, Orange Farm was far more than the 'informal town' it was imagined as by the apartheid government. And the dreams of residents for better homes, services and lives came to be invested in the democratic government. Between 1996 and 2001, Census data shows that there was rapid population growth in the region (Region 11, now Region G). The population grew by 44%, that is from 263 145 (in 1996) to 378 537 (2001), occurring mainly in the marginalised areas of the region (City of Johannesburg, 2006a: 3).

In September 1997, Orange Farm was declared a township, with promises from government for the building of proper infrastructure and the delivery of improved services. At this time, official records stated that there were approximately 300 000 residents in Orange Farm (Cooke, A, 1997). Since then, there has been significant growth in this number and in disagreements about this number. According to the official profile of Orange Farm, its current population stands at approximately 957 810 (Orange Farm CDWs, 2007: 2). In a focus group discussion with some of the CDWs who compiled this profile, however, it was claimed that the current population is closer to 1.5 million. This is a figure that was also given to researchers by the police superintendent in 2001, seven years ago (Khanya College/Kganya Consortium, 2002: 29). What is certain, however, is that the population has grown well beyond the

imaginings of its apartheid planners, and continues to grow today providing old and new challenges to planners of the new dispensation.

While the apartheid authorities sought to assert some form of control and administration over what they portrayed as situations of disorder and chaos, evidence suggests that systems of accountability, responsibility and representativity were established amongst squatters in the early settlements by squatters themselves. Crankshaw and Hart point out that an elected residents' committee existed in Weiler's Farm as early as 1984. While other documents also record meetings and engagements between the TPA and a residents' committee in Weiler's Farm and the early Orange Farm, it is unclear what happens to this initial committee in the move. All that can be pieced together is that, under the direction of the TPA, a new residents' committee is elected in 1991 to represent the interests of residents in engagements with the TPA. In a TPA newsletter distributed in Orange Farm in March 1991, the following is stated,

From the inception of Orange Farm, the TPA has followed the policy of taking major decisions ONLY AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE... The TPA stands by this policy. The present regulations were adopted by the TPA during 1990 only after the people of Orange Farm had agreed to them. Since their adoption, many more people have moved to Orange Farm. The TPA therefore decided not to implement these regulations without CONSULTING THE RESIDENTS AGAIN to find out whether they are satisfied with them. (TPA, 1991: 1 - original emphasis).

The newsletter then goes on to invite all organisations that it lists - ANC Women's League, ANC Youth Organisation, ANC Orange Farm Branch, People's Project Committee, Creche Committee, elderly people, Orange Farm School Crisis Committee, taxi associations, Interim Informal Committee, Sofasonke Party, churches, Natural Residents' Committee and the civic association - to a community meeting to decide on the future of an interim residents' committee. While there is little that records the political state of play in Orange Farm in its early years, the same

newsletter states, "All of these organisations agreed that politics should play no role in the community affairs of the people of Orange Farm." (ibid: 1). The current character of the local municipality and its relations with residents seems, however, to suggest that, as in other parts of the country, civic associations, ANC formations and their members came to dominate processes and institutions established to oversee the implementation of policy changes in Orange Farm, closing off spaces for critique and debate of the policies being implemented in their supposed interest. This is taken up in greater detail in the following chapter.

Until June 1993, Orange Farm fell under the administration of the TPA. In July 1993, the TPA engaged the Municipal Management Services (MMS) to provide town management services in Orange Farm and other parts of the south. The MMS played this role through the changes in government to the Northern Vaal Metropolitan Substructure in January 1995 and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council's Service Delivery Component in November 1995. In 1996, MMS handed over the administration to the Southern Metropolitan Local Council, and in January 2001, the city of Johannesburg placed Orange Farm under the administration of Region 11, today Region G. From interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis it would seem that the ANC has always played an active role in the community of Orange Farm, and that post-1990 attempted to gain control of all representative structures at community level in an effort to influence the processes of co-operative governance and participatory democracy that were being established in the process of negotiations and constitutional development enveloping the country at the time. Today, Orange Farm consists of four wards, administered by four elected Councillors, assisted by elected ward committees, ten in each ward. All four Councillors belong to the ANC and the majority of ward committee members are ANC members (Councillor Simango, interview, 16 October 2007).

The next chapter will explore, in greater detail, how residents relate to and engage with attempts at participatory governance in Orange Farm, and the relationship between the ANC, ordinary residents, and these processes and institutions. Significant to note here is the fact that the traditions, culture, organisational processes and practices of the ANC Alliance come to be remoulded in the context of governance as opposed to protest, and mobilised towards encouraging widespread acceptance of

its neoliberal policies of individual responsibility, self-discipline, self-restraint, and commodification, particularly in the sphere of the delivery of basic services.

A Place of ‘Permanent Informality’

While many of those who moved to Orange Farm under apartheid did so with the belief that their situations of informal living would change once a democratic government was elected, with the demands being made of the apartheid state for decent, quality housing and services by the liberation movement becoming the basis for the development plans of the new government, very few residents have been able to escape their informal living conditions, with access to employment and quality services still being restricted to a few. This may be attributed to the fact that the ANC government, rather than reversing the neoliberal trajectory in the delivery of basic services that the apartheid government had already embarked on since the 1980s, chose to pursue and strengthen it, making cost-recovery, commodification and privatisation its driving principles in this sphere.

This has meant that it has promoted a differentiated and incremental system of access to basic services based on a partnership between the individual citizen and the state where the state makes certain minimal amounts of resources accessible in return for the individual’s acceptance of the responsibility to pay for any additional services. While this will be explored in much greater detail in the next chapter, it is important to note here that in the context of rising unemployment in post-apartheid South Africa, the expectation that individuals would be able to pay for a quality of life higher than that of survival has meant that large communities of unemployed and socio-economically disadvantaged people have remained in their situations of precarity, their informal living conditions made permanent as the possibilities for change have diminished. Where new arrivals in Orange Farm have squatted vacant land post-1994, the ANC government has insisted that they move to site-and-service schemes within Orange Farm much like those established by the apartheid government. In this manner, Orange Farm has become the place of permanent informality spoken of by the apartheid government, and the neoliberal policies of the ANC government have allowed this to happen.

This permanence of informality is evident in the very character that life has assumed for the majority of its residents, with unemployment and the need to find the means to access the resources necessary for life (in the absence of an effective social welfare system and wage labour) determining the everyday strategies adopted by individuals. A close look at the profiles of groups of residents over the years, as well as the levels of access to and quality of services, shows clearly that the informal living conditions imagined for residents of Orange Farm by the apartheid government have not been transcended in spite of the commitments of the liberation movement to ensure a decent, quality life for all.

In the Crankshaw and Hart study, conducted in 1990, including a survey of 100 household heads, 21 per cent said that they were unemployed, 6 per cent were active in the informal economy, and 13 per cent were pensioners. The rest were employed in clerical and sales jobs, and semi-skilled or unskilled manual labour. 11 per cent of the sample said that they had no regular monthly income, 41 per cent that they enjoyed a monthly income of between R1 and R100, 36 per cent between R101 and R200, 9 per cent between R201 and R300, and just 3 per cent above R300. Only 3 percent of interviewees possessed a matriculation certificate, with 24 per cent saying that they had no formal education at all. (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990: 12, 15).

In the study conducted by Khanya College and the Kganya Consortium between 2001 and 2002, 66 percent of the 203 women interviewed said that they were unemployed, 21 percent that they were employed, and 12 percent that they were self-employed. Of the few who were earning, the majority said that their monthly income lay between R200 and R1500. The majority of women interviewed also stated that they worked in domestic and casual forms of labour (Khanya College/Kganya Consortium, 2002: 31). In a study conducted by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, the Anti-Privatisation Forum and Public Citizen in Stretford, Extension 4, Orange Farm, out of a total of 184 households, 30 per cent said that they had no regular monthly income, 11 per cent below R200, 15 per cent between R200 and R500, 32 per cent between R500 and R1000, 10 per cent between R1000 and R2000, and just 2 per cent above R2 000. The study also showed that only 50 per cent of households had some kind of income related to work, both formal and informal, with most people being employed in "elementary occupations or as craft and related trade workers". 29 per cent of

households stated that they relied on the state for their basic income in the form of social grants and pensions (Coalition et al, 2004: 16).

The majority of participants in this study had been living in Orange Farm since the early 1990s, needing to leave situations of overcrowding in townships like Soweto, Sebokeng, Evaton and Alexandra where many of them had been living in backyard shacks or rented rooms. The majority had also come to Orange Farm unemployed and remained unemployed, surviving on social grants (mainly pensions, foster care grants and child support grants), odd jobs, and seasonal and contract forms of domestic and manual labour in and around Orange Farm and the Indian and Coloured townships of Lenasia and Eldorado Park. Many of the women in this study had come to Orange Farm to escape unhappy marriages or situations of domestic violence. In the Khanya College/Kganya Consortium study that focused solely on women in Orange Farm, the experience is also given of women taking up residence in Orange Farm when dismissed from positions of domestic labour where they resided in a backroom of their employer's. All of those under the age of 25 years, who participated in this study, had come to Orange Farm with their mothers when their parents had divorced or separated. From all accounts, then, it would appear that Orange Farm was a place to which 'the poorest of the poor' and those marginalised by society and the economy turned in the hope of a 'better life' for themselves⁸².

One exception to this general trend is a group of residents who had been full-time workers at Premier Milling Company and its subsidiaries, such as Epic Oil, since the 1980s, who had been offered the opportunity to buy formal four-room houses in Drieziek 2, Orange Farm. As its milling activities grew in the Vereeniging area, the company would need to entice semi-skilled and unskilled black workers. And Orange Farm would present an ideal location in which to provide cheap, basic serviced accommodation for the growing unplanned for urban black population. From the early 1990s, then, Premier Milling Company acquired the assistance of banks to

⁸² Both the secondary and primary research processes that contributed to this thesis point to the gendered nature of poverty, with women forming a disproportionately high number of the poor and absorbing the effects of neoliberal policies in the household and community. While this is an extremely important area for further study, the scope of this thesis has allowed only for reference to this concern in relation to specific experiences thrown up by this particular research process. The gendered nature of poverty, as experienced in Orange Farm, is explored in a chapter entitled 'The Feminisation Of Poverty: A Disabling Discourse' in Bond et al. (eds), 2010.

secure bonded houses on fully serviced sites for its potential workers in Drieziek Extension 2. In this way, many families were lured to Orange Farm, with their heads of households securing fulltime jobs as well as formal houses with access to electricity, water, water-borne sewerage, and refuse removal. Having the status of full-time waged employees, these residents were able to repay their bonds on these houses and to pay for their services. For them, moving to Orange Farm did not represent an acceptance of poorer standards of living or the status of 'poverty' or 'the poor'. Rather, life in Orange Farm represented their hope for a decent quality of life of a standard above that determined or imagined to be for 'the poor'. Sadly for these workers, a few years into their contracts, the company would undergo several processes of 'restructuring', resulting in widespread retrenchments, leaving them without the means to pay for their services and make their bond repayments. This experience is explored further in the next chapter. For now, however, it is important to recognise in this experience contested visions for Orange Farm.

The representation of Orange Farm as a place for the poor is, however, reinforced in the City of Johannesburg's most recent policy and discussion documents. Forming part of the city's Region G, Orange Farm is described as a poorer part of this region, requiring different interventions from its slightly richer neighbours like Lenasia. The City's official website states,

The total population of Region G is estimated at 270 000, with 170 000 of these people living in the Greater Orange Farm and Weilers Farm area⁸³. The population is extremely young, with 40 percent under 18. Income levels are very low: 50 percent of the population has no income and about 62 percent of the remainder earn less than R1 500 a month, indicating that the majority live below the breadline. Unemployment is estimated at 70 percent, far higher than the national average, with most people in the region being employed in elementary occupations or as craft and related trade workers.

⁸³ It has already been shown, above, that these figures are gross under-estimates for the population of the region as Orange Farm alone is estimated to be home to over 1.5 million people.

Under the heading ‘Key Issues’, the document goes on to state,

For Greater Ennerdale and Lenasia the issues are: informal settlements; the absence of higher-income residential areas; and the lack of control of local economic activities. For Greater Orange Farm and Weilers Farm (Kanana Park) the issues are: extreme levels of poverty and unemployment; the geographic isolation and marginalisation from the economic and social opportunities afforded by greater Johannesburg; low quality basic services - both infrastructural and social; invasion of planned residential areas, public and private land; and civil disobedience - this fragmented community has strong political and local groupings. (<http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/179/123/1/1/> - accessed, 10/04/2008).

In the regional spatial development framework of the City, Orange Farm and Region G are targeted in the overall strategic goal of ‘proactive absorption of the poor’ (already discussed in *Chapter 2*), with its development being conceived of in terms of enhancing the potential for residents to access jobs and become economically active. In the case of Orange Farm, this is not viewed in terms of the state creating greater infrastructure for economic development, but providing the incentives for private sector investment in the area.

Table 1: Status Of Services In Orange Farm (April 2007)

Township	Water	Sewer	Electricity
Orange Farm Proper	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 1	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 2	Standpipes	Pit latrines/Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 3	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 4	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 6	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 7	Standpipes	Pit latrines	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 8	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Orange Farm Ext. 9	Water tank	Pit latrines	No
Orange Farm Ext. 10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stretford Ext. 2	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Stretford Ext. 3	Communal taps	Pit latrines/Water-borne	Yes
Stretford Ext. 4	Standpipe	Condominium	Yes
Stretford Ext. 5	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Stretford Ext. 6	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Stretford Ext. 7	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Stretford Ext. 8	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Stretford Ext. 9	Communal taps	Water-borne	Yes
Stretford Ext. 10	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Drieziek Proper	Water tanks	Pit latrines	No
Drieziek Ext. 1	Communal taps	Pit latrines	Yes
Drieziek Ext. 2	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes
Drieziek Ext. 3	Standpipes	Pit latrines	Yes
Drieziek Ext. 4	Water tanks	Pit latrines	Yes
Drieziek Ext. 5	Communal taps	Pit latrines	No
Drieziek Ext. 6	Standpipes	Water-borne	Yes

(City of Johannesburg, *Regional Spatial Development Framework 2007/8*: 11)

More importantly, with regard to the levels of access to services envisaged for residents of the area, documents of the City confirm that it imagines Orange Farm to be a place for ‘the poorest of the poor’, that is, those unable to pay for services and therefore deserving of lower levels and inferior quality of services. The table above illustrates clearly how low the targeted levels of service for Orange Farm continue to be, confirming its place in Johannesburg as one for ‘the poorest of the poor’.

For many who had taken up residence in Orange Farm under the harsh conditions of apartheid and its limited choices for black people, the promise of liberation and a democratically elected government signalled different and better times in which a decent standard of living and quality of life were imagined and struggled for. While the liberation movement provided a platform from which the black poor could

imagine and fight for equality and justice under apartheid, the 1990s would present the liberation movement with new challenges - those of governing 'responsibly' under a global neoliberal order and rationality. The language of ungovernability and the demands for immediate change and redress would come to be replaced by that of patience, discipline, self-restraint, and responsibility in the interests of nation-building and reconciliation in the interests of export-orientated growth through enhancing investor confidence and the like.

While those who had taken up residence in Orange Farm under apartheid might have expected far-reaching and immediate change in their interests fairly soon after the ANC's election into government, thirteen years after the first democratic elections Orange Farm is just a much bigger 'informal town' imagined by its apartheid planners. Informality and substandard living conditions continue to be the norm for its over 1.5 million residents, and Orange Farm continues to be seen as 'a place for the poorest of the poor'. The next chapter will show how current policies being advocated by the City of Johannesburg for Orange Farm serve to entrench such inequality today.

Chapter 6 - Orange Farm II: The Poor as Alternative Production?

Introduction

They told us to wait. So we waited. We saw apartheid criminals go free and men who called themselves leaders become rich. We saw them give up their red t-shirts for silk suits made in Italy. We watched as their bellies swelled and their voices thinned in their new accents of the market and the state. Still we waited. Fifteen years now we have been waiting, here in this place they call Orange Farm - a farm where little grows.

Fifteen years ago, hope brought us to this place. Some came here fleeing the violence of those who killed in the name of party and power, others came when they closed the factories where we once worked, or to escape the misery of life in the overcrowded backyard shacks in every Gauteng township. But we all came here because we hoped for more - for ourselves, and our children. Then, the world around us was changing, "Freedom is coming," they said, and all we had to do was wait. "Just wait, and don't forget to vote." So we waited, and we voted. We waited while they went fishing with Roelf Meyer, had tea with Betsie Verwoerd, and mourned Harry Oppenheimer. We waited while they cut our electricity and installed prepaid meters. We waited as HIV/AIDS killed our friends and relatives. We waited in darkness and rain.... We waited and nothing happened. No roads. No toilets, no houses and no jobs. Nothing...or what might as well have been.

So, we are not waiting anymore. None of us were born here. Still, each day, we bury our children here. Perhaps they thought we were waiting to die or maybe they simply forgot that we were

alive. But we are not waiting, now we are 'saying' ...saying, 'give us, or we take'.

(Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, November 2006).

It is significant that almost twenty years since the apartheid government's concerted efforts to prevent Orange Farm from being imagined as a transit camp (a waiting place for those demanding permanent places of dwelling), the narratives of residents continue to speak of it as a place in which they have been waiting for change, their patience now worn thin. While the apartheid state might have imagined Orange Farm as a place through which the informal and substandard quality of life being offered to black people would be formalised and made permanent, with black people taking on the responsibility of providing for themselves, the fact that residents today continue to demand the delivery of 'a better life' from the post-apartheid state is evidence of a long history of struggle against this apartheid imaginary for Orange Farm.

