Experiences of unemployment, the meaning of wage work: The dilemma of wage work among ex-gold mineworkers in the Free State Goldfields

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

DEDICATION

To them that invented I,

God, Ancestors, and my parents Matome and Moremadi Sefalafala.

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"In the wage of labour, labour does not appear as an end in itself but as a servant of the wage. An enforced increase of wages would therefore be nothing but better payment for the slave, and would not win either for the worker or for labour their human status and dignity" (Marx, 1959:72–73).

"When in a city of 100 000, only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities. But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solutions within the range of opportunities open to any one individual. The very structure of opportunities has collapsed" (Mills, 1959:15).

"Where shall we go then for pastime,
If the worst that can be, has been done?" (Andics, 1947:iii).

Figure 1: Map of Welkom (Thabong Township) and Virginia Town (Meloding Township), Free State

ViaMichelin, 2017

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Abstract

The thesis explores experiences of unemployment to understand the meaning of wage work. This ethnographic research focuses on the everyday lived experiences of unemployed ex-mineworkers in their local contexts. Through personal narratives of men laid off from the dying Goldfields of the Free State (previously called the Orange Free State (OFS), it aims to explicate the powerful moral effects of wage work in a context of pervasive joblessness. Ex-mineworkers affirmed their commitment to wage work as the only way in which security, respect, pride, and dignity can happen in society. Yet, increasingly, in South Africa and indeed across the world, wage work can no longer fulfil those values and its traditional promise.

The findings illuminate how unemployment had a profound impact on ex-mineworkers' sense of self and their place in their homes and communities. They suffer stigma, diminished sense of masculine confidence and negative self-perceptions. The thesis describes the ways in which unemployment was experienced as economic insecurity, social insecurity, and psychological distress. However, I argue that these impairments are only symptoms of a much deeper problem, that is, they experienced a deep moral unease at being unemployed.

These impairments do not produce deleterious effects on the unemployed merely because they cause poverty, social uncertainties, and psychological distress, which of course are important, but because a particular moral regulation has lost hold over individuals.

The thesis argues that unemployment produced deleterious effects on the unemployed because it occasioned the abrupt disruption of, and loss of shared collective moral values without the immediate provision of an alternative collective moral order in place of the old. As such, unemployment is experienced as loss.

Ex-mineworkers attempted to overcome the three impairments through a combination of livelihood strategies. Strategies included standing by the side of the road (men by the side of the road), collecting scrap metal for recycling and remittances. They often inadequately benefitted (indirectly) from various state grants. The livelihood activities they undertook were seen as humiliating and driven by desperation and they were unable to facilitate and secure sustainable and predictable sources of economic security or new forms of social status and dignity.

With the above in mind, ex-mineworkers imagined the positive impact that a Basic Income Grant (BIG) or an unemployment grant would have in reducing the insecurities (economic, social, and psychological) of the unemployed. They framed grants as 'handouts' which while reducing insecurities, cannot, ultimately, substitute wage work and the values tied to it.

They preferred employment and jobs over non-wage forms of income distribution. But this raises a policy dilemma; What happens when full employment becomes impossible? If job creation fails, how do we explain the continued commitment to wage work as the central medium of what it means to live a productive life? I argue, the answer lies not only with respect to the economic benefits tied to jobs, but rather, a deeper historical sociological factor, which is the moral status of wage work in society. The moral status and commitment to wage work, not only makes wage work the only perceived viable way of attaining livelihoods, a meaningful life, masculine status etc., but it also hegemonically blinds the unemployed, policy makers and analysts to imagine possibilities of decent life outside wage work.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this thesis is to explore experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work among a group of ex-mineworkers who worked in the Goldfields of the Free State (FS). It focuses on townships of Welkom and Virginia such as Thabong, Hani Park and Meloding and traces some of the ex-mineworkers back to Lesotho in areas such as Makola, Teyateyaneng, Mapoteng and Ha-Ratau in the Berea district some 20km outside the capital city of Maseru. This tracing back to Lesotho, provides a way of thinking about how place, and the resources it provides shape how unemployment is experienced.

The intervention of my thesis draws its weight from the fact that both the pro/anti wage work intellectual approaches debating the meaning of wage work in South Africa (Webster, 2010, Barchiesi, 2011) neglect the experiences of unemployment. By using the ethnographic method and in-depth interviews and live histories, I conduct a reading of the personal narratives of men laid off from the dying South African deep-level gold mining industry. The thesis aims to explicate the powerful effects of wage work in the post-apartheid context of wagelessness. Based on a non-generalizable sample of unemployed ex-mineworkers of the Free State Gold Fields (FSGF), I found that unemployment has profound deleterious effects on its fully proletarianized victims. These deleterious effects extend beyond the adverse economic impacts of unemployment (which have been justifiably the focus of several studies of the unemployed), but rather also due to the moral status and commitment of wage work. The thesis sheds light on the severe consequences of valorising wage work in the face of de-industrialization and joblessness.

This is a qualitative study drawing on ethnography, in-depth interviews and life histories to elucidate the subjectivities, interpretations, emotions and inner perspectives of the participants' world views. The qualitative research methods combined ethnography or participant observations with 66 semi-structured and unstructured interviews with ex-mineworkers and other members of their households and communities.

I show that unemployment impairs three critical aspects of the lives of the unemployed. Firstly, unemployment impairs the economic security of subjects due to the lack of a stable and predictable income. While the working poor and other precarious worker categories experience economic insecurity, the unemployed experience a deeper form of economic insecurity because they lack any realistic prospect of a stable and predictable income to meet basic needs. Secondly, unemployment impairs social life. The organization of social relations was impaired not just because of the lack of a defined set of activities that bring people together on a frequent basis such as employment does but because it constitutes a type of social blemish[1] on the individual. Thirdly, unemployment impairs psychological well-being. Mental tensions or stress compromise the mental health and wellbeing of the unemployed. Yet, at a deeper level these economic insecurities, social insecurity and psychological impairments are only symptoms of a deep seated problem.

The thesis argues that impairments associated with unemployment do not produce deleterious effects on its victims merely because they cause poverty, social uncertainties, and psychological distress, instead unemployment has these effects because a particular moral status and its regulation has lost hold over individuals.

[1] 'social blemish' in the Goffmann sense of the term, which refers to a tarnished moral status.

Unemployment produced deleterious effects on my participants because it occasioned the abrupt disruption and loss of shared collective moral values (underpinned by capitalism and the capitalist system of wages); the disturbance of a collective order or consciousness without the immediate provision of an alternative collective order or consciousness in place of the old (Durkheim, 1933, 1952, 1964). As such, unemployment is experienced as anomie, understood as loss.

In describing the experiences of unemployment, unemployed ex-mineworkers drew on powerful images of incomplete, unrecognizable, pathologized and battered black bodies with missing parts to describe their experience of unemployment as a condition of "declassification", of mal regulation. Bodily images of sickness and disability were used as metaphors to describe a fractured/broken social and moral order. It is in this sense that impairment associated with unemployment was symptomatic of a deeper intangible condition of anomie experienced as loss. In unemployment, ex-mineworker's social life and sense of being continued to be shaped by something that is no longer present in their lives, wage work. This signified how wage work remains a powerful social force whose social and moral domination continues to imbue and saturate its subject's imagination long after it is gone.

The research concludes that a key part of the underlying problem is the continuation of an industrial era commitment to wage work as a morally essential social activity despite growing evidence that it can no longer fulfil this duty. This makes it necessary to rethink two critical points which address the need to think about a strategy to de-centre wage work as a moral imperative:

> Firstly, there is a necessity to rethink the moral value and duty associated with wage work as a strategy to address inequalities and poverty by

guaranteeing the majority of the black working class a decent job. In the context of rampant de-industrialization, mechanization, unemployment, technological advancement poverty and growing inequality, policy preoccupation with job creation as the most desirable vehicle for social inclusion are more "habits of thinking"[2] , reflecting the hegemony of wage work rather than strategies corresponding to any objective reality.

Secondly, there is a necessity to reconceptualize the meaning of work to include activities that are not wage work to imagine new ways of organizing society so as to include those excluded and marginalized from wage work; to reintegrate them into society and address their status as a blemished category that deviates from dominant norms and values. Citizens still need to feel that they are contributing to society[3], even if not employed, by creating a caring and inclusive social life in which all can experience pride and dignity through "non-wage centred" contributions to society. This can be done through adopting a "basic needs approach" anchored in the idea of a Basic Income Grant (BIG) or an unemployment grant rather than narrowly through employment and job creation.

Ex-mineworkers affirmed their commitment to wage work as the only way in which security, respect, pride, and dignity can happen in society. Yet, increasingly, across the globe wage work can no longer fulfil that promise and those values.

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[2] Jonny Steinberg (2013) uses the phrase "habits of thinking" to describe the continued attachments to wage work that blinds us to the need for welfare.
[3] Standing, 2009.

The thesis engages the policy and sociological dilemma of what happens when full employment becomes impossible? How else can we ensure that the working class meets its basic needs, attains a decent life, and overcomes the moral abyss triggered by unemployment? Can the Basic Income Grant (BIG) or an unemployment grant provide an alternative income and wealth distribution mechanism to guarantee basic needs for all citizens? The BIG is a guaranteed unconditional amount of money given to all citizens to use however they choose[4].

Ex-mineworkers saw the potential positive impact of BIG or an unemployment grant to reduce the economic, social, and psychological insecurities associated with unemployment. They, however, preferred employment as a way of earning a living rather than what they saw as 'handouts'. Handouts could not substitute wage work, but rather people would continue to face social isolation and stigma because they are unemployed. They also believed that such grants would make people lazy. The partial rejection of BIG or an unemployment grant was underpinned by the moral volarisation of wage work.

The findings affirmed the centrality of wage work. People want jobs, not grants. Yet jobs are unattainable for millions of unemployed people who struggle daily to meet their basic needs. Grants were not accepted as a policy response to unemployment. The challenge for any post-work imaginary project is that ex-mineworkers and various other sections of South Africa cannot imagine a decent life outside wage work. For BIG or an unemployment grant to become a viable policy solution, ex-mineworkers,

[4] Standing, 2017

policymakers, and analysts would have to imagine a world where workers no longer rely solely on wage work as a moral imperative and on wages alone for basic needs.

Thesis outline

The thesis consists of eight Chapters. Chapter one; introduces the thesis.

Chapter two; is a literature review of scholarly work on experiences of unemployment. It covers the question of unemployment from a variety of fields: Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, and Psychology. The main objective of the literature survey is for the writer to demonstrate some of the pitfalls of the literature and the gaps within the literature to which the thesis is a response. The writer draws from the work of the father of Sociology Emile Durkheim, and especially his notion of anomie, which is about what happens when moral systems disintegrate? to develop an understanding of unemployment, as not just economic loss (which of course is a part), as is often the case with especially the livelihoods approach. This work reconceptualizes and provides an alternative understanding of unemployment as fundamentally, a problem of moral loss in addition to unemployment being a problem of economic and hardship and poverty.

Chapter three; engages the intriguing debate about the meaning of wage work (Webster, 2010, Barchiesi, 2011). The debate is set between two seemingly radically opposed sociological approaches, which I call, Pro-wage work and anti-wage work. The fundamental difference between the two approaches pertains to the role of wage work in human life and society as a source of values and the role of wage work in achieving social justice. The dismantling of, and growing fragmentation of the labour market on a national and global scale, which has unleashed the growth of precarious employment on the one hand and the growth of mass unemployment on the other has opened new terrains of contestation over the role traditionally attributed to wage work. To what

extent can wage work act as a vehicle to constructing livelihoods[5]? To what extent can wage work act as a vehicle to attaining freedom and social justice? What alternatives are possible and what form can these alternatives take? The main silence in the debate about the meaning of work in South Africa is on the absence of the experiences of the unemployed in our understanding of the meaning of wage work.

Chapter four; sets out the context of the study. The chapter provides an overview of the process of downscaling and de-industrialization in the Free State Goldfields (FSGF). It situates the advent of mine downsizing and closure of the Free State Goldfields within the context of national and global experiences of ruined[6] cities following the closure of mining and supporting economic activities around which the cities where usually founded and largely dependent on. Economic data and literature on local economic development is discussed to give a sense of some of the initiatives that have been implemented or considered by the local municipality along with some development partners.

Chapter five; discusses the qualitative research methods used for data collection at different sites in the Free State and Lesotho. The methods combined ethnography with 66 in-depth semi-structured interviews and life histories with unemployed ex-mineworkers retrenched from the Goldfields and members of their households and communities. Some unemployment ex-mineworkers were interviewed on multiple occasions overtime, rather than once off single interviews. This allowed the researcher

[5] Of course, this question does not presume that wage work has ever served as a sustainable source of livelihoods for black workers. Histories of labor show clearly that black workers inception into wage work was insecure from the beginning but things began to change as wages increased and working conditions improved in part due to the important struggles waged by the black trade union movement especially in South Africa.

[6] Ruin is also used by Ann Stoller (2013) to describe the aftermath of colonial occupation. It implies the destruction and debris left behind after a major event has taken place. Welkom is left in ruin by the exhausted mines, failures of governance and environmental problems such as contaminated the water and compromised air quality.

to build rapport with my participants and to get a longitudinal sense of their everyday lives. I discuss the limitations of my study and research method, such as non-representative nature of my sample and briefly discuss the ontology and epistemology between Weber and Durkheim. I detail how I gained access to the field/research participants and some highlight of the strategic decisions that I made, including the decision to not research illegal mining. I learned that ethnography opens a researcher to many different aspects of people's everyday lives, and that the inability to include everything and every aspect of their multi-layered and complex lives required deliberate strategic decisions to focus on the key question (s) that this work set out to engage. Chapter five ends with a discussion on research ethics.

Chapter six; is the empirical heart of the dissertation. Here, the researcher opens the door to the worlds, subjectivities, interpretations, and inner perspectives of the retrenched ex-mine workers from the Goldfields. The material is organized along themes that emerged from the participants' everyday lives. Participants identified three forms of impairments as crucial to how they experience unemployment, namely, economic, social, and psychological impairments. As part of the psychological, aspect, dreams were identified as an important source to understand the experience of unemployment. But as some scholars have pointed out, dreams are both social and psychological phenomena which can teach people's lived experiences and meanings.

The experience of time was important for the unemployed. Unemployment not only meant that people had more time on their hands, but it was also changed the meaning of time. Time as not only abundant but it was also de-commodified through worker's exclusion from the realm of production. In unemployment time was no longer labour time sold for wages, but rather it became something to 'kill' or to 'fill up' with a variety

of activities in their local context. They experience the changing nature of their own personal relationship to time through the historical tower clocks in Welkom and Thabong. These tower clocks were erected during the 1940s as part of the mining industry and urban development of Welkom. However, they were instrumental in shaping the experience of mineworker's time as they also played an important role of labour control. Chapter six shows how economic, social, and psychological impairments are only symptoms of a much deeper problem. This will be demonstrated through how participants drew on bodily images of incomplete and pathologized, unrecognizable black bodies to illustrate that unemployment is an embodied crisis of self. Participants likened the experience of unemployment to not having arms and limbs and to having an incurable sickness. Two conceptions of the black body emerged. First, the black body was evoked as an object of production for the creation of capitalist value and accumulation. After it is used, injured, and battered bearing deep scars and occupational diseases such as phthisis[7], it is disposed of. Secondly, the sick black body was used as a metaphor to describe a fractured and broken social and moral order.

Chapter seven; looks at how unemployment ex-mineworkers tried to respond to unemployment through the informal sector. Ex-mineworkers were not passive, they attempted various responses combining strategies such as scrap metal collecting, waiting for jobs at the side of the road, grants (indirectly) and family remittances. A typology of three developed in a German study of responses of the unmeployed was adapted to frame this chapter. They saw their own strategies of livelihood and survival in the informal sector as humiliating and driven by desperation. These livelihood

[7] A type of pulmonary tuberculosis caused by the sustained inhalation of silica dust (See McCulloch, 2012)

strategies were unable to secure not only the income but also the dignity equivalent to that of wage work. So, for the ex-mineworkers, they emerged as failed attempts.

Chapter eight; the dissertation concludes that the findings on the experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work explicate the powerful effects of the historical process of proletarianization. They affirm the centrality of wage work in the social imagination and identification of ex-mineworkers. Wage work meant social recognition, and the ability to lay claim to living in certain kinds of ways that are socially valued such as breadwinning masculinity, status, respectability, and the meaning of time. But what provides wage work with its vital force is not only its economic importance, but also the moral status it commands and systematic societal commitments to it.

Ex-mineworkers want jobs. They do not want a BIG or unemployment grant. Yet, jobs are unattainable for millions of work-seekers who struggle daily for basic needs. In this instance, the question is what happens in a post-colonial context of mass unemployment when wage work remains valorised as the most vital human experience but remains elusive? While they reject the BIG or an unemployment grant as an adequate response to their predicament (the predicament of wanting something unattainable i.e a job), the BIG or an unemployment grant can provide new possibilities for the emergence of new social and moral orders in which social integration, human value, dignity, and respectability are not dependent on wage work. For this possibility to become feasible, there would need to emerge a new understanding that wage work can no longer fulfil its traditional role, and that this was a product of history, not an inevitable fact. There is a need to valorise the meaning of work that is not wage work to imagine a world beyond wage work.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore experiences of unemployment as a way of understanding the meaning of wage work. Drawing on various perspectives from the literature on experiences of unemployment across different academic disciplines, I explore different aspects from which the subject has been covered as well as some of the existing gaps in the literature. I turn to the work of Emile Durkheim to develop a distinctive sociological understanding about moral disruption and the emergence of anomie. This is followed by a discussion on the emergent political possibilities of eliminating anomie associated with pervasive unemployment. I discuss neo-Durkheimian approaches based on the idea of occupational citizenship and the Basic Income Grant (BIG). The study seeks to contribute to our understanding of why unemployment is experienced as a moral disintegration and loss, a condition of anomie and what this experience reveals about the meaning of wage work. The thesis seeks to suggest alternative political possibilities to combat anomie arising from unemployment.

PERSPECTIVES ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Economics

One of the greatest problems facing capitalism and the capitalist system is the problem of unemployment. Much has been written, attending to various aspects of the problem of unemployment from different perspectives. A variety of perspectives that include Economic, Psychological, Anthropological and Sociological approaches. The economic perspective places general emphasis on causes of unemployment and poses strategic policy questions to find the appropriate policy responses and solutions – in particular how to create jobs and bring the unemployed with the various skill levels back into the labour market. Policy debates are usually located within various theoretical perspectives such as Economic Liberalism, Marxian and Keynesian economics. A key underlying assumption of mainstream economic approaches is that it is particularly undesirable to develop and pursue policies to assist individuals to adjust and cope with long term unemployment (Hayes & Nutman, 1981). The most ideal and desirable objective, therefore, is to reintegrate the majority of the unemployed into employment.

The reintegration of the unemployed into employment has indeed been at the centre of South Africa's macroeconomic policy. South Africa has a high unemployment rate which, according to the official or narrow definition is estimated to be over 27.7%. When the broad definition which includes discouraged workers is used, the unemployment rate is estimated to exceed 35%. However, the distribution of unemployment is uneven across different demographic groups. Black youth and black

women carry a disproportional burden of unemployment in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Several policy documents articulate the African National Congress' (ANC) vision to create an enabling environment for employment-creation and transforming the structure of the South African economy, especially in terms of patterns of ownership.

The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) of 1994, which was the brainchild of the largest union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), on the one hand, envisaged a job-rich developmental path achieved through redistribution of wealth, resources and opportunities towards the previously disadvantaged black majority working class. The RDP embodied a basic service-delivery approach in its orientation to achieve equitable economic growth that leads to job creation. To do this, it identified job creation projects in housing and infrastructure development as well as challenges that need to be addressed such as inadequate education and healthcare (Webster, 2011).

The Growth Employment and Redistribution macroeconomic policy (GEAR) of 1996, on the other hand, cemented a period of liberalization in South Africa[8]. The policy made bold predictions, including among other things, growth in employment averaging some 270 000 jobs per annum between 1996 to 2000, with the number of new jobs created rising over time from 126 000 in 1996 to 409 000 in 2000 (GEAR, 1996). For various reasons, these policy predictions were unrealized.

[8] Indeed, Neo-liberal policies did not begin with the implementation of GEAR in south Africa. The National Party adopted economic policies which advocated neo-liberal measures.

As a result of neo-liberal ideological underpinnings that recommended privatization, liberalization, deregulation and fiscal austerity, GEAR met resistance from the left, trade unions, social movements, and communities. It is widely believed that GEAR eroded many of the gains that the labour movement had made over many years of workers' struggles. It eroded working conditions (fewer benefits, declining benefits, and employment security) and led to higher rates of unemployment through restructuring and increasingly insecure work arrangements (Van der Walt, 2001).

The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA) of 2008 recognized the significance of the informal sector and the need to develop policy mechanisms that would ensure greater synergies between the first economy (formal economy) and the second economy (informal economy). This was viewed as a critical move to ensure economic growth and employment creation (Kirsten & Davies, 2008).

In 2010, the ANC adopted the New Growth Path (NGP), which identified several job drivers and placed key emphasis on decent work as an important element to achieving inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods (Webster, 2011).

In 2012, the National Development Plan (NDP) was adopted and aimed at creating 11 million jobs by 2030 and reducing unemployment to 6% on the assumption that the economy will achieve an average annual growth rate of some 5% over this period. By 2020, the NDP aimed to have halved the current 27.7% official rate of unemployment to 14% (NDP, 2012).

By 2015, however, the South African economy narrowly avoided a recession as Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) figures for Q3 confirmed an economic growth rate of 0.7% quarter on quarter (SSA, 2015). Amid a struggling rand, downgrades by rating agencies, suppressed performance in sectors such as manufacturing and mining and growing rates of unemployment, and the lowering of average economic growth targets to about 1.5% by the Treasury, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) and the World Bank (WB), the government has chosen to stick to the targets outlined in the NDP. Instead of revising the NDP's growth targets to align with the new economic realities, government asserts it will "go back to the drawing board"(Radebe, 2015, cited in Maswanganyi, 2015) to ensure that higher economic growth rates are achieved.

Three approaches to the South African labour market have emerged. Firstly, the official government position is that decent work is a pivotal element of the overall developmental agenda of South Africa. Decent work is perceived as complimentary to both the achievement of economic growth and creation of employment. By making jobs more decent, you are also making them more productive, and this will stimulate the economy, leading to a virtuous cycle. A potential limitation of this approach, however, lies in the fact that it neglects the possibility for trade-offs between making jobs decent versus simply creating jobs (Webster, 2011).

Secondly, a market approach views government policy, alongside strong unions, as an impediment to job creation in South Africa. Proponents of this approach identify decent work, the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and minimum wages (ADCORP, 2010, cited in Webster, 2011) as an obstacle to job creation. It is argued that these three elements make the labour market "rigid" or "inflexible" and hence undermine South Africa's

competitiveness, making it very difficult for employers to manage, pay and fire employees and that it discourages hiring in the first place. Wages are said to outstrip productivity, making it very expensive to employ South African workers. These elements make it almost impossible for South Africa to make inroads into the crisis of unemployment (Hartley, 2013 cited in Webster, 2011). The South African labour market therefore faces a dilemma – "whether to abandon international labour standards to become globally competitive or to try and strike a pragmatic balance between decent work and enterprise efficiency" (Webster, 2011).

Finally, a more radical approach is sceptical about any possibility of achieving fundamental transformation of the labour market in favour of workers under capitalism. For radical anti-capitalists, the precariousness of wage work both in terms of quantity and quality is a permanent feature of capitalism since as a system it thrives off the back of workers (Webster, 2011). Reforms through decent work, minimum wages and labour laws simply fail to counter a process that makes waged employment utterly precarious for millions of workers in the first place (Barchiesi, 2010).

Economic analyses of unemployment largely focus on rates of unemployment across age, race, gender, sectors of the economy, skills categories, relationships between economic growth rates and unemployment, relationships between micro and macroeconomic tools and unemployment, the structure of the economy and unemployment, and relationship between unemployment and poverty (living standards).

Unemployment rates among Africans are much higher than those of whites, coloureds, and Asians. Unemployment by gender varies between rural and urban location (Altman, 2003:161–162; Nattrass, 2003). African women experience much higher rates of unemployment and discouragement than other race groups (Altman, 2003: 161-162). When employed, women are most likely to trail men in terms of remuneration and to undertake unpaid labour. The impact of unemployment is also unequal for individuals with different skill levels. Unemployment impacts greatly on unskilled and semi-skilled African job seekers (Altman, 2003:168).

Young people join the ranks of the unemployed at a faster rate than all other groups. Informality rates are also higher among youth than any other age group. This reflects the well-established vulnerability of youth in the labour market - namely that they are more affected by unemployment than other age groups and when employed, they are low paid (Bhorat, Lilenstein, Oosthuizen & Thornton, 2016)

Economic perspectives are limited mainly because they tend to treat unemployment as a statistical exercise. The important but overwhelming focus on numbers and statistical trends of the unemployed usually tend to ignore the lived experiences of ordinary people impacted by unemployment in their everyday lives. Economics therefore generally has very little to say about the everyday lives and experiences of unemployment (Burnett, 1994).

The experience of unemployment, however, has been the focus of a wide canon of literature in Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology. These analyses are often interdisciplinary and thus characterized by overlaps. Work done on unemployment

from the economic perspective usually addresses unemployment as a subtheme of topics such as industrial transformation, the changing nature of work and the displacement of workers and urban poverty (Jancius, 2006). A key problem with most of this scholarship is the limited established body of social science theory on unemployment. As a result, studies about unemployment are often forced into other areas and become highly descriptive and normative (Howe, 1990).

A notable characteristic of the literature on the experience of unemployment is a focus on the ways in which it animates new forms of social relations and cultural frameworks. These new forms of social analysis are often preoccupied with how the unemployed cope with and manage unemployment. My thesis is not focused on identifying social and cultural strategies used by social actors to manage or cope with unemployment such as shown in Timepass (Jeffrey, 2010). I am interested in understanding how black unemployed ex-mineworkers think about being wage less in a context that volarizes wage work.

Anthropology

Anthropological studies of unemployment have focused on the symbolic value of wage work in capitalist societies, in particular its moral value (Howe, 1990). Howe studies moral discourses surrounding social welfare for the unemployed. There is a wide canon of literature on the unemployed (especially in Europe) focused on the effectiveness of social welfare policies (Booth & Scherschel, 2010; Jahoda et al., 1971; Toge, 2016).

Howe's (1990) ethnography of unemployment in Northern Ireland situates his examination of experiences of unemployment within specific social relations between the employed and their unemployed neighbours. Social relations between the employed and the unemployed are fragmented not because of the economic impoverishment or the 'crisis of social reproduction' (Fakier and Cock, 2009) of the unemployed, but because of the meanings associated with wage work in a context in which wage work is a "morally praiseworthy activity" (Howe,1990:17). According to Howe, the moral discourse framed two social categories of unemployment. Firstly, the "deserving unemployed" who are a social group whose unemployment is seen as not being their own fault. This group 'not their fault' places high value on employment and are very keen to find employment. They are willing to accept any reasonable offer of a job, and thus are seen as truly eligible for the state's social welfare support. They share the same moral community as the employed because of the high value they place on wage work, independence, individual responsibility, and family.

Secondly, the "undeserving" are a socially stigmatized group that often suffer shame and guilt. Shame and guilt are understood as a chronic form of self-blame and other characteristics closely associated with depression and narcissistic rage. Shame and guilt make it difficult to connect with others and often makes men to want to limit social interaction and minimize being seen. The desire to be invisible is linked to the experience of shame and guilt associated with unemployment (Cottle, 2001).

The "undeserving" are seen as idle and work-shy. They do not bother to look for work and are consistently looking for ways to access welfare benefits through manipulation. They are seen as people outside the "moral community" of the employed, who are

perceived to lack a healthy sense of independence, individual responsibility, and family values. They seem content to live on welfare benefits, are idle and neglect their families. This moral discourse implies moral contempt towards the unemployed and the poor. However, it is not clear what conception of morality is operative in Howe's understanding of the concept.

Growing contempt towards the unemployed and the poor was also highlighted by Murray's (1990) conception of the emergence of a British underclass. The British underclass, according to Murray is a social segment often comprised of youth. They generate public anxiety because of their dependency and culture of idleness, and livelihoods sustained by state welfare benefits. This underclass often consists of poorly qualified school dropouts who hoped to get manual labour. Unfortunately, most coincided with Britain's economic decline and industrial restructuring in the 1990s. These young people moved between various forms of highly precarious employment opportunities. Many were viewed as undeserving of state support. They were also condescendingly referred to as "status zero" young people (Williamson, 1995).

Hall (2006) examines the experiences of homeless and socially excluded youth. He argues that young people can draw on the "liminality of youth" to construct ways of managing and responding to unemployment. He draws from Bucholtz's (2002) concept of youth as a "constitutively temporary interstitial phase." In other words, "youth" is both an identity and a trajectory. As a liminal phase, "youth" allows young people to deflect social obligations and expectations often achieved in adulthood. This space allows youth to suspend the seriousness of finding employment and ignores to some extent accusations of irresponsibility and "undeservingness".

This is a different approach to the prolonging of youthhood, which is seen as undesirable in other accounts of the sociology of youth. Dawson (2014), for example, views the problem of youth unemployment as a problem of waiting and envy. “Envy” arises from perceptions and deep-seated convictions emerging from “differential access to state resources”. “Waiting” on the other hand captures the lived experiences of “prolonged youthhood” for many young people who are living with their parents and vacillating in and out of precarious employment. In this reality of waiting, youths cannot transition into adulthood, which implies delayed economic independence, sometimes marriage and the establishment of a homestead. For Hall (2006) being “youth” is a strategy for managing unemployment and not necessarily a phase which people would want urgently to leave behind.

In “Killing Time”, Ralph (2008) examines how unemployed young men in Senegal have formed new social relations for coping and managing unemployment. Their coping strategies are mainly organized around tea drinking rituals. Frequent tea drinking snips away bits of time in anticipation of a meaningful social event. Young unemployed men are the subject of public scorn, often labelled as “lazy tea drinking youth”. They sit around all day drinking tea and talking politics, soothing their troubles while waiting for politicians to create employment opportunities.

One of the most popular accounts of unemployment is Jeffrey’s (2010:471) “Timepass: youth, class, and time among unemployed young men in India.” “Timepass” examines the experiences and strategies of young, educated men in India. They experienced “timepass” as “passing surplus time” and as a social condition of “detachment from their studies”, “boredom” and a sense of “being left behind”. The article describes the

ways in which young educated unemployed men used their abundant time to build new social relations that maintained positive social identities. For such young men, unemployment was not just a form of "social suffering" (Jeffrey, 2010:473) but was also about "promoting somewhat inclusive cultures of solidarity that transgressed class and caste boundaries" (Jeffrey, 2010:477).

In essence, Jeffrey's article is about how people manage unemployment in contexts that place significant moral value on wage work. In contrast to "Timepass", my work is not about how people manage unemployment. Instead, it focuses on understanding how people think about what wage work has meant to them. My study is not an attempt to demonstrate the formation of new social relations of coping based on exclusion from the labour market. My study is about what happens when social formations disintegrate, and people remain attached to something (wage work) that is no longer present.

There are two critical differences between the population in "Timepass" (and the wider canon of literature on unemployment) and the population of ex-mining men in Welkom who are the core of my study. Firstly, "Timepass" focuses on youth while I focus on older men laid off from wage work on the gold mines. This may have something to do with the following two observations I make. The population in "Timepass" are people who have never been employed. "Timepass" youth therefore have no experience of loss in unemployment. Their social struggle is not about the loss of an "object of desire" (wage work) (Berlant, 2011), it is more about the inability to realize their own individual and collective future aspirations. It is about incapacity to fulfil the socially valued obligations and expectations (marriage, upward mobility etc.) often attained through participation in employment for most of the working and middle class. Secondly, they differ in terms of time experience. The population of "Timepass" have

never experienced industrialized or “commodified” time. They are people with limited experience of waged time structure. For them, time is something to “kill”, to “pass”. Ex-mineworkers who were the archetype of South Africa’s early industrialization, are constantly reminded by public clocks in Welkom that time is something that has lost an identifiable and predictable structure and meaning. Surplus time has not only become an opportunity for building positive social identities, instead it has become a “tragic gift” (Jahoda et al., 1982).

O’Brien (2006) highlights unemployment and the vulnerability of social reproduction. He focuses on uneven capitalist development in a de-industrialized community in England. East Kensington destroyed unemployed people’s networks of social reproduction through neighbourhood imperialism driven by finance capitalists and gentrifiers. Through the notion of neighbourhood capitalism, he shows how capitalists extract profits from a combination of land speculation and accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005) while at the same time disrupting social networks that enable people to construct their own economic, social, and political citizenship.

Drawing from feminist theories of the family Rudd (2006) examines coping strategies of households faced with female unemployment in post-socialist Germany. In socialist East Germany, official unemployment was non-existent. The socialist government had a constitutionally enshrined legal obligation to provide employment. This placed an equal obligation on both the state and job seekers to ensure that they were employed and not idle.

Less than a year after the collapse of socialism in the late 1980s, capitalist Germany absorbed East Germany and unemployment rose to 9.5%. By 1994, unemployment was

15.7%. Women made up 65.7% of the unemployed. Women's economic independence was a central feature of socialist regimes. Women's employment was part of the paternalistic system in which all citizens were legally obliged to be employed. Alongside legal provisions, the socialist state implemented various policies such as socialized day care centres for children and up to one year of fully paid leave. The collapse of socialism implied significant transformations in systems of social power, particularly in relation to changing gender relations in the post-socialist context.

Women's unemployment necessitated the renegotiation of meanings of work, domesticity, and gender within marriages. Wives' unemployment meant that the husband became the family breadwinner. Rudd's research (2006) shows how the now dominant and widely accepted norm of the male breadwinner is not a natural but rather a traditionalist and conservative gender politics, based on capitalist patriarchal hierarchy.

Sociology

Like economics, classical sociology was primarily focused on explaining the various causes of unemployment. Notable work in this vein is Karl Marx's thesis of the reserve army of labour (invariably called the Lumpen proletariat) who are the inevitable outcasts of the dynamics of competitive capitalism (Jonna, 2013). In Marx's analysis, the experiences of the proletariat rather than the experiences of the lumpen proletariat take centre stage.

Several studies on unemployment done by sociologists have been influenced by the deprivation theory, which places a significant emphasise on how the lack of employment leads to social ills like poverty, resource deprivation and crime.

Boland & Griffin (2015), in 'the Sociology of unemployment' represents one of the few attempts to develop a different approach by focusing on how governmental power shapes the experience of unemployment. The governance of unemployment, for instance the form of a welfare state, social policies, and processes forms how people experience unemployment, not just the lack of a job.

Ezzy (2001) argues that unemployment can be seen as a naturally occurring "breach" in Garfinkel's (1967, cited in Ezzy, 2001:2) sense, providing an important and otherwise rare perspective on the meaning of work. Responses to unemployment "expose the meaning of work in a new light because being without work makes the person more aware of the significance of his/her loss" (Ezzy, 2001:2). Ezzy however does not classify or characterize precisely what it is that has been lost. In other words, what is the nature and character of this loss? What kind of loss does unemployment represent?

