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SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP AND THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF WAGE LABOUR IN THE MAKING OF POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA, 1994-2001

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Johannesburg, 2005

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

_____

(Name of candidate)

_____ day of _____, 2005.

To my father, Ugo, my mother, Cesira, and my sister, Beatrice.

And to Miranda: here it is, at last.

"The spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life. It is not just that the relationship to commodities is now plain to see. Commodities are now *all* that there is too see; the world we see is the world of the commodity."
(Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*,
New York: Zone Books, 1995, p.29)

"I decided that salaries should be determined by a factor that averaged the arduousness, tediousness, futility and imbecility of a job. The richest people in the world then would be coal miners. Injection-moulding machine operators or tenders would fly to work in their own planes, and competition for such work would be stiff. Having had the experience, I would be quite content to be poor."
(Luc Santé, "Plastics", *Granta*, No. 89, 2005: 164)

"I've worked myself up from nothing
to a situation of extreme poverty."
(Groucho Marx)

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Preface

1. Research Topic and Questions

On 20 April 2000 Sam Namane, chair of the shop-steward committee at Kelvinator South Africa (Alrode, East Rand) under provisional liquidation, visited the Johannesburg headquarters of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) with a delegation of workers. The purpose of their travel was to discuss with union officials possible rescue bids to save the company, which had closed down in September 1999, leaving 1,200 employees jobless. It was not an uncommon episode in the East Rand, a region that had once been the industrial core of the country before a decade of job losses and factory closures hit it. Kelvinator, however, had started in 1996 under a visionary leadership which praised worker participation in company management, and promised a radiant future of quality jobs thanks to expanding demand for its electric appliances in the "new South Africa". Eventually, all rescue bids would flounder and the assets of the company, bought by competitor Defy, were moved to a distant rural location where only 200 employees were hired.

Less than a month before Sam and his comrades visited Johannesburg, the South African government had appointed a commission of inquiry, chaired by Prof. Viviene Taylor, mandated to elaborate a "comprehensive system of social security" to integrate a host of fragmented public and private schemes and programmes, and address wide areas of exclusion from social benefits. The exercise, the first of its kind in South Africa's history, followed the dramatic announcement, in January, by Minister of Social Development Zola Skweyiya that South Africa was facing a "deep social crisis" that could reverse gains made after the first democratic elections in 1994. Part of the need for a comprehensive social security system, Skweyiya continued, was the past over-reliance on the ability of family mechanisms and wage labour to provide for decent standards of living. The Taylor Committee Report, released at the end of 2001, revealed indeed

massive areas of exclusion from social security benefits, a collapse in the relation between monetary "wage" and social "income", and waged employment's growing inability, which challenged conventional wisdom, to lift citizens out of poverty.

The two episodes here described ideally synthesize the contours of this dissertation and the problems it addresses. This work looks, in particular, at the relations between wage labour and social citizenship during the first decade of South Africa's post-apartheid democracy. My interest lies in discussing the ways in which workers' experiences of wage labour as a vehicle of social advancement and access to citizenship have changed, and how such changes relate to government policy discourse on social citizenship in relation to wage labour. The theme is relevant to understanding the South African transition from two main angles. First, labour played for South Africa's racially oppressed population a decisive role in political democratization and the demise of apartheid. This role was not only limited to wage-related, workplace-based struggles, but it advanced visions of social rights and citizenship to complement the democratic expectations of the black working class. Second, organized labour provided an important constituency and organizational ally to the African National Congress (ANC), which in the first democratic elections in 1994 garnered a massive popular legitimacy from widespread demands for redress of the massive class and racial inequalities inherited from the apartheid past.

Ten years after the first democratic elections, waged employment's touted importance in reducing poverty and inequality is confronted by a reality that, according to official data from Statistics South Africa, sees a 35% unemployment rate (including discouraged jobseekers), only one third of the African economically active population in full-time jobs, and most jobseekers in their 20s and 30s (Africans for the overwhelming majority) that have never been in a formal occupation. At the same time, most new jobs are created as "atypical", casual and informal employment with low levels of unionization, scant protections, high vulnerability and limited social benefits.

Has wage labour fulfilled its promise of social emancipation in the "new South Africa"? How has this promise been reconfigured in workers' experiences

and narratives of the employment crisis? What has been of trade unions' discourse of social citizenship and universal social rights as desirable outcomes of the expansion and protection of the waged condition? How have the government's social policies responded to the country's crisis of waged employment? Are there alternative social citizenship paradigms emerging from the crisis of work-based modes of social inclusion? Are workers' strategies and discourses contributing to the emergence of such alternatives? These are the main questions that have driven my research.

The post-apartheid crisis of waged employment cannot be reduced to rising joblessness and exclusion from the labour market, especially among the African majority, but it has more broadly to do with deepening insecurity, vulnerability and poverty within formal employment. Therefore this dissertation looks first at how the links between wage labour and social citizenship are redefined in workers' daily experiences, strategies and discourse. Second, I analyse how issues emerging from workers' grassroots narratives and meanings are elaborated in the post-1994 policy discourse on social welfare and social security. The two conceptual terms in the title of this dissertation, wage labour and social citizenship, define therefore the encounter of two discursive modalities, "from below" and "from above". The appropriateness of this approach resides in the fact that the social crisis of wage labour faces entrenched views of social citizenship that, both in trade unions' discourse and in the rhetoric of the former liberation movement now in power, has glorified wage labour as the gateway to social recognition, respectability and rights.

2. Intellectual Origins and Rationale of the Dissertation

The need to find out what happens to social citizenship discourse once its social and conceptual underpinning, wage labour, fades away is what ultimately motivates my research. In fact, the crisis of established foundations of the concept questions the very notion of "social citizenship". In my initial research proposal I normatively defined social citizenship as a linear process of expansion of codified

social rights through the action of progressive social actors, namely organized labour. I then came to the conclusion that labour's ability to structure and advance demands for broader social citizenship rights can be severely impaired by labour market changes and expanding vulnerabilities. In fact labour's defense of social rights can mean protecting the benefits enjoyed by union members which, however important in a progressive agenda, could become inadequate to represent casualised, atypicals, un-unionised workers and long term unemployed.

Moreover, the post-apartheid state's commitment to macroeconomic orthodoxy and fiscal discipline made the agenda of universal social rights contained in the 1996 Constitution increasingly problematic as a terrain of engagement for grassroots social agency. Therefore, as critiques of African "civil society" often show (Lemarchand, 1992; Markovitz, 2002) responses from below can take the form of "extraverted" survivalist, informal activities that, in their own complex and ambiguous way, avoid engaging the state rather than pushing for an institutional realization of rights.

A further intellectual motivation for this work emerged out of my dissatisfaction with the ways in which mainstream South African academic conversation and policy debates have looked at issues of "poverty", "inequality" and "exclusion" in relation to waged employment. Influential policy-oriented analyses (Van der Berg, 1994; May, 2000; Bhorat et al., 2001) have constantly argued that access to a waged job is a necessary, albeit not always sufficient, condition for effective social inclusion. Often such recommendations are phrased in terms that reward industriousness and independence in ethical and moral terms, stigmatising welfare "dependency" on similar grounds. As a result, the debate on the relations between wage labour, social inclusion and social citizenship is often polarized around binary oppositions between categories like "employed" and "unemployed" citizens, "typical" and "atypical" workers, "formal" and "informal" sectors, social "inclusion" and "exclusion". The first terms generally represent virtue and normality, while the second identify social "problems" that require the application of knowledge to identify viable solutions. This mode of argumentation has recently acquired authoritative institutional recognition in president Mbeki's view of a "two economies" scenario, where informality and flexibility could

become, once properly regulated, new avenues for productive employment and job creation for otherwise unemployable workers. As Chapter 8 explains, this polarized discursive mode presided over a policy trajectory that during the first decade of South Africa's democracy has invariably made social citizenship coincide with labour market insertion and participation, rather than with the reduction of labour market dependency. Only recently have these approaches started to be questioned inside institutional debates.

Arguments to criticize a view of social citizenship that unproblematically idealises wage labour as the most reliable, honorable and commendable form of social insertion are provided by two trends emerging from international scholarly literature. Various authors (Escobar, 1994; Ferguson, 1994; Cooper and Packard, 1997; Abrahamsen, 2000; Mitchell, 2002) have emphasized the role of expert knowledge in the policy process' use of socio-scientific categories like "employment", "inclusion" and "informality" as a normative device that constructs social problems rather than merely reflecting them. Problems construction is associated to the definition, usually with strong ethical overtones, of ideal subjects, like wage labour, that would arguably provide solutions. Critiques of modes of knowledge associated with social policies and state practices strip therefore notions of "waged employment" of its aura of unquestionable, normative objectivity. The state itself, indeed, is called into question as a repository of a "psychic life" (Butler, 1997) made of ideology, desires and ethical frameworks.

The concepts of social citizenship and wage labour, on the other hand, have a history characterized by contestastion of meanings and strategies, as I explain more in detail in the next chapter. "Social citizenship" has been defined -- in a theoretical trajectory that spans the second half of the twentieth century, from T.H. Marshall's (1950) original definition to recent elaborations like G. Esping-Andersen's (1990) -- as a "third generation" of rights that complement civil and political freedoms. A common element in various definitions of social citizenship is *decommodification*, or the provision of goods and services as a social "income" independent of market-related "wage". Decommodified social income includes social security and assistance funded through the fiscal system, but it can also

include employer-subsidised benefits like healthcare and retirement. In this work I use a strictly operational, non-normative definition of social citizenship, avoiding prescriptive characterizations. I therefore define social citizenship as the range and coverage of decommodified goods and services funded by employers contributions or public expenditures outside individual market transactions.

From this point of view, while various modes and regimes of social citizenship exist, even political and ideological systems that are most favourable to "free-market" approaches recognise among their functions the provision of at least a limited degree of decommodified social provisions. At the same time, conflicts over the definition of social citizenship interrogate in which ways social provisions should be regarded as "social rights". The modern nation-state has tried to legislate such rights with an aim at imposing corresponding duties and responsibilities on their beneficiaries. Social rights are therefore used to construct social subjects through public policies. However, the fact that social "rights" depend for their realization on the allocation of power and resources gives juridical formulations a "contingent" nature, which is constantly open to claims by social movements aiming to expand decommodification.

"Wage labour" is also a highly contested concept. In capitalist economies it formally means "free" labour, whose sale and purchase is regulated by contractual arrangements and not by personal coercion. However, as I elaborate in the next chapter, the constitution of "free" labour in a capitalist society is shaped and permeated by institutions of unfreedom and extra-economic obligations, specifically aimed at penalizing defection and refusal of work. This is particularly relevant for colonial and postcolonial societies where economic and social alternatives to capitalist labour contracts are available and where, as Cooper (1996) notices in the African case, struggles of working classes have often taken place against their own being reduced to working classes. One of the main terrains of contestation in the constitution of wage labour are precisely the linkages to be established between labour and social citizenship, the amount of decommodified services to which workers feel entitled on the basis of their collective power, the language of liberation from market coercion that workers' struggles and desires enable. The ultimate contestation in the definition of wage labour resides precisely in its ambiguous

meanings, well captured in classical distinctions like Hannah Arendt's "work" and "activity", as simultaneously being a form of oppression and exploitation and a vehicle for social emancipation, dignified life and self-realisation.

Therefore, rather than adopting a purely normative view of social citizenship, I preferred a use of the concept capable to account for its internal contradictions and contestations. I decided to move away from a static, state-centred view that identifies social citizenship with codified social "rights" and "programmes". I use instead a dynamic approach that sees social citzenship as a contested terrain, shaped by the institutions' attempt to regulate social entitlements and recipients, but also by competing demands, desires and agency from below. As Amenta (2003) argues in his exhaustive review of the literature, the definition of social policy itself becomes increasingly problematic once state rationality in devising programmes of resource allocation is questioned by privatization, public spending cuts, diversifying social inequalities and the appearance of subjects with new needs and demands. On similar grounds, I do not look in this work at social citizenship *programmes*, policy *processes* or related outcomes, but I focus on social citizenship as a *discourse* produced through the interaction of meanings from the institutions and grassroots social actors.

Policy discourse is not a mere superstructural reflection of compromises between interests competing for the allocation of resources. It rather embodies the capacity of ideas and knowledge to structure actors' fields of action (Hall, 1989; Berman, 1998; Bourdieu, 1998b). Following Foucault and Zukin and Di Maggio's notion of "cognitive embeddedness", Somers and Block (2005: 265) argue that discourses of welfare and social rights are "ideational causal mechanisms", where theories have the power of "making themselves true". Ideas and public narratives have therefore an independent influence on policy outcomes, and some arguments have an "epistemic privilege" based on the power of their internal claim to veracity and their imperviousness to empirical challenges.

In the South African case, a deeply entrenched policy discourse based on the centrality of wage labour for social citizenship and inclusion has traditionally enjoyed a specific "epistemic privilege". This is due to the fact that wage labour centrality assuaged at the same time state's and capital's concerns for social

stabilization and labour's demands for "job creation" in the face of mass unemployment and precariousness. The ethical-moral overtones that have surrounded wage labour discipline and its resistance to empirical challenges are being however dented in a context where not only structural unemployment is not receding, but the proliferation of exploitative and unstable occupations interrogates wage labour's ability to enable decent livelihoods. Reasserting under these conditions a policy discourse based on the centrality of wage labour, often as an alternative to decommodification, becomes therefore increasingly problematic.

Understanding social citizenship and its relations to wage labour as terrains of contestation between the agency of the institutions "from above" and social claims "from below" allows to de-emphasise the role, quite central in much literature on the welfare state, of social knowledge in normatively constructing employment as the optimal form of social inclusion. Conversely, contradictions and conflicts that historically shape discourses of social citizenship underline the relevance of multiple agencies in constructing meanings of the wage, of the demands it entitles to, of how it relates to the provision of decommodified services.

As an alternative to static constructs of a normative and institutional kind, I suggest an approach to the relation between social citizenship and wage labour as a *contested field of signification*. Policy discourse can be understood as an example of what Jacques Lacan (1977) called chains of signification through which subjects are constructed. Therefore, social citizenship's institutional discourse that defines rights, programmes and outcomes is inseparable from meanings it attaches to wage labour as a subject in relation to other social subjects – unemployed, poor, disabled and so on -- which, lacking access to a stable wage, become specific targets of social policy. Waged employment becomes therefore, as a subject and object of policy, a "signifier" (*langue*, in Lacanian terms) that to build a signification requires a signified as a "non-overlapping set of the concretely pronounced discourse" in the form of the desired effect of policy interventions.

As a signifier, the idea of wage labour implies related forms of discipline constructed in prescriptive terms, as in praising waged employment as a condition of independence, probity and respectability. At a "signified" level, however, wage labour represents behaviours, proclivities and attitudes that such prescriptive terms aim to construct and discipline. Signification, in fact, for Lacan (1977: 137) does not refer to a "real" thing. Similarly, the idea of wage labour does not want to merely reflect a "pure" knowledge of its subjects, but it rather constructs those subjects. Wage labour emerges therefore as an ordering and structuring principle through which disorderly, unpredictable living experiences and desires can be rationally known and regulated by state institutions. At the same time, wage labour discourse is not just a product of institutional rationality; it is also a "symptom" of underlying grassroots social worldviews, desires, moral economy and meanings. Therefore wage labour is not only a construct of state knowledge "from above", but it is also a self-image "from below" of desires of the self that, in Lacanian terms, are apprehended only in relation to desires of the state as the "other" which becomes the object of social claims.

As Zizek (2000) elaborates, processes through which subjects express their desires in the language of the institutions never eliminate a "leftover" of desire that is not exhausted in state definitions of the subject itself. This "leftover" is what ultimately enables the subject to open new political possibilities and raise new claims, even if it cannot in itself represent the subject as totally autonomous from state constructions of citizenship. The dilemma that social agency faces in relation to wage labour and social citizenship discourses is that it is characterized by an emptiness of signification that wage labour can only partially fill. Defining social citizenship as a contested field of signification has ultimately to do with the fact that wage labour as an incomplete signifier that cannot conceal deeper, unruly, unpredictable demands and desires.

The importance of looking at the labour-citizenship nexus not merely as defined in economic or institutional terms but also as shaped by meanings "from below" has, on the other hand, long been emphasized in labour studies. Sabel's (1982) notion of "worldviews" underlines how wage labour's imageries, demands and strategies are shaped by broader normative frameworks and regulatory ideas

which operate in the everyday life and include extra-workplace issues of fairness, morality, respectability, community viability and household reproduction. In arguing for the relevance of "race" within such regulatory ideas, Robin Kelley (1994: 9) argues:

> Writing 'history from below' that emphasizes the infrapolitics of the black working class requires that we substantially redefine politics. Too often politics is defined by *how* people participate rather than *why* (…). By shifting our focus to what motivated disenfranchised black working people to struggle and what strategies they developed, we may discover that their participation in 'mainstream' politics (…) grew out of the very circumstances, experiences, and memories that impelled many to steal from their employer, join a mutual benefit association, or spit in a bus driver's face. In other words, I am rejecting the tendency to dichotomize people's lives, to assume that clear-cut 'political' motivations exist separately from issues of economic well-being, safety, pleasure, cultural expression, sexuality, freedom of mobility, and other facets of daily life [own emphasis].

As I explain in Chapters 2 and 3, placing wage labour at the center of discourse of social inclusion is a long-standing characteristic of state knowledge and policy in the South African case. The continued insistence by the post-apartheid government and its left allies on unemployment as the main challenge to social citizenship, and on "job creation" as its solution, is framed in unmistakably normative and ethical arguments. President Mandela, himself a figure enjoying all the authoritativeness needed to convey a disciplining "patriotic" discourse, set the tone while presenting, in 1996, the conservative Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. In his words wage labour's promise of development should not enable expectations of "delivery" from the government, but it is aimed at building "good", responsible and disciplined citizens. In promising job creation to boost families' "self-esteem" and combat "helplessness", Mandela also defined attracting prospective investors as a duty of good citizenship. Wage labour's promise implied at the same time

> to exercise moderation in wage and salary increments (…) to invest in greater capital injections and thus create possibilities for hundreds of thousands of people to be absorbed into the mainstream of the

> economy. We should all frankly acknowledge that there will be sacrifice[1].

The reassertion of wage labour discipline in post-apartheid South Africa, however, takes place in a context where wage labour is changing in ways that deepen structural unemployment and expand labour market vulnerabilities. The introduction by the ANC government of policies based on public spending containment and market-based approaches to service delivery, which increase commodification of social goods and services, contribute to strain monetary wages, further revealing their inadequacies. Advocating on pedagogical grounds disciplined selves defined by productive employment, while introducing policies that constrain the ability of wages to actually provide decent lives is therefore a contradiction in the ANC's mode of governance. The democratic government's reproposition of wage labour discipline is, however, not merely a matter of ideology. It rather resumes and refashions policy traditions that during the twentieth century have emphasized waged employment in alternative to decommodification, as the core of social citizenship.It also reflects the power of the image of post-apartheid "free labour" as a legitimating myth amongst left constituencies.

3. Methodology and Research Strategy

The methodology and research strategy that I have adopted for this work respond to my definition of social citizenship as a contested terrain shaped by the encounter of discourse and narratives "from above" and "from below". Empirical materials I have used can be divided into workplace- and policy-related. Policy-related materials include archival and documentary sources and interviews with strategic informants in government departments, academic and political institutions and programmes that are engaged in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social policies. Informants include trade union officials acting in a policy capacity, government-based researchers, academics

[1] Cit. in Cohen, T., "Mandela Says Sacrifice is a Part of 'New Patriotism'", *Business Day*, 21 June 1996.

involved in policy processes, officials in bargaining institutions like the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) and policy-related functionaries in the government departments of Social Development (formerly Welfare and Population Development), Labour, Health and Housing.

I have focused both the content of interviews and documentary search on programmes (unemployment insurance, social security, state pensions, social healthcare, housing subsidies) and policy processes (especially the 1997 White Paper on Welfare, the 1998 Jobs Summit and the 2001 governmental inquiry into comprehensive social security) whose policy objects have a direct bearing on the question of decommodification.

Subsequently, I have looked at workers' changing meanings of waged employment in relation to access to social citizenship and broader visions of social stability and emancipation. In this regard I have focused on two specific case studies, where I have conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with different groups of workers. My adoption of a case study research strategy recognized that the process through which workers construct narratives and meanings of work is socially situated in localities that are also been shaped by worker solidarities and struggles, and therefore reinforce grassroots discourse. Following De Certeau's (1984: 115) suggestion that "narrative structures have the status of spatial syntaxes", worker narratives are not disembodied and interchangeable but refer to the ways meanings "inhabit" spatial practices, physical workplaces, residential communities.

The first case I consider refers to manufacturing industry in the East Rand. The relevance of this region is due to the fact that it constitutes South Africa's historical manufacturing core, but during the 1990s it has undergone dramatic processes of industrial restructuring following rapid market liberalization. Job losses and extensive casualisation make therefore the East Rand a privileged place of observation for grassroots elaborations of changes in waged employment and its related meanings of stability and social advancement. I have deliberately chosen to focus on traditional manufacturing sectors, which had once benefited from state protection under apartheid, and unionized blue-collar workers as realities that are most dramatically, rapidly and comprehensively affected by

industrial restructuring, downsizing and retrenchments. My research looks at companies in the glass, paper and metal-engineering sectors, in which I have selected specific companies in consultation with trade union officials and local organisers. I conducted sixty interviews with workers in three metal-engineering plants and a further 80 in two glass packaging and two paper companies. I have also administered questionnaires on changes in production and employment conditions with shop-stewards and managers in three further glass and three paper companies.

My second case study focuses on a process of similarly rapid organizational change, but taking place in the public sector, among the employees in the waste and roads departments of the Greater Johannesburg Municipal Council (GJMC) under the restructuring exercise known as "iGoli 2002". This latter is a process of corporatisation and privatisation of municipal service delivery which questions patterns of occupational stability and access to benefits that specifically characterize public employment. I have conducted, in particular, interviews with 40 workers in each department, plus two pilot group discussions, and conversations with depot and municipal managers.

Workplace interviews have taken place between July 1999 and April 2000. In total, I have interviewed 220 workers, 209 of which African, trying to represent stratifications in terms of age, gender, occupation and nature of contracts of employment. The duration of interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes, and they were usually conducted in English, using other workers as interpreters when needed. Finally, interviews have largely taken place on company premises, usually inside facilities used for union activities. Approximately 15% of interviews, all of them with East Rand workers, have taken place in respondents' homes. The representivity of my sample is, however, statistically unreliable as I have preferred qualitative interviewing over survey analysis, and the sample was constructed in non-probability ways. The sample was identified with a "snowball" procedure, in which I first contacted shop-stewards through union organizers and then respondents were arranged by shop-stewards depending on time availability. Finally, managers in both cases were asked to provide information on workplace changes in terms of restructuring, technological innovation, retrenchments,

subcontracting of operations and variations in "non-standard" employment (such as casuals, temporary workers, labour brokers).

I have arranged the selection of specific workplaces, and access thereof, in consultation with various union organizations, namely the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the Chemical, Energy, Print, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU) and the South African and Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU). Contacts with the unions was greatly facilitated by my employment at the University of the Witwatersrand and membership in the Sociology of Work Unit (SWOP), a research organization with a remarkable tradition of labour-orientated analysis. In return for access to shop stewards and company structures, I have provided research spin-offs for the unions, especially SAMWU through my participation in the Municipal Services Project.

The choice of my two case studies was determined by their similarities and differences, which allowed to identify continuities and discontinuities in the ways in which workers respond to changes in employment and its shifting social meanings. In both cases, in fact, waged employment and unionization have deeply shaped collective solidarity and meanings of socio-political emancipation in the transition from apartheid to democracy. The experience of wage labour was in fact in both cases co-terminous with resistance to exploitative relations, precarious forms of work, managerial despotism and racialised workplace authoritarianism. Such features have in particular shaped South Africa's African working class as a subject deprived of citizenship, which in both my case studies was the product of state racism, residential and workplace segregation and the experience of migrancy under conditions of bureaucratic coercion. Through unionization and workplace organization wage labour could, conversely, become a repository of citizenship claims and collective power rooted in workers' democratic imagery. Restructuring, retrenchments and casualisation under late apartheid and the first decade of democracy question, however, labour's early social imageries and expectations for social rights. These processes induce the replacement of cohesive workers' identities with a diversified range of coping strategies and responses along the workplace-community continuum. The comparison between private and

public workplaces further enables to capture such diversity by amplifying the range of its manifestations.

My workplace interviews required a basic set of information on individual biographies, wage levels, access to social provisions, and the relationships between wages, benefits, social provisions and household expenditures. In particular, I have looked at changes in employer-funded retirement benefits and healthcare, dwelling types and expenditures, use and access of public services, levels of commodification in national and municipal services, wage distribution to unemployed relatives and extended families, and the amount and types of family expenses. Interviews are mostly focused, however, on changing workers' meanings of their jobs in relation to social citizenship and social advancement. I first addressed perceptions of workplace- and job-related problems (permanence of factory authoritarianism, sense of exploitation, persistence of racial hierarchies) to assess respondents' sense of fulfillment, realization and future prospects on the job.

Impacts of restructuring, prospects of job losses, growing casualisation highlight respondents' feelings of insecurity and how they affect occupational self-perceptions and prospects. I then looked at changing views of how adequate monetary wages are in satisfying household needs, with the associated shifts in perceptions of individual and household quality of life. My aim was to elaborate how commodification in workers' everyday lives is subjectively related to the changing nature of work. I have subsequently addressed alternative strategies used to cope with changing subjective experiences of wage labour, in particular in those cases where restructuring and growing vulnerability are most adversely felt and lead to relying on community-based support mechanisms and individualized self-entrepreneurial strategies. Finally, I have discussed respondents' political meanings and responses to changes in wage labour in relation to their social citizenship claims. This refers to questions on the sources of organized, collective power and participation (trade unions, associational life, political participation) that potentially enable workers to negotiate and contest the wage-citizenship nexus. Interviews have also focused on the respondents' changing perception of government delivery and potential for public interventions, to evaluate to what

extent a rights-based discourse of decommodification is emerging in response to changes in the relationships between wage labour and access to social citizenship.

Even if I have always introduced myself as an independent researcher working on a doctoral dissertation, the fact that my access was facilitated by local union organizations has probably influenced workers' verbalization of narratives and perceptions. In fact, the urgency of changes, the growing occupational insecurity and the disorientation in organized responses emphasized the respondents' needs to elaborate their experiences in ways that underlined the "traumatic" impact of recent adverse changes. This was particularly the case with GJMC employees, for which the rapid implementation of a restructuring plan whose outlines were largely unknown at the time of the interviews was a decisive challenge to time-honoured practices that characterized conditions of employment in the public sector as relatively more stable and protected than in the private one.

The way workers elaborate meanings with the purpose of responding to challenges of recent changes highlight a general problem with qualitative research and its claim to objectivity and empirical representivity. Mindful of methological debates between proponents of "grounded theory" and "extended case method" (Burawoy, 1991b; Corbin and Strauss, 1998), I addressed this problem by maintaining throughout my fieldwork a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. On one hand I have related to my respondents with a basic set of questions in mind derived from a theoretical problem, the relationship between wage labour and social citizenship, that is not self-evident in respondents' experiential world. To avoid making respondents mere objects of knowledge, similarly to what I criticize in expert policy discourse, I have paid specific attention to what Michael Burawoy (1991a) discusses as reflexivity and theoretical reconstruction in his discussion of ethnographic research practice. According to him, fieldwork produces its own theory and claims to generalization, rather than merely provide materials to be evaluated at the end on the basis of predefined interpretative frames. At the same time, the focus on processes of signification in my definition of social citizenship emphasizes the explanatory power of workers' narratives as a plane of reality that, albeit symptomatic of the need to rationalize social existence, does not presuppose reference to a pre-

conceived, theory-laden objective reality as a criterion of validation (White, 1990). Questions, themes and problems touched in my interviews have been modified as a result of the interviewing process itself instead of, as in grounded theory approaches, being functional to coding tags premised on the possibility of identifying causative interactions. In this sense, workers' own redefinitions of experiences and meanings in response to contingent perceptions and states of mind become epistemologically relevant as sources of knowledge and objectivity.

Finally, the non-probability nature of my sample and the open-endedness of interviews refuse statistical inference as a superior validation of findings. Following Burawoy's (1991b: 281) suggestion that case analysis aims at "societal", rather than "statistical" significance, I did not point at predictions based on causative relations between changes in wage labour and responses in terms of social citizenship discourse. Rather, both transformations of wage labour and workers' social citizenship imagery are at the centre of processes of production of meanings that are highly respondent to contingent elements, situational factors, value systems and individual biographies. The "societal" significance of my study resides therefore in a mode of *plausibility* that emerges out of internal patterns of consistency and divergence in the meanings provided by respondents, rather than in a quest for *objectivity* to "explain" respondents' meanings and strategies. In this sense, consistency and "typicality" was balanced with a positive appreciation of individualized "anomalies". These latter, in fact, emphasize gaps and loopholes in existing generalizations, policy frameworks and theories, becoming therefore the basis of critical counter-theories (Burawoy, 1991b).

Therefore, both the emergence of similar elaborations and perceptions and their diversification contribute to establish the linkage between wage labour and social citizenship in workers' narratives and discourses. Meanings are social facts embedded in respondents' reflexivity and stimulated by the interview situation, influenced as this may be by the knowledge effect of the interviewer's "pre-dialogical" problem grid (Maso, 1996; Rapley, 2001; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003).

My choice of a qualitative approach also responds to limitations in mainstream analyses of unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa. During the first decade of democracy, a host of statistical analyses, both surveys and panel studies, have been produced, which enhance a nuanced, multi-dimensional understanding of social problems. It is here sufficient to mention the 1993 SALDRU-World Bank report on poverty and inequality, the 1993 KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study, the 2001 "Mesebetsi Labour Force Study" conducted by the Norwegian agency for international development (FAFO), and the official Labour Force Surveys by Statistics South Africa. It is now possible to produce highly sophisticated explanations of determinants of poverty supported by interrelated data series that account for multifaceted overlaps of income, race, gender, education and location.

Policy-orientated statistical analyses aimed at shaping knowledge of social processes functional to viable policy solutions, however, tend to reproduce the already mentioned dualistic mode of conceptualization, which leads to waged employment being unproblematically idealized as the basis of social citizenship, inclusion and responsibility. This approach is at risk of marginalizing the need for a critical understanding focused on internal contradictions and conflicts underlying notions of "employment", "wage", "poverty" and "inclusion". The same can be said about grounded theory's sometimes purported concern with identifying "transferable" conclusions as a tool for social advocacy (Chritcher, Waddington and Dicks, 1999). As Jacques Ranciere (2004: 169) warns, not only does social science put at the service of policy solutions create its own objects of analysis, for example identifying problems with specific groups like "the poor" and the "unemployed". In fact, sociological facts as a selection of relevant statistical figures also produce their own interpretation out of the value-based identification of relevant variables. For Ranciere this outcome is the product of fixed, static representations of "the poor" as acting in accordance with clear-cut options (for example, job-seeking behaviour versus welfare dependency) that minimize and contain unpredictability and complexities in underlying modes of signification. Therefore, the ways in which contested signification interrogates structured social inequalities and power relations is obscured:

> The justice of statistics continuously dissolves the sociological object, producing in short its own *doxa – demystification*, which returns pure ideas to the impure inertia of domination. Wherever it goes, sociology finds itself preceded by its shadow or its simulacrum: the approximation of its conclusions, which are supported by the statistics of its domain (Ranciere, 2004: 169; own emphasis).

Significational conflicts and contradictions, on the other hand, emerge clearly once the researcher's attention move from "measuring" respondents lives towards the meanings they attach to them.

Similar concerns were quite present in apartheid-age radical critical research that emphasized the relevance of ethnography and case analyses as a mode of social inquiry that was skeptical of the disempowering effects of statistical surveys as a mode of knowledge ultimately dependent on expert validation (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Recent developments in research methodology on welfare, especially from feminist authors, emphasise the need to critically depart from institutionally formulated knowledge of social subjects and problems and re-evaluate the subjectivity and agency of recipients. This is shaped by the intersection of institutional definitions and experiences of power, "differential vulnerability" and coping strategies, all acting as intermediate concepts, defined along lines of gender, race and household, situated between the individual and socio-political institutions (Williams, Popay and Oakley, 1999). Therefore, the provision of rights and entitlements that realize normative social citizenship frameworks does not follow a linear path from providers to recipients that are fixed in institutionalized group identities. As the nature and content of identities fluctuates in response to social experiences, entitlements are also contested based on changing configurations and significations of grassroots discourses of rights and power. In the final analysis, focusing on signification and subjectivity questions the pretense by the state to be the source of social citizenship on the basis of its universalising rights discourse. As I elaborate in the next chapter, identity-based social claim-making is contradictory in the sense that it questions present allocations of rights while recognizing the state's ultimate prerogative to validate identities and claims. This contradiction is however part of

the historical trajectory of social citizenship itself. Focusing on the state would, conversely, mutilate the understanding of the concept reducing it to the sphere of governance and eluding its aspects as a *social movement* shaped by everyday struggles for signification of rights and power.

4. Outline of Chapters

This study is structured into eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides a review of scholarly literature on the relationships between wage labour and social citizenship theory. It focuses on the emergence of such relationships within attempts by democratic capitalist states to provide solutions to the "social question" raised by demands and claims from the organised working class. On the basis of a critical assessment of twentieth century social welfare policy as premised on decommodified social entitlements, the chapter also looks at the transfer of the labour-citizenship relationship in colonial and postcolonial societies, with the attendant, specific complexities related to the contested nature of waged employment and the ambiguities in Western rights-based discourses. The chapter emphasises how social citizenship rhetoric is deployed to enforce social discipline based on waged employment, which becomes stronger in a context of welfare state crisis and downsizing. Grassroots agencies and struggles, however, variously subvert wage labour disciplinary discourse by raising conflicting claims to social rights.

Chapter 2 is a historical overview of the wage labour-social citizenship linkages in South African social policy-making from the early twentieth century racial segregationist state to apartheid and its crisis. Contrary to conventional views that see racial social policies as a decommodified welfare state for whites only, I argue that the nature of South African social citizenship discourse has always been extremely commodified, with a residual impact of public service provisions. The protection of white privilege, in fact, largely relied on workplace- and education-based entitlements that reinforced wage labour discipline. The crisis of the apartheid and the gradual deracialisation of South Africa's social policies ushered in an

ideological discourse celebrating individualised, market solutions to problems of social inclusion and citizenship.

Chapter 3 looks at how the wage labour-social citizenship nexus has been politically debated and institutionally reconfigured in the transition to the post-1994 democratic dispensation. In particular I emphasise the tensions between constitutional formulations of social rights as fully universal and deracialised, and the constraints created to the realisation of such rights by the alignment of the ANC-led government with the tenets of macroeconomic orthodoxy and fiscal discipline. The resulting praise for state expenditure containment is here linked to the reduction of state responsibilities in redistribution and decommodification of social provisions. The advserse impacts of commodification are amplified by labour market and employment changes that, while witnessing the deepening of structural unemployment, bring to the fore new areas of "atypical" jobs, precarious employment, working class poverty and social vulnerability.

Chapter 4 and 5 start introducing the empirical results of my case studies. Chapter 4 deals with the transformations of wage labour faced by the industrial working class on the East Rand by focusing on processes and structures of industrial change. Economic liberalisation has accompanied dynamics of industrial restructuring that have led to widespread job losses and deindustrialisation in what once was not only the core of South African large scale manufacturing, but also a bulwark of worker solidarity, trade union organisation and social citizenship discourse. The crisis of waged employment on the East Rand, in particular, marks the decline of a mode of union engagement, "social movement unionism", previously strongly associated with demands for social rights and decommodified livelihoods.

Chapter 5 discusses challenges to established meanings of waged employment in my second case study, GJMC employees facing the "iGoli 2002" project of restructuring of the Johannesburg municipality. This is a segment of the South African working class for which wage labour has embodied a specific promise of emancipation from an exploitative, authoritarian workplace regime rooted in bureaucratically controlled migrant labour, dispersal of production sites and managerial despotism. Unionisation was here conducive to overcoming

vulnerability and disempowerment and building an image of waged work as the basis of fair conditions, relatively generous benefits and expectations of social rights. Inspired by a managerialist, neoliberalised view of service delivery, "iGoli 2002" is a challenge that can potentially threaten many of these gains, introducing a new era of market-regulated economic insecurity.

Chapter 6 analyses workplace-based responses in the two cases to transformations of wage labour that question its promise of social emancipation and citizenship. I in particular argue that in both cases workplace life remains enmeshed in patterns of continuities and change. While confirming the nature of production as a territory shaped by managerial authoritarianism and racialised practices of domination, these patterns witness deepening feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and exploitation as a result of recent restructuring and job losses. The workplace emerges here, therefore, as a terrain where disempowerment, disillusionment and betrayal of wage labour's emancipatory promises are generally perceived. It is also a locale where, however, no coherent, widespread response to the crisis in meanings of wage labour are emerging, and worker practices are highly differentiated across strategies of collective claim-making, reliance on extra-workplace networks and individual survivalist self-entrepreneurship.

Chapter 6 moves the discussion of workers' responses to the crisis of wage labour towards the level of politics and community life. The African township is a residential space where perceptions of vulnerability at work are both amplified and projected onto visions of a collapsing social order. Rising unemployment, a perceived sense of individual instability and deepening commodification are combined to question the ability of monetary wages to provide dignified personal and family existences. Worker responses to these realities are, however, highly fragmented. A rights-based and social movement-orientated radical discourse of decommodification is expressed only by a minority of respondents. The majority, especially male, display visions that in very complex ways recognise the collapse of wage labour while still reasserting it as the cornerstone of a social order imbued with conservative imagery premised on masculinity, respectability, age hierarchies and gendered responsibility. In ways that are often overtly contradictory, demands for

"job creation" remain the most widespread expectation of government intervention, despite the perceived crisis of jobs as conditions for a decent existence.

Chapter 8 focuses on how post-apartheid policy debates and programmes elaborate on, when not directly responding to, themes emerging from grassroots perceptions of the crisis in the relationships between wage labour and social citizenship. Initiatives in social security reform from 1994 to 2001, in particular, respond to the crisis of wage labour as a material condition by aggressively reasserting it as the main avenue for social citizenship and inclusion. This is often combined to a stigmatising deprecation of "dependency" on welfare grants. Simultaneously, the policy discourse of post-apartheid South Africa marginalizes options of decommodification and redistribution while selectively and rhetorically paying homage to popular demands for "job creation", which is ultimately also delegated to market-based mechanisms. Only in recent times, especially with debates surrounding the 2001 report of the Taylor committee on comprehensive social security, have such orientations started to be challenged by views advocating forms of decommodified universal social income as a clear alternative to labour market dependency.

CHAPTER 1

Debating the Work-Citizenship Nexus: Wage Labour Discipline and Contested Signification

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that refers to theoretical and scholarly debates on social citizenship in relation to waged employment, both in industrialized capitalism and in the passage from colonialism to postcoloniality in the "developing world". Common to the different perspectives discussed here is the perception that wage labour and working class organization confront the nation-state with a "social question" requiring specific policy interventions, ideological discourse and definitions of rights and responsibilities. The idea of "social citizenship" synthesises these aspects with an aim of making wage labour a condition for social inclusion to defuse the most radical implications of its demands. Different policy frameworks, ranging from European and North American welfare state experiments to postcolonial developmentalist and nationalist regimes, have regulated wage labour not only as a social actor but as a set of disciplinary imperatives for productive membership of society. In particular, the extent and depth of "decommodified" social provisions, delivered outside market mechanisms, remains an object of debate and contestation. The relationships between decommodified rights, wage labour and social citizenship are indeed at the heart of my definition of social citizenship as a "contested field of signification".

At the same time, contested meanings of social citizenship reveal the contradictions that surround wage labour as an object of state knowledge and regulation. From one hand wage labour is the repository of antagonistic claims and identities, from the other it becomes a source of obligations and morality around which the state conceptualizes responsible citizenship. The notion of

"rights" when applied to social citizenship is likewise ridden with ambiguities. On one hand, rights-based discourses underlie the universalist phrasing of protections and guarantees in the modern nation-state, on the other the ways socio-economic rights are implemented depend on resource constraints and on the identification of specific target populations, which produces differentiation, inequalities and hierarchies. The problematic, conflicted nature of the work-citizenship nexus reveals, in the final analysis, both the inevitability and the ultimate inadequacy of a mode of sovereignty that operates through the production and regulation of social subjects and identities. The final sections of this chapter connects general conceptualizations of the work-citizenship nexus to South African debates on social citizenship and social inclusion.

1.2 Wage Labour, the State and the Rise of the "Social Question" in Western Industrial Capitalism

The emergence of "social citizenship" in scholarly and policy debates is inextricably linked to the social processes that between the nineteenth and the twentieth century have constituted and reshaped wage labour as a collective identity and a political actor (Bendix, 1964; Titmuss, 1968; Flora and Heidenheimer, 1981; Alber, 1982; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Baldwin, 1990; Kolberg, 1992; Koslowski and Follesdal, 1997). The emergence of the factory proletariat challenged capitalist production and the nation-state, fostering a redefinition of notions of poverty and deprivation. Gradually moving away from explanations focused on the individual's moral weaknesses, behavioural deficiencies or lack of adaptation to the order of the market, poverty was identified as a social problem coterminous with specific social groups whose reproduction and living standards became the object of state regulation. Karl Polanyi's (1944) classic account of the "double movement", where policies of market regulation counterbalance the inherently destructive effects of rapidly liberalizing markets, identified in the commodification of land and labour as productive factors the cause of capitalism's socially disintegrative impacts. Self-destruction proceeded in this

argument out of the market's internal logic, more than from the conscious articulation of anti-systemic social subjects and political organizations. The fact that in the late-nineteenth century many European states started to intervene in the market to control social conflicts and anti-capitalist politics signals the emergence of the "social question". Market regulation was then justified in socio-political, apart from merely economic, terms. For Fox-Piven and Cloward (1993) the rise of modern forms of social relief was tied to an institutional conceptualization of social problems that linked poverty and unemployment to the threat of social unrest.

Emerging social policies of the industrialised capitalist states focused on measures (unemployment and health insurance, limits to working time and age, provisions for work-related accidents) aimed at altering the distribution of economic resources to contain possible anti-systemic opposition by working class organisations that were demanding representation in political institutions. The recognition that poverty was the result of market and production dynamics independent from the individual's will and behaviour was there coupled to the use of the social sciences as expert knowledge (Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1996). A process of "secularisation" (Koselleck, 1985; Elias, 1998) of social assistance, therefore, moved away from the moral discourse of charitable organisations and local volunteer associations. Perspectives influenced by the work of Michel Foucault use the expression "the social" to characterize this new area of state intervention (Foucault, 2002; Donzelot, 1979; Steinmetz, 1993; Procacci, 1993). The "social" means here that the life of the national population (including health conditions, reproductive habits, subsistence levels) becomes the priority target of public policies in a mode of sovereignty termed "biopower". Moreover, social policies build knowledge of their subjects via procedures and practices of "governmentality" which construct those subjects into statistical abstractions to ensure policies predictability and replicability.

According to Steinmetz, the "social" is not reducible to static institutional constructs but is an arena of "needs, grievances and conflicts" whereby "insofar as the social represented a threat to order — the order of the state and the capitalist economy — it posed the "social question" or, rather, a series of social questions"

(Steinmetz, 1993: 2). Therefore for him the goal of governmentality (or, in his words, "regulation") is external to the concept itself and recalls Foucault's notion of "discipline" as interventions not only aimed at delivering tangible provisions but also focused on shaping behaviours, dispositions and expectations.

Early theorizations of the "social question" in Germany, the country with the most advanced nineteenth century experimentations (Von Stein, 1986; Hintze, 1980), saw the rise of the "science of administration" as a specific body of knowledge that combined the "science of finances" (*finanzwissenschaft)*, or the allocation of economic resources, with the "science of police" (*polizeiwissenschaft*) as means to control the "social movement" (*soziale bewegung*). The state was therefore simultaneously concerned with the socio-economic improvement of the body politic and with its moral soundness. The idea of the "social state" (Gozzi, 2003) embodied therefore the policy translation of pre-existing *ethical* and *disciplinary* functions of sovereignty to deal with working class mass politics and extended techniques of population control.

As a result of the development and differentiation of national systems of social security and social assistance, the meaning of wage labour changed from being a target of social control to becoming a necessary requisite for the access to many social provisions. Work was therefore invested with the responsibility to act as a conduit for ethical behaviour and discipline. Public social provisions and employer-subsidised benefits came to depend on a distinction among the poor between "deserving" (i.e. available to seek and accept employment) and "undeserving" (i.e. lacking the fibre, resolve and discipline to enter the labour market). Therefore, the state has tended to restructure the realm of social rights, imposing tighter requirements and more stringent criteria any time the demands and struggles of labour and social movements raised the possibility of benefits becoming a decent form of income, weakening work discipline as the central vehicle of social inclusion (Fox-Piven and Cloward, 1978, 1993; Domhoff, 1990; Jacoby, 1998; Katz, 2002).

The insertion of (especially male) workers in waged employment came to be praised in official discourse as promoting values of responsibility, initiative, probity, care for the family. The twentieth century trajectory from the "social" state to the

welfare state in Europe and North America is therefore characterised by the emergence of wage labour as the social underpinning and the disciplinary principle for the access to social benefits. Social security benefits enabled by "productivity deals" and mass production allowed to make workers' struggles conducive to capitalist development (Negri, 1988; De Angelis, 2000). At the same time, state theory recognised the systemic importance of class integration policies for political stability by removing social provisions from the realm of paternalist delivery from above, as in Germany's "Bismarckian" welfare, and developing a language of "rights". The welfare state came therefore to represent a "third generation" of citizenship, social citizenship, that integrated civil and political rights in the constitutional discourse of the democratic-capitalist state (Baldwin, 1990: 51).

At the same time, social rights and citizenship mirrored the growing institutionalisation of working class organisations within political systems and organs of collective bargaining, in ways that overcome traditional liberal-democratic suspicions for intermediate interest organizations between the state and the individual (Lehmbruch, 1979; Berger, 1981; Rose, 1990). For Juergen Habermas (1983), the extension of social rights is part of the public sphere's response to the unbridled forces of commodification of life unleashed by the worldwide expansion of capitalism. In this line of argument the expansion of the "economic subsystem" with its competitive and instrumental rationality invaded a social "lifeworld" regulated by communicative action. Therefore capitalist crises become immediate threats to the socio-political order and the welfare state addresses capital's legitimation crises, extending the realm of the "political" from formal juridical norms to the control of social conflict. While political and civil citizenship still defined the state as an external normative source for positive and negative freedoms, social citizenship represents the institutional recognition of the destructive consequences of commodified social relations. Habermas contends, in fact, that:

> The social-welfare model emerged from the reformist critique of bourgeois formal law. According to this model, an economic society institutionalized in the form of private law (above all through property rights and contractual freedom) was separated from the sphere of the common good, the state, and left to the spontaneous working of market mechanisms (...). Under the conditions of an organized capitalism

> dependent on the government's provision of public infrastructure and planning, and with a growing inequality in economic power, assets and social situations (...) the universal right to equal individual liberties could no longer be guaranteed through the negative status of the legal subject. Rather, it proved necessary (...) to introduce a new category of basic rights grounding claims to a more just distribution of social wealth" (Habermas, 1996: 400-402).

This analysis, however, fails to address the problem, raised by Foucault (1978), of the role of the "public sphere" and "lifeworld" not simply as opposing but as reproducing power relations that construct the individual as an active, willing participant in its own subordination and self-discipline.

Other arguments have noticed the importance of policies of economic equality for the purpose of democratic stability (Boix, 2003), while critics underline that social citizenship's contribution to political stability conceals underlying market-based inequality and oppression (Sousa Santos, 1995: 415). Contradictions and ambiguities mark therefore the notion of "social citizenship". Social rights' emphasis on ensuring stability and containing worker militancy, in fact, reflects an unresolved tension between the recognition of workers' power to determine meaningful socio-economic changes and their rights to mere social insertion (Pedersen, 1993; Turner, 1993; Bonker and Wollmann, 1996).

Across highly diversified national contexts, the extension of social citizenship rights contains various forms of decommodification, or the access to social goods, services and provisions (such as education, healthcare, retirement benefits, unemployment insurance, municipal utilities, housing, transport) funded through public spending in ways that minimize individual dependency on the market (Lister, 2001). The concept of decommodification determines a conceptual distinction between "wage" and "income". The former refers in fact to a monetary transaction to remunerate productive performances. The latter includes also transfers of a non-commodity, and often non-monetary nature, such as social grants and employers' contributions. Therefore, the difference between wage and income depends on the extent of decommodified components in individual livelihoods.

T.H. Marshall's classical theorization regarded the access to decommodified social rights as a condition for the effective enjoyment of civil and political

citizenship premised on inter-generational and inter-class solidarity. For him social rights included:

> The whole range, from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society (Marshall, 1950: 11).

At the same time, the policy discourse of social rights, as elaborated by experts and policy-makers, showed a remarkable flexibility. The state's conceptualisation of the social question was in fact functional to different policy aims depending on different ideological paradigms and power relations (Hall, 1989). Therefore in Britain, for example, Keynesian job creation policies were initially supported to limit government intervention. In post-depression USA they led, instead, to a substantial expansion of government spending (Weir, 1989), even if anti-poverty policies remained based on a philanthropy-based approach that focused on behavioural and cultural disfunctions at the level of the individual and the community (O'Connor, 2001; Fraser and Gordon, 1998).

Direct state intervention within Keynesian full employment policies, as witnessed in the American "New Deal" and European post-war reconstruction, however, identified waged work as the main vehicle for participation in the financing and enjoyment of social provisions. The restructuring of the British social security system recommended by the Beveridge (1942) Report combined universal social insurance and pay-as-you-go financing from the working population. Mezzadra (2002) argues that decommodification was not the goal of Marshall's view of citizenship, but it acted as a device to engender in the citizen a sense of responsibility and sacrifice, enforcing the ethical imperative to, and the psychological acceptance of, hard work. At the same time, Marshall used work ethic to oppose worker militancy. Therefore, a universal discourse based on citizenship "status" defused the potentially disruptive consequences originating from the inherent inequality of the market-based employment "contract".

The centrality of wage labour discipline in theories of social citizenship led various authors to regard the "constitutionalisation" of wage labour as a defining feature of Western democracies (Offe, 1984; Baldwin, 1990; Twine, 1994, pp. 103–

04). In fact, in these cases the role of labour parties and trade unions has been constitutionally protected and institutionally recognized within structures and procedures of class co-operation and compromise. The role of the welfare state in constitutionalising wage labour defines therefore social policy not merely as an extra-economic function primarily concerned with counterbalancing market failures. Rather, the realm of social welfare becomes an integral part of the functions of increasing economic output, as hinted at in Henri Lefebvre's (1977) concept of "state mode of production". Hardt and Negri (1996: 211), instead, argue that the "constitutionalisation" of labour is a contradictory process: from one side it invests labour with a disciplining ideology of participation, technocracy, "responsible governance" and compromise. On the other hand, however, social rights and the "social wage" provide a common horizon for workplace and community resistance.

Changing meanings of work in left discourses turned labour from a manifestation of oppression into a condition for emancipation. Work ethic was re-evaluated as a basis for social compacts in forms that Walter Benjamin (1969: 253-264) stigmatized in his famous eleventh "thesis on the philosophy of history". The question of labour constitutionalisation through corporatist organs of decision-making, collective bargaining and employment-based legislation for social provisions has been at centre of debates on the ill-fated experiment of the *Soziale Rechtstaat* (social State of rights) in Germany's Weimar Republic (Heller, 1987; Smend, 1988; Preuss, 2001; Dyzenhaus, 2001; Mezzadra, 1999; Jacobson and Schlink, 2001). The Weimar state is here regarded as an attempt to build juridical and ideological foundations for a historic compromise between socialism and capitalism, based on the common goal of harnessing workers' organization and militancy for the purpose of strengthening state institutions and improve productivity. At the same time, Hong (1998) identifies precisely the uneasy coexistence of social citizenship discourse, bureaucratic rationality and productivist modernization as one of the main causes for the authoritarian involution of the Weimar case.

Welfare rights and collective bargaining have become crucial determinants of worker identities. Not only was working class organization decisive in establishing social citizenship rights, but social provisions themselves helped to define an

ideology where waged labour is detached from mere exploitation and represents in workers' imageries an expression of progress, patriotism, consumerism and emancipation – in short of becoming citizens -- which recursively reinforce work ethic and factory discipline. Conversely, according to Seidman (1991), it is among the workers for which the work-citizenship link is feebler and jobs are more meaningless – the unemployed, casuals, low-wage employees in deskilled occupations – that everyday resistance against wage labour takes place, targeting both the factory order (through absenteeism, slowdown, sabotage, disobedience) and social services (through welfare deception and cheating). In general, however, social benefits provided a counterweight to "the permeation of daily life by the values and routines of work, a state of things summarized in the term 'the tyranny of work over life'" (Joyce, 1980: 125). At the same time social security acted in continuity with managerial paternalism and employer-subsidised services, for example housing, aimed at producing a close identification between workplace and community (Joyce, 1980) and forms of "company patriotism" akin to those emerging in Chapter 4 and 5 of this work. Such practices, however, require some employment and career stability, which tend to separate long-term, formally employed male workers from casuals and informal employees, especially female. These latter's appearance on the labour market tends, conversely, to disrupt this pattern of relationships. In the final analysis, therefore, the capacity of social benefits to influence worker identities and behaviours depends on the outcome of power relations and contestation over the ability of social security to enforce wage discipline or, conversely, to enable more radical grassroots demands.