While the pamphlet above was released by the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) during a blockade of the Golden Highway by residents of Orange Farm demanding the delivery of services in the area in November 2006, its spirit speaks to earlier contestations of the apartheid planners' visions, and to a collective imaginary of 'a better life for all' that was being shaped and fashioned in the struggles of the liberation movement against the apartheid regime. It is this collective imaginary, held together in the promises of the liberation movement, that sees residents of Orange Farm today contesting the discourse of the current democratically elected government, which seems to be returning to the logic of 'self-help' and individual responsibility, espoused by the apartheid state, to entrench a logic of payment for basic services and the rule of the market and the profit motive in all aspects of society, as neoliberal policies take their hold.

While the ANC government today demands that individual citizens stop waiting for the state to deliver and assume some responsibility in accessing their own means to 'a better life' through participation in the commodified system of delivery, residents who have taken to the Golden Highway almost every year since 2002 (and many others) argue that they will not wait any longer for the state to deliver on its promises of this

'better life' outside of the logic of the market. In struggles today, then, we see the moral economy enabled by the liberation movement, that developed both a critique of and an alternative to the apartheid state, coming up against its refashioning by the ANC government to facilitate the naturalisation and acceptance of neoliberal policies that once again need the individual to assume responsibility for his/her own conduct and quality of life in a system dominated by the logic of the market and the profit motive. In these struggles, we also see the vision of the liberation movement of an equal and just society coming up against current attempts to entrench divisions between those who can pay and those who can't by making access to a better quality of life dependent on one's ability to pay. In the latter attempts the category of 'the poor' emerges as something to be quantified, identified and registered in an attempt to separate out those 'deserving' of assistance from the state and those who continue to claim this assistance 'in spite of their ability to pay'.

This chapter attempts to understand the moral economy that is being produced in Orange Farm today as the morality of making good on past promises comes into conflict with the morality of becoming a responsible citizen by paying for services and giving government a chance to deliver. In the circulation of this moral economy, many values, beliefs and commitments of the liberation movement come into conversation, debate and conflict with the new language of neoliberalism. This chapter explores the emergence of this moral economy through attempts at introducing the logic of commodification, cost recovery and payment for services in Orange Farm and resistance to them, both under apartheid and post-apartheid. Understanding that a moral economy is what ultimately determines how an individual understands his/her position in society and his/her relationship to others, the state and other institutions, and how s/he decides to act in relation to all of these, this chapter is structured largely around the views of individuals interviewed for this thesis and who participated in focus groups for it. In particular, it will look at those instances where there have been contested visions, definitions, understandings, and approaches to issues.

It is also important to acknowledge that there is no easy way to classify the ways in which residents of Orange Farm relate to and, thereby, shape this moral economy. While organised responses to the introduction of neoliberal policies could quite

readily be separated into pro- and anti-ANC, research conducted for this thesis showed that there is contestation of this moral economy not just between these two 'camps', but amongst ANC members and within community movements and projects. While party political affiliation can certainly be seen to play an influential role in how certain residents approach improving their lives and the life of the community of Orange Farm, it is also significant that the sometimes common histories of struggles in the liberation movement and the common conditions of life experienced by all residents of Orange Farm produce similar beliefs and approaches to issues amongst otherwise oppositional groups. This chapter reflects on the many ways in which residents, from various political orientations, contested, and continue to contest, the poor quality of life imagined for them by state planners whose vision for Orange Farm was that of a 'place for the poor'.

Tenureship : A Means of Control vs Independence

While the offer of tenureship through site and service schemes may have been viewed by the apartheid state as a way of regulating and managing the growing urban black poor, it also featured significantly in the decisions made by individuals and families to move to Orange Farm and to remain there. In the first and only study conducted on the relocation of squatters to Orange Farm from Vlaktefontein and Weiler's Farm, it is stated,

With tenure as a pivotal variable, commitment to Orange Farm was remarkably strong among the sample of respondents. Although 50 per cent of the interviewees at Orange Farm who had moved from Weiler's Farm felt that they had been forced to move from Weiler's Farm, 65 per cent chose Orange Farm as their preferred home, compared to only 23 per cent who chose Weiler's Farm. (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990: 33).

In one of the few research projects conducted in Orange Farm between 2001 and 2002, it is stated that the majority of the 203 women interviewed for the project (59 per cent) said that "they chose to come to Orange Farm because they wanted their own homes" (Khanya College/Kganya Consortium, 2002: 30). In the majority of

interviews and focus groups conducted for this project, participants stated that they had chosen to live in Orange Farm in order to have their "own place". While the apartheid state and private sector interests may have viewed site and service schemes as a way of naturalising amongst the urban black poor a logic of individual responsibility and private sector delivery in the sphere of housing and basic services, for those who had few alternatives under apartheid, the promise of tenureship was imagined, rather, as a way out of situations of extreme poverty and dependency and as the promise of a better life to be fought and struggled for from there on. For many of the first residents of Orange Farm, then, life was viewed as a constant struggle with the apartheid authorities and their laws and visions for black people.

There is no better example of this tension at play than in the retelling of stories by residents of Orange Farm interviewed for this project, of the process of securing a site. In order to secure a site, it is told, individuals would have to produce their shacks - 'no shack, no site', the saying went. As many of those desperate for a piece of land did not have a shack, many sites came to be secured with the same shack as people shared and borrowed shacks from each other. Some also pointed to the fact that this stipulation by the apartheid authorities seemed to suggest that they were trying to enforce a certain standard of living for black people, encouraging informality and substandard development. In the words of one resident,

... people were forced to build shacks because when you ask for a piece of land, they were not saying, 'Bring bricks to come and build your house.' They were saying, 'Bring your shack'. And if you don't have zinc then they are not going to allocate you a piece of land. So, people were forced to live in shacks because of the apartheid system. (Bricks Mokolo, focus group, Kganya consortium, 25/09/2007).

The fact that the majority of residents of Orange Farm today still don't have title deeds also points to the fact that tenureship was not necessarily viewed positively in and for itself at the time. The official profile of Orange Farm, prepared and updated by its five community development workers (CDWs), notes that

On the 19th October 2002, the State President – Mr Thabo Mbeki ceremoniously issued the first residential Title Deeds to the following senior citizens: Ms Patisi Notshizili Rosy-Brook of 1306 Orange Farm Ext.1, Ms Nomadlozi Gasta Khumalo of 1923 Orange Farm Ext.1, and Ms Swewu Lizzy Monare of 1926 Orange Farm Ext.1. The Executive Mayor – Mr Amos Masondo, assisted by the M.E.C. for Housing – Mr Paul Mashatile, issued Title Deeds to the following residents: Mr Butinyana Abram Moeketsi of 2363 Orange Farm Ext.1 and, Mr Pitso Moses Lintso of 2608 Orange Farm Ext.1.

In the majority of interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis, people, some of whom have been living in Orange Farm for over fifteen years, said that they did not possess the title deeds to their homes, and few were involved in processes towards securing them. For members of the OWCC, a struggle for title deeds is not their priority as, for them, having a title deed would mean acceptance of one's substandard quality of life and the responsibility as an individual for improving this life without the assistance of the state.

In official plans for housing delivery in Orange Farm, it is clear that the spirit of 'self-help' and individual responsibility introduced by the apartheid government continues today in the policies of subsidisation for the poor to access decent quality housing. Currently, the poorest households in the city (those with a monthly income below R1500) qualify for an amount of R23 050 towards a house. With the exception of pensioners, the disabled, and those with temporary or permanent disabilities or health problems, beneficiaries are expected to contribute R2 479 towards the building of their houses. Beneficiaries unable to afford this amount are expected to contribute in the form of 'sweat equity' through the People's Housing Process (PHP), through which people are skilled, through Housing Support Centres, to help build their own homes. The table that follows shows the current status of housing delivery in Orange Farm.

Table 2: Status Of Housing Delivery In Orange Farm (April 2007)

Project Name	Description	Comment
Orange Farm Proper	House construction (PHP)	Project ongoing
Orange Farm Ext. 1	House construction (PHP/Thubelisha)	Project ongoing
Orange Farm Ext. 2	House construction	Project ongoing
Orange Farm Ext. 3	Upgrading of services (water-borne sewers and standpipes)	Project ongoing
Orange Farm Ext. 4, 6, 7 and 8	Upgrading of services (water-borne sewers and standpipes)	Project ongoing, KTI appointed
Orange Farm Ext. 9	Formalisation of township and road construction	Project ongoing
Orange Farm Ext. 10	Formalisation of township	Project ongoing
Stretford Ext. 2, 5, 7 and 8	Upgrading of services (water-borne sewers and standpipes)	Project ongoing, KTI appointed
Stretford Ext. 3	Upgrading of services (water-borne sewers and standpipes)	LTE appointed by Province
Stretford Ext. 6	Upgrading of services (water-borne sewers and standpipes)	Emba appointed by Province
Drieziek Ext. 3 and 5	Formalisation of township and installation of services	Project ongoing
Drieziek Ext. 4, 9 and 10	Construction of houses by Thubelisha	Project ongoing
Drieziek Proper	Upgrading of services	Arcuss Gibb consultant engineers appointed by Province

(City of Johannesburg, *Regional Spatial Development Framework 2007/8*: 29)

From the table, it is clear that the levels of access to housing are of the minimal possible standards and quality, with the added dimension that creating access should occur through a ‘partnership’ between the individual and the state, with some show of responsibility on the part of ‘the poor’ for making ownership of a house possible for oneself with the minimal assistance of the state. During one of the many site visits conducted for this thesis in Stretford, Extension 4, Orange Farm, it was observed that construction on a small RDP house had come to a halt. On enquiring what the problem was from the owner, it was learnt that he had just lost his wife and was struggling with the care of his three young children. After the funeral, he had run out

of money to buy water to mix the concrete mix that had been provided to him to help with the building of his house.

'We Cannot Pay, We Will Not Pay': The Struggle for Basic Services

While all historical records indicate that Orange Farm was established as a site and service scheme underpinned by the desire to enforce a logic of payment for these amenities (as basic as they were) amongst residents, it is also clear that little success was achieved in enforcing such a culture of payment and individual responsibility.

Crankshaw and Hart (1990) argue that the absence of rent and service charges in squatter settlements is partly what contributed to them being attractive to poor black people making their way into urban areas or escaping overcrowding in townships. The apartheid government was therefore uncertain as to how successful its site and service schemes would be as they would, in the long-term, require residents to pay for these sites (in the form of rent or a purchase price) and for services. In Orange Farm, sites were to be purchased at the cost of R500 per 210 square metres or rented at the cost of R6 per month, and a service charge of R29 per month was to be levied per site. Services being paid for included communal taps and refuse removal only. While these charges were supposed to take effect from July 1989, by 1990 there was still no sign that they were being levied (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990: 10).

Interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this thesis suggest that the obligation to pay for rent and services was not enforced in Orange Farm in any real way by the apartheid authorities, with no real memory of any bills being received by residents for rent or services in the early to mid-1990s. Participants argued that this was due to the fact that the quality of service delivery in Orange Farm did not improve, with the majority of residents believing that they were not receiving any services that deserved to be paid for, and because of the generally poor economic position of the majority of Orange Farm residents. They also pointed to the fact that there was a general campaign of resistance, led by the United Democratic Front (UDF), that questioned the poor quality of services and infrastructure provided for black people by the apartheid state, and that boycotted payment for rent and services. Residents of townships and informal settlements across the country united under the

banner of the UDF in national campaigns, beginning with the Asinamali (We Have No Money) campaign in 1984 to boycott payment for unequal and inferior basic services and standards of living.

In a memorandum presented to Hernus Kriel, then Minister of Planning and Provincial Affairs by the UDF on 16 August 1990 the following is stated,

The UDF rejects the current government policies of privatisation of housing, which fail to cater for the housing needs of 80 per cent of the black population in South Africa. The UDF believes that all the people of South Africa deserve more than third-class housing in the form of site and service schemes. The UDF believes strongly that the state has a centrally important role to play in the provision of land, services and houses for all South Africans. The UDF commits itself to a process of serious negotiations towards the establishment of new land and housing policies that can begin to solve the problems of landlessness and homelessness.

Further on it states,

There can be no justification for the continuation of landlessness and homelessness, for the lack of clean water, electricity, water-borne sewerage and other basic facilities, and the government must move rapidly to rectify the situation. Constitutional negotiations and a political settlement in South Africa will be rendered useless if urban areas continue to be inaccessible to the poor and the homeless. (UDF, 1990: 6-7).

Orange Farm, it would therefore seem, became a place from which people could struggle against the very logic that underpinned its establishment. And the election of a democratic government in 1994 would mean new hope amongst residents for the development of Orange Farm according to the vision of the liberation movement and their own dreams.

But, as the liberation movement transformed to fulfil the new tasks of governing 'a reconciled nation' in a democratic manner post-1994, it would also be embraced by (and embrace) a world that was becoming increasingly neoliberal. This would mean the adoption of policies that would see the ANC government try to enforce an acceptance of the duty to pay for basic services and the logic of individual responsibility with regard to ensuring and facilitating delivery. This would see the first real enforcement of a logic of payment in Orange Farm by the ANC government, with the first bills for services and rent being presented to residents after 1996 and the launch of the Masakhane campaign.

In the study conducted by Khanya College and the Kganya Consortium (2002), participants are quoted as remembering 1997 as the earliest year in which they remember receiving bills reflecting how much they owed the municipality for rent and services. They are also said to have called these bills 'Masakhane bills' as each statement of account would have the title, 'Masakhane'. In interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis, participants offered similar recollections. In both cases, participants also stated that these bills were not taken seriously by residents both because the majority of residents were unable to afford the high amounts that they were said to be owing, and because there was the continued belief that services were of such poor quality in Orange Farm that they did not deserve to be paid for. It should be remembered that while residents would be billed for rental of their sites, water (in the form of communal standpipes) and refuse removal only, there was still the expectation from residents that the basic services they would be receiving would include running water in their homes, electricity, sanitation, and refuse removal. Paying for services that were seen to be non-existent (largely due to the lack of electricity and sanitation), was seen to be unjust and unacceptable. In other words, non-payment continued on a large scale, and Masakhane failed to engender the culture of individual responsibility and payment for basic services that was its aim.

Instead, there is evidence that residents actively protested against this logic of individual responsibility and payment, taking to the streets several times since 1994 to demand that the ANC government deliver on its promises of free basic services for all. In 1996, residents marched to the municipal offices to demand an end to random

water cut-offs and an improvement in the delivery of water. Without a memorandum, they staged a sit-in at the offices, resulting in the arrests of two men and two women. In 1999, women from Drieziek 2 initiated a blockade of the Golden Highway, also demanding an improvement in the delivery of water to the area. While most of these early actions did not take place under the banner of any organisation or political party, in 1997, SANCO claimed responsibility for the burning of an ANC Councillor's house, Councillor Madikane. (Khanya College/Kganya Consortium, 2002: 39). In 2002, residents organised themselves in protest action against electricity cut-offs, leading to negotiations between an elected group of residents and ESKOM, resulting, in turn, in the reconnection of households that had been cut off. When, later on in the year, Johannesburg Water began its campaign to install prepaid water meters in Stretford, Extension 4, this group would again organise residents to resist the prepaid water system. Through these struggles, the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) was established. Members of the OWCC describe it as a social movement, rooted in the issues and struggles of community members like themselves.

It is also significant that Orange Farm, unlike other more established townships, presented the new government with a slightly different challenge - delivery of services where they had been largely non-existent. Unlike in Soweto where residents enjoyed access to services that they had strategised individually and collectively against paying for, in Orange Farm, the 'culture of non-payment' was not accompanied by a culture of enjoying access to full services. In Orange Farm, then, there was the opportunity to introduce the new logic of commodification and payment in the context of residents' desperation for services. Rather than needing to undo a culture of enjoyment of services without payment for them, then, in Orange Farm what was required was persuasion of residents to accept that their access to services would require them to pay upfront for them. In the context of a lack of full services, prepaid technologies would be sold as the answer for the poor, including residents of Orange Farm. With no other alternatives available to them in order to access much needed services, residents would have no choice but to accept prepaid systems of delivery. The provision of electricity to Orange Farm by ESKOM in 1993, thus happened under this logic, with no overt resistance from residents.

But, this lack of overt resistance should not be read as the blind acceptance of prepaid electricity by residents. Rather, evidence suggests that hidden strategies of resistance, such as illegal reconnections and the bypassing of meters, do also exist. While the delivery of electricity in Orange Farm has always been through the prepaid system, data collected for the Khanya College/Kganya Consortium study (2002) and the report produced by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation et. al. (2003) record high levels of bypassing or illegal connections to the electricity grid that allow residents free access to electricity. In all focus groups conducted for this project, the majority of residents stated that they were illegally connected to the electricity grid, and a number of interviewees also indicated that they were bypassing their metered connections illegally.