Drawing from narrative theory, Ezzy argues that the meanings of both employment and job loss is an individual product shaped by the individual's own self-identity or self-understanding. In a chapter titled *"*Unemployment and the meaning of working" he states that "responses to unemployment can only be adequately understood through a sophisticated understanding of the meaning of working" (Ezzy, 2001:123). The meaning of working is socially constructed around the cultural expectations that a

“person should work in order to be an adult member of society and the variations in this expectation for men and women” (ibid).

He develops a typology of three responses to unemployment. The responses are shaped by individual narratives and meanings around employment. Firstly, “romances” where job loss is portrayed as a “moment of liberation from an oppressive occupation” and as presenting a valuable opportunity. There are two subtypes. “Strong romance” refers to a long-term plan that involves the development of an alternative career path. “Weak romance” involves the portrayal of unemployment as a break or a holiday. Individuals in this category do not have long-term plans and can become disillusioned and tragic.

Secondly, “tragic” narratives have two key phases, “separation” and “liminality”. “Separation” involves an individual’s loss of social relations and a life plan. Life plans involve the achievement of goals often dependent on having a secure, well-paying, and enjoyable job. Unemployment renders the narrative’s life plan implausible (Ezzy, 2001:4). Depression and anxiety thus arise from separation between an ídeal life plan and “what people fear might happen as a consequence of their job loss” (p. 4). There are four subtypes of tragic job loss narratives: traumatic tragedies, moderated tragedies, ironic tragedies, and sustained tragedies.

Thirdly, more complex experiences or “liminal” unemployment in which individuals are in a liminal space in which they feel excluded from employment and society more generally. Ezzy identifies three responses to liminal unemployment: job searches, participation in social activities that give some structure to the day and periods of resignation and depression.

Ezzy (2001) examines the interrelationship between narrative identities and cultural discourses or sedimented traditions. For him, the meaning of working and of unemployment is a product of individuals' narrative interpretation of their own lives as a whole. Ezzy's approach focuses much attention on the individual and seems to suggest that the meaning of working is to a significantly large extent left to the individual to decide. Such an approach privileges individuals without duly recognizing the real coercive power that social structures have on individuals. In other words, decisions that may at first glance appear only as individual decisions can on a deeper analysis be shown to be social in nature and arise outside the cognitive or emotional inclinations of the individual person.

In the South African context, the sociology of unemployment has traditionally focused on the experiences of men. Indeed, the conceptualization of the worker is centred on the male migrant figure who leaves the countryside to work on the mines and factories. Gender and masculinity are viewed as a mediator of experiences of unemployment (Brah, 1986:67). Mkhize and Wilson (2006) found that parental depression and the disruption of families often arise from unemployment, and this tends to affect men more. This also affects issues related to fatherhood.

For Mark Hunter (2012), the problem of youth unemployment leads to the phenomenon of "failing men". The failure of young men to become *abanumzana* (heads of household) because of high unemployment means that very few can build up capital to maintain an independent livelihood. With limited prospects of stable work, young men's ability to graduate into "real men" who marry and can make demands on women

and other junior men is severely compromised. To marry often entails paying *ilobolo* (bride wealth), but high unemployment often means that young men are simply unable to pay it. “Marriage wins respect: a man who is married cannot be told what to do,” failure to marry also means failure to mature into manhood (Hunter, 2012) and consequently failure to earn and demand respect. Central to the affirmation of “social ties” discussed by White (2012) is the process of marriage. The failure to pay *ilobolo* usually means that a man cannot visit his wife’s rural-based family and respect is much harder to come by (Hunter, 2012).

According to Mosoetsa (2011:2), men’s exclusion from wage work (as opposed to female unemployment) often leads to feelings of humiliation and tensions sometimes expressed through domestic violence and alcohol abuse. These tensions flare up in the context of the household, which becomes the main site of social interaction in the presence of, especially male unemployment. For Mosoetsa, a key problem that unemployment creates is poverty and resource deprivation, which often implies men’s inability to meet their obligations, and to fulfil expectations of fatherhood and provision, often leading to aggression and violence towards women in the household. Child grants, dispensed by the state through women, often become sites of gender contestation. Old-age pensions often provided through grandmothers become central in holding households from total collapse. Unemployment she argues also places stress on social formations such as stokvels and savings clubs which undertake burial and other activities when families face difficult times.

Literature often points out that when a man is out of work, the household becomes the main source of social interaction and often the setting in which the tensions of being

unemployed are experienced and responded to. Mkhize (2006) identifies these feelings of humiliation among men resulting from their inability to perform their masculine role. This becomes so bad that some men stop attending family or community gatherings because the question of "What kind of work do you do?" often arises.

In the broader sociological debate, while feminists have challenged the idea that men alone are the sole breadwinners by highlighting the fact that women's employment and wages are also crucial to household income, the ideology of "men as breadwinner" persists (Martin & Roberts, 1984, in Allen, Watson, Purcell & Wood (eds), 1986:70).

Despite high rates of unemployment in Kidderminster's small industrial town in the West Midlands in the United Kingdom (UK), conceptions of male identity as economic provider were defended by both men and women. However, the defence of male economic provider identity in the face of massive structural changes unleashed considerable consequences. Married couples often had conflict over the "origin, ownership, usage and control of money" (Martin & Roberts, 1984, in Allen, Watson, Purcell & Wood (eds), 1986:142). In households where only the women were employed, she carried the responsibility to provide for household needs on little income. In some households, women returned home to undertake chores such as caring for the young and preparing meals for the family. Women often carry a heavier burden of social reproduction (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006; Peck, 1996) than most men. This is also known as the second shift (Hochschild, 1989) which names a situation where women would still cook and clean after having fulfilled their first shift at work.

McKee and Bell (1984, in Allen, Watson, Purcell & Wood (eds), 1986:136) shift focus away from individuals to gender relations in the household. They focus on the impact

that unemployment has on the family rather than on unemployed individuals themselves and how using the household as a unit of analysis can obscure unemployed individuals' extent of suffering and inequality. Instead of creating a situation of shared problems and strategies, male unemployment can have a greater polarizing impact on gender relations than labour market activities. In other words, Mckee and Bell (1984) believed that employment still allows men to share problems and strategies with their spouse about their workplace which may promote better gender relations than does unemployment. As such, wage work provides a basis for discussion within the household, whereby people would share over dinner their workplace related concerns which tend to promote better gender relations.

Rudd's (2006) work on East Germany, shows that the relationship between men/masculinity and wage work is arbitrary and only an outcome of a very particular historical developmental process under capitalism.

Psychology

Psychological literature regards unemployment as a phenomenon having negative consequences for mental health. A dominant approach in psychological studies of the stage theory of unemployment is that the attitudes of the unemployed transition through various stages ultimately culminating in apathy and despair (Jahoda et al., 1982), or "resignation and adjustment" (Fagin & Little, 1984). Parkes (1971, cited in Hayes & Nutman, 1981:9) coined the term psychosocial transitions to describe major changes in life spaces, the effects of which are lasting. They take place in relatively short spaces

of time and have implications for large areas of the assumptive world. Life spaces refer to "that part of the world with which the self-interacts and in relation to which a person acts." The assumptive world "consists of the totality of perceptions and conceptions that an individual holds about the world" (Parkes, 1971, cited in Hayes & Nutman, 1981:9).

Hayes & Nutman (1981) consider the psychological impact of unemployment on the individual and the numerous ways in which the individual reacts to and copes with unemployment. They developed psychological models to help understand the unemployed and also focus on solutions/ strategies to help the unemployed through: (i) changing the individual by improving their chances of re-employment or (ii) changing the employment organization to make it easier for the unemployed to be reabsorbed into the labour market.

Perucci and Gerstl (1969) focus on factors that can mitigate the impact of unemployment. For example, technical professions where industries do not involve career-long affiliation but consist of mobility between organizations can rationalize the absence of employment as a normal career break and thereby sustain their self-image. In professions such as engineering, this could be aided by the relatively high probability of finding employment. However, in recent years, things have taken a turn for the worse.

Jahoda et al.'s (1982) influential study operates on the assumption that wage work is important to human life. From this perspective, wage work is fundamental to identity, status, structure of time and the sense of achievement and satisfaction, so that in

unemployment people usually become demoralized and purposeless. The study does not identify poverty as the main problem of unemployment since poverty is not exclusive to unemployment. They state that "rejecting the idea that unemployment is a matter of material hardship only is, of course, not equivalent to denying that material hardship is involved; a further deterioration of the standard of living of the employed can only add to the burden they already carry (Jahoda et al., 1982:85). For example, the "working poor" are employed but they are precariously employed and are therefore materially deprived people. The problem with unemployment therefore is the lack of legitimate means through which resources are secured by the employed.

Cole's (2007) critical review of Jahoda et al. takes aim at this assumption. Jahoda et al.'s research had profound influence on research on unemployment in the social sciences. He argues that Jahoda et al.'s (1982) study was predicated on a set of beliefs about gendered relationships between human nature and wage work. A consequence of this approach was the production of a moral discourse of human nature as essentially a wage-working/labouring nature. This moral discourse, he argues, reproduces essentialist beliefs as to what human beings, and therefore, human societies are for. He argues that the study is based on the "belief that paid work is in some way central to human, especially adult male, experience, and that its lack in the form of unemployment is necessarily and intrinsically problematic" (Cole, 2007:135). The suffering endured by the unemployed in Marienthal is taken as evidence that the opposite of unemployment, i.e wage work – is the solution for the suffering.

There are five "enduring human needs" which are provided by wage work, namely: wage work as shared experience, wage work as time structure, wage work as collective

purpose, wage work as status and identity and wage work as a required regular activity. Cole (2007:1146) argues Jahoda et al.'s (1982) beliefs that have been pervasive in the social sciences can be summed as follows, "people ought to work, because, firstly, they suffer (not economically, but in terms of identity, status and so on) if they are denied the opportunity to do so, and secondly, they say that they want to."

My thesis is not based on the assumption that there is a moral discourse based on an inherent relationship between wage work and human nature. Instead, it is based on the assumption that historical processes in the development of capitalist accumulation have actively produced a moral discourse which has constructed and organized human values (for example dignity, identity, meaning, etc). In other words, wage work itself has gained a taken-for-granted moral character in modern society. This moral discourse of wage work has become an anchor of human values. This conception is different to Jahoda et al.'s (1982) assumption that there is an inherent relationship between wage work and human nature. Instead, by being cognizant of the development of industrialization and capitalism in South Africa, I attempt to illustrate the understanding that the relationship between wage work and human beings is the outcome of very specific historical processes that have constructed wage work as a central social category in modern industrial society and not something inherent to human nature.

EMILE DURKHEIM AND THE CONCEPT OF ANOMIE

Using Emile Durkheim's (1933) concept of anomie, my thesis focuses on the implications of social and economic transformations accompanying the process of de-industrialization and job loss. Anomie provides a lens to understand the experience of loss at the collective level of disrupted shared moral values. The concept can give an account of what happens when people experience abrupt ejection from a set of shared moral values in society.

I argue that the reason why the experience of unemployment associated with wide-scale retrenchment have such a profoundly deleterious effect on its victims is not just due to the especially obvious material deprivation into which people are cast. Unemployment draws its debilitating power from the fact that it resembles a type of disruption of the moral character, of the collective *conscience*[9] of our society without providing an alternative. This phenomenon, I suggest, situates the unemployed in a moral haze or vacuum. Durkheim (1952:252) uses the term "declassification" to describe a similar phenomenon. However, to allow the concept to do the kind of work in which I am interested, I do somewhat rework and depart from the original meaning.

[9] Durkheim frequently refers to the "*conscience collective*" of a society. Without some unpacking, this French term is untranslatable into English. In English, "consciousness" is a morally neutral term referring to a mental state, whereas "conscience" refers to moral awareness along with a sense of obligation to do what is right or good. In French the word "'*conscience'*" refers to what in English would be understood to be "consciousness" as well as "conscience". For Durkheim, who wrote in French, the term "*conscience"* thus implies the inherently moral aspect of any notion of "consciousness". "*Conscience collective"*, which constitutes the fundamental ground for the "social facts" that constitute social order for Durkheim is thus necessarily moral.

Below, I provide a summary of the division of labour especially in relation to its moral role in society, the types of the division of labour and the anomic forms of the division of labour. I briefly focus on Durkheim's concept of social facts before I turn to his understanding of suicide and in particular the concept of anomie through his study of anomic suicide. I then consider several texts highlighting the ways in which anomie has been used in contemporary scholarship.

I introduce a reading of Durkheim's concept of anomie as described both in *the division of labour in society* and in *Suicide* as essentially a concept that describes a social condition of moral confusion and loss. Although, the experience of loss is observed immediately in the experience of the individual, I proceed with the understanding that what is observed is not merely an expression of individual temperaments but rather a social condition outwardly expressed (Durkheim, 1952: 299).

The body is conceptualized as a site of moral loss expressed through personalized experiences of bodily dismemberment and physical sickness interpreted in moral terms. I refer here not to individual morality, although the expressions are personalized, but to morality as constituting a social structure. In other words, expressions of unemployment as experienced through bodily dismemberment and physical sickness are not merely characterizing mental states of the unemployed but fundamentally reveal a social condition of anomie produced by unemployment and linked to certain qualities of wage work centred society. Finally, I turn to Guy Standing's (2009) *Work after globalization: building occupational citizenship* as a way of speculating about what a strategy for overcoming anomie and reintegrating the unemployed back into society could possibly look like in the contemporary world.

The division of labour in society

The division of labour is of ancient origin, but it was only at the end of the 18th century that significant attention was given to the principle. Among a host of thinkers from earlier times, Adam Smith was the first to present an attempt to develop a theory of the division of labour. The ubiquity of the division of labour in the contemporary period has led to its recognition as an obvious characteristic tendency of modern industrial capitalism: "It advances steadily towards powerful machines, towards greater concentration of forces and capital, and consequently to the extreme division of labour" (Durkheim, 1952:39). Occupations are minutely separated and specialized not just on the factory floor but also each product (as a commodity) is itself a specialization.

The division of labour is no longer considered a general process emanating from the intelligence of man but a social institution, a law governing the whole industrial world. This general movement which is now a fact "cannot be produced without profoundly affecting our moral constitution" (Durkheim, 1952: 41). The question is not whether the division of labour exists in society, in fact it has become an important basis of the "social order" (Durkheim, 1952: 41). The fundamental question is about its nature as a moral rule: "[I]s the division of labour, at the same time that it is a law of nature, also a moral rule of conduct; and, if it has this latter character, why and in what degree?" (Durkheim, 1952:41).

Durkheim notes two radically opposed approaches to the nature of the division of labour. Firstly, opinion in favour of making the division of labour an important "rule of conduct", a type of "duty". Those who do not embrace it are punished, not by a penalty

fixed by law but through subjection to blame. Secondly, an expressed uneasiness and hesitation at the possibility that man could specialize too much. As Jean-Baptiste Say pointed out "that we have come to a state where we never do anything more than make the eighteenth part of a pin" (Durkheim, 1952: 43).

The focus of the economist's analysis of the division of labour is about its link to efficiency and productivity which are vital to the progress of nations: "[T]he economists examining its causes and appreciating its results, far from condemning or opposing it, uphold it as necessary. They see in it the supreme law of human societies and the condition of their progress" (Durkheim, 1952: 39), in other words "it is a source of civilization" (Durkheim, 1952: 50).

Unlike the economist, the sociologist has a different interest in the principle of the division of labour. The challenge is to find a solution to the question as to the function of the division of labour. "To ask what the function of the division of labour is, is to seek for the need which it supplies" and to establish whether the need it supplies is "of the same sort as those to which other rules of conduct respond whose moral character is agreed upon" (Durkheim, 1952: 49). In other words, Durkheim's primary concern in his seminal text, *the division of labour in society*, is to show as to "what extent the division of labour is linked with our whole moral life" (Durkheim, 1952: 405).

There is no proof that industrialization is a moral condition but what is clear is that with it comes an increase in the number of suicides and of all kinds of crimes. This does not necessarily mean that industrialization is immoral, but it does show that "if it has a positive and favourable influence on the moral life, it is quite weak" (Durkheim, 1952:

51). Industrial centres are localities in which crimes and suicide are most common. Industrialization does not present any outward indicators by which moral facts are recognized. This does not mean that industrial activities have no function for which they exist and needs which they supply, it simply means that they respond to needs which are not moral. Industrialization is thus morally indifferent, it belongs to the zone of moral neutrality and is thus not morally binding (Durkheim, 1952:53).

Durkheim identified two types of the division of labour along with their corresponding moral rules and their principal types. Firstly, "mechanical solidarity" comes from social conditions of solidarity based on resemblance. It calls forth repressive sanctions. Secondly, "organic solidarity" is based on greater specialization of functions and evokes restitutive sanctions. Both types of social order are necessary for societal cohesion at different periods in social evolution. Although different in that the first is based on sameness and the latter on specialization, they nevertheless respond to the same social need for collective solidarity but differently because the conditions of existence in societies are themselves different. The two types of social order are antagonistic, not because they serve different needs but since they serve the same needs through opposite means (Durkheim, 1952: 397–398).

Like other social facts, the division of labour characteristic of organic solidarity can also be found in a sickly state and present pathological forms. Durkheim called these forms "anomic" and "forced" divisions of labour. The first abnormal form of the division of labour is given us by industrial or commercial crises which provoke temporary breaks in organic solidarity (Durkheim, 1952: 354). Crises of this nature appear more frequently with increasing differentiation of the division of labour.

Moreover, with greater specialization, revolts are more frequent, that is, conflicts between capital and labour increase. Large-scale industry leads to increased separation of the worker and employer, leading the worker to revolt or to become "somewhat regimented" by forced division of labour (Durkheim, 1952: 354–355).

However, here Durkheim suggests that the concern of the sociologist should transcend preoccupation with the economic aspects of the situation, and rather focus on social aspects which are observed alongside the economic such as impact on the moral order of society. Through his focus on morality, we can deduce that while the economist will focus on the loss suffered in economic terms, there is another type of loss that individuals suffer because of an abrupt economic crisis. This loss assumes a moral character.

What is morality? Morality constitutes the fundamental basis for collective solidarity. It is as moral forces that "social facts" impose order on social life. Morality consists of "all the rules of action which are imperatively imposed upon conduct, to which a sanction is attached" (Durkheim, 1952: 53). The characteristic element of moral rules is that they articulate the essential conditions of social solidarity. Morality constitutes the basis for social structure that prescribes certain limitations on individual freedom. The role of morality, of collective representations, is to constrain and regulate the conduct of human beings. Morality consists in a "state of dependence" (Durkheim, 1952: 398). Rather than serving to emancipate the individual or removing him/her from his/her environment, its function is to promote his/her integration into social order. Morality binds man/woman to society. This social structure itself consists of the "*conscience collective"* (ideas and sentiments that are our object of attachment).

Morality makes responsible freedom possible by confining individual action within shared collective norms.

As a social structure, morality is not an individual phenomenon; “Morality, in all its forms, is never met with except in society” (Durkheim, 1952: 398). “Individual morality” is thus a derivative. The duties (whatever form they take – commitment to scholarship, one’s wage work, being a loving father/mother or husband or wife etc.) to which an individual commits are manifestations of social facts.

The feelings, emotions, thoughts, and actions pertaining to social facts such as solidarity, wage work or unemployment, are not manifestations of individual autonomy but social phenomena. Society acts on and through us. Social facts are immaterial, intangible phenomena which make their presence known through various sensible indices (Durkheim, 1952: 64). Intangible, social facts are only knowable “by the effects that they produce” (Durkheim, 1952: 66) in the individual that cannot be detached from his/her social context. As a result, certain “social consequences must be translated it overtly” (Durkheim, 1952:67). Sociology is the study of social facts which we can only know “through intermediary of effects.” Thus, solidarity, wage work or unemployment are all social, but they manifest themselves in individual consciousness.

Objections have been raised as to the nature of morality and its relation to the individual personality. The concern is whether morality diminishes individual personality? Do the constraints set forth by morality destroy individual personality? On the contrary, however, at least in societies characterized by organic solidarity, while a person acquires his/her quality from interpersonal interactions which are his/hers alone, such

individualization nonetheless expresses special features prescribed by the *conscience collective*.

An incontestable rule of conduct, and indeed of individual consciousness per se, is that we recognize in ourselves fundamental constraints of the collective/common consciousness. In the instance of mechanical solidarity, one's principal duty is to conform and not have individual and personal beliefs and conduct. In organic solidarity, while resemblance is not essential, complete absence of generalized commonality would be considered a moral failure. For example, the criminal is the object of reprobation, because he is unlike us. Even acts that are not criminal but immoral evoke reprobation or sanction.

Law and morality integrate the individual into society by setting definite constraints on ideas, actions, and conducts. Immorality is not always criminal but both the immoral and the criminal share the fact of contradicting the "essential traits of the collective type." Collective consciousness (*conscience*) consists in the "ideas and sentiments to which we are most attached" (Durkheim, 1952: 396).

Wage work is an idea and sentiment to which the majority in society are attached. It has become a "permanent occupation, a habit, and indeed, if this habit is sufficiently strengthened, a need" (Durkheim, 1952: 394). This is not to suggest that Durkheim is an essentialist of wage work, that is, one who views wage work as an inherent part of human nature itself. Wage work is a form of collective consciousness that is sui generis to industrial capitalism.

What the criminal, the unemployed and the immoral have in common is their agitation of the common collective conscious. In the case of wage work, the traits which make up the model of our collective consciousness (i.e the ideas and sentiments relating to wage work to which we are attached) is to be found both within us and around us. Every person in societies characterized by organic solidarity represents this model in their own image. Even those who believe they can, through thought, overcome the influence of social ideas and sentiments cannot do so, because they are impregnated with them, and no matter what they do, they encounter these precepts in their actions and observations (Durkheim, 1952: 397).

The role of social rules is to prevent all types of agitation of the collective conscious, of social solidarity. Such agitation thus, transforms deviants into "objects of reprobation". The accomplishment of its role is due to its moral character. If offences and agitations to collective consciousness are not sanctioned, society will inevitably disintegrate. This is why we combat them through reactions which are moral in character.

What is the relationship between the division of labour and morality?

Durkheim argues that the "division of labour presents the character by which we have defined morality" (Durkheim, 1952: 400). Increasingly, the division of labour of either type tends to become the indispensable condition of social solidarity (Durkheim, 1952: 400). Through the division of labour, the individual recognizes dependence on society, "from it comes[sic] the forces which keep him in check and restrain him" (Durkheim, 1952: 401). As the main source of social solidarity, the division of labour also

simultaneously becomes the basis of the moral order (Durkheim, 1952: 401). “We ought so to work as to realize in ourselves the collective type as it exists. There are common sentiments, common ideas, without which, as it has been said, one is not a man” (Durkheim, 1952: 401).

Social facts as things

Throughout *The division of labour in society* and *Suicide*, Durkheim provides an understanding of what a social fact is. The two texts themselves are about social facts. However, he does not provide an explicit or precise definition of what they are except through illustration. He left definitions to his text *The rules of the sociological method* (Durkheim, 1964). One of the key projects that Durkheim set himself was to set sociology distinct as an independent science apart from psychology, biology or even philosophy, “[sociology] is entirely independent of philosophy. Because sociology had its birth in the great philosophical doctrines, it has retained the habit of relying on some philosophical system and thus has been continuously overburdened with it” (Durkheim, 1964: 141).

For Durkheim, sociology must confine itself to the study of social facts as things having their own independent existence located outside of the individual’s biological or psychological characteristics. Social facts have very distinctive characteristics, “[they consist] of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him” (Durkheim, 1964: 3). More precisely, “a social fact is to be recognized by the power of external coercion

which it exercises or is capable of exercising over individuals … either by the existence of some specific sanction or by the resistance offered against every individual effort that tends to violate it" (Durkheim, 1964: 10). Social facts are not biological features, because they consist of representations and actions nor are they psychological phenomena which exist purely in individual consciousness. Social facts constitute a variety of moral phenomena to which the term "social must be exclusively applied" (Durkheim, 1964; 3). Social facts belong only to society generally or to social groups, such as religious institutions, political groups or occupational groups and associations. There are several key characteristics of social facts contained in the definitions above which I shall attempt to delineate pithily.

Extreme enthusiasts of "absolute individualism" or the "total autonomy of the individual" will be shocked to realize that our thoughts, feelings, and actions are not completely self-determined but come from without. How can social facts become a part of us if not by imposing themselves upon us? Their constraining force may not be felt or recognized as such because they are not necessarily contrary to individual personality which is itself a partially social product. They exist in social organization such as law, moral regulation, language, religious faith, the financial system, et cetera.

Social representations may also exist as "social currents" (Durkheim, 1964: 4), that is, outside social organizations or in any crystallized form but will still have the same objectivity and constraint over the individual. For example, when in a crowd at a packed stadium of people, great emotions of excitement are generated after a spectacular performance or goal scored, they do not come from any one individual consciousness, but they come to us from without and carry us into the general movement of the crowd

in spite of ourselves. If I comply with the great emotions of excitement originating from the crowd, I will not feel the constraint which is exercised upon me. Yet, as soon as I attempt to resist and oppose the collective manifestation, the emotion I deny will turn against me. We live under the great illusion of being in possession of something that really came to us forcefully from without. If we were alone, the impression and experience would have been remarkably different. When at the stadium, we contributed to the emotions but when alone the emotions which pass through our minds appear strange and we recognize that they are not ours. The emotions were forced upon us to a larger extent then they are created by us. This applies to permanent currents of opinion in wage work, unemployment, religious, political, and aesthetic issues that are continuously around us in our circles or in society (Durkheim, 1964: 5).

Social facts have an objective existence outside the individual. A child is born into the world not knowing any of its society's codes of conduct or moral behaviour. He/she is born a child and acquires knowledge through taking the attitudes of others to him or herself. By "society", Durkheim did not only have in mind "some specific social group" or "a material entity" but "something deeply inner", intangible, "a composition of ideas, beliefs and sentiments of all sorts which realize themselves through individuals" a "source of morality, personality, and life itself at the human level" (Bellah, 1973: ix).

Through social interaction the child is continuously impressed with ways of "seeing, feeling, and acting" which he/she would not have developed spontaneously (Durkheim, 1964: 6). From birth, the child is morally constrained to intervals of eating, drinking, sleeping, cleanliness, obedience and later consideration for others, respect, customs, and the need perhaps for wage work. Gradually habits and internal tendencies are

internalized and cease to be recognized as constraints, but such constraints remain the source from which the habits and internal tendencies spring (Durkheim, 1964:6). Contrary to Spencer's notion that rational education must provide the individual with complete liberty, it acts only as an intermediary and representative of the "historical fashion in which the social being has been constituted" (Durkheim, 1964: 6). Thus, moral constraints within the education system are also those of the social milieu (institutions, social groups etc.) which mould the individual after its very own image. Social facts impose sanctions upon those who contradict them; "One's failure to submit to the conventions of society, if in my dress I do not conform to the customs observed in my country and in my class, the ridicule I provoke, the social isolation in which I am kept, produce, although in an attenuated form, the same effects as a punishment in the strict sense of the word" (Durkheim, 1964: 2–3).

It is the collective elements of "beliefs, tendencies and practices" that constitute truly social phenomena (Durkheim, 1964: 7). The distinction between social facts and their individual manifestations must be clarified (Durkheim, 1964: 7). For example, social currents in a given society may constrain specific social groups to marriage, suicide and birth rates. Such social currents are social facts. Statistics provide a way of separating social facts from their individual manifestations.

Social facts are general because they are collective. An objection can be made that a phenomenon is collective only when it is common to all or most members in a society or group – that is, if it is really general (Durkheim, 1964: 9). But it is general because it is collective, and not collective because it is general. It is an objective condition of the group repeated in the individual and not an individual condition repeated in the

group. In other words, “it is to be found in each part because it exists in the whole, rather than in the whole because it exists in the parts” (Durkheim, 1964: 9). The whole creates an entirely new objective reality which does not originate or belong to any single individual. The burst of excitement or pity of a group does not express the individual sentiments held in common. It originates from the group itself, “a product of the actions and reactions which take place between individual consciousness; and if each individual consciousness echoes the collective sentiment, it is by virtue of the special energy resident in its collective origin (Durkheim, 1964: 9). A social fact is independent of the individual forms it assumes in its diffusion. Social facts combine both generality and externality. “If a mode of behaviour whose existence is external to individual consciousness because general, this can only be brought about by its being imposed upon them” (Durkheim, 1964: 10).

Drawing on Durkheim’s understanding of social facts, this thesis is concerned with understanding unemployment (loss of wage work) as an alternative social fact. It examines how and why anomie could emerge especially through the experience of the loss of moral social integrity provided by wage work. If indeed, unemployment causes anomie, it is because obligations to wage work dominate society itself and not because of individual beliefs, dispositions, and interpretations of wage work.

Anomic suicide

Often, suicide is viewed as a purely individual act that depends exclusively on the private and personal biography of the individual, thus a field solely belonging to psychology. In *Suicide* (1952), Durkheim shows that from a sociological point of view,

suicide is not only a result of individual and private circumstances, but it is also fundamentally social in character. “At every moment in its history”, he argues, “each society has a definite aptitude for suicide” (Durkheim, 1952:48). What sociology should therefore study is the “social suicide rate” (Durkheim, 1952: 147) or society’s tendency towards suicide. The social suicide rate itself is a social fact. Individual conditions may cause an individual to kill himself/herself without giving society as a whole a less or greater tendency to suicide because those conditions do not necessarily depend on a certain state of social organization. They therefore have no necessarily social consequences (Durkheim, 1952:51). The point of focus for sociology, however, should be general social conditions, rather than specific psychological temperaments of individuals. Individual suicides per se, therefore, would concern the psychologist and not the sociologist. The sociologist must focus on suicide rates. The sociologist studies the social suicide rate as a “factual order, unified and definite as is shown by both its permanence and its variability” (Durkheim, 1952:51).

Economic crises aggravate the social suicidal tendency. What gives these crises their influence? What is the true nature of the disturbances? “Is it because they increase poverty by causing public wealth to fluctuate?” (Durkheim, 1952:242). If that were the case, then it should surely decrease as comfort increases. “Fortunate crisis”, which abruptly enhances a country’s prosperity has a similar impact on the suicidal tendency as “economic disasters” (Durkheim, 1952:245) however. If economic or industrial crises result in suicide, it is not because of the deteriorating material conditions of life but because both (growth and decline) are crises, that is, “disturbance of the collective order” (Durkheim, 1952:246).

Durkheim distinguishes three kinds of suicide; Firstly, *egoistic suicide*, arises when individuals have lost and no longer find a durable basis for their continued existence in society. For example, people who believe that they are neglected or do not feel valued in the contribution(s) they make to an institution(s) or a group (Durkheim, 1952:209). For example, a worker who is isolated by his co-workers due to an action he committed of which they absolutely disapprove.

Secondly, *altruistic suicide,* arises when the basis of existence appears to be located beyond life itself. In other words, it is when a person or group give themselves up for a cause that is outside of them and considered more valuable. For example, when Buddhist monks immolated themselves alive in a peaceful protest led by Thich Nhat Hahn against the Vietnamese's civil war in the 1960s, Buddhist spiritual leader and monk, Thich Nhat Hahn reasoned that they do not consider this act of self-immolation suicide because in a war situation like in Vietnam it is difficult for one's voice to be heard. This act was done, he said, "out of compassion", it is "the act of love and not of despair" (Oprah, 2013). One could make a similar argument for suicide bombers' sacrifice of themselves to their cause.

Thirdly, *anomic suicide* is a type of suicide most common in industrial society. It results from society's failure to provide the individual with moral constraints leading to his/her consequent suffering. Economic anomie is not the only area in which lack of moral constraint can result in suicide. It may also result from "a crisis of widowhood" or domestic anomie arising from the death of a husband or wife. A family catastrophe impacts on the survivor by its moral as well as its emotional impact. In anomie, the individual finds himself "not adapted to the new situation in which he finds himself and

accordingly offers less resistance to suicide" (Durkheim, 1952:259). For example, Durkheim found that divorced couples have a higher suicide rate than married or widowed persons. For an explanation, he argues, we "must seek the causes of this relation (between divorce and suicide) not in the intrinsic dispositions of people but in the intrinsic nature of divorce" (Durkheim, 1952:262). Divorce is the antithesis to marriage and takes away the regulatory function of matrimonial or conjugal social, life which exerts a moral force over the individual. For Durkheim, marriage is a "regulation of sexual relations", its function is to set limits on and regulate the "life of passions" (Durkheim, 1952:270). Conjugal or matrimonial anomie is not merely the result of bad wives/husbands, household disputes and miserable households. Anomie results form a "moral structure sui generis, itself caused by a weakening of matrimonial regulation" (Durkheim, 1952:273). In a similar way, the experience of unemployment must be connected with some regulative quality of wage work that has dominated modern industrial society, the influence of which haunt the unemployed even long after their loss of work.

To remain attached to something that is no longer there is "constantly renewed torture" Durkheim, 1952:247). Human beings often aspire to and set for themselves "unattainable goals" (Durkheim, 1952:248). A driving force behind this behaviour is the idea of hope. Durkheim (1952:248) argues that "to pursue a goal which is by definition unattainable is to condemn oneself to a state of perpetual unhappiness." Hope has its pleasures "even when unreasonable" and has the capacity to sustain an individual for a limited duration, but it cannot "survive repeated disappointments of experience indefinitely" (Durkheim, 1952:248). Hope gives man/woman the capacity to anticipate a better future. Religion for example holds out the promise of a greater future in

exchange for the current reality in which the unemployed live in strife and inequality (Durkheim, 1952:254). Reality only seems valuable by "comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations ... Reality is therefore abandoned, but so too is possibility abandoned when it in turn becomes reality" (Durkheim, 1952:256). Weariness ultimately brings disillusionment because men/women cannot escape "the futility of an endless pursuit" (Durkheim, 1952:256).

Anomie is linked with a type of "declassification" in which victims are thrown into a changed state of existence from their previous one. They have to undergo moral re-education but "society cannot adjust them instantaneously to this new life" (Durkheim, 1952:252). The conditions of life have changed, and therefore the regulation cannot abide. The social order has been upset and a new social order cannot be spontaneously improvised. Time is required for a new collective consciousness to arise. Therefore, "so long as the social forces thus freed have not regained equilibrium, their respective values are unknown and so all regulation is lacking for a time" (Durkheim, 1952:253).

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the unemployed man/woman's acts or experiences which seem at first very personal and appear only to express their own individual temperaments are actually the "supplement and prolongation of a social condition which they express externally" (Durkheim, 1952:299). Individual experiences of unemployment reveal not just the victim's psychological nature or moral dispositions but also reflect the "moral state of society" (Durkheim, 1952:300).

In *Division of labour in society*, Durkheim's (1933) concept of anomie was mainly concerned with the specific transition from mechanical solidarity where solidary is

based on resemblance and shared values to a differentiated division of labour in which solidarity is founded on mutual dependency fostered by specialization. Since the increased division of labour and specialization are developments peculiar to industrial capitalism, anomie also serves as Durkheim's critique of capitalism. Central to this critique is how capitalist crises disrupt shared moral values resulting in anomie.

In *Suicide*, he identified several types of suicide, particularly anomic suicide resulting from a social condition lacking regulation. Lack of regulation often follows a disruption of social norms by one widespread occurrence or another. Through his analysis of divorce and widowhood, he develops an understanding of the function/role played by the institution of marriage. Marriage is an institution that constrains the individual so as to promote his moral well-being. Since divorce is the antithesis of marriage, it leads to the "weakening of matrimonial regulation" (Durkheim, 1952:271) prompting or inclining the individual to voluntary death. I suggest that in both texts, it is possible to discern a Durkheimian understanding of loss.