For Michele Lamont (2000: 3) social benefits provide workers with moral standards as "alternatives to economic definition of success", whereby "national welfare systems reveal implicit rules about conceptions of merit and social citizenship that vary across societies" (Lamont, 2000: 9). In this sense, the relationship between worker identities and social citizenship is recursive in so far this latter is shaped by workers' cultural repertoires, solidarity and moral economy. Welfare mechanisms, however, also help concealing the role of market relations and capitalist exploitation, while building identity boundaries that separate workers from unemployed and the poor and, in some cases, white from non-white workers. Labour

market policies and social provisions facilitated workers' acceptance of capitalist control of production (Hardt and Negri, 1996), also thanks to the role of trade unions (Boreham, Hall and Leet, 1996; Lavalette and Mooney, 2000) and socialist parties (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, 1992; Hicks, 1999) in shaping welfare state policies. Complementary to this point, the "varieties of capitalism" approach (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Mares, 2003) sees the emergence of welfare states as the product of employers' initiative, rather than as exclusively based on advancing workers' rights and power. This view sees progressive social policies as conducive to improving the performance of labour markets -- especially when high skill levels and firm loyalty are needed -- and as a competitive edge for "coordinated" over "liberal" (market- or hierarchies-based) market economies.

Discussing the interaction between wage labour and social citizenship, Mezzadra and Ricciardi (1997) convincingly argue that, through constitutionalisation, corporatism and collective bargaining, social subjects are not only represented, but also constituted, and labour's radical demands are disciplined in the very moment they are given voice within institutions of compromise and moderation. According to Fox Piven (2001) welfare policies are as much concerned with creating an employable labour force as they are with providing relief to the unemployed. Welfare entitlements themselves, in fact, can have criteria and stigma attached to encourage labour market participation and work discipline. A mode of operation of welfare as a disciplinary device has to do with state regulation of the linkages between production and reproduction. An example is provided by the ways in which single mothers are stigmatized under "welfare queen" stereotypes in discourses of welfare reform in the United States. According to this image, the alleged exploitation of welfare transfers by single mothers leads to their being depicted with the mark of moral turpitude associated with lax sexuality and unregulated, out-of-wedlock reproduction. The institutionalization of family ideology and state control of the female body are here therefore contiguous to the enforcement of wage labour discipline to construct gender inequalities.

Tensions and contradictions that shape social policies in relation to wage labour resurface in Gosta Esping-Andersen's (1990) seminal analysis of the "three worlds" of welfare in Western capitalism. The main merit of Esping-Andersen's

work is to provide an operational definition of social welfare based on the extent and forms of decommodification, which enables him to build a comparison between different welfare states, grouped in three ideal-typical "welfare regimes". For Esping-Andersen (1990: 22) decommodification

> occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market. The mere presence of social assistance or insurance may not necessarily bring about significant de-commodification if they do not substantially emancipate individuals from market dependence (…). There is no doubt that de-commodification has been a hugely contested issue in welfare state development. For labour, it has always been a priority (…). Decommodification strengthens the worker and weakens the absolute authority of employers. It is for exactly this reason that employers always opposed de-commodification.

Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* constructs a comparison between different welfare states based on their "decommodification score" calculated according to criteria that include rules for eligibility to benefits, levels of income replacement and the range of benefits provided. Country scores are calculated as the sum of scores for sickness, retirement and unemployment benefits, and they define the range of decommodified coverage. Observed regularities and variations are linked to socio-institutional factors related to party politics, class alliances, policy path dependency and the strength of labour organizations.

Esping-Andersen and others (Goodin et al., 1999) identify three welfare regimes. First, liberal welfare states (predominant in English-speaking countries like Australia, Great Britain and the United States) are characterised by means tested provisions, modest universal transfers and social insurance targeted at low-income earners. This mode of delivery is therefore residual in nature, entitlements carry significant stigma and the overall policy rationale has to do more with addressing "basic needs" than with increasing social equality. Second, corporatist welfare states (as in continental European countries like France, Germany and Italy) link entitlements and provisions to occupational status, and negotiations betweens powerful organizations representing social interests (mainly capital and labour) have a decisive impact on policy formulation. Benefits are here attached to employment, redistribution of resources is limited and the role of the state is mainly to stimulate

and coordinate societal bargaining. Third, socialdemocratic welfare states, namely the Scandinavian cases (Greve, 1996), have a high level of decommodification, the allocation of social benefits is universal and citizenship, rather than labour market positions, is the decisive criterion for access to social provisions. The system is therefore geared to social equality and generalised provision of services.

The hugely influential "welfare regimes" categorization confirms that discourses and policies of social citizenship are not merely about institutional design of programmes but they are inseparable from constructing and conceptualising their own subjects as "deserving" recipients. Esping-Andersen's three welfare "worlds" are respectively focused on specific areas of disadvantage (need-based provisions), broad occupational groups (work-based provisions) and the totality of the population (citizenship-based provisions). At the same time, institutional practices of individualisation, selectivism or universalism are decisively shaped by the interaction between welfare states and labour market policy. In Esping-Andersen as well, therefore, social welfare arrangements are essentially responsive to the position of wage labour in society, not only as a material condition, but as a normative idea.

The embeddedness of welfare states in labour markets and production regimes is, on the other hand, shared also by other typologies of welfare states, often in overt criticism of Esping-Andersen (Castles 2004). Huber and Stephens' (2001) attempt to build comparisons based on "power constellations theory" emphasises the interactions between institutions, class forces and extra-workplace social subjects. They end up, however, in emphasising connection to production organization and the rise of unemployment as decisive factors in, respectively, permanence and change of welfare states. Therefore, as Janoski (1998: 22) quite pertinently argues, views of welfare states that focus only on the expansion of decommodification are flawed because their focus on employment-based social provisions fails to account for how they actually *re*commodify by requiring the recipients' insertion in waged employment. Moreover, understanding decommodification only as the product of institutional and policy interventions is probably reductive. In fact, the meaning of commodities, including social goods, and demands for their decommodification depend also on the ways in which they are recontextualised as "use values" within

social discourses of rights, customs, morals and "good life" (Appadurai, 1986; Baudrillard, 1998; Canclini, 2001; Sayer, 2003).

Esping-Andersen's work represents a useful and powerful comparative approach based on a notion of "decommodification" that is empirically clear enough not to be a merely normative or ideological concept, and it is at the same time complex enough to take into account a variety of social, institutional and historical factors. The usefulness of the concept is enhanced by the possibilities it offers to extend comparisons to non-Western societies, therefore counterbalancing the Eurocentric bias implicit in the welfare state concept. Equally persuasive are, however, many criticisms to the "three worlds" approach, based on its bias in favour of institutional interventions, its definition of decommodified provisions narrowly focused on the workplace to the exclusion of decommodified services in society at large (as in health, housing and education), and its lack of attention for the role of social conflicts and movements[2] (Turner, 1986; Alber, 1995).

In particular, the criticism addressed by Hans-Juergen Krahl (1972) to Habermas's view of social citizenship -- that it arbitrarily separates the sphere of work and production from a "lifeworld" to which work is connected by forms of solidarity, resistance and communication – can also be addressed to Esping-Andersen. His neglect of the relations between production and reproduction have been particularly chastised by gender-based analysis emphasizing how unequal sexual division of labour and the unpaid household-based work of reproduction have a decisive impact in shaping production regimes, commodification and women's subordinate employment status (Weir, Orloff and Skocpol, 1988; Sainsbury, 1991; O'Connor, 1993; Dalla Costa and Dalla Costa, 1993; Skocpol, 1995; O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999). Such critiques are more generally addressed at the assumptive logic of Marshallian citizenship, which defines as beneficiaries gender-neutral working individuals, overlooking female subordination on the job and in the family (Pateman, 1989: Jenson and Mahon, 1993).

Other authors emphasise that collective identities, social conflicts and ethical worldviews lead to a diversification of subjective strategies and demands that greatly contribute to welfare states' variability and differentiation. Therefore welfare

[2] Esping-Andersen (1990: 138) leaves to "new breakthroughs" the task of investigating the impact of these broader social forces and dynamics.

regimes often function on the basis of contingent, pragmatic adaptation rather than of programmatic planning. Oldfield (1990) argues that social citizenship should be intended as a social processes and practice, and not merely as a social status. Danilo Zolo (1994: 29-31) goes further to challenge conventional definitions of social rights as institutional constructs. For him it is actually imprecise to talk of "social rights", since they differ from civil and political rights insofar they do not depend on a codified, predictable and juridically enforceable implementation. More appropriate would be to talk of "social services" as "conditional opportunities", whose translation into practice depends on the interplay of social forces with different expectations on the allocation of market-generated resources. "Social rights" in this view become the universalist ideological discourse with which the state establishes contingent codifications of social services that to various degrees sanction existing exclusions, inequalities and limits to access.

Approaching social citizenship as a contested terrain, a "field of signification" shaped by institutional discourses and strategies of rights and demands from below reveals the fragility of decommodification itself, whose boundaries are shaped by the reconfiguration of social subjects and expectations. If commodification is central to twentieth-century definitions of social citizenship, it is all the more so in shaping its problems and conflicts. The struggle to signify social citizenship ultimately combines a contradictory movement of non reconciled forces. On one side the state tries to establish wage labour discipline as a condition of social inclusion, to which decommodified benefits are to a large extent subordinated. On the other side, demands from below try to expand the arena of social rights based on the assumption that decommodification minimises market dependency and provides a partial alternative to wage labour. The ambiguities surrounding social citizenship are ultimately at the core of critiques to the concept explored in the next section.

1.3 Radical Critiques to Social Citizenship as a Governmental Practice

The historical trajectory of the European and North American welfare states established an interaction between social citizenship and wage labour discipline that

was reciprocally constitutive, in the sense that they were mutually reinforced in their conceptual coupling by policies of social rights premised on labour markets. At the same time, this interaction is at the heart of unresolved contradictions in the notion of social citizenship advanced by the governmentality project of the Western capitalist state. In fact, on one hand such a notion demands a universalist discourse of social rights, while on the other hand material forms of inequality, domination and conflict underpin the ways in which those rights are realized. Therefore, social welfare policies are as much about the management and reproduction of exclusion as they aim to increase social inclusion.

The combination of inclusion and exclusion as prerogatives of state sovereignty is discussed in Giorgio Agamben's (1998) account of the state's role in governing the "bare life" of its population to transform it into "good life". In his view, "life" is the ultimate object of state policies, whereby "*the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power"* (Agamben, 1998: 6, own emphasis). "Biopolitics" here refers specifically to interventions that, with the stated aim of promoting the population's health and well being, "politicize" the reproduction of life, internalizing its biological development and bringing it into the realm of state knowledge and power:

> The sovereign decides not the licit and illicit but the originary inclusion of the living in the sphere of law or, in the words of Schmitt, 'the normal structuring of life relations' (Agamben, 1998: 26).

However, following Carl Schmitt's definition of sovereignty as the power to decide over "states of exception" (whereby "exception is the structure of sovereignty"), Agamben (1998: 28) argues that having reduced life to a field of policy enables the state to constantly shift and redefine the borders between inclusion and exclusion. These observations seem particularly pertinent to the ways in which specific groups and "risk populations" are defined as targets of particular policies, or of the way in which entitlements to social provisions are constantly redefined according to macroeconomic compatibilities decided in technocratic forms. Moreover, the extension of "social citizenship rights" is a contradictory process that at the same time extends a "norm" by continuously defining "exceptions".

Radical critics of state "governmentality" have emphasised how institutional universalist discourses of social rights are used to contain and channel a "multitude" of social existences, experiences and demands within unified images of "the nation" and "the people" (Ranciere, 2002 and 2003; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Virno, 2004). From this point of view, socialist emphases on an equally unified, homogenous "class" mirror and reinforce those very institutional practices. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1984) the link between wage labour discipline, state institutions and the construction of subjective rights is part of dynamics of "territorialisation" and "deterritorialisation" through which subjects' obligations and forms of control are juridically constituted and placed in radical opposition to their own desires. The construction of social rights is therefore accompanied by the establishment of responsibilities through which collective subjects are constituted under an illusion of autonomy. The welfare state, in particular, operates as a mode of "reterritorialisation" of workers' desires by internalizing the sense of responsibility, moderation and control required to enjoy social citizenship rights (Guattari, 1984; Watson, 1999).

Other authors have emphasized how the operation of social rights discourse as a mode of containment and structuration of grassroots subjectivities is produced by expert knowledge as a separate layer of policy-making. At this level, the "social question" is conceptualized, its subjects are defined and the rationale for related state interventions is elaborated (Ashforth, 1990; Escobar, 1994; Ferguson, 1994; Mitchell, 2002). According to Timothy Mitchell (2002: 118), the role of expert knowledge confers to social policies a "state effect" which does not merely reflect social relations, but rather "formats" them, reformulating their complexity into identifiable problems with discernible causes and arguable solutions. For some authors the role of expert knowledge in policy making is not merely ancillary to powerful economic interests, but it is a specific and autonomous site of power with a unique capacity to elaborate challenges from below and define systematic responses (Skocpol and Rueschemeyer, 1996; Wittrock and Wagner, 1996). Similarly to Bourdieu's (1998a) notion of "state nobility", policy-making "experts" are not coterminous with bureaucratic apparatuses, but they are social groups that

autonomously produce discourses capable to conceal and "mis-recognise" the operation of the market in shaping economic inequalities.

It has also been emphasized how expert knowledge at work conceptualizes social problems by drawing from "natural" and "social" sciences in varying combinations. According to Hong (2005), modern welfare's strategy of governmentality relies specifically on a discourse of difference through which social subjects are produced as beneficiaries and targets of government interventions. In this sense the evolution of social citizenship discourse represents a departure from earlier social policies where "poor" and "marginals" could be considered as deviations to be reintegrated within "normal" full-time employment. Instead, the growing differentiation of labour markets and the rise of mass joblessness make full employment disappear as the "norm". As a consequence, welfare policy is no longer concerned with the "modern" aim of building social cohesion, but has more to do with the "postmodern" function of regulating difference. At the same time social differences as produced by differential labour market positions are "naturalized" as state policies categorize their subjects-targets on the basis of their capacity to compete. The naturalization of the social operated by social welfare discourse is ultimately based on claims to scientific objectivity that underpin policy recommendations according to a "hybrid" (Latour, 2001) mode of knowledge where the border between "hard" and "soft" sciences tends to disappear and the relevance of specific socio-economic interests and ideologies is concealed.

State governmentality and expert knowledge ultimately define the recipients of social programmes with objectifying terms as "poor", "marginalized", "disadvantaged", "disabled". The universality of rights therefore becomes inseparable from the capacity of such subjects to claim rights based on the category of entitlements in which they have been inserted. At the same time, however, this carries important consequences for rights-based discourses and strategies "from below". In fact, demanding social rights on the basis of categories constructed through state governmentality ultimately reinforces the very fragmentation, subordination and inequality that governmentality itself presides upon. Wendy Brown (2002: 430) aptly summarises the dilemmas facing social rights discourse:

> Rights secure our standing as individuals even if they obscure the treacherous ways that standing is achieved and regulated; they must be specific and concrete to reveal and redress (…) subordination, yet potentially entrench our subordination through that specificity (…); they emancipate us to pursue other political ends while subordinating those political ends to liberal discourse.

Therefore the paradox of universal citizenship rights, according to Brown, has to do with the fact that they ultimately reinforce power relations that produce social subjects as objects of policy interventions, hence the dilemma: "What happens when we understand individual rights as a form of protection against certain social powers of which the ostensibly protected individual is actually an effect?" (Brown, 1995: 115). The mode of operation of such an "effect" recalls Foucault's discussion of governmentality as structuring the citizen's field of action (2001), which illustrates the role of macroeconomic policy constraints and viability in containing "excessive" social demands and expectations.

As an "effect" of state sovereignty, social citizenship fits Slavoj Zizek's (1997; 2000: 171-243) concept of "subjectivization" as the construction of society as a totality that comprehends all possible antagonisms and where the recognition of rights takes place in ways that those rights cannot be used to cause fundamental social changes (Boucher, 2002). The construction of social citizenship as a mode of disempowerment and deprivation reduces therefore the demand for social rights to, as Zizek (1993: 211) puts it, a "hysterical demand for a new master". Recent scholarly controversies on "recognition" and "redistribution" (Honneth, 2001) have reflected such problems in trying to devise political strategies of rights that overcome established social inequalities. Arguments underlining the specific importance of recognition of identities and the politicisation of differences (Young, 2002) have opposed approaches based on the priority to mobilise for redistributive policies to tackle "structured inequalities" (Fraser, 1997). At the same time, the relationship between claims to rights and policy constructions of entitlements and target populations is of a recursive nature, insofar demands from rights from particular social positions can enable political radicalism and expectations for structural change.

Partha Chatterjee (2004: 59-60) stresses this point in his analysis of the politics of community movements in Kolkata, India:

> Refugees, landless people, day laborers, homestead, below the poverty line – are all demographic categories of governmentality. That is the ground on which they define their claims (…). [But], alongside its reference to the government's obligation to look after poor and underprivileged population groups, the association was also appealing to the moral rhetoric of a community striving to build a decent social life under extremely harsh conditions (…). The categories of governmentality were being invested with the imaginative possibilities of community, including its capacity to (…) produce a new, even if somewhat hesitant, rhetoric of political claims. These claims are irreducibly political. They could only be made on a political terrain, where rules may be bent or stretched, and not on the terrain of established law or administrative procedure.

Social citizenship, therefore, contains simultaneously an ideal of emancipation and a political practice of subjection. Etienne Balibar (1994) explains the uneasy coexistence of these two terms as internal to the "citizen-subject" as the form of political subjectivity that in modernity replaces pre-existing subjection to absolute state power. At the same time, ideology and discourse in social citizenship do not play merely a "super-structural" role, but they are factors enabling struggles and new political possibilities through everyday contestation of hegemonic discourses (Baynes, 2000; Lefebvre, 2002).

Recalling Agamben's definition of sovereignty as power over "bare life", therefore, the interplay of inclusion and exclusion, norm and exception in the modern discourse of social citizenship enables conflicts over the meanings and extents of rights, and over the allocation of the related resources. As Agamben (1998: 9) argues, "bare life" is both subject and object of political conflicts, and it is both the place of state power and of emancipation from it. Following the definition introduced in the Preface, therefore, social citizenship is not to be reduced to a normative ideal, a juridical codification of rights or a combination of social programmes, but it is rather a contested field of signification. The contradictions that constitute the concept of social citizenship – as enabling claims for universal rights only on the basis of particular, bounded subject positions defined by state governmentality – is closely related to the centrality of waged employment and work ethics as criteria for access to

services. These contradictions are not, moreover, simply a matter of state and citizenship theory, but they are translated into concrete material inequalities. Critical analyses of the welfare state have, in fact, emphasized how changing institutional definitions of entitlements shape subordination and inequality across race and gender lines.

Reflecting on the trajectory of the labour-citizenship link in American society, Evelyn Nakano-Glenn (2002) elaborates on the theme of social citizenship as a boundary between inclusion and exclusion. She argues that the interaction between social citizenship and labour to differentiate benefits in relation to individuals' wages provides an arena "in which groups have contested their exclusion, oppression and exploitation" (Nakano-Glenn, 2002: 1). She sees the development of a discourse of citizenship as coterminous with the expansion between the nineteenth and the twentieth century of the ideology of "free labour", juridically unbounded and regulated by contract. The combination of citizenship rights and "free labour" ideologies has in her view acted to promote a view of the "citizen worker" as white and male, whose ethical paradigms made hard work coterminous with responsible membership of the community. At the same time, the elimination of "unfree", non contractual forms of labour in the process of industrialization refashioned, rather than superseding racial and gender inequalities. In fact, a growing separation between production and household made waged work the repository of both citizenship claims and masculine identity (Willis, 1979).

At the same time, however, racial subordination in the "free" labour market was reinforced by the lack of consideration for household care functions of black women, more easily considered as employable in low-skill, low-wage, precarious positions. "Free labour", moreover, maintained strong elements of coercion as part of the enforcement of work ethic, to which social provisions became functional, for example through punitive means-tested allocations and laws against vagrancy, "idleness" and similar threats to productive employment and "economic independence" (Nakano-Glenn, 2002: 89; Montgomery, 1993; Steinfeld, 2001). Not only was workers' citizenship enmeshed in socio-economic coercion, but the racialised nature of the labour-citizenship nexus in American

capitalism facilitated the spread of ideas of upward social mobility linked to occupational advancement. The resulting "populist sense of common interest" (Martinot, 2003: 86) between white labour and capital contributed to entrench white racism as a "ruling class social control formation" (Allen, 1994). In ways that are relevant to the South African case, in racialised societies citizenship rights were among the factors that enabled white workers to shape their claims and identities in racial terms (Roediger, 1999; Brattain, 2001). They also marginalized by the same token casual workers (especially females), immigrants and non-white workers (Davis, 1984; Davies, 1994). Twentieth century white working class politics in the USA remained shaped by these factors, especially in political orientations towards conservatism or populism, combined to a strongly productivist and "patriotic" approach to industrial unionism (Cohen, 1990).

With the expansion of US federal government provisions, racial inequalities produced by the work-citizenship nexus, more than by differential access to welfare *per se* (Wilson, 1990), also contributed to emphasise the stigma attached to non-working black welfare recipients. For them -- subordinated as they were on the labour market and destined to low-wage, unstable occupations -- receiving welfare benefits was therefore easily presented as a hallmark of idleness, immorality, crime, family decay, which converge in shaping the "underclass" stereotype (Katz, 1990; Quadagno, 1994; Gans 1996; Sugrue, 1996; Lieberman, 1998). In fact, as Linda Gordon (1995) argued, provisions that were relatively less racialised, like the Social Security Administration, were more directly and predictably linked to labour market status through payroll deductions. In this case, therefore, social insurance reinforced the white male breadwinner role, while women's household work was the target of more residual forms of social assistance. The growing orientation of social assistance towards "disfunctional" families of lone mothers with dependent children further fed stigmatization and the "underclass" stereotype.

1.4 Work and Welfare under Neoliberal Globalisation

Scholarly debates on globalisation have focused on the impact on welfare states of market liberalization and the restructuring of production in ways that, once again, stress the interconnectedness of labour market changes, shifting social positions of waged work, and the reconfiguration of access to public social provisions (Harvey, 1989; Taylor-Gooby, 1991; Castel, 1995; Mittelman, 1999; Mishra, 1999). While domestic demand loses relevance compared to outward-looking investment, and capital mobility increases, old welfarist compacts based on job creation, state- and employer-subsidised reproduction, productivity and consumerism come to be seen by capital as onerous fiscal burdens to be rolled back (Teeple, 1995; Kuttner, 1997; Swank, 2001; Genschel, 2002). Saskia Sassen (1996) goes as far as to talk of "denationalization of juridical systems" as the "dissolution of state sovereignty". Therefore, trade unions and organs of societal bargaining become increasingly powerless in negotiating the allocation of the social surplus.

The quest for economic competitiveness, in a context where the private enterprise is assumed as the main engine of growth, is often conceptualized as reducing the state's fiscal capacity, and as fostering restructuring of production leading to new labour market segmentations and the expansion of employment flexibility. The instability of "atypical" forms of employment in dispersed, often un-unionized labour processes also contributes to the unions' loss of representation and power (Moody, 1997; Bauman, 1998; Standing, 1999). The rise of contingent, part-time or self-employed work has been conceptualized by some as the product of a new, knowledge-based economy which subcontracts and decentralizes low-skill operations and stratifies labour markets making the position of traditional blue collar social security recipients unstable and threatened by individualized bargaining over social benefits (Harrison, 1994; Pena, 1997; Peck and Theodore, 1998; Heery and Salmon, 2000; Benner, 2002). These patterns have been found both at the top of the occupational hierarchy, among layers of professionals and technicians, and at the bottom, where declining living standards of casualised employees are combined with lack of access to employment-based benefits. Therefore, the growth hyper-commodified working

class poverty is often seen as a result (Standing, 1997; Heady, 1997; Rosenberg and Lapidus, 1999; Head, 2003; Shipler, 2004).

Across the occupational ladder, wage labour discipline is reconfigured in the direction of hollowing out a predictable link between work and social provisions, rewarding individual calculation in managing finite monetary resources (Muckenberger, 1989)[3]. Moreover, workers' identities and solidarity are faced with the uncertainty deriving from the erosion of the nexus between work and social inclusion (Beck, 1999; Sennett, 2000). To connect to Guattari's view of the work-citizenship nexus as enabling shifting forms of control, it could be argued that flexible employment supersedes old, welfarist forms of "territorialisation" of workers' lives. Central in the process is the rise -- at both ends of the labour market hierarchy, from call centers to computer analysts -- of "immaterial" workers, operating on the basis of cognitive skills, affects, emotions and symbols. For these, the distinction between "working time" an "life time" becomes blurred and overlapping. In this view, flexible employment "deterritorialises" production, which is pushed outside the boundaries of the large factory, and workers' expressions of autonomy and boundlessness at work are coterminous with internalized and individualized social control and discipline (Guattari, 1984; Hardt and Negri, 2000). As Guattari puts it:

> It's a matter of creating systemic poles that guarantee that the functions of desire, functions of rupture of balance will manifest themselves the least possible. What is the best procedure? Much better than guilt is systematic endangering: you're sitting in a place, you might have a tiny functionary's job, you might be a top-level manager; that's not important. It's absolutely necessary that you are convinced that, at any moment, you could be thrown out of this job. That concerns the non-guarantees of welfare as well as the super-guarantees of the salaried professions (…). You are not guaranteed; you are not guaranteed by a connection, by a territory, by a profession, by a corporation; you are essentially endangered because you depend on this system which, from

[3] A commonly discussed topic in this regard is the transition in employer-funded retirement benefits from "defined benefits" schemes, whose rate of benefits is defined by the schemes' rule and employers are liable to cover shortfalls, to "defined contributions" ones, where employers' liability towards the scheme is limited and final benefits increasingly depend on the fund's returns on financial markets and portfolio investment (Clark, 2003). While this issue is generally debated in industrialised countries, it is also quite relevant to the South African case, as analysed in Chapter 7.

> one day to the next, as a function of some requirement of production or simply some requirement of power or social control, might say to you: now, it's over (…), [you are] no longer functioning in the register of functions we agree to promote for the production of subjectivity. So it's that kind of instrument, I believe, that gives this power to integrated world capitalism (cit. in Stivale, 1993).

Catherine Newman (1999) suggests that in cases of high employment uncertainty and vulnerability coupled to welfare erosion, work ethic can actually reproduce working poverty by inducing workers to accept low-wage jobs as alternatives to shrinking social assistance. De Angelis (2002) concludes by contending that generalized insecurity combined with increasing dependence on market relations has the effect of enforcing individual self-discipline in a drive for employability. Thus the totality of human activities become functional to labour market insertion.

Hardt and Negri (2000: 45), however, warn against regarding "national" and "global" as normatively antithetical terms, whereby the former allegedly coincides with job creation and the welfare state and the latter with jobless growth and market discipline. Rather, for them "national" and "global" are moments in a "*regime* of the production of identity and difference, or really of homogeneization and heterogeneization". This is defined by a complex interaction between global market regulation and localized patterns of social control and competitive valorization supported by the reconfiguration of the state. Similarly, for various authors "typical" and "atypical" work should not be regarded as starkly alternative, clearly delimited realities (Felstead and Jewson, 1999). Rather, flexibility and decentralization of production could still to a large extent be seen as part of a broad process of "informalisation" (Meagher, 1995; Crichlow, 2000) driven by the restructuring of the formal sector of the economy, rather than as the emergence of a separate sphere of production.

Different forms of access to social provisions can still provide different protections to workers undergoing the transition to flexible employment, especially women looking for extra-household jobs to compensate for declining family income (Yeandle, 1999). Some scholars talk indeed of a resilience of welfare states (Fligstein, 1998; Pierson, 1998; van Kersbergen, 2000), at least in terms of quantitative indicators of expenditures. In the face of flexible labour markets,

however, state prerogatives are no longer aimed at increasing social equality but at equalizing competitive chances by linking social services to the provision of skills and "employability". Other authors refuse to see in the flexibilisation of labour markets only the hallmark of capitalist domination and utter disempowerment of the workers. Rather, contractual and working time flexibility is sometimes seen as a new arena of contestation where workers retain their agency and try to maximize their "libertarian dispositions" (Gill, 2001) in the absence of strict factory regimentation. Attempts to adapt to changing employment conditions could be enhanced by personal independence, mobility and alternative income sources as tools to resist managerial control.

Over the past three decades, public spending and labour market shifts have provided the socio-economic background to a conservative offensive against "entitlement-centred" views of the welfare state. These arguments are based on welfare's inability to address a widening variety of needs and demands from an increasingly diversified working population. Critics often use these demands to underline the welfare states' biases in favour of long-term, formal, unionized employees. Therefore, conservative opposition to welfare adopts to some extent a language of self-realization and emancipation on behalf of "flexible" labouring subjects left uncovered by old models of social citizenship (White, 2000; Schmidt, 2002; Haylett, 2003a). As a response, more flexible modes of service provisions are often advocated, which combine varying degrees of privatization and re-commodification (for example by increasing users' co-payments), a re-evaluation of the role of volunteerism and the "third sector", and public-private partnerships:

> The major attack on the welfare state comes from those who advocate a shift to strict reliance on markets. Underpinning this attack theoretically is an essentialized notion of sovereign individuals or families as rational, selfcontained monads. More importantly, this attack is based on the highly problematic dichotomy of state and economy (Steinmetz, 1993: 1).

In this changed context the already mentioned "post-modernisation" of social citizenship (Hong, 2005) is fully deployed, through social policies that, instead of enforcing full-time employment as a universal "norm", try to promote wage

labour and work ethic by calibrating and fine-tuning social policies and provisions focused on a multiplicity of social groups. The internalization of difference in social citizenship discourse is accompanied to the renewed emphasis on the role of the individual competing on the market within increasingly commodified and privatized relations. The underlying policy logic is characterized as:

> withdrawal of direct, state involvement in favour of self-government through the internalization of [these] pedagogical and disciplinary structures that lie behind the pleonastic denomination of this new regime as "liberal" governmentality" (Hong, 2005: 150).

Neoliberal governmentality emphasises the role of market relations in disciplining individuals, towards which public provisions are supposed to play an increasingly residual, "enabling" and supportive role. Therefore welfare services are argued to become more selective, and their administration more attuned to individual income and behaviours, rather than to general standards defined *a priori*. The emphasis therefore is no longer on regulating "the social" as an ontological foundation of citizenship, but on supporting private economic activity (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Gilbert, 2002). As a result, wage labour discipline ceases to be exclusively produced through work ethic attached to broadly constructed social subjects, but it is the result of individual self-responsibility. Finally, decommodification loses its salience in public services that are increasingly eroded and become functional to inserting the individual in the labour market, rather than minimizing its dependence upon it.

Individualization of access and commodification of social provisions deepen the already noticed contradiction in social citizenship between the codification of universal rights and the particularized, even atomized, circumstances to which rights are applied. This contradiction, which Steinmetz (1993: 38) following Foucault defines between collective "security" and individual "discipline", leads to a situation in which state sovereignty can exercise diminishing claims to social inclusion, redirecting its scope of action towards the containment and organization of social exclusion.

Part of the ideological offensive against the welfare state is, in fact, an attempt to build an alternative social citizenship discourse (Crouch, Eder and

Tambini, 2001), whereby stable waged work is no longer a defining element (Appay and Thebaud-Mony, 1998). Communitarian and multicultural critiques to Marshallian social citizenship had stigmatized its static view of the employment-entitlements relation, which is incapable to represent social differences and disables citizens' participation to community life (Kymlicka, 1998). Moreover, the demand for citizenship emerging from transnational migrancy challenges state- and nation-centric definitions of social rights (Soysal, 1994; Ong, 1999; Ngai, 2003; Papastergiadis, 2000). Conversely, in alternative social citizenship discourses "entitlements" tend to be replaced with "responsibility" and protected "employment" with "employability" (Giddens, 1995; Scharpf and Schmidt, 2000). For some advocates of "postmodern" welfare discourse, competition and individualism are the antidotes to the "authoritarianism", state-centrism and productivist bias of the old welfare state (Leonard, 1997; Goodin, 2001).

New welfare models, sometimes described as a shift from "welfare state" to a plural "welfare society", redefine the state's role as providing opportunities for the private sector and civil society associations to participate in flexible, adaptable configurations of service delivery that could cover also previously unprotected sectors (Archibugi, 1996; Spicker, 1997). At the same time universalism is downscaled and means testing is aimed at ensuring that individuals with adequate assets do not "depend" on welfare. Finally, "social inclusion" replaces "social equality" as a policy rationale (Alcock and Pearson, 1999; Powell, 2002). However, welfare restructuring in this case is not merely the result of acceptance of labour market changes, growing flexibility and the curtailment of the redistributive role of public expenditures (Bonoli, George and Taylor-Gooby, 2000; Navarro, 2002). Its emphasis on "civil society" in opposition to the state mirrors, instead, growing dissatisfaction with classical welfare state by subjects and movements pushed towards its margins, like casuals, self-employed, low-wage workers, and women inhabiting the uncertain border between production and reproduction (Tweedy and Hunt, 1994; Dyer-Witheford, 2001).

The linkage between state sovereignty, citizenship and social inclusion, which under welfare state was underpinned by the expansion of wage labour in

relatively homogenous forms, is facing a crisis that does not mean, however, that wage labour is disappearing as a condition for social insertion. Rather, welfare downsizing and the individualization of provisions reassert wage labour discipline as the central form of inclusion. In fact, welfare services are more closely linked to "active labour market policies" finalized at skills formation, re-training and job placement. These are supposed to alleviate working life transitions including intermittent periods of unemployment and low-wage employment (Dean, 1995; Esping-Andersen, 1996). At an often related level, the reassertion of wage labour centrality is expressed through a refashioned work ethic where social provisions and welfare benefits are used in overtly coercive and punitive ways. As noticed for the discourse of welfare reform in the United States, in particular, the meaning of welfare provisions is shifting from being a "floor" to being a "ceiling", while access is reshaped by increasing conditionalities and stigma for recipients often depicted as morally or behaviourally flawed (Block and Somers, 2003). This mode of "naturalization of the social" resumes therefore elements of pre-welfare state concepts of the market as producing objective, inevitable inequalities based on individual merit and worth. In such approaches, therefore, not only does addressing the structural origins of social inequality cease to be a social policy priority, but the role of decommodification in social citizenship arrangements is severely reduced.

A common policy and rhetorical device to reassert work ethic and wage labour discipline is provided by "welfare to work" programmes also known as "workfare" (Peck, 2001; Handler, 2003, 2004; Haylett, 2003b). Workfare schemes, which are becoming increasingly widespread in Europe and North America, are usually aimed at reducing the amount of claimable benefits for recipients of social assistance, limiting their duration and making them conditional upon active work-seeking behaviour. The use of social benefits as coercion to enter the labour market, rather than to provide decommodified income outside the labour market, is liked to the stigmatization of recipients, especially lone mothers with children, presented as being encouraged by welfare to be morally corrupt and behaviourally undiscplined (Boris, 1999; DeParle, 2004). Therefore individual subjectivities are reshaped in terms of their labour market

participation. Work is no longer seen as a source of dependency and social vulnerability to be cushioned with decommodified services, but it becomes synonymous with independence and social stability (Holden, 1999; Williams, 1999; Simmons, 2004).

The coercive elements of workfare are particularly emphasized by Loic Wacquant (2001), who sees a correspondence between welfare-to-work ideology and increasing rates of incarceration and criminalisation of the poor in Western societies. For him the end of Keynesian and Marshallian welfare renders obsolete older modes of social policy that needed the construction and the targeting of territories of social malaise (as in ghetto urban planning). These are replaced by the pervasiveness of imprisonment as a specifically coercive modality to promote wage labour discipline. According to Bob Jessop (1995, 2002) workfare is not merely an experiment contingent upon American debates on welfare reform, but it rather configures a new mode of social policy, a "Schumpeterian Workfare State", which replaces the former "Keynesian Welfare State". Jessop's analysis tries to avoid an explanation of transitions between different social policy regimes as mechanically determined by restructuring of production and labour market changes. He rather recognizes that institutional practices and discourses are endowed with a substantial autonomy in shaping long terms trends and structuring policy options. Therefore, on one hand the appearance of a "flexible" labour force is compatible with the permanence of "Fordist" production regimes that underpinned the old welfare states. On the other hand, de-emphasising the role of structural transformation allows this line of inquiry to discuss the enforcement of "workfarist" individualized wage labour discipline as produced by diverse and concomitant policy tools, where privatization and liberalization coexists with organs and procedures for corporatist decision-making.

The analyses above concur in emphasizing the role of discourse and ideology in advancing "workfarist" modes of social citizenship. A powerful target of the moralistic utterances in the welfare downsizing movement is the notion of welfare "dependency" (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). For conservative critics of welfare, "dependency" designates not only a moral and mental state that encourages laziness and militates against the virtues of hard work and self-

initiative. It is also the product of an "entitlement mentality" that reinforces such behaviours, therefore betraying welfare's stated aim of enabling an active and participative citizenry. Hirschman (1991) has illustrated the combined impact of moral judgement and objectifying evaluation in his discussion of "perversity" as reactionary rhetoric. According to his thesis, opposition to a policy programme relies on arguing that its implementation perversely and unintentionally produces outcomes opposite to its own rationale. Somers and Block (2005) stress the "epistemic privilege" of this line of argument in a "market fundamentalist" discourse that is able to shape policies around the idea that social assistance is ultimately detrimental to the poor, while its denial is an act of compassion and solidarity. Niklas Luhmann's (1990) critique of Marshallian welfare argued, for example, that through its self-reproducing growth the welfare state had ended up rewarding unemployment, therefore creating the very problem it was supposed to solve, "corrupting" in this way free enterprise capitalism. The solution he indicates consists in a "change in the cognitive and motivational structure of personalities, their perception and their intentions" (Luhmann, 1990: 22) so that the poor could be "empowered" to help themselves.

The welfare dependency argument is linked to an image of society as a natural, self-regulating organism ruled by Malthusian laws of scarcity. Poverty is therefore constructed as a moral-psychological, rather than socio-economic, condition. The substantial dehumanization of the poor in this narrative allows for them to be presented as irrational beings that indulge in consumptive instincts that are averse to useful production. The conclusion is usually that providing social assistance to the poor fatally leads to their multiplication. The ways in which this discourse is formulated in "hard" scientific language contributes to its allure and power of persuasion. In the case of workfare as welfare reform, therefore, discourse and ideas are important in shaping policies and public perceptions through procedures of construction of the subject that in hybrid ways combine science and morality, nature and society.

Once social inclusion is defined in terms of individual behaviour and discipline, the lazy, unprincipled poor averse to work, as opposed to the industrious "deserving" poor, becomes the negative ideal counterpart to the

enforcement of wage labour discipline in society at large. Somers and Block (2005: 276) conclude that, once poverty is defined as a moral rather than a social condition, the labour market is no longer something purely external, but it becomes the object of moral imperatives and obligations. According to Sanford Schram (2000), discourses of welfare reforms based on "personal responsibility" as taking up paid employment against "dependency" are aimed not only at blaming the poor. They rather constitute the poor as a group that becomes synonymous with social problems in ways that deflect attention away from the socioeconomic system and macroeconomic policies. The power of institutional discourse and narratives of social subjectivity to shape public policies and perceptions is aptly summarized in Schram's concept of "psychic life of welfare":

> Each social welfare entitlement has its own psychic life. The psychic life of welfare, for instance, is tied to aligning its practice with the dominant norms of work and family, as welfare reform repeatedly does. Welfare must of necessity continually distinguish itself from the specter of the other – the 'bad welfare', we might say – that haunts it. Welfare must continually prevent itself from appearing to pose a threat to the dominant norms of work and family. It must continually prove itself to be the 'good welfare' that promotes work and family norms, or it will lose legitimacy and disentitlement politics will accelerate (Schram, 2000: 160).

Here again, therefore, the juridical codification of social rights is inadequate to define social citizenship arrangements. The meanings of welfare and entitlements are rather defined as the outcome of struggles for signification, whereby competing social and institutional subjects try to assert and legitimize their claims.

The re-imposition of wage labour discipline as a mode of access to benefits is challenged by scholars that defend the relevance of decommodification in the idea of "basic income" or "citizenship income". While the workfarist discourse expunges the theme of decommodification from social policy agendas, supporters of "basic" or "citizenship" income want to reinsert decommodification also in the changed welfare and labour market conditions of globalised capitalism. They do not advocate, however, a return to old modes of welfarism premised on unified labouring subjects, even if they rescue the idea of providing income as a way to minimize dependency on the labour market. The case for a decommodified

income proceeds from the recognition that employment and labour market fragmentation under globalisation produce new vulnerabilities and inequalities, associated with the increasing likelihood for an individual to frequently change employment. Under these conditions, wage labour *per se* cannot provide an adequate guarantee and protection of living standards and basic social security. Therefore, demands for basic decommodified income generally have in common the fact that they define income provisions as universal and not related to means test and other stigmatizing measures.

Debates on universal decommodified income, however, show different understandings of the relations between income, wage and the labour market, which can roughly account for the different concepts of "basic income" and "citizenship income". Supporters of basic income (Van Parijs, 1995; Gorz, 1999; Widerquist, 1999; Standing, 2002) argue that it would lead to an effective "right to work", for which basic income is seen as a "necessary precondition" (Standing, 2002) as opposed to a mere responsibility to labour. The distinction between "work" and "labour" allows this current to underline the importance of basic income as enabling "decent employment", especially by relieving the individual of the economic compulsion of having to adapt to degrading, exploitative jobs. Critical of the idea of active labour market policies and of direct public job creating interventions, these authors share a "Polanyian" view of basic income as "justifying" capitalism, saving it from its own excesses (Van Parijs, 1995; Widerquist, 1999).

These views, however, ultimately do not challenge the centrality of wage labour as the main vehicle of social citizenship. They rather invest waged work with a new ethical discourse of "decency" and "self-realisation" as opposed to mere "duty" and "responsibility", and see decommodified income as a support measure for the individual to weather the uncertainties of flexible employment.

Other authors (Offe, 1997; Fumagalli, 2000; Hardt and Negri, 2000: 401-403; Suplicy, 2002) advocate universal, decommodified cash transfers as a "guaranteed income" in response to what they consider a profound, structural crisis of waged employment in providing for social inclusion and a dignified existence. In Offe's (1997: 82) argument, there is a stark contradiction between

the collapse of the "centrality of the labour contract" as the basis for social order and its persistent centrality in individual lives. Unemployment and precarious employment define a scenario of vulnerability as "shakiness and harmful unpredictability, as well as the lack of social recognition and appreciation that is associated with this condition" (Offe, 1997: 82), for which the labour contract fails to provide adequate income and social protection. Offe's argument focuses in particular on "precariousness of subsistence", as distinct from mere "precariousness of work", as seen in expanding areas of working poor in the United States and "unprotected workers " in Europe. While it could still be functional to insertion into waged employment, a "citizenship income", however, essentially recognizes the permanent, structural nature of non-employment as the existential condition of large sections of the working-age population.

In this view unemployment is therefore no longer defined exclusively as a problem (Offe, 1997: 93) but as an opportunity to explore different modes of utilizing time. Forms of citizenship income would therefore liberate individuals from waged work and labour market dependency (Dinerstein and Neary, 2002; Holloway, 2002). The impact of citizenship income in "reducing the volume of work" (Offe, 1997: 93) would be strengthened by a concomitant, generalized reduction in average working times, to allow human activities to re-evaluate the dimension of leisure in opposition to work ethic, wage discipline and self-sacrifice.

Debates on decommodified income confirm that social citizenship rights are a terrain of contestation and conflict shaped by the crisis of former regulative ideas based on stable waged employment. They also show the importance of new identities emerging from labour markets restructuring and flexibility as challenges to mere institutional and policy views of social provisions. What these debates ultimately highlight is the need for a dynamic view that sees social citizenship as the product of agency and shifting power relations, rather than exhausting it into state governmentality and the rights-based discourses it enables. The following section will expand on the theme of social citizenship as a contested terrain by focusing in particular on literature dealing with the problems and ambiguities that

shape the work-citizenship nexus in non-Western societies and in the South African case.

1.5 Work and Social Citizenship in Colonial and Postcolonial Modernity

The literature discussed in the previous sections validates an understanding of social citizenship as a "contested field of signification" based on a specific historical trajectory, that of the Western democratic capitalist state. There, contestation revolved around the meanings of contractually free wage labour in relation to demands for social provisions, redistribution, decommodification. The constitution of labour as "free" in Western capitalism, however, is closely related to the forms of domination and unfreedom that European colonialism imposed on its subjected territories. At the same time, colonial expansion was part, in terms of access to land and resources through the subjugation of non-European societies, of responses by European states to their own "social question" (Wehler, 1969). Moreover, the nascent ideology of citizenship in the European nation-state was reinforced by an "imperial" dimension which placed the white working class, together with its own employers, at the top of a racial hierarchy of rights and duties as part of colonialism's mode of knowledge and governmentality (Conklin, 1999; Stepan, 2000; Thompson, 2000). The specific significance of wage labour in defining the "social question" in the colonial and postcolonial world is therefore of decisive importance for the applicability to such contexts of a notion of social citizenship that would otherwise be marked by the Eurocentric bias of its theoretical and historical trajectory.

One of the main social legacies of colonialism is the emergence of wage labour out of authoritarian political systems and coercive social institutions. Wage labour could be the subject and object of citizenship claims in highly contradictory ways. Studies of European colonial states in Africa, in particular, have emphasized how the enforcement and control of labour was a decisive challenge for administrative apparatuses faced with grassroots African resistance to proletarianisation. Economic and political coercion have initially defined forced

labour as the mode of insertion of African workers in colonial modernity, in a context where colonial administrators' aims were to limit "free labour" and the related danger of class consciousness (Cooper, 1989; Brass, 1997). Limited proletarianisation in the urban centers was circumscribed by the maintenance of despotic forms of labour control aided by "traditional" authorities and customary law in the rural areas (Mamdani, 1996). The universalizing discourse of citizenship that was emerging in the European metropolises, therefore, starkly contrasted with colonial modes of government that promoted differentiation and hierarchies in the categorization of colonial subjects' positions and claims (Benton, 2002; Silver, 2003: 20-25). At the same time, coercion was functional at preventing workers' resistance, which expressed itself mainly through strategies of defection and escape (Moulier-Boutang, 1998).

Late colonialism, however, witnessed a renewed importance of the colony as a site of production and investment, with the attendant processes of urbanization and proletarianization. Combined to African resistance to forced labour and demands for more dignified working conditions (Berman, 1991; Isaacman, 1996; Fall, 2002), these processes led to a substantial inversion in European attitudes towards African wage labour. From being considered an undesirable social phenomenon, wage labour became first an unavoidable problem and then the basis for an attempted discourse of social reform based on limited citizenship rights. As a result, work ethic and wage discipline came to be praised as vehicles of a modernization process that remained defined from above, in the absence of effective citizenship and political democracy. The rhetorical and ideological usage of wage labour, which under colonialism remained however defined by rules and institutions of unfreedom, relied therefore on its purported "civilisational" aim, which remained nonetheless compatible with political domination, juridical coercion, paternalism and racism (Stoler, 1985; Prakash, 1990). Coercion, via the imposition of anti-vagrancy laws and prohibitions on change of employment, was ultimately needed to tie workers to their workplace. Loyalty for capitalist labour discipline could not, in fact, be elicited as long as a hegemonic discourse based on effective citizenship rights remained absent (Guha, 1997).

Social reforms in the late African colonial state was exemplified by legislative measures like the introduction of the "Labour Code" in the French colonies during the 1930s and by the 1940 Colonial Welfare and Development Act in the British ones. These tried to regulate and control the formation of African working classes in ways that were not merely coercive, but which tried to provide social protections akin to developing notions of "fair labour standards" to promote work ethic and responsibility. In this way it was hoped that new legitimacy could be provided to the wage form to overcome Africans' recalcitrance and resistance to proletarianisation. The "stabilization" of the African urban population within wage relations was central in the nascent discourse of "development" (Escobar, 1994) as the modern version of Europe's "civilizing mission". Development posed moral and ethical requirements on its subjects in the drive to self-sustained economic growth based on endogenous production.

Whereas the early colonial state had deprecated workers' escape from rural forced labour as a sign of uprootedness, anomie and abandonment of traditional ways of life, the late colonial discourse produced a mythical narrative of modernity based on the linkage between wage labour and urbanization (Ferguson, 1999). According to Cooper (1996: 14), colonial officials

> *wanted* Africa to have a working class, to separate an identifiable group of people from the backwardness of rural Africa (…) and over time make them into a predictable and productive collectivity.

It is therefore in colonial times that the "promise" of wage labour in terms of modernization and emancipation, which was due to leave a profound imprint on the "developmentalist" discourse of post-colonial independent states, was first elaborated.

These shifts in discursive and policy emphases are evident in late colonial policy discourse. For the 1933 Davis (1933: 52) commission of inquiry into Zambian copper mining, minework represented for the "native" the "breakdown of his inertia, isolation, lack of ambition and contentment with traditional life". Wage labour was here conceptualized as the harbinger of European notions of

citizenry premised upon "the true inwardness of the White man's moral system" (Davis, 1933: 126). That moral system was then summarized as connecting work ethic and scientific knowledge as modes of naturalization of society:

> Labour in industry, on the mines and more especially on the farms of local White settlers, together with the White man's system of medicine and hygiene, has taught the Native something of the consistency and regularity of the laws of Nature, and thus indirectly, but effectively, is undermining the former magical and superstitious practices of village life (Davis, 1933: 126).

In Mamdani's influential analysis, wage labour discipline and guarantees are part of the establishment of a "bifurcated" mode of citizenship, whereby urbanized Africans acquired individual rights and obligations, prelude to postcolonial citizenship and whereby rural residents remained in a status of "subjects", coerced into unfree labour and ruled through customary law by "traditional" authorities.

It is to be noticed, however, that the citizenship discourse of the late colonial state mirrored and reproduced the contradictions already noticed in the ideologies of social citizenship in Europe. In fact, the limited extension of social rights, despite the fact that they were propagated in the name of universalist values, remained functional to categorising, dividing and hierarchizing subject populations, reproducing for a minority work ethic and wage discipline as historical baggage of "modernity". At the same time the juridical constructs with which colonial governmentality had tried to define wage labour as a stabilized "modern" urban reality in opposition to "traditional" rural society were actively challenged and subverted from below. Uncontrolled dynamics of migration led to the growth of urban populations of "squatters" and casual, informal, self-employed workers in search of opportunities but reluctant to be disciplined under permanent wage relations, and therefore easily categorized under the stereotype of "dangerous classes".

Much historical research has shown how the articulation from below of flexible labour strategies represented a major problem of social control for the hierarchical order theorized by the colonial state (Cooper, 1987; Sikainga, 1996; Etoughé-Efé, 2000; Fanthorpe, 2001; Burton, 2005). As Simone (2004) remarks,

the ultimate inability of the African urban form, initially conceived for the purpose of political and administrative domination, to "orderly" control the reproduction of wage labour greatly facilitated the "repositioning" of residents' life strategies across a plurality of practices. Wage labour provided, therefore, only one of many forms of social reproduction and ways of "doing things". "Undisciplined" practices of social reproduction profoundly affected the discourse and imagery of trade union organizing as well. Studies of African and "third world" labour movements show indeed that the wage relation shaped specific worker discourses of citizenship and solidarity to which work provided the foundation of a social and moral order imbued with modernizing ideals and a strong sense of masculinity (Fernandes, 1997; Lindsay, 2003). As Carolyn Brown (2003) argues, colonial production regimes came to resemble metropolitan ones, which facilitated the circulation of ideas of fairness at work premised on the male breadwinners' family responsibilities. At the same time, however, racialised inequalities that symbolically categorized Africans as "labourers", rather than "working men" endowed with legitimate citizenship claims, left worker strategies open to the influence of extra-workplace identities, norms and demands. Higginson (1989) underlines how the concept of "wage" as perceived by Congolese miners was ridden with ambiguities, coming to symbolize at the same time an inherently evil form of "barren wealth" and a terrain of contestation for a more dignified life.