While the reports cited above make these claims based on focus group discussions and observations made by researchers, both found it difficult to make numerically substantiated claims as to how widespread the practice of bypassing or reconnection is as the fact that it is an illegal practice means that its level of reporting would be low as most people would want to hide the fact that they are connected illegally. Similarly, interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this thesis could not force participants to reveal whether they were connected illegally. Where participants did reveal this, they were assured of anonymity. While it is difficult, then, to provide the extent to which bypassing and reconnections are taking place illegally in Orange Farm, the fact that evidence exists that it is happening at some scale is significant enough to show that there are still levels of resistance to payment for electricity, even in the prepaid form. While it may be argued that Orange Farm residents have been paying for their electricity for a number of years now through the prepaid system, it may also be shown that levels of resistance to this system exist in the form of the bypassing of meters and illegal connections to the grid that do not require prepayment. Up until the writing of this thesis, there have been no signs of the replacement of electricity meters with new tamper-proof boxes, as Jak Koseff, Director of Community Development in the CoJ, suggested was currently happening (see *Chapter Four*).

While the introduction of electricity through the prepaid system seems to have happened without much protest in Orange Farm, attempts by the CoJ and

Johannesburg Water to introduce prepaid water meters were met with much stronger resistance from residents. However, even in this instance, the desperate situation of residents in need of proper sanitation and sewerage seems to have been exploited in trying to enforce a logic of payment for water. In early 2002, residents of Stretford, Extension 4, Orange Farm were approached by Johannesburg Water with the news that their water pipes would be replaced with a shallow condominium system⁸⁴ that would allow residents to have flush toilets for the first time. However, in order to access this system, each household would have to pay R100 for a prepaid water meter. In the report produced by the Coalition Against Water Privatisation et al., it is stated that 90 per cent of a sample of 194 households in Stretford, Extension 4 claimed that they had been led to believe, by Johannesburg Water, that they had to buy a prepaid water meter in order to get a flush toilet (2003: 14).

In recorded video footage of a mass meeting of residents held in the streets of Stretford, Extension 4 in 2002, speaker after speaker (mainly old and young women) accuse Johannesburg Water of deceiving ("crooking") residents who were desperate for flush toilets and an end to their endless sewerage problems (Indymedia video footage – September 2002). In the face of widespread criticism in the community and media, Johannesburg Water would turn its strategy towards increasing and enhancing its education and awareness campaigns, showing how responsible citizenship involves the 'efficient use' of water; water conservation in the acknowledgement that it is a scarce resource; and payment for any water consumed above the 'lifeline' provided free by the state.

While Johannesburg Water has tried to show the benefits of self-regulation and individual responsibility facilitated by prepaid technologies, the Coalition report also details a number of adverse consequences that the prepaid water meters have begun to have on the lives of residents. These include the fact that residents on the prepaid system often run out of essential water as a result of their inability to purchase units

⁸⁴ The CoJ and Johannesburg Water, in adhering to the policy of keeping the costs of delivery to poor communities to a minimum, introduced shallow sewage systems, with smaller pipes and lower gradients, that were expected to clog up with faeces frequently, requiring unclogging by hand. In poor areas, such as Orange Farm, where toilet paper is often unaffordable, newspaper is used in its place, resulting in even more frequent clogging of toilets. While the CoJ has developed instructions for residents to assist them to unblock their own toilets, residents and activists have pointed to the health risks entailed. (Bond, 2010: 10; Coalition Against Water Privatisation et al, 2003).

additional to the free 6 kl provided free by the state to all citizens. While government and Johannesburg Water have gone to great lengths to show how 6kl is sufficient for the basic needs of a five person household, and that the prepaid system is a means through which delivery of the 6kl can be effected, the lived experiences of residents, as recorded in the Coalition survey paint a different picture. The Coalition's report states,

The majority of residents interviewed stated that they are now unable to afford to have the amount of water that they need for their daily activities. 47 per cent of respondents have asked their neighbours for water since receiving prepaid meters as they have been unable to purchase water units. In the failure to secure access to additional free water, residents have also begun to change their behaviour, trying to reduce their necessary consumption of water. (2003: 19).

The report then goes on to illustrate how residents have begun to try to reduce their water consumption by limiting the number of times they flush the toilet, bath, wash dishes, cook, clean and garden. While Johannesburg Water has spent much time and money on advertisements and educational campaigns to show how 6 kl is sufficient for the basic needs of the average household, the City's own commissioned research has argued that this amount may indeed be insufficient for the average township household (Palmer Development Group, 2006: 9).

While the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) claims that the prepaid water meter project was brought to a halt by the protests it helped organised amongst residents in Stretford, Extension 4, Johannesburg Water has continued with its roll-out of prepaid water meters in Soweto in its flagship project called Operation Gcina 'Manzi (Operation 'Save Water'). Citing the successes of its 'pilot project' in Stretford, Johannesburg Water entered into fiery street battles with Soweto residents as it forced the installation of prepaid water meters, first in Phiri and then in neighbouring parts of Soweto. In parts of Orange Farm where flush toilets and water-borne sewerage are lacking today, residents are also being asked to buy into the prepaid system in order to access these levels of service. For example, in Extension 8, residents have been

provided with toilets that have not been connected to water pipes. In order to flush their toilets, they have to carry water in buckets from standpipes outside their yards and pour them into their toilets. This system has come to be known as the 'pour and flush' system by residents. For residents to access a level of service that would allow them to have their toilets connected to running water, they are currently required to pay an amount of R650 for a prepaid water meter. Once again, residents are being told to sign onto the prepaid system in order to access flush toilets. What this, in turn, is saying is that those residents who do not wish to submit themselves to the logic of prepayment and the regime of restraint imposed by the need to budget according to their income and general needs, will have to make do with lower levels of service. Several focus group participants and interviewees therefore remarked that the plans of the state for Orange Farm are based on the belief that particular places need to be developed in particular ways that are deemed appropriate for 'the poor' or 'the poorest of the poor'.

For now, while many residents are refusing to buy prepaid water meters in these extensions, there is evidence that people are beginning to connect their own toilets to standpipes, thereby allowing their toilets to flush. While the municipality has threatened to fine residents caught doing this R1 500, it is said that the practice is spreading rapidly. (Bricks Mokolo, interview, 22/10/07; Philemon Tjeba, interview, 25/09/07). In interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis, residents also stated that they would find it difficult to accept prepaid water meters as they would find it difficult to survive on 6 kl a month and to buy further water needed. Residents already found it difficult to survive on the prepaid electricity system, and felt that having to restrict essential water consumption would have more serious effects on their lives. These views were expressed by respondents from both within ANC structures and outside.

Even the Councillor of Ward 4 (an ANC Councillor) stated that she would not support the installation of prepaid water meters in the extensions for which she was responsible. Arguing that it would be difficult for people as poor as those living in her ward to afford to sign onto the prepaid system, Councillor Simango stated that she would oppose any attempts to enforce prepaid meters in Ward 4. In fact, it would seem that the Councillor might be taken by surprise when she learns of the plans for

greater Johannesburg, which include Orange Farm. In an interview conducted for this thesis in 2007, the Councillor recounted her frustration with the process of providing flush toilets in her ward. She stated that after speaking with the Mayor, she had contacted the relevant service providers and been passed between Johannesburg Water and the Department of Housing as neither wanted to take responsibility for joining water pipes to the "toilet structures" that currently exist on sites. When asked whether she thought that this could be the first phase of the installation of prepaid water meters, the Councillor answered in the negative, stating that she was sure that on further consultation with the Mayor, she would receive the answers to her dilemmas. One wondered then whether the Mayor would be able to convince the Councillor of the need for prepaid water meters in her ward. (Councillor Simango, interview, 16/10/07).

While Councillor Simango and other residents of Orange Farm, for example those involved in organisations actively resisting the further erosion of the rights of residents to the basics necessary for life, might have been optimistic about access to water and water-borne sewerage being made possible outside of the prepaid system, others closer to the 'nuts and bolts of service delivery', like the Community Development Workers (CDWs), believed that Orange Farm would not escape the plans already agreed on by the City Council for Johannesburg, which included the roll-out of prepaid water meters. (CDWs, focus group, 25/10/2007). What is clear from the different opinions expressed in interviews and focus groups conducted for this project is that it will be difficult to enforce a logic of prepaid water on residents of Orange Farm. This is perhaps why the most recent strategies of the City Council include ways of answering to the charge that the state should take some responsibility for the provision of basic services to the poor (through the provision of 'lifeline' amounts of water and electricity free of charge), together with attempts to commit the poor to regimes of payment (and prepayment).

In a follow-up interview with Councillor Simango, conducted in August 2010, it became clear that no progress with regard to the problem of toilets had been made in Orange Farm. In the words of the Councillor, "Nothing has happened. I am still waiting. Different departments have made promises, but there is still nothing." (Interview, Councillor Simango, 20 August 2010). According to the Councillor,

Extension 2 has become the focus of her work as residents there have been living with pit latrines for over twenty years, and “proper connections and pipes” are needed for flush toilets to be installed. However, the Councillor is not hopeful as most recently Extensions 8 and 9 have been provided with ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs) rather than flush toilets. Extension 8 is an area where conversion to the prepaid system was attempted at the cost of R650 to be borne by a household; however, residents were too poor to afford this cost, rendering the attempt unworkable. This would, then, suggest that lower levels of service are being provided to those who are unable to afford the costs of prepaid meters.

In Orange Farm, as Masakhane began to try to encourage individual responsibility through payment for services, there is also evidence that the City Council was beginning to think in terms of an indigent management policy that would attempt to separate the 'can't pay' from the 'won't pay' and provide 'the poorest of the poor' with certain minimal levels of services. Newspaper reports indicate that in August 1998, an Indigent Management Policy was introduced by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to "subsidise families who cannot afford service and rate payments" by providing "families identified as the poorest of the poor" with monthly council subsidies of R70 in the areas of Orlando East, Dobsonville, Bertrams, and Orange Farm (Sepotekele, 1998).

Those to be targeted as recipients of the policy were to include pensioners, single parents, unemployed and disabled people with a household income of less than R1 500 a month. The assistance envisaged at the time would include a municipal service subsidy to cover the cost of 10 kl of water as well as sewerage and refuse removal. In the words of Loretta King, chairperson of the credit control task team of the City of Johannesburg at the time, the purpose of the policy was

mainly to identify those citizens in the Greater Johannesburg area desperately in need of assistance in terms of basic services, and to ensure that residents who are able to pay for services do not claim inability to pay. (ibid).

But the only real evidence of the implementation of these apparently noble plans can be found in a couple of newspaper reports. Municipal officials in Orange Farm have no recollection of such a policy, explaining, however, that it has always been the case in Orange Farm that those who cannot afford to pay for services could come forward to the local municipal office with a signed affidavit prepared at a police station to state that they are indigent i.e. unemployed and unable to afford to pay for services. In the experiences of those interviewed for the Khanya College/Kganya Consortium study (2002), very few residents followed this route, largely because they did not know about it or did not think that they stood to benefit much from it. For the few who did pursue this avenue, it was mainly in the hope of receiving assistance with their sewerage and sanitation needs as there was the promise of such help if one produced an affidavit and declared one's indigent status. According to the report,

In no discussions did any participant raise the existence of an indigent management policy, and it would seem, from interview results relating to forms of income that this policy, while it may exist on paper, does not play a real role in the survival mechanisms of the poor. (Khanya College/Kganya Consortium, 2002: 38-39).

While these initial attempts at introducing an indigent management policy may have had little success, it is important to note that they were underpinned by a need to contest the moral economy that was emerging in response to the enforcement of the duty to pay i.e. that in the context of such high unemployment and the widespread lack of infrastructure and inequality of service provision characteristic of apartheid's legacy, as well as the commitments, promises and dreams shaped in the liberation movement and the struggle against apartheid, residents continued to hold the ANC government responsible for delivery rather than accepting the individual duty to secure access to services and 'a better life' through payment.

In enforcing a logic of payment in this context, then, the ANC government would have to prove its commitment to its past promises, which would see its own contestation of this moral economy in which people would be asked to redirect their energies and commitments to making 'the new nation' work according to neoliberal

principles. In this new moral economy, the individual would have to assume responsibility for his or her own quality of life, striving to work and pay for his/her services and contribute to the efficient running of the country. And the state would be at pains to show its commitments to a certain section of society - 'the poorest of the poor'. While these commitments were initially borne out through certain universal provisions of minimal levels of services, as contestation over these minimal levels began, government would return to refashion an indigent management policy that would once again look towards targeted interventions aimed at 'the poorest of the poor', in most cases identified as those who cannot afford to pay for their services.

In May 2005 and February 2006, residents of Orange Farm were targeted, along with residents of other townships and informal settlements, in the City's Municipal Services Subsidy Scheme (MSSS) and Reathusa, discussed in detail in *Chapter Four* of this thesis. In a show of its recognition of the difficulties faced by the poor in paying for their services, and in an attempt to draw residents into partnerships with the state under the logic of neoliberalism, the City would give the poor the opportunity to come forward, acknowledge their past debts, and commit to paying for services in the future, in return for having all or half of their past service arrears erased. It is significant that while these policies were advertised in Orange Farm as elsewhere in the city, their implementation has seen several changes in their character based on the extremely low levels of household income prevalent in Orange Farm. In interviews with Councillor Simango and a clerk responsible for the administration of these policies at the Orange Farm municipal office, it became clear that these policies have not been able to be implemented in their envisaged manner. It would also appear that Reathusa has not been implemented on a large scale, with very few residents earning as much as R6 500 a month.

In particular, the enforcement of prepaid water meters has not been possible. According to the clerk interviewed, residents of Orange Farm are "too poor" to be expected to survive on the prepaid water system.

People living in Orange Farm are the poorest of the poor. So they cannot afford to pay. We ask them to come and prove that they cannot afford to pay and then we scrap their debts and we

ask them to sign that they will pay between R10 and R25 a month, and they don't have to get a prepaid water meter. But all electricity is prepaid in Orange Farm already. (Eva Kgatitswe, interview, 16/10/2007).

This was echoed by the Councillor, who stated:

We just ask people to pay whatever they can after we scrap their debts – R10 or R15. We cannot ask them to get a prepaid water meter because most of them cannot afford to pay. So how can we expect them to pay for their water? People of Orange Farm are the poorest of the poor. So, as long as they can show that they can give something, then it's alright. Because government cannot do everything. There has to be a partnership. (Councillor Simango, interview, 16/10/2007).

When asked whether non-payment would result in any form of punitive action against defaulters, both the Councillor and the clerk answered that there would be no physical punishment for those still not paying under the new system. In the Councillor's words,

No, no, there is no punishment. There's nothing like that. We just ask them to help us – let's help each other – because if I just fold my hands and look at you to give me everything, it's not only you, we are plenty. So government can't afford.

This experience suggests very strongly, then, that the City has remobilised its indigent management policy as a strategy primarily to enforce a logic of payment and cost-recovery amongst residents rather than to ensure the recuperation of monies spent in order to effect delivery as its main preoccupation, and to show that the state is fulfilling its role in providing for the poorest of the poor. In contrast to the City's general arguments made that prepaid meters are necessary for the poor in order to enable them to budget properly and make efficient use of their services, the arrangements entered into by municipal officials in Orange Farm with residents

suggest that officials have had to accept the reality that its constituency cannot even afford the terms of indigency. In this manner, Orange Farm has become, for the state, a place for the poorest of the poor, requiring attention different even from those determined to be the poor in society.

While residents might not be forced, through their signing onto the indigent register, to install prepaid water meters in their homes, the fact that they will not have access to flush toilets unless accepting the prepaid meter means that lower levels of service will be enforced for those unable (or unwilling) to pay upfront for their water. In this way, life in Orange Farm is imagined as one for ‘the poorest of the poor’, that is, a place in which the very minimal levels of access to services are made possible by the state for those unable to pay for higher standards of living. And in order to access a higher standard of living, some form of commitment to pay for services over and above the free amounts provided for by the state. In this way, distinguishing between ‘the poor’ and ‘the poorest of the poor’ becomes a means of distinguishing between ‘the poor who can be made to pay’ from ‘the poor who can’t be made to pay’. In Orange Farm, then, there is a recognition by municipal officials that the majority of its residents fall into the category of ‘those who can’t be made to pay’; hence a different approach to the implementation of the City’s revised indigent management policy in the form of the MSSS and Reathusa, and most recently Siyasizana, and a different standard and quality of life promoted for those unable to pay for their services.

Very few residents canvassed for this project, when asked whether they had knowledge of or had signed onto ‘the indigent management policy’, ‘the MSSS’ or ‘Reathusa’, responded in the positive. However, when the nature of the policies were described to interviewees or focus group participants in terms of the debt write-off, there would be much greater knowledge expressed and experiences shared about individuals’ relationship to these policies. Across all focus group discussions and interviews, participants displayed amongst them, in fairly equal proportions, three main experiences of these policies. While some respondents displayed no knowledge of these policies; others had signed onto the MSSS in order to have their debts erased, entering into individual agreements with the local municipal office to pay a small amount for services every month; with the remaining group viewing the MSSS and Reathusa suspiciously and choosing not to apply for consideration as indigents.

These responses cut across party or organisational affiliation, and did not conform to any patterns with regard to who was responding or the context in which the response was made.

For those who had applied for acceptance by the MSSS, the promise of the cancellation of their service arrears was the driving factor. No knowledge of the stipulation that prepaid meters would have to be installed, was displayed. Rather, participants confirmed the explanations given above by municipal officials that, in recognition of the fact that the majority of Orange Farm residents are unemployed and therefore unable to pay for services, agreements are entered into which required individuals to commit to paying small amounts of between R10 and R25 each month in exchange for their arrears being cancelled. However, it would seem, from interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this thesis, that few people are able to meet these monthly commitments, with individuals currently on the indigent register once again accumulating debt.