While loss may be experienced by individuals, it may also be located at the social level. That is to say, the experience of loss itself expresses not necessarily just an individual reality but also a social reality outside and beyond the individual him/herself. The transition from one mode of production (feudalism to capitalism) to another, implied abrupt loss of shared moral values without the instantaneous founding of new shared moral values to take the place of the old (Durkheim, 1952). I use the concept of anomie to understand the experience of loss associated with the problem of large-scale retrenchment.

There are various ways in which other scholars have used the concept of anomie. As a way of framing this discussion, I draw on Steven Lukes (1967) to identify three main strands in the contemporary application of Durkheim's concept of anomie. Firstly, are those who use anomie to describe an objective social condition that is outside the individual's psychological state. In this strand are scholars like Williams (cited in Lukes, 1967) who understand anomie to describe a "social condition that has to be defined independently of the psychological states thought to accompany normlessness and normative conflict" (Lukes, 1976:75). Secondly, those who use anomie to describe the individual's personal experiences and psychological state. Merton (1938), Reisman (1950), MacIver (1950) and Srole (1956) use it to describe a "state of mind". Lukes (1967:77) argues that there is a third approach, which he calls the "socio-psychological approach". For Lukes this approach "refers to the relationships between individuals to elements of his social environment and his state of mind:". He suggests that the other two strands are a misreading of Durkheim's anomie because the original use of the concept as used by Durkheim himself was as a socio-psychological concept.

In comparing anomie and Karl Marx's alienation, Lukes argues that while both concepts are based on different assumptions about human nature, both are socio-psychological concepts. They embody hypotheses about the "specific relationships between social conditions and individual psychological states" (Lukes, 1967:74). Lukes is also critical of contemporary applications of both concepts, arguing that they have undergone significant extensions and alterations, which have culminated in a debasement from their original meanings.

He cites Merton (1938) as one of the key examples of such contemporary distortions. Anomie has been used in literature on social deviance in which Merton is a key figure.

In a seminal essay in *Social structure and anomie* Merton (1938) argued that deviance arises when individuals' or groups' moral values are not sufficiently integrated into the social structure of society. Key to his use of anomie is the limited integration he identifies between individuals or groups' "frame of aspirational references" consisting of "culturally defined goals, purposes, and interests" on the one hand and the "controls" and regulations of "social structures" that define and institutionalize the "acceptable modes of achieving these goals."

Guy Standing (2011:19) identifies Durkheim's anomie as part of the four A's experienced by the unemployed. These include anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation. Standing (2011:19) describes anomie as a "feeling of passivity born of despair." He continues, "anomie comes from a listlessness associated with sustained defeat, compounded by the condemnation lobbed at many in the precariat by politicians and middle-class commentators castigating them as lazy, directionless, undeserving, socially irresponsible or worse" (Standing, 2011:19). Standing's use of the concept of anomie thus falls into the second strand.

Luke's discussion of anomie is limited to economic crisis, Merton's discussion is limited to deviance while Standing's (2011) discussion is concerned with anomie as an individual condition of passivity and despair due to compromised labour market conditions. None of these scholars use anomie as a sociological concept describing a social condition of moral loss. For example, in his discussion of the division of labour and suicide, Lukes (1967) singles out economic anomie and does not mention other instances or forms of anomie which Durkheim mentions as causes of anomie. For example, divorce, widowhood through the death of a spouse and the suffering experienced by a survivor who has lost his loved ones.

I stress that Durkheim was more concerned to illustrate that anomie is a social condition under capitalism that is not so much about economic crisis, widowhood, divorce et cetera, but more about what happens when shared moral values are disrupted abruptly.

Durkheim's (1964) project is about separating the sociological in the strict sense of the word from other disciplines such as biology and psychology. In disassociating strictly sociological phenomena from other kinds of phenomena, Durkheim shows that it is important to separate social facts from their individual manifestations. Individual manifestations of social facts are not strictly sociological phenomena but belong to a different realm, that is, "socio-psychological", that interests the sociologist without itself forming the immediate subject matter of sociology (Durkheim, 1964:8–9). It seems that what Durkheim is asserting is that since anomie is a social fact, it cannot therefore be an entirely socio-psychological concept. A socio-psychological approach may only be necessary for revealing the effects of social facts but the approach itself is not sociological as such.

I suggest that wage work and unemployment are both social facts. Unemployment, which is a phenomenon special to capitalism, reflects disruption of the shared moral values associated with wage work. This disruption may potentially result in anomie or a social condition of moral loss because of abrupt loss of shared moral values without society or a group providing, in a spontaneous manner, alternative moral values. The lag between the abrupt loss of shared moral values and the development of alternative shared moral values casts the unemployed into a moral haze. This is especially the case with large-scale abrupt retrenchments where an entire social group is cast into a moral abyss.

A Neo-Durkheimian Imagination

From industrial citizenship to occupational citizenship (OC)

The main idea of OC resonates with Durkheim's thesis of professional ethics or professional groups that will become the central source of social solidarity and the foundations of a moral order (Standing, 2009:253).

An occupation can be defined as "consisting of an evolving set of related tasks based on traditions and accumulated knowledge, part of which is unique. An occupation involves some combination of forms of knowledge" (Standing, 2009:11). Occupations involve undertaking productive or reproductive work that an individual freely chooses to do on his own accord, not under the coercion of the market. Reproductive work can involve community-based activities such as nurturing and caring and involving civic friendship. A good occupation can include a range of activities that enable self-development, improvement of competencies while sustaining a sense of identity and status (Standing, 2009:253).

Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed how the question of unemployment has been conceptualized by various disciplines in a variety of contexts. A key challenge to scholarship on the question of unemployment is the relative absence of theory on the subject. Often, writings on unemployment tend to be descriptive rather than concerned with theoretical

insight. Nevertheless, various scholars have drawn on concepts such as time and gender relations to account for problems associated with unemployment. However, none have conceptualized the problem of unemployment as a problem of loss. The chapter draws on Durkheim's work, particularly on the concept of anomie, and attempts to reconstruct it as a concept that is essentially about loss experienced during abrupt shifts between different collective social and moral orders.

The next chapter addresses the emerging debate in South Africa about the meaning of wage work. The debate is set between two radically opposed sociological traditions called "pro-wage work" and "anti-wage work" traditions. The main gap in the debate, however, is the absence of any account of the experiences of the unemployed. This thesis aims to address this gap.

CHAPTER 3: DEBATING THE MEANING OF WAGE WORK

Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explore experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work. This chapter locates differences between "work" and "wage work" in the context of an emerging debate on the meaning of wage work around two seemingly radically opposed sociological traditions in South Africa. I begin the chapter by distinguishing between labour (wage work) and work.

The distinction between labour (wage labour) and work

Standing (2009:5–8) makes an important distinction between labour and work. "Industrial citizenship" refers to a discourse in which the extension of "social rights", "entitlements" and "norms" are associated with industrial wage work. Often, commentators do not distinguish between work and labour, but treat them as synonymous. Yet, not all work is labour. The failure to draw a distinction between the two concepts leads to the loss of all understanding of work that is not labour, for example, caring for a sick relative in the context of the household.

Standing (2009:5) notes that, despite problems associated with their social model (treatment of slaves and women), the Greeks usefully distinguished between productive

work (labour) and reproductive work (work). Reproductive work or *philia* (civic friendship)/*praxis* was perceived as work done for the extension of human relationships or civic friendship. It was about the strengthening of social relations between friends, acquaintances, relatives, and fellow citizens. *Philia* was considered honourable work associated with citizenship. Play was required for relaxation. The Greeks also had a concept of *schole* which has a double meaning referring to leisure and learning through participation in the life of the city *(polis).* For Aristotle, laziness was necessary for leisure. Labour or *poiesis/techne* referred to activities done in order to produce a product or commodity. Productive labour was associated with non-citizenship and was undertaken by slaves. Slaves or *banausoi* and *metics* were mere denizens (not citizens) because they were perceived not to have enough time to participate in the life of the *polis* (Standing, 2011:117).

The link between productive labour and citizenship is a development specific to industrial capitalism. In earlier periods, things were significantly different. For example, under feudalism, labour was for serfs that were tied to the land. Contrary to the Greek conception, by the 20th century work or *philia* was seen as non-work, that is, unproductive activity. It became invisible to public view and excluded from labour statistics. As a result, the 20th century was an era dominated by a labourist model to which citizenship was linked. A powerful idea was created that one of the most desirable things to have in industrial capitalist society is a job (Standing, 2009:5–6). This powerful discourse of having a job as a social ideal has created the idea that when one is not employed, one is idle, lazy and not doing anything productive with one's life.

The alliance of 20th century progressives led workers to the mistaken position of idealizing and celebrating wage work. Wage work became central to the structuring of "social protection, regulation and redistribution" (Standing, 2009:7). The term "labour" is derived from the latin word *laborem* which implies "toil, distress and trouble", "painful activity done in conditions of poverty" (Standing, 2009:6). Its function is to produce commodities for exchange on the market. Labour is undertaken under conditions of control in which workers are subjected to the domination and oppression of figures of authority that extract labour power from workers. In such domination, workers are alienated and there is little or no agency. Participation is governed by economic imperatives of maximizing efficiency, competitiveness, productivity and profit.

On the other hand, "work" is much more desirable and establishes the conditions of liberating flexibility, agency, control, creativity, freedom and dignity, self-development, and self-determination. Unlike labour, work is self-chosen for the purpose of development and social participation. Decommodication is a strategy to rescue work from labour.

Under industrial citizenship work is not treated with respect equal to labour. Instead, work is relegated to idleness and laziness (Standing, 2011:160). Idleness is presumed to be a great sin under industrial capitalism. No thought is spared for the possibility that perceived idleness can be another individual's time of "repose and contemplation" (Standing, 2011:160). Instead, it is rebuked and condemned.

It is crucial to recognize that labour is important, that jobs are necessary. However, this must not be mistaken to imply that jobs are the most desirable social ideal. It is important to have a sense of proportion and to recognize that other forms of work are just as important. It is imperative to strive for a richer concept of work that is not wage work, to liberate society from the dominance of wage work (Standing, 2011:161).

Pro-wage work and anti-wage work debate

Firstly, the pro-wage work position, views wage work as an inherent social good, an institution through which people not only generate an income but also construct a sense of meaning, identity, dignity, and independence (Forstater, 2006; Fakier & Cock, 2009; Langa & Von Holdt 2011; Mosoetsa, 2011; Webster, 1991, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Secondly, the anti-wage work position views wage work as a social evil, a condition of un-freedom in which people are dominated and subjugated by figures of authority that often subject them to their will. From this point of view, all wage work is forced labour because people are coerced by economic necessity to give up their agency and self-determination (Barchiesi, 2011b; Gorz, 1999; Naidoo, 2011; Rifkin, 1995; Standing, 2009, 2011 & 2017; Weeks, 2011b).

Yet there is a third category which is just beginning to emerge but has not yet crystallized. This third category strikes some kind of combination between pro-wage work and anti-wage work. The idea is that society needs wage work but because wage work is in decline, and can no longer fulfil its traditional role, conditions for work that is not labour must be created. Yet in making its case for work that is not labour, this

third category appears to be more sympathetic towards the anti-wage work rather than the pro-wage work position. For example, some of this overlap imbues Standing's work (2009, 2011& 2017a).

This thesis draws its weight from the fact that both perspectives in the debate on the meaning of wage work in South Africa mainly focus on experiences and narratives of employed workers while neglecting those of unemployed workers. This neglect of unemployed life experiences implies that neither perspective provides us with a full account of the crisis of wage work in South Africa. Quite possibly, the experience of "worklessness" will provide new insights into how political possibilities and new social imaginations can be shaped.

PRO-WAGE WORK

"Work [wage work], and the social relations structured around work [wage work], are the central dynamic of modern industrial society" (Webster, 1991:52).

For proponents of wage work, wage work exemplifies, "that without which life [can become] meaningless" (Andics, 1947:172). The main idea is that institutionalized wage work provides human existence in modern industrial society with a durable source of meaning. It is the single most important institution for defining and providing social value (Ghidhima, 1993).

Sigmund Freud (1999) believed that wage work provides "man's strongest tie to reality" and it serves this purpose best when it is highly institutionalized. It remains

desirable even if the unemployed are financially secure. Wage labour has important implications for social time experience. It strongly influences how working men and women and their families structure and use their time. Without a fixed time structure and the discipline often imposed by wage work, many would merely engage in activities to "kill time" or "kill the boredom" (Bostyn & Wright, 1987).

Wage work occupies a privileged position in contemporary social life generally understood. It is widely regarded as the "fundamental social experience" in modern capitalist society (Offe, cited in Webster, 1991:52). Despite African histories telling of resistance to labour and proletarianization, such as dock workers in colonial Mombasa (Cooper, 1987) and earlier struggles in South Africa (see Chapter 4), wage work has now become institutionalized as a vital feature of social and economic life in post-apartheid South Africa (Webster, 1991).

The significance of wage work lies not just in its capacity as a source of income to provide for basic necessities and to enable people to sustain their livelihoods, it is also an important source of values such as mutual recognition, belonging through friendship and social networks providing constant interaction beyond the nuclear family, incorporating self-esteem, reputation, meaning, identity and definition by self and others (Forstater, cited in Webster, 2010).

Many people build a sense of meaning and purpose in relation to their wage work and view wage work as an expression of self. From this perspective, wage work provides opportunities for people to look forward to a future and opens up possibilities for the realization of individual and collective dreams, hopes and aspirations. It also provides

opportunities for men, women and their families to make something of their lives, to self-realize/actualize and become productive members of society (Andics, 1945; Hayes & Nutman, 1981; Jahoda, 1930; Khleif, 1985, cited in Ghidhima, 1993; Kumar, 1984; Littler, 1985).

In Michele Lamont's book (1957) "*The dignity of working men*", two men, Dupuis and Lebleu, define themselves as "hardworking person [s]" who have made best friend[s] through wage work. On the one hand, they tell about how wage work provides a sense of pride because through it, they are able to feel they are making "a real contribution to society" and on the other hand, express a deep hatred for lazy people who "live at the expense of others". Both men believe that unemployment often leads to vice so that "the person who does not work necessarily ends up doing stupid things, like stealing … [W]age work is really a fundamental value" (Lamont, 1957:160–162).

Webster (2010, 2011) argues that wage work, and in particular secure forms of wage work such as the International Labour Organization's (ILO) model of decent work, is not just able to guarantee livelihoods and social inclusion but is vitally necessary for social cohesion and development. He argues that joblessness can have devastating effects on individuals, households and communities, but employment creation, ideally decent work, is able to reverse the potential harm of joblessness.

Alongside the economic benefits arising from productivity and economic stimulation, wage work also has social multipliers such as reduced crime rates, improved social well-being, family and community cohesion, strengthened security of livelihoods and social reproduction, dignity, nutrition, better education, healthcare, childcare and

reduced domestic abuse (Fakier & Cock, 2009; Mosoetsa, 2011; Somavia, 2004; Webster, 2010, 2011). Importantly, employment also creates the possibility for independence (Dawson, 2014; Hunter, 2012; White, 2012) and the capacity to take responsibility for one's own life.

The capacity of wage work to promote social inclusion, social order and cohesion is demonstrated through the case of Bokfontien, a community traumatized and fragmented by high levels of unemployment and problems of service delivery (Langa & Von Holdt, 2011). The significance of the Bokfontien case lies in its illustration of how the unemployed were able to overcome alienation through reframing work done in the state-funded Community Work Programme (CWP) as "work done for the community." This reframing transformed the way they experienced the CWP as it allowed them to see themselves as active agents in the development of their own community, as "making out10" in Burawoy's (1979:51) phrase.

The CWP model is a form of workfare in which people are guaranteed a basic income for participating in socially useful, community based work (Barchiesi, 2011a). The CWP is based on democratic processes such as collective conflict resolution and collective decision-making (Langa & Von Holdt, 2011). While the case study points to a new understanding of work, it reaffirms commitment to wage work as the ultimate goal and only sustainable solution for material deprivation in post-apartheid South Africa (Naidoo, 2011).

(See his *Manufacturing Consent.*) Burawoy introduces the hugely useful concept of "making out" in which workers engaged in "productive labour/employment"actually exercise limited (and fulfilling) control over the labour process. See p. 51. This sort of argument is surely at the basis of Barchiesi's "revolutionary" conceptions also.

Wage work however, is not without problems that its advocates openly acknowledge. In low-status occupations such as in the private security industry, security guards suffered excruciating boredom, stigma and stereotypes attached to the uniforms. They also suffered a crisis of recognition associated with their class position. Security guards, however, did not passively accept their conditions and external perceptions of them, instead they continuously searched for new sources of resilience and ways to improve their experiences as people making an honest living in low-status occupations (Sefalafala, 2012).

One of the most critical challenges for proponents of wage work was heralded by the era of neo-liberal globalization, an era Standing (2009:viii) calls "global transformation". Globalization dramatically eroded wage work's capacity to provide security, certainty and the possibility of living a decent life under the impact of labour market fragmentation, decentralization of production and informalisation of work (Webster, 2006, 2010, 2012).

Standing (2009:37, 2011:10) identifies seven forms of wage work securities eroded under the global transformation:

(1) Labour market security: adequate income generating opportunities; this is epitomised by government's commitment to full employment at the macro-level.
(2) Employment security: rights and regulations stipulated in labour law protecting both employers and employees. Employees are protected from unfair dismissal and employers from acts of dishonesty on the part of the employee.

(3) Job security: ability and opportunity to occupy a niche in the labour market, plus barriers to skill dilution, and opportunities for upward mobility in terms of status and income.
(4) Work security: rules and regulations such as health and safety regulations that give protection against accidents and illness at work.
(5) Skill reproduction security: opportunities to gain skills through training and apprenticeship and the opportunities to make use of one's own competencies.
(6) Income security: assurance of an adequate protected through minimum wage laws, employment contracts, comprehensive social security.
(7) Representation security: the right of association and gaining a collective voice through membership to trade unions and workplace forums.

The characteristics outlined by Standing form part of what is also known as Standard Employment Relations (SER). The proliferation of forms of employment such as labour broking and outsourcing has fragmented the labour market, however, leading to the phenomenon of "informalisation". Informalisation of work has meant that formal jobs begin to share much in common with informal ones. These commonalities include low wages and lack of benefits, lack of representation and lack of job security (Webster, 2006).

While precariousness was the reality for many black working-class South Africans under apartheid long before neo-liberal globalization, the idea is that the contemporary era has cemented and institutionalized insecurity and therefore established the current epoch as the "age of insecurity" (Barchiesi, 2011b; Webster et al., 2008). Informalisation of work through casualization, part-time work, and outsourcing of

workers through labour brokers thus marked a continuation of apartheid workplace insecurity both in the workplace and in society. Increasingly, workers face a reality of falling wages, lack of representation, security and benefits (Webster, 2010).

These crises of wage work are not confined only to the shopfloor. They have created a double crisis. Insecurities in the labour market often spill over into the household, leading to a crisis of social reproduction, where working class households find it increasingly difficult to survive (Fakier & Cock, 2009; Mosoetsa, 2011).

With the decline of SER, South Africa has experienced the rise of the "working poor" in forms of employment that do not conform to SER. Two-thirds of employed South Africans linger in poverty, even though they are employed (Altman, 2008). The idea of the working poor captures the reality that working does not guarantee a decent life nor sustainable livelihood (Sefalafala, 2012). The lived experience of the working poor was captured in a conversation I had with a cleaner in Welkom:

"I am working but I am suffering. The money I earn is not enough. Food and transport are expensive. Everything is expensive. Some unemployed people here in Thabong are better than me but I am employed" (Dako, 18/10/13).

Earlier, similar remarks were echoed by, Charles (15/09/11), a security guard I interviewed in Johannesburg. Pointing to his shoes, he said:

*"*Just take a look, can you say I am working? You can't, I am just poor" (Sefalafala, 2012: 107).

Under the impact of the growing phenomenon of the working poor, the contribution of wages to the national income has declined to its lowest level since the 1960s, while at the same time, profit is at its highest. In sum, the rise of the working poor has led to a significant redistribution of resources from wages to profits since the 1990s (Barchiesi, 2009).

The changing nature of work has led to the emergence of debates around the precariat. The precariat constitutes a new class of people "without an anchor of stability" (Standing, 2011:1). Standing's conception is largely focused on insecurities in the workplace. Candeias (2004), however, provides a broader understanding of precariousness that extends beyond the workplace and captures the reality of "double precarious", that is, precariousness in the workplace translates into precariousness of social reproduction. For Barchiesi (2011b), precariousness refers to the contrast between, on the one hand, social policies and government discourse that impose the search for a job, any job, at any condition, as the "virtuous" mode of attaining social inclusion, and on the other hand, the reality of jobs that are mainly insecure, which provide inadequate incomes even to meet basic needs.

As a response to the fragmentation of the labour market and with the aim of reversing and countering the erosion of labour's capacity to deliver a decent life, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) notion of decent work has been adopted firstly to characterize the processes and erosion of wage work as a "decent work deficit logic" and secondly to "envision an alternative developmental path to restore the dignity of wage work." The key emphasis of the strategy of embracing an alternative

developmental path is that it must be a progressive and incremental realization of the goal of decent work (Webster, 2010).

While proponents of pro-wage work such as Webster (2012) and anti-wage work such as Barchiesi (2011b) agree about the nature of the crisis confronting wage work in post-apartheid South Africa, they differ on its meaning and visions for the future of wage work and workers.

While Barchiesi (2011b) argues for liberation from wage work, Webster (2011b) argues for its progressive transformation. For Webster, the argument for liberation from wage work is problematic since wage work is a practical solution in a context where millions struggle to survive on a daily basis. Yet, the practicality of employment creation as a solution to unemployment is being questioned in the face of growing and persistent levels of unemployment despite various state and private sector interventions. For Barchiesi (2011b), the failure of employment to deliver on its promise of emancipation by securing sustainable livelihoods is precisely why it must lose its privileged position as the vehicle out of poverty. For him, employment creation fails a practical test.

Webster (2012:226) concedes that, in the face of high unemployment, “the goal of the right to work and security seems as elusive as ever.” Nonetheless, he maintains hope of transforming society towards full employment and decent work in the long run. Scully (2013) indeed faults Barchiesi for making sweeping statements that dismiss wage work as a “progressive social force”.

Barchiesi's (2009, 2011a) central point however remains. Under current conditions of global capitalism that have seen massive erosion of wage work on the one hand and its growing valorization as a mediator for social inclusion and citizenship on the other, wage work can no longer play the role that has been historically attributed to it.

For Webster (2012:91–92), transformation of wage work aims at reversing the decent work deficit arising from the impact of neo-liberal globalization. For wage work to reclaim its central position as a vehicle for a decent life, the power of organized labour is critical for transforming the nature of work through an alternative developmental path. Webster's vision for the future of wage work (despite endemic precariousness and worklessness) in post-apartheid South Africa is exemplified by the experiences of the Nordic social democratic countries in the 1930s and 1940s where "labour was partially de-commodified and the working class incorporated into society" (Webster, 2012:92)

While Scully (2012:93) agrees with Webster (2012) about wage work continuing to serve as a "progressive social force" despite its current crisis, he differs from Webster (2012) on two fronts. Firstly, he disagrees with Webster's (2012) critique of Barchiesi (2012) for not providing a vision for the future of wage work. Scully argues that Barchiesi's project is focused on destroying an "outdated vision" of wage work and should not necessarily be expected to provide a future vision for wage work because his key focus is social critique. Secondly, Scully (2012) is critical of the idea of importing welfare policies, union strategies and workplace rules from around the world to combat precarity in South Africa. For Scully, the South African crisis of wage work is not merely a result of poor policy choices and weak union strategies but also a result

of a global economic system that is unable to guarantee the well-being of the majority of the global working class.

Conclusion

It is widely accepted that wage work is central to modern industrial society. Wage work indeed continues to serve as an important economic and social activity for many people. Yet, millions more are excluded and marginalized from direct participation in Standard Employment Relations (SER). Under the impact of modern global capitalism, South Africa has witnessed the rise of a category of the "working poor" in which millions of precariously employed people struggle on a daily basis to make ends meet as they continue to work for pitifully low wages, lack of voice and rights in the workplace.

With the expanding number of unemployed on the one hand and the significant erosion of the nature and quality of employment created under the dominant neo-liberal era on the other, to what extent can we still view wage work as an institution able to guarantee a decent life for the majority of the working class and poor in post-apartheid South Africa? What are the implications of decentreing wage work in a society in which the desire for work underpinned by a strong work ethic remains dominant? If employment remains such a central social category, what does it mean to be unemployed?

The acceptance of wage work as a vital social force, as the norm for many sections of society, has, according to some, blinded us to its inherent problems and threatened to remove it from the realm of political critique (Barchiesi, 2011a; Weeks, 2011).

ANTI-WAGE WORK

"At the same time, the work ethic is more insistently and perhaps desperately defended … Never has the 'irreplaceable', 'indispensable' function of labour as the source of 'social ties', 'social cohesion', 'integration', 'socialization', 'personalization', 'personal identity' and 'meaning' been invoked so obsessively as it has since the day it became unable any longer to fulfill any of these functions" (Gorz, 1999:57 in Weeks, 2011:77).

From the anti-wage work perspective, the centrality of the wage work ethic in governing not just productivist politics but the conduct of life itself should not be accepted as a given. It must be challenged. The fundamental impact of the ethic of wage work lies in its capacity to lay the basis for the justification of the subordination of certain groups in society to the rules and dictates of others (Weeks, 2011).

Paul Lafargue's (1883) essay, "*The right to be lazy"* produced an attack on the wage work ethic and on moral discourses that uphold wage work as a signifier of dignified and respectable existence. Instead of the dignity and respectability of wage work, he saw an institution that degraded people to the rank of slaves and the epoch of industrial society as the epoch of "pain", "poverty", "misery" and "corruption" (Lafargue, 1883: 17) which are the "inexorable law of capitalist production" (Lafargue, 1883:24).

Introduction to factory jobs implied bidding "farewell to joy, health and liberty: farewell to all that makes life beautiful and worth living" (Lafargue, 1883:22). The ethic

of wage work is a “disastrous dogma” a “strange delusion” that “possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilization holds its sway.” This “delusion is the love of [wage] work, the furious passion for [wage] work” whose advocates “presume to rehabilitate what God has cursed” (Lafargue, 1883:9).

Rather than the ethic of wage work being appropriated as a given law of nature, Jenkins and Sherman (in Kumar, 1984), perceived it as a result of “bourgeois indoctrination” promoted through a pedagogy which teaches people to accept that without wage work, life would be meaningless and boring. For Jenkins and Sherman, the idea of wage work, as a necessity for survival and self-esteem and other values is completely arbitrary.

Kathi Weeks’ (2011) book *The problem with work*, argues that the centrality and normalization of wage work and the widespread view that it is a social and political good must be challenged in such a way that wage work may be returned to the “realm of political critique” rather than accepted as the norm.

Scholars have argued that developments in the global labour market over the past two decades should call into serious question the continued centrality and privileging of waged work over other forms of work, despite wage work having entered into permanent crisis,

“[r]estoring the worst forms of domination, subjugation and exploitation by forcing each to fight against all in order to obtain the ‘work’ it is abolishing” while at the same time claiming to perpetuate that same work, the norms, dignity and availability of which it is abolishing, as an obligation, as a norm, and as the irreplaceable foundation of the right and dignity to all (Gorz, 1999:1).

At the same time that South Africa battles a deep crisis of employment (declining both in quality and quantity), government, the left and organized labour have elevated it as the fulcrum of social inclusion and a signifier of "virtuous active citizenship" (Barchiesi, 2009, 2011b). Wage work has failed to deliver on its promise of liberation and can no longer serve as a vehicle for development and decent life in the face of the realities of increasing material decay and precariousness for the majority of working class black South Africans (Barchiesi, 2011b)

While those committed to the wage work ethic argue that "it is better to have a bad job than no job at all" (Webster, 2010:230), Barchiesi (2011a) views this as a "social pathology", in which the "glorification of jobs, by many sociologists and commentators, merely obscures and disguises the manner in which employment today is a decisive vehicle for poverty, inequality and social exclusion" (Barchiesi, 2011a:8–15).

From the anti-wage work perspective, decent work is not a solution because it simply fails to confront the "inexorable laws of capitalism" (Lafargue, 1883) that make wage work indecent for a growing section of the global working class. Thus the real purpose of decent work is effectively to act as an "art of governmentality" and to reconcile exploitative "imperatives of accumulation and governance". Decent work has no answer to the problem that under capitalism, work is not meant to be decent but only profitable (Barchiesi, 2011a:11).

Decent work constitutes, not a solution but an intervention in the form of the "art of government" and a pedagogical device shaping and narrowing down workers' possibilities and constructing them as disciplined and cooperative "patriotic workers" in waiting (Barchiesi, 2011a). It is a "disciplinary construct that marginalizes, stigmatizes and criminalizes specific social categories identified as disruptive of wage work discipline" (Barchiesi, 2009:4).

Wage work in general, regardless of perceived or measured levels of decency is forced activity, because people are often faced with the false choice of not being employed versus living in utter and complete poverty (Barchiesi, 2011b). Barchiesi believes that the focus should not be on wage work and/or decent work but on "autonomous work sustained by forms of redistribution and de-commodification, such as a non-work related Universal Basic Income (UBI) regardless of one's employment status." This would enable a reappropriation of value at a society-wide level of livelihoods that capital otherwise appropriates at no cost. This would constitute, Barchiesi believes, commonfare rather than welfare. This however is not the end goal of the anti-wage work tradition. Its end goal is the total abolition of wage work. Its vision is one of a good life and a good society in which people are free from the domination and subjugation by figures of authority.

CONCLUSION

The centrality of wage work and its link to senses of being (identity, respectability etc.) are viewed from an anti-wage work perspective as arbitrary outcomes of specific

historical developments. Such historical developments have constructed the social and economic dominance of the wage work ethic. Society can thus be re-imagined and reorganized in ways that are not centred on wage work.

Wage work is viewed as the nemesis of true liberation since it guarantees the continued subjugation and dominance of a few lucky owners of the means of production over the majority working class and poor. Even in its most decent form, it is simply incapable of delivering true human liberation.

Inherently, from this point of view, wage work is a condition of enslavement and brutality. As labour market forces continue to dismantle wage work, as seen through high and persistent rates of unemployment, alongside the dramatic rise of the working poor and the precariat, a basis for necessarily rethinking the centrality of wage work in contemporary society is beginning to emerge. A central question remains however. What form(s) could alternative social organization take outside the dominant category of wage work in post-apartheid South Africa?

Writers such as Webster (2012) and Barchiesi (2012) have provided us with an understanding of the meaning of wage work extracted from interactions with people who are directly involved in various forms of wage work. What is missing from their accounts of the crisis of wage work in post-apartheid South Africa are the experiences of the unemployed.

The next chapter provides a background and context of the study. The discovery of gold in the Free State Goldfields in the late 1940s quickly transformed into a large centre of

employment and economic activity in the Free State province. After a three decade-long period of relative economic robustness, retrenchments soon began as the overall gold mining value chain began its decline. Mine downsizing and closure soon led to large numbers of retrenchments and unemployment in the region. This experience however is not peculiar to Welkom, but it is rather an international experience associated with finite mineral-based economies. What has made the Welkom case a relatively challenging case is the failure of effective economic diversification. Lack of economic diversification has opened an area of study focused on Local Economic Development (LED) strategies. Multiple economic and employment strategies have been attempted yet, none have thus far yielded sufficient absorption capacity to significantly address the challenge of unemployment. As such, unemployment remains high in the area. It is within this context that the thesis focuses on experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work among a group of retrenched ex-mineworkers who were proletarians in the Free State Goldfields.

CHAPTER 4: MINE DOWNSCALING IN THE FREE STATE GOLDFIELDS

Introduction

There is a long and complex history of proletarianization in Southern Africa which has been widely debated. These debates have led to an impressive archive of Southern African labour history Barchiesi (2011b), Beinart and Dubow (1995), Callinicos (1980), Coplan (1994), Cooper (1987), Crush and Yudelman (1991, 1992), Feinstein (2005), First (1983), Freund (1988), Guy (1979), Moodie & Ndatshe (1994), Webster (1978), Wolpe, (1972, 1980). In essence, that history was not only about the creation of the economics of a proletarian class but was about how people that had never been

wage workers became inducted into an ideology, desire, imagination and identification that reconstituted them as wage workers (Atkins, 1993).

The central purpose of this chapter is to provide a background to retrenchments in the Free State Goldfields and a context for the study. The chapter suggests that the decline of gold mining in the Free State Goldfields led to mass retrenchments and overall regional economic decline. Mass unemployment and sustained economic decline are partly an outcome of the failure to diversify and create new industries able to absorb large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Retrenched mine workers are partly victims of the lack of meaningful local economic diversification in the region. It is within this context that the thesis focuses on the experiences of a group of retrenched/unemployed ex-mineworkers who worked in the Free State Goldfields in order to reflect on what wage work means to them.

The subjects of my study reside in Thabong (Welkom), Meloding (Virginia) townships and Hani Park (Welkom) informal settlement, hence the focus on townships. Many were hostel dwellers who moved to these areas after mine closure. According to my subjects, some of their former colleagues went back to labour-sending areas such as Mozambique and the Transkei. Through a key informant, I traced some ex-mineworkers in various parts of rural Lesotho. Many ex-mineworkers lost their houses in Thabong because of the failure to keep up with bond repayments. Evictions ensued to which ex-mineworkers responded through the formation of the Bond Victims Association (BVA) in the late 1990s into the 2000s. The BVA was able to help some ex-mineworkers to retain their houses but ex-mineworkers who lost their homes, either moved to informal settlements, RDP houses or moved back to the labour-sending areas.

The BVA story, housing and other issues are important in their own right, but they are not crucial to the main argument of the thesis.

The thesis argues that impairments (economic, social and psychological) associated with unemployment are not harmful merely because they cause poverty, social uncertainties and psychological distress as is commonly understood, but also because a particular moral regulation has lost hold over individuals. Unemployment represents an abrupt disruption and loss of shared collective moral values. An established collective order is abruptly dismantled without the immediate provision of an alternative collective consciousness in place of the old (Durkheim, 1933, 1952, 1964). Unemployment appears as anomie experienced as loss.

In this chapter, I aim to provide the reader with a sense of the developments and context through which ex-mineworkers were abruptly ejected from wage work without the timely provision of meaningful alternatives.

Lejweleputswa District Municipality and Matjhabeng Local Municipality are part of the city of Welkom and surrounding small towns that are close to a township. Gold mining and associated support industries across the mining value chain provided the main economic activities and employment in the region. Mine downscaling and closure is not a phenomenon unique to the Free State Goldfields. To demonstrate this, I briefly discuss international experiences of mine downscaling and closure. I identify the mines located in the region which Klempner (1956) has mapped as consisting of: Welkom area or “Central Section”, Odendaalsrus area or “Northern Section” and Virginia area or “Southern Section”.

The spectacular decline of the regional economy of Lejweleputswa and Matjhabeng has spurred debate on how to restore the municipalities back onto a growth and job creation trajectory. These debates have largely focused on the role of Local Economic Development (LED). LED strategies have been widely explored in order to diversify economic activities and find alternative economic activities that are not mine dependent.

Lejweleputswa District Municipality

The Free State province consists of six metropolitan and district municipalities. These include Mangaung Metropolitan, Fezile Dabi, Thabo Mofutsanyana, Xhariep and Lejweleputswa District municipalities.