The interplay between "imperial" working class formation and local specificities in struggles and mobilization ultimately provides a decisive criticism to the idea of a linear process of African "proletarianisation" leading to the pre-eminence of class consciousness in determining workers' demands. Instead, as Chakrabarty (1988, 2000) shows, workers exploited the contradictions between citizenship ideals and work practices – which were inherent to the "translation" of capitalist relations into local contexts -- by drawing from multiple, often contradictory, sources of consciousness to stake their claims. Far from accepting the citizenship discourse proposed by the colonial state and westernized elites as an unproblematic goal, the subaltern have creatively appropriated and re-elaborated it, contesting from below its modes of signification (Perry, 1999;

Young, 2001). This point, which characterizes the "postcolonial studies" approach, underlines that "free" wage labour and the working class act mainly as capital's normative ideas, "imaginary projects" (Cooper, 1996: 14) and "disciplinary abstractions". Their realization, however, far from mechanically leading to radically new collective identities, is actively resisted by practices that combine citizenship claims with local ethnic, religious and community affiliations (Brandell, 1993; Guy and Thabane, 1993).

Emphasising the importance of grassroots practices, Frederick Cooper (2005) convincingly refutes Mamdani's "bifurcated citizenship" argument by showing how the contradictions of colonialism's social reform agenda, which were heightened by political despotism and lack of citizenship rights, enabled African urban and rural strata alike to use the discourse of social reform to claim political and civil rights. Cooper's notion of citizenship discourse as "claim making" shows how policies of social control and political subjectivation of the colonial and post-colonial state were recursively shaped by agency and struggles from below. The value of this approach, which eschews top-down narratives of "development" and "nation building" as much as an unproblematic idealization of grassroots spontaneity, resides in the fact that it specifically focuses on the relevance of wage labour as a protagonist of colonial and postcolonial modernity in the explanation of Africa's socio-political development. The relations between wage labour and citizenship discourses are usually neglected in African studies due to numerical limits of the formal waged population, its lack of organized power, or its subordination to nationalist agendas. Cooper (1996), instead, identifies the nexus between waged work and citizenship as a crucial terrain of contestation around which the colonial project tried to move beyond coercion and gain legitimation by using "free" labour and scientific knowledge. Reorientations in colonial policies were however influenced by the self-organisation and struggle of emerging African unions. In the process these latter used institutional spaces and the contradictions of colonial citizenship discourse – namely the gap between universal civilizing rhetoric and the practice of political authoritarianism -- to politicize their claims in ways that in the final analysis proved incompatible with the permanence of colonial domination.

The idea of "colonial welfare" provided a further terrain of contestation in the linkage that it tried to establish between wage labour and social protection. Based on a combination of economic development and urban stabilization, colonial welfare policies represented the first attempt to transfer to subjugated societies the social citizenship discourse that was emerging in the metropolis (Lewis, 2000). Limited resources, lack of political legitimacy and a predominant focus on the stabilization of "respectable" urbanized wage labour (Scarnecchia, 2000) made colonial welfare a mechanism for social control substantially deprived of decommodifying or redistributive ambitions. As an alternative, it rather emphasized "community development", prescriptions of moral behaviour, self-help and the promotion of work ethic (Lewis, 2000; Jebb, 2002; Lambert and Lester, 2004; Eckert, 2004). Limited social services, healthcare provisions and family allowances were tightly attached to waged employment (Cooper, 1989: 745). At the same time, however, the associational life encouraged by colonial welfare policies, and the limited amount of services delivered, eventually became in many cases contested sites of working class organization and politicization (Lewis, 2000: 104-105; Noyoo, 2000).

African transitions towards postcolonial independent nation-states promised to liberate wage labour from the grip of political despotism. At the ideological, administrative and juridical levels, however, the continuities with the colonial past are significant. The developmentalist ideology of the late colonial state was adopted by new independent governments and refashioned to serve the purpose of nation-building. To some extent state-driven development policies and infrastructural investment provided working class organizations with opportunities for expansion and solidarity (Breman, 1999; Koo, 2001; Sikainga, 2002). At the same time, however, the nationalist-developmentalist discourse largely remained the precinct of political elites that used it to impose unity over and above different social interests, retaining a strong suspicion for autonomous social subjects that could make claims (Chatterjee, 1994; Cooper, 1996).

Conversely, scarcity of resources and the limited numbers of the waged working population greatly constrained the extent and coverage of post-colonial social assistance and social security policies. Indeed, administrators trained in the

"self-help", work ethic and community development discourse of the former colonial state and international organizations, did not particularly emphasise redistribution and decommodification (De Mesa and Montecinos, 1999; Adejumobi, 2001; Kurtz, 2002). Rather, citizenship discourses in developmental regimes often reinforced social hierarchies whereby, as it has been observed in the Brazilian case (Goirand, 2003: 230), "citizens were those who could be found in one of the jobs recognized and defined by the law", while informal workers were considered "pre-citizens" and the poor "non-citizens". Democratic themes were, on the other hand, used to legitimize technocratic policy-making and enforce social discipline and moderation, rather than enabling arenas of contestation over social policies (Moore, 1995; Abrahamsen, 2000). As Ferguson (1994: 256) observes:

> By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of 'development' is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized (…).

According to Cooper (1989: 758-759) decolonisation was the result of the inability of the colonial state to deal with its "social question" through a "self-reproducing working class" that could be the basis of productivity deals and social citizenship arrangements. Decolonization, therefore, removed the West from "the social consequences of economic processes" (Cooper, 1989: 758). Dealing with these consequences were left to weak institutions and minimal state intervention. From the 1970s onwards concepts like "wage moderation", "basic needs" and "safety nets" became fashionable and useful for postcolonial elites which followed the advice of the ILO, the IMF and the World Bank. Alternative approaches focused on increasing "capabilities" (Nussbaum, 2000; Dreze and Sen, 2002) privilege public intervention especially in health and education seen as ways, within the formal and informal economy, to contain a culture of fixed "entitlements" as protections from risk.

The developmentalist discourse coupled with reduced social spending allowed postcolonial governments to contain and thwart the demands for social

provisions and quality of life that the struggles against colonialism had brought to the fore. Moreover, the downscaling of state social policy was justified by the articulation between formal systems of social security and local "informal" welfare networks based on micro-credit, small scale health projects, community and kin relations of reciprocity and income pooling (Matsetela et al., 1980; D'Haeseleer and Berghman, 2003). As David Webster (1984) noticed, however, the "traditionalist" emphasis often placed on informal welfare belies their interconnectedness with "modern" social dynamics like rising joblessness, retrenchments and downsizing in the "formal" economy. Under 1980s and 1990s structural adjustment policies, self-help was moreover functional to a rhetoric of entrepreneurship and civil society participation that justified further social spending cutbacks.

Finally, the social citizenship discourse of independent African states heavily relied on nationalist mythologies, which Balandier (1967) quite poignantly calls "a new deal of the emotions", that complemented approaches to the "social question" derived from Western knowledge and modes of governmentality. As Cooper (1996: 5) summarises it, Africa's "imported future", based on European expert's views of waged labour as a central tool of social inclusion, prevailed over the "observed present" that made the waged working class a frail, complex and highly contradictory concept. Coronil (1997) argues that the nationalist-developmentalist project was specifically powerful precisely because it "magically" combined a modernizing scientific discourse of control over nature with the quasi-religious appeal of "the nation" as embodied in the ability of its leaders to "deliver". Goswami (2004) and Mbembe (2001) add that nationalism's view of a homogenous national body was also remarkably capable to accommodate social multiplicity and unevenness, also through rhetoric that, for the first time, celebrated the dignity, desires and self-activity of the "poorest of the poor".

As a result, trade unions and working class politics were caught in a tension between siding with nationalist regimes and assume "responsibility for a well-disciplined and productive labor force" (Stoler, 1985: 12; Adesina, 1992), or follow the path inaugurated under colonialism to politicize wage issues and turn

them into broader demands for change supported by community solidarity (Cohen, 1980; Von Freyhold, 1987; Herold, 1994; Koo, 2001). Contributing to the vulnerability of labour movements is also the fact that state ideologies often present union members as a relatively privileged minority due to their access to a monetary wage, which implies additional requests for discipline and self-sacrifice in the name of national development.

In the final analysis, as Cooper (1989) observes, post-coloniality accomplished the colonial utopia of "free labour" regulated by "free market" relations on a global level, but within the political framework of authoritarian states that eschewed redistribution and social equality. The postcolonial link between work and social citizenship used therefore wage labour as a device for discipline and social control, often aided by corporatist institutions (Collier and Collier, 1991; Fashoyin, 1990; Weyland, 1996; Heller, 1999). At the same time, governmental practices enforced all kinds of gender, class, regional, linguistic and ethnic hierarchies (Solinger, 1999; Davila, 2003) while paying homage to a universalist discourse of citizenship, social cohesion and national solidarity.

Recent analyses on the crisis of postcolonial developmentalism and nation-state sovereignty under globalisation and neoliberal structural adjustments have addressed the extent to which commodification and the decline in formal employment affect the work-social citizenship nexus. Ian Gough (2003) suggests that "decommodification" is a useless concept in evaluating social policies in developing countries, since social and labour relations are here commodified only to a limited extent in the first place. Commodification, however, is not a merely economic concept, it rather reveals underlying power relations related with the subordination of everyday livelihoods to the commodity form and wage discipline. Many analyses of neo-liberalising Africa recognize, therefore, that structural adjustment programmes have led to increasing income insecurity, decline of waged employment, increasing commodification due to the introduction of user payments for services, informalisation of work leading to multiple occupations and other "self-exploitation" strategies, and reliance on family networks as survivalist alternatives to the state's inability to provide social goods (Paratian and Dasgupta, 2004). Conversely, neoliberal transitions in

developing countries have particularly weakened labour movements, especially in those cases where trade unions retained strong links with nationalist regimes that now use their political influence to justify restructuring, retrenchments and wage cuts. These processes have, moreover, contributed to labour market fragmentation and precariousness, which have led to de-unionisation and further erosions of labour's ability to speak on behalf of broader citizenship demands (Ecthemendy, 2001; Cocco, 2001).

Social movements and struggles of the poor are often seen as articulating defensive strategies mainly by negotiating and re-evaluating the progressive, transformative content of the nationalist project itself (Cheah, 2003). In doing so, poor peoples' movements can exploit the contradictions between the developmentalist promise of social emancipation and its practice of marginalization of the jobless, in order to reclaim a public sphere of rights and powers that transcend institutional codifications (Goirand, 2003; Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998). As Shivji (1999) argues, political authoritarianism in the developmental state reflects an inability to legitimize a universalist rights-based discourse, which therefore becomes a powerful weapon of opposition. According to Mbembe (2001), the African state's institutional weakness in constructing social subjects makes "power" a diffuse, non-institutionalised social construct operating through the everyday overlap of "desires, passions and fantasies" that provide a vocabulary for domination and resistance. The proliferation of multiple, unassimilable social practices and discourses as the "nonhegemonic limit to the hegemonic thought" (Williams, 2002: 11) of the nation as coherent, undifferentiated unity ultimately makes the postcolonial signification of "wage labour" and "citizenship" a terrain of contestation.

Over the past decade, scholarly debates have started locating the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa within the broader African postcolonial context (Mamdani, 1996: 218-284). This shift has challenged "exceptionalist" views of South African development based, among other things, on the country's high level of industrialization and the size and importance of its industrial working class. Conversely, sociological studies of the crisis and collapse of apartheid have underlined the relevance of black workers' struggles, in

alliance with civil society organizations and social movements, to shape demands and languages of citizenship. Gay Seidman (1994) shows, in particular, how the authoritarianism of the racist state facilitated a process of politicization of workplace-based, wage-related struggles. These eventually evolved towards claims and demands for civil, political and social citizenship as integral to the image of a new democracy. The politicization of demands arising from the encounter between labour and social opposition to apartheid is captured in the concept, discussed in Chapter 3, of "social movement unionism" (Lambert and Webster, 1988; Seidman, 1994; Von Holdt, 2002). This expression signifies the ability of waged workers to advance political liberation by transcending the boundaries of production and the wage relation. In fact, the relevance of issues of reproduction and quality of life for South African labour struggles (Beittel, 1992) was translated into demands for decommodified social provisions, especially in the sphere of housing, transport, municipal services and employer-subsidised benefits.

Halisi (1999: 46) argues that labour's attitude to nationalist politics in South Africa was not characterized by mere "deference and dominance", but it was an issue of contestation within the labour movement itself over how to structure a discourse of citizenship that remained multilayered and stratified due to the ways in which racial domination and class oppression were experienced as distinct, but deeply connected and mutually reinforcing realities.

Labour movement's importance as opponent to apartheid and, in alliance with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) after the 1994 democratic elections, as an actor in societal bargaining and policy-making institutions, also impacted on the state's mode to deal with South Africa's "social question". Apartheid governmentality embodied specific forms of "rule of experts" whereby technical expertise and scientific discourse constituted social subjects and social problems as passive objects of institutional power and knowledge (Ashforth, 1990). The process of post-1990 negotiated democratization, however, interrogated the capacity of the new state form to formulate policies through the intermediation of conflicting social interests (Adam, Moodley and van Zyl Slabbert, 1997; Webster and Buhlungu, 1998; Maree, 1998; Adler and Webster,

1999). Radical critics (Bond, 1999; Marais, 2001) argue, however, that the possibilities for societal bargaining to achieve meaningful policies of redistribution and decommodification are severely constrained by the ANC government's "non negotiable" adoption of a neoliberal, market-based framework to economic growth and social development.

Sampie Terreblanche (2002: 38) contends that South African democratization coincided with a "reshuffling" of political and economic power relations that created a new "distributional" coalition of the old white and the new black elites. Gumede (2005) adds that, especially with the rise of Thabo Mbeki to power in 1999, the predominance of elite-based macroeconomic orthodoxy has led to a reassertion of technocratic discourse and the foreclosure of meaningful spaces of political debate, mirroring the concentration of power at the executive level. At the same time, technocratic and expert-driven policy making reveals continuities with the past in presenting the poor as undifferentiated, unwilling carriers of a social disease that, without questioning broader social power relations, requires targeted policies, morals, knowledge and forms of self-discipline (Kistner, 2003). To confirm the already noticed ambiguities in rights-based discourse, therefore, the universal entitlements contained in the post-apartheid Constitution define, as Chipkin (2003) puts it, only citizens "in right", which to become citizens "in practice", actually capable of claiming rights, have to undergo through a disciplining process that leads to duties and responsibilities based on ethics of self-sufficiency and productive contribution to society.

Neoliberalism and technocratic policy-making have led for some analysts (Kalati and Manor, 1999; Buhlungu, 2002; Zuern, 2004) to a "depoliticisation" of social inequality concomitant with civil society "demobilization" in a context of widespread poverty, rampant HIV-AIDS epidemics and spiraling unemployment. These developments connect the ANC government to the contradictions in post-colonial nationalist and developmentalist projects (Jensen, 2001). In particular a gap is often observed between the promise for greater equality and the actual disempowerment and marginalisation of its intended beneficiaries:

> In South Africa (…) there is no immediate sense among elites that social and political unrest poses threats. Politics, *for the present*, has

> demobilized the poor – or rather it has mobilized them for electoral purposes while containing pressures for social transformation. But transformation has been promised – indeed, oversold – by the ANC. That party therefore finds itself playing incompatible roles, simultaneously promising transformation and containing pressure for transformation while it seeks to tackle poverty through the pursuit of economic growth (Kalati and Manor, 1999: 118).

Scholarly debates on South Africa's "social question", which is generally defined in terms of poverty, inequality and unemployment, bring to the fore the relevance of interactions between wage labour and decommodification in defining the post-apartheid social citizenship arrangement. While Chapter 3 discusses this aspect in detail, two broad theoretical perspectives dealing with it are worth being introduced here. On one hand there are analyses that represent poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa in substantially dualistic terms. Here, the lack of social inclusion is identified with unemployment and underemployment while, conversely, labour market participation and access to waged employment are seen as the main avenues for social insertion. Within this perspective, some authors (May, 2000) recognize the relevance of social transfers as specific forms of support for the long term unemployed. Even if they do not elaborate on the theme of decommodification, they prioritize cash transfers over labour market policies and job creation.

Other authors (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a, 1997b, 2001a, 2001b; Terreblanche, 1998a; Nattrass, 2000; Van der Berg, 2001b; Seekings and Nattrass, 2002; Seekings, 2000b and 2003b) argue that the dualistic nature of South African society means that employment-based divides prevail over other forms of social polarization. For Nicoli Nattrass and Jeremy Seekings, in particular, post-apartheid social inequality is changing from being based on race to being determined by class. The meaning of "class" in their analysis is defined by income and status differential, rather than by relations to the means of production. Therefore the main class divide they focus on is between "upper-middle classes", which include the formally employed, and "the poor", unemployed and underemployed:

> The excluded are no longer defined in racial terms, although almost all are black. Now, the excluded are the unemployed. The new faulty

> line in the labour markets and in the provision of welfare is between those citizens with employment and the many without (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a: 464).

Therefore, they continue, "the urban industrial working class does not represent the poor (…). Only a small proportion of South Africa's poor sell their labour power at all" (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a: 466).

Chapters 6 and 7 of this work refute these claims on empirical grounds. For the moment, it is worth examining their implications in terms of social citizenship discourse. Nattrass and Seekings in fact recognize that historically social security in South Africa has been strictly linked to individual labour market positions, determining wide areas of exclusion for the long-term unemployed to the point that "social citizenship (…) exists in only a minimal form in South Africa" (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a). Moreover, the commodifying effect of this situation is amplified by the fact that most public spending in South Africa is addressed to education and training, sectors with a direct labour market orientation. Their conclusion is that social security contributes therefore to define the waged working class as a "semi-privileged" (Seekings and Nattrass, 2002: 4) social layer. Moreover, high unionization and collective bargaining allegedly reinforce the position of waged workers at the cost of making job creation exceedingly expensive, worsening the conditions of the poor. Therefore, the opposition between workers and unemployed replaces in this scenario the antagonism between labour and capital as the main determinant of class conflict.

Instead of suggesting, as a solution to social inequalities, measures of redistribution to extend universal decommodified social provisions to the poor, however, Nattrass and Seekings advocate public spending constraints and the creation of conditions favourable to the expansion of low-wage occupations. For them state action should be reorientated towards facilitating the poor's sale of their labour power, also through the relaxation of collective bargaining regulations for small and medium enterprises (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997b; Nattrass, 2000). Employment growth and wage discipline, even at the most exploitative conditions, are therefore asserted as the sole vehicle for social citizenship. The alternative of providing decommodified services and income, they conclude, "is not an option"

(Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a: 475). Finally, after identifying working class wages and protections as the main cause of poverty in South Africa, Nattrass and Seekings suggest that waged workers should pay to improve the poor's living standards, with the explicit aims of containing redistributive policies and minimising the obligations of the socio-economic elites. Despite their emphasis on egalitarianism and the need of the "very poor", Nattrass and Seekings' conclusion is that South Africa can only afford a loose definition of social citizenship, made coincidental with a "labour absorbing growth path" (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997b) that praises the inclusive potential of employment at whatever condition:

> The best that a labour-surplus economy such as SA can aspire to is an American-style welfare state regime with a very inegalitarian labour market, where the state provides minimal and stringently means-tested public welfare (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997a: 476).

It is also to be noticed how this line of argument, based on presenting the curtailment of public social provisions as a compassionate act towards the poor, legitimizes itself through a paternalistic celebration of the poor's pragmatism, patience and moderation. These are seen as conducive to accepting work discipline at extremely low wages, in opposition to workers' "selfish preference for higher wages", presented as conservative and anti-poor (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001a).

Rejecting notions of a polarized socio-economic dualism in post-apartheid society (Lund, 2002), a different perspective regards the labour market, and the proliferation of low-wage jobs, as part of the problem of poverty and inequality, rather than unproblematically regarding it as its main solution. These views are therefore also skeptical of the centrality of economic growth in enforcing among the poor patience and discipline in making social citizenship claims (Meth, 2003a; Meth and Dias, 2004). Moreover, they also argue that dualistic discourses define "poverty" as a decontextualised object of policy interventions, constructed in moral-behavioural terms under the pretext of "scientific" statistical measuring. The dualism thesis, therefore, elides the need for interventions at the level of structured distribution of social resources and ends up placing the blame for social

dislocation exclusively on the poor and the workers, upon which the related sacrifices also fall (Ballard, 2004).

Proponents of the concept of "chronic poverty" (Aliber, 2003; Du Toit, 2004b) argue that poverty is a product of deprivation along a set of interrelated dimensions (income, assets, capabilities) which are mutually reinforcing. Rather than seeing "inclusion" and "exclusion" as the opposite polarities of a dualistic framework, they look at the borders between them as blurring and overlapping. In this sense, "exclusion" is not merely coincidental with lack of a formal waged employment, but it also includes working poor whose low wage jobs do not allow access to incomes above mere survival. Therefore, this current considers exclusion as a subaltern, precarious, vulnerable form of inclusion, rather than normatively separating the two. Not only is the creation of low wage employment an ineffective way to address poverty and expand social citizenship, but wage labour is here explicitly criticized as a factor reproducing deprivation through a gradual decoupling of "wage" and income".

Policy recommendations that follow from this line of inquiry refuse using targeted "social safety nets" as an alternative to redistribution, and advocate the introduction of cash transfers and other forms of decommodified income independently from the employment status of the recipients (Meth, 2003b; Samson et al. 2004). Social provisions are therefore to a large extent seen here as protection from, rather than inducement towards, the labour market.

The approaches summarized above are undoubtedly useful to problematise the position of wage labour in relation to social citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, beyond mere ideological polarizations and equivalences that see the formally employed as "privileged" *tout court* and as the oppressors of the unemployed and informally employed poor. Views that look at "chronic poverty" and working poverty, however, still tend to regard decommodified income transfers as temporary relief measures (Meth, 2003b) or "developmental" interventions enabling labour market participation (Samson et al., 2004). Therefore they do not go as far as suggesting income decommodification as a systematic response to a structural crisis of waged employment and as a vehicle for a dignified life. In conclusion, it is therefore important to indicate that South

Africa's intellectual consensus reveals a marked preference for wage labour centrality and discipline as modes of social inclusion. Different opinions exist, however, as to the arguable extent and role of decommodified social provisions. Chapter 3 and, especially, Chapter 8 will develop these issues by relating them to the emerging social policy discourse of post-apartheid democracy and its internal contestations.

1.6 Conclusion

Theories and debates analysed in this chapter show that the concept of social citizenship is deeply affected by the contradictions and contestations shaping the "social" it tries to regulate. Struggles around wage labour in relation to social provisions and entitlements are a crucial factor from this point of view. At the same time, the reconfiguration and diversification in the meanings of "wage labour" also reshape its contradictory interactions with social subjects, claims and state governmentality responses.

For these reason, a concept of social citizenship that relies on formal enunciations, institutional interventions and constitutional codifications of rights is seriously inadequate and in need of a more dynamic, complex understanding. This chapter supports a notion of social citizenship as produced by contestations between meanings and claims from below and state attempts at regulating them within juridical, ethical and disciplinary forms. The universalist discourse of rights is in this process "stretched" by new social claims and reveals its functionality to social inequality. Therefore, social citizenship can be seen as a *movement* to advance non-market based social provisions within, outside or against state institutionality.

Social citizenship is a terrain of contestation not only in terms of *content* of social policies and programmes, as for example in debates over the relationship between social insurance and social assistance, the role of redistribution, the advisability of selective or universal approaches. It is also, and especially, a field of contested signification over the *meanings* of social rights. The importance of

wage labour in this regard resides in the fact that within state governmentality it acts as a moral-behavioural construct, an indication of "virtuous" political belonging, a mode to categorise "good" and "bad" citizens. In the postcolonial world, the disciplinary impact of wage labour is also reinforced by its location within elite discourses of "development" and "nation building". Conversely, supporters of decommodified forms of social "income" as distinct and separate from monetary "wage" tend to signify social citizenship as not primarily depending on wage labour and its related forms of discipline and control. These debates seem of particular importance in contexts where, in the North and the South alike, work is being transformed in ways that do not seem to promote social inclusion and dignified jobs. The urgency of debating the work-citizenship nexus, therefore, arises directly from the inability of wage labour to fulfill its own promises of social emancipation.

CHAPTER 2

Work and Social Citizenship in South Africa: From the Racial State to National Liberation

2.1 Introduction

The historical trajectory of wage labour and its relations to social policy in African colonial and postcolonial modernity surfaced in peculiar forms in the South African case, which have alerted scholars to the specificities related to this country's processes of working-class formation. In particular, institutionalized racial segregation and coercive labour control, in a context of lack of political citizenship rights, have shaped state policies of reproduction and stabilization of the black working class well after the wave of decolonization that started sweeping the continent in the 1960s. While gradually accepting, and trying to control, African working class urbanization, apartheid's labour and spatial policies defined social engineering interventions that deferred the establishment of a formally "free" wage labour system. The white minority governments' failure in this regard mirror, therefore, the quandary of labour reforms in African colonial states as mentioned in the previous chapter. In the final analysis, the persistent limitations political citizenship for the majority in South Africa made it impossible to legitimise changes from above in workplace and wage relations.

The dilemma of the labour and urban reforms introduced in the 1970s was precisely that they were not able to stem a tide of working class militancy that was on the verge of using its newly gained strength in the workplace to demand a more far-reaching political and social change. As a result of the permanence of an illegitimate racialised political order, wage labour was ultimately unable to provide the basis for a discipline based on work ethic. To this outcome also contributed the fact that linkages between waged work and social citizenship rights in South Africa have always been historically weak due to residual and

selective social welfare and policy models in operation also for the politically enfranchised white minority. Wage labour as a terrain of access to social rights and citizenship in South Africa was therefore constrained both by the differential forms of reproduction of labour along racial lines, and by commodified social services that eschewed universalist approaches. The conjunction of such factors explains a reality in which, as Trapido (1971: 313) put it, "South Africa has not incorporated the major part of its working class into its social and political institutions", despite its significant levels of industrialization, which made the task far more urgent for its political elites than what it was in the rest of the continent.

The incorporation of strata of black working class became, indeed, evident as a priority in the "insider" *vs* "outsider" policy discourse that characterized late apartheid reforms, but it ultimately floundered in the face of renewed black worker insurgency. It was precisely the resumption of working class activism and organization during the 1970s that placed the linkage between work and citizenship rights at the centre of the agenda of opposition to the racial state. The struggles of the resurgent black independent trade unions articulated demands which, faced with the limitations of the workplace as a site of contestation, were gradually orientated towards broad social and political change, especially once they connected with the social movements and township insurgencies of the 1980s. Emerged from a strong emphasis on workplace conditions and improvements within the wage relation, the struggles of South Africa's black working class eventually developed a discourse of citizenship based on the social and political rights that were expected in a future democratic society. The demand for social citizenship, inclusion and equality, in particular, related to wage labour in complex ways: on one hand wage labour was the foundation of struggles for social citizenship rights, on the other hand the extension of social rights required the transcendence of the workplace and a refusal of confining the realization of such rights to the wage relation. While wage labour enabled a new discourse of universal social citizenship rights, the exclusive reliance on struggles waged within the wage relation came to be seen as increasingly inadequate to attain such rights.

The linkage between wage labour and a universalist discourse of socio-political rights proved ultimately unmanageable for an apartheid state whose attempts to "liberalise" labour regulation were defeated by the ultimately intractable contradiction produced by its lack of political legitimacy. The post-1994 ANC government, conversely, enjoyed a massive legitimacy as the basis for its own policies of transition to formally "free" labour relations. The next chapter will deal with how the new dispensation responded to the socio-economic expectations raised by the black working class in the struggle against apartheid. This one specifically emphasizes linkages between wage labour and struggles for social citizenship rights, and introduces the ways in which such links are challenged by a transition that combines political democratization and macroeconomic liberalization.

2.2 "Schooling Bodies to Hard Work": Commodification, Work Ethic and Wage Labour Discipline in the Formation of a Racialised Welfare System

The development of an industrial capitalist economy in South Africa was marked by unevenness and asymmetries that shaped the pace and dynamics of formation of the black waged working class, while reinforcing patterns of racial inequality in the access to welfare and social security. The delayed, slow and incomplete expansion of mass production, in particular, has been emphasized as the result of the constraints imposed on domestic capital formation by limited and racially segmented markets. Domestic demand was shaped by institutional and policy interventions based on racialised labour market regulations that confined black workers to a subordinate, poorly remunerated, socially vulnerable position. At the same time, a racialised system of welfare provision and urban residential rights largely confined redistributive policies to the white population, thereby placing further constraints on linkages between mass production and mass consumption that supported the "social contract" between the state and the industrial working class in mature "Fordist" experiments (Lipietz, 1987; Hall, 1988; Marglin and Schor, 1993**).** Conversely, the permanence in South Africa of a "racial", relatively

undeveloped, form of Fordism (Gelb, 1991; Fine and Rustomjee, 1996) facilitated the resilience of modalities of production that privileged small scale, made-to-order and "jobbing" production over the large factory (Webster, 1985; Kraak, 1987; Black and Stanwix, 1987; Verhoef, 1998), an element that will play an important role in the discussion of changes in wage labour in my East Rand case studies.

In early analyses (O'Meara, 1983; Lewis, 1984), a significant process of African proletarianisation took place starting from the 1930s-1940s based on the mechanization and deskilling of production processes. Peter Alexander (2000) convincingly responds that the African workers' entry in manufacturing waged employment was slow, uneven, limited by small capital formation and greatly facilitated by contingent factors like the expansion of industrial production during World War II. The most important avenue to African proletarianization was, instead, provided until the middle of the twentieth century by cheap, migrant labour in the mining and agricultural sectors, with particularly coercive forms of labour recruitment and exploitation (Legassick, 1974b; Lacey, 1981; Cruch, Jeeves and Yudelman, 1991). Here, social isolation hampered the development of trade unionism and of a discourse of rights based on wage labour.

In this perspective, migrancy and different demands for labour by various capitalist sectors stratified the South African working class not only along racial lines, but also according to locality, juridical forms and gender. At the same time, this view allows to explain diversified entrepreneurial strategies, and the preference by most mechanized, semi-skilled manufacturing sectors for the stabilization of a limited portion of the African working class within the urban waged economy. The diversification in capitalist strategies connects at the same time with the important role played under "import substitution industrialization" (Kaplan, 1976; Nattrass, 1981; Archer, 1989) by a "paternalist" ideology (Bozzoli, 1985; Duncan, 1995) that, in accordance with a typical theme in the colonial discourse of labour reform, saw welfare policies as tools to stratify and divide the African population.

In this regard, therefore, the development of social policies under successive forms of racial state cannot be simply defined as functional to the establishment of

a "racialised welfare", entirely finalized at strengthening colour divides and essentially based on absolutely separate and incompatible principles for blacks and whites. The South African case, rather, confirms conclusions in the literature on "colonial welfare" discussed in Chapter 1, which emphasise how colonial states in Africa combined the establishment of racialised hierarchies with a discourse of selective and subordinate inclusion of limited strata of the subject populations within urban settings. Therefore, social and welfare policies acted not only to define racial boundaries for the access to social provisions, but they also defined a shifting, mobile area of subaltern inclusion within wage labour of portions of the colonized societies. In this sense, the development of modern social policies during the twentieth century updated and reformulated solutions to a long-standing problem facing the South African state, that of controlling the proletarianisation of the African population by physically and juridically binding it to the specific requirements of different types of production (Etherington, 1979; Harries, 1987[4]).

Despite the fact that such "portions" of African wage labour lived under specifically oppressive forms of political domination, denial of rights and socio-economic exploitation, the social policy ideologies addressed to them did not fundamentally differ from those aimed at the white working class. The two most important, and interrelated, components underpinning social welfare discourse throughout wage labour formation in South Africa were provided by work ethic and commodification. The former had been identified since the earliest stages of capitalist development as a terrain of contestation, for example over the meaning of working time and the length of the working day (Atkins, 1988, 1994), or with regard to Africans' attempt to resist wage labour through independent agricultural production (Bundy, 1988; Hemson, 1995). Commodification, instead, took the form of an enduring institutional aversion to state-driven redistributive policies of social provisions (Terreblanche, 2002). The 1932 Native Economic Commission (Holloway Commission) provided the most accurate systematization of the policy

[4] Harries in particular shows how since the early development of capitalism in the Nineteenth century policies like the "pass laws" were not aimed at controlling the pace and of African proletarianisation, but they were aimed at enforcing wage labour discipline by coercively linking workers to specific production processes.

problems surrounding the reproduction of an African waged proletariat within differential labour processes and regimes. A mix of inducements and coercion was designed to bind African workers to their work, which relied heavily on moral discourse rather than higher wages, which could shift fluxes of labour away from mines and farms and towards the cities. In the words of the Commission:

> When the raw Native has enough for his wants he stops working and enjoys his leisure (…). He must learn to school his body to hard work, which is not only a condition for his advance in civilization, but of his final survival in a civilized environment" (cit. in Ashforth, 1990: 84-85)

The conjunction of work ethic and commodification, therefore, defined wage labour not only as a juridical and economic status, but also as a disciplinary mechanism at the level of psychology and morality, based on which social insertion depends essentially on individual industriousness and effort. At the same time, however, it should be emphasized that social welfare under apartheid *was* a set of policies and institutions aimed primarily, albeit not exclusively, at reinforcing racial hierarchies. Therefore the discourse of social insertion based on work ethic and commodification defined a set of social provisions that for most of the twentieth century privileged specifically the white population (Grundlingh, 1999). In this sense, Alexander's (2000) argument overestimates the potentials for non-racial class solidarity by underestimating the role of welfare and social security policies in dividing South African workers along racial lines.

Conversely, many recent analyses have emphasized the modes of operation of the linkage between work ethic and commodification in the development of "whites only" social security policies during Segregation and Apartheid. The crucial role played by commodified access to social provisions underlines that the confinement of redistributive policies to residual and targeted interventions is a constant in the development of welfare and social security policies in South Africa. According to Hermann Giliomee (1992) "The white elite did not define poverty in terms of physical or economic data, but relationally – how a white person by virtue of being white *ought* to live in comparison to non-whites". The early development of social welfare legislation in South Africa was addressed at

"poor whites", predominantly Afrikaner, who rapidly urbanised during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Attempts to design policies for this group, continues Giliomee, were influenced by neoclassical theories advocating "free markets, low trade barriers and balanced budgets" (Giliomee, 1992: 615-616). As a result, perceptions of poverty and related policies identified by white governments, starting with the 1908 Transvaal Indigency Commission through various commissions of inquiry, remained suspicious of fiscally-funded solutions, and underlined instead the role of the workplace as the vehicle for social inclusion at "civilized" standards for whites. The social policy discourse of the racist state, therefore, placed a specific importance on job creation and protection of white employment and wages on one hand, and on compulsory education and training on the other (Terreblanche, 2002: 270-275; Nattrass and Seekings, 2000).

White workers' dependence on the state as a source of social citizenship based on the protection of racial status deepened after the 1922 "Rand revolt" and the formation of the "Pact" government as a coalition between the Labour Party and the National Party in 1924, to the point that, according to Margaret Ballinger's liberal critique, state policies to address "poor whiteism" became in this period "the formative force in standardizing relationships of black and white in this country" (cit. in Giliomee, 1992: 630). White working class incorporation saw the strengthening of the role of job creation and work ethic under the Pact's "civilized labour" policies and with the creation of state conglomerates ISCOR and ESKOM, in a new climate of industrial protectionism and import-substitution industrialization. The centrality of wage labour in the social citizenship discourse of the segregationist state translated into an accentuated legislative activism that saw the adoption of laws that limited trade union and collective bargaining rights for Africans (the 1924 Industrial Concilitation Act, passed before the "Pact"'s rise to power), legalized "colour bars" that limited African advancement to skilled trades (Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926), built a bureaucratic system to set African wages (Wage Act of 1925), and systematized "native reserves" and pass systems in the reproduction, channeling and residential control of cheap African labour (Native Administration Act of 1927). White working class support was recruited through policies that defined the juridically subordinated status of

African labour (Yudelman, 1984). According to Martin Chanock (2001: 407), highly regulated forms of unfree labour based on colour bars "made politically possible the continued dominance of market ideology in other sectors", which included the limitation of state's responsibilities in the provision of social services once its obligations towards the white working class were fulfilled by racially-defined protections of white waged employment. At the same time, work ethic was used as a disciplining tool with regard to the African population itself, towards which a culturalist, pseudo-scientific discourse of colonial modernization was addressed, which blamed poverty on alleged agricultural "stagnation" due to inappropriate African farming practices (Wylie, 2001).

Before the 1930s labour legislation was the main area of state social policy interventions. Social security and unemployment assistance saw a comparatively limited legislative production. The 1914 Workmen's Compensation Act covered also African workers (Duncan, 1995: 74), and whites-only maternity benefits were included in the 1918 Factories Act. Between 1919 and 1946 retirement benefits were almost entirely based on industry-based insurance schemes, which were dominated by craft unions (the printing and paper scheme being the most prominent example) and covered a minority of the white working class itself (Van der Berg, 1997). State old-age pensions were introduced only in 1928 (Pollak, 1981; Meth and Piper, 1984).

Also with regard to housing, the early racial state did not privilege an approach based on decommodified social provisions (Roos, 2002), despite the 1920 Housing Act had established a Central Housing Board (CHB) to subsidise white municipal housing as a response to sprawling poor whites' slums. The CHB's scope was however limited by scarce resources, therefore the aim of "civilizing" white living standards in urban areas came to rely more, following the 1923 and 1927 Urban Areas Acts, on repressive policies of slum clearance aimed at removing blacks from low-income urban communities designated as "white". Only in the 1930s, following the great depression and the continuous migration to the cities of poor whites with protected jobs, the provision of public housing became a social policy issue. State financing for new houses in subeconomic schemes, which replaced slum clearance policies, however, overwhelmingly

benefited whites and reinforced coercive black evictions and relocations (Parnell, 1992; Duncan, 1995: 74-75).

In the sphere of healthcare, the Public Health Act adopted in 1919 and in force, through various amendments, until 1977 defined a normative framework that combined a heavily decentralized approach (for example by delegating the management of hospital care to the provinces) with a markedly entrepreneurial and commodified definition of healthcare delivery, deferent to the requests for "autonomy" coming from the medical profession and charitable associations (Union of S.A., 1936). The role of the state was initially limited to residual, emergency-based interventions. State provision of healthcare for whites was tightly linked to wage labour and worked in an indirect way through medical schemes, especially in state-owned enterprises that were integral to the expansion and protection of white employment (Pillay, 1995: 20-44; Jeeves, 2001; Packard, 1989: 126-158).

The 1930s mark the beginning of a phase characterized by a more systematic implementation of expert knowledge in the definition of social policy options (Ashforth, 1990). Stimulated by the government of purportedly Keynesian sympathizer, Jan Smuts, social engineering and the use of scientific inquiry come to play a pronounced role in addressing poverty (Giliomee, 1992: 641). A changing socio-economic context saw first the impact of the global depression on "poor whites" and then industrial growth and renewed African urbanization in the wake of the post-1934 gold price boom and wartime manufacturing effort. Job creation policies in state-supported programmes of industrialization used revenues generated by rising mining profits and remained at the core of South Africa's social policy discourse under the United Party-led "fusion" government (Terreblanche, 2002: 276). The need for the state to control, channel and "stabilize" African working class formation led, however, also to intellectual positions whose paternalist rhetoric (Bozzoli, 2004: 41-50) echoed that of "reform" in colonial welfare and labour law. Accordingly, the mobile boundaries of public social provisions and social insurance had to be expanded in an inclusive direction. The selective incorporation of strata of African urban employment was suggested as part of a limited "social contract" whereby wage labour discipline

could be rewarded with some social protection even in the absence of civil and political citizenship rights. Such positions were at the centre of contestations between sectors of the late segregationist state and powerful capitalist interests, and provided crucial issues on which the 1948 election was fought (Posel, 1991). In general, the positions of those advocating limited social protection as a correlate for wage labour discipline and stabilization of the African working class were defeated or marginalized, and solutions adopted well into the 1970s tended rather to reassert the commodified and residual character of South Africa's racialised welfare system, while repression and bureaucratic coercion continued to play a central role in enforcing wage labour discipline.

In 1934, the first Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in South Africa activated, as it would do the second one in 1984, a connection between international discourses on the "social question" and local networks of knowledge, which allowed for an expansion of intellectual debates around social policy agendas (Bell, 2002). Inspired by the work of E.G. Malherbe, mainly preoccupied with "poor whiteism" as a "menace to the self-preservation and prestige of the white people" (cit. in Giliomee, 1992: 642), the commission's final report ended up recognizing that black poverty was as acute and urgent as white one, even if it maintained a racialised approach in suggesting that a focus on improving white living standards would have benefited all South Africans. According to critics, the policies advocated by the Commission widened the chasm between whites and blacks both economically and juridically (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989: 145, 296). White poverty was blamed on the lack of "ambition, thrift, morals, industriousness, education, temperament" (Giliomee, 1992: 644), qualities conducive to "civilized" standards of living in a competitive economic environment and without which whites plunged below the level they were supposed to occupy in relation to the "natives".

The Commission's emphasis on individual behaviour and morality was, however, counterbalanced by a departure from Darwinist images of poverty as based on the poor's inherent defects that ruled out the possibility of social policy interventions. The recognition that poverty was also the product of economic conditions beyond the control of the individual translated into a predominant

emphasis on education and training within the state's policy armoury (Freund, 1992: xx), coupled with stern warnings against dangers of "dependency" on public expenditures depicted in pathological terms (Giliomee, 1992: 646; Iliffe, 1987: 120-121). Therefore, the Commission's recommendations ended up, through an innovative articulation of personal responsibility and upgrade of rightful employment and the avoidance of decommodification, in reasserting the centrality of wage labour and related forms of discipline in the social policy discourse of the South African state. Some researchers went as far as supporting a greater labour market competition between black and white workers, and the commission in general regarded racial job reservations as a temporary phenomenon.

The most far-reaching conclusions of the Carnegie Commission did not make substantial headways in terms of policy-making during the following decade. Nonetheless, the approach adopted by the Report exemplifies an intellectual consensus which regarded labour market policies, and the extension and protection of wage labour for whites and, to some extent, "coloured" workers, as replacing policies emphasizing assistance and social security. A specialized bureaucracy in charge of social protection (later to become the Department of Welfare) was established only in 1933, tellingly under the authority of the Department of Labour. Conversely, this wage labour-centred approach to South Africa's "social question" departed from the rising emphasis in the United Kingdom and across the Empire on Beveridge's idea of "deliberate social action" to minimize people's dependence on labour market changes and decommodification to support the unemployed (Silburn, 1995).

The success of the South African approach, spurred by rapid economic growth, to protecting white employment and wages was evident in the fact that between 1932 and 1936, immediately before the wartime boom, industry employment rose by 14 per cent per annuum, with an overall unemployment rate of less than 3 per cent among white and "coloured" workers, and a ratio of black-to-white workers that declined by 20% during the "Pact" and "Fusion" governments (Nattrass and Seekings, 2000: 7; Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara, 1976). At the same time education remained by far the biggest item in

public social expenditures, so that, as Nattrass and Seekings (2000: 9) explain, the main beneficiaries of the racialised, employment-based system of social protection were white households with a well-paid male breadwinner. Conversely, assistance for working mothers was non-existent, and non-education expenses were strictly means-tested and targeted at white workers that fell through the cracks of the labour market. Only between 1936 and 1937 were disability, blindness and child maintenance grants, limited to whites and "coloureds", introduced for the first time.

Decommodication and redistribution came, however, to occupy an important role in political contestation within the white establishment in the years before the 1948 elections. A new effort to redesign the borders of state-supported social inclusion, in a context of accelerated industrialization and African proletarianization, saw the publication in September of 1943 of the report of a government-appointed committee on social security, under the oversight of Minister of Social Welfare J.H. Hofmeyr, which was evidently tributary to Beveridge's terminology and themes (Seekings, 2000c, 2003a). The report adopted a notion of social security as protection from risk, which remained however largely confined to "non productive periods of life" like childhood, sickness, disability, temporary unemployment and retirement (Nattrass and Seekings, 2000: 11; Union of S.A., 1944a). Therefore, the centrality of employment in social inclusion was confirmed. The 1943 report, however, tried to push the boundaries of social inclusiveness by proposing for the first time elements of universalism, including means-tested, non-contributory state old-age pensions, to be combined to a range of contributory unemployment and social security benefits. Urbanised Africans were largely supposed to enjoy the coverage of contributory social safety nets, while for the first time non-contributory social assistance was devised for the rural areas. In any case, benefits for Africans were calculated at lower rates based on assumptions on their allegedly more frugal needs. In this way, race was reconfigured under the guise of scientific measurement of cultural criteria and locational living standards.

The ideas of the 1943 Report were subsequently rejected by a 1945 White Paper on Social Security in their most far-reaching parts concerning the proposed

comprehensive non-contributory scheme (Duncan, 1995: 79). The 1944 Pension Laws Amendment Act, however, covered for the first time Africans under pension legislation (Sagner, 2000: 535-541; Human Awareness Programme, 1984; Moller, 1998; Rycroft, 1988), even if old-age pensions and disability grants were strictly means-tested, diversified according to rural and urban areas, and in 1948 they ended up covering little more than 200,000 Africans (Iliffe, 1987: 141). The scaling-down of proposal for greater social inclusion and the abandonment of universalism was, in the final analysis, accompanied by the alternative of intensified repression of black working class organizations in the final years of Smuts' government, as witnessed in the suppression of the 1946 African mineworkers' strike. It is quite indicative that in 1943 only 4% of all social assistance public expenditure was directed to Africans (Van der Berg, 1997: 487).

In rejecting proposals for a comprehensive restructuring of the social security system, the government heeded widespread concerns and worries across the white population, including the working class, big "British" business and the Afrikaner middle class (Meth and Piper, 1984: 8). They tended to oppose increasing taxation for redistributive policies and were turning towards Afrikaner nationalism as a more effective representative of racial privilege. Similarly, the debates on the reform of unemployment insurance ended up reinforcing the white elite's consensus around residual measures that forestalled universalism, redistribution and decommodification. A system of unemployment insurance had been established under the 1937 Unemployment Benefits Act which, covering only 88,000 workers and a tiny fraction of high-income Africans, was largely a measure against cyclical unemployment (Meth and Piper, 1984). A new Unemployment Insurance Act was passed in 1946 as a further product of the short-lived reformist impetus brought by the 1943 commission of inquiry. The new act, like the old, specifically excluded mineworkers not to jeopardize the migrant labour system and to prevent escapes of African labour from the mines to the cities (Duncan, 1995: 79). The act, however, covered all permanent urban employees, including Africans for which income limits were abolished, reflecting the adoption of an "urban stabilization" and expansion of residential rights approach in the 1944 report of the Fagan Commission. Even if mineworkers and

farmworkers were excluded from the act, white mining and agriculture opposed it precisely due to their hostility to the expansion of an African urban labour market endowed with basic protections

Opposition to the act, and to the inclusion of Africans, by white constituencies provided one of the most divisive issues during the 1948 election campaign. As Meth and Piper (1984) show, white opposition to the act was largely voiced in rhetorical arguments that praised work ethic, individual responsibility and reduced dependency. These arguments were enabled by the employment-based model centred around wage labour that had until then characterized South African state discourse of social inclusion. In this sense, J.G. Strijdom could quite indicatively argue:

> Is it not a fact that natives only work to supply their immediate wants, and if you grant them old age benefits and other benefits you would only make them lazy? (…) They only work when starvation stares them in the face (…). *There are a large number of Europeans to whom that applies as well* (cit. in Meth and Piper, 1984: 9; my emphasis).

The suspension of the Act in 1947 preluded to its rewriting by the NP government in 1949 in a way that excluded low-wage Africans, putting an end to the late 1940s debates on social security reforms. A further, important setback for redistributive, partially decommodified forms of social provision took finally place in the sphere of health policy. The 1936 Collie Committee (Union of S.A., 1936) had identified substantial opposition to a state-funded national healthcare system from employers -- which were not against national health insurance per se, but did not want it to be fiscally-funded -- the medical profession and private charities -- which wanted to retain their autonomy against bureaucratic interference -- and also many white workers covered by company medical schemes. The committee had however recommended the introduction of a national health insurance system in urban areas. The government eventually decided against implementing the committee's recommendations based on their alleged unaffordability (Pillay, 1995: 69-71). A new National Health Services Commission was however appointed in 1942 and chaired by Henry Gluckman, to investigate the introduction of a national health

system in the context of escalating health costs and growing working class support, in the context of wartime industrialization, for publicly funded healthcare. African trade unions, the African National Congress and the Communist Party were particularly vociferous in advocating this kind of policy change (Pillay, 1995: 83-84; De Beer, 1986: 15-30; Van Rensburg, 2004). The 1945 report of the Gluckman Commission tried to define health as a social right provided by the state through a centralized system that reduced provincial autonomy. It also proposed a national health system financed through tax revenues from employers and employees, with a particular emphasis on primary over curative healthcare (Union of S.A., 1944b). Once again, however, Smuts refused to implement the Commission's recommendations on grounds of financial unviability and to avoid "differences and divisions" (cit. in Pillay, 1995: 77) in his own imperiled political constituency, especially mining and agricultural capital, opposed to fiscally funded social security schemes.

The failure of the two most important attempts to introduce elements of decommodification and universalism in South Africa's social welfare system during the late 1940s reforms, the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Gluckman Commission report, contributed to entrench a policy paradigm centred around wage labour discipline and commodification. On the other hand, such a paradigm had already been conducive to establishing a discourse of work ethic and individual responsibility which was highly functional to ideologies and practices of racial discrimination and domination that were profoundly rooted in the sphere of work and production. Centering the social policy discourse on the workplace and its related racialised privileges was part of a consensus that was ultimately averse to universalism, redistribution and decommodification.

2.3 Apartheid Social Engineering and the Coercive Enforcement of Wage Labour Discipline

According to Nicoli Nattrass and Jeremy Seekings (2000), apartheid's "distributional regime" strengthened a South African welfare system where "labour market policies were especially important". In particular, labour

regulations and employment-based social provisions retained a crucial role in enforcing racially segregated and geographically differentiated access to entitlements. State intervention in industrialization and job creation (Nattrass, 1990 and 1993) and the systematic use of expert knowledge in conceptualizing the country's social issues (Ashforth, 1990) continued to play a decisive role within a muted policy environment where incorporationist approaches of the previous decade were replaced by an "overtly racialised mode of social engineering" (Posel, 2004: 3). In this sense, also the expansion of public expenditure for the Africans, notable from the end of the 1940s, and schemes of "betterment" for non-white residential urban and rural areas were primarily aimed at stabilizing racially segregated labour markets, reducing the monetary costs for the reproduction of black labour, and denying citizenship rights for the majority.

The policy priorities of the racial state were no longer related to "poor whiteism" as a social question to be addressed through the creation of waged employment. Rather the main problem facing social policy became that of a mounting African proletarianisation that was partly produced by industrial expansion but that to a large extent reflected the collapse of the economic and social systems of the rural "bantustans". Migration to the cities reflected grassroots strategies of escape from socio-economic decay and political authoritarianism in the countryside, which was particularly pronounced in the illegal flow towards the urban areas of women opposed to patriarchal domination and deemed "undesirable" by urban state bureaucracies (Bonner, 1990; Bozzoli, 1991). Proletarianisation was therefore also intended as a resistance strategy, and it became increasingly uncontrollable by employment bureaucracies when it started to politicize during escalating urban protests in the 1950s (Marks and Trapido, 1987; Wells, 1993). Apartheid social planning displayed a combination of increasing repression and pragmatic adaptation whereby the control and stabilization of African urbanization, and targeted social services, tended to become centerpieces of social policy (Bonner, Delius and Posel, 1993; Robinson, 1996). Conversely, given that white workers had by then their labour market position protected by wage segregation and skills and education privileges, state-based social provisions became increasingly residual and access was further

commodified (Nattrass and Seekings, 2000: 4). As a result, the role of means-tested social assistance for the long-term unemployed and the elderly, and of private provision of medical aid and retirement benefits were reinforced, while racially segregated unemployment insurance saw a gradual reduction in the state's funding responsibilities. For example, between 1949 and 1981, state contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) were reduced from 50% to 7% (Meth and Piper, 1984: 27).

Early apartheid social welfare policy foreclosed the limited spaces of debate opened during wartime industrial expansion and rising bargaining power for the working class, both black and white. The choice of repressing popular organisations, already witnessed in the occasion of the 1946 miners' strike, was extended to the totality of the country's political space after the passage of the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act. Repression, at the same time, emphasized how proletarianisation and the imposition of wage labour discipline were not accepted as natural and objective processes by the African working class. They were rather actively contested and resisted through claims around wages, working conditions, fairness and respect that were economically fed by the collapse of subsistence economy in the "reserves", as noticed in 1943 by the state-appointed Lansdowne Commission (Terreblanche, 2002: 277). They also drew inspiration from a "moral economy" (Moodie, 1946) of migrancy that reacted to the decay of living conditions in the urban workplaces and in the rural reserves. Rather than reproducing the forms of consciousness conceptualized by the policy discourse of the racial state -- namely a "modernized" urban proletariat schooled in the ethics of waged work vis-à-vis ruralised migrant workers reproduced through pre-capitalist networks -- African migrancy mobilized a sense of unfairness, injustice and outrage to shape resistance and claims for improved quality of living and citizenship rights within urban politics (Beinart, 1987).