In the words of a female pensioner belonging to the OWCC,

I heard about the indigency policy. I went to the offices as they say that I owe more than R6 000 for the site where I'm staying, but if I come to the office and talk - tell the municipality that I'm not working, I can't afford to pay and so on - they'll scrap my debt. So I went to the office and they scrapped my debt, but it still comes to the same thing. After they scrapped what they said I was owing, R6 000, it's still the same thing because they said I must pay R10 a month - that was two or three years back. So, I'm not working; so I now owe again. So I don't know what will happen to me this time. I don't know if I'll be locked in a cell. I don't know. But I haven't received any bills since the scrapping of my debt to show how much I owe. Before, we always used to get white envelopes with the bills saying R6 000 and some odd every month. And I've never paid that R10 or anything before or after. When we got the stand, we paid R6 for a stand number - that's all. And after that, nothing. Because there was nothing to

pay rent for. There were no toilets, no taps - we came here and made taps in our yards - no electricity, there was nothing at all to pay rent for until they brought these plastic rubbish bas only for a couple of years now. And then they say that we owe debt. I don't know how much I owe the government. (Female Pensioner, interview, 24/05/2007).

While the debt write-off was envisaged by the City as a means of 'incentivising' payment for services amongst the poor, it would seem that the extreme levels of unemployment and socio-economic deprivation prevalent in Orange Farm work against the ability of many residents to pay any amount, no matter how small, for their services. In addition, the fact that the majority of residents continue to suffer the most basic and minimal levels of service results in the general view held amongst residents that they are not receiving a quality of service deserving of payment.

In interviews and focus groups, it was emphasised that the initial roll-out of the MSSS in Orange Farm targeted pensioners and those receiving social grants from the state. In one focus group discussion, residents claimed that pensioners had been threatened with having their grants withdrawn if they did not sign onto the scheme (Focus group, OWCC, 26/09/2007). While the view that those receiving social grants should be able to pay for their services as a result of their receiving a regular sum of money monthly, is largely what underpins this targeting, the majority of interviewees and focus group participants shared a different view - that these grants were too small to cover the cost of basic services in addition to the other constantly rising living costs that all people are having to bear. Respondents also pointed out that pensioners and other recipients of social grants, in the majority of cases, use their monthly allowances to cover the costs of maintaining households rather than those of an individual person. In many cases, pensioners end up supporting multiple households, as they become the sole breadwinners when their children and their spouses are unemployed, who have the responsibility, in turn, of supporting their own children. In some cases, where the children of pensioners are employed in the inner city and suburbs of Johannesburg (usually as live-in domestic workers, gardeners, or security guards), grannies (and sometimes grandfathers) become the primary caregivers of their grandchildren, using their grants to supplement whatever little money is earned by their children.

In the words of a female pensioner participating in a focus group discussion,

With the old age grant, people are struggling because I can tell you that right now I've got nothing, and it's only the 25th [of the month]. I've got nothing left; not a penny from that R850 that I got because there's so many things you've got to do with that money, especially those old men and women who have grandchildren, children who need to be taken to school because of these youngsters not working. They are being supported by the old people in the house. So that's why that R850 is too little. (Female pensioner, Focus Group, Kganya Consortium, 25/09/2007).

A significant number of residents chose, however, not to sign onto the scheme, believing that it would, for the first time in their lives, bind them to paying for services they needed but could not afford. In the words of Thando Ngoma, Chairperson of the Lebone Skills Development Centre and a proud member of the South African Communist Party (SACP), when asked what he thought of the revised indigent management policy of the City,

You have to begin to understand the ground before you bring your fancy policies. It's useless – you can't tell me you're going to scrap a debt that I wasn't even going to pay you in the first place. Whether you scrap it or not it's all the same to me – I'm not going to pay you. (Thando Ngoma, interview, 16/10/2007).

These words were echoed by Bricks Mokolo, Organiser of the OWCC, who called the revised indigent management policy “a trap” as it forces individuals to take responsibility for previously unacknowledged debt and commit to a logic of payment under the guise of being a means for individuals to ‘start over with a clean slate’ and take responsibility for proper management of their finances and efficient use of their resources.

For some participants in this study, the MSSS and Reathusa were also viewed as attempts by the state to enforce a logic of individualisation in all aspects of service delivery, from the establishment of single monitored delivery units, to the development of systems for the tracking of individual consumption and payment, and the encouragement of individual responsibility at the level of the ‘customer-citizen’. When asked to comment on the effects of the introduction of policies of cost recovery and privatisation in the delivery of basic services, interviewees and focus group participants spoke, in particular, of the erosion of communal practices and customs related to the use of water, for example. Weddings and funerals were often cited as occasions requiring large amounts of water, and therefore exerting tremendous pressures on families and communities in the context of it needing to be purchased. Some participants also highlighted the fact that access to free basic services has been secured for all through a collective commitment to the individual act of non-payment. For them, signing onto the MSSS or Reathusa would amount to ‘selling out’ as it would be an acceptance of the individual duty to pay for these services that have historically been held through common struggle. In the words of one of the OWCC members in response to being asked about their knowledge of the revised indigent management policy,

I’ve heard about it but I didn’t go and sign. I’ve taken it to be that if I go there and sign I’ll be selling out some of my colleagues. (Female pensioner, Focus Group, OWCC, 26/09/2007).

For the majority of those interviewed or canvassed through focus groups, however, this collective commitment to non-payment would, in all likelihood, disappear if the quality of service delivery improved in Orange Farm. All participants stated that they would be prepared to pay for services if the quality of their delivery improved substantially and if they were earning enough to afford these services. However, for all those interviewed, payment for services would not be easily enforced in Orange Farm for as long as there was the perception amongst residents that they were not receiving quality services. For many participants in this study, then, the introduction of the indigent management policy in Orange Farm in its current form entrenches the informality imagined for Orange Farm by the apartheid government, allowing access

to different levels of service in an incremental fashion that is based on an individual's ability to pay. With the majority of residents of Orange Farm falling into the category of 'the poorest of the poor', levels of service made available are of the lowest standard and quality in society, with refusal to accept the system of prepayment resulting in access to flush toilets being denied, for example.

In the words of a member of the OWCC,

People, as long as they are being labelled as 'poor communities', being given substandard development, I don't think people will pay for services. I, for one, am not going to pay. I'll never pay as long as I'm living in Orange Farm and no one is trying to transform Orange Farm. We are being told that Orange Farm is part of the city of Johannesburg, but if you look at the development of Randburg and Orange Farm, they differ. Even the Mayor, Masondo, is not ashamed, because he was involved in Soweto civic politics in the '80s, to be leading one city with different development approaches. As long as they treat Orange Farm as a place for the poorest of the poor I am not going to pay. (Male participant, Focus Group, OWCC, 26/09/2007).

It would seem that the introduction of Siyasizana holds no hope for residents of Orange Farm. According to Councillor Simango, "people of Orange Farm are signing on very slowly to Siyasizana" (Interview, Councillor Simango, 20 August 2010). This was confirmed during a visit to the municipal office in Orange Farm where one registration point is open for residents, when no residents were observed approaching the registration desk over a period of three hours. The clerk responsible for registration also said that residents of Orange Farm were signing on very slowly to the programme, attributing this to her observation that "Orange Farm residents are ignorant and take life easy" (Interview, Mpumi Tsotetsi, 21 August 2010). Herself a resident of Soweto, employed by the CoJ, she stated that Siyasizana had been advertised to the community of Orange Farm and that further outreach programmes were planned. She also stated that the registration process had attracted many more registrants in areas like Soweto and Ennerdale.

When asked why he thought the registration process was going so slowly in Orange Farm as compared with other areas, Jak Koseff had the following to say:

... it also remains possible that those that are connected to accounts of some kind are afraid of a formal registration process on account of their poor credit history with the city. As the credit management measures grow more intensive, and the ESP becomes their only means of shielding themselves from those measures, I expect that constituency to register in larger numbers. (Koseff, e-mail communication, 25 August 2010).

It is also significant that the clerk responsible for Siyasizana registration in Orange Farm insisted during her explanation of the application process that individuals had to produce proof that they were receiving services, either through their account statements or through prepaid tokens and/or receipts. This was clarified by Jak Koseff to be “a problem of communication” with lower level staff in the programme, who also insisted that the individual benefits are accessible to residents who do not pay for services from the City. It is also significant that, in addition to being fingerprinted and having to present their identity documents, residents are also having to present photographs.

In spite of the City’s commitments to target the poorest of the poor for benefits through Siyasizana, its set-up for registration in Orange Farm seems to suggest that not many potential registrants are being targeted from Orange Farm – there is a single clerk responsible for a population of over 1.5 million people, housed in a single desk cubicle within the Orange Farm municipal office that is responsible for the administration of many other services, pamphlets have been produced only in English and are not visible anywhere but on the desk of the clerk, there are no posters advertising registration points and dates, and community members are unaware of public meetings that are taking place in relation to Siyasizana.

For Councillor Simango, Siyasizana’s benefit seems to lie more in its ability to capture information about residents than in its expansion of service delivery. She

stated that she was looking forward to its roll-out in Orange Farm as it would finally provide the municipality with the correct data about “how many people are working, how many are not working, how many youth with matric are not working, and so on”. She went on to explain that this would assist as “people are always saying that they cannot pay for services because they are not working; so now we will know” (Interview, Councillor Simango, 20 August 2010). By September 2010, however, the CoJ had recorded the official registration of just 732 individuals on the Siyasizana programme (e-mail communication with Farida Taaka, Social Assistance Directorate, Department of Community Development, CoJ; 7 September 2010). This, in an area with a population of over 1.5 million, and a recorded 15 039 granny-headed households and 676 child-headed households (ibid).

For members of the OWCC and Kganya Consortium, Siyasizana represents a further entrenchment of inequality, this time amongst the poor, and will be opposed. However, they too have heard little about the programme, and many heard of it for the first time when approached for comment for this project in March and August 2010. In the words of Bricks Mokolo:

If there was honesty in this [the introduction of Siyasizana], it should have been publicised and advertised, but it hasn't. Residents are not aware of it. City statements do not talk about it. (Interview, Bricks Mokolo, 21 August 2010).

Mokolo also believes that Siyasizana merely extends the positions already taken in the MSSS and Reathusa, cementing “class inequality amongst the poor” and forcing poor people to declare themselves in order “to be given a status as the poor” and “bar-coded” so that “everyone knows just how much you can have and how you can live as a poor person” (ibid). Mokolo stated:

My status of poverty is something that I don't need to go and tell other people – how poor I am – but if government wants to provide services, it must provide the same standards for all. Basic services are a fundamental right for all. This screening of the poor is not a demand from the people. It is a foreign idea. (ibid).

In opposing inequality and stigmatisation, the OWCC and Kganya Consortium believe that the only way forward for them as organised residents of Orange Farm is to oppose Siyasizana, and to encourage residents to continue to enjoy free services through illegal connections. Mokolo explained that the majority of Orange Farm residents have survived illegally for years since apartheid, having installed their own taps and toilets (pits and flush) on the bare and largely unserved sites that they were provided with by the apartheid government. To now begin regulating payment for these services would be extremely difficult.

Contested Understandings of Self-Reliance

While we have already seen how the apartheid state mobilised a language of self-reliance and individual responsibility to try to limit its role to that of providing the minimal resources necessary for black people to survive in Orange Farm and to entrench substandard and informal living conditions amongst black people, it is also important to note the emergence of an alternative logic of self-reliance amongst black people resisting apartheid. From within the liberation movement, in particular from within the Black Consciousness tradition growing from the teachings of Steve Biko, people began to commit themselves to developing the collective self-reliance of black communities and their independence from the apartheid state. As part of its philosophy of encouraging black people to stand up for themselves against a system that taught them that they were inferior, the Black Consciousness philosophy and tradition also saw the establishment of a number of community projects aimed at developing self-reliance amongst democratic collectives of black people. In contrast to the notion of self-reliance as a means of assuming individual responsibility for one's standard and quality of life promoted by the apartheid state, Black Consciousness spoke of the building of the individual as part of the development of the collective self-reliance of black people as an oppressed group in society (Biko, 2004).

Today, as the ANC government perpetuates the apartheid vision of formalised informality for Orange Farm through its encouragement of a culture of self-reliance

and individual responsibility amongst the poor, we also see the re-emergence of past commitments to self-reliance of the collective sort. And the contest over the ways in which ordinary residents imagine their own development with regard to different notions of self-reliance is an ongoing one that forms part of the shaping of the moral economy today in Orange Farm. This contest manifests primarily in the ways in which people imagine their relationship to wage labour and the formal economy, and the related ways in which they understand the responsibilities of the state versus the responsibilities of the individual citizen.

A drive or walk through Orange Farm highlights just how the majority of its residents are surviving in the context of such high unemployment described in the previous chapter. What has come to be known as the informal economy plays a significant role in this regard, as the many spaza shops, home salons, and side-street salespeople bear testimony to. As jobs have become increasingly difficult to secure for long periods of time, hawking and other small business enterprises have mushroomed. In addition, a number of community projects have been established with the help of larger NGOs, government and various religious groupings. While there is no official audit of the number of NGOs working in Orange Farm or the number of community projects existing, the Khanya College/Kganya Consortium report (2002: 50) records that there has been "a proliferation of community projects and organisations" operative in the area, and it is clear from a visit to Orange Farm that this is indeed the case. It is in these spaces that the shaping of a moral economy is occurring around notions of self-reliance that speak to past and present understandings of the concept.

Interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis included members of different projects in Orange Farm, those initiated and supported by government, and those that have arisen out of the initiatives of groups of residents who have come together on their own and/or with the support of other organisations like NGOs and religious groupings, to provide ways for residents to generate income for themselves or to provide services to other residents of Orange Farm that are lacking. In all cases, members interviewed stated that it was due to their inability to find full-time, secure employment in the formal economy that they were working as volunteers in projects. For a few, however, it was also the nature of the full-time employment available to them that had led to their choosing to work in projects rather than for racist, sexist or

otherwise problematic employers for poor pay and/or under poor conditions. Some also spoke of the projects offering far more than just an income or ways of dealing with material problems, with their alternative forms of work in the context of unemployment being a means for them to show their children a way of life still deserving of respect despite their poverty. In the words of one of the female pensioners interviewed,

When we work in projects it is to bring ourselves up so that somewhere along the line we can get something for our children to eat, to buy clothes for them to wear, and so on. At the same time, we are gaining experiences from other women who are doing different things. At the same time we are gaining experience of how to let our children grow in a very respectable way. And educating our children in a decent way. Though we have nothing to do things for them in the future, they can learn from what we are doing, the way we are living. (Female pensioner from Thandeka Ratheha, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

For all members of projects interviewed, young and old, in a world where a person's worth is measured by his/her relationship to a job or secure income, the various collective spaces which have been made places of production of different types in the form of projects have become important symbols of their redefined contributions to society. Members from projects across the spectrum spoke of their "creativity" in establishing projects, and of "creative forms of work" that the projects have produced. Interestingly, many individuals also spoke of their creativity in dealing with unemployment as a means of showing that they "are not lazy" or "idle" in trying to make a living for themselves, as government often tries to portray the unemployed and poor in this manner.

While all the projects and organisations surveyed for this thesis have similar histories and face similar problems, there are also some striking differences with regard to the ways in which members of different projects understand their role in broader society and their relationship to the state. In particular, some projects and organisations see

themselves as "assisting" the state to deliver in its developmental role while others see the projects as answering problems caused by the state's own policy failures. In the latter case, project members are more critical of government and its policies, making more demands for change from the state and being less amenable to working with government. While 'self-reliance', for the former group, tends to be imagined in terms of empowering and capacitating individuals to become entrepreneurs of themselves, the latter group exhibits a tension with regard to approaches and understandings of the concept, tending to want to strengthen collective approaches to self-reliance but coming up against difficulties having to survive in an increasingly individualising and entrepreneurial world.

The Hlanganani Youth NGO and the Lebone Skills Development Centre are two projects that exemplify the former type of project. Working closely with local government's appointed Community Development Workers (CDWs) for the area is Hlanganani, an NGO established recently by a few youth in Orange Farm, with the help of local government, in order "to assist government to intervene in the lives of poor young people".

Members of Hlanganani volunteer without any regular remuneration, sometimes receiving a small stipend for their work. Generally, however, their individual transport costs to work, food, and so on must be found by themselves individually. At present there are three members whose main task is to provide assistance to the five CDWs by way of assisting young community members to access identity documents and the information about state policies and other avenues open to them in order to better their lives. While the NGO is still small, members see their effectiveness lying in their working in partnership with government and the community. They also see their participation in the project as a way for them to access skills, make contacts, and gain more knowledge about the workings of government so that they may access better jobs in the future or be able to enter politics by becoming leaders in Orange Farm. In the words of one of the young members of Hlanganani,

We have to sacrifice a lot because we have to pop out money out of our own pockets to get here in the first place, then to eat, and

then at the end of the month you have to put something on the table at home. But, on a positive note, volunteering here makes you knowledgeable - knowing everything, and being informed as far as what is happening in that sector that you are focusing on. Like now, I can say that I know almost everything in as far as what is happening inside the government, and what the government has in store for the people at the grassroots level. (Male Hlanganani member, Focus Group Discussion, CDWs and Hlanganani, 24/10/2007).