This study is located in the Lejweleputswa District Municipality and Matjhabeng Local Municipality and traces some ex-mineworkers back to Lesotho. Lejweleputswa is a Sesotho phrase meaning “grey rock”. This district municipality, and in particular, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, is at the heart of the Free State Goldfields. Matjhabeng is a Sesotho word describing a locality where nations meet. Gold mining thus played a critical role in the inception and growth of Matjhabeng, including Welkom and surrounding towns.

The municipal demarcation of 2000 incorporated Welkom into Matjhabeng, along with other locations such as Allanridge, Hani Park, Hennenman, Meloding, Odendaalsrus, Riebeeckstad, Thabong, Virginia and Ventersburg. Census data (Statistics South

Africa, 2011) approximates Matjhabeng's population at 406 46l, a decrease to 408 170 in 2001, from 472 281 in 1996. The population growth rate is estimated at 0.4%.

Unemployment is at approximately 37% while youth unemployment is estimated at a whopping 49.7%. Matjhabeng has negative growth of approximately 0.04% according to Statistics South Africa (2017) other local municipalities in the Lejweleputswa district include; Nala (Bothaville, Balkfontien, Kgotsong etc. at 1.9 % growth); Tokologo (Boshof, Hertzogville, Seretse etc. at 1.13 growth); Masilonyana (Theunissen, Brandfort, Winburg, Masilo, Tshepong etc at 0.17% growth) and Tswelopele (Bultfontien, Hoopstad etc at 1.2% growth).

Figure 2: Map of Lejweleputswa District Municipality

Source:Municipalities, www.municipality.co.za

International experience of mine downsizing and closure

De-industrialization and job loss associated with mine closure and downscaling is a common experience, especially in the Global North. The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were periods of significant decline for many mining economies in the developed world. The Ruhr region in Germany, Appalachia in the United States of America (USA), Wallonia in Belgium, Liguna in Italy, Lorrain in France (Marias, 2013) had experienced massive economic decline resulting and mass retrenchments. Mining also has very strong forward and backward linkages with other industries such as manufacturing. Often decline in mining severely compromises the competitiveness and sustainability of manufacturing and other support services leading to significant decline or total collapse of industrial development complexes and hence even greater job loss (Blackaby, 1979; Strongman, 2000).

Twenty to thirty years later, the developing world is experiencing similar patterns. In 2002, the World Bank released a report warning that "a wave of mine closures is looming". In 2002, the report claimed that "over the next decade, at least 25 major mines in developing countries are scheduled for closure" (World Bank, 2002:V). The report suggested that how mine closure is managed determines the future of mining communities, towns and regional economies in which those mines were located. Ideally, mine closure should be part of the planning of a mine from its inception (World Bank, 2002). This view is widely held in discussions around economic revitalization of post-mining localities.

The literature on de-industrialization associated with mine downsizing or closure focuses on various important aspects. Hunter (1992), Marais (2013), Marais & Nel (2016), Nel and Binns (2002), Ngonini (2007), Rex (1974), Seidman (1993) and Wilson (1972) have focused on the social and economic devastation suffered by host communities and migrant labour sending areas. Cloete and Marais (2009), Cloete, et al., (2009), Crush, (1989), Crush and James, (1991), Crush, (1992), Crush, (1994), Demissie, (1998) and Marais & Venter, (2006) have focused on the relationship between mining companies and housing for mineworkers. Others have looked at the broader impact of de-industrialization on infrastructure beyond housing. Jackson (2002), Rao and Pathak (2009) note that while many mine workers lose housing benefits previously supplied by the mine houses, mine closure has significant impact on telecommunication infrastructure, schools, health facilities and land and air transport infrastructure that were initially built for the mining communities. The environmental and technical impact of mine closure on host localities has also been widely investigated. Andrews-Speed, Ma, Shao and Liao (2005), Fourie and Brent (2006), Jackson (2002), McGuire (2003), Smith & Underwood (2000) and the Water Research Commission (1996), have focused on ecological damage caused by mining activities such as the contamination of river systems, water quality, dust generation and rehabilitation.

Other scholars have focused on how to respond to the social and economic devastation arising from mine downsizing and closure (Binns & Nel [2001], Centre for Development and Enterprise [2005], Marais [2005], Marais & Cloete [2013], Marais & Nel [2016], Ndaba [2010], Nel & Binns [2002], Pelser, Van der Merwe & Kotze [2012], Rogerson [2012], and Van Eeden [2012]). The key factor is the relationship

between national policy and local economic development initiatives and developing partnerships and collaborations for coordinated interventions to develop alternative industries for job creation.

The evidence of negative experience due to mining activities has led proponents of the resource curse theory and Dutch disease thesis to argue that mining activity brings many ills (Gylfason, 2001; Millar, 2015; Ross, 2001). Resource curse theory argues that mining increases levels of corruption, weakens institutions, impedes economic growth, leads to underinvestment in human capital, decreases general investments and creates tensions that may develop into civil war. The Dutch disease thesis argues that mining activities are detrimental to economic diversification and discourage export of other economic outputs because mining output benefits exchange rates. Bloch & Owusu (2012), Brueckner, Durey, Mayes and Pforr (2014), Bryceson and MacKinnon (2012), Grill (1984), Jike (2004), Millar (2015) and Smith (2015), warn that the positive effects of mining should not be ignored or underestimated because mining activities have led to the development of new cities, towns, infrastructure and promotes urbanization and development.

Overview of the Free State Goldfields

Mine downsizing and closure have been particularly devastating in the Free State Goldfields (FSG) (Marais, 2013; Seidman, 1993). The area was once wealthy and highly productive. By 1904, it was already known that there might be gold deposits in the area. Deep level geological exploration, however, only began in the 1930s. In 1946,

an exploratory borehole discovered a gold seam with an assayed gold content 92 times higher than that discovered on the Witwatersrand (Nel & Binns, 2002). By 1968, the FSG had eight gold mines with about 46 shafts that accounted for approximately 35% of total gold production of South Africa, 12% of the global total.

Odendaalsrus was the only already existing town when gold was discovered in the area (Marais, Van Rooyen, Nel & Lenka, 2017). Welkom was founded in 1947 as a private company town of the Anglo-American mining group (Nel & Binns, 2002). Allanridge and Virginia were also developed after gold mining was established in the FSG to accommodate the mining population (Marais, Van Rooyen, Nel & Lenka, 2017). Welkom is named after the farm on which gold was discovered and was officially declared a city in 1948. It is now the second largest city of the Free State province after Bloemfontein (Welkom: Capital of the Free State Goldfields, 1968).

Welkom was planned as a modern "garden city" and developed by the best standards of town planning at the time. The city has no traffic lights, only a host of traffic circles with beautiful gardens inside. Welkom is spacious, with a number of parks and gardens. There is one long street (Stateway) that drives through the central business district (CBD) which also houses the civic theatre (Nel & Binns, 2002). Oppenheimer had envisaged Welkom as a permanent place of beauty and wealth. According to Fleischer (1968):

> "What Sir Ernest [Oppenheimer] had in mind was not a mining camp which would disappear when the mines were finished but a town of permanence and beauty such as men could not believe in at the time and which they thought that

even the millions of Anglo American could not create" (Welkom: Capital of the Free State Goldfields, 1968).

1988 is regarded as the peak of the Free State Goldfields mining development during which over 150 000 mineworkers were employed (Nel & Binns, 2002). Gold mining and support industries and services underpinned Welkom and the area's tremendous development. It sustained white-owned businesses and economic growth for over 30 years. By the 1980s, over 80% of the jobs in the area were mine related (Nel & Binns, 2002).

The tables below provide a summary of the gold mines in the different areas and provide the dates on which operations started, when downscaling or closure happened or when the mine was acquired by new owners and renamed.

Table 1: Welkom area or "Central Section" consisted of the following gold mines (Klempner, 1956)

Old name	**Start of operation**	**Start downscaling**	**Closure/New name**
Free State Geduld mine Ltd	1956	1990s	-
Western Holdings Ltd	1953	1990s	-
Welkom G.M CO. Ltd	1951	1990s	-
President Brand G.M CO. Ltd	1954	1990s	-

President Steyn G.M CO. Ltd	1954	1990s	Now Bambanani
St. Helena Gold Mine Ltd	1951	1990s	-

The city of Welkom and surrounding towns are accompanied by a township planned for black labour in close proximity. The township in the proximity of Welkom is Thabong. In Sesotho, Thabong loosely translates into a “place of joy or a place of refuge” (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Thabong was established in September 1951 as the official “Bantu” residential area in the than Welkom municipality. The township was established to service labour needs of new mine-related industrial enterprises as well as in response to the rapid influx of African migrant workers to mine compounds mushrooming around the city.

In 1968 there were 3200 dwellings, housing a population of 22 800 Africa male labourers living with their families. In addition, 4200 African men rented in Thabong which had water and sanitation as well as refuse removal twice a week. Thabong was supplied with such services as tarred roads, a clinic (with x-ray machines and medication for infectious diseases freely supplied besides a small fee for maternity aid), Thabong isolation hospital (for TB and other infectious diseases), police station, crèche, sports stadium, tennis courts, children’s play grounds, schools, transport, churches and electricity. In 1963, the first African council in South Africa was established in Thabong. The Council was only concerned with the social and community life of residents of Thabong. Thabong has an estimated population of 126 013 and 39 710 households (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Hani Park is also located in close proximity to Welkom. It is separated by a road from the coloured township of Bronville. It has a population of 9 600 and about 3 396 households (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Seidman (1993) focused extensively on this area in her study of the impact of mine downscaling.

Table 2: Odendaalsrus area or "Northern Section" consisted of the following mines (Klempner, 1956)

Old name	Start of operation	Start downscaling	Closure/New Name
Freddies Cons. Mine Ltd	1954	1990s	-
Loraine Gold Mine Ltd	1955	1990s	-
Jeannete Gold Mine Ltd	-	-	-
Geoffries-MID. WITS	-	-	-

Kutloanong is a Sesotho word for "a place of mutual understanding". In close proximity to Odendaalsrus, Kutloanong is considerably smaller than Thabong with a population of 54 350 and 15 621 households (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Table 3: Virginia area or "Southern Section" (Klempner, 1956)

Old name	Start of operation	Start downscaling	Closure/New Name
Virginia O.F.S Gold Mine Ltd	1954	1990s	-
Merriespruit O.F.S Gold Mine Ltd	1950	1990s	-

Harmony Gold Mining Co. Ltd	1954	1990s	-
Saaiplaas	1961	1990s	-
Erfdeel	-	-	-

The township in close proximity to Virginia is Meloding. Meloding is a Sesotho word meaning a "place of melodies". Meloding has a population of approximately 44 362 and an estimated 13 683 households (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Virginia and Meloding were areas of Seidman's (1993) focus. She described the social impact of mine closure on Virginia as "devastating". Black low-skilled mineworkers with little or no prospects of shifting to other sectors were the worst affected.

The magnitude of dependence on a single sector highly reliant on international commodity prices was always unsustainable. This dependency was as a result of the failure to diversify (Nel & Binns, 2002; Marais et al., 2017).

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) No. 66 of 1995 (as amended by amendment Act, No 42 of 1996, Proclamation, No 66 of 1996, Amendment Act, No 127 of 1998 and Amendment Act, No 12 of 2002) provides for, in terms of section 189 and 189A, the dismissal of employees based on employer's operational requirements (South Africa. Department of Labour, 2017).

The closure of Rand Mine's Harmony mines in 1991 (Ryan, 1991) was the first spectacular blow to Matjhabeng. It resulted in the loss of over 10 000 jobs. In 1996, total employment in mining was estimated at 97 914. It dropped to 36 505 in 2001 and 27 494 in 2011 (Marais et al., 2017). The Free State Goldfields currently employ less

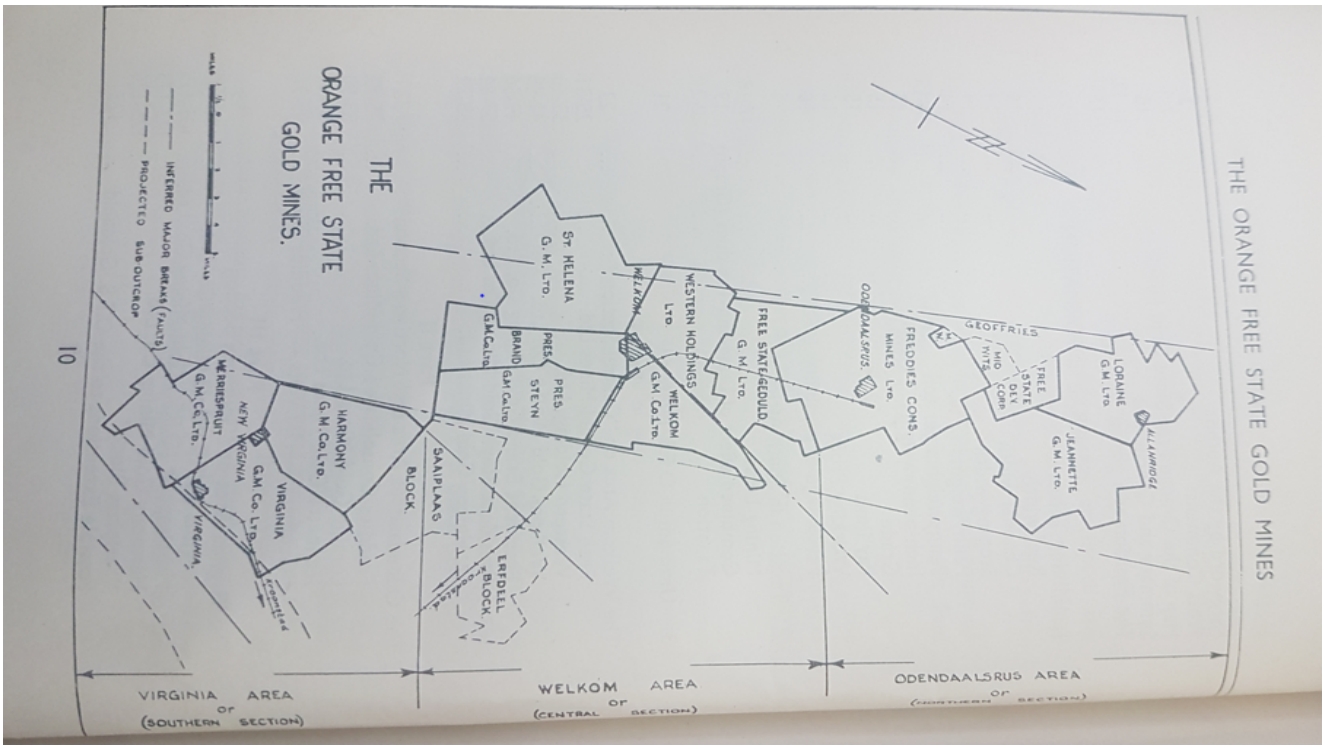
than 30 000 employees (down from the 150 000 in the late 1980s). In the late 1980s, mines had up to eight shafts each, but by 1999, remaining operating mines had no more than two shafts each. Many of these remaining mines have been sold off to smaller emerging black players such as African Rainbow Minerals (Nel & Binns, 2002).

The table below provides sectoral employment figures of Matjhabeng between 1996 and 2011. These figures (percentage) highlight the spectacular decline of the mining industry and the performance of other industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, services and trade (Marais et al., 2017).

Table 4: sectoral employment figures (percentage) of Matjhabeng between 1996 and 2011.

Sector	1996	2001	2011
Agriculture	5.3	8.4	3.7
Mining	55.6	31.0	29.4
Manufacturing	4.4	7.8	6.1
Utilities	0.4	0.3	0.5
Construction	3.9	3.3	5.5
Transport	1.8	2.4	3.4
Trade	9.3	18.1	17.4
Finance	7.8	9.6	10.4
Services	11.5	19.2	23.6
Totals	**100**	**100**	**100**

Figure 3: A map of the Orange Free State Gold Mines



Source: Klempner, 1956:10

Economic strategies for diversification and employment creation

In response to the economic decline, precipitated by mine downscaling and closure, economic diversification has been a major area of focus for the Matjhabeng Local Municipality. Economic responses have emphasized the need to promote local economic development (LED). Zaaijer & Sara (1993) define LED as a developmental approach based on partnerships and collaborations between local governments and/or community-based groups and the private sector in which they manage existing resources to stimulate local economic activities and create new employment.

Various economic strategies have been developed to build a post-mining economy. These efforts, however, have not been able to create sufficient labour absorption capacity to replace the number of jobs displaced because of mine downscaling and closure.

Nel and Binns (2002) highlight a number of initiatives that were meant to promote LED and create employment. These include, the Free State Goldfields Development Centre (FGSDC), Welkom College, the gold jewellery cluster, the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) Mineworkers' Development Agency (see Philip, 2006) and the Phakisa Raceway. Some of these initiatives have already collapsed on account of a host of challenges such as lack of funding and policy alignment. For instance, Marais et al. (2017) argue that LED initiatives may be hindered by a policy mismatch between government support and what is really needed at the local level. They also note that social and labour plans do not assist in promoting collaborative planning.

In his study focusing on the role of social labour plans in skills development and retraining targeting retrenched mineworkers, Zdrazil (2002) showed that the biggest factor underpinning the failure of social plans in three areas (Klerksdorp, Carletonville and Welkom) was the lack of collaboration. Retrenched mineworkers were retraining various skills such as plumbing, bricklaying, driving programmes to earn a learners' permit, carpentry, auto-mechanics et cetera, but the training was not tightly linked to any tangible market access opportunities.

Social plans were introduced in Welkom in 1998 and achieved some successes by preparing some of the people to find or create their own employment, but they also had

several problems such as the absence of a formal monitoring and evaluation process, weak institutional context in which they are implemented which is also linked to the lack of collaboration.

Social plans involve government, mining houses and labour. Social plans are an approach based on LED. Mining houses and labour often facilitated the recruitment of trainees, the actual skills training and funding, yet without government opening up market access opportunities for new market entrants, workers are often left unemployed. Zdrazil (2002) shows that the effectiveness of skills programms are dependent on the economic context in which they are implemented. Training itself without market opportunities does not create gainful employment. Skills development programms should be guided by economic development programmes. Economic development programmes should be embedded in the regional economies. Implementation of skills development programmes should emphasize tight collaboration and coordination at the local level as well as being aligned with the national economic agenda to promote job creation.

Development consultants appointed by Harmony mining companies are developing a "master plan" for the area's post-gold economy. Integrated development plans (IDPs) which are meant to articulate the municipality's development initiatives, however, barely reference mine closure or even give a proper description of what a post-mining economy means.

Marais & Nel (2016) note that planning for closure must be part of the initial planning of a mine's lifespan. They argue that part of the difficulty for Matjhabeng in building a

post-mining economy is linked to its planning as a “garden city”. The idea of a garden city emphasizes permanent settlement rather than mobility, yet the city of Welkom itself was founded upon mining, a finite and transitionary activity. Perhaps the problematic migrant labour system has been less of a challenge to these post-mining areas than permanent settlements. The initial planning was centred on establishing decentralized towns rather than one city. Welkom, Allanridge, Virginia and Odendaalsrus are scattered settlements which make it difficult to manage and survive mine downsizing and closure.

Marais et al. (2017) argue that perhaps a focus on a regional functional role might assist Matjhabeng to buffer the effects of mine downsizing. Matjhabeng’s economy does benefit from the growth of an emerging manufacturing sector and trade services. The establishment of a new retail centre, the Goldfields Shopping Mall has created new markets for local engineering to supply metal products and engineering services that are also being marketed regionally.

Conclusion

The focus of the thesis is experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work. This chapter has surveyed both local and international literature to provide a background of retrenchments and context of the study. Mine downscaling and closure often wreaks devastation for mining communities that are often unable to achieve meaningful economic diversification to absorb hundreds of thousands of ex-mineworkers that have been retrenched.

Studies of unemployment often highlight the social, economic and psychological impairments as the main problems of unemployment. Merely asserting that unemployment causes these impairments does not begin to explain why it has this affect on its subjects in the first place. This thesis takes it further and views these impairments as indicative of a deeper problem associated with the implications of suffering abrupt disruption and loss of shared collective consciousness (Durkheim, 1933, 1952, 1964). As such unemployment is reconceptualized as a problem of anomie experienced as loss.

Townships where ex-mineworkers now reside were identified and important demographic information provided shows that the problem of mine closure is not just a problem for ex-mineworkers but also for township life in general. Many people in these townships are unemployed, and the majority are young people.

Drawing from C. Wright Mills' (1959) distinction between a personal trouble and a public issue, it is clear that the problem of unemployment facing ex-mineworkers is not an individual problem associated with the specific and unique characteristics of the ex-mine workers themselves, instead, it is a systemic problem.

The period between the late 1980s and 2017 has seen the disappearance of over 80% of jobs in the gold mines. While mining's contribution to Matjhabeng's gross domestic product (GDP) is relatively significant, the evidence also shows that, its contribution has declined by over 26% between 1996 and 2011. The sector that has experienced growth in terms of its contribution to Matjhabeng's GDP is services. Yet, the growth of services has clearly not been at the scale required to absorb employment and keep unemployment low. LED responses have not yielded significant success in achieving

economic diversification and significant employment in the Free State Gold Fields. The reasons for this failure are varied, including the fact that mine closure was not sufficiently factored into the planning process at the inception of mining operations. As such, the planning was more focused on the idea of the "garden city" and "mining towns" which imply that it was not sufficiently foreseen that this region would in future transcend its status as a "mining town".

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STRATEGY

Introduction

The primary aim of this research is to explore the experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work. To explore lived experiences, subjective experience, consciousness and symbols, the research is by necessity qualitative. Such an approach enables the researcher to consider the perspectives of research participants (Bruyn, 1966; Filstead, 1970).

The research is qualitative and draws from a small, non-representative and non-generalizable purposefully selected sample. The fieldwork was conducted in Welkom and Lesotho. The places I visited included: Thabong, Hani Park and Virginia's Meloding Township. In Lesotho, I interviewed ex-miners in areas such as Makola, Teyateyaneng, Mapoteng and Ha-Ratau in the Berea district outside Maseru.

To elucidate the everyday life of participants and meanings attached to their social actions, the study combined qualitative research instruments such as participant observation at multiple sites, 66 semi-structured, unstructured interviews and conversations with both ex-mineworkers and other members of their households and communities. This combination of methods was able to generate thick qualitative data allowing the researcher access to the inner thoughts, emotions, and subjective interpretations of participant's worlds. The study was conducted over a period of 12 months.

I learned that ethnography opens a researcher to the worlds of participants in ways that other methods cannot. By opening the many different aspects of people's everyday

lives, it exposed their multi-layered and complex lives. Yet, not all these important layers can be practically captured. Thus, ethnography requires very deliberate strategic decisions to focus on the key question (s) that the researcher initially set out to explore because of the sheer volume of data it gathers in very short space of time.

Limitations

The findings do not represent the entire universe of experiences of unemployment of the total population of ex-mineworkers and other existing categories of unemployment across age, gender, race and context in post-apartheid South Africa or other post-mining communities.

Ontology and epistemology

Two dominant approaches define the scope of social science research. Both are premised on different ontologies, these are: positivism and interpretivism (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). From an ontological point of view, in one sense, Emile Durkheim can be regarded as a positivist while Max Weber an interpretivist. Durkheim's approach to sociology as an objective science was concerned primarily with the study of social facts as things. Weber, through his notion of *verstehen,* saw sociology as a subject that must be concerned with social action and the meanings actors give to their own actions. This approach tends to view participants as subjects with their own set of subjectivities and their own understandings of the social world. Thus, the task of the sociologist is to focus on and detail the inner perspectives and meanings that social beings attach to their social actions.

Yet, epistemologically, they are much closer. Durkheim's social facts and "objective universe" is rooted in shared moral understandings that sanction patterns of social

behaviour. These shared moral understandings derive their power from "collective consciousness" (*conscience*) which consists of the "ideas and sentiments to which we are most attached" (Durkheim, 1933:396). From this point of view, it becomes clear that Durkheim is also a theorist of meanings, which are, however, not just about individual understandings but collective.

Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research is more suited for providing descriptive information such as statistical data, usually for purposes of generalization. The qualitative approach provides an interpretative contextual perspective that cannot be obtained through a quantitative survey (Greenstein, Sitas, Roberts, Booth & Ngcobo, 2003:53).

By collecting data through unstructured and semi-structured interviews focused on ex-mineworkers' experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work, the study aimed at understanding their shared moral understandings.

Gaining access

My initial visit to Welkom was during July 2012 for a pilot study seeking to refine my research question. The initial idea was to explore livelihood strategies, illegal mining being one of them. On 6th July 2012, I met up (at Goldfields Mall), with a contact, Ntate Mandefu, who is a next-door neighbour from my home in Limpopo, at Ga-Matipane. It is an area of Bolobedu under the rule of the Rain Queen Modjadji dynasty. Ntate Mandefu has been a mineworker in Welkom since the early 1990s.

In his home in Hani Park, where he stays with his girlfriend, Matshidiso, and their son Thabang, I discussed my initial research objectives which focused on illegal mining. His experience as a mineworker made him ideal for identifying ex-mineworkers and snowballing. He made two important points that were to shape my approach. Firstly, he said that some mineworkers have remained in Welkom, but many have gone back to their various migrant labour sending areas such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Transkei. This implied that I would have to cover at least one sending area to track ex-mineworkers. As a result, I visited Lesotho.

Secondly, he said that while many ex-mineworkers have become illegal miners (*Zama-Zamas*), it is a dangerous area of study because of its intersection with non-mining criminal elements. He highlighted that there are many young people in the community who have become *Zama-Zamas* because of unemployment and poverty.

The next day, I visited Number 8 and Number 2 shafts at the long since mined-out and abandoned St. Helena mine with a lady from Lesotho who was working at a guesthouse where I stayed for a short while. She took me to a mine residence in St. Helena to meet her friend and home girl who sells food, mostly to *Zama-Zamas* or *Makgomosha.*[11] We met with her friend but two *Zama-Zamas* followed her to my car. Sensing some potential danger because of my own unease, I asked the lady from the guesthouse not to disclose the real reason I am here, so she just said I was her relative. The reason for

[11] Both terms refer to illegal miners. They both refer to activities usually outside the formal economy through which people attempt at constructing their livelihoods. The term '*Zama-Zama*' means 'to try' implying a sense of making a plan in order to survive (see Munakamwe,2015).

my unease was because I had noticed that the men with blankets gave us a piercing stare without greeting.

One of them had a gun but the ladies reproached them, saying they should not scare children (referring to me) with such things. In an aggressive tone, one of them said to the lady from the guesthouse that she must not bring strangers here. These men came from a rowdy house, packed with men and women drinking and playing loud music. I stayed there for about 10–15 minutes and left. My brief interaction indicated to me that they do not trust anyone and are constantly on alert for police and other potential threats. It became immediately clear to me that researching these activities would be a dangerous and potentially fatal endeavour. Moreover, it seemed to me that the research question of this thesis could still be answered drawing from a sample that would be relatively more aligned to my own strengths as a researcher.

Community members I spoke to in Thabong claimed they knew at least one or two *Zama-Zamas* but warned that I should not approach them asking "too many questions". Interestingly, other community members felt that it was very unfair of the state to criminalize their activities since it is providing them with employment. Some sections of the community believed that *Zama-Zamas* see themselves making a plan by using the only skill they have in order to feed, clothe and provide shelter for themselves and their families.

Ntate Mandefu said that *Zama-Zamas* were present in his workplace (Masimong) and were mining illegally on the older parts of the mine at Number 5 shaft. He declared that some of them remain underground for a given period and rely on legal mineworkers for

foodstuff often sold at inflated prices. A loaf of bread could cost R100, instant porridge R110, 500ml cold drink R75 and canned fish R120. Given this lucrative money-making opportunity some mineworkers, collaborating with security guards, would strategically insert bread/chicken and other foodstuff into their boots to sell to *Zama-Zama* underground. The mine, he claimed has since strengthened security to stop these practices.

On the 8th, I attended a church service in Thabong with the intention of gaining access through networks at church. Before the service, I had already spoken to a few church members about why I was there. Some of the church members are ex-miners but those who were not could at least direct me to someone they knew. Using the church as an access point proved quite helpful. It was at the church that I met Molumo with whom I stayed with for over 8 months in his shack in Bronville. He was a great help in my purposive and snowball sampling.

On the 9th, I visited the regional office of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Department of Minerals and Energy officer responsible for social and labour plans. The aim was to see if these organizations would be able to assist me in any way to get in touch with ex-miners who had been retrenched from Welkom mines. The help they were able to give me was quite limited, however.

A great help also came from referrals I received from Dr. Kally Forrest about two community activists, Mojalefa Rabolinyane and Thabo Khoeli working for the Gold and Uranium Belt Impact Censoring Organization (GUBICO). They took me around old shafts, introduced me to ex-miners and shared their experiences with me. Mojalefa

soon became a close friend and was always supportive throughout the course of my research including when I went to his home country of Lesotho.

Interviews were conducted between March 2013 and April 2014. I spoke to many ex-miners in Welkom. Some of them become key informants with whom I spent considerable time. Several interviews were conducted with wives and children of ex-miners. Most of the interviews with ex-miners were conducted in their homes or homes of other ex-mineworkers. Interviews were conducted in Sesotho. During the study, I also had numerous conversations with other members of Thabong, Bronville and Virginia to complement data gathered from ex-miners.

I developed very close relationships with some of my participants which led them to share some of the most private aspects of their lives, including sexual problems among others. When going to the field I was always conscious of certain things that might create barriers between me and participants such as the car, dress code and other material markers. As far as possible, I tried to eliminate these barriers. Weiss (1995) argues that the effectiveness of qualitative interviews depends very much on the skills of the researcher. Thus, it was important for me to develop rapport with participants in order to enable them to share their experiences of unemployment openly and fully.

During interviews, I tried to pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues. An important lesson with participant observation is to try and limit note taking in the field as much as possible. Writing while participants share their stories can be distractive to both the interviewer and interviewee. Keeping a notebook, jotting down key words

during interviews, and writing up a summary of the day's work in the evening is useful (Wiess, 1995). Most of the interviews were recorded and lasted over an hour and a half.

I interviewed union officials, including David Sipunzi (10/06/13), the former NUM Welkom Regional Secretary and current General Secretary of the NUM; Pastor Peter of Mercylife, facilitator of the Community Work Programme (CWP) in Bronville;, Sibongile (09/07/12) who was responsible for the implementation of social responsibility programmes at the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR); and Johan (02/12/13) who is a Chief Director for economic and spatial planning at the Economic Development Department of Matjhabeng.

I visited Lesotho twice and stayed in a place called Makola, some 15km outside Maseru. Interviews were conducted in various small villages such as Teyateyaneng, Mapoteng and Ha-Ratau in Lesotho. Interviews were conducted at the homes of participants with the help of one of my key informants Ntate Thabo Motseke. Mojalefa Rabolinyane also assisted with interviews. We interacted with many other community members to help me get a better sense of the area. Following ex-miners who left for Lesotho after being retrenched from Welkom mines helped gain an understanding of the ways in which context shapes the various experiences of unemployment.

All ex-mineworkers interviewed were black African men who had worked underground in various positions, at different times, in several mines in Welkom. Some were migrant labourers from neighbouring African countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique and other parts of South Africa such as the Eastern Cape. All of them had South African citizenship. In that sense, they are also South Africans.

Although I had spoken to other participants such as union officials, officials in various government departments, community members et cetera, in this section I focus solely on profiles of ex-mineworkers whose voices and experiences were the main focus of the study and paramount in answering the research question.

Ethics

In social research ethical issues arise immediately when I, as the researcher began interacting with ex-mineworkers and other research participants. While the researcher has the right to conduct scientific research, this must not be done at the expense of the participants. As such, before proceeding with the interviews, I introduced myself by explaining to my participants who I am and what my research is about. I made participants aware that they have the right to accept or decline participation and the right to refuse answering questions that they perceive as inappropriate. I did everything in my power to ensure extreme sensitivity and care so as to cause no harm whatsoever to participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Where a recorder was used, I asked for the permission from the participant. The key instrument I used in my fieldwork was a notebook. I asked for permission to take notes of what they were saying. During informal conversations, it was difficult to ask prior consent from all, particularly from participants who joined the conversation later (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001). In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality only pseudonyms are used in the report. This is meant to protect the confidentiality and preserve the right to privacy of the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

CHAPTER 6: THE EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN WELKOM

"Where object loss appears to entail the loss of an entire world
And therefore a loss of confidence about how to live on" (Lauren Berlant, 2011:16).

Introduction

The objective of the thesis is to investigate experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work among a group of ex-mineworkers in Welkom. This section presents empirical data gathered from interviews and interactions with ex-mineworkers and some of their family members in Welkom. The interviews focused on the everyday lived experiences of ex-mineworkers in their communities. Key themes identified in the data reflect both their experiences of unemployment and the meaning (s) they associate with wage work.

The sample of ex-mineworkers draws back to the period of inflexible migration of the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. In the centuries of mining in South Africa, this cohort of ex-miners is a fully proletarianized group. Many of their relatives are in Lesotho, Mozambique, and other parts of South Africa such as the Transkei but links to the countryside are largely severed so that their lives were predominantly based in Welkom and Virginia townships.

Although many were raised herding cattle and ploughing fields in the labour sending areas, they only seemed to value this part of their personal histories as a way of life

more important to previous generations than to themselves. They still valued it, but to a lesser extent. In their relatively small yards in Thabong, Hani Park and Virginia, small food gardens were not fully cultivated. They often had peach trees and grew a few tomatoes and some spinach, butternut, and corn. In other words, unlike older generations of mineworkers, this cohort did not have a high degree of commitment to the rural economy's way of life. This is mainly because in their adult lives, wage work has been their experience not the rural economy as such.

In Welkom, there was only one ex-mineworker who seemed to live a much more traditional life than the rest. Sekobela (21/08/13) had a sizeable herd of livestock which he began raising while employed. His livestock consisted of goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, and a horse. He also cultivated tomatoes, butternut, and spinach which he lives on and sells to the community.

When I visited him, he was wearing long rubber boots, overalls, and a traditional Basotho thatch hat. He had an old short-base Toyota bakkie, a tractor and a collection of farming tools such as spades, shovels, a rake, axes, a sickle, a wheelbarrow, and a hoe. He was well-off in comparison to the other participants. However, he fits more the description of a small-scale farmer, a small entrepreneur, than an unemployed person wedded to finding employment. Since his retrenchment, he has added to his livestock and farming tools. He has not been roaming around factories, mines and the roadside looking for jobs. He is an exception and not a typical participant in my study. His way of life strongly suggests he has largely moved on with his life. Employment was only a phase in his life that has now passed.

This, however, was not the experience of many participants who continued to place premium value on wage work. They struggled with moving on with their lives as Sekobela had, instead remaining largely attached to the idea of one day returning to a job, if not on the mines, at least in factories somewhere.

Nevertheless, a key challenge I observed when studying unemployment is that no one really seems to go through long-term unemployment in a continuous and uninterrupted way. Often long-term unemployment was characterised by intermittent periods of informal work and various forms of small-scale entrepreneurship. The reason, I regard my participants as unemployed, even though some of them do have intermittent periods of unemployment (and can technically be regarded as underemployed informal workers) is because they reject the idea used in official statistical measures of unemployment that people who have piece jobs occasionally can be regarded as employed. I elaborate on this point later.