Apartheid's industrial relations legislation was similarly inspired by the aim of containing and repressing the working class militancy. The 1953 Industrial Conciliation Act and its 1956 amendment had excluded Africans from the definition of "employees", thereby preventing them from belonging to registered unions entitled to collective bargaining rights (Davies, 1978; Lewis, 1981;

Lichtenstein, 2004). White unions, on the other hand, relied on collective bargaining to strengthen job reservations and prevent Africans' advancement into skilled jobs (Webster, 1985). Finally, a 1952 amendment to the 1945 Natives (Urban Areas) Act had systematized the mechanism of 'influx control' and the division of the urban population between permanent residents and 'migrants', employed on the basis of fixed-term contracts through 'labour bureaux' and threatened with deportation in the event of job loss (Hindson, 1987). The promotion of whites in high-wage jobs responded to demands from working-class constitutencies, while the system of job and wage discrimination met mining and industrial capital's requirements for cheap African labour.

Simultaneously, the first significant social policy measure of the new government was to exclude, with no parliamentary opposition from the United Party earlier in power, Africans from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) reformed under the 1946 Unemployment Insurance Act (UIA). The move was, once again, couched in an anti-welfarist rhetoric that stigmatized the dangers of Africans' "dependence" on the UIF which, on account of their assumed "idleness", could allegedly weaken work ethic and discipline and therefore lead counterproductively to increased unemployment (Meth and Piper, 1984: 17). Section 2 of the 1949 Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act excluded from benefits all Africans earning less than £15.00 per month, thereby *de facto* the vast majority of them. In fact, while 140,000 Africans claimed unemployment insurance before the 1949 amendment, their number dropped to 1,400 afterwards. In 1956 the minimum wage to claim benefits was raised to £278 per year, while average African wages were £150.47. Only in 1967 did average African wages reach the UIF eligibility threshold (Nattrass and Seekings, 2000: 15). As an indication of the success in racialising unemployment insurance, while in 1952 "coloured" and Indian workers claimed more than twice the amount of unemployment benefits claimed by whites, by 1954 these latter claimed 60% of all benefits (Meth and Piper, 1984: 19). This result was achieved by placing non-white workers in income groups I to III (the lowest), for which benefits could be claimed only in the absence of "suitable alternative employment", which included domestic work, farms and mines, still not covered by the UIA.

At the same time, black exclusion from the UIF was paralleled by the expansion in the range of payable benefits, which came to include illness lasting more than four weeks in 1952, 12 weeks maternity benefits in 1954, and death benefits in 1957. As a consequence of the reduction in state contributions, however, overall payments exceeded contributions from 1957 to 1981, and the benefits-to-contributions ratios steadily declined to the point that by 1980 claimable illness and maternity benefits were only about a quarter of total contributions (Meth and Piper, 1984: 32; Cooper, 1984). The expansion in the range of benefits therefore accentuated the largely residual characteristics of the unemployment insurance system. According to the Department of Labour, by the early 1980s only 0.3% of the subsistence of the unemployed was contributed by the UIF. A further contributing factor in the financial crisis of the UIF was later given by the establishment of separate funds in the "independent" TBVC (Transkei, Boputhatswana, Ciskei and Venda) states, whose unemployment insurance funds were funded with contributions almost entirely paid in South Africa.

Similarly, unequal access to state old-age pensions paid to whites and Africans widened until the 1970s (Rycroft, 1988), when the maximum value of African pensions was approximately 13% that of white ones (for Indians and "Coloureds" it was 41% and 47% respectively). In 1958, 60% of all old-age pension recipients were Africans, but they received only 19% of the benefits paid (Van der Berg, 1997). Moreover, the 1956 Pensions Act, which for the first time regulated the private pension funds industry, specifically excluded low-skill, mainly black, workers (Van der Berg, 1997: 486). On the other hand, African workers were excluded from pension funds also by eligibility requirements in the funds' rules, which prevented membership to contract workers, migrants and hourly and weekly paid employees (Human Awareness Programme, 1984). Imbalances in the system of retirement benefits are evident in the fact that, by 1987, unemployed workers depended mainly on state social pensions, including maintenance grants, which reached 15% of the economically active population, much more than recipients of retirement benefits. These latter, however, were far more generous than the former; in fact their amount was 3% of the GDP

compared to 1% for social pensions, and they were spread among fewer beneficiaries since they reached only one third of the number of social pensions recipients (Kruger, 1992: 30).

The National Party government ultimately chose, as seen with regard to the UIF and confirming previously existing policies, to protect the social status of its white working class constituencies by defending their employment-related racially privileged status, rather than by expanding redistribution and decommodication through public expenditures. This contradicts arguments (Seekings, 2003a; Posel, 2004) that this period saw an expansion of "welfarism". On the contrary, the apartheid state stimulated private entrepreneurship and commodication in crucial areas of social provision. The decline in illness benefits paid under the UIF, for example, was compensated by the impulse given to private medical schemes. The Friendly Societies Act No. 25 of 1956 defined a national system for the registration and regulation of products offered by private medical schemes, which proliferated also due to employers' and practitioners' refusal to amalgamate existing schemes. By 1960, 169 schemes covered approximately 370,000 members with 590,000 dependants, and "all whites in South Africa had shifted away from the free services provided by the government" (Masobe and Van den Heever, 2002: 8; Rama and McLeod, 2001). These latter were greatly impoverished in terms of resources, focused predominantly on primary care, and catered for the needs of about 95% of the non-white population (Seedat, 1984; Kelly, 1990; Baldwin-Ragaven, De Gruchy and London: 17-49)[5]. Conversely, in 1986, only 3.6% of members of private schemes were Africans (Price and Tshazibane, 1989).

The government's commitment to the privatization of healthcare services, which absorbed increasing portions of the country's health expenditures, was ultimately confirmed by its rejection of the recommendations from the 1962 Snyman Commission, which as a solution to escalating costs had proposed the creation of a state-subsidized national medical scheme (Pillay, 1995: 157-158). The Health Act No.63 of 1977 reinforced rejected once again the idea of publicly-

[5] For example, public healthcare expenditure was reduced by 19.6% between 1950 and 1955 (Pillay, 1995: 120).

funded national healthcare, while reinforcing racially segregated healthcare provision by largely confining public intervention to primary and preventative healthcare (De Beer, Myrdal, Thompson and Zwi, 1983; Pillay, 1995: 170-180). A parallel area of increase in public healthcare expenditures were the African "homelands", as part of policies to reinforce spatial segregation and counterbalance black urbanization.

It was to urban planning and housing policy that the apartheid state turned in designing policies where social provisions and amenities were specifically linked to strategies of social control, labour market stratification and continuous imposition of wage discipline. The period of "separate development" was in fact accompanied by extensive socio-spatial engineering both in the forms of consolidation of segregated rural "bantustans", which absorbed an increasing share of public spending for the African population (Van der Berg, 1997), and as restructuring of African urban spaces through the forced movement of populations and the construction of new "model township". These latter were aimed at accommodating the expanding African labour contingents that fell inside reshaped boundaries of inclusion within urban wage labour (Morris, 1982). In the case of the East Rand, examined more closely in Chapter 4, this process led to the removal of historic townships like Dukathole (Germiston) and to the establishment of KwaThema, Thokoza and Tsakane at the end of the 1950s. The role of new urban developments in linking residents to waged employment was evident in the ways in which the state considered them, in Hendrik Verwoerd's words, "European-owned property" where "natives" were allowed to live "just like labourers on a farm" (cit. in Legassick 1974b: 20). At the same time, the policy stressed that it was the employer's, not the state's, responsibility to provide for the needs of their employees, since using public expenditures to that end would have lowered African wages to the point that "too many bantus" would be employed (cit. in Legassick, 1974b: 21).

The "upgraded" African rural areas became the destination, on the other hand, of massive deportations of "surplus people" (Platzky and Walker, 1985) falling outside the boundaries of subordinate urban inclusion. The socio-economic development of the homelands was one of the priorities indicated in the 1956

recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission, which articulated the intellectual discourse of separate development. Forced removals from "white" urban areas were greatly facilitated by the 1964 Black Labour Act, which punished with deportation also permanent urban residents that refused waged employment (Terreblanche, 2002: 322). Besides, under newly introduced "administration boards", some African "homelands" came to incorporate sections of urban townships, where new housing developments were encouraged, giving migrancy a daily "commuting" meaning that further eroded urban residential rights.

The relevance of spatial restructuring in relation to social stratification, social provisions and wage labour discipline has been in the past at the centre of important scholarly debates. Early structuralist positions had explained the impact of the system essentially in decoupling production and reproduction, delegating the absorption of this latter's costs to rural economies in the "homelands" and allowing therefore a constant flux of "black cheap labour" (Wolpe, 1972; Legassick, 1974a). Doug Hindson (1987) rejected this view and argued that "influx control" under apartheid was mainly focused on segmenting the urban population and limit urban residence entitlements for Africans, rather than on shifting costs of reproduction to rural reserves that were by and large in a state of economic decay.

As Deborah Posel (1983; 1991: 17) indicated, such views obscure the extent to which "influx control" was shaped by contestation and worker strategies from below, especially related to the refusal of low-wage work by permanently urbanized Africans that preferred informal entrepreneurship. A useful reassessment of this debate has been recently advanced by Yann Moulier-Boutang (1998: 640-644). Emphasizing the state's need to control workers' autonomous practices, he convincingly argues that Hindson's "split labour" theory explains the effects of "influx control" policies but not their rationale. Such policies were in fact respondent to the state's need to control the escape of workers from highly coercive employment in the mines and agriculture towards occupations in the cities. In this way, influx control segmented African workers' rights and social provisions by strictly binding them to institutionally segmented labour markets

expressions of three coexisting forms of labour control: urban wage labour, semi-servile employment in mines and agriculture, and "subsistence" economy in the "homelands". At the same time, the existence of the latter two labour markets exercised downward pressures on urban wages. Migrant labour kept urban wages down not by shifting reproduction costs to the "homelands" but by creating non-urban labour forces of juridically inferior status and deprived of contractual rights. Therefore, rather than being a mechanism to "protect" African urban wages, influx control served to generalize African social vulnerability and insecurity while strictly tying the enjoyment of limited social provisions to individual positions in the labour market. In this sense, by increasing Africans' labour market dependence to access social services, influx control imposed on blacks the logic of commodification that privatization and employment protections had established for whites.

Relationships between racialised spatial engineering, social provisions and wage labour were redefined in the 1970s-1980s in a context of political and economic crisis, renewed worker militancy and perceived shortage of African labour in skilled urban manufacturing occupations. Late apartheid urban planning was in particular aimed at the promotion of layers of black middle class and entrepreneurship while enhancing the residential rights and ownership opportunity of the urbanized black working class. The 1977 report of the Riekert commission reflected a redefinition of the mechanisms of labour control in the direction of increasing regulation by "market forces", in relation to which the role of the state became that of "intervention" rather than direct management of socio-economic change (Ashforth, 1990: 205). A new discourse of class differences created by economic forces tended to replace that of institutionalized racial hierarchies. As a consequence, a new urban policy was advocated which, by linking more closely housing to employment, was aimed at restructuring labour control by separating urban "insiders" with residential rights from "outsiders". In this way, the state exempted itself from the task of directly regulating fluxes of people but defined its role as the codification of "objective", market-determined relations between individuals' production and reproduction, jobs and houses, wage labour and social rights (Ashforth, 1990: 212; Hindson and Lacey, 1983). The strategy of "orderly

urbanization" adopted in 1985 by the Department of Constitutional Development endorsed this approach based on market regulation of a fully commodified link between employment and housing. Indeed, it deepened it by rejecting a strict institutional dualism between "insiders" and "outsiders" to advocate a large scale privatization and "recommodification" (Mabin and Parnell, 1984) of public housing to bolster African ownership in urban areas, including "affordable" working class low-income housing at substantially lowered construction standards (Cobbett, 1986).

After 1979, moreover, formerly segregated home loans and land purchase subsidies obtainable through the National Housing Commission at sub-economic rates became available also for the African population (Kruger, 1992: 10). The policy was publicized as a strengthening of individual initiative, self-help and responsibility as pillars of a new ethics of ownership expressed in the 1982 report of the state-appointed Viljoen Committee (Wilkinson, 1983; Tomlinson, 1990: 86-90). Crucial was to this end the mobilization of residents' savings and capital to acquire home ownership and pay at market rates for services and utilities run by newly appointed Regional Services Councils with extremely limited cross-subsidization. At the same time, the renewed role of the market in stratifying urban populations replaced the old bureaucratized rural-urban divide and pushed residents unable to pay for housing bonds and services towards informal settlements at the outskirts of cities (Jochelson, 1990; Hendler, Mabin and Parnell, 1986; Hendler, 1986).

The trajectory of social policy reforms devised by the late apartheid state, therefore, left to the market the task of determining social differentiations along class, not only racial, lines. It therefore tended to converge, eventually, around the largely privatized, heavily commodified system of social protection applied to white South Africa, but with greatly reduced resources for a deeply impoverished black majority. This trajectory left important legacies and continuities in the social citizenship arrangement and discourse of the post-apartheid state, as discussed, respectively, in the next chapter and Chapter 8. It also became during the second half of the 1980s the target of renewed opposition by an organized African

working class that started to place social citizenship and decommodification at the top of its agenda.

2.4 The Black Labour Movement and the Re-emergence of Social Citizenship Discourse

The resumption of black working class' struggles and organizing after the 1973 "Durban strikes" started a process of unionization that over the following two decades saw highly localized labour organizations with a strong orientation to the workplace and wage-related issues develop into a national movement with a deep-seated presence at the level of urban communities, a crucial influence on national liberation politics and programmes and visions combining the demand for political democracy with expectations for fundamental socio-economic change and social citizenship rights. In the process, wage labour was transcended as a terrain of claims and as a repository of collective identities, and aspirations for radical redistribution and decommodification emerged.

Worker insurgency in the 1970s took place against a background of profound socio-economic and political crisis for the apartheid regime. The model of import-substitution industrialization had made the economy dependent on capital-intensive production and imported technology, while local manufacturing was lagging behind in terms both of capital formation and availability of skilled, especially black, labour. In a context of declining revenues from the export of mineral commodities, a development model heavily geared towards the "mineral-energy complex" (Fine and Rustomjee, 2000; Bond, 1999) became increasingly unstable, while the patterns of consumption proper to "racial Fordism" constrained economies of scale needed for local manufacturing investment. To address industrialists' demands for black skilled employment (Lipton, 1986) the regime embarked in attempts at deracialisation that were not limited to urban residential space, but started looking at the workplace and industrial relations as well. New openings in the system of workplace recognition and collective bargaining combined with rising militancy connected to declining urban living

conditions to provide the re-emerging union movement with a new sense of power and possibilities (Friedman, 1987).

A central role in the rebirth of an independent, democratic union movement was played by the organization of migrant workers. Their historical experience with urbanization and industrialization was ridden with ambiguities and layered discourses, where wage labour came to assume multiple, uneasily coexisting meanings (Van Onselen, 1976; Sitas, 1983; Webster, 1985; Moodie, 1994). On one hand the waged condition in urban manufacturing had meant an alternative to despotic forms of labour control on the mines or in the farms, and to decay and impoverishment in the rural "homelands". Urbanization, industrialization and wage labour came to embody an emancipatory promise linked to better income, more decent working conditions, larger rewards for hard work. On the other hand, however, the process often also proved to be a highly alienating and disempowering experience, subject to precarious and unstable forms of contract employment, managerial authoritarianism, racism in the workplace and hostility by local township residents judged as morally lax and corrupt. Such contradictions were often experienced in terms of violation of a moral economy of the community, nurtured in discourses of fairness, reciprocity and respect for gender and age authority, which retained strong rural undertones. Comaroff and Comaroff's (1987) analyse narratives of alienation among Tswana migrants, "a black South African people drawn into the labour market and made to eke out an existence out of a combination of small farming and wage work". They persuasively show that workers' sense of social antagonism was shaped not so much by exploitation and oppression *within* the wage relations, but by the very experience of wage labor, seen as reducing and impoverishing the richness of meanings attached to human activity. In terms reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's (1958, 1998) classical conceptualization of the subject, they conclude:

> Migrants soon produced a sardonic commentary on the lesson of free labour. This, as we might expect, was less a narrative of dispossession than a symbolic elaboration of the contrast between work and labour. For, as Alverson was to observe in Botswana, "wage labour violates the very definition of 'doing'" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1987: 200).

Unionising migrant workers was therefore neither an obvious nor a spontaneous outcome. It rather required for the unions to assert themselves, through a prolonged organizational work in segregated compounds, as the carriers and the repositories of an moral economy discourse in alternnative to that embodied by authorities rooted in age and ethnicity (Keenan, 1980; Sitas, 1983).

At the same time, the complexity in forms of consciousness, identity and meanings of wage labour articulated inside the new trade union movement sat increasingly uncomfortably with the policy discourse of the late apartheid regime. This latter tended in fact to make wage labour the main criteria of discrimination in the access to social provisions and residence-based rights, within a socio-political context that was increasingly market-regulated and commodified, but in the absence of political democracy. In this sense, South Africa experienced with considerable delay the dilemmas that, according to Cooper (1996), affected the late colonial state in Africa, namely the ultimate impossibility to introduce elements of "free", contractual labour regulation to sustain wage-based ethics and identities in an illegitimate authoritarian context that continued to deny citizenship rights for the majority.

Such contradictions became particularly apparent in the outcomes of the reform of the industrial relations system spurred by the publication, in 1979, of the report of the Wiehahn Commission, with which the regime had tried to devise a not merely repressive response to the spreading of black trade union organizing. The report recommended the admission of African trade unions to "registration" and to the enjoyment of collective bargaining rights within industry-wide institutions and at the workplace level. Echoing a language used in the Riekert report, Wiehahn explicitly called for a "free labour" system, or a system of labour relations attuned to the requirements of "free enterprise", and could therefore depart from a racialised logic of bureaucratic labour control (Ashforth, 1990: 217-231). As Ashforth notices, the fundamental weakness of the report resided in the fact that in order to advance "freedom" in the industrial relations sphere, this latter had to be depoliticised and insulated from a social environment characterized by the permanence of racial discrimination presided over by an undemocratic political system. Therefore, the aim of expanding "industrial citizenship" was

"limited within the broader political strategy of outright political repression, influx control and the migrant labour system" (Roux, 1981: 40). The independent trade unions, mainly the ones with a strong workplace orientation like those organized by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), innovatively related to the openings provided by Wiehahn-inspired legislation and used legal recognitions and institutional presence as protections to strengthen organizations on the shopfloor (Friedman, 1987). To do so, the unions primarily exploited loopholes in a "free labour" discourse whose ultimate inability to tame union militancy resided in a construction of universal worker rights in the absence of a universalist citizenship arrangement. In the final analysis, the contradiction between access to equal citizenship in the workplace and lack of citizenship in the broader society opened up a debate inside the union movement, in which the workplace and the wage relationship themselves came to be seen as increasingly inadequate vehicles for full access to social and political citizenship rights. The outcome of such debates saw a strategic reorientation in the union movement from a predominant emphasis on production-related issues towards struggles concerned with reproduction, social provisions, community services, and political liberation. The fact that wage labour ultimately enabled this reorientation did not prevent the rise of opinions that became increasingly critical of wage labour as the main focus of organization and demands.

The need to "transcend" wage labour for broader engagements at a political, community and reproduction level was at the heart of debates during the 1980s between "workerists", mainly identified with the FOSATU tradition of workplace unionism, and "populists", largely represented by a new generation of union organizations that underlined the relevance of community struggles and came largely to support the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front (UDF) after it was launched in 1983 (Baskin, 1991: 91-108; Seekings, 2000a; Van Kessel 2001). While the workerists emphasized organizational independence from political forces over political radicalism, the populists tended to invert this order of priorities. The workerist-populist polarization was ultimately superseded, as Baskin argues, with the birth in 1985 of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) as the representative of an organizational-ideological middle

ground (Bendix and Verster, 1986) which combined a strong orientation to the workplace, a priority on the idea of worker-controlled unions and the adoption, in 1987, of the political programme of the ANC-led national liberation movement. It is however to be noticed that before being resolved by new organized structures, the dilemmas surrounding relations between the workplace and the broader society were transcended on the ground, by the involvement of black trade unions in the 1980s township uprisings, which led the leadership of many "workerist" unions to support struggles for social services and decommodified social rights.

On the other hand, trade unions from the "workerist" tradition were definitely not insensitive to issues regarding reproduction, welfare and social citizenship. In a context were demands for higher wages were the most immediate response to the collapse of workers' living standards, access to funeral benefits, medical aids and retirement benefits had still been identified as priorities already by the "wage commissions" that helped organizing independent unions in the early 1970s[6]. An inquiry conducted among members of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) in 1975 revealed that the need for unemployment protections, apart from higher wages, was one of the main reasons for workers to join[7]. At the same time, the organization of unemployed workers was identified as an early priority by "workerist" shopfloor-orientated unions[8]. Finally, participation in industrial councils provided by the 1981 Labour Relations Act was used by some unions to gain representation in the boards of industrial pension funds, which allowed them to demand investment for housing and social services[9]. FOSATU unions' response to Wiehahn revealed, ultimately, a deep awareness of the residual and commodified nature of social security, and of its role in enforcing wage labour discipline rather than minimizing labour market dependence:

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6 *Isisebenzi*, No.3, July 1974, Wits DHP, FOSATU, C.3.19.1.2.3. On the other hand the General Factory Workers Benefit Fund, one of the service organisations that helped the first trade unions, was required to be registered as a "friendly society" administering funeral schemes under the 1956 act, while the emerging unions wanted to run benefits themselves *ibidem* and *Secretariat Report to the second TUACC Council Meeting, 1 December 1974*, Wits DHP, FOSATU Files, B.4.2. In fact, trade unions were careful to avoid an image of themselves as benefit societies, while recognising the importance of the issue for their members, see *TUACC Secretariat Meeting, 31 January 1977*, Wits DHP, FOSATU, B.4.4.

7 *Isisebenzi*, No.2, 1975, Wits DHP, FOSATU, C.3.19.1.2.3.

8 *Minutes of the Special TUACC Secretariat Meeting, 21 November 1977*, Wits DHP, FOSATU, B.4.4.

9 *Umbiko we MAWU*, March 1985.

> [The UIF] is calculated, not to relieve pressure on unemployed Africans, but by its malfunctioning, precisely to maintain the pressure in order to maintain a vast reserve labour pool. Therefore they will be obliged to accept any job at all, no matter how low the wage. the UIF Act, as it now operates is part and parcel of the low wages forced labour system peculiar to Africans in South Africa[10].

At the end of the 1970s, however, the factory and the wage relation, remained for the FOSATU unions the main terrain to improve the socio-economic conditions of black workers, while community struggles were regarded mainly in a supportive role. This was the case, for example, of company boycotts called by "general unions" in the Cape Town area that did not find a place in the system of industry-based collective bargaining devised by Wiehahn, which they rejected.

The rise of a new group of organisations as part of what became known as "community unionism" (Lambert, 1983; Webster, 1987) underlined linkages between struggles in the sphere of production and reproduction, in ways that often determined conflicts with FOSATU unions. The 1979 strike at Ford in Port Elizabeth saw FOSATU affiliate United Automobile Workers Union (UAW) engaged in a struggle sparked by the dismissal of a member and local community activist. Ford black workers, relatively more educated, stabilised and with a strong presence in white collar occupations, saw the community as a natural extension of workplace struggles. The response by the UAW leadership, which was influenced by a predominantly "coloured" registered FOSATU union, NUMARWOSA, rejected community-based alliances fearing that the union's internal democracy and accountability could be weakened by the more informal and personalised mode of organising in "civics" (Southall, 1985). The result was a split in the UAW and the beginning of a "community unionism" tradition that shaped union struggles throughout the 1980s.

In East London, new unions acted to a significant extent as community organisations, structuring demands and claims of broader communities outside the workplace. The birth and rapid growth of the South African and Allied Workers

[10] Chemical Workers Industrial Union et al., *Memorandum Submitted to the Commission of Enquiry into Labour Appointed in Terms of General Notice 445 of 1977 in Government Gazette 5651 of 8th July 1977*, p.5, Wits DHP, FOSATU, B.13.2.

Union (SAAWU) in the early 1980s took place in a context of intensified repression, also organised by the autocratic "homeland" regime in Ciskei, in a context of weak union traditions and lack of community organisations. SAAWU's role as a community organisation, and not only as a union mobilising communities around workplace struggles, was combined to a priority placed on struggles over decommodification and access to social services. As SAAWU put it

> Transport, rents to be paid, are also worker issues. I see SAAWU as a trade union: there's no doubt about it. The problems of the work-place go outside the work-place. If you are underpaid it goes at home or the community. (cit. in Maree, 1982: 38)

SAAWU's programme openly advocated "national liberation", opposed the pass laws and challenged apartheid's "separate development" and the "homelands" system. The union was, consequently, active in organising boycotts of transport and services at community level (Swilling, 1984a). It also tried to ground its demands, however, in a class-based view of South African society, which tended to identify black business owners, for example, as part of the "exploiters" (Davies, O'Meara and Dlamini, 1982: 338-339). A strong workplace orientation was combined with the organisational relevance of community meetings to provide, as SAAWU's general secretary put it, "magnetism" to the organisation and to express a view of the worker as member of the community (Bonnin, Hamilton, Morrell and Sitas, 1996: 157-58) which became quite influential during the 1980s.

It was largely under the impulse of "community unions" operating in the Eastern Cape that issues of social security and struggles over reproduction translated into active mobilisation across the independent trade unions' spectrum. Such was the case of the 1981 "pension strikes" (Roux, 1981), where FOSATU became involved only in specific localities and following the initiative of the "community unions" (FOSATU, 1981). The strike was motivated by the 1980 report of the state-appointed Louw Committee that recommended the "compulsory preservation" of pension rights, which meant the prohibition to withdraw employees' contributions at the termination of a relation of employment. From the government's perspective, the move represented an

attempt to modernise social security, to stabilise urban African employment and to tie social benefits to the length of service. In fact, by the end of the 1970s the vast majority of African workers were excluded from company pension schemes due to restrictions on contract workers, migrants, hourly and weekly employees. Moreover, African workers received approximately one third of the retirement benefits accruing to white workers (Friedman, 1987: 255-257; MacShane, Plaut and Ward, 1984: 61-62). Finally, 82% of private schemes which admitted Africans allowed for the payment of pensions in lump sums at the termination of employment, as opposed to their "preservation" for retirement. The possibility to withdraw benefits, conversely, provided an important asset to face unemployment and assist extended families. In fact, alternative social safety grants were either strictly means-tested, like the social pensions or had a very low "free income", or the income level above which payments start to decrease on a Rand-by-Rand basis (Roux, 1981; Kruger, 1992). Compulsory "preservation" had been recommended by the 1966 report of the Cilliers Committee, which defined withdrawal of benefits as "a potential burden on the state" (RSA, 1966: 24).

In 1976 the Department of Welfare published a report that did not insist on preservation and argued for the transferability of pension benefits and the introduction of a National Contributory Scheme to cater for the retirement needs of workers not covered by pension funds at an estimated 75% final wage replacement rate (Human Awareness Programme, 1984). Business opposed the plan, denounced as "nationalisation" of the pension industry through a "pay-as-you-go" system seen as onerous on employers of an ageing workforce. Indicatively, the employers opposed transferability because it would have weakened the ties between workers and their workplaces (Roux, 1981: 44).

The Louw Committee's recommendations endorsed transferability but made preservation *de facto* compulsory. In this way worker retirement rights were closely identified with the wage relation, following the spirit of the Wiehahn Commission. In fact, the transferability of benefits introduced an element of decommodification in the system by making retirement benefits somehow independent from individual employment vicissitudes, but the Committee did not provide for prescribed minimum benefits as the unions were demanding (Roux,

1981: 50). Besides, the unions saw in the commission's attempt to reward duration in employment a way to undermine state old-age pensions financed through the fiscal system.

The 1981 "pensions strikes", which spread especially in Natal and the Eastern Cape under the impulse of "community unions", were not only worker struggles to expand retirement benefits and protect decommodified access to an income independent from wage employment. They also projected the unions onto a political dimension with their demand for increasing worker control over pension funds' boards and decisions to invest in social services for poor communities (Bonnin Hamilton Morrell & Sitas 1996: 159; Anon, 1981; Roux, 1981: 51-52; Morris, 1982). The gap between production and reproduction was addressed by a rising tide of struggles in the 1980s, like those on maternity rights and benefits (Daphne, 1985; Markham, 1987; Fonn, 1990). In that case as well, maternity rights claimable under the UIF (from which agricultural and domestic workers were excluded) were highly dependent on the length of service, whereby the full 26 weeks of benefits (at approximately 45% of normal earnings) required at least three years in employment, which led to discrimination against casual and retrenched workers. Unions' struggles were focused on extending maternal leave and ensuring re-employment of the pregnant employee, and they managed to win important agreements in the retail, chemical and metal-engineering sectors, where in 1986 MAWU won for the first time maternity rights for a whole industry.

Advances on the production-reproduction border reinforced ideas of the union movement as an actor that, developing from, and transcending, the terrain of negotiations over wages and working conditions could successfully mobilise for broader social rights and political citizenship. A dramatic confirmation came with the growing involvement of trade union organisations in community uprisings in the 1980s. Initially limited to UDF-aligned unions opposing state reforms of national institutions and local governments, such mobilisations eventually drew support from the rank-and-file of FOSATU and "workerist" unions, whose members often blamed their own leaders for an eccessive workplace orientation distanced from broader social struggles (Baskin, 1982; Swilling, 1984b; Ruiters, 1985; Cobbett and Cohen, 1988). Through a process

characterised by internal conflicts and tensions, FOSATU unions became, in particular, protagonists of struggles against rising rents, evictions and relocations that in important industrial areas like the East Rand characterised the dynamics of commodification of the urban space (Rees, 1983; Chaskalson, Jochelson and Seekings, 1987).

Struggles over housing rights and for municipal services figured prominently in the unions' agendas and discourse during the 1980s. While labour's involvement on this terrain was contested and largely contingent upon the specific crisis context of the time, it nonetheless helped in shaping a social citizenship discourse where decommodification and opposition to privatisation were bridging established divides between production and reproduction, workplace and community. Unions' refusal of the rising state's emphasis on private home ownership, for example, was in a sense aimed at preventing the co-optation and emasculation of their most urbanised, better paid constituencies[11]. It was also, however, demanding housing and municipal services as rights rather than commodities dependent on wage levels. As such, these struggles were closely linked to historical trends where boycotts and urban land invasions had reclaimed the urban space over and above the narrow confines of wage-based "stabilisation" contained in government policies (Stadler, 1979; Cobbett, 1989).

Trade unions' concerns with socio-political change and community-based alliances defined a new style of union activity, "social movement unionism", which was intended not only as co-operation with social movements and political organisations, but as the internalisation of social movements' demands, organisational forms and methods of struggle (Webster, 1987; Waterman, 1993). Karl von Holdt (2002) argues that the emergence of social movement unionism in

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11 For example, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) adopted a pragmatic strategy of "militant negotiations" with regard to the use of pension funds to finance low-income housing developments. Home ownership was identified as a potential source of divisions among workers and housing was indicated as a right to be provided by a democratic state with adequate level of subsidisation of housing needs. At the same time, in view of difficulties of access to bank financing, limitations of rental markets and high costs of privatised services, the union accepted that "a portion of pension and provident fund assets should be invested in community projects provided that such investments do not jeopardize returns to members of the fund", Schreiner, G., *Social Security Funds and Housing: A Union View*, n.d. (but 1989). See also *Minutes of the NUMSA Housing/Provident Fund Research Group Meeting Held on 3 September 1989 in Johannesburg*, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 42.3.7.1, and *NUMSA Housing Report (1988)*, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 43.3.6.6.

South Africa was linked to a specific set of conditions that allowed the radicalisation of union struggles and demands based on alliances with diverse social actors because the unions themselves were affected by lines of fracture and contestation present in society at large, where "premodern", "non-class" and "popular" identities remained important. The politicisation and radicalisation of labour demands could work precisely inasmuch the unions themselves were an arena of contestation between different meanings of wage labour, social rights and community needs. An outcome of the struggles during the 1980s was that from such contestations a discourse of social citizenship and decommodification emerged to transcend the wage relation as a terrain of social emancipation. Integral to this trajectory was the adoption as a rallying cry of COSATU campaigns of a notion of "living wage" based on an "emphasis on securing a 'social wage' rather than a narrow focus on increasing the monetary value of take home pay" (Pillay, 1995: 208).

At the same time, however, the politicisation of union identities and struggles had contradictory effects on the development of a social rights and decommodification agenda. In particular, COSATU's substitution for the political opposition during the state of emergencies and the repression that preceded the fall of apartheid, and its political alignment with the ANC following the adoption of the "Freedom Charter" as a political document in 1987, led the federation to marginalize the development of campaigns on social rights. In fact, already in 1988 the "living wage campaign" was regarded as lacking connections with COSATU's political struggle, and social demands were marginalised to the level of mainly rhetorical enunciations (Obery and Singh, 1988). Conversely, issues related to social security, retirement, housing and healthcare were largely delegated to workplace- or industry-based collective bargaining, where unions had greater chances to make inroads, even if they downscaled the need for broader coalitions for social citizenship rights (Lund, 1988). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that trade unionist Jane Barrett could declare immediately before the unbanning of the ANC and the beginning of the post-apartheid transition that "the labour movement presently has no coherent social welfare policy" (Barrett, 1989: 16). The lack of a systematic strategy around demands emerged across labour

struggles during the 1980s ultimately revealed the problematic nature of COSATU's political role. The next chapter will further explore this theme by looking at how the post-apartheid institutionalization of the union movement affected options for a radical discourse of social citizenship

2.5 Conclusion

Social policies and social citizenship discourses of South Africa's racial state revealed in peculiar forms and modalities the permanence in this context of many of the dilemmas faced by wage labour in colonial modernity, as discussed in the literature analysed in the previous chapter. In particular, wage labour and work discipline were identified as constituent mechanisms of social control of the African population that functioned across mobile and constantly shifting barriers between "urban" and "rural" labour, "stabilized" and "migrant" urban workers, "capitalist" forms of production and "precapitalist" modes of reproduction, "modern" and "customary" juridical status.

Discourses of the "customary" and the "traditional", in particular, undergirded an economic reasoning assuming that the reproduction of the Africans was provided by the "pre-capitalist" economies of the reserves or took place in any case at lower levels of needs. "Culturalist" presuppositions allowed therefore to the idea of social inclusion under apartheid "reforms" to function as the structuring and organizing of differential levels of exclusion from social citizenship rights.

Overall, wage labour continued to provide the common foundation for highly commodified social welfare systems whose practices and modes of operation were nonetheless profoundly diversified along racial and spatial bases. The permanence of coercive forms of control of black labour was ultimately superseded by attempts at reform that tried to make wage labour the criteria for access to social rights. Apart from reinforcing the commodified nature of such rights, however, these attempts ultimately confronted the racial state with the unsolvable dilemma, identified by Cooper in other African contexts, of having

social reforms in a context of lack of democracy and suppression of citizenship rights.

Such contradictions ultimately fed ideas and practices of labour resistance that regarded wage labour as an increasingly inadequate terrain to structure claims for social citizenship that accompanied demands for political change. In the final analysis, however, the transcendence of the confines of the wage relations and the politicization of union struggles had contradictory effects that left the terrain of social citizenship discourse contested when the transition to democracy began. On one hand, in fact, politicization allowed the unions to shape struggles for social rights that traversed the social fabric. On the other hand, however, it prevented such struggles from congealing around articulated elaborations of social citizenship and radical decommodification.

South Africa's black working class, nonetheless, entered the post-apartheid transition with a heightened sense of social expectations that structured social citizenship imagery. A survey of COSATU members conducted in 1995 revealed that, even if most respondents were unaware of the specifics of the new ANC government's policies embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), their demands far outstripped the limited ambit of wages and working conditions and "the ability of the capitalist class to deliver" (Ginsburg et al., 1995: 71). In particular, "higher wages" did not figure among the top eight items that a new democracy was supposed to deliver. These were, instead (Ginsburg et al, 1995: 71), "better housing" (90.5%), education (90.2%), healthcare (87.2%), safety (85.7%), electricity (84.6%), water (82%), land (80.7%) and public transport (79%). Moreover, 72% of respondents declared to be prepared to ongoing extra-parliamentary direct action had their expectations not been met (Ginsburg et al., 1995: 73). Such findings revealed not only the extent to which past struggles had entrenched social citizenship rights at the core of workers' discourses, but also the radicalism that supported such demands and expectations.

While the demand for decommodified social rights emerged as a challenge for a post-apartheid government engaged in constructing democratic institutions and completing a transition to a fully-fledged capitalist "free labour" system, it

also clashed with changing policies and economic realities. Late apartheid had in fact witnessed a social policy convergence around commodification and market regulation, which hinted at new class divides that cut across racial boundaries. Such trends were, moreover, favoured by the paradigm of economic liberalization which faced the ANC at the moment of its ascent to power.

The following chapters will show that, in the face of an employment crisis that profoundly and negatively affects discourses of social citizenship premised on wage labour, past policies and ideological paradigms continue to impinge on the policy approaches of the new democracy. Not only wage labour discipline and work ethic still provide decisive weapons in the new government's social insertion armoury, but they continue to underline the role of commodification as a mode of access to social provisions. Current policy discourses that oppose "dependency" on welfare "handouts" (Meth, 2004a), accused to create "negative incentives", and emphasize "productive employment" as an antidote echo previous emphases on "schooling bodies to hard work" to avoid the "idle enjoyment of leisure". At the same time, they provide arguments for containing and downscaling redistributive policies based on refashioned views according to which state pensions' generosity is to be evaluated depending on the differential needs of specific geographical areas.

Similarly, discourses on social inequality and the role of the state under the new democracy resume the aims of late apartheid reforms: to make social inequalities legitimate once they are defined not by race but by the objective workings of market forces (Ashforth, 1990: 211). In this regard, the role of the state is reconceptualised not as a provider of rights but as a corrective to the undesirable effects of the market. Finally, the hyper-commodified, wage-centred welfare system inherited from apartheid is taken by some as evidence of the fact that social policy in South Africa is structurally ill-equipped to deal with mass unemployment and demands for inclusivity. Such conclusions enable representations, not deprived of involuntary irony, of the black unionized working class as a "privileged" minority that, having "benefited" from past policies, is now required to make sacrifices to fund a modicum of social provisions for the largely unemployed or underemployed poor (Nattrass and Seekings, 2000).

CHAPTER 3

Wage Labour, Social Vulnerability and Commodification in the Post-Apartheid Transition

3.1 Introduction

Integral to the transition from apartheid to a democratic government was a labour social imagery that, emerged out of workplace and community struggles during the 1970s and 1980s, carried expectations for socio-economic changes and a "social wage" to accompany political transformation. Under apartheid, wage labour had functioned as a conduit for such expectations in complex and multifaceted ways. On one hand, trade unions took part in struggles around decommodified housing, services and municipal utilities. On the other hand, a climate of intensified repression and the priority of political liberation in the programme of the ANC-led mass democratic movement marginalized the development of an articulated agenda on changing welfare and social security systems. COSATU's "living wage campaign" was reduced either to rhetorical claims or to monetary demands with little connection with the development of a broader vision of access to social services. Conversely, the terrain on which the unions recorded the most significant advances on the decommodification front remained the workplace, with important workers' gains over issues such as provident funds, maternity agreements and housing investment.

The lack of a comprehensive labour programme on social security and decommodification related, conversely, to a democratic transition that faced the legacy of a heavily commodified welfare system which had presided over extreme socio-economic inequalities. Moreover, a deep economic crisis was reflected in declining employment trends. To the combined impact of such processes was added the emergence of new labour market stratifications, actively fostered by late apartheid reforms, along skills and income lines, which overlapped and

intersected with established racial inequalities. Finally, the fact that the transition took the form of negotiations between the old regime and the ANC, in a context of economic globalisation and liberalisation endorsed by the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism, announced renewed constraints on the capacity of state institutions to design policies of redistribution.

This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which the links between wage labour and social citizenship have been reconfigured during the 1990s. It focuses on changes in forms of employment, with particular regard to trends in non-standard employment, and on problems raised by labour's relations with the sphere of social provisions. I discuss problems facing organised labour in relation to such developments, in terms both of trade unions' institutional role and of shifting discourses of social citizenship and decommodification. Labour market changes and the persistent commodification of social provisions lead, in the final analysis, to the emergence of new strata of working poor that challenge the conceptual polarization of social "inclusion" and "exclusion". The fact that expanding areas of poverty are emerging within formal employment challenge the link between wage labour and the discourse of social citizenship that was ushered in by trade unions' resistance to apartheid.

At the same time, unemployment, commodification and working class poverty help to redefine the social imagery of wage labour in a survivalist and defensive mode, where priorities on the protection of employment and monetary income are increasingly decoupled from the access to social rights. My two cases studies introduced in Chapter 4 and 5, and the discussion of changing workers' meanings and perspectives of the work-social citizenship nexus in Chapter 6 and 7, will provide in-depth, empirical perspectives on the general issues outlined in this chapter.

3.2 Wage Labour and Social Citizenship in the Policy Context of the Democratic Transition

The democratic constitution adopted in 1996 defined socio-economic rights in a way that balanced popular expectations and demands for redress of inherited inequalities (Greenstein, 1998) with the spirit of policy pragmatism that inspired the negotiated transition and the abandonment by the ANC of options of rapid and radical social change. In fact, rights pertaining to the sphere of social citizenship were included in Chapter 2 (the "Bill of Rights") of the Constitution, where they were given the same relevance as civil and political rights, avoiding a hierarchy between them based on liberal doctrine's grounds (O'Regan, 1998; Van Huyssteen, 2000). The realisation of social rights, however -- in particular housing (Section 26) and healthcare, food, water and social security (Section 27) -- was qualified and subordinated to a principle of "progressive realisation" (Sect.26(2) and 27(2)), according to which "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources" (RSA, 1996).

In this way, justiciability of socio-economic rights was limited to the courts' ascertaining "progressive realisation", which beyond bare subsistence remains loosely defined in terms of time frames and provisions. The state can still be held accountable for a "tertiary obligation" to actively "protect, promote and fulfil" social rights (De Villiers, 1994; Heyns and Brand, 1998; Liebenberg, 2001), but practical implementation measures are devolved to the budgeting process and to policymarkers' drafting of boundaries of entitlements and social inclusion (Du Plessis and Corder, 1994; De Vos, 1997). Subsequent constitutional jurisprudence has confirmed the subordination of social rights to policy decisions over the allocation of resources and has not placed redistributive obligations on the state to enforce an effective enjoyment of such rights. Rejection of the link between redistribution, decommodification and social rights was common to Constitutional Court decisions that either abstained to interfere with the allocation of resources[12], or reminded the government to take "reasonable steps" for a "progressive realisation" of rights while accepting resources' scarcity[13].

[12] This was in particular the case of *Soobramoney v Minister of Health (KwaZulu-Natal)*, CCT

The democratic constitutional dispensation embodied a universalist principle of social citizenship, whose translation into social policies was largely left to bargaining institutions based on the centralised, national representation of organised social interests. South Africa's experiment with "democratic corporatism" (Baskin, 1993) as the establishment of formalised interactions between the state and representatives of business, labour and civil society was finalised at building consensus on, among other, social and labour legislation to be proposed to Parliament. The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), established in 1995, fulfilled such tasks mainly through its Labour Market and Development chambers. In tune with the Constitution's orientation, however, negotiations within corporatist-styled institutions related to the allocation of economic resources defined by macroeconomic policy orientations that are largely external to such institutions.

The 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, in particular, was adopted as a policy document by the Department of Finance and became the centrepiece of the government's growth strategy. GEAR subordinated the expansion of public spending and redistributive interventions in the sphere of social provisions to targets of inflation reduction and deficit containment, in particular a decificit-to-GDP ratio of 3%, regarded as favourable to strengthening private investors' confidence (Michie and Padayachee, 1998; Habib and Padayachee, 2000; Goetz, 2000; Mhone, 2003). As Steven Gelb (1998) recognised, GEAR's limitation on public expenditure constrained NEDLAC's ability to bargain over resource allocation and reduced the role of corporatist institutions to the definition of technical details of policies largely defined externally. Conversely, the chasm between such constraints and broad rank-and-file expectations, combined to the employers' pragmatic instrumentalism and

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32/97, where the applicant's appeal against a state hospital's denial of life-saving dialysis treatment on grounds of limited resources and priority for patients with greater survival probabilities was rejected by the Court. The applicant died of complications associated with other conditions. See also Moellendorf (1998).

[13] This was the case of *RSA and Others v Grootboom and Others*, CCT 11/00, where the Court ruled on a matter of housing rights for an informal settlement community. While the Court resolved the specific case by issuing an order for basic housing materials that were already offered by the government, it also judged the government negligent in enforcing rights to housing. Even if it clearly asserted the justiciability of socio-economic rights, the court, however, abstained from a judgment that could place specific obligations on the state in terms of resource allocation. See Barchiesi and Van Huyssteen (2001), Pieterse and Van Donk (2002) and Wesson (2004).

reliance on unilateral restructuring, greatly hindered the ability of corporatist institutions to achieve consensus around redistributive policy options (Eidelberg, 2000; Lawrence, 2000).

Limitations to corporatist decision-making indicate that the post-apartheid social citizenship arrangement is largely a "hybrid" form that cannot be easily categorised on the basis of clear-cut distinctions between "welfare regimes" as the one proposed by Esping-Andersen and discussed in Chapter 1. In particular, the universalist themes and redistributive aspirations contained in the Constitution recognised that democratic political institutions had to be responsive to expectations from labour and community struggles for socio-economic changes and reduction of inequalities. At the same time, the policy orientations of the new government tended to redefine the role of the state in social service delivery in a "residual" sense, with a specific emphasis on social assistance targeted to extreme poverty, social exclusion and unemployment. Finally, NEDLAC's role as a bargaining institution based on structured representation of socio-economic interests introduced elements of corporatist social policy-making that recognised the specific status of wage labour as an actor and a vehicle to extend social protections.

With regard to the universalist principles enshrined in the new dispensation, they responded to labour's entrenched demands, which linked access to social provisions to an explicitly redistributive and decommodifying role of the state[14]. As COSATU argued in its opposition to GEAR:

> The private sector should not be allowed to escape its commitments to redirect investment towards the poor (…). Wealthy South Africans are using the policies of nation-building and reconciliation to clamour for their privileges to be left untouched. They fail to see that the stability of the new democracy cannot be built on squeezing the poor. There is one important source of income to assist in creating greater equity in society, and that is to tax the wealthy. Indeed, modern fiscal policy has developed to achieve this aim (COSATU, 1996).

[14] In a 1991 survey of COSATU shop-stewards, to the question "how should social services be provided?" 56% of respondents answered "increased taxes and free social services", while 44% answered "no increase in taxes, individuals pay for services" (Pityana and Orkin, 1992: 68).

Conversely, the ANC's emerging definition of a residual public sector's role in providing access to social security emphasised wage labour as the main mechanism of social insertion. It also explicitly minimized the redistributive, decommodifying role of the public sector. As Hein Marais (2002) argues, such policy shifts emerged well before GEAR, and were part of the ANC's approach to the negotiated transition to democracy.

Earlier constitutional elaborations by the ANC emphasised the role of the government in providing a "guaranteed and expanding floor of economic, social and educational rights for everybody" (African National Congress, 1991). At the same time, the party supported progressive taxation and service cross-subsidisation as measures to equalise access, while opposing the privatisation of municipal utilities. However, the interaction between economic and social policies defined by the "Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa" (African National Congress, 1992) had tempered the emphasis on the link between universalism, redistribution and state interventionism that characterised the ANC's historic "Freedom Charter" of 1955. In fact, in the 1992 "guidelines" a new emphasis emerged on "macro-economic balance, including price stability and balance of payments equilibrium" (African Nationa Congress, 1992: D1.3), whereby the provision of "attractive and competitively priced goods and services" was a responsibility to be shared also by a "dynamic private sector" (African National Congress, 1992: D1.5).

It was therefore within this "mixed economy" geared to macroeconomic stability and private sector dynamism that the role of the state in "redistribution programmes to meet the basic needs of our people" (African National Congress, 1992: D1.2.1) was envisioned. At the same time, social welfare services eschewed a "hand-out approach" while emphasising the "importance of the family as it is understood within the social and cultural norms" (African National Congress, 1992: I.4). Finally, public provision social safety nets were targeted to areas of need where "the ability of the individuals to contribute to society through work or other ways is beyond their control" (African National Congress, 1992: I,5).

Therefore, the wage was confirmed as the main avenue to social insertion and to "the right to fair treatment". Decommodified social services, instead, would

proritise, "within the limits of resources", special needs such as those of victims of violence, marginalized youth, rural poor, veterans of the struggle, children and elderly in need of community care". In defining the country's social security system, such forms of social assistance would be separated from "social insurance" as based on contributory schemes pertaining to labour legislation and human resources development (African National Congress, 1992: I.6). The ANC's elaboration of social citizenship prioritised wage labour as the basis of social inclusion and defined the welfare regime in a residualist and commodified framework through the radical decoupling of social assistance and insurance inside a "familist" ideological discourse. Such orientations were more clearly articulated with the government's economic policies in the process that led to GEAR.

The new government marginalized the recommendations emerging from a union-driven research exercise, the Macroeconomic Research Group (MERG), which placed considerable emphasis on social provisions and redistribution not only as means to social inclusion but also as levers of demand-driven "growth through redistribution" (Adelzadeh and Padayachee, 1994; Macroeconomic Research Group, 1993; Adelzadeh, 1996; Fine and Van Wyk, 1996). On the contrary, the ANC government embarked on a conservative revision of its own political programme, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), with which the alliance between the ANC, COSATU and the SACP had won the 1994 elections. Originated from COSATU's demands and campaigns, the RDP was the end product of a long process of negotiation and redrafting (Bond, 1999). The ability of COSATU and grassroots activist constituencies to contest and shape ANC policies declined with the closure of spaces of debate inside the Alliance around priorities defined in increasingly technocratic ways (Lodge, 1999). The final RDP document placed a specific emphasis on "meeting basic needs" and "attacking poverty and deprivation" (RSA, 1994a: 2.2.2) within the constraints of "affordability". Deepening the logic contained in the 1992 *Policy Guidelines*, however, the RDP made social insertion primarily the responsibility of individual self-activation and initiative. It emphasised the role of the state mainly as "creating opportunities for all South Africans to develop their full

potential" (RSA, 1994a: 2.2.4.1), underlining "job creation, productivity and efficiency, improving conditions of employment, and creating opportunities for all to sustain themselves through productive activity" (RSA, 1994a: 2.2.4.2).

Only subsequently was "better access to basic physical and social services" mentioned, while a "social security system and other social safety nets" was suggested with specific regard to "the poor, the disabled, the elderly and other vulnerable groups" (RSA, 1994a: 2.2.4.4). The poor's empowerment and control over their lives was ultimately made dependent on their "ability to mobilise sufficient development resources" which included the role of the state "where necessary" (RSA, 1994a: 2.2.3). Replicating earlier ANC enunciations, and in remarkable continuity with the policy discourse of the previous regime, the RDP's residualist social welfare logic indicated work ethic and productive employment as an antidote to welfare dependency, rather than emphasing the role of redistribution and decommodification:

> Although a much stronger welfare system is needed to support all the vulnerable, the old, the disabled and the sick who currently live in poverty, a system of 'handouts' for the unemployed should be avoided. All South Africans should have the opportunity to participate in the economic life of the country (RSA, 1994a: 2.3.3).

It is to be noticed that in this discourse even the use of fiscal resources to strengthen and extend employment-based contributory provisions, such as retirement benefits, unemployment insurance and housing finance, is absent. Employment was not regarded as an unstable, crisis-ridden, risk-prone reality which required a comprehensive system of decommodified provisions, as in universalist social citizenship approaches. Rather, wage labour played not only the role of socio-economic mechanism of integration, but also that of a disciplinary device and a benchmark of social merit.

In fact, the separation between "assistance" for the poor and the permanently unemployed from "insurance" linked to the wage relation allowed the state to reduce its welfare obligations by placing a stigma of social marginality on public grants' recipients. A similar logic worked in other areas of delivery, like housing, where private financing of low-cost accommodation was prioritised (RSA, 1994a:

2.5.15) and state subsidies remained targeted to "the poor" (RSA, 1994a: 2.5.14). With regard to healthcare, the RDP proposed a national health system (NHS) largely as the unification and coordination of existing public and private schemes. The focus of the NHS was indicated in primary health care, while the "immediate" provision of free health care in public structures was limited to children under six years of age or homeless and, over a longer term, pregnant women (RSA, 1994a: 2.12.6). The redress of previous racial and income inequalities was not indicated therefore as the responsibility of an expanded public sector through generalised access to decommodified healthcare, but as a product of shifting resources from curative medicine and hospital services towards primary health care (RSA, 1994a: 2.12.11.1).