While life as volunteers in a project providing assistance in difficult circumstances is generally hard and trying, these young members of Hlanganani remain committed to their roles as a result of their belief in the programmes of the ANC government. Central to their commitment is the notion that every individual needs to contribute to the development of themselves and the country through assuming responsibility for their basic needs and their further growth. In assuming this responsibility, each individual needs to accept his/her responsibilities as a citizen to participate in partnerships with government and to assist the state to deliver. For the young people of Hlanganani, then, the problems and difficulties experienced in their work are accepted as part of their "sacrifice" or contribution to the partnership necessary for development to occur. (Focus Groups, CDWs and Hlanganani, 24/10/2007).

The Lebone Skills Development Centre is another community initiative of residents of Orange Farm, working together with the Department of Labour and the local municipality. The Centre's basic mission is to provide skills training for the Orange Farm community, which it currently attempts to do in the fields of catering, welding, agriculture, and sewing. With the provision of service providers from the Department of Labour (DoL), the Centre is supposed to train members of the community in the hope that they establish their own projects which are able to be sustainable and, in turn, sustain them and the community. At present the Centre is only able to train between fifty and sixty people, that is, approximately fourteen people per sector per year. For the Director of the Centre, Thando Ngoma, this is a real problem as Orange Farm's population far outnumbers this tiny number that the Centre is able to reach. In addition, there are currently problems being experienced with regard to the

partnership with the DoL. While the Centre applied for service providers to conduct training in April 2007, by the time of the interview (October), training had still not begun. While the DoL had given a commitment to the Centre that training would begin in October or November 2007, by the time of the interview there had still been no firm communication about plans being made by the DoL to indeed begin training.

The Centre also faces serious problems in trying to restrict training programmes to the small number possible as it has no strict criteria for selection or any real selection process. Instead, acceptance to programmes happens on a first come, first serve basis. As the only state supported skills centre in Orange Farm, Lebone is under tremendous pressure to increase its capacity. In spite of this, its Director is adamant that government's policies with regard to job creation and self-reliance are "correct". In his words, the problems lie, rather, in "their implementation". He also stated that there are sufficient opportunities for young, unemployed people to become active in their own self-interest. He said,

I also believe that if someone is self-motivated, they're not going to wait for some training to make means. That's why I always encourage the community - don't wait for some government official to tell you to initiate something. Look deep inside yourself and find something you are passionate about. Don't wait for structures and all these policy-making people to determine your life. You be the ruler of your life. If you think you have an idea, don't wait for the DoL to train you. Act on that idea. There are many avenues available for the youth especially to develop. (Thando Ngoma, Interview, 16/10/2007).

While government's problems faced with regard to implementation should be addressed, individuals should also go ahead with trying to take responsibility to see to it that this implementation happens. In other words, individuals should make it their responsibility to make their elected and appointed representatives in government accountable to their constituencies. (Thando Ngoma, Director of Lebone, interview, 16/10/2007). This is explored further in the section looking at attitudes to participatory governance, below.

While organisations like Hlanganani and the Lebone Skills Development Centre see their role as "assisting government in delivering on its policies and plans, which are good" (Thando Ngoma, interview, 16/10/2007), members of other projects and organisations interviewed for this thesis see their work as providing solutions to the problems left unanswered by government policies or produced by government policies. In the latter group of organisations and projects, members tend to be more critical of the ANC government, arguing that current notions of individual self-reliance allow the state to shift its responsibility to individual citizens and prevent more collective approaches to the creation of work and self-reliance. In these spaces, older notions of self-reliance, fashioned in the liberation movement, come into contest with the new language of individual responsibility espoused by the ANC government, and with the realities of survival in a neoliberal world. The thirteen projects forming the Kganya Women's Consortium reflect different responses from ordinary people coming together to find solutions to the problems produced by their poverty and lack of access to jobs. Projects include a food gardening, crèche and recycling project; child-care projects; sewing collectives; baking projects; the provision of home-based care and support for people living with HIV-AIDS (PWAs); the provision of support and care by PWAs for PWAs; the making of shoes; and upholstery. In interviews and a focus group of members from these projects conducted for this thesis, members recounted how most of their projects began as a result of their individual search for a way out of their poverty in the context of an absence of fulltime, secure jobs, and their coming into contact with groups of people faced with similar circumstances trying to find answers to their problems. While many of these projects have approached the state for assistance and only sometimes received it, they have also, through their experiences, developed a critique of the programmes of the ANC government, and posed alternatives to them, both in theory and in their everyday practices.

For the Itsoseng Women's Project and Thandeka Ratheha, two member organisations of the consortium, the idea of establishing the projects arose out of neighbours sharing their problems and their skills, as well as their past experiences and histories of struggle against apartheid and against continued poverty under the ANC government. Let Us Grow, another member organisation, was established by a brave resident, Rose Thamae, who came out about being HIV positive in her church and after receiving

much support and listening to the stories of many others like herself who began coming out after her, decided to start a project for HIV positive residents to come together and share their experiences, offer each other comfort, generate some income through the making of paper mache toys, recycled paper and the like, and providing home-based care and education and awareness about HIV-AIDS in Orange Farm. Today, Let Us Grow provides a home to over fifty young and old residents, and offers services to all of Orange Farm, with limited support from NGOs and government. Rose Thamae and Let Us Grow have also become household names in civil society, with appearances in several magazines and newspapers, television shows and radio programmes. Let Us Grow still operates from the shack that Rose first lived in when she came to Orange Farm. Over the years, she has made more and more of her own space available to the project, and built her own brick house next door.

Another prominent organisation in Orange Farm, also a member of the consortium, that has grown with the support of the church is Inkanyezi, which provides home-based case, Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) and Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) to residents of Orange Farm who are HIV positive. Members of Inkanyezi come from the unemployed congregation of the St Charles Lwanga Roman Catholic Church based in Extension 8, Orange Farm. Inkanyezi is staffed largely by volunteers, only some of whom receive a monthly stipend. The church has also established an advice centre through which residents are able to access information and assistance with regard to their problems, such as getting identity documents and social grants. Beginning as a one-man volunteer driven project, supported in spirit by the church, the advice centre is today a permanently funded space that hires three fulltime paid staff, and offers much-needed services to a considerable portion of Orange Farm residents.

While the majority of those involved in such projects as described above see their work as a means primarily of survival, there are a significant number of members who also see their work as allowing them to develop their self-reliance in ways reminiscent of past dreams. In the words of one of the founding members of Itsoseng, which was established in 1999,

Our ideas were influenced by Steve Biko's ideology of 'Black man, stand on your own' and we said 'Now we stand on our own, we need to do things on our own'. And we also tried to translate the talk of self-reliance into reality by doing things on our own. (Bricks Mokolo, interview, 29/03/2008).

While what this meant was fairly self-evident under apartheid, after 1994 'doing things on our own' would come to mean different things to different people. Against the logic of the ANC government which had begun to redefine self-reliance within notions of individual and market success, members of the latter group of projects speak of these initiatives arising to meet the needs of those adversely affected by the individualising logic of the policies adopted by the ANC government, and surviving and succeeding due to their collective strength. But even this commitment to collective approaches comes into conflict with and is threatened by the logic of individualism that upholds capitalist society.

While members of the Kganya Women's Consortium bragged about how they started their projects "with nothing but our ideas" (Female Participant 4, Focus Group, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007), they also spoke of the tremendous difficulties faced in the context of working with very few material resources and the pressures that this brought to bear on their work as collectives. With most of the projects offering no guarantee of a regular, stable monthly income, when paid work, usually in the form of contract jobs in construction, retail or the domestic sphere, becomes available, members leave the projects to take up these more stable and lucrative offers, only sometimes to return. This has often seen projects within the consortium changing their form completely, adapting to suit the needs of fewer members or new members, and so on. This has also meant that the majority of projects are unable to operate at a level of stability necessary to ensure the predictability and patterns of productivity required for proper management and planning. And, as the individual pressures faced by members of the projects (from families or debtors or society generally) to become economically successful mounts, collective solutions to problems are often put aside when more immediate, individualised, opportunities for income generation become available, even if they might be short-term and short-lived. In some cases, such as Itsoseng, there are a few

members who work in the project, as well as other seasonal and part-time jobs when they are available. In this manner, the composition of the project is constantly changing, bringing both new skills and experiences to the project and presenting it with the challenges of working with an unpredictable community of producers. In cases, such as Thandeka Ratheha, however, the loss of members to jobs has seen its membership drop by half over the last year. With just twelve members, and no source of income besides their collective pooling of whatever funds they have remaining from their pensions each month, this loss of members has had a terribly negative effect on the work of the project.

In the early days of the work of the Kganya Consortium, many of its members spoke proudly of their projects as “the alternative” to wage labour, offering the unemployed spaces outside of their daily grind of looking for work, to begin collective production of different kinds. While attempts at the organisation of production may have been successful, with collective forms of decision-making, sharing of tasks, and the sharing of income generated being experimented with, the difficulties of making the projects successful within a market logic has proven to be problematic for members. This has seen members change their views of the projects, no longer seeing them as “the alternative” to formal fulltime jobs, but presenting them as “pressure groups”, forcing government to assume responsibility for job creation and showing government a different form in which production could be organised. In the words of Gladys Mokolo, Chairperson of Itsoseng,

You can't say that we are solving problems by creating jobs. Yes, we have tried to create something so that we mustn't just stay at home doing nothing, we must come together and do something for ourselves. But, at the end of the day, it's giving us problems, especially because people who are coming from the projects are people who are hungry, who don't have anything at the end of the day. (Female Itsoseng Volunteer, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

In particular, the notion of volunteering has become a problem for members of projects, in much the same way as described above by members of those NGOs closer

to the ANC government. In the context of project income often being insufficient to pay all members cost-of-living stipends, volunteers are constantly under pressure to meet the expectations of family members who believe that they should be earning something for the time they spend working in the projects. When funds do become available, through periods of increased production or sales or the injection of donor funds, relations amongst members of projects tend to come under additional strain as the demands of the project as a whole or the stipulations of funders often prevent individual members from gaining materially through the payment of stipends. While several projects have attempted to address some of the problems of members in collective ways, such as the provision of one meal a day to members or making arrangements for childcare, there have been no broader attempts made to ensure the well-being of members' households and families. In this context, many members of projects view their participation as volunteers as temporary, fighting within projects for regular monthly stipends or constantly looking for wage labour to provide an income for themselves and their dependents in addition to whatever resources they may access through the projects.

For many members of the projects, then, life as volunteers is fraught with conflict over the opportunities presented by the projects and the difficulties that they bring. In the words of a young woman volunteering for Inkanyezi,

Volunteering is bad, very bad. I told you that I'm a mother. So if I'm volunteering it means that I'm getting nothing, but sometimes I get a stipend. But if there's no stipend, I have three mouths to feed. So how am I going to feed those mouths without money? Now I'm starting to hate what I'm doing. I think maybe if I go back to school and get my matric maybe I'll get something better. But I know it's going to be hard for me because there are all these graduates with lot of certificates without jobs. So I'm sticking where I am, but I'm starting to hate it. (Female Inkanyezi Volunteer 1, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

Many members of projects also view their work in these spaces as ways of accumulating experience and developing skills that will one day give them access to a paying job in the formal sector or the means to establish their own small businesses. As one respondent stated,

I see it as a job now because I work now as a caregiver, caring for the sick ones. I think if I have a lot of experience, I can go to the hospices because it seems as if there is not going to be a cure for AIDS. So, we are going to help them a lot there. So, I think what I'm doing is part of a job now, and I'm expecting something for it. ((Female Inkanyezi Volunteer 1, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007)).

While working in projects may have been imagined as alternatives to wage labour by some, for the majority, however, the hard grind of working as volunteers and needing to find ways of surviving in a context of rising living costs has led to the majority of those working in projects continuing to value wage labour and seeing their involvement in projects primarily as a means towards accessing a fulltime job in the formal economy or finding the means to start their own small businesses or income generation projects. While several respondents acknowledged the value of the projects with regard to their collective organisation of work and decision-making, and their flexibility with regard to participation in production and the nature of one's participation in production, they would go on to highlight the value of such practices for their own individual development as opposed to the collective development of the projects. For example, in the words of a young female member of Itsoseng,

Me being in Itsoseng, I see it as a stepping stone because it gives me courage and power to think about others and to know how to help people outside so that in the future when I'm going to open my own business or project - because I don't think I want to work for a boss - well, I'll have the skills and all the training that I got in Itsoseng. And I don't think I'll be able to go outside and get a job, working everyday for someone who's going to tell me what to do and what not to do without sharing ideas and asking for

ideas. (Female Itsoseng Volunteer, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

While the problems with wage labour featured strongly in discussions held with members from projects (e.g. excessively long hours of work; low wages; contract and casual labour; hierarchical forms of organisation of production and decision-making; unequal distribution of profit), job creation continued to be proposed by the majority of respondents as the solution to be assumed by the state as its responsibility in meeting the needs of South Africa's citizens, the majority of whom are poor. Respondents did, however, stress that the kind of jobs to be created should be fulltime, permanent, secure, protected, and with full benefits. In addition, it was argued that the nature of production should be reorganised in a more collective and fair manner, with the experiences of community projects providing an example for the state to define these changes along.

Access to jobs was also seen by the majority of respondents, across the board, as the solution to the problem of creating access to basic services. With fulltime wage labour, it was argued, residents would be able to assume responsibility for paying for services, building their own homes, and so on. In the words of a paralegal community worker at the St Charles Lwanga Advice Office in Orange Farm,

I think that government is trying to shift its responsibility onto people so that people can blame themselves. But the fact is that it is government's responsibility to make sure that everybody is living a normal life by getting the basic services because our government is always preaching this thing of providing free basic services, but it is not being realised. According to me, if people have jobs, they can build their own houses - decent houses - they can do whatever they want with their own money, rather than saying that you'll build houses for people and do everything for them. What people need are secure jobs so that they can take care of themselves rather than government providing everything. So what government needs to do is to create jobs for people - secure jobs. (Philemon Tjeba, interview, 26/09/2007).

For members of the projects, their role is both to demand that government assume its responsibility for job creation and to provide an alternative form for the organisation of production. In the words of Bricks Mokolo,

I think that the projects are not there to take government's responsibility, but are there to act as a pressure group to force government to create jobs... As the OWCC, we don't see projects taking over from fulltime employment. It is the government, through public works programmes, that should create full-time jobs for the people, and the local municipalities can also create more jobs for people - full-time jobs. The aims and objectives of the OWCC are to see government reducing the high rate of unemployment. People who are unemployed should be able to access an unemployment grant until government creates space for them in the formal economy because everyone has the right to work. And if government says that there are no jobs, as OWCC we see a lot of jobs in Orange Farm that can be created through municipal programmes, public works programmes - people don't have water; just putting pipes in is job creation; building a certain standard of housing is job creation; building streets, roads, lights, recreational centres - that is job creation that needs to be taken by the government, not by the community projects. (Bricks Mokolo, Focus Group Discussion, OWCC, 26/09/2007).

In the current context of such widespread unemployment, however, the projects do provide spaces for unemployed residents to come together in the pooling of their resources (human and material) and the creation of forms and processes of production that do not necessarily conform to capitalist ways of organising production but which depend on the capitalist market for their reproduction through the distribution of their products through the traditional circuits of capital. The Kganya Consortium, bringing together various projects in Orange Farm, is a unique initiative at creating an alternative platform and space for those attempting to live differently in spite of

neoliberalism's attempts to keep them in 'their places' as 'the poorest of the poor'. While the work of many of its projects continues to depend on the market, and many members imagine their work in the projects as allowing them to develop their abilities to gain access to wage labour or small business development, the projects, nevertheless, present various opportunities for the imagination and organisation of production and work in different ways. For many members of these projects, then, work in these spaces becomes to them a way of exercising a form of counter power in contexts which otherwise render them powerless. In the words of a member of the Itsoseng Women's Project,

The consortium is an alternative form of power because it is a way for us to unite and as individual organisations to do more and better things with other organisations. (Male Itsoseng Volunteer 2, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

In exercising this 'alternative power', some members of the projects believe that they are showing the state an alternative way of organising production and life. In the words of Bricks Mokolo,

What people are practicing is what they expect from the state because the struggle that the people are taking is the struggle of changing the system from a capitalist approach to a socialist approach. Under the socialist approach, people are expecting that all people are employed and that even the hours of work will be designed by the people. The demand from the trade unions is now for eight hours of work a day, but if the eight hours is also long, the workers should be able to decide because they will be part of the management, to create more space for leisure time and create more jobs for other people. But under the capitalist system, which is not actually for developing human beings but to destroy the human being in order to make profit - they are the bloodsuckers - today, there are even people who work for eighteen hours a day. There are more people today who do not

know their children... But our kinds of projects are different and government must learn from these projects how people can produce because their concern is production. But production can also be done by many people. If a country has a number of people, then it is developed because people can share in the work. And there must be no poverty because everyone can work. (Bricks Mokolo, Focus Group Discussion, OWCC, 26/09/2007).

While the majority of interviewees and participants in focus groups did not speak of socialism as an alternative to their current problems, those working in community projects not aligned to the ANC or government did speak of the projects as providing alternatives to the current form of work under capitalism, particularly with regard to the hours of work, wages (or the ways in which labour is given value), the distribution of profits, and the organisation of production. These alternatives are, however, shaped and developed in the context of the need to survive in a capitalist world. The process of building these alternatives, is, therefore, one of constant struggle against the ideas, beliefs, values, aspirations, kinds of relations, and so on that the capitalist economy attempts to naturalise.