There was very limited imagination explicitly mentioned in interviews for seeking alternative possibilities of earning an income and sustaining life outside, completely detached from the confines of wage work. Even available means of household income (often pooled together) such as grants and remittances, standing by the side of the road, scrap metal collecting, small food gardens, selling *muti,* selling diet and health products, doing occasional domestic work, and working periodically in retail, not to mention sharing incomes generated by wives and daughters. Participating in Community Works Programmes (CWP) did not prompt any attempt to organize their social lives in ways that decentred wage work.

The continued centrality of wage work seems to have had very serious deleterious effects on subjects. Pervasive economic insecurity seemed to be at the heart of the problem, but there were other equally damaging non-economic effects that seemed to be precipitated by the abrupt transition from wage work to wagelessness. Adjustment to new social and economic condition is not immediate. Instead, participants linger on for a very long time without transitioning into a different way of organizing their social and moral lives. In fact, some believed that it is impossible to normalize their new condition. The transition triggered by the abrupt change in their lives seems to impair their capacity for fully integrating into their society.

Drawing from the data I present below; I show that unemployment impaired the normal functioning of three critical aspects of their social life. Firstly, unemployment impaired the economic security of subjects due to the lack of a stable and predictable income. Secondly, unemployment impaired social life. The organization of social relations was impaired not just because of the lack of a defined set of activities that brought people together on a frequent basis as employment used to do but also because it was seen to constitute a type of social blemish on the individual. Thirdly, unemployment impaired psychological stability. Mental tension or stress compromised the formal functioning of other areas of life such as temperament and sexual health.

I suggest that these three main effects of unemployment do not produce deleterious outcomes because they cause poverty, social uncertainty, and psychological and physiological distress (as existing literature reports), but because a particular moral regulation has lost its hold over individuals. I suggest that unemployment represents the abrupt disruption and loss of shared moral values, that is the disturbance of

collective order or consciousness without instantaneous provision of an alternative collective order or consciousness in place of the old. In Durkheimian terms, unemployment thus appears as anomie experienced as loss.

Unemployment as economic insecurity

One of the main characteristics of neo-liberal global transformation is the systematic construction of chronic economic insecurities. These insecurities are pervasive not only among the unemployed but also among the employed, especially the precariat (Standing, 2011) and the working poor (Altman, 2003).

Scholars have highlighted the ways in which employment tends to create expectations of a decent life because of the prospects of a stable and regular income (Barchiesi, 2009, 2011a&b). Yet, wage work has increasingly become a place of disappointment. In some instances, informal jobs pay more than formal employment. As Mr Khumalo, a car guard, pointed out:

"The jobs are not paying … that is why people are turning to informal jobs, because they're paying more than formal jobs" (Khumalo, 2012; in Valet & Hustler, 2012:4).

Thus, a perception exists among some of the 'working poor'/'precariat' that some unemployed men in their communities are better off than them. This idea seems to reflect more about economic insecurities facing the working poor themselves more than it does about the unemployed. In a random conversation I had with a cleaner at a residential complex in Welkom who earns R1800 per month, Ntate Pontso (18/10/13)

perceived some unemployed men in his community to be better off than himself even though he works:

"I am working but I am suffering. The money I earn is not enough. Food and transport are expensive. Everything is expensive. Some unemployed people here in Thabong are better than me but I work" (Ntate Pontso, 18/10/13).

Another informant who was one of the 'working poor' announced that he saw the unemployed as people who always have money for alcohol. He claims that often, the unemployed in his community are drunk, with a cigarette in hand while talking loudly on the phone. In his view, many unemployed people in his community obtained a certain level of economic security provided by networks of working friends and family that many poor working people do not seem to have.

The problem of economic insecurity in unemployment is nonetheless quite severe in a different way. While the precariously employed receive a regular wage, the unemployed often rely on the ability and willingness of others, and intermittent piece-jobs for income. The unemployed find it difficult to plan or budget and thus live hand to mouth in a different sense to the precariously employed. Even though Ntate Pontso is one of the working poor, he has a predictable, regular, albeit small, wage income.

The unemployed in South Africa lack guaranteed welfare benefits such as the Hartz IV (see Chapter 6) in Germany and thus live under uncertainties of a different kind. There is no sense of predictability of income for the unemployed in Welkom. Born in 1953, Thuso (17/04/13) comes from the Eastern Cape, in an area called Botha. He started

working in at Harmony's Virginia Merriespruit 1 shaft in 1998. He worked as a generalist, construction team and team stoper. He was retrenched in 2010 when Harmony announced the closure of its Virginia operations' Harmony 2, Merriespruit 1 and Merriespruit 3 shafts (Harmony, 2017). He stays in Thabong with his wife and two sons (18, 12). He highlighted the economic insecurities faced in unemployment by speaking about what kinds of possibilities employment enables:

"Employment enables you to think about and plan your future, but unemployment makes you think all the time- – what will I do next? What will I eat before I sleep" (Thuso, 17/04/13).

Economic insecurity also creates the impossibility of structuring time for eating and other social activities, which often need to be secured through an income. Not having money to buy food not only shaped what Thuso's household can eat but also shaped the time-ordering of his day.

Among the unemployed in Welkom, economic insecurity played itself out in two ways. Firstly, they lost the ability to order their lives as before unemployment. Secondly, they struggled to secure the social reproduction of self and the household. These forms of insecurities had been mainly shaped by socially constructed gender identities and expectations associated with mine masculine self-formation (Moodie, 1994) and breadwinning masculine identity.

Lenkwe (06/03/14) was born in 1952 on a farm in Smitfontein where his parents worked and lived. He left school in Standard 2. He began working at President Steyn Gold Mine

(PSGM) 5 Shaft mine in 1975. He worked as a machine operator, welder and stope team leader. Like many others, he lived in the mine hostels/compounds before moving to Thabong. He was retrenched in 1998. Since his retrenchment he has been browsing other goldmines and factories hoping to get a job. Yet, he was never able to find a permanent job. He has been surviving as a small-scale welder making different products such as door and window frames, but he has very few customers that he experiences long spells of time without a project. He explained the double economic insecurities of the unemployed, namely that of (i) no sense of predictability about income and (ii) the impossibility of guaranteeing and securing social reproduction for self and the household. Basic human needs such as food, clothing and footwear become unattainable, he says:

"Unemployment changes everything, even your family. There is no food in the house. You cannot buy your children clothes. All these things are expected from you. Look at my shoes, there is nothing left underneath. My feet touch the ground. But what can I do because I don't work? Nothing!" (Lenkwe, 05/03/14).

The lack of necessities among my participants reached desperation levels at times. I illustrate this by citing one example. I had built trusting relations with some of the participants, and this allowed me to get very personal accounts of their lives. On one occasion, I travelled to Lesotho with a key informant who was going to link us up with some of his former mining colleagues and other ex-mineworkers who returned to Lesotho after being retrenched. He had not used an antiperspirant roll-on for more than a week because he could not afford one and this worried him, especially because he was tidy and clean man. I had to share the one that I had with him. For him, things had

become so bad that when he gets some money, the option is really between buying food or necessities such as an anti-perspirant roll-on.

Economic insecurities among the group of ex-mineworkers was mostly narrated through a gendered lens. Economic insecurities in unemployment also impacted on their sense of status and masculine pride. Raseboko (10/04/14) hails from the Transkei. He was retrenched in 2010 after the closure of Merriespruit 1. He had worked as a general worker. He began by recounting that his children were migrated to live with his mother in the Transkie since his marriage broke down. He declared that he cannot go and sit doing nothing and he remained in Welkom to search for employment. He lives alone in Meloding. He highlighted his perception that unemployment had stripped him of his masculine status embedded in the idea of providing for the family:

"Unemployment has taken away my status as a man. A man gets his status from providing for his family. If I cannot provide for my family, what status is there?" (Ntate Raseboko, 10/04/14).

Thuso (17/04/13) echoed Ntate Raseboko's sentiments but also added that economic insecurities implied a strong sense of embarrassment:

"It affects your status in many ways as a man. You don't feel proud of who you are. Your family is struggling in front of you and there is nothing you can do. Sometimes I get help from my relatives but I feel embarrassed because as a man, I am supposed to work for my family. I have lost my status."

The data suggests that wage-centred conceptions of breadwinning masculinities remain dominant in a social world that is changing rapidly. Economic insecurities in unemployment pose threats to traditional wage-centred understandings of masculinity. What does it mean for these men and for society to define masculine self-formation and masculine identity through wage work in its absence? Many people are facing this reality in their everyday lives.

The consequences of this development are severe. Men who are unemployed and often unable to fulfil wage work centred social expectations and obligations increasingly lack confidence and feel worthless. New forms of masculinities delinked from wage work do not emerge spontaneously. When individuals are thrust into unemployment, they and their households are not able to spontaneously adjust their economic expectations to meet the new conditions. Aspirations typically far outstrip provision. This sets the scene for all kinds of pressures.

These pressures are fertile ground for an increase in household tensions and bickering. Chabedi (19/03/14) is divorced and lives with his father who earns an old-age grant. Chabedi gets piece jobs from time to time. His last part-time job involved the installation of new water pipes in Thabong. Chabedi highlighted his perception that his new condition of economic insecurity was central to new problems and conflicts in his household. He felt always under pressure because of the new form of economic insecurity:

“Being unemployed caused a lot of problems for my family. There are always conflicts: things were not the same as before [when he was still working]. I could not meet their

needs but sometimes it seems like they do not understand. So I was always under pressure."

Letsie (19/03/14) and his friend Chabedi (19/03/14), were retrenched from Steyn 1 in 2008 where they worked as underground assistant driller and electrical assistant respectively. They had worked together at the last piece job that involved the installation of new water pipes in the township. Letsie is divorced from his 1st wife but now has a new partner, a woman who is a traditional healer. Mostly, she is the one that brings some form of income to the household. He spoke well of his current relationship, stating that they respect each other as man and woman. This was unlike his 1st marriage. The pressures in his 1st marriage were centred on economic insecurity. He could no longer provide as before, but his family's expectations did not adjust. As such, he felt that he was useless and no longer saw a reason why he should still live:

"You cannot provide for your family as a man. The pressure from my family was too much, I even thought about committing suicide. I felt that I was nothing, no one important to my own family. Useless. I cannot see what I am still living for" (Letsie, 19/03/14).

Molakolako (20/02/14) was born in the Botshabelo Township near Bloemfontein in 1962. He went to school up to Standard 8. He became a mineworker at Unisel in 1983 and was retrenched in 2007. He had worked as a winch driver. Molakolako now does piece jobs around the community. He said:

“I live by piece jobs, that R50 that I get here and there, I am able to live off it” (Molakolako, 20/02/14).

He lives with his sister and brother-in-law in Thabong. He considers himself a handy man who can mend fences, cut grass, fix leaking roofs, and plaster walls. He perceived the economic insecurity caused by the loss of his stable mining job as a contributing factor to the breakdown of his household. According to him, things got so bad between him and his wife that she started cheating on him with employed men because he could not provide for her basic needs any longer.

Through Molakolako, we are able to see that it appears as if economic insecurities can also set the scene for the emergence of other forms of insecurity. Several ex-mineworkers who are now divorced accused their wives of cheating on them with employed men because they could no longer provide for them.

The data suggests that economic insecurities can also emerge as social insecurities because the ex-mineworkers were unable to ensure the social reproduction of their wives. As Molakolako stated:

“When you work [employed], you can stand for yourself. You can do things for yourself. I was retrenched in 2002 and divorced in 2010. When I ran out of money, it affected my marriage. She was cheating on me with a working man. We decided to divorce because I was going to kill her. She left me when I was sick [silicosis]”(Molakolako, 20/02/14).

Lenkwe (13/07/13) also accused his ex-wife of cheating on him with an employed man driving a white car because the man with the car could provide for his wife's basic needs. He said:

"My wife was having an affair right in front of my eyes with a working man, you can even ask Mofokeng [another participant and his old friend] I used to call him and tell him that I am fighting with my wife. It was bad. There is a man who works at municipality that stays at Mshengoville [section of Thabong]. They call him Mochedi. He was driving a white Honda. He would pass here and my wife would follow the car and get in at the corner. When I asked her where she came from she would make noise saying 'You are not working. Other men are working. All you do is watch me all day.' So I realized she wanted me to beat her so that she could call the police to arrest me. Where will I work because where I worked my company is closed and her boyfriend's company is not" (Lenkwe, 13/07/13).

Although participants reported increased tensions and the changing nature of their relationship with their wives, I did not come across any accounts of domestic violence as such.

My interviews suggested that economic insecurities can also lead to newly emerging forms of economic and social envy. In Tumelo's instance, we can see how the polarising effects of envy threaten good neighbourliness and social solidarity. Tumelo (17/02/14) was born in 1960 in Botshabelo Township outside Bloemfontein. He dropped out of school in Standard 3. He worked as a generalist and rock drill operator at Steyn 2 until 2008.

He became a key informant, and I also interviewed his wife (Gloria), daughter (Manketsi 26 years old) and sister-in-law (28 years old Mampe has two young children a boy and a girl aged 3 and 5). He also led me to other interviewees including his neighbours and friends who are ex-mineworkers. His yard was relatively large compared to most of the other yards, but there are only two small shacks. His lives in one of the shacks with his wife, daughter and two sons (10 and 12 years old). Before he moved to the shack in Thabong, he declared that he held a bond on a house in Riebeekstad near Welkom city whence he was evicted.

His sister-in-law, Mampe's older sister, has one two-year-old girl child. Mampe's sister works as a cashier at a fish and chips outlet in town. She reportedly earns between R800 and R1200 a month. Mampe and Manketsi are not at school and are unemployed. Extended family members bring food sometimes, but this can create problems. In one of my interactions with Manketsi, for instance, she told me a story about what her uncle had recently done.

"My uncle brought rotten meat to come and give us here at home. Maybe in his eyes, we are dogs. He thinks he is better. Poverty brings a lot of disgusting things" (Dineo, 20/07/13).

In another household, that of Ntate Sefako (10/06/13, 13/06/13, 10/04/14) and Mme-Dineo (13, 06/13, 20/07/13), which I describe later, Refiloe (20/08/13) was studying for his matric. His grandmother, Mme-Dineo (13, 06/13, 20/07/13), sees him as her

only real hope of getting out of poverty. Refiloe described a situation of food insecurity. He said:

"Sometimes we eat pap with water. Sometimes we have bottled peaches soaked in water. That is why many families here have peaches in their yards. Sometimes you just drink water and go to sleep. Sometimes I worry about what we are going to eat. Sometimes I need things like roll-on but I cannot have them. I tell myself that I am going to change this situation" (Refiloe, 20/08/13).

In one of the interviews that I had with Tumelo, an important aspect of the economic and social envy I describe emerged. He declared that it was an uncomfortable experience for him to see his neighbour who had just retired as a mineworker returning from the supermarket:

"It is not nice seeing other men providing for their families, holding plastic bags full of groceries going into their yards, and their kids running to meet them by the gate and my family has nothing in the house" (Tumelo, 13/07/13).

His statement suggests that he wished to be in his neighbour's situation providing materially for his family. Envy is different from desire (Klein, 1988). If it was desire, one could suggest that Tumelo would have not found the experience of seeing his neighbour providing for his family uncomfortable or in his own words "not nice". Envy on the other hand can be ill-wishing and destructive.

On the day of that interview, I spent almost the entire day at his house. All we ate were peaches and drank Welkom's brownish water. There was no money to buy bread. The

only available meal was reserved for the evening. His wife sells health and beauty products, she returned from one of her very long walks, sweaty, thirsty and hungry. She joined us in peach-eating and began complaining that she walked a very long distance to go and collect money from a client who had not been answering his phone. The client owed her R100. Unfortunately, instead of giving her money, the client offered only excuses.

Although Gloria's small business is unable to provide her with a sufficient level of predictability and stability, the money does help the family to provide for basic needs such as maize meal and protein, toothpaste, Vaseline, roll-on, powder soap, bath soap, over the counter medicine, airtime, burial club contributions and electricity. I do not count water because in most indigent households, it was provided free by the municipality.

They are aided by the pooling and sharing that happens between her family and the resources from her sister's neighbouring shack in the form of the meagre wage from the fish and chips outlet and child grants. The pooling of resources also goes towards the payments of school fees and transportation costs. When Tumelo goes looking for employment in Welkom and in other provinces, he draws from the same pool.

Economic insecurity has eroded the ability for stable participation in burial and savings clubs. Often participants can contribute between R20, R50 and R200 depending on the cover– especially those that had access to some form of income either through grants, informal jobs, remittances and borrowing et cetera. For example, Gloria has a friend who is employed. In times of need, she can borrow small amounts of money for her

small business. Although she admits to really disliking borrowing, she is forced to do it as a response to economic insecurity and in the hope of overcoming it.

The Unemployed Insurance Fund (UIF) is no more than a short-term intervention aimed at providing relief to workers once they become unemployed or unable to work due to various reasons such as illness and maternity leave. Dependents of deceased contributors are also covered (Department of Labour, 2013). However, participants did not identify the UIF as a source that provided economic security for them in any meaningful way. The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) was not mentioned in the sample. This is unsurprising, given the large number of ex-mineworkers being sought by the Department of Labour (DOL) to submit claims to qualify. The ex-mineworker's union and the Southern African Miners Association (SAMA) found that high illiteracy levels of ex-mineworkers "hinder them to follow through on their benefits as they do not read and write" (SAMA, 2015:15). The translation of written material into understandable content for mineworkers was often done by the unions. In unemployment, it seems that ex-mineworkers lack access to a voice because they fall outside the mandate of the union.

The idea of a Basic Income Grant (BIG) – a universally-provided unconditional small amount of money given to citizens of a country – has been around for several years, but for the most part, it has been ignored (Standing, 2011, 2017a&b). However, in recent years, more and more people are beginning to pay it some attention. This growing attention towards the BIG is partly because of the deepening levels of economic insecurity across the globe. Indeed, proponents of the Basic Income Grant such as Guy Standing and the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) see it as a way of addressing economic insecurity in the global transformation (Standing, 2009, 2011, 2017b).

However, evidence seems to suggest that ex-mineworkers in Welkom reject the idea of a BIG. Tumelo's (13/07/13) statement illustrates this view eloquently. Like other participants, he uses the language and metaphors of dismembered bodies with missing parts to describe their experience of unemployment. I discuss what this language signifies later. Participants held the view that grants for the unemployed are equivalent to an artificial leg. While the artificial leg can enable certain possibilities, it was not considered as a full replacement of the leg that has been lost. When an individual loses their leg (unemployment), even if you give them an artificial leg, the experience of loss still remains. He stated:

"I have seen people without legs, touching themselves, they say, 'you know, I was trying to touch my leg and the leg is not there at all.' Even if you can put an artificial leg, that is not your leg. Grants do not replace the lost leg" (Tumelo, 13/07/13).

They highlighted the fact that they will take the money because they need it for basic needs, but they still believed that wages are more desirable. Firstly, because wages are actually a form of payment for rendering one's labour. The idea is that it is better to earn money than to depend on handouts (Standing, 2017). Secondly, they believed that if you give people money, they would no longer be willing to labour. Thirdly, they believed that such a grant would not be able to provide the dignity and identity associated with wage work. Instead, a BIG would lead to stigma associated with able-bodied men (participants used gendered language) living on hand-outs.

Ntate Lesiba (18/03/13; 10/04/14) was born in Lesotho in 1958. His father worked in the goldfields. He was recruited through The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) in

1978 and worked in Virginia 1 shaft. He worked a Merriespruit 1 and moved to 3 until his retrenchment in 2010. He worked as a winch driver, team stope, team stope leader, construction team leader and as a hostel administrator after surviving phthisis. He worked as a hostel administrator at Merriespruit 3 until 2010 when mine closure was implemented. He lives in Meloding with his wife and four daughters. One of the daughters earns a child grant of R280 per month. He was the chair of the group of ex-mineworkers that meets frequently in Meloding. He drew directly on a conception of masculinity that was quite general in the group as a rejection of the BIG. This, is what he said:

"A man must earn his money by working with his hands" (Ntate Lesiba (18/03/13).

In essence, the belief is that such a grant would be able to reduce the level of economic insecurity associated with unemployment by proving a regular, predictable and stable income, but in their view, it would not replace the desirability of wage work.

Ex-mineworkers also have access to informal *mashonisa* (loan sharks) (see James [2014] for a comprehensive account of *mashonisa*). They usually borrow very small amounts of money. Usually between R50 and R200. The problem is that they default and the interest keeps going up, making it difficult to repay the loan. They reported instances where the interest is as high as 30% to 50%. It was therefore an important consideration for them to ask for money they will be able to repay. The *moshonisa* were often people they knew who could only just write their name, date and amount in a book. When unable to pay, they would go and try to negotiate with the *mashonisa* to halt the interest so that it does not keep going up. Negotiations would not always be

successful, because some *mashonisa* come after you and threaten you if you fail to pay. On the other hand, many of them still owe banks for vehicles and homes that have been repossessed as well as outstanding personal loans.

Unemployment as social insecurity/impairment

As shown above, economic insecurities associated with unemployment can also influence and shape forms of social insecurities. One of the key characteristics often highlighted as an important feature of wage work, is the way in which it provides forms of organized social interaction. Sefalafala (2012) shows the importance workers often attribute to wage work as a basis for social interaction and the making of new friendships. An an interview with Charles (15 /09/11), a private security guard working in Gauteng, shows how workers looked forward to going to their workplaces not only for the job but because they have made many friends through it.

Social interactions constructed through wage work provide a basis for the sharing of life lessons, life experiences and personal problems and solutions. Social interactions are not just ways of whiling away time, they also have the power to transform the actual experience of wage labour itself. In Charles' case, social interactions and friendships helped overcome the problem of boredom. These social relations (friendships etc.) help to reduce the monotony and repetition which is typical of his work (Smith, Lopata, Norr, Barnewolt & Miller, 1985 cited in Barbalet, 1999:639). Charles said:

“To work with my workmates as a team because when I come to work in the morning, I feel very happy to work with them. I make friends through my job” (Charles (15 /09/11).

Indeed, in adult life, most people spend a considerable amount of time in their places of employment. For mineworkers who often stayed together in hostels and compounds and also worked in gangs underground, the basis for social interaction and constructing friendship was quite solid. Social interaction did not just end in the place of work, but it also continued in their places of residence. My interview data showed that in unemployment, social interactions with their former colleagues often showed up in their dreams. I elaborate further on dreams later. When mineworkers recount their experiences of mine labour, friendships, including those of homeboys and others, are a key feature that transformed their experience of what is otherwise hard and dangerous labour.

One of my participants, Ntate Jeremiah (28/03/14) gave an account of how mineworkers used to look out for each other in the mine underground. He was born in 1959 in the Free State and stayed in school until Standard 8. He worked at Western Holdings 4 and 5 from the early 1980s until the late 1990s. He started working as a generalist, a team stoper. He lives in Thabong with his two children (17 and 15) and wife. Ntate Jeremiah acknowledges the dangerous nature of mine work and “miners regularly pay with injuries and death” (Nattrass, 1995:168) but highlights forms of cooperation and solidarity which made work for them much more meaningful:

"We taught each other many things in the mines. We protected each other. In the waiting place, we would remind each other of the rules and the need to concentrate. One of my colleagues told us that he could not sleep last night because of the *mpondolo*, a nightly creature that takes you and kills you. He said to us, that his wife came to the compound at 1 am and woke him up. She said to him, wake up and follow me. He woke up and looked at his wife but she had no feet, she was floating in mid-air, he didn't follow her. If you receive bad news, maybe about the death of a loved one, we do not allow you to work because you are distracted. We will cover the work for you. When he told us what happened to him last night, we immediately knew what was happening. Today was his turn to fetch us water. When he went to fetch water, the *mpondolo* possessed him again and he followed it. Mine work is very dangerous, when tiny rocks fall, they cut you deeply. Look at my scars (pointing to his arm and leg). We became worried when he was not coming back, a colleague ran and found him heading towards a cliff that goes deep. The colleague shouted and shouted but he kept on going and finally he caught up with him and pulled him back … There are many things happening underground, *muti* plays a big role" (Ntate Jeremiah, 28/03/14).

Unemployment dilutes or breaks friendships formed through employment. It can also make it more difficult for people to make friends because of the isolation it can bring. In the European contexts, literature on unemployment shows that in more urbanized contexts, unemployment leads to isolation which breaks down social solidarity (Jahoda et al., 1972).

The view that unemployment can undermine social solidarity seems to concur with Durkheim's (1963) thesis that the function of the division of labour or wage work in

modern society is to forge social solidarity or organic solidarity. Indeed, as I try to show in the thesis, unemployment appears as a moral debasement because individuals are no longer regulated by the moral authority of wage work.

However, while some participants described experiences of isolation similar to those described in the literature, there is also a form of social isolation or social insecurity of a different type. It occurs not in the sense of social isolation, but in the sense of social blemishing through stigma, insults and disrespect the participants perceived to be aimed at them because they are unemployed.

Goffman's definition of "stigma" is deeply Durkheimian because it attributes stigmatism to conditions and situations which defy dominant social norms and values. Stigmatism is deeply moral. According to Goffman (1963), to stigmatize is to mark out undesirable blemishes in an individual or collective. Stigmatism disqualifies individuals and collectives from the category of full social acceptance. To stigmatize is to question the moral status of a person (Goffman, 1963). It is to make a judgment that a given condition is socially anomalous.

In Lesotho, I interviewed a man called Kotsi (13/06/13). He was born in 1962. His late father was a mineworker who died underground due to earth fall. Soon after, his mother left Lesotho seeking employment as a domestic worker in Bloemfontein. He went to school until Standard 2 then took his father's place at Saaiplaas and worked in a stope team from 1981 until his retrenchment in 1996. During the interview, I had to speak louder and while he bent forward to listen because of hearing impairment that he declared emanates from the extreme explore of noise underground.

Kotsi (13/06/13) reported that he was divorced but also claimed he found someone else. He claimed that unemployment had negatively affected his marriage. He believed that younger women in his village of *Makola* and even worse in Welkom tend to give more respect to men who work for wages. He believes that rural agricultural activities that he is currently engaged in in Lesotho, do not dispel the stigma and stereotyping often suffered by the unemployed. He reported that many ex-miners are no longer given the dignity, status and respect that he once knew when he was employed in the goldfields of Welkom. According to Kotsi (13/06/13), tradition, for example, having to call males "ntate" as a traditional symbol of respect, still plays some role in maintaining a basic level of respect for men. Despite the role played by tradition, he still believed, that this role is insufficient in preventing a man's status and dignity to be denigrated.

In Lesotho, a different narrative emerged that seemed to decentre wage work in conceptions of masculinity. Some of the interviewees in rural Lesotho, reported that after being retrenched from various mines in Welkom, they returned home to try subsistence farming. They had given up the idea of ever finding employment especially on the mines.

During the first round of interviews in Lesotho in June 2013, for instance, I came across a participant (Kgwiti). He was born in Lesotho in 1957. He dropped out of school in Standard 3. He grew up herding cattle and farming. He worked at Welkom 1 from 1982 until 2004 as a winch operator/driver. He spent his money on acquiring a car, tractor, pay for children's schooling, farming tools and completing his house. When I met him in June of 2013 at his home in Lesotho, he reported that initially, he felt that

retrenchment offered him some kind of freedom to be close and spend more time with his family than being far away. He said:

"Being unemployed enabled me to return home to do what I really like which is farming. I plant corn, beans, spinach. I am not working under another person. I am free. I see that my wife and children are also happy because we spend more time than before" (Kotsi, 13/06/13).

He sells some of his produce in the community where he drives around in his van. When I revisited Lesotho in September of 2013, he highlighted an aspect of unemployment contrary to what he had told me less than 3 months before. He now believed that unemployment was terrible rather than a liberating experience. He also reported that produce from his farm had declined significantly. He was no longer able to use the tractor because the tyres were worn out and unable to grip on the ground to pull the plough. His van had been giving him mechanical problems and costing him money to fix it. But in 2014, he returned to South Africa looking for a job, including at the goldmines of Carletonville. He was, however, unable to find

Besides the increase in his level of economic insecurity, there is perhaps another reason we can use to explain such a seemingly rapid change from unemployment experienced as freedom to three months later, it being experienced as a dread. Perhaps, to make sense of the shift he seems to describe, the stage model which is often used in psychology could help explain. The stage theory of unemployment argues that the attitudes of the unemployed transition through various phases, initially as a sense of freedom but eventually culminating in apathy and despair (Jahoda et al., 1982; Fagin

& Little, 1984; Parkes, 1971). However, such stage model theories are more suited for longitudinal research design such as those conducted by Jahoda et al. (1982) rather than the research design adopted for this research.

The data in Lesotho seems to suggest attempts by ex-mineworkers to focus predominantly on subsistence farming rather than wage work. Rural subsistence agricultural activities and the extent to which those activities enabled the family to survive played an important role. Farming activities included cattle, sheep and pig breeding. Corn was harvested mainly for the production of maize meal. Sorghum, pumpkin, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onion, spinach and other indigenous *morogo* (greens) were also planted. In certain instances, the entire family (women and children and next of kin) would be involved in agricultural activities organized along a gendered division of farm work. Distinctions between the employed and unemployed is sometimes blurred. For example, sheep would be sheared and the wool would be sold. In defining what it meant to him to be a man in Lesotho, Motlalepula (12/06/13) said:

"We build our houses on the highlands; the lowlands are used for agriculture. As men, we wake up in the morning to plough the fields and take care of the animals, that is what being a man means here."

Ntate Ramabanta (13/06/13) was born in Lesotho in 1952. He worked at Welkom 1 from 1973 until 2002 when he was retrenched. He worked as a generalist on a construction team. He drew a comparison between life in Welkom and in Lesotho and noted how men in the different contexts tended to define and organize their masculine identities:

“In Welkom people stand by the garage and ask for piece jobs. Sometimes they wait the whole day without getting anything. Here, we do not do that. I do agricultural activities that will allow me to put food on the table. I plant cabbage, corn and time and again we will slaughter an animal to eat and sell to get some money. Those are the things I do to protect my status as a man in my family” (Ntate Ramabanta, 13/06/13).

However, despite reporting such shifts to non-wage-centred ways of defining and organizing masculinity, wagelessness for most of my informants remained a stigmatized condition. Participants cited examples of labels naming aspects of their state of joblessness they considered insulting. Ntate Lethabo (26/03/14), for instance, was born in Lesotho in 1950. He worked at Western Holdings 1 as a generalist and a clerk in the 1970s until the late 1980s. He lives at Rheederspark in Welkom and walks long distances collecting scrap metals. He also regards himself as a pastor. In his yard, there is a small area with five chairs, two short wooden benches and a small table. His Christian beliefs have played an essential role in helping him navigate through unemployment at a spiritual level. He believes that when you are unemployed, people despise you. He said:

“They disrespect you. They call you all sorts of degrading names” (Ntate Lethabo, 26/03/14).

Ntate Morena (27/03/14) added that people regard the unemployed as worthless people. Ntate Morena was born in 1962 in Botshabelo and began working at President Steyn 4 in 1980 until his retrenchment in 1998. He then worked as a contract worker at Bambanani until 2008 as a store assistant and locomotive driver. Ntate Morena said:

“You are nothing to people when you do not have a job. They take you as nothing” (Ntate Morena, 27/03/14).

Ntate Morena gave an example of the name calling and insults he perceives people are using to describe the unemployed. One such insult describes the unemployed as people who just sit around doing nothing but watching the sun. As an unemployed man, however, he said he is very busy, looking for wage work and doing things such as walking long distances to stand by the side of the road in search of piece jobs. They call you, he said:

“The one that sits under the sun all day doing nothing. Even though you don’t do that. You are busy going to town every day trying to get something” (Ntate Morena, 27/03/14).

Even when Ntate Jeremiah (28/03/14) used the phrase “just sitting” implies static condition, he seems to contradict himself by stating that he finds something to do. This seems to indicate that the phrase “just sitting” highlights the fact that time feels dead now that he is not employed, even though he is doing work in his yard. He said:

“I just sit at home. What can I do? Sometimes I find something to do in the yard just to keep busy” (Jeremiah, 28/03/14).

Ntate Mathebula (26/08/13) comes from the Northern Cape in Upington. He was born in 1965, a child of farmworkers. He left school in Standard 3 and worked at Lorraine 1 and 3 between 1983 and 2008 as a generalist and winch operator. He claims that, in

2012, he was diagnosed with Pthisis and that he is still busy with the claims. Ntate Sefako introduced him to lawyers from Richard Spoor Inc. Attorneys. He is Ntate Sefako's neighbour in Hani Park. He walks long distances to town just like Ntate Morena. He gave a clear description of the term *mahlalela* (unemployed). He believes that people calling him by that name attack his sense of dignity. He believes he does not deserve such an attack because being unemployed is not is own fault, he was abruptly retrenched. Before that, he was a man who took care of his responsibilities. Describing him as a *mahlalela* does not take that into consideration. It is a way of people to talk bad about men like him. He said:

"I don't like that name because I did not make myself unemployed. I see it as something silly when someone calls me *mahlalela* (unemployed). It is like they take you as nothing. Yes I am unemployed, but it's like an insult. People undermine you, they talk bad about you" (Ntate Mathebula, 26/08/13).

Many unemployed people use their time on community-based and other forms of activities, but the way they use time in unemployment does not adjust to their own perceptions and beliefs about the centrality of wage work. Moreover, their own communities do not adjust their attitudes towards how the unemployed spend their time. In other words, the lack of adjustment towards the way in which time is spent by the unemployed themselves on the one hand and, on the other, the implications of social impairments and stigma targeted at their unemployed condition imply that time spent doing wage work is a more valid form of time use. Ntate Joseph (26/08/13) described his daily life as a life of chaos. He does not see any order to routine in his time use. He said:

"I wake up anytime … There is no order in my life … It is just up and down" (Ntate Mathebula, 6/08/13).

When Welkom was built in the 1940s and when the mineworkers were still employed, time seems to have had a meaning different from the sense of less recognized and less valued forms of spending time associated with the unemployed.

There are two clocks in Welkom. One stands tall overlooking the central business district (CBD) on Stateway by the municipal offices and the other, ticks away near the Thabong community hall. The clocks are historical and were built during the glorious days of the booming Welkom gold mines. In the 1940s, Welkom was ahead of many other cities at the time. It gave practical expression to the possibilities of a modern industrial city. The clocks were not just for aesthetics nor just for the provision of time. They were built around one industry and aimed at entrenching forms of labour discipline.

Ntate Moshoeshoe (07/07/13) was born in 1962 to farmworkers in Botshabelo township near Bloemfontein. Before he become a mineworker, he worked as a generalist servicing railways. He joined President Steyn 2 in 1976 as a driller and became a team leader until his retrenchment in 2008. He recalls Welkom as a place where jobs where plentiful. You could choose which mine you wanted to go to. People used to walk with their heads held high because they were working, but today, he said:

"Look at the body language of men in this place [Welkom], they look defeated [pointing to men by the side of the road]. They leave their homes and sit here all day and return home to say I am looking for work" (Ntate Moshoeshoe, 07/07/13).

He said many men also survive through *dimphabadimo* (ancestral thanksgiving). They attend funerals in order to eat. He lives in Thabong with his wife. He recounted his experiences when he still worked. He said that black mineworkers knew that no black person was allowed to be in town later than 21:00. If the police found you in town after that time, you would be arrested or assaulted. Given the clocks in Welkom, when the police found you in town after 21:00:

"You could not say you did not know it was past 21:00 o'clock because you can see the time from anywhere" (Ntate Moshoeshoe, 07/07/13).