The RDP White Paper published in late 1994 (RSA, 1994b), finally, inserted the attainment of the RDP's social goals within priorities of fiscal discipline and public deficit containment which would be finally quantified by GEAR as objective macroeconomic constraints. In its residualist redesigning of social welfare, the government was on the other hand making explicit reference to an international neoliberal policy consensus according to which public safety nets had at most to serve the purpose of cushioning the social impacts of restructuring and job losses caused by economic liberalisation and privatisation. A meeting of national and provincial directors general was held on 27 November 1995 to discuss the priorities of the "national growth and development strategy" document that in mid-1996 served as a *de facto* prelude to GEAR. In that meeting, deputy president Thabo Mbeki, which in August 1995 had been appointed to chair a Cabinet committee to co-ordinate economic policy, summarised the work of an inter-ministerial "labour market working group" which recommended compliance with the Programme of Action adopted at the 1995 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Copenhagen. Among the points of the programme the following was quoted as a social welfare priority:

> Establishing appropriate social safety mechanisms to minimise the adverse effects of structural adjustment, stabilisation or reform programmes on the workforce, especially the vulnerable, and for those who lose their jobs, creating conditions for their re-entry

> through, inter alia, continuing education and training. (Ministry in the Office of the President, 1995).

Tangible policy developments accompanied the conservative re-signification of the RDP discourse. Following the policy course outlined in late 1994 and 1995, in particular, the government decided in March 1996 to close the RDP Office in the Presidency, which had been inaugurated in May 1994 to co-ordinate the funding of a series of "presidential lead projects" (Blumenfeld, 1997). According to many commentators, the ANC's social policy trajectory during the transition reflects at a discursive and ideological level a shift in the party's class referents, which saw the rise in importance of market forces and African entrepreneurship (Jacobs, 2001; Marais, 2002; Southall, 2004). The relevance of policies of "black economic empowerment", addressed also to trade unions' investment companies (Naidoo, 1997; Iheduru, 2002), and the aim of creating an African corporate layer became stated priorities of President Mbeki after his rise to power in 1999 (Mbeki, 1999). They also supported the reconfiguration of the role of public policies in reducing racial inequalities towards the promotion of individual opportunities for market competition. Conversely, this discourse's silence on the structural socio-economic determinants of inherited racial and class inequalities (Terreblanche, 2000) enables the government to downscale the relevance of redistribution and decommodification.

In such a context of economic liberalisation and predominance of market forces in shaping social policy paradigms, corporatist policy-making cannot be simply regarded as a device introduced by the ANC government to tame and emasculate labour militancy within conservative macroeconomic policies, as some critics imply (Desai and Habib, 1994; Panitch, 1996; Bond, 1999; Saul, 2001). In fact, a corporatist approach, initially focused on tripartite negotiations between labour, business and the state, was a direct product of labour's demands on socio-economic and industrial restructuring that emerged in the context of negotiated political transition. Labour, in particular, had chosen to engage the state and business in negotiations aimed at consolidating and expanding gains won during apartheid's final years. In particular, inside COSATU a debate emerged on the opportunity to enter tripartite social contracts with a view at

ensuring labour's "strategic" role in inspiring social, economic and workplace change (Schreiner, 1991; Copelyn, 1991; Von Holdt and Webster, 1992). Equally important was a preoccupation with defending the independence of workers' interests against possible adverse compromises that could be requested by the impending ANC government, towards which substantial suspicion existed within COSATU (Rakner and Skalnes, 1996: 26; Torres, 2000a)[15]. Voices on COSATU's left developed a typical "workerist" theme in support of engaging with state structures, arguing that it would strengthen unions' autonomy while allowing them to represent the needs of unemployed and vulnerable workers for an "active labour market policy" focused on job creation, skills development and job placements (Bird and Schreiner, 1992). Engaging the state was therefore wage labour's way to claim its role in shaping social citizenship and inclusion.

An early product of labour's approach to engagement was the 1991 "Laboria Accord", which established that all changes to industrial relations and employment conditions legislation would be the outcome of negotiation among the parties concerned (Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 1990). A strike in 1991 against the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT) led to the establishment of a National Economic Forum (NEF) as a tripartite negotiating institution on issues related to economic and employment policy (Patel, 1993; Habib, 1997). The NEF was part of a broader strategy in which COSATU and the other main oppositional labour federation, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) were participating in various "forums" charged with negotiating transitional arrangements in social provisions and infrastructures. The establishment of NEDLAC with a 1994 act was, ultimately, the result of the merger of the NEF and the National Manpower Commission (NMC), a consultative institution over industrial relations legislation.

According to Adler and Webster (1995, 1999), the unions' approach to corporatist policy-making was inspired by a strategy of "radical reform" with which labour adapted to the realities of a negotiated democratic transition and

[15] 70% of COSATU shop-stewards surveyed in 1991 declared that COSATU best represented workers' interests during the negotiations for a democratic constitution, while 21% and 9% trusted more the ANC and the SACP respectively. At the same time, 94% of respondents expressed an electoral preference for the ANC (Pityana and Orkin, 1992:58).

aimed at "bargaining" the outcome of economic liberalisation with an aim at combining economic growth with social security and employment protection. Pretorius (1996) is cautious, however, to overestimate the pervasiveness of corporatist trends. Due, in fact, to the lack of centralised business interest representation, the power of the ANC in policy-making and grassroots union suspicions, such trends remained uneven and focused on areas where the parties pragmatically and contingently agree to have negotiated solutions. Moreover, a corporatist approach to national policy-making was supposed to integrate and reinforce a multi-pronged strategy in which labour continued to rely on workplace-based and industry-level pacts and agreements aimed at managing the social consequences of industrial restructuring, labour flexibility and retrenchments (Maree and Godfrey, 1995; Steinberg and Seidman, 1995; Sellars, 1997; Webster, 1999). Finally, the unions have recognised the importance of NEDLAC, in particular its Labour Market Chamber, as an avenue to build consensus with sympathetic state organs, mainly the Department of Labour, and counterbalance in this way the unilateral decision making of other ministries such as the Finance Department (Houston, 2001)[16].

At the same time, however, labour would be required to contain and compromise its demands for redistribution and social rights, in accordance with business' and the state's requirements for social stability, industrial peace and economic competitiveness (Marais, 2001: 231). Such sacrifices seem indeed part of the very nature of an institution like NEDLAC, which as a "vehicle for the social partners to mobilise their constituencies into an effective strategy for social and economic transformation" sees participating constituencies as "willing to consider the possibility of making short-term trade-offs", while recognising that "there is no other alternative" (NEDLAC, 1995: 3) to a compromise approach. Part of such trade-offs is the institution's own self-limitation in the sphere of social policy to advancing an unspecified "floor of improved social benefits" (NEDLAC, 1995: 6). Therefore, consent is sought not on broad policies of social reconstruction, but on technical adjustments within the narrow allocative

[16] Bengeza Mthombeni, CEPPWAWU and NEDLAC labour representative, Interview with the Author, 12 June 2000.

boundaries defined by government macroeconomic policy[17]. Corporatist institutions were also conducive to establishing among workers and the poor an ethical discourse that rewarded discipline and sacrifice for the sake of realising the RDP's objectives, similarly to what the ANC government was experimenting with its "*Masakhane* campaign", aimed at stopping bonds and rents boycotts. An emphasis on self-restraint and moderation as part of the new government's practices of governance deflected accusations to the unions of being selfishly concerned only with their members' rights. It also often appropriated and re-elaborated old languages of struggle to enforce conservative ends. As a delegate at the 1994 COSATU congress put it: "We used to have stayaways without pay. We as workers should take the lead in sacrificing" (cit. in Von Holdt, 1994: 41).

Corporatism provided labour organisations with an institutional avenue to adapt their demands for structural change to the conditions of the negotiated transition. The contradiction inherent to such a strategy, however, was provided by the fact that resources available for its accomplishment were defined in a macroeconomic policy realm ultimately separate from labour's influence (Gostner and Joffe, 1998: 141; Houston, Mpanyane and Liebenberg, 1998; Eidelberg, 2000). Moreover, the ANC's policy discourse was fundamentally at odds with the emphasis on universalism and commodification of its COSATU allies. Corporatism ultimately underlined the contestation of, and the unresolved tension surrounding, the meanings of wage labour in relation to social citizenship and social policy. To the unions' view of labour as an engine for policies of radical redistribution was opposed the ANC's discourse of wage labour as a source of individual discipline and promotion. Therefore, as Grossmann (1997: 162) argues, new, market-imposed constraints replaced apartheid's "unfree" labour regime, and the ANC came to represent the "problematic" legacy of apartheid in terms of workers' "unrealistic" expectations as much as, if not more than, continuities in oppression and exploitation.

The hybrid nature of a post-1994 social welfare framework that encompassed elements characterised in Chapter 1 as "residual", "corporatist" and "universalist" was largely the product of pragmatic adaptation by the main

[17] See *NEDLAC News Update*, Vol.1, No.7, 1996 and Vol.2, No.1, 1997.

institutional actors. Equally important was the institutionalisation of organised labour as the carrier of deep-seated expectations for socio-economic change, which revealed a consensus between the ANC government and trade unions around wage labour's importance for social integration and citizenship. In this sense, "free" wage labour, liberated by past bureaucratic constraints and authoritarian regulations, was "constitutionalised" as a primary vehicle of social emancipation, institutional representation and social contracts.

The significance of wage labour in relation to social policy, however, remained contested between state and labour. The unions' discourse of labour-driven transformation regarded wage labour as a tool to extend and protect social rights for all sections of the population, including the unemployed and marginalized. In the ANC and the government's discourse, instead, wage labour largely pertained to the realm of individual self-activation, responsibility and discipline. Social security remained the precinct of employment-based provisions and labour market interactions, and as such it was separated from a sphere of social assistance that was residual and targeted to the special needs of stigmatised poor. In this view, the role of the public sector in redistributing resources and decommodifying services was reduced in accordance with conservative macroeconomic policies.

While macroeconomic policies constrained labour's institutional influence, the next section will explore a further important limitation that, from below, impinged on trade unions' social citizenship discourse. In fact, adverse changes in labour markets led to the widening of inequalities and vulnerabilities, making access to a wage increasingly frail and embattled as a device for social insertion.

3.3 Labour Market Changes and the Rise of the Working Poor

Labour market and employment trends during the first decade of democratic transition have to a large extent deepened processes already observed during apartheid's final years. In particular, employment growth has taken place predominantly in the informal economy or in most precarious and contingent

formal occupations, which in general have not been able to absorb the growing numbers of young entrants in the economically active population, and has actually shed jobs due to the economic restructuring that accompanied liberalization (Nattrass, 1998; Bhorat and Hodge, 1999). While 69% of the economically active population (EAP) was employed full-time in 1995, by 2001 the figure declined to 49%. During the same period, underemployment in the form of part-time, informal or atypical occupations has risen from 14% to 31% and unemployment from 17% to 30% according to Statistics South Africa's "narrow definition", which does not count discouraged jobseekers (Altman, 2003). Once the "broad definition" of unemployment is taken into account, the rate of unemployment has risen from 30.8% in 1995 to 41.8% in September 2002, with informal employment hovering between 13% and 17% of total employment during the same period (Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2005). In 1995, 67.7% of the unemployed had been looking for a job for longer than 12 months, while for only 17.3% jobseeking lasted for six months or less. At the same time, 64.8% of African participants in the EAP aged between 16 and 24 were unemployed (Bhorat and Leibbrandt, 1996: 146-147).

The second half of the 1990s recorded massive job losses, especially in manufacturing industries that were most heavily unionized (see Table 3.1). The impact of employment decline has been clearly differentiated across racial groups, revealing labour market's specifically low absorptive capacity in low-skill occupations with a higher number of African entrants in the EAP. In fact, according to Bhorat (2003), between 1995 and 1999 African employment has grown 9.94%, compared to an African EAP growth of 25.5%, for an employment absorption rate of 25.07%. The corresponding figures for whites are a 6.22% employment growth, an 8.42% EAP growth and a 70.36% absorption rate. National figures are, respectively, 10.17%, 22.18% and 32.59%, making the Africans' absorption rate the only one that is lower than the average. Finally, dynamics within specific sectors, like retrenchments and technological change, are the main responsible for shifts in labour demand at all occupational levels, which leads to the impact of job losses being mainly felt by the unskilled.

Table 3.1. Job Losses in Manufacturing, 1996-2000

Industry	Employment March 2000	% of Manufacturing Employment, March 2000	Employment Change 1996-2000		Average Annual % change		% of Job Losses, 1996-
					1996	2000	
Basic metals, metal products and machinery	222,000	17%	-54,000	-19%	+2%	-5%	35%
Textiles, clothing, leather	220,000	17%	-40,000	-15%	+7%	-4%	26%
Electrical machinery	71,000	6%	-33,000	-31%	-3%	-9%	21%
Non-metallic metal products	46,000	4%	-30,000	-39%	-2%	-12%	19%
Food, beverages, tobacco	196,000	15%	-12,000	-6%	-1%	-2%	8%
Transport equipment	84,000	7%	-11,000	-11%	+5%	-3%	7%
Furniture manufacturing and recycling	62,000	5%	-10,000	-14%	+3%	-4%	7%
Coke oven products, petroleum, Refineries, etc	174,000	14%	-3,000	-2%	+1%	0%	2%
Professional equipment	22,000	2%	+15,000	+190%	-7%	+30%	-9%
Wood, paper, printing, publishing	181,000	14%	+24,000	+15%	-3%	+4%	-15%
Total manufacturing	1,278,000	100%	-155,000	-11%	+1%	-3%	100%

Source: Statistics South Africa, *Survey of Employment and Earnings*, June 2000, elaborated in COSATU (2001).

The rise in "atypical" and informal jobs is also differentiated by race, as evident from Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Forms of Employment by Race, 1999

Population Group	Unemployed (%)	Casual and Part-Time (%)	Full-Time Employed (%)	Total (%)	% of Total Population
African	47.3	20.1	32.7	100.0	76.4
Coloured	8.6	20.0	71.4	100.0	8.9
Indian	21.8	16.4	61.8	100.0	2.6
White	8.9	5.8	85.3	100.0	10.9

Source: Torres (2000).

At the end of the 1990s, full time waged employment was a reality for only less than one third of the African EAP and approximately 40% of the overall national EAP. In 2002, according to Bhorat and Oosthuizen's (2005: 46) findings, based on Statistics South Africa's *Labour Force Survey*, 65.8% of the unemployed aged 25 to 34 and 37.9% aged 35 to 44 had never worked in their lives.

The inability of economic growth to create enough employment to absorb labour market entrants and the employment decline in more protected formal economy occupations are been mirrored by wages' rising inadequacy in ensuring household living standards above official poverty levels. Based on the Supplemented Living Level (SLL)[18] for a family of five as a poverty line, Table 3.3 shows that only three non-agricultural sectors (paper, food, metal and engineering) out of 12 selected had above-poverty minimum wages[19].

Table 3.3 Minimum Wages for Selected Sectors, 1998-1999

Sector	1998 (Rand/month)	1999 (Rand/month)	Real Change	% of SLL for a Family of Five
Paper, paper products and packaging	2240	2409	0.2%	124%
Food	1974	2156	1.9%	111%
Metal and engineering	1660	1950	10.2%	100%
Public service	1750	1872	-0.3%	96%
Local government	1550	1835	11.1%	94%
Glass	1515	1820	12.8%	93%
Automobile industry	1560	1677	0.2%	86%
Transport	1408	1563	3.7%	80%
Mining	1262	1373	1.5%	70%
Wood	1157	1250	0.7%	64%
Contract cleaning	1022	1194	9,5%	61%
Building and construction	1041	1150	3.1%	59%

Source: Labour Research Service (1999, 2000).

[18] The SLL is, together with the Minimum Living Level (MLL), a poverty line calculated by the Pretoria-based Bureau of Market Research and is commonly used for poverty measurements. Both poverty lines are based on a basic basket of goods and services required for households' survival. The MLL is the most basic line, and includes rents for basic services, minimum dietary requirements, schooling expenses, clothing and washing materials, and transportation to and from work. The SLL is more adequate to measure working class poverty since it includes contributions for pensions, unemployment insurance and medical aids, apart from a broader definition of transportation and some recreational expenses (Horton, 1999).

[19] It should be noticed that two of these three sectors are included in the case studies in chapter 6 and 7 of this work.

According to Bhorat and Leibbrandt (1999), by setting the lowest individual poverty line at R650 per month, 45.6% of the labour force and 25% of the employed would still fall below that figure, with farmworkers and domestic workers being the most vulnerable sectors. These figures seem to corroborate conclusions that access to a wage is increasingly inadequate in providing for the basic necessities of life and household reproduction, especially when contributions for employer-subsidised provisions are calculated, as in the SLL. They also indicate a growth of poverty within the wage relation, in contrast with the government policy discourse discussed in the previous section, according to which social exclusion is largely a matter of inability to access formal employment.

Equally challenged (Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996) is the identification of unemployment as the main cause for social marginalisation. Figures from a 1994 SALDRU (University of Cape Town)-World Bank poverty survey, one of the most comprehensive panel surveys of social conditions in post-apartheid South Africa, reveal (Budlender, 1999) that even for the poorest section of the South African population (the decile with annual income between R0 and R1199) unemployment affects less than half of respondents (41% of males and 44% of females). For the following decile (annual income between R1200 and R1811) it affects approximately one third (31% for males and 37% for females). Therefore, most of the 20% of the South African population living in the direst poverty conditions continued to have access to monetary remuneration deriving from some sort of employment.

According to Leibbrandt et al. (2000), even if wage incomes are the least unequally distributed of all income sources, wages still contribute for 67% of total social inequality, only half of which is determined by the 30% of households with no wage earners. The authors conclude that employment is still an important asset for individuals to avoid plunging into poverty. They however specifically refuse to identify the employed as a relatively privileged stratum in South African society, observing that earning wages as such by no means guarantees upliftment from poverty once household incomes and expenditures are considered. In 1995, 59.1% of African households with three or more wage earners, 66% with two

wage earners, 57.6% with one wage earner and 77.8% with no wage earners could be defined as "poor". A condition of "deep poverty" was ascertained for, respectively, 23.2%, 26.5%, 21.3% and 37.4% in each group (Bhorat and Leibbrandt, 1996: 155). A report on "Poverty and Inequality in South Africa" commissioned by the government indicated (May, Woolard and Klasen, 2000; Torres, Bhorat, Leibbrandt and Cassim, 2000) that wages constituted the most important source of income for the majority (40%) of poor households, followed by state transfers (26%), and remittances (17%).

According to the union-aligned National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), formal wages, rather than casual labour or state transfers, provide the most important source of income to the second poorest household quintile (44% of households) and, with 23% of households, come as a close second to remittances for the poorest quintile (Naidoo, 1999: 40). At the same time, 47 per cent of 'poor households' and 35 per cent of 'very poor households' have at least one economically active member in employment (in 26 per cent and 19 per cent of cases respectively all the economically active members are employed). These figures are higher or close to those for 'poor' and 'very poor' households with no economically active members (25% and 28% respectively) or where all economically active members are unemployed (28% and 37% respectively). Both NALEDI researchers and the authors of the "Poverty and Inequality Report" draw from their data conclusions explicitly critical of policies aimed at providing low-wage employment for jobless low-skill unemployed.

The inadequacy of the wage to provide for income levels above poverty lines has also been related to changing labour market stratifications that are polarising wage labour, leading to the emergence of new inequalities among the employed, and challenging union identities where "the relative lack of social segmentation" (Wood and Psoulis, 2001) facilitate collective solidarity. According to Owen Crankshaw such trends emerged in the 1980s and were the result of occupational mobility into professional and skilled occupations, rather than of workers' ability to raise wage rates for their jobs. Therefore, unskilled African workers were largely left behind in wage increases or fell into

unemployment, which not only hindered the equalization of wages, but also prevented them from playing a role in reducing racial income gaps. In fact, while the African share of unskilled manual jobs has remained almost unchanged at around 87% from 1965 to 1990, the Africans' share for semi-skilled and skilled occupations increased, respectively, from 70.2% to 76.1% and from 0 to 18.9% (Crankshaw, 1997: 147). Such findings confirm the impression that inequalities within wage labour assumed complex configurations and blurred a mere polarisation between "employed" and "unemployed". In particular, while a minority of skilled and unionised African workers managed to benefit from their insertion in waged employment, the majority was left in low-skill, unstable, vulnerable occupations (Hindson and Crankshaw, 1990; Bhorat et al., 2001; Bhorat, Poswell and Naidoo, 2004).

The link between vulnerability within waged employment and the expansion of working class poverty in post-apartheid South Africa has been recently informed by a bourgeoning body of research that emphasizes how precariousness among the employed is facilitated by "atypical" forms of employment. These include casual, temporary, fixed-term, part-time contracts, labour broking and "homework", which often question the very distinction between formal and informal work (Klerck, 1994; Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996; Theron, 1996; Rees, 1997; Crankshaw and Macun, 1997; Kenny and Webster, 1999; Kenny and Bezuidenhout, 1999; Mosoetsa, 2001; Newman, Pape and Jansen, 2001; Barchiesi and Bramble, 2003; Theron, 2004; NALEDI 2004).

According to Statistics South Africa's *Labour Force Survey* (2002: 2.12.2), in 2002, 23.7% of the employed population was working under fixed term, temporary, casual or seasonal contracts. While in manufacturing this figure was at around 17%, the highest shares of atypical workers could be found in agriculture (33%), construction (54.73%) and domestic services (50.29%). Independent research in the retail industry suggests that in areas like the East Rand the use of casual and contract labour could be as high as 65% of the employed workforce (Kenny, 2005: 164). While systematic analyses of trends in atypical employment and differential wage and benefits levels between permanent and non-permanent work are still lacking, existing case studies point at the fact

that atypical jobs are also expanding in labour-intensive operations in mining, retail and footwear (Kenny and Bezuidenhout, 1999; Clarke, 2000; Mosoetsa, 2001; Kenny, 2005).

Research produced for the ILO (Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996; Hayter, Reinecke and Torres, 1999) has shown that industrial restructuring is a driving force for the expansion of atypical employment and the casualisation of work in South Africa. In particular, industrial sectors, like the automotive industry, that have seen the success of export promotion policies favoured under the GEAR framework have also expanded downsizing, outsourcing and numerical employment flexibility. In sectors where precise wage comparisons between permanent and "atypical" workers exist (Kenny and Webster, 1999), wide wage disparities between the two categories are apparent. In retail, for example, hourly wage of largely unionized full-time workers can be as much as 50% higher than those of much less unionized casual or fixed-term workers.

Moreover, casualisation and non-standard forms of employment reinforce labour market polarizations along gender lines as atypical work involves predominantly women in both temporary and casual employment. By the end of the 1990s, in informal, self-employed occupations in urban areas the number of women employed tended to be higher than that of men (Grest, 2001; Valodia, 2000; Lund and Skinner, 1999). Processes of "feminisation" of informal and atypical activities are related to "push" factors whereby women often enter the labour market under unfavourable and unprotected terms to replace the household monetary income lost due to the layoff of male members from higher-paying positions (Casale and Posel, 2001). The late-apartheid regime had encouraged, particularly through its Small Business Development Corporation, the growth in African micro-enterprises, especially based on self-employment. The aim was to create an enabling environment for African entrepreneurship and facilitate sub-contracting of large-scale operations in manufacturing and building not only in "industrial decentralization" areas but in townships and inner cities as well (Rogerson, 1991).

Post-apartheid industrial policy had sought the promotion of African micro-enterprise on the basis of a rhetoric, largely propped up by the World Bank

and the International Monetary Fund, that praised the dynamism and autonomy of this sector (McKeever, 1998). The picture of self-employment in South Africa presents a high level of complexity based on the wide variety of production processes, occupations and skills deployed. Recent studies also indicate, however, in self-employment dynamics of informalisation through sub-contracting and outsourcing of formal manufacturing production and employment. Therefore, the divide between "formal" and "informal" economy is blurred, rather than reinforcing a duality between the two spheres (Lund and Srinivas, 1998). In this sense, government policies that, with the aim of creating work in the informal sector, encourage employment flexibility and "modest minimum wages" (Department of Labour, 1996; Nattrass and Seekings, 1996; Baskin, 1998) reshape the boundary between formal, relatively protected, and informal, relatively vulnerable and unorganized jobs (Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996).

As Chapter 6 discusses more in detail, self-employment is relevant to the formal economy not only in terms of outsourcing, but also in providing, in the form of double jobs, alternative sources to cope with declining wages or employment insecurity. The large majority (almost 90%) of self-employed workers are African, and more than half of them are employed in street vending, shops and shebeens, with less than 1% in manufacturing (Bhorat and Leibbrandt, 1998). Self-employment in South Africa, in general, is revealing extended patterns of poverty and marginality that reinforce the link between atypical work and the degradation of wage labour. According to various estimates (Bhorat and Leibbrandt, 1998; Torres, Bhorat, Leibbrandt and Cassim, 2000: 80), around 55% of self-employed workers in South Africa (76% of which are African) earn below the SLL and 45% (72% of which are African) earn below the MLL. Female self-employed workers are significantly more likely to be poor than male ones. The figures of below poverty self-employed income, moreover, are not substantially lower than that for unemployed workers below the poverty line (55.4%).

A further, and much more elusive to measure, phenomenology concerning the diffusion of atypical employment concerns the use of labour brokers (Bezuidenhout, 1997). While reliable statistics on the extent of this aspect are lacking, its use has been regarded as particularly detrimental for union

organization and bargaining over wages and working conditions. In fact, it fragments the labour force under a plurality of employers and bargaining units, while turning the contractual negotiations between employers and employees into a commercial relation with labour broking companies. Trade unions' opposition to this practice has led to frequent calls for it to be outlawed (NUMSA, 1999), even if a more pragmatic approach discussed for example by NUMSA is to approach labour brokers, trying to organize their workers and ensure basic wages and benefits[20]. In this way, the union hopes to replicate successes in collective bargaining that saw the inclusion in the 1999 Engineering National Agreement of a clause for the permanent hiring of casuals employed for at least three months[21]. Research in the former Transvaal manufacturing industries indicated that wages paid by approximately 3,000 labour brokers employing 100,000 workers could be on average 25% lower than industrial councils' minimums (Naidoo, 1995a; Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996: Ch.3).

Recent research on retail workers (Kenny, 2005) emphasise how casualisation creates new lines of occupational differentiation that fragment the workforce along gender, juridical status and occupational lines that intersect in very complex ways with trade union solidarity and organization. Trade unions have encountered growing difficulties in recruiting and organizing within sectors whose geography of production is becoming fragmented and dispersed and where casual and temporary workers with unstable jobs, limited attachment to the unions and difficulties in paying dues proliferate (Klerck, 1998). Not only does the peculiar vulnerability faced by workers in atypical occupations make them difficult to organize by trade unions, but it also makes unions uninterested in deploying resources to organize employees whose tenure, and therefore union membership, is unstable (Appolis and Sikwebu, 2003). At the same time, COSATU and other federations have resented "difficulties of regulation in small businesses" with most atypical workers, which undermine collective bargaining and unions' influence in an increasingly hostile industrial and macroeconomic environment (Labour Constituency to the Jobs Summit, 1998; Webster, 1999).

[20] Dinga Sikwebu, NUMSA, Interview with the Author, 18 April 2000.
[21] Elias Monage, NUMSA, Interview with the Author, 20 April 2000.

Trends to the decentralization of bargaining as a result of subcontracting and the growth of small and micro enterprises (Standing, Sender and Weeks, 1996) are seen as a threat to labour's influence in centralized institutions for policy bargaining (COSATU, 1999a). Consequently, COSATU advocates a radical change of approach and a profound rethinking of organizational practices to make the organization of vulnerable workers a priority:

> The sub-contracting, casualising and division of workers is an attempt to deny workers the very citizenship rights that democracy promises them: the right to organize and to engage in collective bargaining and the right to work in fair and decent conditions. It is the re-emergence of a new form of apartheid employment strategies. It undermines COSATU's project of extending democracy and the rights of citizenship into the economy and working life (COSATU, 1997a: 127).

It is here quite significant that COSATU identifies atypical employment not only as an organizational challenge but also as a threat to a deep-seated, long-standing discourse of citizenship rights. Available data reveal that casualisation and atypical work undermine access to benefits and employer-subsidised social provisions (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Access to Enterprise Benefits for Regular and Temporary Workers (1996)

Benefit	Regular workers (%)	Temporary workers (%)
Paid vacation	96.1	16.4
Paid sick leave	96.5	15.1
Medical aid	67.8	1.4
Medical facilities on site	53.0	33.8
Subsidised housing/ housing allowance	12.9	0.5
Childcare services	2.2	0.5
Incentive bonuses	37.6	6.8
Profit share bonus	12.5	1.4
Severance pay	77.5	8.7
Transport allowance	29.3	5.9
Occupational health service	45.0	25.9
Provident fund	85.7	8.7
Paid maternity leave	61.6	2.3
Pension	62.1	6.4
Hostel benefits	5.2	0.5

Source: ILO, *South African Labour Flexibility Survey*, cit. in Standing (1999: 226).

A report discussed at a COSATU policy conference in 1997 noticed that the lack of a comprehensive welfare system in South Africa, coupled to an enduring legacy of commodification continued to make employees dependant on employer-subsidised provisions for their social security needs. By impacting on non-wage costs, this situation acted as a further brake on permanent employment and as an encouragement for casualisation (NALEDI, 1997). Official statistics show (Statistics South Africa, 2002: 2.13, 2.17) a growing number of employees that are not covered by employer-subsidised benefits. In the early 2000s, 55.08% of South African workers in formal employment (56.71% in manufacturing) had no medical insurance, while only 26.17% (24.53% in manufacturing) could provide coverage to dependants. At the same time, 44.83% of workers (half of which domestics and employees in trade), and 24.59% of manufacturing workers were not paying UIF contributions for reasons other than wages higher than the UIF limits.

The next section looks specifically at the broader trends in commodification of social provisions within which employment changes discussed in this section take place. Commodification, in fact, compounds and deepens in the broader society the vulnerability of wage labour emerged in the labour market. Employment vulnerability and fragmentation, conversely, interrogate the potential for social cohesion in the "hybrid" social citizenship arrangement emerged in the South African transition, which heavily relies on wage labour as a vehicle for social inclusion.

In fact, the social marginalisation of wage labour is not merely confined to unemployment, but is a product of labour market stratifications that lead to the growth of working poverty while weakening the trade unions' capacity to organise, represent and bargain for vulnerable sectors. The problem is heightened for the expanding areas of youth marginal population that are irrevocably excluded from wage labour and find no representation in a policy and institutional discourse that remains largely wage-centred (Sitas, 1998). Conversely, the institutionalisation of labour under the new dispensation requires trade unions, if they want to avoid being the representatives of a shrinking portion of workers with living standards above poverty levels, to develop ambitious policies to

allocate resources across a broader spectrum of needs. Finally, the fact that poverty tends to be reproduced inside wage labour across highly complex and layered patterns of labour market stratification, rather than being merely reducible to lack of employment, questions the viability of government strategies of social insertion based on work and wage labour discipline.

3.4 Commodification and the Widening Wage-Income Gap

The linkages between commodification and casualisation of work that emerged from the previous section, and debates on the relevance of waged employment in policies of social inclusion, highlight the importance of commodification in the relationships between wage labour and social citizenship. The deepening under the new democracy of a long-standing legacy of commodification and welfare residualism creates further problems for the waged working class and widens the gap between wage and the income required to satisfy broad social needs.

Commodification also points at fundamental ambiguities and contradictions in labour's strategies for social provisions. As Barrett (1989) argues, unions have a tradition of demanding such provisions from the state, while negotiating them with private capital, so that labour has left the question of inclusiveness and universality of the social security system unaddressed. The paradox of enforcing a selective system of benefits tied to employment status, while demanding universal social citizenship rights is adequately captured by what NUMSA's Dinga Sikwebu calls "labour-driven privatisation of social welfare":

> We are aware that we can't continue just to win these benefits against the employers without seeing that they are spread throughout society as a whole because that reinforces accusations to the working class of being an elite. Anyway, I think it is counterproductive where there is a high unemployment that brothers and sisters will not be able to enjoy these benefits, so we must be able to fight for a universal welfare system.[22]

[22] Dinga Sikwebu, NUMSA, Interview with the Author, 18 April 2000.

In fact, workers' dependence on company and industry schemes for access to healthcare, retirement benefits and housing loans reinforces the neglect of problems of social security long considered by democratic unions as the preserve of "sweetheart" labour organizations and benefit societies. An ironic outcome that many unionists have identified, however, is that only a small minority of waged workers have ended up benefiting from company-subsidised benefits, which become an added factor of segmentation of union constituencies. In the early 1990s, approximately 20% of COSATU members had access to housing loans, usually through their provident fund's contributions as collaterals (Schreiner, 1989). In a sector heavily unionised and with a strong collective bargaining tradition like engineering, only 8% of NUMSA members are covered by medical schemes, as are only 25% of NUMSA's overall members[23]. Sikwebu notices that issues related to the withdrawal of provident fund contributions in the event of retrenchments are creating increasing tensions and conflicts inside the unions. The possibility of withdrawing benefits, a conquest of working class struggles against "preservation" in the 1980s, is now turning into a threat for the unions, because it makes workers accept being retrenched if that means a substantial lump-sum payment with which to explore alternative economic opportunities, like starting a small business or buying a taxi. Sometimes the money is just needed to pay for household debts. Therefore, benefits and social rights are weighted against needs for daily survival with which they often are in contradiction:

> The general squeeze on workers leads them to see retirement money as a source of relief for their general problems. Now we have had big campaigns by workers to get the money into their pockets. That is a big issue, in a way I don't think it is so in a progressive way, it is much more of a survivalist way and that is becoming, from a survivalist point of view, a big problem for the union (…). I can understand a worker that gets a report from the fund saying he has accumulated R120,000, and there isn't an effective bursary scheme to get his kids to school, and they are being financially excluded. Or maybe his house is going to be taken because of the policies of the government on housing. Why should he spare money for when he retires when there are so much more pressing things to deal with now

[23] Paul Biyase, NUMSA, Interview with the Author, 18 April 2000.

> (…). You can't survive with your wages, so what do you do? If you go to the loan shark you sink into indebtedness and the only way to get out of that is to get retrenched and take the package. This has created a lot of instability for the union, it's a time bomb for us.[24]

With spiralling levels of unemployment, poverty and downgrading of wages and working conditions, social security acquires a new sense of urgency for the unions. Under apartheid, high levels of social spending were finalised to social control, rather than redistribution. In the early 1990s state transfers and grants contributed less than 4% to personal income (despite being about 12% of the GDP and 40% of the budget) compared to 12% in OECD countries with similar overall levels of budget allocations (Kruger, 1992: 8). At the same time, the late apartheid state had reinforced the means-tested nature of provisions that were not wage-related, for example starting to phase out social pensions not for the elderly, like family allowances (Lund, 1993), a trend that the post-1994 government continued. The early democratic state strengthened the existing dualism in South Africa's social welfare system between a minority of workers covered by comprehensive wage-related benefits, and a majority of working poor and unemployed that were either excluded from social security and assistance, or received a targeted and means-tested safety net, mainly in the form of old-age pensions.

In this context, the impact of income redistribution was negligible. The democratic transition saw the growth of income inequalities along class lines that tended especially to polarise the African population, overlapping with existing racial disparities. While the income of the poorest 40% of African households declined 21% between 1991 and 1996, that of the richest 10% increased 17%. Therefore, while the African share of the poorest 30% of the population increased from 87% to 92% between 1975 and 1996, the African share in the top 10% also increased, from 2% to 22%, and the white share in this bracket declined from 95% to 65%. Income redistribution, in itself the source of only 8.4% of overall income growth, took place largely towards the richest 10% of the African population (40.1%) and the richest 10% of the white population (11.4%), while the poorest 40% of the African population benefited from only 0.1% of redistribution

[24] Dinga Sikwebu, NUMSA Education Officer, Interview with Author, 18 April 2000.

(Whiteford and van Seventer, 2000). In 2000, while the richest 10% of South Africans received 51% of the national income, the poorest 40% received less than 4% (NIEP, 2000). The following sub-sections will discuss how specific areas of policy intervention have dealt with changing scenarios of inequality.

3.4.1 Non-Contributory Grants: A Strained Social Safety Net

Social inequalities and vulnerability related to the crisis of waged employment and labour market fragmentation impinge on a system of social security that within the GEAR framework has reinforced its residual, selective and predominantly means-tested nature (Vorster, 2003). As a result, state social policies have unevenly addressed, and often reinforced, commodification levels that, together with the decline of wage labour, place increasing strains on working class incomes. Current welfare and social assistance expenditures are largely targeted at specific areas of social marginalisation and are only loosely connected with social security mechanisms. These latter remain largely based on active employment and provide an inadequate coverage for retirement and risk events related to unemployment, illness or disability. In 2001, approximately 65.5% of all social grants paid by the Department of Social Development (former Department of Welfare) went to state old-age pensions (SOAP), with a decline from 70% in 1999 (Torres, 2000b; SAIRR, 2003: 348). The variation is largely explained by the increase in child support grants (CSG), also means-tested, extended in April 2003 to caregivers of children under 9, up from the previous 7-year age limit (Dept. of Social Development, 2001 and 2004). CSG beneficiaries increased from 2.5 to 7.5 million from 1997 to 2004, and by more than 50% between 2001 and 2002 (National Treasury, 2004: 495). On the other hand, CSGs were put in place after the gradual phasing out of a former, and substantially more generous, State Maintenance Grant (Haarmann, 1998; Zain, 2000)[25]. Moreover, to qualify for the CSG, caregivers must not only pass the means test, but they should not refuse employment "without good reason" (RSA, 1998a; Clark, 2000).

[25] The SMG was gradually phased out between 1998 and 2001, and in 1998 it amounted to R235 per month. CSGs paid R130 per month in 2002, down from R150 in 2001 (SAIRR, 2003: 348). The policy discourse for the transition from SMG to CSG is discussed in Chapter 8.

SOAPs are paid on a means-tested basis[26] to male recipients aged 65 and above and female aged 60 and above. According to the 1996 Census, only eight per cent of the population were entitled to SOAPs, whose maximum monthly value in 2002 was R620. In 1994, only 5% of the poorest 10% of the population were SOAP recipients (Van der Berg, 1994). As evidence of the limited decommodifying impacts of old-age pensions, rates of increase of SOAP were below the rate of inflation for every year from 1994 to 2002, with the exception of 1997 and 2002. SOAP payments that were theoretically required, in excess of actual payments, to keep pace with inflation went from R13 per month in 1994 to R 99 in 2002 (SAIRR, 2003: 349). The functioning of SOAPs and CSGs means that South African citizens aged between 9 and 59 (women) or 64 (men) are totally deprived of any form of state social security coverage.

An added strain on SOAPs is due to pension sharing with which, in the absence of a comprehensive social security system, elderly members of the household are often the main source of support for long-term unemployed relatives (McKendrick and Shingwenyana, 1995; Sagner and Mtati, 1999; Barrientos, 2003). This factor can hardly be taken as evidence of the "universalism" (Matisonn and Seekings, 2002) of the SOAP system. The importance of the SOAP as a means to decommodify livelihoods of poor South Africans avoiding utter social dislocation can be seen by data according to which, in the middle of the 1990s, 52% of the African population would have been at the income level of the poorest 10%, had it not been for the SOAP, which on average increased the income of the bottom 20% of the population by 206%, and that of the next 20% by 24% (Le Roux, 1995).

[26] In 2000 the means test for SOAP limited eligibility to net incomes of less than R12504 per year, or R1042 per month, or a combined income of R23064 per year or R1922 per month for married couples. The means test for the CSG limited eligibility to household's net income of R9600 per year, or R13200 per year for households living in rural areas or informal dwelling. Income used to calculate means tests include cash payments, pensions and provident funds, income from immovable property. The means test formula also penalises, among other, "assets" in the form of immovable property and lump sums invested with the aim of procuring an annuity (NIEP, 2000; Van der Berg, 2001a).

3.4.2 Contributory Provisions: Unemployment Insurance, Retirement Benefits and the Reproduction of Exclusion

The South African system of social security for retirement and unemployment is separate from social assistance both in its logics of operation and in its institutional framework. In particular, the Department of Labour is responsible for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), in terms of the Unemployment Insurance Act (UIA) of 2001, which replaced the former UIA of 1966, and for the administration of benefits under the 1993 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA)[27]. The UIF defines as beneficiaries only contributors in regular employment and excludes independent contractors, casual workers, public employees covered by the Government Employees' Pension Funds, self-employed, job seekers, workers employed for less than one full day or eight hours per week, and employees with incomes above a maximum ceiling subject to variation (Olivier 2000a, xx)[28]. A 2002 amendment to the UIA has extended UIF benefits to domestic and seasonal workers.

UIF benefits, at a graduated replacement rate ranging from 60% of the last wage for low-income workers to 38% for middle and high-incomes can be claimed by contributors who have been in employment for at least 13 weeks, and have contributed for at least six months, over the 52 weeks that preceded unemployment, illness or maternity (NEDLAC, 2000b)[29]. The contributor must be capable and available for work, whereby refusal to accept or to apply for suitable employment is ground for the exclusion from benefits. The system is designed to punish work avoidance, which includes the denial of benefits for loss of

[27] On the COIDA, which replaced the 1941 Workmen's Compensation Act and the 1973 Mines and Works Act, see Rosengarten (1983), Benjamin (1992), Department of Labour (1997) and Flutz and Pieris (1999).

[28] Since the 1980s the independent trade unions had demanded the inclusion of jobseekers and long-term unemployed under state-funded unemployment insurance (Industrial Aid Society, 1984).

[29] Following the Unemployment Insurance Contribution Act of 2002, 7 days of benefits are claimable every 42 days of contributions for a maximum of 238 days (121 days for maternity benefits) over the four years preceding the application for benefits. This system replaces the previous one, where one week of benefits could be paid every six weeks of contributions. Such a system departed from the insurance principle of the UIF because it allowed contributors to build contributory "credits" over their entire lifetime and be therefore still eligible for benefits even in the event of not contributing for long periods of time. The new system, moreover, separates maternity and unemployment benefits, allowing claimants of maternity benefits to remain covered by insurance against unemployment.

employment resulting from strikes and lock-outs where the contributor is part to or has an interest in the dispute (Calitz, Grant, Shipman and van Kerken, 1999).

The financing of the system relies entirely on employers and employees, which contribute 1% each of the contributor's earnings. Since 1979 the government has actually stopped contributing to the UIF following an amendment to the UIA that limited state contributions to 25% of the aggregate contributions of employers and employees but not in excess of R7 million annually. A ministerial inquiry reported in December 1996 that less than 10% of the unemployed were benefiting from the UIF. At the same time, workers with extremely low wages claimed a minor amount of UIF benefits due to the fact that it is more difficult for them to build benefits through fixed contributions from a meagre payroll. In 1996, two thirds of benefits were paid to employees earning more than R1,500 per month. Workers below that level, which constituted 70% of contributors, received only one third of benefits (27% in the case of female workers). Moreover, less than 5% of contributors in top income brackets received almost 20% of total benefits payout. Duration of benefits was also highly unequal: for salaries of less than R500 per month benefits were paid for 1.9 months on average, while for wages higher than R5,000 per month they were paid for 4.6 months (Meth, Naidoo and Shipman, 1996: 37).

As the Unemployment Insurance Board recognised, the UIF functions predominantly as a temporary economic relief, hence the conflation of maternity, sickness and death benefits in the UIF, rather than as a real income replacement for the unemployed (Department of Labour, 1995)[30]. Moreover, vast areas of exclusion from the UIF, especially long-term jobseekers, reflect the fund's inability to face labour market's failures to absorb new entrants. The UIF therefore codifies unemployment or under-employment as temporary accidents of life, rather than enduring, long-term forms of exclusion. Moreover, the state's disengagement from the fund heavily limits its redistributive potential, leading to

[30] At the same time it is to be noticed that, during the limited duration of benefits, the UIF's income replacement rate is approximately 50% with three years contributions and a R2000 monthly wage, which is far higher than the 27.3% replacement rate the same worker would have with 20 years contributions in a defined contributions pension fund. The authors of these estimates, therefore, are quick to complain about the "disproportionately high" level of UIF benefits (Van der Berg and Bredenkamp, 2002: 45-46).

chronic underfunding. In 1999 the Auditor General ultimately declared the UIF "technically insolvent" (Auditor General of South Africa, 2001; Thari Consulting, n.d.). Since then, the number of unemployment claims approved and the benefits paid out have constantly declined, even if the average per capita benefits have marginally increased. While in 1998 842,000 UIF beneficiaries received R3,623 each on average, the number of beneficiaries had dropped to 569,000 in 2003, for R4,150 average benefits (Department of Labour, 2003).

The National Treasury has opposed more generous and inclusive benefits and the Department of Labour is not been enthusiastic on expanding coverage for casual workers and jobseekers. The UIF Commissioner, Shadrack Mkontho, commenting on the question of raising UIF contributions from employers said:

> Our approach is to create a balance between security and employment. So what we say is that as much as we'd like to regulate the market, we also don't want to kill jobs (…). I think that is where the tension is between us and labour, because traditionally we come from the same history and I think the expectations they have is that we'll be sympathetic to their reasons and demands, but we are with the government now, you see? Let's take the whole issue of casualisation. In terms of labour, what you must do is to legislate so that it is not attractive for an employer to casualise, right? (…). Now, our approach is we are in a globally economy now, whereby we cannot act as if we are in isolation from what is happening in the world[31].

The South African system of retirement benefits is fully privatised. The country does not have a national public pension system, and company or industry-based schemes provide the totality of retirement coverage, usually on a fully-funded rather than on a more redistributive pay-as-you-go system. In mid-1990s, approximately 70% of employed workers contributed to retirement funds, with hourly and weekly paid workers belonging predominantly to provident funds, which allowed for lump sum withdrawals of contributions in the event of loss of employment. Both provident and pension funds are funded by employers' and employees' contributions at usual rate of 7.5% of the normal wage (RSA, 1992; Naidoo, 1995b).

[31] Shadrack Mkontho, UIF Commissioner, Interview with the Author, 2 October 2000.

Workers' preference for provident funds is a product of the inadequacies of unemployment insurance in providing an income for the long-term unemployed, which leads many retrenched workers to give up retirement income to withdraw accumulated contributions. As Asher (2000) estimates, a retirement fund with a 6.7% payroll contribution level is likely to pay a greater overall cash benefit than the UIF, and retirement contributions are usually at a 7.5% level. There is abundant evidence of the inability of the private pension system to provide for adequate post-employment income. In 1995, 40% of monthly payments from retirement funds were lower than the state old-age pension, and more than 50% of beneficiaries received less than the SLL threshold of roughly R600 per month (RSA, 1995a: 18-19). Labour's, particularly COSATU's, approach has traditionally prioritised a clear separation between an effective unemployment coverage and retirement benefits to be paid entirely at the end of the worker's career (Congress of South African Trade Unions, 1999). In this way, the unions have tried to respond to the inherent contradictions in provident funds which, rather than the UIF, have come to provide the main safeguard against job loss.

Post-1994 policy orientations to the reform of the retirement provisions system have, however, been particularly concerned with extending access to private retirement funds as a way to reduce the costs for the state of old age pensions. The 1995 Smith Committee on retirement provisions recommended incentives of different kinds -- including tax breaks, relaxation of the means test to facilitate the accumulation of financial assets and special funds for informal workers -- to encourage recipients of the SOAP to save for their retirement and cease being dependent on government transfers (RSA, 1995a: 42; Naidoo, 1995b). The drive to further commodify retirement provisions was endorsed by the Department of Finance and the RDP Ministry in the Office of the President. This latter, in particular, argued that job-creating investment, rather than "handouts", should remain the priority of state social spending, while the former supported Smith Committee's emphasis on downsizing the SOAP. It is indicative, from this point of view, that the only main recommendation of the Smith Committee that was rejected by the Department of Finance was to peg pension payments at a

fixed rate equal to 1.7% of the GDP, which the department deemed too expensive[32].

Therefore, the government's approach not only confirmed the commodification of retirement income, but tried to expand it by limiting the state's existing responsibilities in the provision of old-age pensions through redistributive means. Conversely, a similar emphasis was not placed on making retirement benefits more adequate as a replacement income, in a context whereby low-wage workers would need substantial portions of their wages as contributions only to achieve a retirement income at the level of the SOAP (see Table 3.5). A survey conducted in 1999 found out that 94% of retirees in South Africa are not financially independent, with 47% still depending on their families after retirement, 31% continuing to work and 17% depending on state pensions (Falkena and Luus, 1999).

Table 3.5. Percentage of Income Required to Provide Retirement Benefits at 60/65 Years of Age Equivalent to a SOAP of R410/month, 1995

	R750/month Wage			R1250/month Wage			R1750/month Wage		
Years of contributions	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
40	8	10	18	5	6	11	3	4	7
35	10	12	22	6	7	13	4	5	9
30	12	15	27	7	9	16	5	6	11
25	16	19	35	9	11	20	7	8	15
20	21	25	46	13	15	28	9	11	20
15	30	36	66	18	22	40	13	15	28
10	48	58	106	29	35	64	21	25	46

Figures represent percentages of income required as contributions at different wage levels and years of contribution to be able to receive at least R410/month at retirement.
Source: RSA (1995a: 47).

The combined impact of inadequacies in the UIF and in retirement benefits questions a notion of 'employment' as a phase of life in which rights and entitlements are built to be enjoyed after work. Increasing uncertainties in retirement incomes rather tend to face the individual worker with the alternative of either depending on waged employment well after the retirement age, or spending retirement benefits to cope with job losses. On the other hand, trends to commodification of retirement income are reinforced by the growing exposure of

[32] *Hansard*, 13 June 1996, pp.3021-3025.

benefits to the fluctuations of financial markets. Following international trends (Blackburn, 2004), in fact, the growth of contingent and atypical forms of employment has mirrored a shift of retirement funding risks from the companies to the employees. The adoption of "defined contributions" in place of "defined benefit" schemes (Orr, 1996) in fact reduces the employers' liability in financing workers' retirement. At the same time, defined contributions schemes carry, however, relatively higher returns for workers whose contributory periods are curtailed by layoffs or whose working life is shortened by illnesses like HIV-AIDS. According to independent projections "defined contributions" schemes rose from about 25% of total pension assets in 1995 to 60% in 2000[33].

3.4.3 Healthcare Policy: Universalising Private Access?

In the case of health services as well, inequalities of access inherited from the past are coupled to a highly commodified pattern of delivery (McIntyre and Doherty, 2004). On one hand, the public health sector predominantly serves the low-income population, with free public primary healthcare for all citizens and free access to public hospitals based on income-test or limited to particularly vulnerable groups such as children under 6 and pregnant women, but not the elderly or patients suffering from HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, private sector structures offer a much higher level of quality for customers that can afford health insurance under private (usually company-based) medical aid schemes. In 1997, between 17 and 18 percent of the population (McCoy, 2000; Olivier 2000a, 152-153) was covered by medical aid schemes, but while coverage was 60% for the richest 20% of the population, it was only 5% for the poorest 40% (Soderlund, Schierhoul and van den Heever, 1998: 142). By 2000, the covered population had declined to 16.3%, while the African population covered by private healthcare has dropped from 10% to 8.4% between 1996 and 1999 (Statistics South Africa, 2001a). Conversely, in 1995 the public health sector served 80 percent of the population with approximately 50% of the total health budget and 40% of the practitioners (Pillay and Bond 1995).

[33] *The Economist*, 5 June 1999. According to Asher (2000: 3) almost all retirement funds in South Africa were "defined benefits" until the mid-1980s.

The state of overcrowding and poor quality of services in the depleted public sector is indicated by the fact that in 1999 nearly one-quarter of all private sector expenditures were paid "out-of-pocket" by users not covered by private medical schemes and entitled to free public healthcare (Goudge, 2000: 71). Facing powerful business resistance to proposals to institute a National Health Insurance fund (Van den Heever 1994), the 1997 "White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System" confirmed the RDP's orientation to primary health care (particularly for women and children) as the most accessible form of health delivery. The extension of free primary care for pregnant women and children under 6, established in 1996, was marked by unevenness in implementation and low standards of newly-built facilities (Bond and Khosa 1999; Bond, Pillay and Sanders, 1997). Minister of Health Dlamini-Zuma has emphatically stated that "primary health care does not mean cheap care"[34]. Huge disparities between "curative" private care and "primary" public care, however, ultimately reflect in the South African case a trend that Packard (1997) identifies across the developing world. For him, "primary health care" is applied as a rhetorical device spun off an expert knowledge that, within international institutions, is interested in downgrading public healthcare in the direction of selective, residual provisions for the extremely poor.

Post-1994 health policies have looked at regulating the private sector in trying to ensure some equity of access (Nadasen, 2000; Blaauw and Gilson, 2001). In this regard, expert policy recommendations have tended to reinforce a view of healthcare provision as based on strict insurance principles, with clear connections between risk-events and payments, and a rejection of progressive funding systems, like pay-as-you-go schemes, seen as "encouragement of an entitlement, as opposed to an insurance, mentality" (RSA, 1994c: 57). Compared to other government ministries, the Department of Health has, however, shown sensitivity to the need of equalising access to services in private schemes, for example by encouraging legislation and tax incentives to provide for risk-sharing, limit discrimination and avoid risk-rated premiums (Department of Health, 1996).