In all of the discussions and interviews held, the issue of social grants came up in the context of exploring notions of self-reliance. For the majority of project members interviewed, creating and increasing access for poor residents to currently existing programmes of social welfare, is a priority. For those projects closely linked to government and the ANC Alliance, assisting individual residents to get proper identity documents and learn about the services available to them from the state is a key function of their duties as volunteers, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their lives by working in partnership with the state in a mutual commitment to improve their lives. For projects more critical of the ANC government, an additional feature of their work is the call for the current grant system⁸⁵ to change, primarily with the amounts allocated for disbursement to be increased.

⁸⁵ In particular, participants spoke of the child support grant, the old age pension, the foster care grant, and the disability grant (also given to people living with HIV-AIDS).

Members of the OWCC and the Kganya Women's Consortium also argued that an additional grant should be introduced by the state for the unemployed, that is an 'unemployment grant' or a Basic Income Grant (BIG) as espoused by COSATU. For these residents, such a grant would take the burden off the unemployed, allowing them to come together to start their own income generation projects or small businesses in the absence of fulltime jobs. It would also allow the unemployed some control over their lives by providing them with the means to look for work or to start small businesses. For these residents, however, such a grant would have to be substantially higher than that proposed by COSATU (R100), corresponding with today's rising cost of living.

In a focus group consisting of male workers who had been retrenched from Premier Milling Company and its subsidiaries, as well as Dairy Belle, and CNA Stock Planning, participants felt strongly that government should make some acknowledgement of the fact that formal, well-paid, secure, permanent, protected jobs are on the decline and that those previously employed in such jobs require assistance in meeting their needs in the context of their prolonged unemployment. For all of these workers, their commitment to their companies with service of over ten years (in most cases) had ended with them being forced to accept contract jobs with worse conditions of service and lower pay, or retrenchment packages that would amount to very little in the long term and the promise of receipt of a 'surplus' from company earnings⁸⁶. With all focus group participants having accepted the retrenchment packages, unwilling to "work for R20 or R50 a day", the discussion focused, for a considerable period of time, on their experiences of "running out of money" and being unable to find formal sector employment or even scarce contract jobs. For these workers, life has become a constant search for a way to make a little bit of money, the promise of a contract job or an interview for a permanent job an expensive taxi ride away in Lenasia or the city of Johannesburg, if lucky.

In the words of one of the retrenched Premier Milling Company workers,

⁸⁶ In the focus group discussion, it became clear that workers faced with retrenchment had been told that they would receive part of a 'surplus' of funds generated by their companies. They were not ever given any information related to this 'surplus', and it would appear that this has been the subject of dispute in engagements between the various managements of the companies over the years and the elected committee of residents of Drieziek 2 of whom the majority are retrenched workers of Premier Milling and its subsidiary companies.

Me, individually, I think I'm running now for twelve years without working. So maybe I used to live with five in my family, including me. But now, I'm ending up alone in the house because no one can stay for so long without any income every month... So it's been affecting us until now. I don't know what I can say because now it feels like I never worked before as it's been twelve years. That's a long time. In twelve years you can do a lot of things, many of them different. So if you stay for twelve years, I can say maybe I surrender. I won't get a job anymore or anything like a surplus whereby the management gives us our money. So I just forget something like that... What I thought I'd survive on is just to make a private job around here in Orange Farm. It's how I can say I survive – in that way. It's not like before when I knew that if I want a job I must go to Johannesburg or Vereeniging or Krugersdorp. But looking at today's situation, I think I will survive just by getting piece jobs around here in Orange Farm. (Male Participant 8, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

Since being retrenched, these workers' lives have become consumed with the search for ways in which to survive, their sullen attitudes and sombre, smile-less dispositions betraying their sense of hopelessness, surrender, and sadness at having lost their jobs, their livelihoods, their ways of ensuring the security and comfort of those who depended on them as providers. In the words of another retrenched Premier Milling Company worker,

Sometimes you just know how to survive. To be honest, when they gave me that package, I sold my fridge, TV, whatever I had. When that starvation comes, you start selling whatever you can in the house just to make sure that the children have something to eat. At the end you see that you've already sold everything in the house. You're going to start struggling again and then you're

going to start looking for a job again. (Male Participant 4, Premier Milling Focus Group, 30/05/2007).

Other participants in this focus group felt, however, that it could not be claimed that they have been surviving. In the words of a retrenched worker from Epic Oil,

Yes, people may start to sell things in the home and so on, but, truly speaking, at the end of the day they are not surviving. It's only that we make ourselves survive. Sometimes my children try to help out and it's a bit better – a little bit. But to survive, you have to do your own things. You can't depend on your children because if they are no longer here – if they die – you'll be struggling badly again. (Male Participant 8, Premier Milling Focus Group, 30/05/2007).

This was echoed by another retrenched worker from Premier Milling, who said,

I gave up on the hope that I will get another job like at Premier. So, what I do to survive is piece jobs around Orange Farm. But I'm not surviving exactly as I used to work in the big companies before and now it feels like it's just play. But I'm not just sitting and folding my hands, doing nothing. (Male Participant 3, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

In acknowledgment of this context that retrenched workers find themselves in today, focus group participants argued strongly that government review its current grant system to include some form of recognition of the contribution made by formal sector workers now unemployed and struggling to find employment in the formal sector. In particular, participants argued that the current Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) should be revised to operate for a longer period of time in recognition of the difficulty with finding wage labour. Participants also argued that the current age at which individuals may receive the Old Age Pension (OAP) should be reduced. The latter argument arose in the context that a number of participants shared the fact that they had lost their jobs well before the age of forty. Their retrenchment packages

exhausted within the first two years of their unemployment, and with no hope of another job, they would like to have access to their pensions earlier in life⁸⁷. In this discussion, participants also spoke of the fact that many of them had accepted that they would die young due to the high incidence of HIV-AIDS and due to the hardships of their lives. In the words of one,

After twelve years without working, you just give up because you don't believe you'll get a job again. For instance, now I've got twelve years without working. I'm now just over 40 and I've given up. So what must government do? It's rather we form another organisation for unemployment and start toying and tell the government that pension at 66 years is not good; why not give us the pension at the age of 44 or 46? At 50 I'm maybe going to die because there is too much disease now. (Male Participant 9, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

Striking about this discussion was how nonchalant participants were about making these points, and how easily participants would choose an early death over a longer life considering their inability to provide for themselves and their families without access to wage labour.

At the time of the focus group discussion, however, all that these residents had available to them was the MSSS. While many of them had 'been to the office to sign' that they would pay a small amount for services every month, it was with some amount of disbelief that participants spoke of these arrangements. In the words of one,

Last year, July, I used to go to the office and they used to write letters for us – every house, I think – they said all those who don't work must come and report at the police station. When we

⁸⁷ It is significant to note that, in July 2008, government announced that it would be phasing in the lowering of the age for men at which they could apply for the OAP. From 2008, the age will be lowered to 63-64 years; in 2009 to 61-62 years; and in 2010 it will be the same as for women, 60 years. (Bua News, 13 July 2008 - <http://www.buanews.gov.za/view.php?ID=08071313451003&coll=buanew08>; accessed 15 July 2008).

go there, they ask you ‘How do you survive? How can you survive?’ Then they give you a statement that more or less how much you can pay, they ask from you. So, this person who doesn’t work, some months from 1 until 30, I don’t even have R10 in my hand, they say, all those who don’t work must pay something like R10 a month. So, it’s whereby we must pay R10 a month – those who don’t work. (Male Participant 6, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

In this manner, these retrenched workers face very similar conditions to the members of the projects discussed above when it comes to their relationship to the indigent management policy.

While these retrenched workers continued their individual struggles for survival, during the period of the Masters research project, they elected a committee to pursue negotiations with the companies to secure title deeds for houses in which residents currently live. However, focus group participants pointed out that title deeds are not really the solution to their problems as they would then own houses with access to full services that they would not be able to pay for. In the words of one,

How are you going to buy services, like electricity, if you don’t have a meal in the house for the children to survive and go to school? (Male Participant 4, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

While it seemed at the time of the focus group discussion that the committee could potentially do more than fight for title deeds, the committee has, according to members of the OWCC, since disbanded. Attempts to make contact with focus group participants in 2010 were unsuccessful.

There was, however, also, particularly in the all-male focus group of retrenched workers described above, an overwhelming sense of anger at being let down ‘as men’ by a system for which they had worked and committed themselves in order to be able to provide for their families. Much of this anger manifested in the form of comments,

unprompted by the facilitator, usually directed against young women receiving the child support grant (CSG). In the words of one participant,

Talking about grants, I think that government must look with three eyes because it's giving a child, who has never been at work, who is having four or five children before she turns 21, this child is getting grant, grant, grant... She's still young but she falls pregnant because of the rush for this money. And they are playing marbles with this money. We were working, we supported our government, but it is giving someone who has never worked that money. And they are playing with that money every month end at the mall – two babies the front, two babies at the back. And what have we got? (Male Participant 6, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

Others in the group argued that government should take responsibility for “fathering these children” as they felt that the CSG encouraged young girls from poor families to fall pregnant. It is interesting that the majority of female participants in other focus groups and interviews conducted for this thesis echoed these views in less hostile ways. Although the Department of Social Welfare has conducted research that proves that the CSG is not “a perverse incentive” for young girls, it is striking that such views do exist at community level, even amongst those organised in otherwise progressive organisations and groups. In a context where socio-economic hardship is so severe that the very basic and few provisions made by the state begin sowing feelings of anger and hatred amongst groups of poor people, it would be important for the state to consider the gendered implications of its targeted interventions within the broad context of the ways in which the lives of poor men and women have been adversely affected since the mid-1990s.

Also striking in the all-male focus group discussion described above was the anger with which the view was expressed by the majority of participants that the loss of their jobs was the result of an influx of ‘cheaper labour’ from other African countries. In the words of one participant,

How can we survive in Africa, like other countries, a country like Zambia, the people of Zambia come to take our food here. We're calling this cheap labour because they haven't got qualifications, passports, like you see in the TV, they're crossing the border and they come here. (Male Participant 3, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

Another participant in the discussion said,

The other big difference that I see between now and apartheid is that then I don't think there were any foreigners in South Africa. A big thing that is causing this problem of unemployment is that there are these other people here all the way from Africa. They've come down here. So it's where you see government handling it hard from both sides – people inside the country and people from outside. They are still coming because they say South Africa is one of the better countries in Africa. So this is why we live like this. You see, someone from Tanzania comes to South Africa. There's no rands there. I don't know what kind of money they use there. But if you have R10 in South Africa, it's a lot of money for him because he didn't grow up in this country. But for me, if I've got R10, it's like I've got 10c now in 2007. It's whereby we stay like this because I can't work for R50 a day, I can't. I rather stay and make piece jobs in Orange Farm because I have to spend to go to work in a contract job in Johannesburg... It doesn't make sense. (Male Participant 9, Focus Group, Premier Milling, 30/05/2007).

While the statements of hostility expressed towards young women and immigrant workers are the subject for independent theses and papers, it is important here to note that the conditions of hardship that have come to face particular groups of residents do often produce feelings of animosity and anger towards other groups of similarly disadvantaged people whom they see as benefiting from the state or the market in

more ways than themselves. In such instances, the building of lasting and meaningful bonds in the form of community is made much more difficult.

It is also significant to note that some of the projects have sustained themselves through their collective appropriation of resources, such as water and electricity. Several of the income generation projects, whose members participated in interviews and focus groups for this thesis, spoke of their gardens being watered from illegal water connections and their electricity being accessed illegally. In this manner, the income generation projects represent the collective laying claim to resources previously held in common that have begun to be commodified and sold to individual consumers.

Since 2009, the OWCC, Itsoseng and Kganya Women's Consortium have spearheaded the formation of the Orange Farm Early Childhood Development Forum (OFECDF) to take up the fight for crèches in Orange Farm to be allowed to exist in spite of their trespassing of certain city by-laws. The CoJ's public health by-laws stipulate that all crèches must be run out of a permanent building and must have a running toilet and ablution facilities on their premises. Mothers and teachers point out that crèches have existed in Orange Farm for over fifteen years, and have, out of necessity, been run out of shacks that have been erected on land not usually owned or able to be owned by the crèche teachers and/or mothers. This makes the erection of permanent structures impossible. In the case of Itsoseng, for example, the CoJ has been approached to buy the land from its private owner for the crèche; however, the private company refuses to sell to the City. Mothers and teachers also point out that there is no infrastructure in Orange Farm for the installation of flush toilets even though residents have been fighting with the City for them for many years. This makes it impossible to fulfil the by-laws; hence disrupting the collective care of children in Orange Farm.

On 26 March 2010, over fifty principles of crèches, together with other teachers and parents of Orange Farm, marched in central Johannesburg to deliver a memorandum to the Mayor demanding that the right to education be protected for children in Orange Farm. Among their demands were the right to land for the development of crèches, and the scrapping of the related by-laws, taking into consideration the vast

inequalities within the city. In a statement released on the day of the march, the Forum stated:

The City of Johannesburg must fast track service delivery in Orange Farm because the City of Johannesburg By-laws apply too high standards of developed areas such as Sandton or Houghton. (OFECDF press release, 26 March 2010).

Five months later the OFECDF had received no response from the Mayor's office (Interview, Bricks Mokolo, 21 August 2010). However, the struggles that have developed around the crèches have re-ignited old groups of activists and brought them together with new residents in re-imagining approaches to change and to life in Orange Farm.

Significant in these evolving approaches to effecting change in Orange Farm is the centrality of protest in the shaping of its organisations and movements.

Protest vs 'Constructive Engagement'

Since the establishment of Orange Farm as an area designated for 'controlled squatting' in 1987, there were attempts on the part of the apartheid state to include community representatives in consultative processes around decisions being made about the area's future. Documents from the apartheid period suggest, however, that community representatives received communication about decisions already taken by the municipality rather than participated in decision-making in consultative forums. In this manner, consultation served to deliver the word of government to the people of Orange Farm in an effort to make them accept it and abide by it. Nevertheless, it would seem that, under apartheid, an elected residents' committee did exist in the early years of the settlement, dominated by representatives from ANC Alliance structures.

As part of the processes of governance negotiated during the transition from apartheid to electoral democracy, Orange Farm would organise itself into the current system of representative local governance in the form of elected street and ward committees,

reporting to four elected ward councillors. By all accounts, this system has always been and continues to be dominated by the ANC. In this manner, the programmes and direction of these governing structures have come to reflect those of the ANC. In addition, many residents canvassed for this project from outside of the ANC claimed that they had been refused access to particular services in Orange Farm by municipal officials if they were unable to produce an ANC membership card. They also felt that the dominance of the ruling party in structures supposed to be broadly representative of residents had meant that genuine criticism of government policies had been disallowed by defensive reactions on the part of ANC members.

While interviews and focus group discussions for this project would suggest that there is genuine criticism of some of government's policies coming from within ANC Alliance structures in Orange Farm, they also point to the existence of a culture within the Alliance of encouraging the putting aside of any of these criticisms in the interests of 'nation-building' through 'development', understood as the incremental attainment of higher standards of living for groups of people dependent on the fiscal constraints of the state and the ability of the economy to grow, as well as the individual commitment of people to help themselves out of their 'poverty traps'. In advancing this understanding of development, however, the ANC would come up against residents, from both within its ranks and outside, differing with this approach, reminding it of its past commitments to the creation of quality living standards of equal value for all and demanding that it deliver on its past commitments to free basic services for all. While the internal organisational discipline of the Alliance would see such critique being channelled and quieted from within local Alliance formations, ordinary residents and those organised in community movements, such as the OWCC, have on several occasions protested at the lack of delivery of the ANC government on its historical promises to its people.

The OWCC, formed in 2002, is the only movement of residents in Orange Farm that exists outside of political parties and their influence, and that campaigns in the interests of all residents, bringing together different groups of residents at different times and organising around issues that affect all residents. In 2002, as a group of residents belonging to projects of the Kganya Women's Consortium were threatened with electricity cut-offs for non-payment, and as prepaid water meters began to be

installed in Stretford, Extension 4, members of the consortium began organising protests against these moves. In their organising efforts and discussions, the OWCC was born, bringing residents, primarily members of income generation projects organised in the consortium, together to collectively struggle against the immediate problem of cut-offs and prepaid meters, as well as the more general moves by the municipality towards entrenching a logic of commodification, and an inferior standard and quality of life for residents of Orange Farm, imagined and portrayed as 'the poorest of the poor'.

In 2002, the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), hosted by the ANC government in Sandton, Johannesburg, was seized by the OWCC to draw the attention of the world, through protest action, to the continued poverty and disadvantage suffered by residents of Orange Farm. Almost every year since then, the OWCC has mobilised residents to come out in protest, demanding action on the part of the municipality to speed up the delivery of basic services. In the years before 2006, marches to municipal offices and demonstrations outside them complemented delegations entering into negotiations with officials of the different service providers and the authorities. On 6 September 2007, however, the OWCC decided to change tactics and blockade the Golden Highway. A few weeks later, receiving no response to its demands from the municipality, the OWCC took to the Golden Highway again. In a communiqué, it explained:

Highways are the arteries and veins of the capitalist body. This week, we took the Golden Highway. With our bodies and whatever else we could carry, we blockaded this highway. For a few hours it wasn't business as usual. For a few hours, our voices could be heard... This was not the first blockade. On 6 September this year, we took the highway for the first time. Our slogans were 'No Freedom Without Basic Services' and 'No Peace Without Development'. We wanted the Mayor of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo, to come to Orange Farm to address the lack of service delivery in our township. Over many months, we had been coming together in house meetings to share our problems and we had decided that it was time our voices were heard. For too many

years we have been waiting for decent houses, flush toilets, running water inside our homes, and electricity. When we have invited our local councillors to address our meetings, they have said that they have ‘more urgent’ tasks to attend to. So, we took their highway – peacefully. Their police responded with rubber bullets, birdshot and teargas. Many people were hurt. We refused to disperse. Others joined us as the police went into Orange Farm randomly shooting people busy with their daily chores. (OWCC, September 2007).