In conversations with ex-mineworkers about the clocks, it became clear that a significant shift in the meaning of time had happened with unemployment. E.P Thompson's seminal essay 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism' (1967), looks at how the working class came to identify itself as a class through its collective experiences of time under industrial capitalism in the labour process. Central to these social processes was the emergent transformation of the meaning of time.

An exploration of experiences of unemployment reveals time experience as the unmaking of this working class collective identity. As Bourdieu (2000) shows, time assumes different meanings for different social categories. For many working people, time structured around wage work usually determines the time to get up in the morning.

There was a time to report for duty and begin working and a time to get home and attain sufficient rest in preparation for the next working day. When employed, time is clearly capitalist time. With wage work, time structures both social relations and leisure. Thus, work times exercise significant influence over people's identities, subjectivities and how they construct and understand their meaning and purpose.

However, Welkom experienced a dramatic decimation of wage work when the mines closed down and thousands of miners were retrenched. At once, the economic and social decline of Welkom implied the radical transformation of the meaning of time. Yet, the wage work constructed rhythms of waking up, also seem to continue even in unemployment. Tumelo (13/07/13) reported how he still wakes up at times similar to when he was employed. He now does not have a job to go to, he just lies in bed and begins wondering what his family will eat and how he can spend his time. He said:

"At 4am, I am out of sleep. I am used to the time I used to wake up going to work. Then I just lie there and I will start to think a lot about what we are going to eat or where can I go today?" (Tumelo (13/07/13).

With no set place to go, loss of work translates into loss of a socially recognizable function and free time is dead time (Bourdieu, 2000). Participants look for something to do in their immediate surroundings. This often involves finding something to do in the yard such as repairing damaged fencing, clearing out grass, watering trees and vegetables, watching TV, listening to radio, visiting and chatting to neighbours and friends on street pavements, across fences and on actual visits, searching for work and sometimes just sitting without any visible activity at hand.

Once a city ahead of its time, but now stagnant and struggling to find a post-mining future, Welkom has fallen behind time. Once a place of extraordinary productivity, now one of its dominant characteristics is the magnitude and significance of perceived redundant bodies that no longer have the same relationship with time.

The clocks still work, they are on time, but for ex-minerworker
s, the meaning of time has radically transformed. It no longer appears as a regulator of thoughts and behaviour as before (Bourdieu, 2000). In unemployment, a new relationship with time is formed. Yet, it is a relationship not equally valued as was the previous one centred on wage work.

In unemployment, time is experienced differently and becomes largely empty, useless and meaningless. Yet the unemployed try to change this by engaging in various community-based activities. Even though some kind of meaning is definitely created, it is not a sense of meaning equal to that associated with wage work.

There was also a sense in which activities were engaged as a way of killing time. Killing time involves actively and deliberately seeking various forms of activities to fill up the long hours of the day (Bostyn & Wright, 1987). In this provisional existence, the unemployed also suffer from a deformed time experience in which a day with its long hours appears as torturous and tedious but a week seems to pass by more quickly (Frankl, 2004). Jahoda et al. (1971) recorded instances in which the unemployed lost their sense of time. At the end of the day, they could not describe what they had been doing all day. Their sense of time was vague except for biologically significant moments such as getting up, eating, going to bed. Furthermore, she found that some

five-minute activities such as fetching wood were stated as though they had consumed an entire morning.

Their experience of time is associated with social impairment because they end up feeling insecure about themselves when they see other people going to or coming from work. As Tumelo (13/07/13) said:

"You see other people going to work and you are just sitting like you are stupid."

In a study of an ex-coal mining community in the central industrial belt of Scotland, Bostyn & Wright (1987:150–151) describe how the unemployed set out on a "fishing expedition" [on which] their failure to keep the basic guidelines of these activities (which they describe) suggest that they are more concerned to pass the day than actually to catch anything."

Critics of the work ethic view the work ethic as an abnormality that is continuously reinforced through state programms of job creation and the education system and amount to nothing more than "bourgeois indoctrination" that has engraved the idea of "wage work" as its main objective and "simultaneously fails to teach about leisure and how to use it" (Jenkins & Sherman cited in Kumar, 1984:11). They argue that ideology of wage work has led people to believe that without work "they will be bored, and so become bored; they believe they will drift, and they drift; they believe that by not working they will become useless, and too many become useless. This need for work is an ingrained and inculcated attitude of the mind" (Jenkins & Sherman cited in Kumar, 1984:11).

Boredom and perpetual uncertainties on how to spend time were common in Welkom. Barbalet (1999:631) defines boredom as a "restless, irritable feeling that the subject's situation holds no appeal, and that there is a need to get on with something interesting." It is a subjective experience, an emotion of anxiety "that an activity or situation holds no significance" (Barbalet, 1999:632). Boredom emotionally registers "often as a result of a lack or absence of meaning in the social practices undertaken by individuals or groups in society" Barbalet (1999:631). Barbalet argues that meaning is vital to social processes.

As Ntate Joseph (26/08/13) said:

"[A]n individual wakes up any time."

Yet, he does not see this as a freedom to freely choose what to do instead of being compelled to wake up and go to a factory where he is subjected to the will of another man. He sees this situation not as an opportunity for new kinds of freedom but as a sign of boredom, job seeking and chaos. He said:

"You can wake up anytime. Sometimes I wake up late around 11:30. Sometimes I keep busy doing some work in my yard. Sometimes I just sit, I get very bored, and sometimes I go and look for work. It is just up and down, there is no order" (Ntate Joseph (26/08/13).

The type of social isolation I describe also creates new forms of responses. The idea of entrepreneurship, of being busy trying to start some kind of business, is an example of

a response some used. In certain social interactions, it is quite common for people to ask what an individual is currently doing in their lives. The question is often meant as asking what you do for a living. Instead of saying they are unemployed, sometimes my informants would lie to try and avoid the stigma. They would claim to be entrepreneurs. The term "entrepreneurship" has become a panacea in the South African policy space, especially in conversations on how to reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality (National Development Plan [NDP], 2012). As a largely state and private sector driven narrative, it has also become a pervasive narrative for ordinary citizens even though the entrepreneurial capabilities of South Africa leave much to be desired (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], 2015).

GEM surveys note that the success rate of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) remains remarkably low. Low success rates continue even though efforts and resources in support of SMEs are increasing. Many South African SMEs collapse within the first four years of inception, often due to poor management, lack of access to market opportunities, and lack of resources (GEM, 2015).

Nevertheless, for the unemployed, entrepreneurship is used as a strategy for hiding their stigmatized condition. It is used in an attempt to avoid connotations associated with unemployment. It seems the social isolation I describe is also at play in Mark Hunter's (2012) description of his research participant, Thami. Thami works informally as a car guard in KwaZulu-Natal. He helps people park their cars and also helps with carrying their groceries in exchange for a few rand. In 2000, Hunter accompanied Thami to a funeral where Thami took an interest in an attractive young lady. After a few moments of conversation and having given him her numbers, she posed the question: "Where do

you work?" He replied, "for the municipality." Thami was fully aware that a certain response i.e., fully disclosing his real status in the labour market could easily translate into a lost opportunity with the young lady because of the stigma linked to labour market hierarchies. Like my participants who hide behind entrepreneurship, Thami hid behind formal employment.

I have shown above how unemployment can lead to new forms of social insecurity that can threaten solidarity. Yet unemployment does not threaten only social solidarity. It can also provide political possibilities for new social forms of solidarity from below. This includes forms that do not depend directly on the division of labour in the sphere of production as such, but in the sphere of social reproduction. I discuss two ways in which my data suggests this could happen.

Firstly, the fact that unemployment is widespread in contexts such as Welkom implies that there are many unemployed people in the community during working hours. This was certainly the case in my field trips to townships in and around Welkom. If I went there any time between 9:00 and 15:00 the streets would not be empty and silent. There would be people walking while conversing, people talking to neighbours over the fence, on pavements in front of their houses, by local spaza shops et cetera. Perhaps the reason why unemployment is isolating in the sense meant by Jahoda et al. (1972) is because unemployment would be generally low and many people would be at work, therefore isolating the unemployed by causing them to retreat into their houses.

Yet, in Welkom the intriguing aspect to note is that the widespread nature of unemployment does not seem to destigmatize it. Stigma is the new form of social

isolation in Welkom. This confirms the continued centrality of wage work in the social imagination. Their imagination continuous to be influenced and shaped by something that is no longer there. Attachment continues even after object loss (Berlant, 2011). In this context, it seems, the most logical response would be to replace the object of loss, i.e., give them wage work. Hence, BIG was overtly rejected.

Secondly, a group of about 15 retrenched ex-mineworkers met regularly to discuss how they could oblige the mining companies to re-employ them or employ their children. In Meloding, a township located between 5km and 8km outside Virginia town, I found a group of ex-mineworkers who claimed to have been retrenched from various mines in the goldfields. The meetings were planned to happen weekly or bi-weekly. But due to lack of money and other commitments, some members could not attend the meetings regularly. The meetings were held at Jozini's (17/04/13) house. He is a Mozambican ex-mineworker who worked at Merriespruit 1 from 1978. He was retrenched in 2010 when the mine closed while he was working as a stope team leader. He lives with his two sons and daughters. The group claimed that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in Welkom betrayed them. They believed that the NUM has changed and it is no longer as strong as before. In 2010, they claim union representatives from the NUM informed them that they would be transferred to operating mines such as Masimong, Bambanani, Tshepong Target 1, Phakisa, Doornkop, Joel Kusasalethu and Unisel in Welkom, Virginia and Odendaalsrus. Yet, they claim they were not transferred but retrenched. For them, this implied that the union failed to deliver on its promises by failing to prevent retrenchments. Another view was simply that the union knew all along about the retrenchments and chose to misrepresent facts by making promises of transfer. The second type of betrayal was due to what they claim is a lack of concern

for their plight now that they are unemployed and no longer paying membership fees. They feel that they were loyal to the union over many years of working on the mines and paying monthly union fees, but the union does not seem to reciprocate in these times of their most desperate need.

Alongside the overtly stated purpose of the meeting, the gathering played another important role. Ex-mineworkers reunited to share old experiences, to share humour and advice, to update one another about what is happening in their lives, and to debate politics, et cetera. It seems as if the gathering also provided an opportunity to overcome the social isolation they suffer. Sechaba (05/03/14) was born in Lesotho in 1962. He is the son of a mineworker. He worked at Western Holdings 1 from 1984, after his father's passing, as a generalist, winch driver and team leader. He was retrenched in late 1998. Four years later, he was re-employed at Merriespruit 3 as a contract worker until 2006. He now lives in Meloding. He suggested that unemployment can paralyze a man's will to live. He collects scrap metals in order to generate some income. However, when he finds himself sitting with a group of ex-mineworkers in their community meeting at Meloding, they share a common experience and he is encouraged. As such, networks of home boys and other ex-mineworkers play a very important role, the construction of new forms of solidarity in unemployment. Sechaba said:

"Sometimes, I just wish I could die, but with these men we sit and encourage each other" (Sechaba, 05/03/14).

In those groups there were thus bonds of "reciprocity", "mutual obligation" and social capital", that constructed conditions that perhaps made it possible for men to imagine new forms of solidarities without wage work (Dlamini, 2009:13).

Unemployment as psychological and physiological impairment

My data seems to suggest that economic and social insecurities play a major role in the manifestation of psychological and physiological impairment. Stress or negative consequences for mental health is one of the key factors emphasised in the psychological literature on unemployment. In my data, continuous worry and anxieties about the uncertainty to ensure the social reproduction and livelihoods of their families and the social uncertainties defined by reduced confidence and perceived social stigma are important factors in the mental tensions experienced by participants. These narratives were often gendered. Men reported feeling inadequate and stressed because of their inability to fulfil personal and familial obligations and expectations. They often blamed themselves for the suffering of their children. Letsie (19/03/14) described how he often feels stressed and worthless because of pressures from his family that he simply cannot fulfil. He said:

"The pressure from my family, the stress, made me think about suicide. I felt that I was nothing, no one important to my own family" (Letsie, 19/03/14).

Letsie also claimed to know ex-mineworkers who have committed suicide because they could no longer bear the stress caused by pressure. He said:

“I do not blame those that have committed suicide because of unemployment. The pressure becomes too much. Being unemployed is painful” (Letsie, 19/03/14).

Shadrack (27/02/14) also declared that many ex-mineworkers have committed suicide because they could no longer tolerate the turn life took. This was mainly because of stress and loss of hope. Shadrack said:

“Many have committed suicide because they could not tolerate how life becomes when unemployed. You become really stressed, hopeless and bored” (Shadrack, 27/02/14).

In December of 2013, Nkoana (19/03/14) was in Bongani hospital after he had suffered a stroke. He attributed it to stress associated with unemployment. He said: “I was in hospital when they buried Mandela. I was at Bongani, because I suffered a stroke. I was very stressed” (Nkoana, 19/03/14).

Ex-mineworkers also felt that unemployment has negative consequences for their sexual lives because of the psychological distress they believed it causes. According to Ntate Chabedi (19/03/14):

“It is like they despise you, you can see they are sad and you always blame yourself. It also affected my sex life.”

Some, however, felt that it had no serious impact and that their sexual lives remain relatively the same. None in the sample however reported a more intense sexual drive.

The link between the psychological impact of unemployment and the negative consequences for their sexual lives was made quite often. A Sesotho metaphorical phrase was used to describe the link between unemployment and reduced form of sexual life. I first heard it from Ntate Sefako (06/09/13), and then from other participants as well. Ntate Sefako lived in Hani Park with Mme-Dineo and Refiloe. He moved into her shack in 2010 after he was retrenched. She owns the house.

He was born in Lesotho in 1958 andwent to school until Standard 2. In his childhood, he herded his father's cattle. He began working at Virginia's Merriespruit 1 in the late 1970s where he worked until 2010. He worked as a generalist, driller, and stope team leader. There is a backroom shack in their yard which they rented out for R200. It had been empty for a while since the previous tenant, a lady selling food stuff at the gate at Masimong. Ntate Sefako and Mme-Dineo claimed that her boyfriend was using *muti* to prevent people from coming to the yard. He used *muti* to stop her from cheating but as a consequence, it was also preventing visitors from coming.

We also visited Sefako's home in Lesotho. His wife does not know that he is unemployed, and stays in Hani Park with Mme-Dineo. The wife still thinks that he stays in the compound. Concerning his sex life, he said: *"Kgomo esa kgorang ha e tlolele."* Loosely translated, it means, "a bull that has not eaten properly and is dissatisfied doesn't (is unable to) mate."

Refiloe (17) is Mme-Dineo's grandson. His mother passed on while he was young. His own family is in Lesotho. He often goes to the bushes to get plants to make *muti.* He was a key participant in my study and connected me with ex-mineworkers in Welkom

and Lesotho. Before we left for Lesotho a second time in September, we went to a *muti* shop in Welkom by the taxi rank to buy two packs of "*indlovu* or *tokoloshi* salt" which he threw on top of the roof of the house we slept in. The salt was mixed with something to keep the tokoloshi and evil spirits away during our stay. During out first visit in June of 2013, there were noises on the roof. He said the salts would deal with the noises.

In unemployment, it appears that ex-mineworker's conceptions of masculinity suffered a triple impact. Masculinity is organized on firstly, the ability to fulfil the responsibilities of ensuring the social reproduction of their family, secondly, having a sense of dignity and respect in the community and, thirdly, the ability to fulfil and ensure the sexual satisfaction of his spouse.

However, interview data suggests that the reduced sex life of the unemployed man was mainly in relation to his spouse in the household. When engaging in sexual activities with their *nyatsi* or girlfriends, the problem seemed less severe. Another Sesotho metaphor was cited in order to make sense of this peculiar situation: "*Lapa le se nang Nyatsi lea shwa."* Loosely translated this means "a marriage without a third party/member/side chick/concubine will ultimately end/be doomed or, alternatively, a third party strengthens a marriage."

The reason provided for this strange variation of sexual desire for the wife as opposed to the *nyatsi* was because of the constant arguing, bickering and tensions between the married couple. This made the *nyatsi* more appealing because there was hardly anything to argue about with her. It was mainly just an easy and mostly sexual relationship.

Another psychological dimension revealed by the data had to do with dreams. Dreams are usually understood as psychological phenomena but they are also deeply social because they are so often based on social phenomena As with suicide, which is often viewed as a purely individual act shaped purely by individual characteristics and belonging to psychology, Durkheim (1952) understood, sociologically, how suicide is not just an outcome of individual and private circumstances, but is also fundamentally social in character. Social phenomena are expressed or revealed in psychological states. From this perspective, in order to understand the nature of social phenomena, dreams can be an incredibly useful data source.

Through dreams collected in the data, it is possible to gain a strong sense of the experience of unemployment and the meaning of work. Dreams show the mental tensions produced by the gap between a strong desire to be employed on the one hand and the inability to fulfil that desire on the other. The main claim I attempt to establish is that this gap results from the abrupt disruption occasioned by shifting out of an established and authoritative moral order centred on wage work into a moral haze in which individuals and collectives are morally unregulated.

The study of dreams remains a realm largely confined to the different traditions of psychology (Freud, 1999). My interest in dreams is only in relation to the extent to which dreams are an alternative data source to help understand the nature of social phenomena. In other words, dreams are an intermediary to building an understanding of social realities. As such, dreams will not be used to understand individual psychological states, but to understand the external social world in which the dream individuals are located. They are considered important only in so far as they help the

sociologist to reflect on collective realities, that is, external social realities, not individual psychological states and mental processes of dream formation et cetera.

My in-depth interviews suggest that ex-mineworkers, who have had similar experiences of wage work in the gold mines and experienced abrupt mass retrenchments, have similar dreams when unemployed. This is sociologically most intriguing. The dreaming is thus not considered as a reflection of individual traits, but rather as a reflection of an external collective social reality which ex-mineworkers share. This approach thus eschews a psychological approach, whatever the merits might be of such an understanding of dreams.

In psychology, dreams are regarded as phenomena that reveal certain things about the individual. At times, dreams are incomprehensible, confusing, nonsensical and contradictory to the prevailing realities known to the dreamer. From the psychoanalytic tradition, dreams represent unresolved psychic issues harboured by dreaming individuals. They are sites of conflict, in which the desires of the unconscious mind (id) are transferred into the conscious mind (ego) of the individual. The content recalled by the awake individual is not the meaning of the dream but a representation, a façade, concealing content/stories that reveal the deep desires of the individual (Freud, 1999). Hildebrant (1999, cited in Freud 1999) indeed argues that dreams should be understood as a continuation of lived experience.

From a sociological point of view, dreams may be regarded as phenomena that reveal social realities in which individuals exists. Through the reported dreams of my participants, we are able to understand that the abrupt disruption in their lives unleashed

by mass retrenchments created a condition of nostalgia for them. The term, nostalgia, combines two Greek roots, *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (longing). The original meaning of the word is, "longing for a home that no longer exists" Johannes Hofer (cited in Dlamini, 2009:15) . Johannes Hofer (cited in Dlamini, 2009:15) used the term in 1688 to diagnose the problems of students and labourers who left home to study or work abroad. He diagnosed symptoms of nostalgia that included the "ability to see or hear ghosts, "nausea", and "loss of appetite", et cetera. Nostalgia was a curable disease (Johannes Hofer cited in Dlamini, 2009:16) .

In the modern world, nostalgia means something else. Moreover it is considered an incurable condition of modernity. Nostalgia refers to "sentiments of loss and displacement" (Dlamini, 2009:16) Nostalgia is not only about the past, it is also about the present and anxieties of the present refracted through the perspective of the past. Nostalgia arises therefore in conditions where people "feel themselves adrift in a world seemingly out of control" (Dlamini, 2009:15–16). My ex-mineworker informants seemingly feel adrift from a past world of engagement with work, into a present of unemployment with new forms of anxieties. As such, they feel lost and displaced.

Interview material shows that, for ex-mineworkers, abrupt mass retrenchments left traces of nostalgia. Participants gave the impression that they were mostly disappointed that dreams about their past days of employment were not real. Tumelo (13/07/13) describes a dream in which he is late and has to run and catch transport. He arrives at work, gets into the change room, then into the lift with his colleagues, but his facial expression when he was recounting the dream and the use of his arms showed that he was not happy that it was only a dream. In his own words, he said:

"One day I dreamt running to the taxi going to work, I got in the change room and after getting into the lift and get to work with my colleagues. When I woke up all was just a dream. There was nothing totally" (Tumelo (13/07/13).

One of the most common aspects of wage work mentioned was the manner in which it provides a platform for solidarity. Participants made mention of colleagues, friends and workmates to highlight this. Ntate Sefako (24/08/03), recounted a dream in which he was with an old Xhosa man from the Transkei. They lived in the hostel together but after the retrenchments, the Xhosa friend left and went back to the Transkei. They have lost contact since then. In his dream, Thabo said:

"[I] was back at work. We were at the hostel with my Xhosa friend. We were sitting and talking like we used to during the old days" (Ntate Sefako (24/08/03).

The mention of colleagues, friends, teammates and workmates also shaped workers' experiences of mine labour. Through these relationships, mineworkers were able to create new communities of solidarity based on civility and cooperation. Nkoane (13/07/13) reported a dream in which he was working underground with his workmates, and asking them to pass him working equipment. He said:

"I was underground doing things that I used to do in the mine. I was with my workmates and I was asking them to pass me the tools we were using" (Nkoane, 13/07/13).

In another dream reported by Tumelo (13/07/13), he had arrived underground and was blasting rocks and being reprimanded by the team leader for not blasting as expected.

Afterwards, he dreamt about knock-off time and was about to leave for his home. He said:

"I dream a lot about my work. I was underground, blasting rocks, my workmates were there with me. The captain was saying I should not have blasted the way I did. I explained to him why I did that. After that, it was knock-off time. I was about to go home. Then I heard my wife's voice saying 'were are you going?' In my dream I said 'we have knocked off'. I woke up, and realized I had been sleep-walking" (Tumelo, (13/07/13).

He also reported a dream in which a link was made between production and social reproduction. He had knocked-off from work and headed to Shoprite Checkers to buy groceries with his family. Yet, when he woke up, he was overcome by sadness because he was still unable to secure the social reproduction of his family as he would wish. He said:

"I knocked-off from work. I was at Checkers buying groceries. In the dream I was happy, my family was happy. I wake up, just to find myself lying on the bed. It makes me very sad when I open my eyes, and all I see are sunrays piercing through the window curtains" (Tumelo,13/07/13).

What Tumelo shows about the link between production and reproduction was a common theme. Such experiences illustrate conceptions of masculinity centred on fulfilling personal and familial obligations and responsibilities, and being a responsible father-figure presiding over the household as a breadwinner.

Ntate Morena (27/03/14) reported a dream in which he was underground with his teammates. He was back in employment and in his own home. Sadly, after retrenchment, he had been evicted out of his house in Thabong due to his failure to keep up with bond repayments. He was staying in his sister's yard in the backroom. He describes his version of a good life. It consists of a labouring man who is able to preside over his own household. He said:

"I dreamt working underground with my teammates. Life was good, it was back to the way it was. In my dream I was even back in my own house" (Ntate Morena, 27/03/14).

Ntate Kamogelo (27/03/14) was born in 1968 in Maokeng township near Kroonstad. He worked at Freddies 7 from 1987 to 1996. From 1998 until 2008, he worked at Steyn 2 as a generalist, stope team and construction team worker. He lives in Hani Park. I found him by the side of the road and interviewed him and Ntate Morena on the same day. He also describes an emotional dream in which he was welding and laughing. He dreamt being happy because he was back at a job. Yet, he awoke in a dark shack. He said:

"I dreamt doing boilermaker, working, welding. I was even laughing with the team, I was happy. Life was nice. I was smiling because I was in my job but I wake up in the darkness of my shack and I still don't have a job" (Ntate Kamogelo, 27/03/14).

There were three ways in which my informants interpreted the meaning of dreams. Firstly, dreams were interpreted as signs and symbols that they were going to find employment and therefore should not easily give up the hope of finding a job. This interpretation was associated with understandings of the supernatural or spiritual world

in which ancestors and God were indicating certain possibilities about their futures. This kind of interpretation could prompt a continuation of their employment search. Secondly, participants understood dreams as an extension of thoughts, wishes and desires that occupy their existence during waking life. They believed that they dream about jobs because they think about jobs throughout the day. The frustration and stress of not being able to get a job comes up in their dreams. Thirdly, some viewed dreams simply as a meaningless and bizarre phenomenon. Those who attributed some kind of importance to their dreams were willing to speak about their dreams while those who viewed them as meaningless phenomena, not so much.

Anomalies: bodily meanings

In the previous section, I have demonstrated that unemployment can impose upon individuals three forms of impairments: new forms of economic insecurity, social insecurity and psychological impairments. At first glance they appear as individual rather than collective phenomena. Are economic insecurities, social insecurities and psychological impairments then purely individual phenomena? If the answer is in the affirmative, it would essentially require a view from the academic field and practice of psychology. But, if the answer is not affirmative, then it might be because they are social phenomena that are only refracted through the individual. Psychological insights are of interest to the sociologist only in so far as they reveal characteristics of social realities that individuals and collectives navigate on a daily basis (Durkheim, 1964).

From, a sociological point of view, it seems that the cumulative effect of the three impairments is what they signify about the collective consciousness *(conscience*). As

such, unemployment appears as an impairment of their very bodies themselves. In conversation ex-mineworkers described bodies in two different ways.

Firstly, the black body has been used as an object/instrument of production to create wealth in the South African gold mining industry and economy. After it is used, injured and battered, it is disposed of. Yet, it continues to bear the brutality of mine work through deep scars inflicted by sharp falling rocks and dreaded occupational diseases such as phthisis. Yet, today, these workers have little if anything to show for their toil.

In her work on how contestations at a waste landfill in Soweto reflect the global economic crisis and capitalist value production, Samson (2012) identifies three strands in the literature concerning waste and value within capitalist production. Firstly, capitalist production is inherently wasteful. It produces large amounts of waste in the form of actual physical waste and wasted industrial capacity. Waste is seen as an inevitable part of production if only at the end of the production process. Secondly, waste has a direct input on capitalist production of value. Thirdly, and finally, the process of capitalist value production has not only produced actual material waste but also generates human beings as a form of waste.

Drawing from the third interpretation of capitalist waste, it can be understood that, by destroying jobs on a large scale, capitalism is systematically producing human beings as waste. Changing capitalist processes are producing people that are no longer needed or relevant to capitalist value creation. This point is observed by Ferguson who states that unemployment is irrelevant for capitalism because hypothetically millions of

unemployed people can drop dead and the markets will not register any significant impact (Ferguson, 2015).

One of my participants, Ntate Jeremiah (28/03/14) gave an account of how mineworkers used to look out for each other in the mine underground. Ntate Jeremiah acknowledges the dangerous nature of mine work and that "miners regularly pay with injuries and death" (Nattrass, 1995:168), but he highlights forms of cooperation and solidarity which made work for them much more meaningful. It is through workers' own agency within the production process that the meaning and experience of wage work was transformed. The claim is not that the work became pleasant, but only that it became bearable partly through the social relations and solidarities forged by mineworkers themselves. It in this sense that is highlighted in Burawoy's (1975) notion of "making out".

Some consider themselves lucky to have survived mine work, as they often know of others who died on duty. Ntate Jeremiah (28/03/14) described mine labour as dangerous labour. He lifted his trousers to show me deep scars on his right leg and took off his jacket to show me scares on his arms. He believed that if the flying pieces of rock had struck him on the abdomen, it could have possibly been fatal. He said:

"Mine work is very dangerous, when tiny rocks fall, they cut you deeply. Look at my scars [pointing to his arm and leg]" (Ntate Jeremiah, 28/03/14).

Ntate Setjhaba (12/09/13) was born in Lesotho in 1953 and started working at Welkom 1 in the late 1970s as a stope team and rock driller until 2004. I interviewed him in

Lesotho in his three-room cement-plastered corrugated roof house. He is a short roundly built man who lives with a young lady. He pulled out X-rays showing that his left lung is full of holes. He suffers from phthisis. He was diagnosed with phthisis long after he was retrenched.

However, some were infected with TB because they are HIV-positive which is unrelated to minework. For example, during my first visit to Lesotho, I met an ex-mineworker, Ntate Ramabanta. Born in Lesotho in 1952, he worked at Western Holdings 1 until 1998. He discovered that he was HIV-positive in 2005 and has since suffered from tuberculosis during his illness. Ntate Tsietsi (13/06/13) also declared his HIV-status and has survived tuberculosis (TB). He was born in 1952 in Lesotho and has no schooling. He was recruited through TEBA in 1970 to work on the mines. He worked at Saaiplaas, Loraine and President Steyn 1 as a winch operator until 1997 when he was retrenched. His wife, Mme-Mpho (13/06/13) said that she remembers the retrenchment because it changed things for her and their six children. She said;

"It was 1997, 27 November. I remember this date because it made things bad for me and my family" (Mme-Mpho, 13/06/13).

Like Ntate Ramabanta, he also did not claim that his illness was phthisis.

Ex-mineworkers felt a sense of betrayal. Their sentiment was that the mines just disposed of them after they were no longer needed. To them, it also appeared that the mines and the unions do not care about what happens after they were retrenched. They believed they were good workers who were "always on time for work", and "doing a

good job". Yet, this does not seem to matter at all when the mines are retrenching. Ntate Raseboko (18/04/13) claimed that he gave the mines all his boldily energy and they just disposed of him peremptorily. He said:

"I gave the mines all my power but they just throw you away like you are nothing" (Raseboko, 18/04/13).

Secondly, the black body was used as a metaphor to describe a fractured/broken social and moral order. Participants provocatively described their experience of unemployment through strong images of incomplete, unrecognizable and sick bodies with missing and injured parts. Sickness and disability are anomalies, that is, they were used by ex-mineworkers to describe unemployment as fundamentally a condition of malregulation. It is in this sense that the three impairments of unemployment express a deeper intangible condition of anomie that is experienced as loss.

Descriptions of what it is like to be unemployed seems to go beyond the three impairments of economic loss, social insecurity and psychological impairment. They draw on bodily metaphors to convey the sense that, to them unemployment is a much deeper problem. When describing his experience of unemployment, Ntate Sefako (16/05/13) likened it to sickness. He stated that it is a sickness for which no cure is known. It is a sickness that is eating away at his body, making it difficult for him to recognize it as his own. In a sense, Thabo described unemployment as a sickness that reduces his life to emptiness. He said:

“The problem with unemployment is that it is like a sickness, I don’t know how it can be treated. I am suffering from this sickness. It is not my choice that at this time of the day, I am just sitting here. Sometimes, I sit and watch others go to work in the morning and come back at noon. This is not my body; I used to wear size 36, now I am like this because of my sickness that is making me suffer” (Ntate Sefako, 16/05/13).

According to Chabane Manganyi (1973) such sickness describes a social or cultural condition in which individuals feel that they have lost or do not have an essential part of their being in the world. Ntate James (24/08/13), another neighbour of Ntate Sefako was born in Lesotho in 1968. He worked on short-term mine contracts as a generalist until 1998. Since then, he has been searching for employment, but has never found a permanent job. He lives with his wife who works as a cleaner together with his two daughters who are still at school. I have heard gossip about him that his wife sends him to the shops while the daughters are there. He was also mocked for doing the laundry since this undermines his masculinity. They gossiped, saying that unemployment had reduced him from being a man into being one of the children at his home. In reference to such third persons, he told me that a man must help his family in any way he can, even if he is not working. He compared unemployment to a sickness because it makes an individual feel as if there is something disjointed or wrong with them.

Ex-mineworkers did not blame themselves for unemployment. They often attributed it to external factors to do with the mines themselves and to some extent the African National Congress (ANC). A view was expressed that the government is partly responsible for causing unemployment because people from Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique get the jobs that should be going to South Africans. They complained that

there is a lot of corruption in the municipality because many are still waiting for long promised Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses. In 2012, a protest broke out led by youth from Thabong over their belief that the mine companies were hiring foreign nationals while South Africans are unemployed. Yet, a view was expressed that the ANC was still the only party they could vote for because it changed the situation in the country and also the decision taken in 1995 to grant South African citizenship to Lesotho citizens who had worked on the mines for at least seven years. The ANC's intervention through social grants was also identified as a reason for continued support. Nevertheless, unemployment was not seen as a "personal trouble" but rather a "public issue" (Mills, 1959:15). Ntate James (24/08/13) said:

"Being unemployed is like being sick. It feels like there is something wrong with me"

For Tumelo, unemployment is an experience to which it is impossible to acclimatize. The inability to acclimatize seems to go beyond the three impairments discussed earlier. He described unemployment as a disability through images of lost legs and lost arms. He refers here to the impossibility of aligning one's condition with the dominant wage work centred moral discourse. This is because to him unemployment is an anomaly. Tumelo's (13/07/13) quotes capture this eloquently:

"If your leg is cut off, you will always feel there is a part of you that is missing. That is how it feels to be unemployed. It feels like there is a part of me that is missing. And I hope that it is possible to get my leg back" (Tumelo, 13/07/13).

He speculated that if he were actually to loose his leg, he would probably acclimatize, but not to unemployment. He said:

"If I lose my leg, maybe I can forget because I can get used to not having one. But I cannot get used to being unemployed" (Tumelo, 13/07/13).

In his study of ex-miners on the copper mines of Zambia, James Ferguson (1999) found similar accounts by ex-miners who described the loss of wage work through images of lost limbs. What I found in Welkom resonates closely with what Ferguson (1999) describes as *abjection* – the process of being, expelled/discarded and thrown down and experiencing humiliation and debasement. This experience he argues left in its path "profound feelings of loss as well as the gnawing sense of a continued affective attachment to that which lies on the other side of the boundary" (Ferguson, 1999:238). However, Ferguson sees the problem of unemployment as a problem of attachment and thus does not see it as a social reflection of an abruptly disrupted moral debasement.

Participants universally rejected unemployment grants as real solutions to the crisis of joblessness. Universally, ex-mineworkers expressed their aspiration to find employment. They do not want grants, they want jobs. As Tumelo (13/07/13) insisted, grants represent artificial legs, which may enable walking but will not replace the real loss. He said:

"I have seen people without legs, touching themselves, they say, 'you know, I was trying to touch my leg and the leg is not there at all.' Even if you can put on an artificial leg, that is not your leg. Grants do not replace the lost leg" (Tumelo, 13/07/13).

The proposals for BIG is a call of old, yet its advocates have been largely ignored and the proposal rejected (Standing, 2009, 2011 & 2017a&b). My data provides a basis for a new understanding of rationalities for the rejection of BIG. In essence, the rejection of grants is moral in character. Grants are rejected not just because they will make people lazy, but more fundamentally because they represent an "artificial leg". The rejection of grants by various sections of society is influenced by the centrality and moral status of wage work in society.

This seems to be a rejection based on conscious or unconscious beliefs that grants cannot play the same moral function as is provided by wage work. The rejection of grants is informed by a particular moral understanding. The "collective conscious" or "social current" consists of the idea that people must be employed to earn an income. The claim that people must get an income even if they are not employed, goes against the common/collective consciousness, hence the great resistance towards the idea (Durkheim, 1963).

Conclusion: towards a Durkheimian concept of loss

The data has shown how unemployment seems to impose various forms of social ills. Three main forms of impairments were identified, namely: economic insecurity, social insecurity and psychological impairment. Through analysis of their descriptions of the body, however, my interviews demonstrate how my group of ex-mineworkers experienced unemployment as a much deeper problem, written on their bodies, well beyond economic, social and even psychological impairments.