[34] *Hansard*, 19 June 1995, p.2855.

Regulations "against the threat of managed care"[35] were also argued for. Rather than endorsing the principle of universal publicly-funded healthcare, however, the government envisaged the gradual expansion of coverage by private schemes as a preferred solution. Indeed, equalising access to private schemes was considered, in purported imitation of what the Smith Committee had recommended for pensions, a way to "encourage behaviour that will prevent people ultimately relying on the state" (Department of Health, 1997a: 7).

In this way, however, employment remained a decisive factor in determining access, therefore limiting the decommodifying impact of the proposed policies. The 1995 Broomberg-Shisana Committee, for example, recommended that everyone in formal employment should be covered by private health insurance schemes providing, also in public hospitals, a minimum benefit package refunded by the scheme for an amount equivalent to at least the corresponding costs in the public system. Indicatively enough, however, one of the rationales cited for this proposal was to actually further commodify healthcare by "improving cost recovery within the public hospital system" (RSA, 1995b: S.23) and limiting "non-payment" of public hospital services by employed people without medical aid.

The 1999 Medical Schemes Act advanced the notion of "minimum benefit packages", which include "essential" hospital care, and prohibited discrimination in access and contributions on the basis of age, sex, race, past medical history and frequency of use of medical services. The Act established a "community rating" principle according to which contributions could not be differentiated according to health status, but only on the basis of specified criteria, which include contributors' income and number of dependants. Moreover, as a counterweight to commodification, co-payments were allowed only for non-prescribed benefits, and the ratio between health savings accounts and contributions was limited to

[35] Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, Chair of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health, *Hansard*, 4 June 1996, p.2197. As organisations that "manage the utilisation of health care through the use of mechanisms that are designed to monitor appropriateness, promote efficacy, quality and cost-effectiveness" (Roy, 2002) of healthcare delivery, managed care organisations are an effective way to contain health costs in a privatised environment. Economies are usually achieved by contracting with healthcare providers the delivery of packages at standard conditions, usually on a bulk basis (especially in "preferred provider" schemes). In this way, however, commodification of healthcare is reinforced by establishing a more stringent connection between the users' financial capacity and the type and amount of services provided (Gottschalk, 2000).

15%. Finally, a fixed premium scale was introduced to avoid adverse selection of the elderly (Carstens et al., 1999). At the same time, however, and despite a public support for the idea of state-funded social health insurance (Doherty et al., 2000; McIntyre, Doherty and Gilson, 2003; Blaauw and Gilson, 2001), private medical schemes were reinforced as the "socially desirable" option over decommodified universal public healthcare[36].

In the final analysis, the government's health policy confirmed its commitment to liberalise the market and prioritise private provision while enforcing regulations to prevent discriminatory coverage. Part of this strategy, which departs from strict insurance principles, is to increase diseconomies for private providers, which are faced with escalating costs. In this sense, limited mandatory services and contributions can facilitate a move towards public healthcare. At the same time, however, private providers' lack of interest in "unprofitable" low-income markets, combined to the steady deterioration of the public health sector, make the possibility of a greater involvement of the private sector in funding a semi-public contributory system remote (Van den Heever, 1998)[37].

Rising private healthcare costs have short-term detrimental effects on contributing employees, which are increasingly opting out of medical aids. Ironically, the prescribed benefits established by the 1999 Act have led many schemes offering blue-collar, low-cost products to increase their fees for services provided particularly in public hospitals with a low reimbursement rate. While in 1986 the rate of premiums' increase in relation to inflation was 9:18, in 1995 it was 13:8, and from 1990 to 1999 it has been 18:10 on average. According to

[36] In this sense, the 1999 Act was a retreat from the Department of Health's earlier commitment to establish a payroll-funded Social Health Insurance system which, among other things, was supposed to include a public hospital fund in the form of a contributory scheme, a "second tier" publicly-funded mechanism intended to increase public propensity to contribute to healthcare. According to the Department, the new scheme would have brought coverage to 17.3 million members, 10.4 of which with yearly incomes of less than R15,000. At the same time, 70% of private schemes' members are above this income level (Department of Health, 1997b). This proposal was shelved after encountering the determined opposition of private medical schemes, worried that a publicly funded scheme would have involved an adverse selection against them, and from private hospitals, worried about losing their low-income clientele, see Alex van den Heever, Council of Medical Schemes, interview with the Author, 29 November 2000).

[37] See also Alex van den Heever, Council of Medical Schemes and Department of Health, Interview with the Author, 29 November 2000.

Rothberg, Magennis and Mynhart (2000), with the spread of "managed care" schemes (Roy, 2002) funders and providers have contained medicalization and hospitalisation costs while admission fees for users have risen, signalling a shift of the financing burden towards the customer.

A survey conducted in 2000 by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JMCCI) on 1500 member companies found that one third of respondents addressed rising healthcare costs (and a further 8% was planning to do so) by offering "salary packages" to employees as lump-sum medical compensations, which substantially reduce the amount of claimable benefits[38]. At the same time, 20% of respondents were limiting their employees' medical benefits to schemes with low premiums and limited coverage and 53% reported that the number of their staff on medical aids had decreased since the passing of the Medical Schemes Act, mostly due to premiums' increases. According to other surveys, while overall members' contributions currently stand at 55% of the total premiums paid, this is expected to touch 70% (corresponding to 14% of the amount of wages) by 2010, also due to the dramatic increase in HIV/AIDS prevalence[39]. The government's strategy of "privatised universalism" as an alternative to decommodification supported through redistribution seems therefore questioned by the very market forces initially advocated to limit reliance on the public sector.

3.4.4 Housing Policy: Public Expenditure as an Incentive to Commodification

In the sphere of housing policies, finally, the government has followed a line that, compared to the Department of Health's emphasis on equalising conditions for access, has more closely followed macroeconomic orthodoxy (Bond 1999; Khan, 2004). The post-1994 housing policy framework remained largely market-based and dependent on private banking institutions for credit. It is particularly remarkable, however, that these orientations emerged from a broad process of consultation that during apartheid's final years had involved a broad spectrum of civil society actors, including the ANC, trade unions and non-governmental

[38] *Sowetan*, 14 June 2000, p.5.
[39] *Finance Week*, 26 June 2000, p.16.

organizations. In 1992 a National Housing Forum (NHF) had been started following the initiative of the liberally-minded Consultative Business Movement. While not unique in a late apartheid context that saw the proliferation of "forums" in many areas of socio-economic policy making, the NHF engaged in structured interactions with the Department of Housing, which culminated in the 1993 launch of a National Housing Board (NHB) that replaced all the former racially-segregated housing policy institutions. An early consensus between the government and the NHF was found on the need to reshape existing state housing subsidies and define new mechanisms of mortgage indemnity to attract private developers to black townships (Rust, 1996).

The NHF became increasingly institutionalised within housing policy making, and its role increasingly was to select civil society representatives for the NHB. The National Housing Summit held in Botshabelo in October 1994 marked the end of the NHF, which converged in the broader consultative process charged with outlining democratic South Africa's housing policy. The main product of this process was the 1994 "Housing White Paper". The White Paper's basic approach was in line with a residualist view of social services delivery as a way to "provide security of tenure and access to basic services as well as possibly a rudimentary starter formal structure to the poorest of the poor" (Department of Housing, 1994: 5.3.7). To this end, in particular, a new system of housing subsidies was envisaged as part of a "social compact" between communities, the state and private developers (Tomlinson, 1999).

Explicitly aimed at promoting home ownerships in poor communities, the housing subsidy initially consisted of a maximum of R15,000, set on a scale depending on household income, for households earning less than R3,500 per month. The NHF had reached consensus on a principle of "incrementalism", which privileged "breadth" over "depth" in public intervention and regarded, therefore, public subsidies as starter finance for a wide number of poor recipients, rather than focusing on more substantial amounts for smaller numbers (Adler and Oelofse, 1996). In this way, subsidies were intended to act as the basis of a partnership whereby private finance could arguably complement basic public provisions.

Critics of this solution regard it as a capitulation by the ANC government and its civil society allies to the centrality of private investment and commodified housing provision (Bond, 1999: 122-151). In this view, a logic that had historically failed to provide low-cost housing in black communities was therefore destined to perpetuate spatial inequalities and marginalisation of the poor (Royston, 2002; Hassen, 2003; Huchzermeyer, 2004: 179-223). Progressive organizations inside the NHF had lambasted the concept of "incrementalism" as legitimising inferior housing standards for the poor, or "a new word for [apartheid-era] site-and-service"[40] policies. Adler and Oelofse (1996) show, indeed, that attracting private top-up investment rapidly became the new government's priority, replacing decommodified housing provisions. This was coterminous with a gradual sidestepping of civil society inputs and of the NHF itself. Direct negotiations between the government and mortgage lenders led, in particular, to reconfigure public housing finance as ancillary to financial capital. For example, a public mortgage indemnity scheme was started to cover "politically inspired" risks, namely the legacy of apartheid-age rent boycotts and land occupations, while a National Housing Finance Corporation was mandated with providing finance for private low-income housing developments[41].

The philosophy of incrementalism was, on the other hand, responsive to the ANC's Housing Minister Joe Slovo's stated ambition to "end the undeclared war between communities, the state and the private sector" in order to alleviate communities of the burden of being "passive recipients" of housing[42]. To present limited public subsidy allocations as a benefit for poor communities, therefore, the government deployed a substantial amount of entrepreneurial rhetoric, self-help imagery and a disciplining discourse based on the individual duty to manage scarce financial resources. After recognising that the R15,000 public subsidy "will seldom, if ever, buy the kind of house people imagine when they turn to daydreaming", Slovo himself clarified:

[40] Reid to Pinsky, 30 May 1994, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.24.5.
[41] The ANC, on the other hand, was of the opinion that even the state role in providing "bridging finance" in the form of mortgage indemnity had to be limited, and that this task was a responsibility of the private sector, see African National Congress, Department of Local Government, *National Housing Subsidy Scheme. Discussion Document*, Draft 4, May 1994, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.24.3.5.
[42] *Hansard,* 25 May 1994, p.37.

> If one gets R15,000 and chooses the most expensive area of land, or takes R15,000 to purchase expensive building material, it will be little, it will not be enough. What I am saying is that we are allocating the R15,000 as assistance money for the needy, for the poor, and we call upon our people to maximise the use of the subsidy[43].

In the final analysis, as Slovo added in a different occasion, "maximisation" of the subsidy depended on the people's ability to attract private developers in their communities, which ultimately required the orderly payment of bonds, rents and fees in accordance with what the government's *Masakhane* campaign was recommending[44]. Far from being a measure aimed at decommodifying housing, therefore, the subsidy was an inducement to discipline users into paying for municipal services[45]. Revolutionary, *marxisant* struggle parlance occasionally supported this celebration of public spending downgrading, as in the case of the ANC member of Parliament that praised incrementalism as the "dialectical unity"[46] of public subsidies and private finance. In endorsing the concept of "incrementalism", the NHF had, on the other hand, expressed the concern that the new housing subsidy could be intended as "a strategy for substandard provision of housing". To counter this danger, the Forum suggested to present the subsidy in a positive light, as a way to reduce dependency on the state[47] and as an encouragement for the "ingenuity and commitment communities demonstrated, even when confronted with limited resources"[48].

In its current structure, the housing subsidy scheme (HSS) provides financial assistance finalised at acquiring home ownership for households with incomes of up to R3500 per month (Newton, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999; Lanegran

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[43] *Hansard*, 28 February 1996, p.240.
[44] *Hansard,* 16 May 1995, p.1269.
[45] These arguments were, on the other hand, consistent with recommendations from the World Bank, according to which "There are significant advantages to end-users paying at least some of the cost of services. Not only are public resources freed up for other social objectives, paying for services makes users more attentive to the quality of what is provided, more willing to participate in delivery, and readier to speak out in the event of quality shortfalls" (Ahmad, Hansen, Fallon and Levy, 1994: 44).
[46] *Hansard*, 16 May 1995, p.1271.
[47] See National Housing Forum, *Co-ordinating Committee Third Strategic Workshop*, Glenburn Lodge, Muldersdrift, 3-5 November 1993, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.25.10.3.
[48] National Housing Forum, *Submission to the Proposed National Housing Strategy*, 4 October 1994, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.11.2.

and Lanegran, 2001). Different kinds of subsidies provide, among other, for access to land and infrastructures (Project-Linked Subsidy), purchase of a house (Individual Subsidy) or rental and co-operative housing (Institutional Subsidy). Between 1994 and 2000, 80% of approved subsidies were project-linked and 13% were individual (NIEP, 2000). The highest subsidy amount was R20,300 in 2003, for households with income of less than R1,500 per month, decreasing to R7,000 for households with income between R2,510 and R3,500. A recent investigation by the Public Service Commission (2003: 86) shows that most recipients of project-linked subsidies live in conditions of extreme poverty with household incomes in the region of R600-800 per month. These figures rise for individual, institutional and credit-linked subsidies. Approximately one quarter of project-linked recipients had either no income at all or survived on state grants. Individual subsidies' recipients have, instead, a R1200 median monthly household income, while 21% percent of them are in formal employment and 16% are in informal employment (Public Service Commission, 2003: 87).

The limited impact of the HSS in decommodifying access to housing is, however, emphasised by high levels of dissatisfaction for poor building standards and low quality of services allowed by the subsidies (Tomlinson, 1996; Public Services Commission, 2003). By 1999, only 30% of houses built with subsidies complied with building regulations, mainly in areas where additional subsidies, usually from local governments, were available (NIEP, 2000: 30). Moreover, the HSS's aim to facilitate partnerships between aspiring homeowners and private financial institutions clashed with these latter's resistance to fund low-cost housing in black townships with high levels of poverty, unemployment and entrenched traditions of militancy and rent boycotts. An alternative for formally employed workers, as discussed in Chapter 7, is to use their retirement contributions to access mortgage lending[49], which amounts to further commodification of housing while endangering retirement incomes. For the unemployed, however, such possibilities are unavailable, and they are moreover

[49] The use of accumulated pension contributions in the forms of housing loans is the only form of withdrawal of contributions to be legally allowed by the Pension Funds Act (No.24 of 1956, Sect.18(5)). This practice has been however repeatedly discouraged by the statutory Pension Funds Registrar, especially with Circular PF92/1997, which expressly blames it for the erosion of retirement benefits (Janse van Rensburg et al., 1999).

affected by geographical discrimination, or "redlining", enforced by private investors (Bond and Tait, 1997).

Diat von Broembsen, Chief Director of Policy Planning at the Department of Housing[50], recognises the contradiction implicit in a policy approach that encourages ownership among sectors of the population that do not have real possibilities to achieve it except at very poor levels of access. At the same time, the government has reinforced the commodified nature of access to housing abdicating from redistributive policy interventions in the sector, for example by denying mortgage guarantees in several impoverished locations. The state has rather prioritized the stabilization of the private grants market by targeting subsidies according to a concept of housing "affordability" defined in ways that minimize housing costs by reducing standards (Bond, 1999). Therefore, the Department of Housing's (1995) definition of "full services" encompasses relatively rudimentary provisions such as household-connected water supplies, paved roads with drainage and 60 amps electricity. These are defined "affordable" for households able to pay monthly fees of R270-350, which are relatively high as a proportion of state grants or minimum wages in many sectors.

The construction of "affordability" as a concept finalised at ensuring residents' ability to repay private lenders, rather than as protecting access to basic housing rights, is stated in the position of SERVCON, a public-private partnership charged by the government with managing repossessed houses from loan defaulters:

> The housing policy in simple terms means that the poor will be assisted through capital subsidies but beyond that people must live in houses they can afford. This is not generally understood nor accepted by everyone. The impact is that if you can no longer afford your house you will have to move to a cheaper one (…). Those who continue to refuse to cooperate will have to face the normal legal process (…). Many people who have signed either sales or rightsizing agreements will have to receive "intensive care" until they establish a constant payment pattern" (Creighton, n.d.).

[50] Interview with the Author, 7 August 2001.

The reconfiguration of housing away from a public social provision and towards a fully commodified good accessible on the basis of the individual's financial means had also been clearly phrased in Minister Slovo's warnings. In response to the ANC's Mary Turok's protestation that "housing is a right, not a commodity"[51], the minister argued that the government would not "keep listening to excuses"[52] of poor residents that refuse to pay for their rents. In their case:

> Let me make very clear that people who refuse to respond to [our] very fair offers will be occupying accommodation which neither belongs to them nor to which they have any right. We are determined for the rule of law to take its course in these instances. We are saying to the communities that it is in their interest to support the rule of law, because only then can they hope to attract housing investment on a sufficiently large scale[53].

In the case of housing, therefore, commodification and the allure of private property emerge not only as policy alternatives to public social provisions, but also as a pedagogical discursive device that justifies the withdrawal of public resources by making the satisfaction of communities' social needs dependent upon individual discipline and entrepreneurial activity (Castles, 1998).

The government's perceptions of the subsidy's limits as a tool to attract private housing finance in African townships have ultimately played a relevant part in recent reassessments of housing policy. Current policy debates, in fact, are focused on the need to rethink the earlier ownership-orientated approach and develop multi-pronged, flexible solutions. These tend to prioritise rental accommodation as a mode of occupancy that, on the other hand, research has shown as popular among subsidy recipients that are not attracted by prospects of building their own home with subsidies often perceived as inadequate[54]. At the same time, however, emphasizing the role of rental has led the Department of Housing to accentuate the entrepreneurial dimension of housing delivery. New subsidy mechanisms under discussion, in particular, would provide financial

[51] *Hansard,* 16 May 1995, p.1290.
[52] *Hansard*, 16 May 1995, p.1325.
[53] Joe Slovo, Minister of Housing, *Hansard*, 16 May 1995, p.1268.
[54] Petal Thring, University of the Witwatersrand Graduate School in Public and Development Management, interview with the Author, 22 May 2000.

support directly linked to users' savings and ability to mobilize equity in addition to the subsidy. This solution is sometimes dubbed inside the Department as the "Chilean route"[55], after the country where it has been more systematically applied.

Part of the concept is to develop financing tools that more closely adhere to modes of entrepreneurship which in poor communities depend on informal networks and microcredit, rather than on formal mortgage lending. The mobilization of these networks, together with small users' equities is therefore aimed at increasing users' participation to housing costs, again under the cover of promoting responsibility and self-activation, while addressing grassroots preferences for non-ownership options[56]. Part of the government's purported vision to strengthen individual entrepreneurship as a mode of housing delivery (what Housing Department's Diat von Broembsen calls "psychological ownership") is the perceived opportunities lying in the informal rental market, mainly backyard dwellings which, as explained in Chapter 7, are widespread among many of the respondents for this work. Analyses that have informed departmental discussions argue, from this point of view, that backyard rental is a promising market to "tap" once landlord-tenant relationships are brought under the realm of market rationality, entrepreneurial spirit and predictable patterns of payment, rather than merely leaving such arrangements to "compassion", erratic personal interactions, rent boycotts and inadequate housing renovations (Gilbert, Mabin, MacCarthy and Watson, 1997; Gilbert, 2003).

The social policy overview presented in this section shows how post-1994 macroeconomic orientations and social citizenship discourses at the institutional level have translated into transitional public interventions that reinforce the commodification of social provisions while segmenting their forms of delivery. The radical separation emerging under the new dispensation between publicly-funded social assistance and largely privatised or employer-subsidised social security confirms in various ways trends emerging under late apartheid. In fact,

[55] Lucky Mphafudi, Chief Town and Regional Planner, Human Settlement Policy Directorate, Department of Housing, interview with the Author, 8 May 2001.
[56] Diat von Broembsen, Chief Director of Policy Planning, Department of Housing, interview with the Author, 7 August 2001.

social assistance has been nationally unified and fully deracialised, but it remains fundamentally residual, targeted and averse to redistributive policies. Social security, private healthcare and pensions-backed housing loans, conversely, are largely orientated to formal employment and wage labour. Such trends, however, are also creating uneasiness among sections of organized labour for which employment is still linked to a vision of universal social rights on a strongly redistributive basis.

Latched onto the separation between social assistance and social security, and the residualism of the former, is a visible stigma that, across all policy sectors discussed, is aimed at those who cannot productively contribute to society and are confined to "dependency" on "handouts" produced by an "entitlement mentality". Stigma in this sense does not reflect necessarily the institutions' opinion of the recipients, but it is predominantly used to justify the containment and withdrawal of public resources from social provisions. These are rather seen as the predominant domain of individual discipline, either as waged worker or as consumer, on the market. The social policy framework of the South African transition ultimately reinforces and rewards, also at an ideological and argumentative level, wage labour discipline as the main vehicle for social insertion. It does so, however, in a highly problematic context, where wage labour is becoming increasingly embattled, frail and vulnerable. The problems and contradictions inherent in such a scenario are revealed by highly unequal and generally quite incomplete levels of social services' coverage and access. The second half of this work will explore in detailed case studies the problematic relation emerging between the crisis of wage labour "from below" and the reassertion of wage labour discipline in policy discourse.

3.5 Conclusion: Decoupling Wage and Income in the Transitional Social Citizenship Arrangement

In the struggle against the apartheid regime, trade unions had articulated a discourse of change that made wage labour the foundation of moral and political

claims on the social quality of the new democracy. The emphasis placed at this level on inclusion, universalism and redistribution was not, however, deprived of important contradictions, related to the fact that on a practical level labour strategies had privileged negotiations with business to reinforce a privatized system of employer-subsidised, wage-based social protections. Even if such a system managed to partially decommodify the sphere of working class reproduction, it nonetheless entered a tension with labour's view of society-wide decommodification to be achieved through fiscal means and public spending. Finally, labour's influence in shaping such a specific pattern of social security was part of a broader process of institutionalization inside the policy bargaining organs that provided a "corporatist" component in the hybrid institutional setting that emerged from the transition.

Subsequent developments have seen a restriction of options to expand the boundaries of inclusiveness and decommodification. Two trends, largely independent in their origins but nonetheless strictly connected, have played a decisive role. First, the macroeconomic policy framework of the transition has enabled a social citizenship arrangement where commodification of social provisions and a residual role of public policy have prevailed. Second, labour's social position has been challenged by employment changes which increased the working poor, questioned the unions' ability to push for progressive social changes and faced them with the problem of representing increasingly diversified social needs.

As a product of the uneven and stratified system of social provision emerged in the transition, whose continuities with the past are apparent at many levels, wage labour has become a vulnerable, uncertain, highly problematic vehicle to expand social rights. While more stable, unionized sectors of the working class can still enjoy to some extent the protection of their workplace-based retirement and medical schemes, the extension of such safety nets to the casualised and atypical sectors of the labour market, apart from the majority of the poor and the unemployed, is fraught with difficulties. For a majority of the economically active population, having a wage or the prospect of earning one is no longer a guarantee of an income capable to provide for basic social needs. The state's withdrawal

from the sphere of decommodification and the predominance of market relations in regulating access compound and deepen such problems. In fact, the ANC government has been able to re-elaborate the link between wage labour and social citizenship, but in ways that justify the downscaling of redistributive and decommodifying policy interventions, rather than enabling them as labour demanded.

While in the collapse of the wage-income nexus in the post-apartheid transition organized labour pays a price for its own ambiguities and contradictions, such dynamics have been at the centre of much recent scholarly debate. Labour's vulnerability begins in fact to be regarded not so much as a product of unemployment or dualism between "formal" and "informal" labour markets. Rather wage labour's shifting position in the South African society is produced by a complex combination of trends, at a material and ideological level, both within wage labour and in the commodification of social life. The wage form is being transformed from the basis of a discourse of social integration into a determinant of new forms of poverty and inequality. At the same time, however, wage labour discipline remains central in the government's rhetoric of social rights and inclusion. Earlier discussions had debated the kinds of compromises and trade-offs that labour was required to make to continue contributing to democratization and progressive social change. According to some, more flexible employment, diminished protections and lower wages were needed in a "two-tier" labour market where the unskilled could become "employable" (Nattrass and Seekings, 1996). Other views, echoed in labour policy-making (Department of Labour, 1996) argued that downgrading wages, social protections and collective bargaining would not address poverty and inequality and would endanger protections enjoyed by permanent, unionised workers. Therefore productivity and competitiveness deals between labour and capital were prioritised, where "wage restraint should be treated as one element of a compromise between capital and labour" (Webster and Gelb, 1996). Others, finally, rejected both positions as implying that labour should carry the burdens and sacrifices needed for social inclusion, neglecting the need to establish universal social security premised on public redistributive interventions (Torres, 1996).

More recent analyses, however, have transcended this debate by moving beyond the interactions between labour and socio-political institutions. Instead, a greater awareness is emerging of the fact that waged employment as such is showing structural inadequacies as a vehicle of social integration or as a solution to South Africa's social question (Meth, 2004b). The concept of "chronic poverty" (Du Toit, 2004a), recognises social marginality and inequality as also produced within waged work, where the majority of South African workers have emerged first as "cheap labour" under apartheid, and then as low-wage unskilled under the new democracy. Poverty in this view is not a product of social exclusion, but of a subordinate form of inclusion structured within wage and labour market segmentations.

The final section of this work will examine how the problematic interactions between wage labour's crisis in society and the centrality of wage labour discipline in the policy discourse developed in debates on social policy change, particularly around the idea of "comprehensive social security". Before that, however, I will analyse in greater detail over the next four chapters the ways in which changes in the world of work have manifested themselves in the lives, imagery and discourse of working class communities across selected cases. The next chapter will look, in particular, at a locality, the East Rand industrial area, where post-apartheid changes in the social status of wage labour have been particularly dramatic and far-reaching.

CHAPTER 4

Case Studies of a Changing World of Work. I: Industrial Crises and Wage Labour Decline in the East Rand

4.1 Introduction

The 1999 Municipal Structures Act established the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council, which merged the East Rand towns of Alberton, Germiston, Brakpan, Benoni, Kempton Park, Springs and Nigel under a single municipal authority for this industrial area with a population of approximately 2.5 million. Now, therefore, formal borders encircle a space that has been historically defined as a unified entity by processes of economic development and social stratifications. Between the 1950s and the 1970s the East Rand has become South Africa's industrial "workshop", as manufacturing replaced mining as the major contributor to the country's GDP. In the 1970s and 1980s, the area was a primary locale for the development of union-community alliances that shaped the trajectory of "social movement unionism". Wage labour emerged as an actor and an engine of social integration, nurturing social demands that became deeply embedded in the movement for political democratisation.

The birth of the Ekurhuleni metropolitan government has taken place, however, at a moment when established patterns of economic growth based on manufacturing are profoundly affected by restructuring encouraged by domestic and global forces. During the 1990s, industrial decline and downsizing have questioned the social position of wage labour and of the unionized working class. Government macroeconomic policies encouraging liberalization and domestic competition have placed particular pressures on the restructuring of production. In the process, trade union organizations have faced the adverse combination of retrenchments, company closures and labour market changes that segmented the workforce and expanded atypical employment.

This chapter elaborates on the transformations in the world of work outlined in Chapter 3 through a case study of selected manufacturing sectors and companies on the East Rand. In particular, I will look at industrial restructuring and its impact on local labour markets, union organisations and labour politics by focusing on three industries. All companies analysed are located in the southern part of the East Rand, along a strip of industrial towns stretching from Wadeville (Germiston) to Nigel, and including Alrode (Alberton), Brakpan, Leondale and Springs. Historically, the majority of the predominantly black hourly- and weekly-paid workforce in the area live in the largely African townships of the Kathorus triangle – made of Katlehong (Germiston), Thokoza (Alberton) and Vosloorus (Boksburg) -- KwaThema (Springs), Tsakane (Brakpan), Daveyton (Boksburg), Wattville (Benoni), Duduza (Nigel), and in former "coloured" or Indian areas like, respectively, Geluksdal (Brakpan) and Actonville (Benoni). The chapter will focus on three establishments in the metal-engineering industry, mostly organised by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), plus five companies in the paper sector and five in the glass containers and flat glass industry organised by the Chemical, Energy, Print, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (CEPPWAWU), which was formed in 1999 from the merger of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) and the Print, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (PPWAWU).

The decline of large scale manufacturing on the East Rand during the 1990s is evident in the sector's contribution to the region's economic activity and employment levels. The deindustrialisation of the area is shown in particular in massive layoffs and in the growing dispersal of production through the diffusion of small-medium enterprises, which encourage employment based on fixed-term contracts, labour broking and the use of casual workers. While in the past the union movement had built in this region a powerful discourse of emancipation and social citizenship, the current transformation is heralding a phase of precariousness and uncertainty that underline wage labour's vulnerability and questions established collective identities.

4.2 Manufacturing Decline and the Changing Geography of Production on the East Rand

Sociological and economic analyses of deindustrialisation (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Harrison, 1994; Gordon, 1996; Carmody, 2001) are largely focused on managerial rationality in corporate processes of 'downsizing' driven by increasing competition and pressures from financial capital. Such debates emphasise that deindustrialisation implies not merely the decline of manufacturing industry as a contributor to economic growth, but also changes in labour markets towards a low-wage economy characterised by casualisation and rising social exclusion.

Paradigms inspired by 'network' concepts (Castells, 1996) emphasize shifts from an 'old' manufacturing-based economy to a 'new economy' with an increasing mobility of financial flows and informational content of production. New labour market stratifications underpin therefore the spatial dimension of restructuring and the territorialisation of inequalities (Sassen, 1996; Marcuse and Van Kempen, 1997; Brenner, 2004). The interaction of labour market and spatial impacts of industrial change is discussed in recent studies for which such processes converge to question the social cohesiveness of working class communities and the representational capacity of trade unions (Hathaway, 1993). The disappearance of an urban landscape centred on the large manufacturing company is in fact seen as highlighting the fractures and the divisions that a unitary representation of the working class and its historical "memories" had attenuated in the image of workers' "communities" (Milkman, 1997; Linkon and Russo, 2002) based on solidarity and struggle.

Conversely, deindustrialisation points at the diminishing role of collective organising within coping strategies. Accommodation, survivalism and the quest for individualised alternatives counterbalance a sense of adverse historical shift but also expand areas of social marginalisation (May and Morrison, 2003). In the South African case, Mark Hunter (2002) showed how the decline of KwaZulu-Natal's textile industry created a vast low-wage, informal, largely female labour market where survival activities connected to sex work contribute to social emergencies like the HIV-AIDS epidemics.

Chapter 6 and 7 will look more specifically at how deindustrialization in the East Rand has played at the level of workers' narratives, meanings, survival strategies and discourses of social citizenship. It is here important, however, to underline that what warrants a definition of the East Rand as a coherent object of study ultimately resides in the production of space as a contested process (Smith, 1996; Wills, 1998). On one hand, the birth and growth of the East Rand as an industrial concentration was the outcome of the interplay of market and institutional forces that have negotiated the transition from a mining economy to an inward-looking manufacturing-cum-infrastructure complex, especially under the aegis of currently discarded import substitution industrialisation (Black, 1993; Fine, 1997). On the other hand, working class struggles and traditions have shaped the East Rand as a space of solidarity and a conduit for ideas of citizenship and social entitlements that, as explained in the previous chapters, transcended the workplace in constructing workers' demands and expectations for a new democracy.

In the South African case, Fine and Rustomjee (1996) relate post-apartheid industrial restructuring to the decline of a "mineral-energy" complex centred on raw material extraction and the production of consumer goods, which apartheid protectionism and state investment buffeted to cater for domestic markets. The limitations posed on the development of mass production by a racially segregated domestic demand led to the failed development of a local intermediate and capital goods sector, which remained dependent on imported capital. Working class militancy in the 1970s and 1980s heralded and accelerated the crisis of this development model. The adoption under late apartheid and the new democracy of a liberalised, export-orientated approach to growth has placed older industrial areas under competitive pressures and uneven processes of development (Bond 1999). During the late 1980s and the 1990s South Africa has seen a constant reduction in the economic weight of manufacturing industry, especially in sectors geared to the domestic market. This is particularly the case for industries like glass, paper, transport equipments, structural steel, domestic appliances, which are analysed in this chapter. Manufacturing contribution to total output growth has dropped by more than 40% between 1985 and 1998 while contribution to

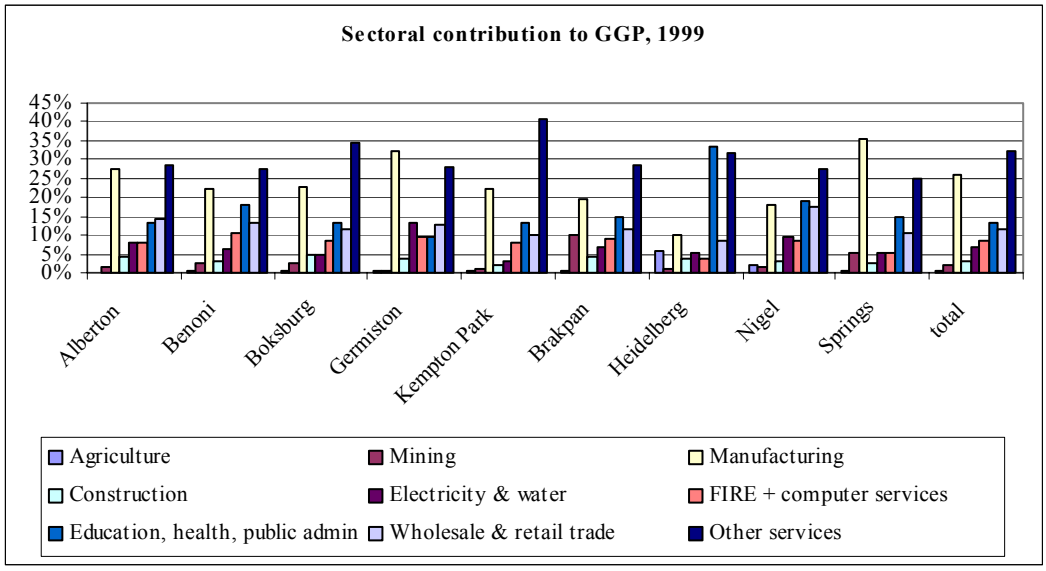
employment growth has declined by 35% (Pieper, 1998). In general, the best performing sectors have remained those with the highest capital intensity, which have a limited impact on job creation (Machaka and Roberts, 2004).

Emerging as a cluster of mining towns linked by rail to Johannesburg and the West Rand, between the 1950s and the 1970s the East Rand experienced a tumultuous growth in manufacturing activities. The share of the industrial workforce rose from 27% in 1950 to 52% in 1970, while manufacturing overtook mining to become the most important contributor to the GGP (Cockhead, 1970; Drake, 1971). By the 1980s the former Transvaal province came to provide 66% of the country's metalworks (40% of manufacturing output) with the East Rand accounting for the largest share (Sitas, 1983: 4-5). The availability of cheap land, and linkages with apartheid's infrastructural and heavy industry projects (Eskom, Sasol, railways) facilitated the inflow of domestic and multinational companies. Small engineering firms, foundries and jobbing companies in precision tools persisted nonetheless due to limited scale economies (Sitas, 1983; Webster, 1985). Already at the end of the 1940s the East Rand had one third of the whole industrial labour force of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region and rapid urbanisation led African industrial workers to outnumber African miners for the first time in 1946 (Nieftagodien, 2004). Germiston rose to particular prominence, contributing most of the manufacturing output, particularly in metal and chemical industries.

The economic crisis of the 1980s, linked to intensified worker struggles, was followed by negative growth, in a context marked by increasing costs, the contextual decline of mining, rising job losses and the relocation of many heavy industries to more competitive locations on the coast or overseas (Rogerson and Rogerson, 1999; Rogerson, 2004; Smith and Futter, 2000). In the early 1990s manufacturing provided more than 40% of the GGP in all East Rand towns except Brakpan (31.6%) and Nigel (23.9%), with the strongest contribution being in Springs (54.7%). At the same time, five towns out of nine recorded negative growth rates between 1981 and 1991, with only Benoni, Brakpan and Kempton Park recording a growth rate of around, or slightly higher than, 1%. Seven towns had negative or zero growth between 1991 and 1993 (Kok, 1998), with the most

pronounced decline being in the "far East Rand" towns of Springs (-1.6%), Heidelberg (-2.3%) and Nigel (-4%). By the end of the 1990s, manufacturing decline in the region had become spectacular (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Sectoral Contribution to East Rand's GGP, 1999



Source: Barchiesi and Kenny (2003), based on Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates (WEFA) database, 1999.

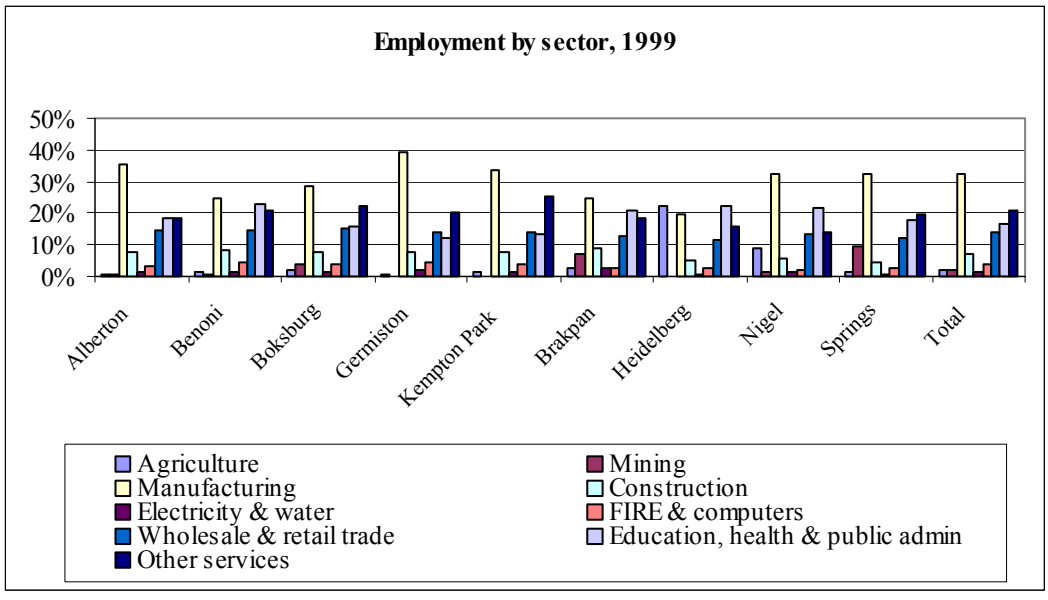
In fact, manufacturing had lost by then its predominance in all towns, with particularly apparent downturns in strongholds like Germiston (from 47.5% in 1991 to 31% of the GGP in 1999) and Springs (from 54.7% in 1991 to 36% in 1999).

Despite economic decline, the region's economy did not display significant diversification and retained a strongly industrial profile, except in those towns, like Brakpan and Nigel, where large scale industrialization was historically weak (Sapire, 1993), or Kempton Park, which benefited from its proximity to Johannesburg's northern suburbs. In fact, in the second half of the 1990s, industrial investment in Gauteng started to privilege the adjacent Johannesburg-Midrand-Pretoria corridor which became an area of expansion for "new economy" sectors linked to finance, information and communication technologies (Hodge, 1998; Johannesburg Housing Investments, 2000). Conversely, in 1999 activities related to FIRE ("finance, insurance and real

estate") or to information technologies provided only 8.4% of the East Rand's GGP.

While Industry was declining, trade and services, particularly in Boksburg, Benoni, Kempton Park and Germiston, have grown throughout the 1990s (Urban-Econ, 1999: 86). The rise of the tertiary sector has expanded low-wage and insecure employment through casual and subcontracted labour, as shown by recent research on retail (Kenny, 2005). Similar trends were encouraged by the fragmentation and the dispersal of manufacturing production in smaller sized establishments (Rogerson, 2004). Undergirding formal institutional unification, therefore, intra-regional stratification and socio-economic disparities seemed to emerge as a product of restructuring to challenge the area's industrial identity. Employment indicators (see Figure 4.2) in particular show that, despite the relative predominance of manufacturing, in 1999 the tertiary sector's contribution to employment reached 44.3% overall, calculated as the sum of FIRE and computer services (3.6%), public services (16.2%) and wholesale and retail trade (14%). At the same time, according to WEFA data, manufacturing has declined from the 1970s levels of above 50% of total employment to 32%. Other estimates based on the 1996 Census put manufacturing contribution to total employment at 19% (Erasmus, 2001: 15).

Figure 4.2 Employment by Sector in East Rand Towns, 1999



Source: Barchiesi and Kenny (2003), based on WEFA database, 1999.

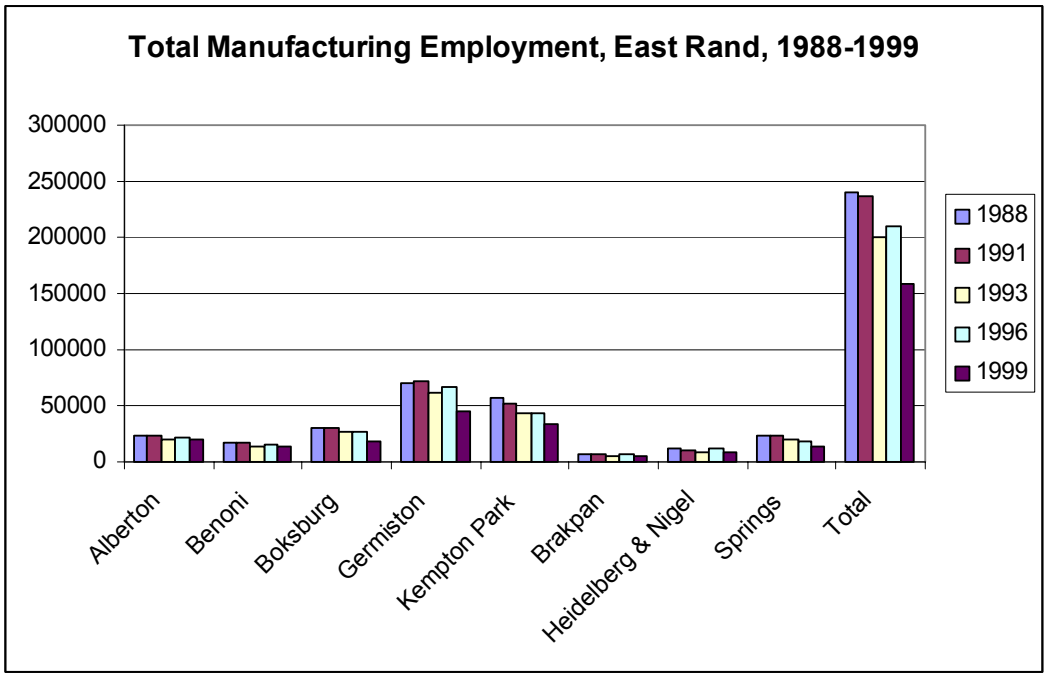


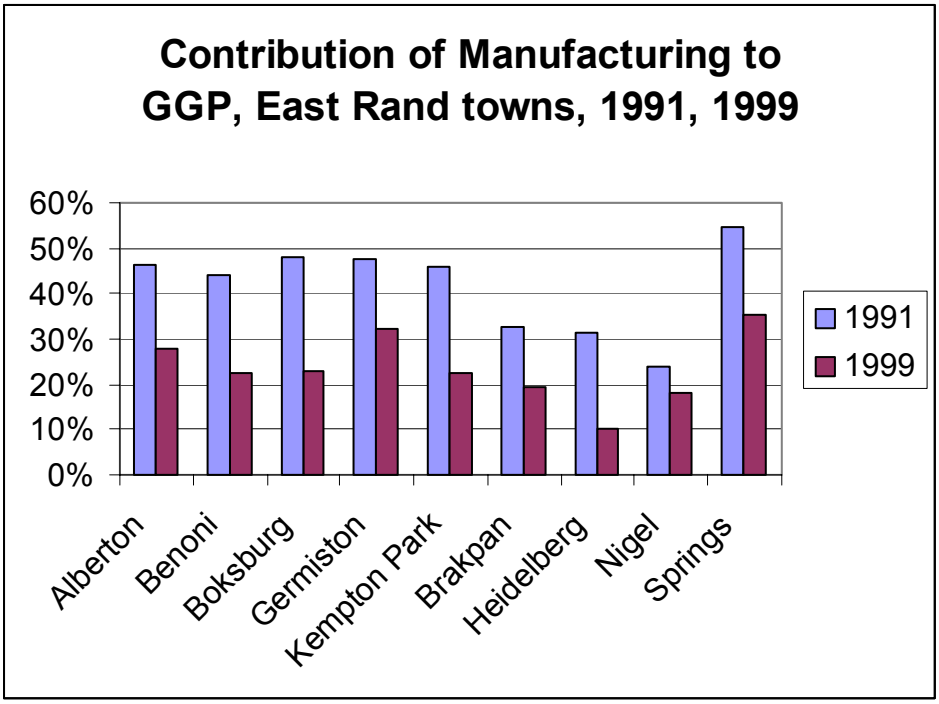
Figure 4.3 Total Manufacturing Employment in the East Rand, 1988-1999

Source: Barchiesi and Kenny (2003), based on Bureau of Market Research (1998); Statistics South Africa (2001b) and WEFA database, 1999.

At the same time, total manufacturing employment has constantly declined between 1988 and 1999, with a partial recovery in the 1993-1996 period and an accelerated downturn that tellingly coincided with the 1996 introduction of GEAR, which emphasised the competitive pressures on the sector following liberalisation (see Figure 4.3). During this whole period, approximately 80,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the East Rand. The occupational composition of manufacturing employment shows a lower skill profile than in the rest of the province, with "craft and related trades" at 31.7% compared to 33.9% for Gauteng's overall manufacturing. Conversely, plant and machine operators (25.3%, compared to Gauteng's 19.4%) and elementary occupations (13.6%, compared to Gauteng's 11.1%) tend to predominate (Erasmus, 2001: 41).

In many towns, manufacturing's share of the GGP has declined by as much as 50% between 1991 and 1999 (see Figure 4.4), with the biggest losses in absolute terms recorded in the two most important centres of Germiston (18%) and Springs (20%). Kempton Park is confirmed as the most rapidly de-industrialising town, and here as well 'new economy' sectors (6.2% of GGP) continue to play a limited role.

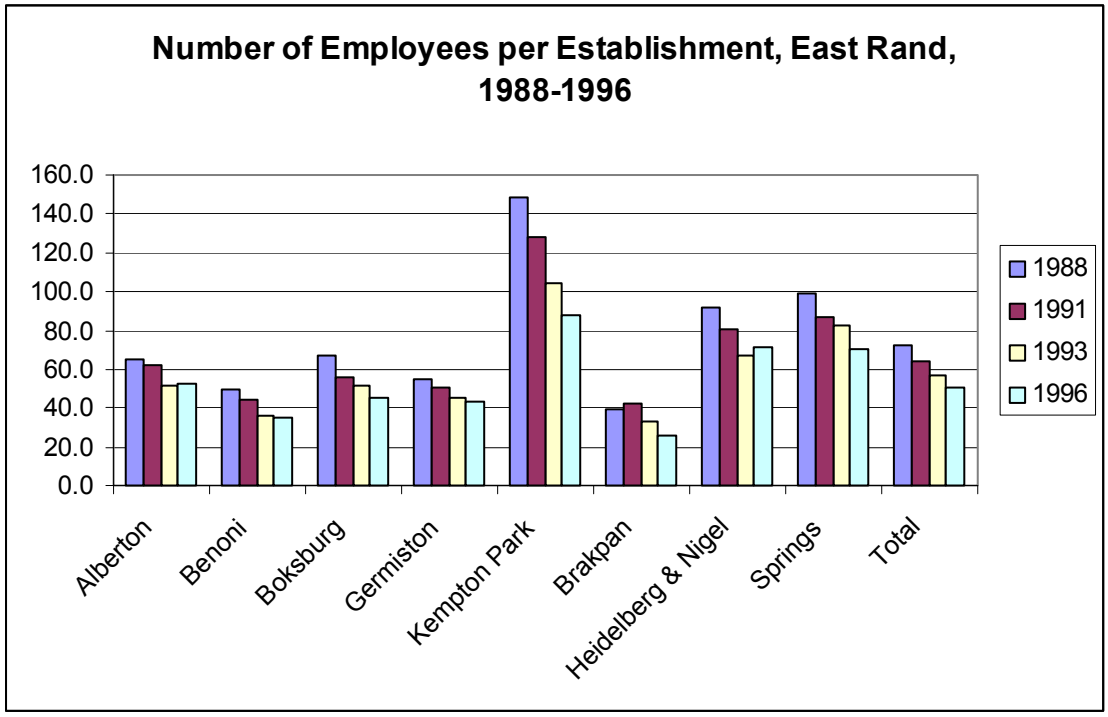
Figure 4.4 Contribution of Manufacturing to GGP, 1991-1999



Source: Barchiesi and Kenny (2003), based on Kok (1998) and WEFA database, 1999.

The decline in manufacturing's employment and economic importance has been, finally, paralleled by a reduction in average company sizes (see Figure 4.5), particularly in areas, such as Kempton Park, where factories used to employ the largest workforce. Job losses might have contributed to this outcome, which is also probably related to the emergence of smaller enterprises competing with, or contracting for, larger ones (Rogerson and Rogerson, 1999: 92; Rogerson, 2004). In areas like Brakpan, Benoni and Germiston, where there are strong traditions of small-medium jobbing firms, such figures might indicate a strengthening of this kind of production.

Figure 4.5 Average Number of Employees per Establishment, East Rand 1988-1996



Source: Barchiesi and Kenny (2003), based on Bureau of Market Research (1998) and Statistics South Africa (2001a).

In conclusion, during the 1990s a process of industrial decline has heavily questioned the role of the East Rand as the core of South Africa's manufacturing, which the region had played for the previous 60 years. Deindustrialisation has not been accompanied by the rise of viable alternatives in terms of economic activity or job creation. Rather, there are signals of an increasing fragmentation of production linked in some cases to vulnerable, "atypical" forms of employment. Such changes are likely to have far-reaching implications for trade unions and for wage labour as an actor of broad socio-economic changes.

4.3 Labour Politics from Apartheid to the Transition: Community and the Urban Space as Terrains of Citizenship

Rapid African urbanisation and working class formation in the context of industrial development during the 1940s and 1950s had made of the East Rand

one of the country's hotbeds of popular resistance and militancy (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2000). African migration to the region's towns, in particular, took place in a context of mining industry decline and industrial growth. Early apartheid's urban planning tried to reshape the urban landscape by building new "model townships" to replace the old, overcrowded and crumbling African "locations" and enforce tighter segregation and social control. African urbanisation was, on one hand, linked to the escape from coercion and exploitation on the mines and the farms. Therefore, the search for more dignified waged employment in the cities coexisted with widespread "work-shyness", refusal of work and illegal entrepreneurship, which were concerns both for the local state and for the popular opposition led by the ANC and the Communist Party (Sapire, 1993).

On the other hand, the PWV "model township" where African populations were forcibly relocated became a feature of "high apartheid"'s attempt to reassert "influx control" and defuse the challenge of African working class formation and militancy. Following the recommendations of the Mentz Commission in 1955, new townships were proclaimed at the end of the 1950s, like KwaThema (Springs), esatblished from the relocation of Payneville, Tsakane out of the removal of Brakpan Old Location, Katlehong, after the removal of KwaDukathole (Germiston), and the new township of Daveyton (Benoni). Finally, Duduza (Nigel), which in Xhosa means "consolation", was proclaimed in 1964 following the removal of the Charterston location[57]. New townships tended to accommodate recent authorised migrants or illegal "squatters", both with little links with existing traditions of struggle. Especially after the suppression of resistance to evictions in the 1950s, "model townships" divided and moderated political militancy (Sapire, 1993; Nieftagodien, 1996; Malinga and Verhoef, 2000; Bonner, 2000). Areas where large-scale industries were only partially entrenched, as in Brakpan-Tsakane, remained relatively quiet well into the 1980s. Conversely, the old locations were more easily mobilised and became hegemonised by nationalist politics starting with the 1950s ANC's defiance of early apartheid legislation.

[57] Policy Research Unit at AMCHAM, *The Nigel Regional Complex: A Case for the Establishment of Non-Racial Local Government*, n.d. (but 1990), Wits DHP, PLANACT, 26.25.14.

Finally, the segregation of migrants in urban ethnic-based "compounds" strengthened the social distance between recent arrivals, particularly in the new inflows during the 1960s repressive climate (Nieftagodien, 2004: 9), and permanent township dwellers, enforcing among the former traditional age-based authorities and ethnic affiliations. At the same time, Africans rapidly moved upwards on the occupational ladder, by taking up semi-skilled positions (Sitas, 1983). The East Rand was one of the areas where independent trade unionism emerged in the early 1970s as an original ideological and organisational synthesis in which union activities reshaped strongly ruralised forms of consciousness and reorientated them towards the struggle for workers' rights and dignified conditions in the workplace (Sitas, 1985a,b).