Speaking out against the actions of the authorities, the OWCC proceeds, in its communiqué, to state that the method of the blockade will continue to be used in the struggles of residents for access to a decent standard and quality of life:

This was not the last blockade. Each time we return to the highway, we are able to hold it for longer. For as long as our voices are not heard and our problems not addressed, we will return to say ‘there will be no peace without development’. (ibid).

The OWCC has led residents in blockading the highway on 12 May 2008, 8 September 2008, 14 September 2008, 24 September 2009, 22 February 2010, and 3 March 2010. Each time, it has reiterated its demands for improved service delivery and its refusals of the inferior standards and quality of life prescribed for residents of Orange Farm. Media coverage has mostly been positive, focusing most recently on a statement made by ANC Parliamentary Chief Whip, Mathole Motshekga, after a visit to Orange Farm during the most recent protest action, that protesters demands were “reasonable” (*Beeld*, 3 March 2010). The OWCC has also cultivated a healthy relationship with the local community radio station, Theta FM, on which its members have regularly appeared, and for which its members have produced content about their struggles.

However, the media has also picked up on isolated incidents of violence amongst small groups of breakaway protesters, including some related to xenophobia. On 23 February 2010, news reports carried stories of Somali shopowners fearful of angry

mobs of protesters. On 26 February 2010, the *Mail and Guardian* reported that vendors in Orange Farm were attacked and their stalls looted by unemployed youth and school children during a protest. Bricks Mokolo explained that these were small and isolated incidents, probably undertaken by individuals not related to any of the organisations that were participating in the protests. However, he also explained that the OWCC was aware of levels of xenophobia that existed amongst its members and residents more generally, and was therefore actively attempting to counter this through programmes such as social activities in which members of immigrant groups are invited to participate with South African members of the OWCC. For example, during the World Cup, friendly soccer matches and braais were organised in which South African and immigrant residents socialised and enjoyed each other's company.

As Mokolo explained in an interview, movements like the OWCC have to be self-aware and self-critical, working consciously to counter any forms of discrimination and inequality that might exist within them, including xenophobia, and sexism.

In discussions held with residents for this project, a sometimes vicious critique of protest action emerged from those closely aligned to or belonging to the ANC Alliance. In their view, the post-1994 'democratic dispensation' is different from apartheid times, particularly with regard to the fact that a democratically-elected government has assumed control for the running of the country. In this context, it is argued, citizens need to become partners of government, participating in the processes of decision-making and control made open to individuals, and voicing their disagreements and dissatisfaction within the accepted channels of 'rational engagement' set up to deal with conflict by the state or using the accepted 'mechanisms and processes of democracy' to effect change in leadership or representation. In this way, politics, for many ANC Alliance members, has been reduced to the moments at which representatives are elected to pursue change or implement policies, with very little room being left for the effecting of change to be imagined outside of the processes of lobbying elected representatives or becoming elected oneself to processes of policy formulation and decision-making at the level of municipal and/or party structures. This is, perhaps, no better expressed than by Thando Ngoma, who said,

Politics is all about structures. It's about how you get people to, how you mobilise people, how you get those numbers. You can't stand aside as an individual and say, 'Ah, ANC is not working. Ah, Mugabe is a tyrant.' But there are people voting for them. If you believe their policies are not good, there is democracy here in South Africa. You can challenge that. There are ways you can use. I'm not going to say that I'm an ANC fanatic. No, I'm not. But I respect their history when it comes to their involvement in the struggle... In terms of Orange Farm, ANC has a stronghold. Why? Because other parties are not active. Even the ANC itself is not active. It's just that they are here because they are the ruling party and the majority of the people of Orange Farm know the ANC. They know that old face of Mandela and will always support it. If other parties have issues with the ANC, why don't they mobilise the people and expose the ANC where it is lacking? It's no use going on about the problems. Come with solutions. Don't come to me to discuss problems – 'The Councillor is not doing this and that' – no, no, no, no. I don't want those kinds of discussions. I want discussions like, 'If we were to do this project and go to the Councillor and hear what she has to say ...' Those are the kinds of discussions I want. If she's there, she's already the Councillor. It's useless trying to backstab her and all that. Why don't we work with her? If we fail to work with her, let us expose her to the community and vote in a new Councillor. (Interview, Thando Ngoma, 16/10/2007).

As representative governance and politics have come to determine the broad character of the ANC Alliance since the 1990s, various structures have worked, at community level, to represent 'the common interests' of residents. Those aligning themselves with the tradition of the ANC would include the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO). Established in 1992, SANCO marked the first national attempt at bringing together township-based civic structures that had predated its formation (Seekings, 1997: 1). In aligning itself with the ANC, SANCO would bring all of the concerns of its members within the programmes of the ANC government, leaving little room for critique of the neoliberal policies that would be introduced by

it. In Orange Farm, many of the members of the OWCC previously belonged to SANCO. However, as they began to realise that the policies of the ANC government were no longer working in their interests and that SANCO leadership in Orange Farm were unwilling to challenge government, these residents left SANCO and helped to form or joined the OWCC, a space which claims to have no party political affiliation.

While residents from the OWCC claim that SANCO does not currently exist, the Chairperson of the Orange Farm branch of SANCO appeared during a focus group being conducted with CDWs for this project, and was subsequently interviewed for this thesis. Claiming that the SANCO branch does exist but does not have many signed up members to show because of the inability of its poor constituency to pay the R10 membership fee required to join, the SANCO Chairperson did, however, confirm that the local SANCO branch enjoys an extremely close relationship with the local municipality and the ANC. Prioritising the building of the partnership between SANCO (representing the interests of the community), the CDWs and Councillors (representing the local state), and individual residents and the ANC, the Chairperson went on to explain the changed role of civil society organisations post-1994, stating,

It's not like before in the 1980s with regard to struggles when SANCO was driven by what we were being told by those leaders who were in exile before 1994. It's a different opinion now because after 1994 it's no longer a question to operate like we were operating in the apartheid system. Now the challenge that we have is to help the government to implement these policies. (Interview, SANCO Chairperson, Orange Farm, 24/10/2007).

This general view was echoed by CDWs, the Councillor, and members of NGOs and projects aligned to the ANC Alliance and/or set up by the municipality or local government. In the words of Councillor Simango,

You know, people think that when they are making toyi-toyii, blocking the roads and all that, the services will be speeding up. And they don't see that they are delaying things because when they spoil

other things you must go back and fix those things, and I don't think it is nice. (Councillor Simango, interview, 16/10/2007).

For others, residents who took to blockading the highway in order to make their demands heard need to acknowledge that the post-1994 'democratic dispensation' affords them channels for engagement that do not require extreme forms of disruption. And there was the view expressed that protesters were not giving due respect to the history and traditions of the ANC Alliance by calling its members in government into question through protest action. In the words of Thando Ngoma,

Protesting is a good thing, but I don't want that kind of protesting where you have to disrupt. There are ways in which you must protest. As much as I'm a communist and communists are related to toyi-toyiing and all that, I don't encourage those things. I did them when I was young. I know the results of those things, and now I think we've developed. That's why I'm saying we are a developing people. When you are a developing people, you can't use the same old policies – you can't always be digging with your sticks, you have to develop digging with a pick, digging with a bulldozer. Don't use those old fashions, the tried and the tested, toyi-toyiing because it worked – no, it doesn't work. It only shows your incapacibilities... If there is a housing problem in the community, we need to get together and come up with a plan to say we are prepared to build our own houses and go to government with it, not to toyi-toyi and cause problems saying that the Councillor is not building houses. Does the Councillor build houses? No. You find that you are actually toyi-toyiing for yourself because the head of the municipality is the government and who is the government? You are the government. So, you are like an idiot toyi-toyiing in your own house. (Interview, Thando Ngoma, 16/10/2007).

But for members of the OWCC and other unorganised residents of Orange Farm, voting for the ANC has not given them a sense of ownership of government. Rather, there is the increasing feeling amongst people that the ANC government uses them in

order to win elections and then disregards them as it pursues policies that ultimately work against their interests. In the words of a female pensioner participating in a focus group for this thesis,

Those who are on the top there, their children are fed, they get everything smooth in life, but we on the ground, we have to suffer, I don't know until when. But soon they are going to the elections. So you'll see cars running around, pamphlets will be put all over the place, so that we must just go and vote for them, so they can win again. After that, they'll just dump us again. Empty promises since 1994. I was turning 60 recently, but nothing has been done since 1994. I haven't seen anything being done. (Female Pensioner, Focus Group Discussion, OWCC, 26/09/2007).

A younger female volunteer from Inkanyezi stated,

Government, each and every time they come to the community and say, 'We are promising a better life for all'. Why? Because they want our votes. And then we vote for them. What do they do? They just forget about the whole people. They represent their own jackets. You see, they'll be saying 'job creation', but at the end of the day, because they've had our vote, they don't worry about this but worry about themselves. They don't even think about you as a person. (Female Inkanyezi Volunteer 2, Focus Group Discussion, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

In this context, many residents have lost their faith in representative politics, with the studies conducted by Khanya College and the Kganya Consortium (2002), and the Coalition Against Water Privatisation et. al. (2003) arguing that a minority of residents included in their household surveys belonged to any political party, organisation or movement, and that a minority of their respondents had any knowledge of the OWCC or any other new social movements. Nevertheless, the existence of the OWCC and the protest action of residents over the years since 1994, both affiliated to the OWCC and independent, suggests that there is a political

sensibility amongst residents of Orange Farm that cannot find voice within the structures and processes of government and the ANC Alliance, and that will make its voice heard in other forms and spaces.

Members of the OWCC argue that the ANC government has foreclosed any potential for change within and through the formal processes of participatory local governance as it has made its overall neoliberal macro-economic framework non-negotiable. As such, it sees its role as pressurising the state from outside to change this neoliberal approach, and to make demands on the local state for the quality of life of residents of Orange Farm to improve so that they meet the standards imagined and dreamed of in the struggle against apartheid. In doing this, it does not see itself participating in many processes of participatory governance, choosing to remain outside of processes and institutions that might coerce its members to adopt neoliberal policies themselves. This has seen it refuse to participate in local government elections, leading a campaign encouraging residents not to vote and refusing to field candidates for election. OWCC members belonging to income generation projects have also resisted being taken over by the state, refusing to have their projects brought under the management of appointed state officials given the mandate to transform these projects along the lines of business entities.

In research conducted for this thesis, then, we see the emergence of the contested moral economy in the form of arguments made against protest action in the interests of participatory governance and rational forms of engagement that want respect to be given to the history of struggle of the ANC today mobilised in the interests of preventing critique of its neoliberal policies, and in demands made that the ANC remain true to its historical promises of 'a better life for all' based on commitments to a standard and quality of life determined in the liberation movement. For those who believe that the ANC government has prevented any hope of this quality of life being attained for the majority of those disadvantaged by apartheid through its adoption of neoliberal policies, participatory democracy has become but a means of making small gains for the poor within the rationality of neoliberalism, with protest action and the collective strength of those who have recognised the limits of their responsible actions as citizens of a 'democratic dispensation' becoming the real alternative for more far-reaching and meaningful change to be realised.

Who are 'The Poor'?

While state and ANC policy documents, as well as the pamphlets, press releases and discussion documents of new social movements, are full of references to the poor and the poorest of the poor, when participants in focus groups and interviews conducted for this thesis were asked how they felt about the employment of these terms, the vast majority, across organisational or political affiliation, expressed dislike for them, arguing that they operate to stigmatise people or to make people believe that they are worthy only of a substandard quality of life, and to speak out against the quality of life encouraged by the state for those identified and managed by these categories

In interviews and focus groups conducted with individuals closely aligned with the local municipality and/or the ANC Alliance in Orange Farm, the common view expressed was that the use of the terms the poor and the poorest of the poor to describe places like Orange Farm had a stigmatising effect on people and did not acknowledge the immense creativity, sacrifices, and resolve evident amongst these groups in spite of their socio-economic hardship. In the words of a CDW,

The usage of the term 'the poor' might not be suitable – it's like being stigmatised. However, we might be able to turn it to say 'the disadvantaged people', so that at a later stage they may be more advantaged to access more of government services, jobs and everything that government is delivering. Even if government is delivering the services, the disadvantaged people will get their own jobs to be able to build their own sewer systems and so on. (CDW 1, Focus Group, CDWs, 24/10/2007).

In a similar vein, a member of Hlanganani argued,

I think the right term to define the people of Orange Farm – because there are people like us in Hlanganani who want to move away from our background, not so good background, poor

background as well – I think we should say ‘the rising people’, people who are moving from point B to point C. So, I think for the usage of the term ‘poor’ to refer to people of Orange Farm, to me it feels like you are sorry for me as a human being. It makes me feel like I’m coming from nowhere, from another planet, I’m not coming from Joburg. So, I think we must use the term ‘the rising people’ maybe. (Young Male Hlanganani Volunteer, Focus Group, Hlanganani, 24/10/2007).

In another interview, Chairperson of the Lebone Skills Centre argued,

I don’t like that word ‘poor’ or ‘disadvantaged’ blah blah blah. I think it demoralises people because I think there are other people who like to take comfort in it – ‘I come from a poor background, that’s why I’m like this’ – and so on. I don’t come from a poor background. I come from a nothing background. My mother had nothing. She had only passion for the struggle to try to change the country that didn’t guarantee that it was going to do everything for her. Don’t label yourself ‘poor’ because I’ve never seen a baby being born and given a bank account... You are only given life, and what you have to do with that life is to develop. So I’d rather you use the words ‘developing communities’, ‘developing people’, you understand? (Thando Ngoma, interview, 16/10/2007).

Behind these various proposed alternatives for the terms the poor and the poorest of the poor, lie very similar understandings of the ways in which residents of places like Orange Farm need to be empowered to take responsibility for their own development. In the various quotes above is evidence of the ways in which members of the ANC and servants of the state have naturalised the logic of individual responsibility and ‘creativity’ in tackling their problems of unemployment and poverty. Rather than being seen as complacent, these residents want Orange Farm to be seen as a place in which people are active in removing themselves from their situations of socio-economic hardship.

In interviews and focus groups conducted with members of the OWCC and Kganya Consortium, as well as other unorganised residents, people also highlighted the fact that usage of these terms by the state encourages people to think of themselves in these terms. In the words of a female pensioner belonging to the Thandeka Ratheha project,

I think people call themselves 'the poorest of the poor' because of our own government. Our government always stresses poverty, we must do some work, have jobs for those people who live in poverty, we must provide jobs for them, and do promises... The government always tells people that they are poor and the people themselves become, they give themselves to become the poorest... (Female pensioner, Focus Group, Kganya Women's Consortium, 25/09/2007).

With residents of Orange Farm being targeted for assistance through policies aimed at and designed for the poor in the city, participants in discussions argued that they were forced to engage with the state about their needs in terms of these categories. While the state has mobilised these categories to try to enforce a lower standard and quality of life for those falling into these categories in society, members of community movements and organisations claim, however, to employ these categories in order to contest the kind of life prescribed for people by them.

In the words of the organiser of the OWCC,

Government, by promoting this thing of 'the poorest of the poor' is developing class differences in communities. You can even see with this development. Under apartheid we were fighting against apartheid development, saying that we are being given substandard development because we are black people. Today, after this new dispensation, the government says that it builds this same kind of development for poor people because they feel for the poor. Even the words that we use for solidarity as the poor,

government also uses to show that it is a government that cares for the poor. (Bricks Mokolo, interview, 20/01/08).

For these residents, government's professed commitment to the poor and the poorest of the poor allows it to get away with entrenching inequality in society, with those unable to pay for decent quality services and living standards restricted to the most minimal resources considered necessary for survival. While movements like the OWCC might, then, employ the terms the poor and the poorest of the poor in order to effect action on the part of the state, a state that has recognised the need for targeted interventions to allow access for groups fitting these definitions to certain minimal resources considered necessary for survival, it does so fully aware of this character of the state and with the intention of fighting against this logic of provision of the very basic and minimal resources to the poor. Groups like the OWCC, and individual residents of Orange Farm, mobilise these categories strategically, then, as part of their individual and collective strategies to force from the state greater provisions in the form of resources necessary for a quality of life beyond that of survival.

Bricks Mokolo also argues that the role of donor organisations has resulted in the increased mobilisation of the discourse of poverty and the poor within new social movements as the ability to access funds and other resources is often based on the ability to present a particular organisation or movement as representing the poor or working to fight poverty:

Our struggles are today controlled by funders. If they want to fund violence against women, you start to campaign on violence against women; if they want to fund women's empowerment, you become focused on women's empowerment; and most want you to say 'We are poor', 'We fight for the poor', 'We are fighting poverty'; so now we start to say that we are poor. (Interview, Bricks Mokolo, 21 August 2010).

These comments reveal, then, that there is some validity to the claim that the identity of the poor is strategically mobilised by groups of the poor in order to elicit various gains from both the state, organs of civil society, and individual members of society.