The central argument of this thesis is that unemployment is a condition of anomie experienced as loss by my participants. Unemployment is the antithesis of wage work. It takes away the regulatory function of wage work, which exercises a moral force over individuals. Anomie results from the weakening of the moral regulation of wage work over individuals without simultaneously providing an alternative social and moral order. As a result, they are forced into a moral haze without a regular set of social norms and values. Unemployment appears as the agitation of the collective conscience.

The common/collective consciousness (*conscience*) consists of the "ideas and sentiments to which we are most attached" (Durkheim, 1952:396). Wage work is an idea and sentiment to which most citizens in industrial society are attached. It has become a "permanent occupation, a habit, and indeed, if this habit is sufficiently strengthened, a need" (Durkheim, 1952:394). Wage work is a form of common/collective consciousness that is sui generis to industrial capitalism. "Social facts" give morality its character and its content (Durkheim, 1952). Abrogation of the common/collective conscience, transforms deviants into "objects of reprobation". Reprobation of course accomplishes its role because of its moral character.

While moral loss is refracted through the experiences of individuals, it is also located at the social level because it reflects the condition of a group. The experience of loss expresses not just an individual reality but a social reality outside and beyond the individual him/herself. Powerful images of incomplete, unrecognizable, pathologized battered black bodies with missing parts were evoked to describe their experience of unemployment as a condition of "declassification", of malregulation. Bodily anomalies

of sickness and disability were used as metaphors to describe a fractured/broken social and moral order.

However, Durkheim's understanding of loss is not without limitations. In particular, his understanding of loss lacks a focus on the experience of loss in ways that are specifically about a seemingly very personalized experience of bodily dismemberment and physical sickness. In other words, what is lacking in Durkheim's anomie, which I have adapted as a concept of loss, is an understanding of the body. Although Durkheim's classical text, *Suicide* (1952) is essentially about the total destruction of an individual's body as a result and reflection of external social reality, Durkheim did not pay any particular attention to the body itself. This seems partly because his focus was to a large extent on the macro rather than the micro level. The empirical material of this research points towards an emerging conception of the body as a metaphor for moral orders.

CHAPTER 7: RESPONSES TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN WELKOM AND VIRGINIA

Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explore experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work among ex-mineworkers. The previous chapter showed that ex-mineworkers experienced three main forms of impairments associated with unemployment. These included economic insecurities, social insecurities and psychological impairments. Through interpretations of bodily metaphors, it was shown how the problem of unemployment transcended its economic, social and psychological implications. Instead, unemployment was fundamentally experienced as a condition of anomie experienced as loss.

This chapter discusses empirical evidence on how scrap metal collecting, waiting by the side of the road and grants/remittances constituted an attempt by ex-mineworkers to respond to economic insecurities, social insecurities and psychological impairments associated with unemployment, but also how such activities fail to address their experience of anomie.

Thus, responses to unemployment can be understood best by locating them in the meanings workers associate with wage work. In Welkom, work meant social recognition and the ability to lay claim to living in certain kinds of ways that are accorded social value such as breadwinning masculinity and respectability, et cetera. In

other words, responses to unemployment were shaped by what work meant to them. Wage work not only meant a level of material security and an important source for self-definition and social relations, but it also played an important moral role.

Partly compelled by economic necessity in the absence of decent employment and comprehensive social protection, ex-mineworkers walked long distances (8–10km) from the township of Thabong or the informal settlement of Hani Park in the morning to stand by the side of the road in anticipation of piece jobs in Welkom. Available work included gardening, plumbing, tiling, painting, roof repair and welding among others. However, the opportunities were constrained, and they go for weeks without getting any job.

Others collected scrap metals from around the city and township, including at closed mine shafts. They walked long distances looking for scrap metals for submission to recycling centres in exchange for money.

However, both groups found their current livelihood strategies or survivalist activities dirty and deeply embarrassing. They did not view these livelihood strategies as an alternative to gainful employment. Instead, they recognized them only as forms of "hustling" or "making a plan". Thus, despite long-term chronic unemployment, and lack of alternatives for gainful employment, ex-miners' desire for wage work remained. In other words, the desire for and attachment to wage work was not displaced by its 'unattainability', neither was it displaced by their engagement in informal activities.

Typology

I draw on a typology developed in Germany which looks at how the unemployed cope with unemployment under an active labour market regime (Booth & Scherschel, 2010). Under Hartz IV labour market reforms,[12] Germany instituted a change from welfare to a workfare state. Instead of receiving state benefits by virtue of simply being unemployed, new reforms made demands on the unemployed to meet certain conditions in order to qualify for benefits (Booth & Scherschel, 2010).

The reforms centred on the idea of "self-responsibility". This effectively shifted the blame for unemployment to the individual rather than attributing it to structural economic causes. The unemployed are unemployed not because there are no jobs being created by the economy but because people themselves have personal defects such as a skills mismatch, which makes them unemployable. Thus, to change this they need to amend their behaviour and acquire new skills to position themselves better in the labour market. The reforms seem to assume that the unemployed are too passive when they simply receive benefits. The idea is to make them more active employment seekers (Booth & Scherschel, 2010). The reforms thus aimed at reducing or completely terminating unemployment benefits by making them less attractive (ibid.).

An agreement is signed between a case manager at the labour office and the beneficiary. The agreement would provide a clear list of activities that beneficiaries would have to undertake in order for them to receive unemployment benefits. They agree on the number of employment applications they have to submit to various employers and the

[12] Peter Hartz was an executive at the leading global automobile company, Volkswagen (VW). In 2002, he headed the 'Hartz committee', named after him. The committee came up with recommendations that led to changes in the labour market and its agencies which established the Hartz IV reforms.

frequency with which they must report back to the labour office. Failure to fulfil the agreement is sanctioned by reduction of benefits (Booth & Scherschel, 2010).

The Hartz IV reforms also dismiss people's entitlements to a "good job". Instead, by making unemployment state benefits less attractive, the reforms seek to encourage people to adjust their expectations regarding employment and to accept whatever employment opportunities are available. As the phrase describes it, "having (nearly) any job is better than having none at all" (Streeck & Heinze, 1999:4, cited in Booth & Scherschel, 2010). Thus, to receive benefits recipients are forced to prove their willingness to work and record efforts to find employment. Consequently, the reforms constituted new forms of control over the behaviour and activities of the unemployed (Booth & Scherschel, 2010).

A key concern for Booth & Scherschel's (2010) longitudinal study was to understand beneficiaries' attitudes and perceptions towards the reforms. Three types of responses where identified. (1) The "at any cost/price worker" consists of those who place high value on wage work as a key signifier of the meaning of their lives. They remain committed to the idea of gainful employment. They are relatively more skilled and educated, have a positive self-image and tend to experience relatively shorter spells of unemployment than the other categories. They often have access to a wide network from previous employment which they are able to rely on for economic and emotional support. They tend to see unemployment as "subjectively not existing" (Booth & Scherschel, 2010:14). In other words, they believe that those who really want employment can get it.

(2) The “as-if worker” also values wage work, and will accept any low paying job to overcome unemployment. Due to their personal biographies, they have much lower chances of integrating into the labour market (long-term unemployment, outdated qualifications etc.). Despite numerous disappointments, they still maintain a significant sense of hope of attaining gainful employment. Without gainful employment, they do not believe that they are “equal members of society” (Booth & Scherschel, 2010: 15). This indicates that, as a result of unemployment, they do not have a positive self-image. They see unemployment as socially excluding and stigmatizing. They tend to search for ways to conceal their state of unemployment. In part, to defy problems such as isolation and boredom experienced in unemployment, they will often accept low wage jobs such as the “one-euro job” and volunteer just to access the “social integration, fulfilment and identity and time structure that wage work provides” (Booth & Scherschel, 2010:15). However, a key distinguisher of this category is that they are quite a devious group since they often make gestures in the labour market by applying for jobs they know they have no or very little chance of getting just to make it seem as if they are looking for employment. The growing gap between the desire for gainful employment and a reality that makes the fulfilment of this desire relatively impossible is most pronounced in this group.

(3) Booth & Scherschel (2010) identify a category they call the “non-worker”. They provide the least information about the concrete nature of the activities of this group. The “non-workers” are chronically unemployed people who have suffered multiple disappointments in the labour market and embody a withered sense of hope of ever finding employment. They live a “reduced life” and actively seek to decentre wage work as a way of organizing social life by engaging in alternative roles and activities

such as “maintaining contact with neighbours, or taking on activities in the milieu” (Booth & Scherschel, 2010:15). In other words, they attempt to pursue a life that is no longer normatively navigated through intrinsic value placed on wage work. This is not to say they do not recognize its social significance, instead, they seek distance from it due to repeated disappointments and fading hope of integration. In South Africa, they would be regarded as “discouraged workers”, a category of people who have lost hope of ever finding employment and are accounted for in the expanded definition of unemployment (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Despite significant differences between the two countries, this typology offers insights into how South African ex-miners responded to unemployment. Differences between South Africa and Germany do seem to shape ways in which unemployment is both experienced and responded to. Firstly, from a historical perspective, South Africa transitioned from a brutally oppressive and racist colonial and apartheid regime that deliberately created economies of marginalization, which remain a significant feature of present post-apartheid South African reality, to a dual economy consisting of a “first economy” and “second economy” that operate alongside one another (Devey, Skinner & Valodia, 2006).

Black workers in Welkom and in South Africa have come from a long, violent and dehumanizing history that denied them basic human rights such as the right to representation through affiliation to a trade union. It was not until 1977 that the Wiehahn Commission was established to examine South African labour laws and make recommendations on the nature of reforms. In 1979, the Commission recognized the

moral right of African workers to form and belong to trade unions and recommended reforms to that effect (Habib & Valodia, 2006).

Secondly, South Africa is characterized by a growing and economically significant informal economy or informal sector that shares many upstream and downstream linkages with the main economy. The term "informal sector" gained traction in the 1970s and its origin is attributed to Keith Hart (1973). The informal sector defines a range of activities usually undertaken by the urban poor for their own subsistence such as street trading (Devey et al., 2006) and home workers (Webster, 2006). The existence of the informal economy is underpinned by the strategic approach of modern enterprise to institute such practices as "effective downsizing" and "subcontracting" which have changed the nature of work (Webster, 2006).

Through "informalization" of work, the growing erosion of employment protections for the majority of African workers in formal jobs has increasingly shifted these formal jobs to share characteristics with those in the informal sector. These characteristics include lack of unionization, lack of employment security, lack of benefits and low wages et cetera (Webster, 2006).

Thirdly, South Africa battles high long-term unemployment. Using the official or narrow definition, the unemployment rate in South Africa rose from 26.6% in quarter one of 2016 to 27.1% in quarter two of 2016. (Statistics South Africa, 2016). In contrast, the jobless rate in Germany was 4.2% in August 2016 (Trading economics, 2016).

Fourthly, Germany has a workfare state that administers cash grants directly to the unemployed, South Africa does not. The South African unemployed often benefit indirectly from grants received by other members of their households such as old-age and child support and disability grants. Alternatively, some South African unemployed have the homelands as an option through which to construct a livelihood especially through subsistence agricultural activities.

By using this German typology, it is not my objective to identify how people should manage unemployment. The objective is to use the typology in a South African context as a way of organising and identifying how people think about what it means to them to be unemployed.

The scrap metals collector – "at any cost/price worker"

Scrap metal collecting was viewed by participants as a strategy to overcome economic insecurities characterised by the challenges of having to ensure the social reproduction of themselves and their families. In almost every urban landscape in the country, it is common to see men and women walking long distances dragging heaps of waste material (recyclable objects) destined for submission to recycling centres in exchange for money.

Given their limited education and skills, they have few options and thus very few alternative means of generating money. Partly because of the reality of absolute poverty, they believed their position forces them to accept nearly any opportunity

offered to generate income. In her research, Samson (2012) shows how waste workers are isolated but form an integral part of a larger global value chain that is transforming waste into value-for-profit. Many citizens excluded from the labour market have adopted waste collecting as a livelihood strategy.

Ntate Moloi (05/03/14) lives in Meloding. When he is not out collecting scrap metals, he is either at home resting, doing some maintenance and cleaning work in his yard or sitting with ex-mineworkers and other friends in the community in the shade with a jar of water for refreshment. His wife is deceased and he lives with his son who is a disability grant recipient. He saw collecting scrap metal as an activity of last resort. He only engaged in the activity as an attempt to overcome economic insecurity. He sees poverty as a terrible condition that can force people to do things they find unacceptable. He said:

"Poverty also makes you accept anything just to get some money" (Ntate Moloi, 05/03/14).

As a response to economic insecurity, scrap metal collecting was certainly inadequate. Ex-mineworkers adopted an attitude that doing something is better than doing nothing. Ntate Moloi spoke of the toil involved in scrap metal collecting. Scrap collectors drag heavy loads of waste for long distances. Alternatively, they may have to walk long distances, even entering isolated bushy areas looking for pieces of metal. The challenge was also that different metals fetched different prices. Efforts stretching from morning until afternoon can yield very small amounts. He said:

“Many of us [ex-miners] collect scrap metal because we are really struggling. I can spend the whole day, from morning to noon, looking for those metals. They [scrapyard staff] put them on the scale and give you R10" (Ntate Moloi, 05/03/14).

Unlike the German group of “at any cost workers”, the group in South Africa does not have a positive self-image. For them, unemployment and their current livelihood strategy is accompanied by a deep sense of shame. Unemployment seems to have negatively impacted on their self-image and confidence. Inadequate as a means to a decent living, informal scrap metal collecting is also not an adequate response to social and psychological impairments associated with unemployment.

From my interview data, official conceptions of who is unemployed and who is not, were challenged. In conversation with ex-mineworkers, I often discussed with them official definitions used by Statistics South Africa for the statistical categorization of the labour market demarcates between the unemployed and employed, even if underemployed. Letsie (19/03/14) and Chabedi (19/03/14) were not scrap metal collectors. Yet, they know many ex-mineworkers who are scrap collectors. They prefer other forms of informal activities in the community such as those mentioned about them in Chapter 5. However, they captured the essence of the astonishment with which mineworkers responded to the statistical understandings of unemployment and employment.

I used a variety of examples (such as scrap metals collectors and piece job holders) to explain who would be considered employed if Statistics South Africa was to survey them within a given period of time since the last job was done. If a scrap metal

collector/piece job holder is surveyed while busy collecting scrap metal/on the piece job or within 7 days of the last scrap metals collected/piece job completed, those people would be considered employed - self-employed people or underemployed.

Generally, ex-mineworkers challenged the idea that economically and socially insecure men like them, working long hours in badly remunerated informal activities barely accorded any social recognition, can be considered employed, or at least underemployed. Collecting scrap metal in particular, was viewed as a stigmatized, dirty and embarrassing activity which they do only because they suffer economic and social insecurities.

Participants believed that there are very clear distinctions between scrap collectors/ piece job holders and people who are employed (self-employed or by an employer). Key aspects in this distinction were identified such as having a payslip, access to medical care, working regulated hours, and the ability to approach institutions such as banks to access financial products such as loans. Scrap metal collectors and piece job holders were viewed as people having much in common with the *mahlalela* (unemployed*)* and therefore should be properly identified as *mahlalela* (unemployed) rather than as employed. Letsie said:

"You cannot say someone who walks around the whole day looking for scrap metal is working [counted as employed]. Working is when you get paid and have a payslip, medical aid, and working hours. Now I have a piece job, I don't have a payslip, I cannot access loans like working people do. I belong with *mahlalela* because often you cannot do what employed people do" (Letsie, 19/03/14).

Scrap metal collectors and piece job holders, they said, must be recognized only as people who are engaged in *ho-zama*, "hustling" or "making a plan", not as employed. Take for example a conversation with Lenkwe (31/07/13) and Ntate Tshepo (31/07/13) at Ntate Tshepo's house in Thabong. Ntate Tshepo hails from Botsabelo Township where he was born in 1964. His parents worked as farmworkers. He dropped out of school in Standard 2. He was recruited through TEBA and started working at President Steyn 1 mine in 1986. He was working as a machine operator when he was retrenched in 1998. Ntate Tshepo now largely depends on his daughter's income who works as a petrol attendant in Welkom. He is Lenkwe's neighbour and friend.

During our conversation, they highlighted how scrap collectors and people in the community selling a few apples, chewing gum, sweets, cigerrates and potato chips on a small table placed in front of their houses might be considered as self-employed people who have opened their own small business (tuck shop or recycling business). Yet, they found the definition disagreeable.

The empirical data seems to support Alexander et al.'s (2013) observation that in practice, the inclusion of scrap metal collectors as employed hides the actual misery and hardship endured in a life of poverty. In practice ex-miners who are now scrap metal collectors are struggling and barely makig a living in the informal sector. Given their inability to attain gainful employment, they have simply exploited a gap in the labour market from which to generate some income. Participants were often very doubtful about find employment, especially because they were mineworkers whose skills are not easily transferrable to other sectors of the economy. They believed that

unemployment is an objective reality in Welkom, and that adequate gainful employment, since the closure of many of the gold-mines and associated industries, has simply become 'unattainable' for men with their life histories. This point was clearly stated by Ntate Jeremiah, (28/03/14):

"I am not proud of being a mineworker because once you are retrenched, you cannot use those skills outside."

Since he was retrenched in 2000, Ntate Lethabo (26/03/14) quickly finished his retrenchment payouts. Like other participants I spoke with, he can provide only a patchy description of what the money was used for. Ntate Sefako (13/06/13) fell victim to a Ponzi scheme in Lesotho and he used some of the money to complete his house in Lesotho.

Tumelo (13/07/13) purchased a Toyota Corolla which he had hoped to use as a maxi taxi, but it has since been repossessed by the bank. He was also evicted from his house in Riebeekstad near Welkom due to defaulting on repayments. Retrenchment packages were used in a variety of ways. This included settlement of debts, attempts to establish tuck shops, buying and selling second hand clothing, building, or renovating homes, purchasing new furniture, helping out next of kin. Tumelo has held a few part-time, casual, and poorly remunerated jobs and volunteering with the hope of getting permanent placement. Unfortunately, after long years of searching, he has never found a stable, secure job. Like him, others are just waiting for old-age pensions to provide some basic level of economic security for social reproduction.

Ntate Lethabo (26/03/14) decided to become a scrap metals collector in response to the impairments he suffered associated with unemployment. He leaves home in the morning around 8:00 and 9:00 and walks the entire day looking for metals such as steel, brass lights, aluminium, circuit boards and copper and returns home before 17:00. The first time I met him, he was walking home past a group of sex workers and *Zama-Zamas* (illegal mineworkers) near Bedelia, holding a shopping bag filled with metals. Scrap collectors often submit their collections at scrap metal dealers such as Voorspoed Scrap Metal CC.

He lives with his wife who often works as a domestic worker on an ad hoc basis and two unemployed youngsters in their twenties. His eldest son who is in his late thirties is a general worker at Babanani East Shaft. He has his own family and can contribute only small amounts to his parents for their basic needs and those of his younger siblings. Ntate Lethabo however, could not just sit and depend on his son to provide for him and his mother's social reproduction.

Ntate Lethabo prefers to gather a significant number of various metals before taking them to metal dealers in exchange for money. His last metal sale earned him R383.00 for 60.30kg mass of metal collected over a few weeks. When I was visiting his house, he gave this money to his wife who left at once for town to buy some basic groceries and electricity for the house.

Like Letsie and Chabedi, he rejects the idea that he is employed. Instead, he believes that what he is doing is merely a means for survival, "making a plan", he calls it. He categorizes himself as unemployed because according to him, there is no real difference

between himself and someone who is "just sitting" at home doing nothing. This is what the term *mahlalela* (unemployed) generally implies. Ntate Lethabo (26/03/14) believes that unemployment is a terrible experience that often feeds stress, tension and conflict in households. He declared that it has changed the way he sees himself. It has affected his self-confidence, self-image, and his personal sense of dignity.

Unemployment, Ntate Lethabo (26/03/14) believes divides people as it isolates them and makes it increasingly difficult for them to come together. He thus views wage work as an institution that can give structure and purpose to social life. Not only does it bring people together in a single space, but it also helps build a sense of solidarity which now stands divided in the face on unemployment. He said:

"It brings conflict at home; I do not see myself the same way I used to when I was working. It divides people because everyone just sits at their homes" (Ntate Lethabo, 26/03/14).

In an article entitled "Excavating 'globalization' from street level: homeless men recycle their past", Teresa Gowan describes how homeless men in San Francisco are able to foreground the positive aspects of their current situations by referring to their past lives and using these images to recuperate "past certainties in relation to the current chaos and loss of the present as a way of placing themselves inside a surrounding world which makes sense" (Gowan, 2000:81) and thus construct new meanings and identities.

Ex-miners in Welkom also attempted to construct new meanings and identities around their current life strategies. But while scrap metal collecting may have been a form of

search to address the three impairments associated with unemployment, for these men it was not a successful one.

There are a variety of ways which ex-mineworkers reported as attempts at manage stress. These included reading the Bible and praying, sharing their problems with friends, and drinking alcohol when possible. Ntate Kgauho (19/02/14) was however critical of those that thought alcohol reduces stress. In his view, it can also add to existing problems and therefore intensify stress. If alcohol reduced stress, he would have it in large volumes. He said:

"Alcohol does not remove stress. If it did, I would drink a lot to make sure it never returns" (Ntate Kgauho, 19/02/14).

Behind Bongani hospital in Thabong, there is a drinking place that mineworkers called *ha-pillisi.* The name makes reference to the traditional brew which acts as self-medication to help cope, to forget for a little while about life and its challenges. The brew is regarded as lethal. Rumour has it that battery acid is added to the beer. They start selling alcohol from as early as 7:00. I was at *ha-pillisi* between 9:00 and 10:00 to interview a mineworker, but he had already blacked out. By that time, some people were already on the ground, other talking/singing loudly and dosing off, and yet others trying to leave but missing steps and holding the fences for support.

Men at the side of the road (MSR) - "as-if worker"

A group of men can be easily seen near the traffic circle by the Caltex filling station or Orange Circle as it is known. This circle is near the only Toyota dealership in the city. It is a popular spot where men with different life histories gather, waiting for jobs. It was their hope that this activity would provide access to opportunities to overcome their experiences of unemployment. Yet, my interviews indicate that, like scrap metal collectors and piece job holders, it was a failed attempt. Some can be seen sitting, lying stomach flat on lawns, leaning against walls, streetlight and road signage poles and others walking up and down on urban roadside pavements for visibility to passing motorists and potential employers.

This activity has become one of the ways unemployed people search for employment opportunities. Not all men use this strategy. Others rely on networks, usually consisting of people they know, either as homeboys and former colleagues or general acquaintances both locally and from other provinces. Letsie (19/03/14) said:

"I don't go to Orange Circle, I get some piece jobs through people I know."

Others regularly check the newspapers (local Welkom newspapers "The Vista", and "Daily Sun"). Sometimes, if they have any money to spend on job searches, they travel (mainly by hitch-hiking) to other mining areas in other provinces such as Limpopo and North West (Phalaborwa and Modikwa mine in near Burgersfort and Lonmin mine in Marikana were mentioned). When arriving in other provinces, they rely on a homeboy and other social networks for accommodation.

A labour market intermediary, the non-governmental organization (NGO), "Men at the side of the Road" (MSR), estimates that about 100 000 men stand at the side of the road at various sites in South Africa in anticipation of employment (mostly casual). Workseekers may register with this NGO to develop a database of CVs and skills records and facilitate skills training (Webster, 2010). Having started off in Cape Town, MSR has now established sites across the country such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Nelspruit, Durban, George and Port Elizabeth (MSR, 2016).

Ex-miners in Welkom who are now "men at the side of the road" are not registered with MSR, however. Instead, they operate as independent employment seekers without the aid of any organization. On 19th August 2013, from about 9:00 to 15:00, I joined a group of men waiting at the Orange Circle. There was a man I had met during my pilot survey named Tekron, who had given me his number but interestingly, it was a land line. When I arrived at the garage, I explained to the petrol attendants on duty why I was there so they could give me a parking space out of sight. I asked one of the petrol attendants if he knows a man by the name of Tekron. It turned out that Tekron is actually a nickname, in fact it is a name of one of the petrol products.

Nevertheless, the man giggled and confirmed that he knows Tekron. He also knew that Tekron was a mineworker and that Tekron walks every day from Thabong to come and wait at the Orange Circle. He says that he has not seen Tekron in a while, he does not come as often anymore. I asked the petrol attendant if he by any chance had Tekron's cell phone number. According to the petrol attendant Tekron does not have a cell phone. I suddenly remembered that Tekron had given me a number when I last met him, and

decided to try it. The number was not going through, however, and the petrol attendant giggled again and claimed that Tekron had become mentally unstable. I asked the petrol attendant why he believed Tekron was mentally unstable. He claimed that Tekron talked to himself when walking alone.

I parked my car and went to join the group of men on the pavement. Some were across the road, and others further down the road. I joined the group closest to the garage. Not everyone at this location were ex-mineworkers. It was nevertheless important to get a sense of group dynamics. The groups were fairly mixed in terms of age. I counted about 20 men waiting that morning. When I joined the group, there were six men. They never asked me who I was, why I was there or any question that would normally be asked when meeting a person for the first time. I was sitting with a group of about three men and directly across was a group of about six. Some wore overalls and others ordinary clothing. Almost every time a car slowed as if seeking their attention, some would walk, and some run towards it. Some would just remain sitting. I spoke also to others in the group but specifically focused on ex-mineworkers for data collection.

Ntate Mathebula, (26/ 08/13) stays in Hani Park. He reported that he often leaves home at past 6:00 to seek employment opportunities by the Orange Circle, where he often arrives between 7:00 and 7:30. He reported that his wife, Diketso works in the Community Works Programme (CWP) in Bronville facilitated by a coloured Pastor Peter of the Mercy-life Christian Church. She was the one who was providing a more stable source of income to the household which they used to meet basic needs. As a result, he is also trying to do something with the skills that he has instead of sitting at home and not trying at all. He said:

“I stay in Hani Park. I walk from Hani Park at past 6 and arrive in town between 7:00 and 7:30. We wait here the whole day and leave around 17:30 or 18:00, arriving home before 19:00” (Ntate Mathebula, 26/ 08/13).

Ntate Mathebula (26/ 08/13) claimed that he could do several types of jobs, but the problem is that when he gets piece jobs, people set the prices low. He does not have bargaining power, because often what he is able to make can help somewhat. He said:

“I take any piece job: painting, gardening, anything. But the problem is that people want to set the price low. You can do a job that costs R400 just for R50. I take it because I am hungry” (Ntate Mathebula, 26/ 08/13).

There was no sense of predictability about access to piece jobs, nor with the amount of income they could expect to earn. Uncertainties made it difficult for them to plan. Ntate Morena (27/03/14) said:

“Sometimes I come here for four weeks without getting a piece job. If you are lucky sometimes you can make R100, R80, R200 it depends on what kind of work you do … Piece jobs are not good because you cannot really plan. One day you have a job and tomorrow you don’t” (Ntate Morena, 27/03/14).

Ntate Tebogo (27/03/14) was born in 1962 in the Eastern Cape area of Herschel. His wife passed away leaving behind four children. Only two are old enough to receive a child grant. They live in Herschel with their grandmother who gets an old-age pension. He worked at Welkom 1 from the 1987 to 2004 as a generalist and rock driller. For a

short period, he became involved in illegal mining, but decided to quit after narrowly escaping arrest in 2011. Since 2012, he has been standing by the side of the road and doing other piece jobs. After his wife's passing, he met someone else but they have since separated. He demonstrates how economic insecurities are linked to the inability to secure social reproduction. He finds it difficult to have access to a proper meal. He declared that he often has nothing else to eat except maize meal and some cooking oil. He declared that he never thought that in his life, he could be eating and living the way he was. Ntate Tebogo, further claimed that he has had no choice but to somehow train his body to try and go for days without proper food, except, water. He said:

"I never thought I could end up eating cooking oil but now I am living like that … I have trained my body to go without food for 2 to 3 days by drinking water" (Ntate Tebogo, 27/03/14).

With an air of disbelief, he said that:

"I never thought one day I would be running to people's bakkies like a mad person asking for a job" (Ntate Tebogo, 27/03/14).

Searching for work was not the only reason why these men spent time almost every day by the side of the road. The side of the road provides for social needs such as social integration and the formation of new friendships and solidarities. It can provide a platform through which to challenge not only economic insecurities but also social and psychological problems associated with unemployment. The side of the road provided these men access to social networks that allowed them to have diverse conversations

about a host of different topics. They spoke about soccer, politics, women, their former working lives and their uncertain futures. They pooled whatever little money they had, buying bread, or biscuits, or vetkoeks and a 2-litre bottle of soft drink.

Yet, the side of the road could also potentially create the conditions for the emergence of an as-if. Men who simply want to leave their home and meet up with other men, without really seeking piece jobs per se could also use the side the of the road. Leaving home each morning more or less the same time as his wife who works in the CWP, Ntate Mathebula could seem to be pretending in order to be seen as making an effort to find employment. Nevertheless, many of these men faced real material challenges associated with unemployment.

Grants and family remittances dependency – the discouraged or "non-worker"

Child grants, disability and old-age grants emerged as some of the most important sources of predictable income households had. Social grants provided a basis from which people could respond to economic insecurities. Empirical evidence suggests that social grants often benefit not just direct recipients but also positively impact on households with ineligible members. In other words, the benefits derived from grants often extend to those they were initially not intended for, for instance, a grandmother's old-age pension benefitting her unemployed nephew that lives with her (Mosoetsa, 2011:5).

Ntate Jafta (18/02/14) suffers from phthisis. He was reluctant to participate in the research because he said that many people have come and taken information from people like him promising to help but they disappear. He had not even given me (and Ramathaleha who introduced me to him) enough chance to explain. Men like him that I interviewed in Welkom and Lesotho felt that their battle with phthisis was made worse by the fact that they were often broke, lacking money for food and transport to collect medication. His experience seemed to have do with companies that had previously come and promised to help ex-mineworkers launch claims for occupational diseases. Representatives from Richard Spoor Inc. Attorneys were also present in the community. They also visited the gathering of ex-mineworkers in Meloding trying to register ex-mineworkers to claim for occupational diseases.

Ntate Jafta lives with his wife and two young children. He also collects scrap metals but does not see it as an activity that can ensure his own and his family's survival. Child grants make the real difference. He declared that he does not know how things would have been if it was not for the income through child grants. He said:

"I survive through grants I receive because of my two children. I don't know what would happen if there was no grant. Things would be worse" (Ntate Jafta, 18/02/14).

Ntate Kgauho (19/02/14) is Tumelo's neighbour. He was born in Bethlehem in 1957. He dropped out of school in Standard 4. He began as a mineworker at President Steyn Number 1 shaft in 1975. He was retrenched in 1998. Since retrenchment, he has never had a stable job. He is divorced and believes that unemployment introduced new tensions that led to the breakdown of his marriage. One of his fingers is missing, so he

receives a disability grant. Yet, he still does piece jobs to augment the grant. Seemingly, a grant did not deter him from taking on low-income jobs.

The administration of social protection in South Africa, especially through social grants has been hailed as a policy innovation and has indeed aided in the battle to reduce poverty. Without such interventions, South Africa would be far worse off in its fight against poverty, inequality and unemployment (Ferguson, 2015). Social grants also have a positive economic impact. Steinberg (2013) claims that in Pondoland where unemployment and poverty were high, social grants "increased purchasing power in poor rural villages, leading to new enterprises, enhanced education and increased ability to pursue work."

Critics of social grants across various sections of society however often point out the disproportional dependency of grant recipients versus the number of people in employment. Direct money transfers by the state to those understood to be in need account for some 3.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) going into the pockets of about 30% of the South African population. Over 16.9 million South Africans are state grant recipients South African Social Security Agency (SASSA, 2016). There are various categories of social welfare programms. The largest include old-age grants Old Age Grant (OAG), Disability Grants (DG) and Child Support Grants (CSG) (SASSA, 2016).

The South African population is currently estimated at 56.5 million, with an economically active population estimated at 37 million. Using the official definition, over 27.7% of South Africans are unemployed. When discouraged workseekers are

accounted for under the expanded definition, more than an estimated 36.6% of South Africans are unemployed. Social grants outstrip the number of people with jobs. As is clear from the statistics, a significant proportion of South African households depend on social grants for the provision of basic necessities.

My interview material indicates that it is not just grants that provide households with some level of security, but a further combination of strategies. Sources of income also included remittance from employed relatives. However, it was not always easy for them to ask for money. Ntate Modise (06/03/14) was born in Lesotho in 1969. He began working as a mine general worker in 1987 and later became a rock driller. He was retrenched in 2000. He estimated that the people who depended on his mine wage, were about five, excluding his wife and children. He used some of his retrenchment money to buy a second-hand Toyota Corolla with the hope of starting a cab business. He lives in Meloding with his unemployed wife and three children (six, nine and an infant of three months). The infant benefits from government supplied milk. He reported that he was no longer going to church because they asked him to clear the grass and cut the tree branches. He associated this request with the fact that he is unemployed. He viewed the request as a suggestion that, because he is unemployed, he is idle and does nothing and should therefore be given some task do to keep busy. He reported that he often spends time with friends at a local scrap yard to keep busy. He claimed that his family often received money from his sister and brother-in-law, but he asks the wife to make the call. For him, but also for his wife, asking for money was often a source of embarrassment. He said:

“If I need electricity, it can come from Pretoria or Bloemfontein from family and relatives. Even my sister sends me money when she has. My brother-in-law sends money when he can. My wife is the one who usually calls” (Ntate Modise, 06/03/14).

Asking for money was very difficult for them, but they did it anyway because of economic insecurity:

“I was used to taking care of myself. Asking people for money is very hard” (Ntate Modise, 06/03/14) .

Ntate Modise claimed that he no longer has good relationships with some of his relatives, saying:

“Some relatives distance themselves, they do not take your calls or respond to your ‘please call me’ because they think you are going to ask for money” (Ntate Modise, 06/03/14).

Remittances also came from some of the ex-mineworkers’ children who are employed, but the problem is that their children also have their own families and financial commitments. As a result, the money remitted is not always guaranteed. When they do receive the money, it is combined in some instances with other available small income and used for the acquisition of basic needs such electricity and maize meal among other goods.

The reality of households drawing on a combination of livelihood strategies combining both wage and non-wage income streams was captured by Scully (2013). Relations of interdependence among wealthier and impoverished members of households benefitting from "top down" and "bottom up" transfers challenge the core assumptions of the polarization thesis which argues that development has increasingly led to a polarized class structure characterized by an "organized elite minority and unorganized majority of workers" (Scully, 2013:II). Some scholars have asserted that a pro-poor development policy in South Africa undermines the power of the privileged minority to ensure employment for the excluded majority (Scully, 2013). In the face of joblessness, however, Scully (2013) argues that contemporary development policies should pursue the improvement of livelihoods rather than to strictly focus on growth and employment creation.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided some empirical evidence and discussion on how scrap metal collecting, man by the side of the road and grants/remittances constituted an attempt by ex-mineworkers to respond to economic insecurities, social insecurities and psychological impairments associated with unemployment. However, these were failed attempts. They were unable to secure sustainable and predictable sources of economic security or new forms of social status and dignity. Because they are unemployed, their stigmatized status continues, reinforcing their diminished sense of masculine confidence through negative self-perceptions. Their responses were failed attempts not only because the income generated through different combinations of livelihood strategies are insufficient, but also because they do not meet moral void created by lack of wage work.