The 1973 Durban strikes were followed by the 1975 launch of the East Rand branch of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), with the help of student activists, black consciousness-aligned structures, 'dissidents' from established 'white' unions and trade unionists from Durban. Trade union grassroots structures challenged symbolic and discursive patterns of authority on the shopfloor and in the segregated 'compound' and promoted worker organisation as an alternative to ethnic hierarchies. In this way, wage labour and workplace struggles laid the foundations of a new idiom of citizenship that challenged apartheid-enforced loyalties and identifications along the rural-urban continuum (Mamdani, 1996: 248-249). Black migrant workers provided a decisive support for the unions and became the most militant sections of the area's working class. The presence of large factories in the metal, chemical and food sectors facilitated organising and strikes, which could be strategically focused on companies that had a particularly relevant role in the definition of employers' policies, or on multinational companies (Webster and Sitas, n.d.).

The reorientation of state spending and planning priorities towards the "improvement" of African homelands in the 1970s had deepened economic decay, infrastructural collapse and social dislocation in the East Rand's cities and compounds. They became increasingly overcrowded and, during the 1980s, recorded widespread increases in informal settlements and backyard accommodations. Moreover, the provision of urban infrastructures on a "site and

service" basis, without direct household connection to services' reticulation, encouraged residents' "self-help" to reduce public responsibilities (Hendler, 1989a; Tomlinson, 1990: 86-90). The population of Tsakane (meaning "to be happy") rose from 31,000 in 1980 to an estimated 90,000 in 1988, half of which lived in shacks, with an average of 6.3 people per household, and 65% of houses without electricity (Moshabela, 1988)[58]. The large majority of Duduza's 77,000 inhabitants were living in shacks by 1989,[59] when administrators reported that "the squatter community is continuously increasing in numbers", and 60% of the households had incomes below R600 per month[60]. Almost 80,000 people lived in shacks in KwaThema at the end of the 1980s, while informal settlements largely outnumbered formal ones[61]. While Daveyton's population doubled between 1961 and 1982, formal dwellings increased by only one third. Political polarisations confronted here populist leaders representing, respectively, township dwellers and the squatters that in 1986 moved to the nearby Etwatwa area, whose population of largely informal settlements rapidly grew to 160,000 (Malinga and Verhoef, 2000: 9-10)[62]. During the 1980s the average occupancy per dwelling reached 7.2 persons in Daveyton, 7.8 in Thokoza, and 9.4 in KwaThema (Pillay, 1984). In Wattville, 13.04 occupants per dwelling were recorded in 1985, for an average of 5 square metres per person and with 60% of the population living in informal settlements[63]. In this case, residents organised into a Wattville Concerned Residents Committee that in 1986 occupied adjacent land, which became the Tamboville settlement (Royston, 1998: 152-163).

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[58] See also *Discussion Draft, Tsakane Discussions, Notes for Proposed Agreement;* Mandy to Vining, 4 August 1991, Wits DHP, PLANACT 26.8.4.

[59] *Capital Subsidy Scheme Application for the Approval of Project Blue Gum View*, Wits DHP, PLANACT 26.8.5.

[60] Deteriorating living conditions were not limited to the housing crisis. In a township like Vosloorus, with deeply entrenched patterns of African home ownership, 43.8% of the population lived with less than R500 per month in 1989. See *Synopsis of the Vosloorus Municipal Area, Report Prepared for the Policy Research Unit of the American Chamber of Commerce*, 1990, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 26.8.7.4.

[61] Eastern Regional Services Council, *Regional Planning Land Delivery Study. Phase 1, Volume 1: Land Delivery Framework in the East Rand, Report No.30/93*, June 1993, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 17.7.24.3.

[62] See also PLANACT, *Divisional Management Committee 14 April 1992. Project Name: Etwatwa Extension 8*, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.15.2.

[63] PLANACT, *Town and Regional Planning Practice III. Project 2 – 1990. Wattville/East Rand Housing Project*, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 17.7.24.2.

As Ruiters (1995) notices, emerging urban stratifications and differential access to housing revealed fractures and divides that questioned the ability of political organisations, specifically those aligned with the UDF and the nationalist tradition, to weld a coherent meaning of "community". In particular, differences in housing accommodations played an important role in shaping communities' claim-making discourses, social citizenship imagery and sense of radicalism. Beginning with the East Rand "strike waves" of 1981 and 1982, the emergent trade unions placed a greater emphasis on building forms of territorial co-ordination. Following the establishment of the Germiston shop steward council (Baskin, 1982; Webster, 1985), such efforts were not primarily aimed at addressing community issues, and remained focused on workplace-related struggles around union recognition, unfair dismissals, wages and working conditions. They also allowed, however, circulation and exchange of information on declining living standards across different townships (Von Holdt, 1987: 24-25).

Increasing labour-community interactions led wide sectors in FOSATU unions' rank and file to demand the mobilisation of union organisations against the combined pressure of social decay, declining living conditions and apartheid's repressive response to urban social problems. Therefore, trains and neighbourhoods became locales of union organisaiton and mobilisation, where demands were placed on trade unions' structures to turn their newly-gained power in production towards a struggle for decent living in the residential space. Local government and the central state had responded to urban social crisis, which threatened the fiscal sustainability of newly established Black Local Authorities and deepened the regime's legitimacy crisis, by implementing evictions and relocations of informal settlements. Particularly targeted were East Rand townships where, in the context of "orderly urbanisation" that succeeded influx control in the mid-1980s, evictions of informal settlements were presented as technical measures to prevent "illegal" urbanisation. As Ruiters (1995: 115-116) shows, evictions disproportionately affected FOSATU unions' migrant members, and FOSATU's initial involvement on housing issues was mainly a matter of defending members' rights.

Struggles for housing and urban social services became therefore the breeding ground for "social movement unionism" in the East Rand. They also provided a terrain of contestation between apartheid's strategies of social and labour stratification, which came to rely increasingly on market dynamics, and labour's emerging social citizenship discourse. Therefore, the unions' resistance to evictions in areas like Katlehong and Daveyton after 1983 was connected to rents and fees boycotts organised by the civics, which emphasised the lack of legitimacy of black local authorities. In Katlehong, the Germiston shop steward council directly mobilised against evictions (Rees, 1983). In Daveyton, the black local authority under populist leader and councillor Tom Boya had managed to some extent to lead the mobilisation against rents' increases, and the political tradition of the ANC and the SACP was relatively weak. The unions played therefore a decisive role in mobilising communities (Hendler, 1988: 35)[64]. In Springs, the local shop steward council launched a branch of the civic structure East Rand Peoples' Organisation (ERAPO), which had been in existence since 1979 (Von Holdt, 1987: 24).

At the same time, township struggles and social movement unionism sparked a debate between and within unions, where grassroots activists challenged their leaderships' predominant orientation to workplace organisation and issues. Leaders remained in fact suspicious of the practices of student, church and residents' groups inside the UDF, especially where allegedly 'petty bourgeois' elements like shop owners and taxi entrepreneurs had gained influential positions (Seekings, 2000a: 231-235). UDF leaders and the ANC, on the other hand, tended to reciprocate such a hostility towards unions they saw as detached from the tasks of political liberation (Ruiters, 1995: 101-102; Lambert, 1987; Lewis, 1983; Njikelana, 1984). Conversely, FOSATU unions on the East Rand were divided over the feasibility to participate in community struggles. The federation's official policy, enunciated by General Secretary Joe Foster at the 1982 Congress, privileged the construction of an independent workers' movement that, while not necessarily confined to the wage relation, did not want to be formally aligned with the nationalist political opposition (Foster, 1982). Grassroots structures, however,

[64] PLANACT, *Greater Benoni Report*, n.d. (but 1991), Wits DHP, PLANACT 17.7.24.4.

grew increasingly restless over the leadership role of "white intellectuals" in FOSATU, in ways that did not emphasise racial polarisation as such, but criticised production-orientated agendas that prevented solidarity between workplace and community struggles (Ruiters, 1995; Mamdani, 1996:241; Buhlungu, 2001). As Ruiters (2000) convincingly argued, the combined effect of FOSATU leadership's hostility towards community struggles and of the ANC-aligned organisations' antagonism towards FOSATU's independent "workerism" facilitated debates in the unions' rank and file whereby the East Rand came to be represented as a unified imaginary space woven together by working class mobilisation and emancipatory demands that were no longer confined to the workplace. The role of shop-steward councils, therefore, encompassed both union organisational functions on a territorial scale and a catalyst for community demands and support that exceeded union constituencies.

According to Swilling (1984b), rank-and-file union members engaging in community mobilisations remained attached to the unions' organising style, emphasising accountability and mandates, while retaining a distaste for the "spontaneist" and "Jacobin" practices of civic movements. Other authors contrast the racialised identities of community "marginals'" groups with the unions' class-based politics, blaming community activists for causing chaos and 'ungovernability' within organised oppositional structures (Seekings, 1993; Bozzoli, 2004). Other analyses, finally, emphasise that the labour-community convergence on the East Rand during the 1980s is not merely explainable as a contingent and uncertainly politicised outcome of the encounter of separate issues and demands. It revealed instead a deep-seated opposition to political oppression that, under the impulse of declining social conditions, encouraged new collective identities and discourses of citizenship, where socio-economic change came to play an important role (Ruiters, 1995; Mamdani, 1996). At the same time, the emergence of strata of African middle class and small entrepreneurship in the United Democratic Front's leadership opposed, inside this new struggle milieu, working class hegemony with views of social emancipation based on individualised market advancement (Ruiters, 2000).

Conversely, labour's renewed emphasis on an urban-based discourse of organisation and social provisions tended to marginalize the concerns of migrant hostels' residents. Township-hostel linkages on which the early strength of the union movement was built were now therefore weakened, and hostel residents with strong rural affilitations became increasingly alienated. Such dynamics became more pronounced after the formation of COSATU in 1985 and its increasing closeness to the ANC. Hostel dwellers started to resent the neglect of their workplace-based problems by unions that tended to privilege mobilisation over socio-political issues, and hostels with large Zulu populations, especially in the Kathorus area, became fertile recruiting grounds for the anti-ANC Inkatha Freedom Party (Segal, 1991; Sitas, 1996; Shaw, 1996; Bonner and Ndima, 1999). These dynamics led to the explosion of violence that marred the East Rand between the end of the 1980s and the transitional negotiations. Hostel residents confronted both township dwellers and recent waves of squatters that moved to the cities to compete for shrinking urban resources in the context of collapse of apartheid spatial segregation.

The democratic transition on the East Rand accompanied deepening dynamics of urban decay, violence, economic crisis, deterioration of living conditions and rising unemployment. The transitional local governments continued prioritising policies of housing privatisation, discussed in Chapter 2, with the aim of encouraging black home ownership and attracting private developers in low-income housing financing. Private developments in low-cost housing, however, failed to materialise, while developers' profit expectations based on their practices in affluent white suburbs were hampered by grassroots militancy, entrenched traditions of rents and bonds boycotts and high social expectations for housing (Merrifield, 1992; Malinga and Verhoef, 2000: 15-17). On the other hand, as union-based researchers found, developers used this scenario to justify a constant downgrading of construction and service standards[65]. Local councils sought agreements with civics and unions, which demanded low flat rates[66], for residents to resume the payment for services. Therefore, the

[65] *Report Prepared for the Springs Shop Stewards Council Concerning the Proposed Development of Duduza by Ferrocor Property Developers (FPD)*, n.d. (but 1988), Wits DHP,PLANACT 26.8.2.
[66] Chairman, Daveyton Interim Committee to Ngcobo, 12 September 1990, Wits DHP, PLANACT

responsibility for access to urban social services tended to shift from policies of redistribution and cross-subsidisation to the users' ability to pay. Nonetheless, in Daveyton, for example, it was found that with a housing shortage of 70,000 units, 92% of the population could not afford housing without public subsidies (Malinga and Verhoef, 2000: 19).

The post-1994 allocation of state housing subsidies in the East Rand has privileged almost entirely project-linked subsidies aimed at basic housing construction, which largely went to unemployed residents whose poor income levels were lower than in the rest of Gauteng (see Table 4.1). Therefore, low-wage formal workers were left with the alternative of looking for private finance[67], usually using retirement contributions as collaterals. In 2001, 41.4% of households in the southern East Rand townships where workplaces researched for this work are located (Wattville, Vosloorus, Tsakane, KwaThema, Thokoza, Daveyton, Katlehong and Duduza) were living in informal settlements, whose number increased by 8.89% between 1996 and 2001[68].

Table 4.1 Total Housing Subsidies Approved, Gauteng and East Rand, 1995-2001

Gauteng Total			East Rand Only		
Total beneficiaries	% Employed	Average Monthly Income of Beneficiary	Total beneficiaries	% Employed	Average Monthly Income of Beneficiary
254520	0.27	R 600.28	80992	0.03%	R542.80

Source: Author's elaboration based on Department of Housing, National HSS Database.

During the first half of the 1990s the East Rand witnessed extremely high levels of poverty, deprivation of basic services and rampant refusal to pay. Calculated at constant 1996 prices, 35.7% of East Rand households lived with real incomes of less than R6,000 per year, compared to 32.2% in the whole Gauteng province (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005: 167). By 1995, services' payment levels in the Kathorus area were approximately 25%[69] and remained below 50%

17.3.4.

[67] See also Sanjee Singh, Assistant Director, Policy and Evaluation, Gauteng Housing Department, Interview with the Author, 1 November 2000.

[68] Author's elaboration from Statistics South Africa National Census database, 1996 and 2001.

[69] "Councils Unite on Katorus Payment", *Business Day*, 14 March 1997.

in Tsakane and Geluksdal[70], while in 1991 the figure in Wattville was 9%[71]. In 1995, 56% of houses in Daveyton, 56% in Thokoza, 62% in Katlehong, 85% in Tsakane and 94% in Duduza had no electricity[72]. In 2001, 30% of Ekurhuleni's population lived without formal shelter and only 42.4% had water on site, down from 68.2% in 1996 (South African Cities Network, 2004: 28).

Analyses of poverty levels on the East Rand in the mid-1990s show that the area has a "poverty gap" (the difference between average incomes and poverty lines) of 29.36%, the widest in Gauteng, larger than in Johannesburg, the Vaal Triangle, Pretoria and the West Rand. Five of the region's former nine municipalities were in the province's bottom half, and the human development index (HDI) for the African population in all East Rand towns was lower than Gauteng's HDI (see Table 4.2). In 1999, unemployment on the East Rand, calculated at 33%, was the highest of all metropolitan regions in South Africa (Municipal Demarcation Board, 1999).

Table 4.2 Poverty Levels on the East Rand, 1995

Magisterial District	Provincial share of poverty gap,1993	Provincial ranking in poverty gap,1993	National share of poverty gap in 1993	National ranking in poverty gap, 1993	Human development index for Africans, 1991
Johannesburg	24.29%	1	2.46%	1	0.58
Alberton	7.38%	4	0.74%	40	0.53
Germiston	1.25%	21	0.13%	172	0.52
Boksburg	1.42%	20	0.14%	162	0.58
Benoni	4.17%	7	0.42%	87	0.52
Kempton Park	3.98%	8	0.40%	93	0.57
Brakpan	2.15%	15	0.22%	123	0.51
Springs	4.90%	5	0.50%	77	0.55
Nigel	1.74%	19	0.18%	142	0.46
Heidelberg	2.37%	13	0.24%	116	0.41

Source: Author's elaboration from Whiteford, Posel and Kelatwang (1995).

Table 4.3 shows employment and unemployment figures for the East Rand townships in the area where companies analysed for this work are located. Data

[70] Brakpan Transitional Local Council, *Workshop on Tariff Structures*, 13-14 May 1995, Wits DHP, PLANACT 25.2.2.
[71] PLANACT, *Minutes of Meeting Held in Hume Building in Germiston. Community Services in Daveyton and Wattville*, Wits DHP, PLANACT 17.3.4.
[72] *Hansard*, 1995, pp.827-828.

reveal, first and foremost an extremely low labour market absorption for new entrants.

Table 4.3 Unemployment Levels in Selected East Rand Townships, by Ward, 1996-2001

Ward No	Area	Population			Employed			Unemployed		
		1996	2001	Change (%)	1996	2001	Change (%)	1996	2001	Change (%)
61	Daveyton Central	24651	22807	-7.48	6378	4452	-30.20	5148	6126	19.0
41	Duduza Cent., Tsakane X 9,15	20976	31089	48.21	4670	6237	33.55	4788	7380	54.1
40	Duduza X 2,4	21779	22255	2.19	4833	4350	-9.99	4467	5385	20.6
62	Etwatwa	23933	31890	33.25	7168	7605	6.10	5740	8124	41.5
35	Germiston-Leondale-Rondebult	19233	42074	118.76	8192	14064	71.68	1550	9012	481.4
17	Katlehong Zuma-Ncala-Tsolo	25984	24329	-6.37	6677	4809	-27.98	6175	7179	16.2
27	Katlehong Central-Tokhoza X 2	19476	36151	85.62	5635	9165	62.64	3978	9330	134.5
23	Katlehong South	23165	36654	58.23	5340	7134	33.60	5754	10437	81.4
19	Katlehong Dukathole	23876	22698	-4.93	6057	4353	-28.13	5058	6342	25.4
13	Katlehong Twala	26357	24490	-7.08	7413	5877	-20.72	5745	6471	12.7
49	KwaThema Cent., New Payneville	25386	22625	-10.88	5249	3978	-24.21	5733	6054	5.6
19	KwaThema Phase 1-3	20619	29454	42.85	6650	7992	20.18	2911	6612	127.1
48	KwaThema Rest-in-Peace Tembelisha Vergenoeg	20129	20367	0.73	4776	4116	-13.82	3596	4893	36.0
46	KwaThema Tornado, Sunair Park	22042	23804	7.99	7286	7035	-3.44	3877	5220	34.7
16	Thokoza Hostels, X 6	16722	23288	39.27	4920	5094	3.54	5095	7734	51.8
21	Thokoza X 1	29143	24528	-15.84	8817	5835	-33.82	6397	6960	8.8
42	Tsakane Proper	21371	21522	0.71	5256	4134	-21.35	4410	5226	18.5
37	Tsakane X 5, 8, 11	22151	28775	29.90	6126	6627	8.18	4285	6885	60.7
34	Vosloorus, Eastfield	24370	30848	26.58	7091	8757	23.49	4631	5574	20.4
56	Wattville	21323	21194	-0.60	5677	5469	-3.66	5202	5823	12.0
25	Zonkiziwe	27535	35718	29.72	6280	6210	-1.11	5980	9291	55.4
TOT.		480221	576560	20.06	130491	133293	2.14	100520	146058	45.3

Source: Author's Elaboration from Statistics South Africa, National Census Database, 1996 and 2001.

The rate of unemployment in these townships rose from 43.51% of the EAP in 1996 to 52.28 in 2001, while the unemployment rate in the whole Ekurhuleni municipality grew from 32.2% in 1996 to 40.4% in 2001, the third highest rate in

the Gauteng province, where over the same period the overall unemployment figure went from 28.1% to 36.5%. Employment decline mirrored a productivity stagnation: the East Rand's Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita, at constant 1996 prices, declined from R16,035 in 1996 to R14,928 in 2003. The increase in the East Rand's overall GVA over the same period was of only 2.3%, compared with 3.7% in Gauteng and 2.5% nationally (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005: 167).

The post-apartheid legacy of poverty, social marginality and unemployment that affects the East Rand profoundly questions earlier linkages between labour and local community movements, which connected issues of social rights and services to broader expectations for a new democratic political order. Labour's role on the East Rand in shaping and structuring discourses and imagery of social citizenship, for example through demands for adequate, decommodified municipal services and housing, is therefore challenged by transformations in wage labour within a social context of growing poverty and inequality. The next section will explore more in detail changes in forms of employment by introducing the sectors and companies used for my research.

4.4 Industrial Change and the Crisis of Wage Labour: Sectors and Company Cases

4.4.1 Trends in Employment Decline, Casualisation and Deunionisation

Industrial decline on the East Rand has particularly affected a productive texture historically characterised by the predominance of large-scale, heavily unionised companies in consumer products, especially chemicals, packaging, appliances and light engineering (Ruiters, 1995: 73). Dynamics of restructuring have been substantially facilitated by the withdrawal of state support, from which local industry benefited in periods of high protectionism and import-substituting production. Sectors where large conglomerates have mostly succeeded in terms of innovation and competitiveness, like steel, have developed a strong orientation to

export, from which smaller local players downstream have benefited only to a limited extent in terms of jobs (Roberts, 2003). This reinforces historical trends of disadvantageous pricing with which main companies in highly concentrated and vertically integrated sectors have penalised, often through collusion, local companies and merchants (Fine, 1998; Bah and Mbano, 2000; Ndabezitha, 2001).

Moreover, technological innovation, specialisation and differentiation of the product cycle are generally not accompanied by renewed investment in human resource development (Kesper, 1999). Sectors that are more inward-orientated, like light and heavy engineering, have suffered from shrinking domestic demand, often related to slowdowns in sectors like construction that suffer from sluggish housing development, or transport, which is also negatively affected by cuts in public spending and investment. In some cases, like the "white goods" industry, social factors explain productive crises, like the excessive optimism by local manufacturers about mass electrification as an engine of demand in poor communities (Bauman, 1995). In many of these cases, local production also suffered due to competition from cheaper imports (Rustomjee, 1993; Labour Market Alternatives, 1997; Sector Jobs Summit Team, 2002; Bezuidenhout, 2002). Competition for sectors like paper packaging comes also from alternative materials (Bethlehem, 1994: 90-91), like more capital-intensive plastics.

Policies of liberalisation and export promotion have led to uneven restructuring strategies, which facilitated downsizing, particularly in larger workplaces with the highest levels of unionisation. In the companies I looked at, restructuring takes different forms, which respond to specific market challenges, competitive scenarios, policy settings and the strength of labour organisations. It is nonetheless possible to pinpoint some general features that reinforce the idea of the East Rand as a cohesive socio-economic space. Conversely, old patterns of labour-community interactions are increasingly reversed as a result of restructuring. Union-community linkages that fostered "social movement unionism" are substantially weakened as unions find themselves embattled and confined to defensive struggles to protect jobs, wages and working conditions.

During the 1990s retrenchments have been particularly severe in the metal and engineering industry. On a national level, approximately 190,000 workers

have been laid off in this sector between January 1990 and April 2000 (65,000 of which after 1995, with averages between 1,000 and 1,500 retrenchments per month between 1995 and 1999). Over the same period, total hourly-paid employment plunged from 385,000 to 255,000. At the same time, the average company hourly headcount also shrank from 35.54 to 28.12[73]. According to NUMSA organisers on the East Rand, restructuring and retrenchments have in fact been accompanied by the fragmentation of production and the growth of small-medium companies. Such dynamics are not predominantly linked to subcontracting of production, but they are rather the result of specialisation, with the attendant appearance on shrinking markets of new small players focused on specific products or phases (like palletising, repairs, tool and die making, foundries, specific niche products) previously vertically integrated in larger companies. With uncertain market prospects, specialised small companies easily gain a competitive edge[74] in a process of "competitive outsourcing" where such companies, emerging out of the downsizing of large ones, compete with each other to supply these latter.

Downsizing and the fragmentation of production facilitate the re-employment of a portion of retrenched workers in smaller companies under casual, fixed-term contracts or through labour brokers. Moreover, small companies are less likely to be unionised and precariousness of employment makes unionisation difficult, either because vulnerability acts as a deterrent or because unions do not want to invest resources on workers with unstable membership. The loss of union representation deepens the levels of exploitation in the industry, as union organisers testify:

> One night I just went to the township, I went to a certain house, of course I knew what I was looking for. I bought one bottle of beer, and there were people busy doing Marconi's [a communication appliances company, formerly TEMSA] job. It's a manual job, very, very easy. They assemble small pieces of rubber putting them in the phones, stuff like that. They work at home, then Marconi comes and collects, paying

[73] Figures based on Metal and Engineering Industry Bargaining Council data provided by Elias Monage, NUMSA, 20 April 2000.
[74] George Magaseng, NUMSA Springs organiser, Interview with the Author, 11 November 1999. According to Magaseng, the current environment is characterised by competition without growth, whereby "the cake remains the same but the people eating it have increased".

> them very poorly. They're taking advantage of the social situation of the workers. These people, due to a poverty situation, are compelled to accept that kind of conditions.[75]

According to this organiser, 99% of jobs created in engineering on the East Rand are by now on a casual basis and the only way in which the NUMSA Springs local can retain its membership levels, faced with a constant haemorrhage from large companies, is by intensifying recruiting efforts in small companies, often employing less than 10 employees, like garages, car washes or repair shops. At the same time, organising casual workers has inherent problems:

> Well, you can organise them if you wish, but unions are much different from, say, a burial society or an insurance company, whereby you got an insurance only if you have a problem. With the union it's completely different, you build a relationship over time. Some of the issues workers are enjoying today have been fought for many years, even the recognition of the union has been an uphill battle. That is the problem in organising fixed-term contracts. You can organise them but in a union you build up for a future, you must have an agreement. If you don't have an agreement contract workers are terminated when their contract expires, so that is what makes it difficult to organise in those industries[76].

NUMSA's Wits East region includes the locals of Alrode, Germiston, Wadeville, Benoni, Springs and Nigel. At the beginning of 2000 the region had a membership of approximately 25,000[77], following a 26% decline from the 1996 membership figures (NUMSA, 1996) and a 45% decline from 1989 (NUMSA, 1989)[78]. To stem the tide of membership loss, the union has to stretch its resources to organise across a fragmented geography of production, whilst targeting large companies had historically shaped organising strategies on the East Rand.

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[75] Ibidem.
[76] Ibidem.
[77] Locals' membership data, April 2000, provided by Meshack Robertson (Wits East regional organiser). Membership by local was, approximately as follows: Alrode, 3800; Germiston, 5500; Wadeville, 5150; Benoni, 4000; Springs, 5200; Nigel, 1200. Less than 60 companies out of approximately 600 unionised had more than 100 members, while approximately 40% of companies had less than 30 members. The average number of members per company was approximately 49.7.
[78] The 1989 figure is highly indicative as it represents members in the East Rand locals of the then Wits Region.

Similar challenges are confronted by CEPPWAWU[79]. Retrenchments have had particularly dramatic impacts on sectors like packaging, pulp and paper, and glass, dominated by large companies that in the past benefited from state protectionism and, in the latter, investment by multinational corporations (Barker, 1996; Rosenthal, 1999). During the 1990s the unions that merged to form CEPPWAWU had known a constant growth nationally, from 80,000 members in 1990, to 93,000 before the 1999 merger (Buhlungu, 2001: 129). Such growth was aided by the relaunch of the once disbanded pulp and paper bargaining council and the signing in 1995 of an interim centralised agreement for the glass industry, in view of establishing a bargaining council in 2000.

At the end of the 1990s, however, the East Rand started to provide an exception to the general trend. In late 1999 CEPPWAWU's Wits region (including the locals of Germiston, Springs, Tembisa and Johannesburg) had approximately 18,600 members, or 25% of the union's overall membership, 12,000 of which were based in the three East Rand locals (see Table 4.4). In 1998-99 alone, however, CEPPWAWU has lost approximately 3,000 members in the region.

Table 4.4 CEPPWAWU Membership, February 1999, Disaggregated by Region and Sector

Sector	Regions' Members						Regions' Companies						Total members
	EC	GP	KZN	NETvl	NC-FS	WC	EC	GP	KZN	NEtvl	NC-FS	WC	
Consumer	188	1229	651	--	--	145	3	23	8	--	--	4	2213
Furniture	79	3153	422	158	710	82	10	59	17	9	13	3	4604
Glass/pottery	802	2020	172	174	--	414	10	29	8	3	--	4	3582
Industrial Chemicals	1484	5079	2303	511	128	670	18	104	48	7	3	21	10175
Others	449	2290	1383	601	27	941	35	149	67	42	21	59	5691
Petroleum	26	2175	546	46	146	743	2	13	9	1	1	6	3682
Pharmaceutical	863	1365	1177	27	34	366	10	19	6	1	1	5	3832
Plastics	649	2642	2202	299	--	1152	17	51	41	5	--	24	6944
Printing	722	4019	2626	429	41	1856	23	174	55	13	10	37	9693
Pulp & paper	200	1906	2268	948	50	485	8	41	23	8	3	14	5857
Rubber	62	631	364	21	--	--	1	14	3	2	--	--	1078
SASOL mines	--	5145	--	94	--	--	--	4	--	1	--	--	5239
Sawmills	1491	12	799	1151	--	399	12	3	9	34	--	5	3852
Woodwork	581	1153	1300	4034	73	1690	37	43	34	38	12	28	8831
Total	7596	32819	16213	8493	1209	8943	186	726	328	164	64	210	75273

Note: EC=Eastern Cape; GP=Gauteng; KZN=KwaZulu/Natal; NC-FS=Northern Cape/Free State; NETvl=North-Eastern Transvaal; WC= Western Cape.
Source: Information Provided by John Appolis, CEPPWAWU Wits Regional Secretary.

[79] On the history and organisation of CWIU and PPWAWU before the CEPPWAWU merger see, respectively, Rosenthal (1995) and Buhlungu (2001), pp.120-145.

CEPPWAWU was affected particularly badly by membership decline on the East Rand, while the Johannesburg local actually gained members, with the Germiston local dropping from 6,500 to 4,300 members, Springs from 4,700 to 4,600 and Tembisa from 3,500 to 2,500. Unionisation remained heavily reliant on large companies, with three firms (PFG, Consol and MB Glass) providing half of all members in the Wits glass industry and a similar role being played by Nampak, Mondi and Sappi in pulp and paper. Conversely, small enterprises played a much more important role in other sectors[80].

Membership losses were largely due to retrenchments in large companies (Consol-Wadeville, Waltons Stationery, Bison Board-Boksburg, PFG Flat Glass-Springs, AECI-Kempton Park), with glass companies being particularly affected. Such figures reveal a trend to organisational dispersal and fragmentation that, similarly to NUMSA, accompanies restructuring and retrenchments. According to Andile Nyambezi, Germiston local organizer[81], 2,000 jobs have been lost by CEPPWAWU-organised companies in the local from 1998 to 2000 alone. Only in companies with the strongest union traditions retrenched workers are re-employed on a fixed-term basis. Despite the predominance of large companies in sectors like glass and paper, about half of CEPPWAWU members in the East Rand are not covered by centralised bargaining.

As in metal and engineering, downsizing in chemical, glass and paper has been paralleled by fragmentation of production and competitive outsourcing. Technological innovation has, however, played a far greater role in company downsizing. Small companies, largely un-unionised, have proliferated especially in production segments, like palletising or cutting to size, that do not require substantial investment and overhead. Volatility in employment and companies' ownership implies renewed organisational efforts for the union and a shift away from organisation based on large conglomerates.

[80] All CEPPWAWU membership figures and related elaborations are provided by John Appolis, CEPPWAWU Wits Regional Secretary. In 1999, 54% of Wits CEPPWAWU members were in workplaces with less than 30 employees, 16% were in workplaces with 31-50 employees, 17% in companies with 51-100 employees and 13% in companies with more than 100 employees.
[81] Interview with the Author, 7 April 2000.

Labour broking is emerging as a significant factor in the casualisation and fragmentation of employment on the East Rand. Interviewing direct participants allows a glimpse in an otherwise scarcely researched business. Fernando Perneta[82] runs the labour broking company FEDMO, which supplies workers to establishments in the Nigel area, especially Union Carriage & Wagon (UCW). A former foreman at UCW, Perneta left in 1991 when, besides starting FEDMO, he became a coach with soccer team Moroka Swallows. He returned to work full-time with FEDMO when UCW started retrenching in 1997. During the 1990s, he says, the labour broking business has known an explosion in the East Rand, based on the proliferation of operators on a largely undocumented and unregulated basis. According to him, there are more than 1,000 brokers in operation on the East Rand, plus an unspecified number of retrenched or dismissed foremen that arrange for small teams of workers to be employed as casuals in their previous companies. Nearly all of them are not formally registered and, according to CEPPWAWU's Andile Nyambezi, some of them entered the business by recruiting strikebreakers.

FEDMO, conversely, is a significant exception. In fact, it is the only labour broker on the East Rand that a union, NUMSA, has managed to organise after protracted confrontation, forcing it to register under COIDA and the Bargaining Council, to pay contractual wage rates and provide UIF, sick pay and a provident fund[83], although not medical aid (Interview #21). Moreover, agreements between NUMSA and FEDMO provide for a 7-day notice for termination of employment, as opposed to the customary 24 hours. Perneta rationalises the situation by emphasising the uniqueness of his business strategy and the exception it constitutes in the East Rand's labour broking scenario. In fact, he says that he is prepared to accept lower profit margins for the sake of building reputation, "social capital" and long-term networks of loyalty.

FEDMO's approach can also be explained, however, by the fact that the company positions itself on the upper end of the labour market, specialising in the supply of artisans and skilled workers. At the same time, maintaining a "skills mix" with a significant craft component is crucial because many companies

[82] Interview with the Author, 21 October 1999.
[83] I could verify this on payslips of FEDMO workers that Perneta showed me.

employ semi-skilled workers for artisans' jobs, paying semi-skilled rates to the broker who then pays artisans' rates to the worker. If FEDMO was not paying for benefits, as the near totality of labour brokers do in Perneta's view, its margin for a worker paid R28 per hour would rise from R1.00 to R1.30-1.70 per hour. Developing long-term relations of trust between labour brokers and craft workers redefines patterns of identity and representation. FEDMO presents itself, in alternative to the union, as a *de facto* representative of workers on whose behalf it negotiates with client companies. During our interview, Perneta showed me a leaflet from another labour broker advertising its advantages in this way: "As contract staff are not unionised, a client's time is not spent negotiating with union representatives and work attendance of contract staff is not dependent on trade union attitudes and agreements". FEDMO's approach conversely, is more resonant with conventional managerial paternalism disguised as industrial relations pluralism:

> When I started at UCW, I used to think and behave like all the other brokers and the union didn't like that, and I thought, 'This can't be real, why must I give you ten Rand more? If these people that are bigger than me are not doing it, I am not doing it'. Then I started talking to the union (…). Other companies think that if they use labour brokers they won't have to deal with the unions, to get rid of toyi-toyi. I am the only one who allows the workers to belong to the unions, there's no other labour broker that I have seen doing that. And still our workers don't stand out of the gate jumping up and down. (…) I have no problems with blacks. I come from a football background, I was training the Moroka Swallows in the 1970s, I have been training black teams since 1972-73, I was one of the two only white coaches, so I know these people, I know how they are and I know how they look, and they respect me, they are the ones that make me what I am, and I respect them. So I have never had problems with what the unions want, otherwise they would have started dancing outside the gates. I know, Franco, that is not you want to hear…"
> Q No, look, there is nothing that I specifically want to hear…
> A No, really, there has never been fights between us, I have come a long way with these people, I have always been with these people, many years.

He then went on suggesting the possibility of a cooperation between unions and "good" labour brokers to improve knowledge of the law, prevent elusion and set

uniform standards in the industry to increase diseconomies for exploitative practices. On the basis of his own paternalist framework, he starkly contrasted FEDMO's case with what he regards as harshly exploitative and abusive practices linked to labour broking on the East Rand:

> Outside it's not like that, we are a very isolated case. I know lots of labour brokers outside and they don't basically care about the people, what will happen tomorrow to that guy. My people are people who have worked here before, we don't just put an advert saying that we want six artisans, I personally bring them here and because I bring them, I know what the person can do. (…) Outside it's very stupid, companies would just say "I need a boilermaker", and that's it, and they wouldn't worry about provident fund. So I have to make R1.50 and hour while others make R10.50 because they don't pay benefits, that's exploitation.
> Q but if all these people get away with it, why don't you do the same? After all, they save a lot of money
> A (laughs) yes, a lot of money. Let me tell you something: nobody comes to my door, nobody swears at me, nobody calls me names and I would like to think that I am still doing business ten years down the line. (…) So, you people looking at the labour brokers are quite right: labour brokers in general is probably the worst business around, because they don't pay people in time (…). You can't imagine, you haven't even started to imagine".

According to research on the subject, companies' gains from using labour brokers are mainly in saving administrative costs, undercutting benefits, avoiding unions and enforcing time flexibility counting on the employees' vulnerability (Rees, 1998). The specific case here discussed, however, indicates that casualisation involves also a process of reshaping worker identities and loyalties in ways that new meanings are provided to replace prospects of stable insertion in waged employment. The following discussion of the companies that constitute my case studies underlines the importance of contestation over meanings and discourses used to make sense of the East Rand's industrial transition.

4.4.2 Presentation of Individual Company Cases

FEDMO's main client, UCW, is a leading name in the production of locomotives, trailers and wagons. Started by an Australian investment in 1958, and enjoying

the support of railways parastatal Spoornet as part of apartheid-age policies of infrastructural development, UCW reached its peak during the 1970s, specialising in particular in the production of 6E/6E1 engines and Electrical Multiple Units (EMUs) for suburban transportation. Economic crisis and the decline in public transportation from the mid-1980s led the company to privilege the production of wagons and, later, to focus on repairs and export to the region following the expiry of major contracts for the domestic market[84]. In 1996 Murray & Roberts took over the company from Malbak and it embarked on a massive restructuring and downsizing exercise coincidental with new contracts for the supply of carriages for Malaysian and Zimbabwean rail networks. UCW was then a subcontractor for major multinationals (Siemens, Toshiba) which provided electrical systems.

Retrenchments were motivated by the fact that new contracts were of a limited duration, while no production for the South African market had taken place since 1982. Layoffs started in early 1997, at the expiration of the Malaysian contract, and over the following two years employment dropped from 800 to 310 permanent workers, 50% of which white artisans. During the 1980s, UCW could employ between 1,200 and 1,500 workers. For subsequent contracts, like the one for Zimbabwe, workers were re-employed on fixed-term contracts through FEDMO, and 200 of them were terminated again when the Zimbabwe contract expired at the end of 1997. While UCW was retrenching and casualising, FEDMO workers were working on overtime schedules of 27-30 hours per week (Interview #33).

Following further retrenchments after April 1998, the company was planning a 150 headcount by October 1999[85], while 70% of production workers and the majority of white artisans were hired through FEDMO, according to shop-stewards (Interview #21). Since 1997, the company's survival prospects have been, in the words of its Human Resources director, "quite bleak"[86] and depending entirely on repair jobs, especially for commuter rail operator Metrorail.

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[84] UCW company information on <www.ucw.co.za>, last consulted 30 May 2005, and *Engineering News*, 26 July 2002, p.18.
[85] Information provided by Joe Lekhasi, UCW Human Resource Manager, 3 November 1999.
[86] Joe Lekhasi, Interview with the Author, 3 November 1999.

Following unsuccessful attempts by M&R to sell UCW, in 2003 the "UCW Partnership" was formed to include UCW and Duduza Rail Engineering, a black empowerment consortium led by the J&J Group.

According to NUMSA organisers, UCW specifically targeted union members for layoffs and introduced labour broking in an effort to weaken NUMSA[87] in a company with a strong union tradition and where MAWU was recognised already in the 1970s. Between 1997 and 1999, NUMSA has lost 330 members at UCW. On the other hand, no negotiations over restructuring have taken place. Even if management vaunts its "availability to talk" to the unions and the need to move away from an adversarial "them and us mentality", no formal workplace structures exist, on account that they would "restrict the flow of communication", leading legitimate differences of opinion to "question perceived authority"[88].

The second NUMSA-organised company in my sample, Baldwin's Steel in Brakpan, was part of a conglomerate, Dorbyl, which placed a specific emphasis on its enlightened, participative, union-friendly management style. Baldwin's Brakpan, part of the Baldwin's Group, is a company specialised in trading and cutting structural steel for branches of the group nationwide. The production of structural steel was started at Baldwin's by Dorbyl when it took over the company from Stewart and Lloyd's in the late 1980s. Flat steel products, once done at Baldwin's Brakpan, were moved to the Isando branch in 1991, when Baldwin's Brakpan was scheduled for closure and the entire workforce was retrenched. According to workers, with that decision the company's aim was to "run away from strikes" in a factory characterised by high levels of union militancy (Interview #15). Eventually it was, however, the Boksburg plant, previously producing structural steel, that shut down, while its workers and structural steel production were moved to Brakpan.

At the time of my research, the workforce at Baldwin's Brakpan was of 115 employees, 10 of which working on cutting machines, numbers that remained

[87] Andrew Zulu, NUMSA Nigel Local Organiser, interview with the Author, 13 July 1999.
[88] Joe Lekhasi, Interview with the Author, 3 November 1999. Lekhasi was a MAWU and NUMSA shop-steward before being hired in a managerial position in 1994.

stable during the 1990s[89]. The factory's prospects are however shadowed by the enduring crisis of the construction industry, the main source of demand for structural steel, which led between 1997 and 1999 to a drop in sales by almost 50%. As a result, the plant has come increasingly to depend on steel cutting, a relatively capital-intensive segment of production whose share of the turnout was planned to double from the existing 10% and which, in the words of a shop-steward, "keeps the company going" (Interview #5)[90]. Therefore, Baldwin's Brakpan was trying to become a lean production, made-to-order operation in an environment penalised by overpriced locally produced steel and particularly subject to competition from what a manager calls "many rats and mice who operate on a small basis"[91]. Increasing pressures on workloads and task flexibility have been combined to recurrent rumours of impending retrenchments[92], which management unofficially reinforces:

> If we can avoid all this crap and this hassle with trade unions. We can't fire… here there's a poor guy that starts a business and then he finds out that he can't fire, he has to deal with the unions, people with disabilities, the CCMA, the Employment Equity Act… If we can get away with all that crap and employ a machine instead of having ten workers employed that would make perfect business sense for the poor guy that is doing the business.[93]

Eventually, Dorbyl decided to sell the Baldwin's group in a major restructuring at the beginning of the 2000s. First its three flat steel plants in Rosslyn, Durban and Port Elizabeth were merged with Trident Steel in December 2000[94]. Then, in January 2002 a management buyout of Dorbyl's steel traders, Baldwin's and Stalcor, created Kulungile Metals as a group with a 49% black empowerment shareholding[95].

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[89] Keith Roach, Works Manager, Baldwin's Steel Brakpan, Interview with the Author, 27 October 1999.
[90] See also Mgibe (MEIBC) to Roach, 4 April 2000, Author's collection.
[91] Keith Roach, Interview with the Author, 27 October 1999.
[92] Du Plooy to Madiseng, 30 March 1999, Author's collection.
[93] Keitth Roach, Interview with the Author, 27 October 1999.
[94] Competition Tribunal, *Trident Steel (Pty.) Ltd and Dorbyl Ltd*, Case No. 89/LM/Oct00.
[95] "Big Steel-Sector BEE Deal", *Engineering News*, 4 March 2005; "Pamodzi Gets Grip on Steel Sector", *Bisiness Report*, 12 February 2004.

Before such changes took place, however, work intensification, increasing insecurity and a muscular managerial style contrasted starkly with Dorbyl's discourse of participative company governance. According to Osborne Galeni, NUMSA's organiser for the Dorbyl group, the company's leadership that emerged in 1992, represented by CEO Bill Cooper, tried to engage the union in a visionary process of joint transformation with which Dorbyl wanted to end a history of adversarialism where it was the most hardline voice in employers' organisation SEIFSA. Bill Cooper's transformation programme involved a radical reshuffle of management and the establishment of transformation forums in Dorbyl's subsidiaries, which earned him the respect of the union: "Sometimes other employers called him a NUMSA executive. He's viewed as a union man"[96].

Part of the company's image of change was the assertion of an ideological discourse of cooperation and "company patriotism" that aimed at reshaping workers' attitudes and responses in a non-conflictual direction. "Roadshows", as Galeni calls them, involving company and union officials were organised across Dorbyl's plants to explain to workers the need to transcend a culture of confrontational interactions. At the culmination of the process, a "truth and reconciliation commission" (TRC) was formed, modelled after the national TRC, which seconded officials for this exercise. The Dorbyl TRC had a mandate of collecting information about past practices and abuses, with an aim at healing the resulting animosities and laying the groundwork for cooperative relationships. Even if it considered the TRC a positive departure from a company's past where "foremen used to beat workers", NUMSA refused to make a submission as an organisation, while also many managers resisted the TRC fearing that it could turn into a "witch-hunt"[97]. Baldwin's workers expressed a generalised scepticism and indifference for what they considered as *mampara* (Interview #9), or a rehashing of 1970s "liaison committees" (Interview #11), or a fictitious and merely ideological window-dressing with "some reverends and some government people going around the plant" (Interview #12). As a result, many of them refused

[96] Osborne Galeni, NUMSA Organiser for the Dorbyl Group, Interview with the Author, 11 August 1999.

[97] At Baldwin's Brakpan management tried to convince NUMSA to demand the formation of a "workplace forum" in terms of the 1995 Labour Relations Act rather than being part of Dorbyl's "transformation forum".

to participate. Therefore, individual cases of racist abuses figure prominently in the TRC company reports[98]. Structural issues related to managerial authoritarianism, unilateral decision-making, casualisation, restructuring and retrenchments, however, were not part of the Dorbyl TRC's mandate since, as Galeni puts it, "they are driven by market forces".

The positive reception by NUMSA's national headquarters of the Dorbyl TRC and of Cooper's discourse of change, despite refusal and disillusionment at the grassroots, reveals the company's remarkable success in shaping union identities away from social radicalism in a context of crisis and high uncertainty. Dorbyl's discourse of corporate citizenship contrasts with the militant utterances in the unions' social citizenship discourses in presenting workers' empowerment as depending on the company's success:

> The emphasis should now be on positives, not negatives (…). What we need is a common vision that defies old narrow thinking and practices, allowing the empowering of the workforce to give everything they've got and management to lead confidently(…). The time of 'fanagolos', dictatorship, 'double agendas', unnecessary confrontations and all those things has ended in 1994"[99].

NUMSA itself has become increasingly concerned about such developments that, by exploiting workers' vulnerability and employment insecurity, mobilise corporate identities in ways that could deepen the union's representation problems and cause further divisions. In 1995 NUMSA's Dorbyl National Shop Steward Council "intervened by discouraging members from entering into (*sic*) any form of co-determination at Dorbyl plants"[100]. A 1996 internal NUMSA report noticed that, even if 64.4% of Dorbyl employees belonged to NUMSA, most shop stewards did not attend meetings regularly and most members were "out of touch"

[98] Reports were compiled for all Dorbyl subsidiaries. The most common complaints concerned racial forms of abuse, racial favouritism in loans and promotions, racial wage gaps, unpaid nightshifts and overtime. Lack of information and financial assistance to purchase housing was a widespread complaint at all companies. Equally raised was the lack of information on, access to and downsizing of medical aids. See *Dorbyl TRC Companies' Reports* (SPI, DHE Vereeniging, Roll Work Vanderbijlpark, Dorbyl Marine, DSP Containeering, Mechanical Products, MSP and Venco, 11 October 1997; Climax, 28 November 1997; McCarthy Mine Machinery, 2-3 December 1997; Baldwin's, 3 March 1998; Busaf, n.d.), Author's collection.

[99] *Dorbyl Transformation Minutes*, 28 May 1997, Ndlovu to Girodor et al. See also Dorbyl Ltd., *Annual Report*, 1997, Author's collection.

[100] *Minutes of Dorbyl National Shopstewards Council*, 13 April 1996. NUMSA.

with the union. On the other hand, management in many divisions was "way beyond communication stage" and had started workplace-based informal forums and "green areas" where workers were led by fears of being laid off to accept unilateral technological innovation, multitasking and reorganisation of shifts. Management's transformative rhetoric was ultimately seen as piecemeal and aimed at sidestepping the union, confining it to a "rubberstamp" capacity (Morapedi, 1996).

Discourses of "company patriotism" and managerial attempts at reshaping workers identities, with attendant divisions inside the unions, played an important role also in the trajectory of the last NUMSA-organised factory I investigated, Kelvinator's plant in Alrode. Kelvinator's origins as a household appliances' producer date back to 1929, with a plumbing and sheet metal company founded by Carl Fuchs, whose development benefited from industrial expansion in the 1930s and the war effort in the 1940s. The company acquired licences from Sweden and the USA to manufacture products under the brand names of, respectively, Westinghouse and Electrolux (Bezuidenhout, 2004). In 1978, the then C.G. Fuchs was absorbed by Barlow Rand and took the name Barlows Consumer Electric Products Group (Barcep). In 1983, out of 700 employees, 326 were members of MAWU[101]. By 1993 Barcep had 1900 employees and a leading 24% market share, even if its unbundling from Barlows in the same year had weakened it in a liberalising scenario that was becoming increasingly competitive (Rees, 1994). In November 1996 Barlows announced that due to a competitiveness crisis the possibility of discontinuing operations existed, a prospect for which the company had already expressed its preference. The choice to liquidate was confirmed at the end of that month, and retrenchment letters were sent. Few days later, however, the direction notified the employees of discussions for a takeover of the company by a consortium formed by NUMSA and Sovereign Capital Investment (SCI), led by Simon Koch.

On 17 December 1996 the SCI-NUMSA consortium became the owner of the company as a going concern for R1.00, after that 400 workers had been retrenched. SCI owned the Kelvinator brand to be produced on franchise and, as

[101] Information provided by Greg Ruiters based on MAWU membership statistics.

part of the deal, workers were given a 20% share ownership[102]. The new management embarked on an ambitious expansion plan counting on increasing demands for household appliances in a post-apartheid market driven by government-sponsored electrification, the promotion of an African middle class and the spread of consumerism among poor communities. As a director explained, "We has a pot of gold in Africa and a pot of gold in Sub-Saharan Africa"[103]. Therefore Koch introduced new technology, opened a cookware line to be combined with the previous production of fridges, enhanced marketing efficiency through direct sales to the final customers, outsourced transport, planned to double output to 1,000 units per day, which was achieved in September 1998, and started a massive recruitment drive, employing 500 new workers, mostly previously retrenched[104]. By the end of 1998, Kelvinator employed almost 1,300 workers (800 in direct production), 840 of which were NUMSA members.

While production efficiency, output and working capital improved and overhead and purchasing costs were drastically reduced, demand expectations did not materialise. Moreover, the market became increasingly competitive in a liberalised context where retailers buying in bulks maintain substantial influence on prices. Finally, a competitor, Masterfridge, exported to South Africa from a Swaziland factory whose workers were allegedly paid one third the hourly rate of Kelvinator employees[105]. In 1999, Kelvinator's selling prices were 10% lower than in 1997. Management felt that the only alternative to restore profit margins was to further increase production in the hope of improving economies of scale and being able to negotiate more effectively with retailers, which strained capacity, led to excess stock and increased costs. To overproduction was added growing workers' resentment at the company's work intensification[106] (Barchiesi, 1999).

For Kelvinator employees "it took a lot of strength to restart the company again" (Interview #41), and their sacrifices endorsed Koch's image as a saviour of

[102] *McCulloch v Kelvinator Group Services of SA (Pty) Ltd*, ILJ, 1998: 1399-1413.
[103] Andy Fenn, Financial Director, Kelvinator, Interview with the Author, 20 October 1999.
[104] Ibidem.
[105] See Koch to Ngwenda, 4 August 1997; Koch to Erwin, 30 July 1997; Koch to Erwin, 30 July 1999, Author's collection; "Use of Cheap Labour Criticised", *Business Day*, 23 May 1997.
[106] Andy Fenn, Interview with the Author, 20 October 1999.

jobs and as a visionary business leader in an environment based on cooperation and a fair share of rewards. In spite of the going concern agreement, the company's "founder employees", those who were part of the 20% shareholding deal, accepted to place their Barlows' retrenchment packages in a Kelvinator Employee Founder Share Trust, with the promise of being refunded after six months in case of negative results. Koch, therefore, restarted the company with R16 million in employee's retrenchment benefits in addition to SCI's R60 million investment[107]. Moreover, the union had to accept a no-strike pledge and agreed in a "record of understanding", due to expire in June 1999, that while "founders" rates of increase would be at the industry's levels, new workers hired as operators at the lowest grade after 1 June 1997 would be paid the minimum SEIFSA rates of R8.03 per hour, compared to the R10.42 paid to "founders" in the same grade. Not only was this a breach of centralised bargaining but, in the words of a local NUMSA organiser:

> This created two categories of workers. The founder members were disadvantaged because they never got the percent increment in terms of centralised bargaining and the newly employed had their wages cut as they started with the SEIFSA rate.
> Q: So you agreed to a…
> A: …a wage freeze. We agreed to it.[108]

Management, however, has a different version:

> Bullshit. There was no wage freeze. The deal was that the guys' increases were agreed at SEIFSA rates and new people would be at SEIFSA rates, and that created conflict. We had higher wages and similar productivity compared to our competitors, that's why we told workers that to continue the business new guys had to get SEIFSA rates[109].

In any event, differential wages created dissatisfaction especially among the new, younger workers, with spiralling theft and sabotage, an absenteeism rate that

[107] Ibidem and Zweli Livi, NUMSA Alberton Local Organiser, Interview with the Author, 16 September 1999.
[108] Zweli Livi, interview with the Author, 16 September 1999.
[109] Andy Fenn, Interview with the Author, 20 October 1999.

climbed to 36% and accusations to the "founders" of having "sold out" the new employees. In the second half of 1998, in the midst of its financial and market crisis, the company started looking for possible rescuers. Potential investors, in particular the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), demanded an extension of the "Record of Understanding" and of differential wage schedules. NUMSA's acceptance of this request led to a breakdown of relations inside the union and to clashes between "founders" and new workers which felt betrayed by the deal.