While Orange Farm might have been imagined by its apartheid planners as a place through which the ‘permanent informality’ of black people could be controlled through the encouragement of individual responsibility amongst them for their own and Orange Farm’s development, and by the ANC government as a place in which the poor and the poorest of the poor could be made to conform to the logic of individual responsibility and self-reliance espoused by neoliberalism, this chapter has shown how there has always been, and continues to be, a contested imaginary for Orange Farm, one held and shaped in common by its residents, organised and unorganised, in their everyday struggles to live in spite of their being the poorest of the poor.

Conclusion

*Give Us or We Take.*⁸⁸

*Destroy the Meter. Enjoy Free Water.*⁸⁹

As the post-apartheid state has attempted to enforce an inferior standard, quality, and way of life for that population group in society identified as the poor and to produce particular behaviours and the acceptance of neoliberal logics amongst the poor through the sphere of the delivery of basic services, individuals and collectives have spoken out and acted against such efforts, reasserting that resources, such as water, remain free to all, their ownership being imagined as common. In slogans such as those above, social movements, often beginning as small groups of neighbours commonly affected by restricted access to services for non-payment, have both made demands of the state, and organised their own access to the resources necessary for life (often illegally). As formal sector, fulltime, permanent employment declines, and flexible forms of work and informal economic activity increase, struggles over access to basic services speak to contestations over a much broader sphere than the immediate context of service delivery, that is, over the grid of possibilities for the everyday lives of those identified as the poor. As state policy has evolved in the context of resistance from poor communities, the delivery of basic services has become a space through which the behaviours of the poor have been targeted for reform and ‘rehabilitation’ in the interests of producing economically active, and therefore paying, citizens.

While the radical potential that exists amongst the poor, understood as ‘the dangerous classes’, has been shown to emerge in instances such as illegal reconnections, the experiences shared in this thesis also speak to the tremendous difficulties faced in the realisation of this potential, partly as a result of the making of the poor by and through state policy in such a manner that plays on the survival needs of its most marginalised

⁸⁸ A slogan first seen on a placard carried by a member of the LPM in the march of social movements under the banner of the Durban Social Forum (DSF) in Durban during the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in 2001. It has since been used in pamphlets and other media of various new social movements. For example, it appears in the OWCC pamphlet that opens *Chapter Six* of this thesis, and on an Indymedia-SA t-shirt.

⁸⁹ A slogan first painted on various walls in Orange Farm in 2002 during struggles of the OWCC against the installation of prepaid water meters in Stretford, Extension 4. The slogan has since been used by various activists and movements in South Africa and globally.

citizens in order to confine them to a particular standard of living and to get them to accept and adopt particular forms of behaviour. The poor and poverty, explored as governmental categories, have been shown, then, to produce particular definitions of the poor and measures of poverty in order to prescribe interventions to be undertaken by the state in order, increasingly, to provide the most minimal resources necessary for survival to those considered to be unable to provide for themselves, and to encourage a logic of self-restraint, conservation, 'careful budgeting', individual responsibility, and entrepreneurship development amongst this population group in society.

With the post-apartheid state defining its roles and responsibilities to its most marginalised citizens in terms of providing only for their survival needs, individuals and groups have come to identify themselves as the poor, strategically. And the effect and acceptance of neoliberal policies have often relied on the outcomes of contestations that happen over definitions of and policies for the poor. In the struggles of individuals and groups or communities of disadvantaged people for socio-economic improvements in their lives, then, the making of the poor and poverty has become a strategic field of contestation – a field of engagement in which categories are mobilised not for their innate value or meaning, but as ways of attaining the ends of improved living conditions through the struggle over their definition and the ends to which they work. In this making, contestation over what constitutes basic needs and the role of the state, have come to be the central issues around which debate and disagreements have occurred.

In the experience of Orange Farm, we have also witnessed the mobilisation of a discourse of self-reliance and mobilisation of the resources existing amongst the poor in the creation of spaces of production that are antagonistic to and, at times, subversive of the relations of capital. While the various income generation projects provide instances in which capitalist understandings of and approaches to work, the wage, relations of production, surplus creation and distribution, individual progress, and so on are challenged and given new meanings, they have also been shown to exist within contexts of extreme precarity and insecurity, composed of individuals who continue to face the constraints imposed by capitalist society in spite of their choosing to think differently about their circumstances. Whilst the collectives, in the form of

income generation projects and movements (like the OWCC), provide, then spaces for alternative imaginings of life and opportunities for the development of collective solutions to individual problems, they cannot escape their own production in and by capitalist society, in particular the fact that their individual members are constantly coming up against the forces of attempted discipline, regulation and control of capitalist society in their everyday struggles to survive.

In this way, the contested terrain produced by mobilisations of the categories and identity of poverty and the poor/s may be viewed as a space of subjectivation, in which the attempted production of a particular subject (in the form of the politically docile, entrepreneurial, paying poor) comes into conflict with subjectivities that are produced in and from the experience of poverty, that are antagonistic to its logics. In post-apartheid South Africa, the slogans, symbols, and traditions of the liberation movement have come to be struggled over in the definition of what constitutes survival and whether it is the responsibility of the state to provide for the survival or life of its people. In this way, the poor and poverty have been shown to constitute a field of knowledge and intervention on the part of the state that becomes a strategic field of contestation for the citizens potentially constituted by the field.

While this field of contestation is certainly important in the struggles of movements currently, and has produced some favourable changes in policy for the poor, actions of those identified as the poor that do not focus on this field have also continued e.g. illegal reconnections. This would suggest that often the radical potential said to characterise the subjectivity of the poor is realised and apprehended outside of the strategic field of contestation that emerges around the meanings and mobilisations of the term, outside of the imaginary of survival and in that of life. The experience of Orange Farm has also shown how this strategic field has come to be driven by highly technical debates that have come to centre on questions of survival, with the possibilities for life often being imagined outside of this field.

The problems raised in the practical implementation of the City of Johannesburg's changed indigent management policy, in the form of the MSSS and Reathusa, in Orange Farm (explored in *Chapters 4 and 6*), speak to this fact that governmental strategies unfold in specific contexts that determine their efficacy and indeed their

successful implementation. When state officials have attempted to implement policies targeted at the poor as set out in the City's revised indigent management policy in Orange Farm, the glaringly obvious socio-economic desperation of residents has prevented officials from insisting on the prescription that residents accept the prepaid system of delivery due to the extreme poverty and unemployment experienced by the majority of residents. In this context, residents of Orange Farm have come to be identified and to identify themselves as the poorest of the poor, those unable to pay for services in any form, in particular those delivered via the prepaid system. In individual agreements set up between officials and residents, the stipulation that households sign onto the prepaid system has fallen away and residents have been asked to pay whatever they can afford for services each month. While the CoJ engages in debates about whether to waive the cost of installation of prepaid meters for indigent residents, it appears as though individual household access to services in parts of Orange Farm that have not previously enjoyed such delivery is taking place at a lower level of service. For example, residents are being given VIP rather than flush toilets. In this manner, the categories of the poor and the poorest of the poor have become ways of separating 'those who can be made to pay' from 'those who cannot be made to pay', with a lower standard and quality of living being provided to the latter group.

For the poorest of the poor, then, those unable to be put to the use of the market and the logic of commodification, life is restricted to the bare minimum, a level at which 'prevention of wastage' and 'conservation' is enforced through mechanisms such as toilets that do not flush automatically and the like. For the poor life becomes one governed by the logic of restraint, conservation, and 'careful budgeting' as the state's responsibility becomes that of providing only the very basic and minimal resources for survival, with access to a better quality of life being the 'reward' for such behaviour. The experiences explored in this thesis, then, highlight how power comes to be exercised in new ways to encourage acceptance of logics in which the individual and his/her relationship to the resources necessary for life and his/her related conception of what this life should entail, become the means through which the logic of the market are entrenched and resisted, in a continuous and changing cycle through which capitalism is reproduced and alternatives to it imagined and attempted. Forced onto a terrain of engagement about how one lives that begins with the most basic

standard of living, that is, survival, whether at the level of the household or within a community or movement, it has become increasingly difficult to resist the conditions of survival that people have been told are ‘necessary’ and reflect ‘best practice’ in our current neoliberal ‘reality’.

This contestation that happens at the level of the individual or ‘the self’ has been shown, in this thesis, to unfold in the form of a moral economy, in which the promises of the past are held up in the demands of the present against the inferior quality of life being prescribed for the poor. While the contestation of this moral economy has at times presented opportunities in which the potential for relations and ways of life different from and/or antagonistic to the logic of capital have been imagined and acknowledged, it is also through the contestation of this moral economy that the state and other exponents of neoliberalism operate so as to close these opportunities. While residents of Orange Farm showing allegiance to the ANC Alliance, for example, have been shown to be as critical of state policies targeting the poor as those organised in community movements like the OWCC, the discipline of the Alliance has worked to ensure that these criticisms are subjected to a logic of patience, incremental gains, fiscal constraints, and faith in the market, portrayed as ‘the only alternative’ considering ‘the reality’ of neoliberalism faced by the post-apartheid state.

Even in the spaces promising the most radical alternatives to capitalism in the experience of Orange Farm, the logic of consumerism, commodification, and wage labour are almost always reinscribed, thus foreclosing the potential for the production of relations and ways of being different from those of capitalist society, and reasserting the fact that the production of these alternatives lies in continuous processes of contestation and struggle over the meanings and values upheld in society or against it. An example here would be the income generation projects and the OWCC in Orange Farm, a unique organisational relationship through which there have been times in which an imagination of a life beyond that of survival, wage labour, and the other constraints of capitalist society has existed. However, this imagination is constantly contested by the promise of ‘the better life’ made by neoliberal society through the individual solutions that it offers, and by the sheer need to survive, often only possible through acceptance of the logic of the market and the state.

This thesis has also shown that the realisation of the potential that exists amongst those outside of capitalist society's traditional forms of control, discipline and regulation for the production of relations and ways of being and living different from and/or antagonistic to those of capitalist society, is an ongoing process of struggle. In the example of the City of Johannesburg's attempts at entrenching a logic of commodification and payment for basic services, this is clear in the ways in which municipal policy and strategies for implementation have changed as community struggles have contested their logic, and in how struggles have changed in response to the former set of changes. The example of Orange Farm has also shown how individuals and organised groups of residents have resisted the implementation of City policy in their everyday lives and in collective protest actions, and continue to do so.

The experience of Orange Farm suggests that, rather than celebrating the poor as an always radical subjectivity, then, it would be more appropriate to understand its radical potential as lying in the ways in which it is mobilised as a strategic field of play by groups and communities of people resisting the kind of life prescribed by its governmental mobilisation. As the last chapter has shown, many residents of Orange Farm approach the current indigent management policy as a strategy to ensure their continued access to free basic services. In addition, movements have undertaken struggles to ensure that a certain standard and quality of life is provided to the poorest of the poor, those unable to pay for services. Approaching the definition of the poor and poverty and their accompanying interventions as a field through which contestation can happen around what constitutes a 'decent quality life' for the poor and the poorest of the poor, movements have been able to make demands of the state, mobilising past commitments made in the liberation movement to contest current arguments by the state that particularly low standards of living be accepted by the poor and the poorest of the poor.

While the South African government may celebrate its policies as meeting the interests of the poor, that figure that has come to symbolise 'the second economy', the experience of Orange Farm and disadvantaged communities of the City of Johannesburg highlights how these policies entrench inequality in society and the

most basic and minimal standard and quality of living for a large section of society. The proposal of targeted interventions for the indigent today serve only to entrench the logic of permanent informality begun by the apartheid state in areas like Orange Farm, imagined as designated areas for the development of 'black life' according to lower levels of service and infrastructure provision. And, 'pro-poor' commitments and strategies have been shown to entrench poorer standards of living for the poor under a logic of commodification and payment for services.

As the language of struggle mobilised by movements that emerged post-apartheid has been colonised by the state and employed to its own ends, it might well be time for movements to revisit their strategic use of the category and identity of the poor. As the state moves towards entrenching a particular quality of life for those it acknowledges to be the poor or the poorest of the poor, movements might have to begin struggles against the definition and targeting of people through categories such as the poor. Whether the latter happens will depend, partly, on how the contest between survival and life unfolds within movements that currently identify themselves as movements of the poor.

Post-apartheid South Africa provides, then, an experience of the two histories of capitalism in the contested space of subjectivation produced by various mobilisations of the categories and identity of poverty and the poor/s, that speaks to current processes of neoliberalisation. In presenting the unfolding process of policy formulation around the delivery of basic services as one in which attempted governmental deployments of the categories of poverty and the poor happen within a context of heightened resistance against such attempts, this thesis has, it is hoped, provided a reading (and writing) of poverty and the poor in neoliberal South Africa that will allow us to begin to move away from "the econometric imaginary" (Du Toit) and "impact model" (Hart) approach to neoliberalism and questions of poverty. In this way, it is hoped, 'giving poverty a human face' will come to mean much more than adding qualitative dimensions to quantitative models in which the economic continues to structure ways of thinking about the social and the political. Rather, it is hoped that it will get us thinking about the values, beliefs, morals, cultures, and so on, that produce the ways in which we think about poverty and the poor.

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List of Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus Groups

Where names are not provided, the anonymity of participants was guaranteed at the start of the relevant discussion. Full registers containing names of participants are, however, available on request.

- Retrenched Workers Of Premier Milling Company and Its Subsidiaries (30/05/2007)
 1. Male, 59 years old
 2. Male, 43 years old
 3. Male, 52 years old
 4. Male, 50 years old
 5. Male, 39 years old
 6. Male, 51 years old
 7. Male, 43 years old
 8. Male, 43 years old
 9. Male, 49 years old
 10. Male, age not given
- Retrenched Workers of SAMANCOR (30/05/2007)
 1. Male, 64 years old
 2. Male, 59 years old
 3. Male, 46 years old
- Retrenched Workers Of Pickup (31/05/2007)
 1. Male, 79 years old
 2. Female, 21 years old
 3. Female, 66 years old
 4. Female, 23 years old
 5. Female, 47 years old
 6. Female, age not given
 7. Female, 33 years old
- Kganya Women's Consortium members (25/09/2007)
 1. Male, 52 years old
 2. Female, 24 years old
 3. Female, 25 years old
 4. Female pensioner (exact age not given)
 5. Female, 23 years old
 6. Female, 45 years old
 7. Female, 50 years old

8. Female, 37 years old
- Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee members (26/09/2007)
 1. Male, 22 years old
 2. Male, 19 years old
 3. Female, 34 years old
 4. Female, 23 years old
 5. Female, 56 years old
 6. Female, 45 years old
 - Hlanganani Youth NGO (24/10/2007)
 1. Mthandeni Mdakani (age not specified; young male)
 2. Zandile Dlomo (age not specified; young female)
 3. Nomalanga Thonsi (age not specified; young female)
 - Community Development Workers Of Orange Farm (24/10/2007)
 1. Selby Ramaloise (age not specified; young male)
 2. Martha Mopo (age not specified; young female)
 3. Amen Khumalo (age not specified; middle-aged male)
 - Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee members (17/03/2010)
 1. Male, 59 years old
 2. Male, 46 years old
 3. Female, 47 years old
 4. Female 57 years old
 5. Female, 30 years old
 6. Female, 23 years old

Interviews

1. Kgatitswe, Eva, Account Assistant in the finance office of Region 11, Orange Farm – 16/10/2007
2. Koseff, Jak, Director of Community Development in the City of Johannesburg – 15/06/2010
3. Magoga, Samuel, member of the OWCC and Itsoseng Women's Project - 15/03/2010
4. Mahlangu, Nthabiseng, member of the OWCC – 24/05/2007
5. Makgethla, Thabang, Clerk in the Housing Department, Region 11, Orange Farm – 16/10/2007
6. Mazibuko, Pinky, member of Itsoseng Women's Project and the OWCC- 21/09/2008
7. Mbombiya, Abel, Chairperson of SANCO, Orange Farm – 25/10/2007
8. Mokolo, Bricks, Co-ordinator of the OWCC – 22/10/2007
9. Mokolo, Bricks, Co-ordinator of the OWCC – 20/03/2008
10. Mokolo, Bricks, Co-ordinator of the OWCC – 29/03/2008
11. Mokolo, Bricks, Co-ordinator of the OWCC – 16/03/2010
12. Mokolo, Bricks, Co-ordinator of the OWCC – 21/08/2010
13. Mokolo, Gladys, Director of Itsoseng Women's Project and member of the OWCC – 20/09/2008
14. Mokolo, Gladys, Director of Itsoseng Women's Project and member of the OWCC – 15/03/2010
15. Ngoma, Thando, Director of the Lebone Skills Development Centre, Orange Farm and member of the SACP Orange Farm branch
16. Ngwenya, Nonhlanhla, 34 year old female resident of Orange Farm – 24/05/2007
17. Nkosi, Bongani, Manager of Legal Administration in the City of Johannesburg's Revenue Department -
18. Nthoroana, Christina, 56 year old female resident of Orange Farm – 24/05/2007
19. Phillips, Millicent, female pensioner, resident in Orange Farm – 21/09/2008
20. Radebe, Nomasonto, Director of Business Planning and Organisational Performance, City of Johannesburg's Revenue Department
21. Simango, Meisie, Orange Farm Councillor, Ward 4 – 9/10/2007
22. Simango, Meisie, Orange Farm Councillor, Ward 4 – 20/08/2010 (telephonic interview)
23. Tjeba, P, Paralegal, St Charles Lwanga Advice Office, Orange Farm – 25/09/2007
24. Tsotetsi, Mpumi, CoJ administrative clerk responsible for Siyasizana registrations in Orange Farm – 21/08/2010