Chapter eight: conclusion: deleterious effects of proletarianization and the neo-Durkheimian imagination

The main aim of this thesis was to explore experiences of unemployment and the meaning of wage work among a group of ex-mineworkers who worked in the Free State Goldfields (FSGF). Through the personal narratives of men laid off from the dying South African deep-level gold mining industry, it aims to explicate the powerful effects of wage work in a post-apartheid context of wagelessness. What does it mean for people to want something that is not there?

This thesis draws its weight from the fact that both pro - and anti-wage work intellectual traditions in South Africa neglect the experiences of unemployment. In order to provide background and context, the thesis briefly traced historical processes that established proletarianization in South Africa. The central point was that proletarianization in the gold mining industry happened quite late, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, proletarianization in the gold mining industry did not happen merely because of effective labour stabilization policies of mining houses but also because of structural changes both in the decline of the rural economy and the decline of employment opportunities in other sectors and industries of the economy (Crush, Jeeves, & Yudelman, 1991).

Drawing on a limited, relatively non-generalizable, purposefully selected snowball sample of ex-mineworkers in Welkom's Thabong, Bronville, Hani Park and Virginia's

Meloding townships and Lesotho, the findings of the thesis are not necessarily representative of the experiences of all the various categories (age, gender, race, place) of the unemployed. Nor do its results necessarily even apply to all ex-miners. Nonetheless, the stances of the men I have interviewed provide genuine insights that should be useful for the more general debate about wage work.

The effects of this powerful desire for what is lost, may be read and illustrated through conceptions of bodily dismemberment. This is conveyed not just in the sense of sick or injured, amputated bodies, but also in problems that confront masculine bodies that no longer knew how to be men. These narratives are about social conditions of meaninglessness and despair, that is, anomie, in which fragmented social orders and the effects of desiring something that is not there thwarts the capacity to be a whole-bodied human being.

The findings affirm the centrality of wage work in the "social imagination"[13] of my sample of ex-miners. By identifying and extracting what wage work meant to them, the study found that they view wage work as a fundamental social category of what it means to be human. As proletarians, the organizing of their lives had been anchored around wage work. Its absence highlighted the moral power of wage work that transcends the significance of material income. Unemployment, wagelessness, translated into the apocalyptic disintegration of an entire social and moral order.

[13] See Barchiesi (2011b)

Responses to unemployment constituted an attempt by ex-mineworkers to meet economic and social insecurities as well psychological impairments. However, these emerged as failed attempts largely because the problem is of a moral character.

Between pro- and anti-wage work perspectives, there are fundamental differences but also important points of convergence. My findings indeed suggest the possibility of actual agreement. Both traditions agree that in a capitalist world, wage work remains a formidably powerful social force. Their difference lies in the fact that the former (pro-wage work) view it as a positive and progressive social force that enables people to earn a living while constructing a sense of purpose, identity, dignity, and respectability. Pro-wage work proponents view wage work as a necessary that is institution capable of organizing social life. The latter (anti-wage work) view it as a negative force, a wrong desire systematically produced by a domineering capitalist profit driven regime. Proponents of the anti-wage work position argue that it is not just workers who are trapped by the domineering power of this regime that has turned wage work into a 'normal' part of life despite its inherent problems of subjugation etc. Alongside workers, implicated in the trap (at least in South Africa) is the discipline of the sociology of work, the labour movement, the left and the state that have all actively contributed to the production of a dominant discourse celebrating the "dignity of wage work" (Barchiesi, 2009, 2011a). Ironically, the celebration of the dignity of work peaks when that which is the subject of celebration can no longer fulfil its traditional role.

Marx's writing also conveys a powerfully anti-wage work proposition, in which he calls not for more or better conditions of wage work but for the possibility of imagining a society that is fully dis-embedded from the desire for wage work in its very conception

of humanness. This lies at the root of his call for a revolutionary worker's movement that will abolish wage work. Marx detests wage work as a condition of slavery, domination, and subjugation, which is incapable of bestowing any sense of dignity to the work or the worker. Hence the key concern for Marx was alienation. Alienation for Marx is a compromised state of being, that is, compromised life activity, thwarted, and distorted by capitalist forms of private property and production relations.

Indeed, the findings of this study, aptly illustrate Marx's point about how the force of industrial capitalism on worker's 'subjective being' completely obliterates any possibility for the proletariat to imagine itself as fully human without engagement in (and enslavement to) wage work. The representation of bodies with missing arms and legs reflects this sense of incompleteness at the level of embodiment that is experienced by the unemployed.

The clarity in Marx's thought concerning the need to imagine a completely different social order dis-embedded from wage work, provides a powerful basis for thinking about alternatives to wage work. The powerful discourse of the "dignity of work" that describes the pro-wage work tradition sees the problems of wage work as those that are manageable and 'normal' rather than inherently irreconcilable. As pointed out by Weeks (2011), this configuration of wage work as a state of normality has removed it from the arena of political contestation or critique. If the desire for wage work is viewed as a product of the capitalist regime, then by implication, any relationship between wage work and necessary human values is arbitrary and historically contingent. Nonetheless, problems of realising an alternative to wage work continue to haunt anti-wage proponents without ever being fully articulated. But equally, problems of

realizing decent work for the majority of the working class in a capitalist world that is built on 'precarity and insecurity' persist to haunt pro-wage work visions of the future.

For pro-wage work, the only way to resolve problems arising from the loss of wage work and continued attachments to it is to fulfil the desire by putting people back into jobs. Job creation remains the only redemptive possibility to restore people's sense of dignity and independence in the world today. Thus, wage work remains the ultimate goal and the only practical and sustainable solution to the 'crisis of social reproduction' and decent work the only solution to 'precarity and insecurity'.

Through the "progressive realization paradigm" (Webster (2011), state-led interventions such as the Community Work Program (CWP) and the Expanded Public Work Program (EPWP) are seen not as potential alternative approaches to work but rather short-term labour market interventions targeting the unemployed with the aim of developing the necessary skills and discipline for decent work somewhere in the future. Having acknowledged the crisis of wage work, its proponents have no answer except to tell people to wait for full employment while participating in short-term labour market interventions through state-led programms like the CWP and the EPWP. Such projects, however, do raise the question of whether it is perhaps possible to create, within the present social order, pockets of "decent work" that are not really wage work at all since they are state driven not for profit community based projects. The question that remains, nonetheless, is what happens when job creation fails in the face of worker's own embodied desire and attachment to wage work?

My findings confirm that indeed wage work is seen as an institution that is central to worker's sense of dignity. The findings also speak to the anti-wage work position concerning the problematic nature of glorifying the ethic and desire for wage work in a context in which it is simply unattainable for most work seekers. Ex-mineworkers nonetheless continue to subscribe to wage labour as the best suited institution to organize social life and ensure social status for most of the working class. In unemployment, ex-mineworker's lives continue to be shaped by something that is not there (wage labour). They nostalgically hold on to the 'promise' of wage work even when it is no longer a tangible part of their daily lives. Wage work is a powerful social force the social domination of which continues to subdue its subject's imagination long after it is gone. The embodiment of wage labour as the central institution to attaining dignity contributes to how unemployment is experienced. Unemployment was thus articulated as a condition of anomie experienced as loss.

Yet, unemployment is a policy and development problem. But it is also a moral problem. Various strategies, such as achieving full employment, have been developed from a range of different economics and development schools of thought, but no known intervention has thus far yielded the kinds of results hoped for.

This makes it necessary to rethink at least two things. Firstly, there is a need to rethink our notion of wage work as an institution capable of guaranteeing a 'decent life' for the majority of the working class. Is wage work still able to achieve the goal of extending decent life for the working class majority or is this expectation a mere attribution to wage work, capacities, and responsibilities it is no longer able to fulfil? Secondly, there is a need to rethink the meaning of work to imagine new ways of 'organizing society

so as to include those excluded and marginalized' from wage work, to reintegrate them into society and address their status as reprobates. Work (not wage work) must be 're-embedded at the societal level' to enable individuals to become aware of the moral significance of their position in the division of labour and their relations of interdependence within the broader society. Ways need to be found to enable people (especially men through alternative conceptions of manhood delinked from wages and breadwinning status) to find meaning in their social actions, and to feel that they are contributing something and hence can experience pride, dignity and meaning through "non-wage centred" contributions to society.

To enter the policy conversation, I depart from mainstream arguments around the support for SMEs and preoccupations with economic growth. I also depart from alternative agendas that respond to neo-liberal globalization such as the campaign for decent work. Instead, I consider a neo-Durkheimian approach that must address the problem of anomie arising from unemployment through non-labour market-linked interventions.

Since the evidence suggests unemployment is a condition of anomie experienced as loss, how can the unemployed be reintegrated into society? Should our efforts be fully committed to job creation and putting millions back into jobs or labour? Or should we embrace an alternative developmental path that acknowledges the need for wage labour but also celebrates and values work that is not labour? Indeed, such a dual approach has a sense of 'proportion' in that it recognizes the importance of labour but refuses to accept that wage labour must be the ultimate aspiration of life and the only durable way in which respect and dignity are distributed among individuals.

I argue the idea of a Basic Income Grant (BIG) provides possibilities to imagine the decentring of wage work and the creation of new 'social orders' in which dominant social norms and values are no longer monopolized and mediated through wage work but also through work that is not labour.

Such a strategy would rest on the willingness to accept that wage labour can no longer serve its historical role of promoting social inclusion and social solidarity. Instead, the present and future society with much fewer jobs will depend on a commitment to 'work that is not wage labour, leisure that is not play, organized in occupational communities' in which everyone is provided with a Basic Income Grant (BIG).

A strategy for de-centreing wage work: the Basic Income Grant (BIG), 'new politics of distribution' and the development of new moral orders

The Basic Income Grant (BIG) is the main idea to a strategy of de-commodification of labour. The BIG is an old idea that has gone under different names such as "citizen's grant", "social dividend", "solidarity grant", "Universal Basic Income (UBI)", "demogrant" and "the rightful share". The idea is that every rightful citizen of a country be guaranteed a modest unconditional monthly income as a right to use for whatever they choose. Every citizen will receive the BIG regardless of their class background and relation to the labour market. Each citizen would have a card entitling them to withdraw a modest monthly amount for basic needs to use as they see fit, with add-ons for special needs (i.e disability) and stringent conditions for migrants (i.e waiting periods etc.). The BIG would be targeted at the individual, not a household or a family.

It would be in the form of cash transfers only, not food, clothing or any other kind of voucher. The state cannot disallow a BIG unless if specific set conditions are violated such as committing a crime (Standing, 2011:171–172).

There are various forms in which the BIG can be administered, usually with very different objectives. There are models focused on improving the living conditions of the majority citizens and those concerned with intensifying capitalist exploitation. The former belong in the progressive category while the latter emerge from the liberal camp. While liberal versions seem to promote some level of redistribution, poverty, and inequality reduction, they are mainly concerned with reducing government bureaucracy and pegging the level of provision at a level that does not interfere with the supply of cheap labour. The progressive models seek to achieve radical transformation by eroding an employer's power of economic coercion by delinking work and income (Clarke, 2017).

For decades, the idea has largely been ignored as a utopian "Marxist dream" that is obsolete in the 21st century and utterly undeserving of the attention of influential politicians, bureaucrats, government officials and economists focused on real practical solutions to challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

Yet, in recent years, signs of change have begun to emerge across the globe with more and more people including Nobel Prize winners beginning to realize that the BIG is not only possible but also feasible, desirable, and affordable. Different models of the BIG have been piloted in various parts of countries such as India, Finland, Namibia, Italy, and Canada yielding results that contradict some of the main objections raised by

sceptics of the BIG (Standing, 2017b). South Africa had its BIG moments in 2001 and 2002 with the establishment of a BIG coalition of over 30 community organizations, NGOs, religious organizations, social movements, research institutions and COSATU and the Taylor Commission (2001) respectively Barchiesi (2011b,). In 2016, 75% of Swiss voters opposed the idea of a BIG in a public referendum (Standing, 2017b).

The sudden turn towards BIG is within the context of a global transformation that has fundamentally dismantled the dominant labourist model of the 20th century. Global transformations have entrenched chronic insecurity, precariousness and inequality. The traditional classes have been fragmented, leading to the birth of the precariat (Standing, 2011). Other authors such as Barchiesi (2011b) and Candeias (2004) among others have written about precariousness and double precariousness respectively to highlight the problems associated with treating jobs as the norm.

Basic income promotes basic conditions for work that is not labour. It promotes liberation and freedom or emancipation, creativity, self-chosen self-development activities, greater equity and reduced poverty, basic security and stability, egalitarianism, employment creation and development (Standing, 2011, 2017).

Hostility towards the BIG prevail, mostly stemming from some kind of commitment and privileging of wage work over other forms of work. Main objections to the desirability of the BIG include:

Firstly, the BIG will lower labour supply by taking away the incentive to work, making people lazy. This objection was well summed up by South African and African National

Congress (ANC) Parliamentarian Mike Masutha in his response during the basic income debates of the Taylor Commission (2001), “if you have all these nice social benefits, where is the incentive to want to go back to work” (Barchiesi, 2011b:121). This would especially be the case if the condition is that the BIG is withdrawn when an individual gets a job, especially if the job does not pay significantly more than the basic income.

In such a situation, the incentive to work vanishes and people remain in an “unemployment trap”. However, if the basic income is not withdrawn, it will induce people to seek employment in order to augment the basic income through labour. Some precarious jobs may become utterly unattractive for people, but this places the duty on the employer to improve employment conditions in order to attract the labour he/she requires. Alternatively, the basic income can open up completely new possibilities. People can freely choose to use the basic income to sponsor productive activities such as buying seeds and fertilizers, equipment et cetera necessary for subsistence agriculture and other forms of work that are not labour in their homes and communities. BIG could also sponsor small-scale entrepreneurial activities that would have otherwise not existed.

Secondly, it is unaffordable. Opponents of the BIG such as Trevor Manual gave an inflated figure of R80bn in 2002, claiming that it would bankrupt South Africa (BIG Financing Reference Group, 2004). As a number of studies have shown, the most important thing is not whether or not the money is available. The most important thing is to prioritize it.

There are a number of innovative models that can be developed to generate the money to finance the BIG. For example, Guy Standing (2017a&b) has suggested that basic income could be built up progressively from a small base and as it is being built up, we progressively phase out other expensive and ineffective areas of social expenditure. This would help avoid increasing taxes too high.

The Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) has developed alternative tax scenarios that can generate the grant from higher income households and allowing the net cost to be financed by an optimal combination of tax instruments. Fiscal impact of the BIG depends on several factors such as, the size of the grant, the relationship between the Basic Income Grant and other social grants, the associated adjustments to the overall tax structure, the growth effects resulting from consequent improvements in living standards, the impact of the grant on other government expenditures and the effect of the associated tax changes on economic growth (BIG Financing Reference Group, 2004).

The BIG was benchmarked at R100 per individual per month, equal to R120 in mid-2003. In the 2003/2004 fiscal year, the population was estimated at 46 million citizens. Population growth was estimated at 2% annually, resulting in an estimated population of 48 million in 2005. The major existing grants include the child-support grant, the state old-age pension and the disability grant. Yet, these leave too many people excluded. The BIG would be the pillar of a comprehensive system of social security and would become the foundation for all other social grants (BIG Financing Reference Group, 2004).

Thirdly, it will be inflationary. Critics have argued that the basic income would lead to inflation because of the greater spending power pushing up the demand for goods/services, and in turn their prices. The uptick in prices would erode the spending power from the BIG (Prochazka, 2016). However, basic income would replace existing costly social welfare programms that are expensive, inefficient, inequitable and prone to corruption. Some of the social spending would be converted to more efficient and equitable basic income and yield many positive effects for economic transformation and development (Davala, Jhabvala, Mehta & Standing, 2015).

As indicated in the discussion above, the mental habits formed around the centrality of wage work blind many people from seeing the fundamental social and economic benefits possible from the administration of basic income (Steinberg, 2013). Standing (2017a) highlights philosophical and economic reasons in support of a BIG.

Firstly, basic income is about social justice. Basic income is perceived as an instrument of social justice reflecting the fundamentally social/collective nature of society's wealth. It is not a form of charity or a response to poverty per se, but a right to claim a stake in the social dividend from the collective wealth created and sustained by our forebears. This element of social justice distinguishes basic income from other social security schemes that are mainly posited as poverty eradication measures (Standing, 2017a:25–27). One of the standard objections to claims on the social inheritance or dividend through a basic income is that no one has a right to a share of inherited social wealth because they have not done anything to deserve it. The response to such an objection is that, using the same logic, private inheritance must be abolished because

the inheritor has done absolutely nothing to deserve it. If private inheritance is allowed, the same principle must be applied to social inheritance (Standing, 2017a:30)

Secondly, a basic income enhances our sense of freedom. The dominant utilitarian and liberal paradigms understand freedom to mean the absence of interference. The "republican" version associated with Aristotle and Hannah Arendt equates freedom to non-domination from figures of authority and institutions that interfere with one's ability to act, think and develop oneself freely. Republican freedom is robust because it creates the conditions for one to avoid or escape unwanted interference and the will of others. It depends on a democratically accountable government committed to full freedom, which is mainly about ensuring that the most vulnerable in society avoid domination. Such a freedom requires people to have sufficient resources, allowing them to make rational and reasonable choices. Along with other institutional and policy changes, a basic income would enhance and strengthen a number of everyday freedoms such as (Standing, 2017a:60-61):

- The freedom to refuse a job that is onerous, boring, low-paying or just nasty;
- the freedom to accept a job that is none of the above but which could not be accepted if financially dictated;
- the freedom to start a small-scale business venture, which is risky but potentially rewarding;
- the freedom to do care work for a relative or friend, or voluntary work in and for the community, that might not be feasible if financial necessity required long hours of paid labour;

- the freedom to do creative work and activities of all kinds;
- the freedom to risk learning new skills or competences;
- the freedom to leave a relationship that has turned sour or abusive;
- the freedom to be lazy once in a while.

The emancipatory value of a basic income would exceed its monetary value. The pilot of 6000 people in the Indian village of Madhya Pradesh illustrated how a small guaranteed income could yield positive impacts that are far greater than anticipated. It lowered the levels of default of loan repayments and promoted savings on interest. Cost of living was reduced through collective action. Liquidity enabled individuals and families to make more strategic decisions such as acquiring equipment, seeds and fertilizers for subsistence farming. In cases where people were unable to pay back their loans or pay rent, landlords would force them to provide labour when required as payment in kind. This denied individuals and families time to do other activities such as working on their own piece of land in preparation for harvest, which entrenched them deeper into poverty. The basic income enabled them to pay off their landlords, freeing up their time to spend how they saw fit. Young women coerced into covering their faces with veils (even when taking photographs) were able to push back against forms of cultural domination because they had their own money and could decide what they wanted for themselves (Standing, 2017a:67).

Thirdly, a basic income is a basic security. A basic income would reduce poverty, inequality and insecurity. A common claim in favour of a basic income is that it would be an effective way to reduce poverty because it simply involves making direct and

transparent ways of transferring cash with relatively low administrative costs. In this way, it would be a good way of providing basic economic security. This is important because at the heart of the global transformation is the production of precariousness and chronic economic uncertainty (Standing, 2017a:73).

While inequality is bad for society and the economy, it hits the poor hardest. In recent decades inequality has been increasing. Evidence also indicates the adverse impact it has on economic growth and it impairs sustainable economic development. A basic income would reduce income inequality because it represents a higher proportion for the lower income groups. Much of the 20th century has featured a steep redistribution of income from wages to profit, indicating a dysfunctional system of distribution. Prevailing technological changes are by and large rendering human labour unnecessary and lowly paid, making it nearly impossible for people to rise above poverty or to chart a path of upward social mobility (Aronowits & DiFazio, 2010; Standing, 2017a:73-86).

A basic income would promote economic security more effectively than any alternative. Without basic economic security, people cannot be rational. Basic economic security promotes peace of mind, reduce stress and worry while yielding positive psychological changes. Current social protection schemes such as the German version of Hartz IV (see Chapter 6) do not address the main problem of the 20th century, the problem of economic uncertainty. The qualification for Hartz IV benefits is dependent on fulfilling various requirements such as providing proof of employment search, or attending skills training programms meant to improve chances of employment. The behaviour of beneficiaries, which I discuss in Chapter 6, suggests that they comply not out of free choice but because they are forced by harsh economic

realities. Under a basic income, none of this coercion would be found. An unconditional grant that is guaranteed will inevitably promote a greater sense of psychological security and freedom for people to use their time as they see fit (Standing, 2017a:90).

The idea that a basic income grant would lead to undesirable social behaviours by recipients, such as becoming lazy and sentiments that grants for able-bodied men would lead to stigma and insults to dignity, stem from the conception that labour is the most desirable institution in industrial society. It is grounded in the sexist belief (especially for men – "breadwinning") that earning money wages by selling one's labour on the labour market is the only morally acceptable way of accessing money for basic needs especially for the working class. This commitment to labourism is underpinned by hostile and dismissive sentiments towards basic income grants that are delinked from labour as utopian dreams that are irrelevant to the 21st century reality.

In *Give a man a fish: reflections on the new politics of distribution*, James Ferguson (2015) surveys significant developments across the globe and especially in Southern Africa (in particular South Africa and Namibia), where there has been the emergence of a large expansion of social welfare programms. These social welfare schemes dispense small cash transfers directly to the poor.

This expansion runs counter to some of the accounts given about the effects of neo-liberalism in the region. South Africa has been reputed to be a pragmatic case of neo-liberal governance (Bond, 2005; Klein, 2008 cited in Ferguson, 2015:3). The country, however, has led the way in Southern Africa (compared to neighbouring countries such as Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and also pilots in Zimbabwe) in the

implementation of extensive administration of social payments anchored mainly around child-care grants, old-age pensions and disability grants. Instead of neo-liberal governance in South Africa leading to more and more exclusion of the majority of poor people, new forms of inclusion of many poor citizens previously ignored by government have thus emerged through direct cash payments by the state (Ferguson, 2015).

Administration of social protection has been hailed as a policy innovation in South Africa, which has aided in the battle to reduce poverty. In the government's view: "Social assistance continues to form an important part of government's strategy to fight the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment"(Ferguson, 2015). These cash transfers are not even in the form of micro credit or securitization but simply involve the transfer of cash to those identified through means tests as eligible.

The unexpected expansion of welfare in the region and especially in South Africa points towards the emergence of new political possibilities. Politics of redistribution are delinked from wage work as a vehicle for the distribution of income. As wage labour continues to lose its credibility, small cash transfers may become a much more persuasive political policy. While South Africa is targeting the creation of employment as a central pillar of liberation, in reality more and more people have been placed not in jobs but in social welfare schemes. Over 30% of the country's population is benefitting from social grants. In essence, it is not jobs but grants that are holding the country from total disintegration.

Direct money transfers by the state to those understood to be in need account for some 3.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) going into the pockets of about 30% of the South African population. Over 16.9 million South Africans are state grant recipients (SASSA, 2016). There are various categories of social welfare programms. The largest include old-age grants (OAG), disability grants (DG) and child-support grants (CSG) (SASSA, 2016). With an employed population of some 15.5 million people (2015 Q1), social grants outstrip the number of people with jobs. As is clear from the statistics, a significant proportion of South African households depend on social grants for the provision of basic necessities rather than on jobs (Mosoetsa, 2011, Ferguson, 2015).

Citizens not eligible to receive grants are often beneficiaries of grants awarded to others (Mosoetsa, 2011:5). In other words, the benefits derived from grants often extend to those they were initially not intended for, for instance, a grandmother's old-age pension benefitting her unemployed nephew that lives with her.

Scully (2013) notes that, significantly, households drew on mixed livelihood strategies combining multiple income streams from both wage and non-wage sources. Relations of interdependence among wealthier and impoverished members of households benefitting from "top down" and "bottom up" transfers challenge the core assumptions of the polarization thesis. The polarization thesis argues that development has increasingly led to a polarized class structure characterized by an "organized elite minority and unorganized majority of workers" (Scully, 2013:II).

Some scholars have asserted that there is the case that a pro-poor development policy in South Africa undermines the power of the privileged minority to ensure employment

for the excluded majority (Scully, 2013). In the face of wagelessness, however, Scully (2013) argues that contemporary development policies should pursue the improvement of livelihoods rather than a strict focus on growth and employment creation.

Social grants provide some level of protection for households without any income. Social grants have made the lives of certain participants who I have characterized as the "non-workers" or "discouraged workers" somewhat better. The advocacy for a BIG is not a claim suggesting that wage work is obsolete. It is rather intended as a critique of the centrality of wage work despite the growing evidence that it no longer has the capacity to "fulfil the daunting distributive role that has so often been imagined for it" (Ferguson, 2015:192).

Drawing from the anarchist proponent, Peter Kropotkin, Ferguson argues that cash transfers should not be understood as a gift, but as a rightful share of the social inheritance and wealth. Only through such an approach can true meaning be given to claims of liberation contained in the Freedom Charter that "the people shall share in the country's wealth." Such a declaration suggests that liberation and freedom is not just a matter of political rights but also the equitable redistribution of resources and wealth. The labour market has been traditionally understood as the vehicle through which to deliver this declaration, yet in reality, only a handful of people are gainfully employed. However, the right to a decent life and basic security must remain the right of each and every citizen. The wealth generated for capitalism over generations entitle people a share of the wealth, not a reward for labour or a benevolent gift but as a rightful share.

With regard to mineworkers, Kropotkin stated: *"*The shafts of the mine still bear on their rocky walls the marks made by the pick of the workman who toiled to excavate them. The space between each prop in the underground galleries might be marked as a miner's grave; and who can tell what each of these graves has cost, in tears, in privations, in unspeakable wretchedness, to the family who depended on the scanty wage of the worker cut off in his prime by fire damp, rock fall, or flood". (cited in Ferguson 2015[1892] 1995, 14).

With regard to the claim for a rightful share, Kropotkin said: "We must recognize, and loudly proclaim, that everyone, whatever his grade in the old society, whether strong or weak, capable or incapable, has, before everything, the right to live, and that society is bound to share among all, without exception, the means of existence it has at its disposal … . A 'right to well-being' means the possibility of living like human beings, and of bringing up children to be members of a society better than ours", whilst the 'right to work' only means the right to be always a wage-slave, a drudge, ruled over and exploited by the middle class of the future. The right to well-being is the social revolution, the right to work means nothing but the treadmill of commercialism" (Kropotkin [1892] 1995:28, 30).

Ex-mineworkers affirmed their commitment to wage work as the only way in which security, respect, pride and dignity can happen in society. Yet, increasingly, across the globe wage work can no longer fulfil that promise and those values.

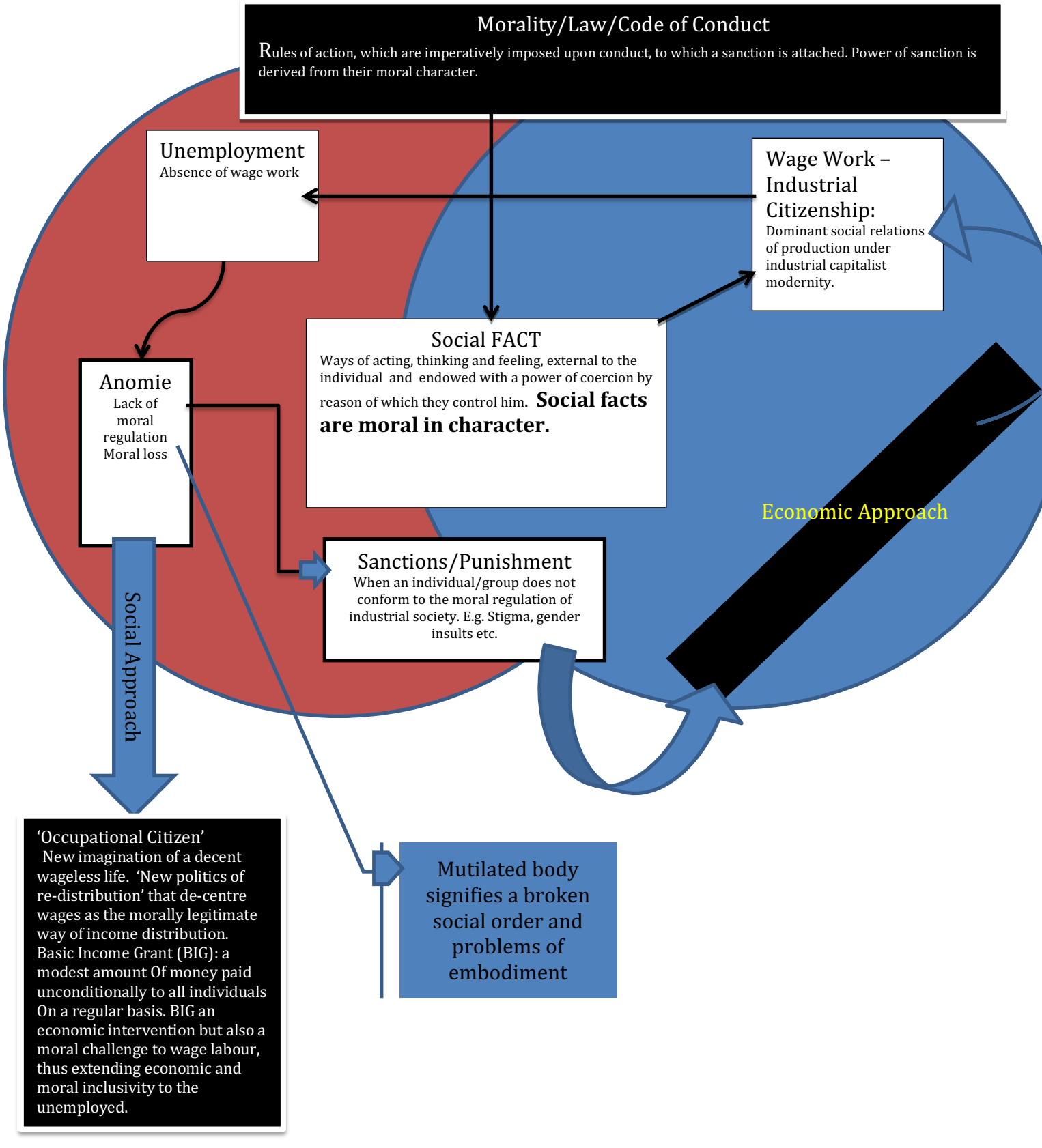
What happens when full employment becomes impossible? How else can we ensure that the working class meets its basic needs, attains a decent life and overcomes a moral

abyss when unemployed? One way to approach this would be through a Basic Income Grant (BIG) (see article "Universal Basic Income: A Radical Post-Labour Agenda" *Fouksman, 2017*).

Ex-mineworkers saw the positive impact of the BIG to reduce the insecurity of unemployment. However, they preferred employment as a way of earning a living rather than handouts. Handouts could not resolve social isolation and stigma. They also believed that such a grant would 'make people lazy'. The partial rejection of the BIG was underpinned by the moral commitment to wage work.

The BIG is a guaranteed unconditional amount of money given to all citizens to use however they choose. The findings affirmed the centrality of wage work. People want jobs, not grants. Yet jobs are unattainable for millions of workseekers who struggle daily for basic needs. Grants were not acceptable as a policy response from the point of view of ex-mineworkers. The challenge is that ex-mineworkers and various other sections of South Africa cannot imagine a decent life outside wage work. For the BIG to become a viable policy solution, ex-mineworkers, policymakers and analysts would have to imagine a world where workers no longer rely on wages for basic needs.

Diagrammatic summary of thesis



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Interview list:

(a) Welkom and Virginia Townships (Ex-mineworkers, unless if stated otherwise):

1. Ntate Lesiba, 18/03/13, 10/04/14,
2. Ntate Jeremiah, 18/04/13,
3. Ntate Sefako, 13/06/13, 10/06/13, 06/09/13, 10/04/14,
4. Shoplifter ex-miner's widow, 07/07/13,
5. Johan (02/12/13): Economic Development of Matjhabeng: Economic Planning,
6. Sibongile (09/07/12) social responsibility programmes at the Department of Mineral Resources,
7. David Sipunzi (10/06/13) former NUM Welkom regional secretary
8. Ntate Mandefu, 06/07/12, 18/08/13, 20/08/13
9. Thuso, 17/04/13
10. Ntate Mandla, 17/04/13. 1964, Mozambique, replaced father as a mineworker after his death at Meeriespruit 3 shaft. Divorced.
11. Ntate Madoda, 17/04/13
12. Ntate Solomon, 15/04/13
13. Ntate Ranku, 27/03/14
14. Ntate Lehlohonolo, 20/08/13
15. Ntate Jafta, 18/02/14
16. Ntate Moiketsi, 20/02/14
17. Ntate Letsie, 19/03/14
18. Ntate Chabedi, 19/03/14
19. Ntate Tebogo, 27/03/14
20. Ntate Kabelo, 28/03/14
21. Ntate Sipho, 06/02/14
22. Ntate Moloi, 05/03/14

23. Ntate Modise, 06/03/14

24. Ntate Kutlwano, 19/08/13

25. Ntate Lerole, 05/03/14

26. Ntate Joseph, 26,08/13

27. Ntate Bokamoso, 20/02/14

28. Ntate Sekobela, 21/08/13

29. Ntate Molakolako, 20/02/14

30. Ntate Morena, 27/03/14

31. Ntate Nthoroane, 17/04/13

32. Ntate Kamogelo, 27/03/14

33. Ntate Charles, 27/08/13

34. Ntate Wellington, 17/04/13

35. Ex- mineworkers of Meloding meeting, 17/04/13, 21/08/13, 28/08/13

36. Ntate Raseboko, 18/04/13,10/04/14

37. Ntate Lethabo, 26/03/14

38. Tumelo, 13/07/13, 17/02/14, 19/02/14

39. Ntate Kgauho, 19/02/14

40. Ntate Moshoeshoe, 07/07/13

41. Lenkwe, 06/03/14, 30/07/13, 31/07/13

42. Ntate Tshepo (Orange Grove), 31/07/13

43. Ntate Mofokeng, 23/07/13, 31/06/13

44. Ntate James, 16/05/13, 24/08/13

45. 43. Pastor Peter (03/05/14) Facilitator of the Community Work Programme (CWP) in Bronville; Mercylife,

46. Mme Dineo, 13/07/13, 20/07/13

47. Refiloe, 13/07/13

48. Ntate Pontso, 18/10/13, 05/03/14

49. Participant observations; men by the side of the road. 19/08/13, 20/08/13

50. Mampe, 16/02/14

51. Ntate Patrick Ngomezulu, National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), 07/06/13

52. Manketsi, Tumelo"s daughter, 19/02/14

(b) Lesotho

53. Kotsi, 13/06/13

54. Ntate Tsietsi, 13/06/13

55. Ntate Mahlomola, 12/06/13. Lesotho, 1973 – 2011 Welkom mine. Winch Driver

56. Ntate Ramabanta, 13/06/13

57. Ntate Kgwiti 13/06/13

58. Ntate Thapelo, 14/06/13

59. Ntate Rapula, 10/09/13

60. Ntate Tau, 11/09/13

61. Ntate Kagiso, 11/09/13

62. Ntate Setjhaba, 12/09/13

63. Ntate Mahlomola, 13/09/13

64. Mme Mmampho, 13/06/13

65. Mmamasolomane, 14/06/13

66. Mme Taunyane, 11/09/13