Some "founders" also felt betrayed by the company, who never paid dividends on their shares due to financial difficulties, and they accused the managers of not disclosing correct financial information. Therefore, many of them ended up supporting the new employees' demands for wage parity. The shop steward committee eventually split between those who blamed the company for reneging on its promises and those who accused the young workers' radicalism and laxness for the company's downfall. The former line prevailed and the shop stewards stopped attending the "consultation forum" which was the only company structure in which changes were discussed, alleging that the forum was used by the company to create a direct communication channel to impose top-down decisions in ways that sidestepped the union. Escalating conflict accompanied Kelvinator's problems and in August 1999 the company announces the retrenchment of 200 employees for 10 September[110]. But on 7 September, faced with the failed materialisation of new investments and rising debts, the company announced its provisional liquidation. In the meanwhile no negotiation had taken place with NUMSA, which was not informed of the decision to liquidate (Vlok, 1999).

As a result of Kelvinator's liquidation, 1,200 employees were left jobless. After prolonged negotiations involving alternative rescue options, a major local company, Defy, bought Kelvinator's assets and resumed production in March 2000.In June, however, Defy announced the transfer of production equipments from Alrode to its plant in Ezakheni, near Ladysmith, in what was, under the apartheid-age KwaZulu homeland, an "industrial decentralization" site and is now

[110] *Minutes of the Retrenchment Consultation Meeting*, 23 August 1999; Raphoto to Livi, 25 August 1999, Author's collection.

a deindustrialised backwater of under-employed, low-wage workers, with weak traditions of union organising (Hart, 2002: 127-151). With only 250 workers employed in the new plant, at a cost one third lower than employing them in Alrode, Defy doubled its operating profits and captured 44% of the cookware market (Bezuidenhout, 2004: 7).

Kelvinator's collapse ultimately confirms the relevance, already seen for FEDMO and Baldwin's, of managing worker identities and allegiances in a process where old promises of emancipation linked to wage labour have collapsed, giving way to a reality of uncertainty, precariousness and fear. Managers' bitter comments reveal both the importance of such a terrain of contestation, and the problems they encountered in building a worker identity centred on company patriotism as an alternative to collective solidarity and union organisation:

> The new workers employed to work in the cookware plant were not part of Kelvinator culture, so new divisions and conflicts arose between young and old guys, who were instead committed towards the company. The new guys, however, were very disruptive and in the end they took over the shop-steward committee and radicalised the union[111].

According to Simon Koch:

> We told the shop stewards about our problems, but they did not believe us. They're a young bunch of guys, (…) disruptive young workers with nothing to lose. (…) Their allegations that we did not disclose information on the financial situation of the company are simple lies (…). It was a mistake to employ workers with matrics. I thought they were smarter and I wanted to give them a chance but labour intensive production was not suited for them[112].

But the Kelvinator drama was also a devastating setback for the union and its ability not only to represent workers' demands in a coherent way, but also to contest managerial hegemony. Workers' views on the responsibility for the collapse and on the role of NUMSA are divided and cut across age, seniority and

[111] Andy Fenn, Interview with the Author, 20 October 1999.
[112] Simon Koch, CEO, Kelvinator, Interview with the Author, 17 November 2001.

organisational divides. Some NUMSA members, and not only older ones, fondly remember "Simon" [Koch] as a visionary leader, "a good guy who got bad luck", under which "everything was going first class" (Interview #55). Many older workers blame the younger ones for their alleged envy, greed, lack of discipline and commitment to the company, accusing the union for having sided with them (Interview #45). Most shop stewards accuse Kelvinator's management of incompetence for a high-volume and overstocking strategy that they see as a sign of mistrust and fear of strikes. For a senior shop steward "despotism and anarchy: that was the name of the game for the bosses" (Interview #41). Most workers, however, old and young alike, ultimately felt betrayed for the collapse of a company that was relaunched and became competitive essentially thanks to their sacrifices. Instead, after a pattern of unfulfilled promises and violated agreements, often with the union's agreement, they had their jobs erased without consultation or notice, facing management's contempt at their "unruliness":

> Sometimes it felt like a torture chamber, it felt very hard to report for work. I felt like, why am I going to that place? That place is boring me, I don't feel that place like home… And he was calling us a family, 'we are a family here! We are a family!', Yes, a big, unhappy family (Interview #51).

Kelvinator's end is a glaring and symptomatic example of how the material collapse of wage labour opens up gaps at the level of workers' collective discourse, identity and rationality, and it highlights the growing inadequacy of union organisations in weaving meanings and strategies of solidarity that are irrevocably questioned. My case studies of glass and paper companies confirm such trends in a context of constant erosion of wage labour's stability and rewards.

The East Rand's glass packaging industry revolves around two main players, MB Glass in Leondale and Consol Glass in Wadeville. Metal Box (MB) Glass, then owned by Barlow Rand, opened its Leondale plant in 1983, recruiting many managers and skilled workers from Consol. Nampak bought the whole Metal Box group in the early 1990s, and now MB Glass is a fully-owned Nampak subsidiary (Interview #221 and 223). Historically, the company is a union

stronghold, with 191 CEPPWAWU members among the 450 workers in direct production out of a 600-strong total workforce, and prospects for further increases following the ongoing merger of CEPPWAWU with the National Employees' Trade Union (NETU). Probably about 25% of the African workforce is made of migrants, especially weekly commuters from rural KwaZulu-Natal.

Strong union identities in the plant translated into company agreements with wage levels substantially higher than centralised bargaining rates, the provision of a range of company services usually unavailable in the industry, like company transport for workers on nightshift, and an uncommon tradition of company welfarism. MB had a relatively advanced national housing loans programme for its employees (Hendler, 1989b: 8). The scheme started as a company project to provide housing mortgage and personal loans backed by the employees' provident fund[113]. Initially the unions present at MB, especially NUMSA, resisted it, seeing it as a company ploy to promote private home ownership among most stable employees and in this way divide and sidestep the union. In fact, no more than 5% of MB's employees could afford the company's home loans financing for the cheapest housing products, even if between 50% and 75% qualified for various types of loan[114]. However, following advice that it should not "cut itself off from the communities"[115], the union eventually decided to engage the company on this terrain, demanding to focus home loans on low-wage workers, to introduce one-time company housing subsidies for all employees equivalent to the cost of a serviced site[116] and to cap the amount of withdrawal from the provident fund to 5% of assets. The scheme was then restructured under the name Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project, and NUMSA gained representation on its board. In 1999, 44.06% of overall provident

[113] Hendler, P., *Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project Report Two: Access to the Formal Home Ownership/Improvements Market*, n.d. (but 1988), Wits DHP, PLANACT 25.26.5.8.
[114] Hendler, P., *Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project 1988/89 Final Report: Employee Benefit Funds and Financing and Delivery of Low Income Housing*, n.d. (but 1989), Wits DHP, PLANACT, 25.14.16.
[115] Hendler, P., *Discussion Document on the Various Proposals which Have Been Emerging from Different Quarters for the Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project*, 4 October 1988, Wits DHP, PLANACT, 42.3.7.2.2.
[116] NUMSA, *Union Proposals to the Metal Box Provident Fund*, n.d. (but 1989), Wits DHP, PLANACT, 42.3.7.1.

fund members (about 30% in the Leondale plant) had access to loans of an average size of R20,173.90[117].

The company has faced two restructuring exercises in 1990 and 1991, in which 60 workers were retrenched in a context of heavy technological innovation. Moreover, some departments, especially the mould shop resort of faulty bottles, were outsourced or, as a shop-steward indicatively says, "privatised" (Interview #201). While resorting and moulding have been outsourced to an external company, some of the retrenched workers were rehired as temporary. In few cases workers laid off in 1990 are still called to work for MB Glass on an intermittent basis, but casuals are largely hired in nearby informal settlements, largely through labour brokers. At least three labour broking companies operate in the plant, one of which owned by a formerly retrenched MB manager.

According to shop-stewards, temporary workers hired through labour brokers earn wages of R150-250 per week with no benefits, and they provided first-hand evidence of former MB employees being terminated by labour brokers for joining the union (Interview #201). While CEPPWAWU demands to stop outsourcing and subcontracting of operations, a further threat to MB workers' employment security and stability comes from the shutdown of the company's Durban branch, which raises fears that managers will move to Leondale some of that factory's machines and that retrenchments would follow (Interview #215).

According to both managers and union organisers, relatively high wages and company welfarism that made of MB Glass a relatively "insular" reality were the product of a perculiar combination of union rootedness, shop-steward radicalism[118] and the tempo of the company's expansion. In fact, being a latecomer on the glass containers' market faced MB Glass with the need to retain critical skills to be able to compete[119]. The strengthening of centralised bargaining

[117] NBC, *Home Loans Report – Metal Box South Africa Provident Fund as at 31 December 1999*, Author's collection.
[118] Andile Nyambezi, Interview with the Author, 7 April 2000.
[119] Brian Maguranyanga, Nampak National Headquarters, Sandton, telephonic conversation with the Author, 12 April 2000. Maguranyanga reported "management sources who prefer to remain anonymous" in citing the possibility of cutting the wage bills at MB Glass' Leondale, while facing the unions with the threat of closure or retrenchments following the introduction of new technologies. At the end of 1999 the company announced possible retrenchments following the planned introduction of an automated line in April 2000, see *Minutes of Meeting between Management and Shop Stewards*, 24 November 1999, Author's collection.

and the threat of new technology following the closure of the Durban plant, however, are challenging MB Glass' peculiarities. While shop-stewards report that relations with management have been increasingly strained during 1998 and 1999, culminating in the suspension of the whole shop-steward committee for having taken part in a 1998 national strike, the company welfarist system has also shown cracks[120].

Technological innovation played a decisive role in restructuring and employment crisis also at Consol Glass. The company was started in 1948 and at the time of my research Anglovaal was its main shareholder. Following successful restructuring, in October 2004 Anglovaal "unbundled" Consol and allowed it to be separately listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange[121]. Apart from its Wadeville bottle plant, Consol has branches in Pretoria, Cape Town and Olifantsfontein. In 1994 Consol Glass Wadeville employed more than 800 workers in direct production alone. Following a wave of retrenchments, especially 200 workers laid off in April 1998, the total workforce dropped to 340, of which 280 in direct production, by early 2000[122]. The main reason for retrenchments was restructuring due to focusing on the company's "core business" and to the introduction of new technology (Beadle, 1995). New computerised bottling machines were introduced and two furnaces out of three were shut down following the automation of the remaining one. As a result, productivity has greatly increased, with less workers employed, which allowed the addition of one line to the company's four. While in 1996 there were 27 palletisers on 9 machines (3 per machine), in 1998 there were 9 on 4 machines (2.25 per machine).

[120] At the end of 1999 the company announced its decision to eliminate its shift transportation arrangement. See *Minutes of Meeting between Management and Shop Stewards*, 24 November 1999, Author's collection. CEPPWAWU's research showed that members' costs for risk benefits in the MB provident fund were increasing, while claims and housing loans were decreasing. See *Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees of the Metal Box SA Provident* Fund, 24 February 2000 and Metal Box SA Provident Fund, *Administration Report for the Gauteng Region as at 10 March 2000 for the Regional Trustees Meeting, 3-6 April* 2000, Author's collection. Few months before MB Glass shop-stewards had sent Nampak a letter of complaints blaming management's "lack of effective leadership" and failure to involve workers in decisions, see NUMSA MB Glass Roodekop to Evans, 26 July 1999, Author's collection.

[121] "Consol to Be Unbundled from AVI and Relisted", *Business Day*, 13 October 2004.

[122] Steven Kalicharan, Human Resource Manager, Consol Glass Wadeville, Interview with the Author, 4 April 2000.

Therefore, restructuring was the result of manufacturing expansion, rather than the response to market problems[123].

Moreover, numerous operations deemed "non-core" were outsourced inside the plant (as in smelting) or closed down and subcontracted outside. In particular, resorting was subcontracted to Bompak Services in 1994 and recycling was moved to Enviroglass in 1996. All in all, 150 workers were lost due to outsourcing and 150 as a result of automation, particularly in the furnace (Interview #181). Despite a 1994 agreement on consultation, a 1997 agreement on restructuring, and a "competitiveness and restructuring agreement" where the company commits itself to securing jobs for its employees, the unions were unable to affect the process and a CWIU application to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) was rejected. Such developments contrast with Consol's stated intention to adopt a participative management style based on joint problem-solving and "green areas", as a worker remarks:

> Yeah, sure, like this one, it's a Green Area but they are not working. This thing was introduced but we are not participating in it, we use these areas to come here, have tea, lunch.
> Q: Well, this corner is unquestionably painted green… The idea is that at the beginning of the day you meet with managers for 15-30 minutes to discuss company problems. Is there anything like that here?
> A No, no. we are not discussing anything (Interview #183).

At the same time, workers in outsourced companies are employed in precarious, possibly exploitative conditions. Part of restructuring was Consol's decision to get rid of its vast contingent of casual workers, which could be as many as 40% of the headcount (Interview #198). According to a Consol shop-steward who visited the plant, Bompak, which is run by a former Consol manager, employs approximately 50 workers, almost all casuals with 1 to 3 weeks contracts, which are "paid slave wages" (Interview #181). The equivalent of a Consol's Grade 16 allegedly earns

[123] According to company statistics machine utilisation increased from 80% to 86% between 1996 and 1998 and downtime decreased from 6.5% to 4.2%

at Bompak R1200 per month compared to Consol's R2160[124]. Another shop-steward thinks that Bompak employs illegal immigrants from Mozambique, since they cannot speak Zulu (Interview #184). It is the unanimous opinion of shop-stewards that visible union members were targeted for retrenchments, often on a racial basis, under the pretext of their low skills and of the fact that, in this continuous operation 3-shifts plant[125], workers on a permanent dayshift, which are mainly whites, have a higher exposure to the work environment (Interview #181).

Other glass companies I visited[126] reinforce the impression of generalised employment decline linked to intensified technological innovation in highly competitive contexts that, however, are not affected by the market crisis encountered for metal and engineering companies. In flat glass production, in particular, the main industry player, PFG Glass in Springs, has retrenched almost 1,000 employees from 1995 to 1999 (from 1,700 to 750), almost halving its weekly-paid headcount from 850 to 450[127]. To some extent restructuring was due to decline in demand for specific products, like bulletproof glass, of the which the company was a major supplier to the military and internal security during apartheid. The main reason is, however, competition from small companies specialising in cutting glass to specific sizes and shapes. Conditions facing workers in some of the smaller emerging establishments can be gathered from questionnaires administered to managers and shop-stewards[128]. At one of these companies a shop-steward explained the reason for union membership's decline as: "Bosses have become stricter on discipline after we joined the union (…), we can't afford walking around". The main reason for unionisation in this company

[124] The minimum monthly wage set in the 1999-2000 Glass Sector Interim Substantive Agreement is R2000, or R10.26 per hour on a 45-hour week and R11.55 for a 40-hour week.
[125] Like MB Glass, Consol works of a "3-shift, 4-crews" system, whereby workers are required to work on morning, afternoon and night shifts, doing the same shift for 2 consecutive days (3 days for weekends' shifts), taking 2 consecutive days off after 7 working days. The system was introduced in the early 1990s, before it was a conventional 3-shift system, with one day off after 3 days on the same shift.
[126] Apart from MB Glass and Consol, where I conducted extensive interviews, I have also submitted questionnaires to managers and shop-stewards at PFG Building Glass (Springs), Ace Glass (Germiston) and Triumph Glass (Alrode South).
[127] Christo Swanepoel, Human Resource Manager, PFG Building Glass, Interview with the Author, 14 March 2000.
[128] I faxed questionnaires to two of such companies, for which managers denied me direct access. In one of them, management refused to return the questionnaire. The two companies employed respectively 20 and 33 workers and specialised in specific products, like windscreens, or in sub-supplying automotive manufacturing suppliers.

was indicated as unpaid overtime, while a 30% yearly turnover is reportedly due to low wages and there are no provident funds or medical aids. In the other, where half of the workforce is made of casual workers paid R600 per month without benefits, management blamed a decline in productivity on "outside influence, once they joined the union" and provided "strike actions" as the main reason for employing casuals

Paper and packaging companies visited for this research include manufacturers' and merchants' establishments[129]. The picture of downsizing in large companies, rising competition from small establishments and growing outsourcing of operations is here generally confirmed. Kimberly Clark in Springs has retrenched 140 workers in direct production from 1994 to 1998, down to the current 600, while closing a plant in Wadeville employing 100 workers[130]. Sappi Enstra (Springs) planned two retrenchment exercises in 1992, and from then to 2000 total employment fell from 1800 to 1030 following technological innovation, while outsourcing is now discussed for the first time[131].

Nampak Corrugated (NC) Wadeville's plant is one of the six in the Corrugated branch of the Nampak Group, the leading paper packaging producer in the company. In 2000 NC-Wadeville employed 263 permanent workers, 180 of which in direct production. While 145 production workers were black, 15 artisans out of 20 were white. Before 1994 more than 800 people were employed in this plant[132], but workers in direct production have dropped from 400 to the current 180 between 1995 and 2000. 80% of job losses were attributable to retrenchments linked to new technology and market competition and 15% are due to subcontracting of operations, especially in box stitching. A blow for the company came with South African Breweries' decision in 1994 to use plastic crates rather than paper containers. Competition, however, is especially from small companies

[129] Extensive interviews were conducted at Nampak Corrugated (Wadeville) and Paperlink (Germiston). A questionnaire was directly administered to management and shop-stewards during visits at Kimberly Clark (Enstra, Springs) and Sappi Enstra (Springs). A questionnaire by fax was responded by shop-stewards at Mondi Recycling, while management declined.
[130] Neville Sabor, Human Resources Manager/Specialist, Kimberly Clark of South Africa, Interview with the Author, 8 March 2000.
[131] Edgar Kgosi, Human Resources Manager, Sappi Enstra, Interview with the Author, 7 March 2000.
[132] From 1988 to 1993, employment at Nampak Corrugated nationally declined from 4005 to 3303 (Sociology of Work Programme, 1994: Appendix 3).

which usually do not employ corrugating machines and therefore they specialise in the production of finished boxes with corrugated sheets from Nampak, which sells an increasing share of its production to such companies. Therefore, in this case the border between competition and competitive outsourcing becomes blurred and both trends converge in undermining Nampak workers' employment and job security, while probably expanding low-wage, unprotected work in small companies.

New technology has been introduced particularly after 1994, first with new boxing machines, which led to 90 layoffs, then with new printers in 1996, which shed 50 more jobs, and finally with new corrugators in 1998, which eliminated 98 further jobs[133]. In 2000, the company was planning to introduce new conveyors, which would lead to 70 more retrenchments, but it could not due to lack of capital. Despite a national Nampak agreement on retrenchments, of all the retrenched workers only 18 were re-employed as temporary, 8 of which became eventually permanent (Interview #162). Restructuring has almost doubled the company's production of stitched and glued boxes, and managers praise multiskilling and work intensification as a result of new technology[134]. According to a worker, however, "multiskilling is abusing us, because we make more jobs with less money" (Interview #168). At the same time, Nampak has tried to reassert management's ideological hegemony around the need of building co-operation and worker's commitment to the company's success. A 1998 agreement on "World Class Initiatives" signed by PPWAWU, before its merger in CEPPWAWU, committed the union to prioritise competitiveness according to criteria benchmarked with international conditions by a private consultancy.

The union's shift towards "company patriotism" in a context where its members continue to be adversely affected by restructuring is a product of a process of engagement started in 1994 with the establishment of a National Working Committee with an equal representation of management and shop-stewards and the launch of an "Upgrade Project" based on Total Quality

[133] William Sithole, Human Resources Manager, Nampak Corrugated Wadeville, Interview with the Author, 10 April 2000.
[134] In March 1999 the corrugating department, the company's core business, was working at a respectable 86% capacity, see Rijnberg to Buthelezi, *Memo. Factory Performance Meeting*, 23 September 1999, Authors' collection.

Management and Just-In-Time production concepts. The process represented a fundamental departure from worker-management relations historically marked by militancy and conflict (Sociology of Work Programme, 1994). In 1989, after ten years of attempts at preventing PPWAWU from organising in its plants, Nampak withdrew from the printing industry industrial council, which led to its eventual collapse, and adopted a strategy based on decentralised bargaining. Prolonged conflicts since then saw PPWAWU growing to 4,000 members in the whole Nampak group and achieving important gains on the benefits front, like the establishment in 1990 of a national Nampak Provident Fund with union representation.

Successful management strategies to reshape workers' commitment and discourse towards co-operation and industrial peace are also apparent in the case of the last company I visited, Paperlink in Germiston. The company, whose other branches are in Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban, was started in 1993 as a fully-owned paper merchant subsidiary of Mondi, following the purchase by Mondi-owned Main Paper of a competitor, VRG. While the company's total employment of approximately 60 workers is probably half the pre-merger combined headcount, employment levels have remained stable since then, even if an unusually high number of disciplinary dismissals (10 from 1998 to 2000) is considered by one shop-steward as a "retrenchment in disguise" (Interview #142). The company has, however, outsourced its transport department and drivers of hired trucks are now employed on 3-months contracts (Interview #141 and 150). While Paperlink has no formal grading system, contract drivers earn R550 per week, compared to R700 for permanents, have no medical benefits and their use has led to longer working hours (up to 14 per day), increasing mileage travelled and more deliveries.

Paperlink's management has embarked on a strategy of workers' involvement following the appointment of new human resources personnel. In management's discourse the experiment is couched in typical paternalist terms, while emphasising the importance of teamwork and quality circles. The company's logistics manager, for example, underlines "adequate financial reward in the form of an outing for them, or a day at Gold Reef City or a picnic with their

family"[135]. Workers and shop-stewards, however, credit management, and this specific official, with having profoundly changed the company's mindsets, introducing a new sensitivity for the workers' conditions (Interview #160), whereby previously "you could cry until the tears were finished" (Interview #141). CEPPWAWU's regional offices, however, express concern for such development, regarded as "a very questionable relationship between management and the shop stewards" based on the company's attempt to "co-opt the shop-stewards and instill in their mind the idea that there is no need for the organization"[136]. For this union official, what happens at Paperlink reinforced "this mentality of 'we are family'", which he has noticed in Nampak as well, and which exploits increasing competition and insecurity to reshape workers' identities in ways that sidestep the union.

4.5 Conclusion

During the two decades that followed the re-emergence of independent trade unionism in the 1970s, the East Rand has been a territory where the spatial and economic map designed by urbanisation and industrialisation overlapped in peculiar ways with the social maps of grassroots organising and struggles. The area acquired therefore coherent and specific characteristics that made it a unique laboratory to study relations between wage labour and discourses of emancipation. The transformation of waged work on the East Rand during the post-apartheid transition emphasises the crisis of a trajectory where, in a complex interaction between workplaces and residential communities, wage labour had emerged as a vehicle for social as well as political citizenship.

In many analyses during the 1980s and 1990s the concept of "social movement unionism" has come to represent such a trajectory by looking at labour's involvement in "community" struggles. This chapter has shown, however, that both "labour" and "community" are not objective and immutable terms, and that the conditions of their encounter and congealing around discourses

[135] Ellen Roberts, Logistics Manager, Paperlink, Interview with the Author, 5 April 2000.
[136] Andile Nyambezi, Interview with the Author, 7 April 2000.

of emancipation and social citizenship are highly contingent on the forms of contestation through which structured claims emerge out of the complexities and the contradictions of specific contexts. In the case of trade unions on the East Rand, wage labour played the ambiguous role of a tool for the social promotion of a largely migrant labour force and of a boundary to be transcended for the organised working class to be able to claim social rights and decommodified resources. Such a trajectory, which involved considerable contestation inside the trade union movement itself, led eventually to labour's involvement in struggles for the quality of life, grassroots control of the urban space, access to housing and municipal services.

Industrial decline and wage employment crisis during the post-apartheid transition have questioned the social foundations, the sense of stability and the symbolic referents upon which wage labour could build its role as a conduit for a social citizenship discourse. Casualisation, new labour market hierarchies, the fragmentation of production and the expansion of vulnerable labour market sectors are among the manifestations of such shifts, but they do not necessarily determine their outcome. In fact, as my discussion of labour broking shows, "atypical" work itself is a multi-layered, contested arena where worker identities are reshaped and discourses are circulated in ways that cannot be merely reduced to domination and obliteration of workers' agency. Chapter 6 and 7 will explore this point in deeper detail by looking at workers' responses to casualisation and employment insecurity inside and outside the workplace.

For the moment, however, it is important to underline that labour market changes, rising insecurity and precariousness open up new terrains of contestation over workers' identities and allegiances. The rise of discourses of worker participation and "company patriotism" is an important facet of this phenomenon, where defensive worker identifications are elicited at the corporate level to weather the challenge of competitive, market-regulated, unprotected wage relations. Such changes have caught the unions increasingly unprepared and unable to articulate a proactive social citizenship discourse able to bridge gaps between wage labour and communities. Rather, adaptation and defensiveness

seem to take centre stage for unions that are facing deepening representation problems. As NUMSA's George Magaseng notices:

> Previously it was politics more than bread and butter issues. That has changed, we now deal with real economic issues, we do participate with companies in productivity negotiations, we do also give inputs. Workers take for granted that once there has been a process of democratising the country everything else will follow, and that's the mistake they are doing. But until they realise it it's gonna be difficult for them to identify themselves with the union[137].

For Andile Nyambezi, it is precisely the growing frailty and instability of employment that mostly contributes to weakening workers' identifications with organisations centred on wage labour:

> Now workers tend to rely largely on the law and how the law would assist. With all the defeats they have suffered, militancy in that sense has declined, not that it isn't there but it has changed. The demands have not changed: wage increases, hours of work remain the main ones. The demand for job security is there but if the wages are settled that is a demand on which they compromise. I don't know, maybe that is informed by the notion that it is an impossible request that you can make. Albeit it is important for the union, job security is seen more as a long-term issue, it is watered down to something that is not tangible. The question becomes: 'Are you being reasonable in the current economic climate?' Workers don't demand job security, they don't have faith in the union dealing with the issue.[138]

In a sense, the disillusionment expressed here reflects the unfulfilled promises of wage labour which Sitas (2004), in a recent research on what has been of the 1973 Durban strikers, identifies with the social disorientation and the fading of meanings for the half of them that he categorises as the "stuck" and the "deteriorated".

Of course, the question is opened of what the possible discursive and organisational alternatives to the decline of wage labour could be, or of how workers reshape their strategies once the terrain of wage labour becomes

[137] Interview with the Author, 11 November 1999.
[138] Interview with the Author, 7 April 2000.

insufficient to gain stability and rights. Debates on the fate and ultimate decline of "social movement unionism" underline the impact in severing labour-community interactions of changes inside trade unions, in the direction of growing bureaucratisation, professionalisation, rank-and-file demobilisation or subordination to the ANC in power (Hirschsohn, 1998; Rachleff, 2000; Buhlungu, 2001; Bramble, 2003). The combination of these factor could open spaces of community mobilisations that in recent years have been filled by new forms of social movement politics (Desai, 2002; Naidoo and Veriava, 2004; Buhlungu, 2004). This chapter indicates, however, that important as such factors probably are, they cannot replace an analysis focused on the transformations internal to wage labour, at the level both of material conditions and of social imagination, discourse and desire, to explain its gradual hollowing out as a factor of social integration and solidarity. The analysis of changing meanings of wage labour and the ambiguities surrounding demands for "job creation" will be explored more in depth in subsequent chapters. Before that, however, the next chapter will introduce my second case study of transformations of work in another working class community, Johannesburg municipal workers under the "iGoli 2002" process, largely made of low-wage, migrant workers for which access to a formal job became coterminous with a now endangered social advancement.

CHAPTER 5

Case Studies of a Changing World of Work. II: Johannesburg Municipal Workers and the Corporatisation of Service Delivery

5.1 Introduction

Like the previous case study, this chapter presents a process of rapid and far-reaching change affecting a working class constituency for which in the previous two decades wage labour and trade union organization had meant struggles and visions of social emancipation that contrasted with a reality of disempowerment, vulnerability and instability. Even more than the East Rand industrial workers, Johannesburg's African municipal employees have historically been socialized through migrancy, recruitment by the city's various Councils in rural homelands and housing in segregated compounds. Under apartheid, municipal services were characterized by authoritarian management, repressive legislation, limits to workers' organizing rights, and a highly decentralized labour process. Workers have, in fact, not only been divided by racially and ethnically segregated residence, but they were also employed in depots and departments spread over the municipal territory and separated from each other.

Trade union organization provided municipal employees, which are still geographically quite dispersed, with a common language of struggle, shared claims, and connections with other sections of organized labour. Peculiar forms of unionization of municipal employees have also emphasized the role of the union in developing a relatively sophisticated agenda on benefits and employer-subsidised provisions, to complement demands on wages and working conditions. Finally, unionization has facilitated, also due to the workers' role in providing services for residential neighbourhoods, linkages and solidarity at the community level along the lines of "social movement unionism". Out of a trajectory of recent urbanization and unstable, exploitative insertion in waged employment,

Johannesburg's largely low-skill and unskilled African municipal workers have emerged in the post-apartheid transition with a remarkable security of tenure, centrally bargained wages, and benefits that on average are better that at equivalent levels in the private sector.

The transition in the Johanensburg's municipality heralded by the "iGoli 2002" plan promises radical changes in such a context through the introduction of market-based regulation in the delivery of services, in the organizational frameworks and in the forms of employment. Coupled to a municipal fiscal and financial crisis that has become apparent in the mid-1990s and has led to a deterioration of employment conditions, iGoli 2002 was perceived by workers with a growing sense of uneasiness and anxiety for what it potentially implied in terms of eroding past gains and questioning social advancement.

My research has taken place in the waste management and roads and stormwater departments of the Greater Johannesburg Municipal Council (GJMC). This chapter provides a picture of changes envisaged by iGoli 2002, of the transformations in municipal wage labour while the plan was being introduced, and of how the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) related to the plan. I do not therefore deal with the impacts and consequences of iGoli 2002's implementation on labour. In fact, from a temporal point of view, my discussion stops in December 2000, when SAMWU's opposition to iGoli *de facto* faded soon before the plan entered its implementation phase.

5.2 "iGoli 2002", Market Regulation and the Transition to the Contracting State in Municipal Services

The iGoli 2002 plan for the restructuring of the GJMC is the end result of three main, concomitant although historically specific trends. First, the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 laid the groundwork for the restructuring of municipal government and the unification of apartheid-age segregated local authorities under a single system of municipal administration and service provision. For Johannesburg this meant, as per Provincial Proclamations 24 of

1994 and 42 of 1995 (Swilling and Boya, 1995; Abrahams, 1997), bringing seven pre-existing city councils (Johannesburg, Sandton, Randburg, Dobsonville, Diepmeadow, Soweto and Roodeport), and areas run by old Regional Services Councils (RSC) and the Transvaal Provincial Administration (like Orange Farm and Lensdale), under a Greater Johannesburg Transition Metropolitan Council (GJTMC), subdivided in 4 Municipal Sub-Structures (MSS).

Second, the state of fiscal crisis and budget deficits which the GJTMC declared in 1997, while facing extreme inequalities and backlogs in service delivery between former black townships and white suburbs, prompted the intervention of the Gauteng provincial government. A proclamation by the province's Local Government MEC issued on 10 October 1997 *de facto* blocked new capital investment and required the municipality to embark on a restructuring exercise. With the aim of reducing deficits, improving service delivery and enforcing residents' payment for services, the Proclamation required the municipality, among other things, to embark on "public-private partnership" agreements for service departments to be reconfigured as independent business units.

Finally, the 2000 Municipal Structures Act provided for the establishment of a unified metropolitan administration ("unicity") to replace the articulation of functions between what was by then the GJMC and its Metropolitan Local Councils (MLCs), which replaced the MSS and were largely autonomous in terms of budget and services administration[139].

The massive social inequalities inherited from the apartheid-age organization of municipal services and their racially segregated patterns of delivery were deepened in the transition period by new social stratifications. In particular, the proliferation of informal settlements at the city's outskirts or in backyard accommodations in established townships resulted from the collapse of apartheid's "group areas" legislation and from waves of jobseekers migrating from impoverished rural areas (Guillaume, 2001). Before the establishment of the GJTMC, yearly per capita expenditures of black local authorities servicing 80% of the population were approximately R150, compared to R3,000 for "white"

[139] Makgabe Thobejane, Labour Relations Specialist, GJMC, Interview with the Author, 16 March 2000.

councils[140]. During the 1990s, employment patterns in Johannesburg mirrored trends noticed for the East Rand, with a constant decline in activities related to manufacturing, mining, agriculture and construction, and the rising importance of commerce and services (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2000). Information technology and finance played an increasingly visible role in the northern corridor connecting Midrand, which is part of Johannesburg municipality, to Pretoria.

With an overall unemployment rate of 33% in 2002, and 17% of the population living in informal dwellings (Everatt et al., 2002), the city is marked by vast disparities in the access to services. At the end of the 1990s, 30% of Soweto's population lived in backyard accommodations, half of which shacks, while a further 14% resided in informal settlements, hostels and "site and service" schemes (Morris et al. 1999). At the same time, 45% of Alexandra's residents lived in informal accommodations and 17% lived in hostels. Finally, only 11% of informal settlements residents used electricity as their main source of power, a choice dictated largely by lack of affordability. One third of all African households had no running water and 50% had no flush toilets in their dwellings (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2000: 113-115). Late apartheid urban change was characterized by the collapse of black local authorities amidst widespread political insurgency and boycotts of rents and service fees. The government responded through the somehow contradictory combination of increasing public expenditures and cross-subsidization of the black townships on a contingent, ad-hoc basis, and the promotion of privatisation and private housing development on a more long-term ground (Heymans, 1991; Samson, 2004b: 85-89).

The choice to open opportunities for private involvement in the delivery of municipal services was part of the late-apartheid policy discourse, and was resumed and re-elaborated as a solution to the challenges of post-apartheid democratic municipal governance. The municipality had already contracted in 1996 a group of consultancies headed by PriceWaterhouse & Cooper to conduct an "Organisation Review", which revealed areas of duplication of structures and organizational inefficiencies. It also expressed a strong preference for a restructuring based on a combination of privatization and corporatisation, or the

[140] Ibidem.

transformation of municipal departments into autonomous, Council-controlled business units. The Review predicted that

> The trade unions will offer resistance to efforts which look like a privatization. Furthermore, employment risks or lose (*sic*) of pension fund advantages in mergers will engender great disquiet and opposition[141].

In execution of the October 1997 provincial Proclamation, a "Committee of 10" was established with representatives from the GJMC and the four MLCs to coordinate their respective functions, elaborate a response to the financial crisis and identify "core" council responsibilities in view of the transition to a single municipal authority. The Committee of 10 was later expanded into a "Committee of 15", which in February 1999 was succeeded by a Transformation Lekgotla (TL). The TL was composed of the chairpersons and the deputy chairpersons of the GJMC and the MLCs plus five co-opted councilors, and it acted as a transitional political organ in charge of running the five councils as a single structure. The GJMC and the MLC entered an "urgency agreement" with which they delegated their powers to the TL[142]. In this way, an administrative unelected body assumed full policy-making powers, of which the Councils as composed of elected representatives were deprived.

In September 1998 the GJMC had also decided to select a management team on a two-year contract to assist with the short-term phase of the process of transformation. In January 1999 the team was appointed, consisting of city manager Khetso Gordhan, transformation manager Pascal Moloi, labour relations specialist Magkane Thobejane and financial manager Roland Hunter. The management team, which sat jointly with a Transformation Lekgotla expanded to include the managers of municipal departments, elaborated and presented the iGoli 2002 plan to the Lekgotla and the Council, which approved it on 16 March 1999. IGoli 2002 was then referred to a process of consultation with civil society and labour organizations, which lasted from March to August, when an "iGoli

[141] GJMC, *Organisation Review. Final Case for Change Report. Group Executive Report, Group 1*, 1998, GL.
[142] Makgane Thobejane, Interview with the Author, 16 March 2000.

Summit" with broad stakeholder participation was convened and a steering committee to advise the Council on the long-term implementation of the plan was selected[143].

IGoli 2002 emerged out of a financial crisis to which greatly contributed the reduction in central state funding to local government before and after GEAR. At the end of the 1990s South African municipalities were expected to raise from local sources (mainly fees and rents) approximately 90% of their budget, to which national government grants provided for only 7% in 2000 (Ajam, 2001). Moreover, the contribution of intergovernmental transfers as a proportion of local government expenditures was about 10% (Solomon, 1998), whereby central government transfers to local government have been slashed by 55% between 1997 and 2000 (McDonald, 2002: 23). The 1998 *White Paper on Local Government* and the subsequent *Municipal Infrastructures Investment Framework* (MIIF) limited the extent of intergovernmental cross-subsidisation only to areas of extreme socio-economic disadvantage and recommended the contracting out of municipal services to achieve job creation, good employment conditions and equitable tariffs. In relation to such pressures, during negotiations with SAMWU, city manager Khetso Gordhan described in vivid and sanguine terms the urgency of iGoli 2002:

> Gordhan: Here we are, basically going to the Department of Finance. We have said to them that Johannesburg is 11% of South Africa's economy, and it is in shit: 'You cannot stand there watching us die, you have to do something about it'. They say, 'Why?'. Alright, I will tell you, that was one reason why. The second reason is that you gave us a number of unfounded [inaudible]. I am just using Orange Farm as an example. If you go to Durban today, there is a place called KwaMashu close by. KwaMashu used to be a Bantustan (…). Every year Durban gets in another occasion roughly R300 million extra from the Department of Finance, for KwaMashu, plus Umlazi, plus a few other areas that were part of KwaZulu. Now, Orange Farm is no different from KwaMashu, Alex[andra] is no different from other places in Durban. Our problem is that none of these things were part of a Bantustan. You see, you should have fought for a Bantustan, you would have got more money. We said to them, 'Now listen, guys, Durban gets the R300 million, we get nothing, it's not fair'. (…) They

[143] M.Thobejane, *iGoli 2002, Transformation and Implementation*. *Chronology of Events, Labour Relations Section*, 20 December 2000, GL.

> said 'Ja, that sounds good but it's not good enough. Give us one more reason'. I said, 'Here is our plan, (…) over a three year period it will put us back in the right direction, okay? It only takes three years before we are sorted out after all, then we will be able to look after ourselves. So we are asking for your help or whatsoever, for 3 years (…), after that we will be okay. We can look after ourselves. But help us out of this mess'.
> Q: Who did you talk to, Thabo Mbeki or who?
> Gordhan: Trevor Manuel.
> Q: Do you know if they will come back?
> (Laughing).[144]

When questioned about the effectiveness of solutions to the crisis based on a greater private sector involvement, Gordhan continued:

> There is a woman called Margaret Thatcher, who I am sure all of us would love to hate. In the late 1980s, basically she said, 'I don't care if these things work, I don't want to own them on my own, please'. It wasn't a study done before a decision was made (…). What the basic lesson is that (…) they are not the best, they are not first prize, it is definitely second prize, and it is a hell of a lot better than being in a government department[145].

The imposition of fiscal discipline to municipalities was integral to the GEAR policy discourse, but the GJMC invested it with a rhetoric of "crisis" and "emergency" that hegemonised public perceptions, reshaping them into accepting the need of drastic solutions. IGoli 2002 came therefore to embody such solutions in a policy process that, by suspending ordinary democratic-representative decision-making, was dominated by corporate managerial rationality and the "rule of experts" (Escobar, 1994, Mitchell, 2003). According to some analyses, the extent of the municipality's fiscal crisis was "talked up" to accelerate metropolitan restructuring in ways that marginalized former anti-apartheid activists now working for the local government and marked the ascendancy of a new generation of neoliberal technocrats (Beall,

[144] South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC), *Transcripts of Negotiating Committee on iGoli 2002,* Tape of 15 June 1999, SAMWU. In 2000 Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel announced in its "Budget Speech" that the government would allocate three-years "restructuring grants" to municipalities complying with the *White Paper*'s recommendation. The concession of the grant was in fact conditional to the implementation of iGoli 2002 (GJMC, 2000; Samson, 2004b: 99).
[145] SALGBC, *Transcripts of Negotiating Committee on iGoli 2002,* Tape of 15 June 1999, SAMWU.

Crankshaw and Parnell, 2002: 87-106). At the same time, overt political opposition was discouraged by the determined intervention of the ANC leadership in support of iGoli 2002, which led to the expulsion from the party of vocal critics of the plan, like Pimville councillor Trevor Ngwane.

The broader spatial and economic strategy context in which the GJMC's restructuring took place was defined by the Council's Strategic Metropolitan Development Framework (SMDF) and Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The SMDF defined the spatial coordinates of metropolitan change, decentralizing service management functions into the 11 regions in which the GJMC was supposed to be subdivided. The IDP was an economic development strategy strongly geared towards a high-skill, "post-Fordist" economy, a move actively encouraged by the Province's "Blue IQ" project-based investment programme. According to critics, the vision envisaged by GJMC's spatial and economic planning was liable to increase the marketization of the urban space in ways that would benefit only the top, qualified layers of the labour market to the detriment of low-skill, unemployed and informal workers. Reinforced class divisions would therefore emerge in a context where deracialization of the urban space itself had advanced only to a very limited and unequal extent (Tomlinson, Beauregard, Bremner and Mangcu, 2003; Beavon, 1998: Noble, 2000).

The iGoli 2002 plan is based on a conceptual separation in the services provided by the GJMC. Social services like health, libraries and sport amenities remain under this framework the direct responsibility of the Council in terms of local government's constitutional obligations. To this end, the management of such services is decentralized to the new 11 regions to be established, in place of the 4 MLCs, as autonomous non-political bodies. They will contract the provision of social services with the Council, which as "client" provides a "ring fenced" budget and sets standards, targets and delivery performance evaluation. Trading services like water, electricity and waste, conversely, are transferred from former Council departments to autonomous business units of various kinds. First, 10 "utilities" and "agencies" are established and registered either as proprietary limited companies or under Section 21 of the Companies Act, and the Council remains their 100% shareholder. In particular, three utilities become responsible

for the provision of the income-generating services, namely water and sanitation, electricity and waste management. Moreover, "agencies" are created for the management of roads and stormwater, parks and cemeteries. Finally, five more entities will be the corporatised companies of the zoo, the fresh produce market, the Civic Theatre, the bus company and the newly established property company. Other activities are fully privatized, like Metro Gas, the Rand Airport and the Johannesburg Stadium, while fleet management and information technology functions are outsourced to private companies in terms of the MEC recommendations for public-private partnerships.

In the case of the utilities, the Council remains responsible for appointing their directors, setting policies and targets and approving five-year programmes, using their dividends to finance social services, even if as a rule it will no longer cross-subsidise their budgets. Agencies, which do not raise their own income through direct user payments, and the bus company will instead continue to be subsidized (GJMC, 1999a). Retaining a 100% share-ownership was aimed by the Council at strengthening its regulatory functions and setting tariffs and delivery standards in accordance with RDP-mandated obligations to satisfy basic needs, with particular regard to lifeline free basic services for approximately 20,000 households identified as "indigent" (GJMC, 1999b). New public-private partnerships, for example in the newly established Johannesburg Water (which manages 30% of the GJMC's budget), privilege short-term, 5-year management contracts aimed at acquiring critical skills rather than capital finance. Therefore the GJMC eschewed the 30-years concession contracts experimented in other municipalities, like Nelspruit, which came under severe criticism by opponents of privatisation[146] (Van Niekerk et al., 1999).

The World Bank supported the GJMC's shift towards entrepreneurialism in municipal service delivery, providing funding to monitor market and investment opportunities that focused specifically on involving local small-medium enterprises. The Bank recognised that from the success of "iGoli 2002" depended the introduction of similar processes in other South African metropoles (Chandra and Ahmad, 2000).

[146] Makgane Thobejane, Interview with the Author, 16 March 2000.

Johannesburg's transition in municipal governance translates at the local level the abandonment, discussed in Chapter 3, by the ANC government of its earlier developmentalist approach based on state intervention in redistributing resources and equalizing social provisions. The structure of service delivery envisaged by iGoli 2002 is rather reminiscent of the concept of "contracting state" (Harden, 1992; Broadbent and Laughlin, 1996; Eardley, 1997) as a form of governance based on the separation between the local functions of service authority, reserved for the local government, and those of service provision, which are delegated to entities operating on private business principles. The former function is redefined in terms that I have elsewhere in this work defined as "residualist", aimed at providing non-tradable social services and minimum safety nets for the extremely poor. The latter is reconfigured through autonomous profit centers supplying customers at market rates with "ring fenced" products -- like water, electricity, refuse collection -- that replace municipal services as cross-subsidised, decommodified provisions (Bond, Dor and Ruiters, 1999).

Managerialism and entrepreneurialism as rising ordering principles for access to social services allow, finally, to de-politicise the sphere of delivery, reduced to "technical" adjustments within given policy borders (Hassen, 1999). Social provisions are therefore subtracted from political contestation and insulated from social conflict, while emphases on profit-making disable criticism of the role historically played by the private sector in shaping Johannesburg's unequal social and urban geography. As Gamete (2002) notices, these local administrative practices facilitate modes of social control that, similarly to what I have noticed in previous chapters in relation to national social policy, construct the urban poor as a passive entity coterminous with social "problems" and related governmental "interventions". In this way the poor's agency is disempowered and its claims for radical redistribution of resources are defused.

Finally, urban managerialism tends to be hostile towards non-market, informally decommodified forms of access to services, as in the case of land invasions, bond boycotts and illegal water and electricity connections. Instead, transferring municipal services to individual providers as "business units" that raise their income on the market, makes the maintenance of stable credit ratings a

priority that requires minimal political “interference”, a prompt recovery of costs, regular payments from users and repression of rates boycotts, including evictions and disconnections when needed (Govender and Aiello, 1999).

5.3 The Reorganisation of Waste and Roads Services under iGoli 2002

In terms of iGoli 2002, assets managed by the GJMC Solid Waste Directorate (SWD) were transferred under a new utility, Pikitup Johannesburg (Pty.) Ltd., which started operations in January 2001, while the roads and stormwater department became the Johannesburg Roads Agency. Before the establishment of Pikitup, the MLCs were largely responsible for waste collection and disposal, while the GJMC was allocated approximately 9% of the budget in 1999-2000. The largest share of the budget (approximately 33%) went to the Southern MLC (SMLC), which covered rapidly urbanizing, impoverished areas such as Orange Farm and new extensions of Ennerdale and Lenasia (GJMC, 1999a; Barchiesi, 2001).

The structure of waste management inherited from apartheid was the product of racially segregated administrations that caused vast inequalities in access (Swilling and Hutt, 1999: 194-197). Therefore, the Johannesburg City Council had a ratio of staff to serviced population of 1:482, a budget of R123.41/person per annuum, waste collection once a week and regular street cleaning. Conversely the staff-to-residents ratio in the Soweto City Council was 1:2,412, with a budget of R26.31/person per annum, refuse collection every two weeks and no service for street corner dumps. Shack settlements, then administered by the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA), had a staff-to-resident ratio of 1:28,333 and a budget of R0,74/person per annum.

At the time of my research, waste collection was structured in 13 depots and 54 “garden sites”, or fenced dumping areas attended by a supervisor and an assistant, used to collect domestic waste, garden refuse, tree cutting and waste for recycling companies (GJMC, 1999a: 12). All garden sites, which collected 15% of the city’s waste, were located in historically ”white” neighbourhoods.

Round collection of domestic refuse was done by approximately 200

municipal rear-end loader trucks or by contractors' compactor trucks, working with 240-litres wheeled bins or 85-litres bins. Bulk collection for the city's 73 informal settlements, with approximately 130,000 households and 553,000 inhabitants, was made -- on a typical "site-and-service" basis – in 5.5 cubic metres' open skip containers placed at street corners. Underservicing in these areas favoured illegal dumps, vermin and rodents, contributing to poor health and hygiene conditions (GJMC, 1999c,d). Street cleaning, which collected about 11% of the city's waste, covered approximately 1,000 kms of municipal streets (mainly business, shopping and public parking areas), while litter-picking covered approximately 3,000kms, out of the city's 7,700 km. of streets (GJMC, 1999a: 12-13).

The GJMC's waste management budget has been drastically reduced between 1995 and 2000, and no capital expenditures have taken place between 1997 and 2000. The 1997-98 capital budget of R1.5 million was only 0.4% of the total for the GJMC. The council was therefore prevented from directing resources to expand existing infrastructures. The 1997-98 operating expenditures of R338.3 million led to a shortfall of R133.6 million. Following an increase in the operating income from R200 million to R280 million in 1999, the shortfall was reduced to R110 million in 1999-2000. To the improvement contributed, however, a drastic reduction in repairs expenditures for an ageing and collapsing fleet (GJMC, 1999a: 16).

At the same time, the neglect of the Council's assets and fleet, deepened by budget cuts, had direct negative impacts on garden sites maintenance, street cleaning and refuse collection. The fiscal crisis in the sector was not so much the consequence of rising debts and external circumstances, but it largely self-reproduced: rising shortfalls required budget cuts, which increased the shortfalls. Therefore, rather than being a means for a more efficient allocation of resources, fiscal austerity was a main factor in reproducing the deficit (Barchiesi, 2001).

Before iGoli 2002 waste management was one of the most cross-subsidized municipal services at GJMC. The service has many non-tradable activities, like garden sites, that in terms of waste by-laws have to be provided irrespective of payment. In 2000-01 waste contributed 3.55% to GJMC's revenues

and 5.1% to its expenses (third biggest item), which implied that 40% of its budget was funded with income generated by other departments[147]. At the same time, the scope for further increases in waste tariffs was limited considering that most revenues came from poor families (12.5% of all domestic rates were paid by stands of no more than 280 sq.m. and R7,000 land value, while 6.1% came from stands of more than 1,205sq.m. and at least R45,000 land value). In 1998 non-payment for waste was R55 million, equivalent to 41.1% of the shortfall and 15% of the budget (GJMC, 1999a: 15). Such figures questioned the sustainability and the equity of a market-based cost-recovery option. Waste, more than other municipal services, reflects and amplifies inequalities between segregated urban spaces and how they translate into consumption habits of affluent and marginalized neighbourhoods.

Given the urban polarization between the suburban sprawl in "white" areas and higher population density in poorer black ones, Johannesburg has an inverse relationship between the accumulation of waste and the levels of access to refuse collection. The provision of the service is more regular and pervasive in areas of town that are dispersed and characterised by more wasteful patterns of individual consumption, even if they constitute a bigger drain on GJMC's waste management budget. Conversely, marginalised, overcrowded communities, whose modes of consumption are less wasteful and patterns of accumulation of waste are more efficient for collection, are less serviced. In fact, while the affluent northern suburbs (approximately 25% of the municipality's surface and with a per-capita daily waste production of 3.35 kg.) have less than 10% of households without waste collection services, this figure increases to about 70% in the southern ones, with peaks of 90-100% in the Ennerdale-Orange Farm area, whose per capita daily production of waste is 1.48 kg[148].

Therefore, wasteful individual consumption by a minority is rewarded by

[147] It should be added, however, that budget cuts have led to substantial reductions of municipal allocations for individual depots. Some of them, especially those in affluent suburbs, like the Waterval depot which services the Melville-Northcliff area could counter the trend by increasing the turnout of the income-generating activities, like round refuse collection (RCR). In these cases, it can be therefore concluded that it is waste management that subsidises the council, rather than the opposite. See Anton Van Niekerk, Manager, Waterval Waste Depot, Interview with the Author, 17 February 2000.

[148] Author's elaboration from GJMC population database and 1999-2001 budgets, see Barchiesi (2001).

service access to the detriment of community needs for improved environmental conditions in under-serviced, over-populated zones. It can be therefore questioned how a greater emphasis on users' ability to pay as conditions to provide services will revert trends to spatial inequalities that those very dynamics have encouraged in the first place. On the other hand, comments by officials of the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit (MIIU), a government-initiated company that mobilizes private investments for public-private partnerships, authorize conclusions that a market-based approach to municipal service delivery might not be the most effective way of reducing inherited inequalities:

> [Site-and-service schemes] offer a much lower level of service, but they may be the only services sustainable given the economic conditions of the customers being served. In general, different levels for solid waste collection services could also be applied. Lower services levels, including communal skip or once a week collection could be used in lower income areas with a lower ability or willingness to pay. Twice weekly curbside service with 240 litre containers is the top level of service in higher income communities" (Dohrman and Aiello, 1999: 697).

The abdication of public institutions from redistributive and decommodifying functions, noticed for national social policy, is replicated at the level of municipal services. Market discipline in the allocation of scarce resources and in enabling users' claims to services is therefore confirmed as an alternative to "entitlements" based on universal social citizenship rights.

The assets of the GJMC's Roads and Stormwater Department were transferred to the newly constituted Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) with effect 1 January 2001 following the approval by the Council on 23 October 2000 of a sale of business agreement followed by a service delivery agreement for the duration of 25 years. Reaffirming the nature of the JRA as an "agency", the agreement established that the GJMC's control over it was in terms of the Council's constitutional obligations to provide municipal road services, and nor merely as a result of the Council's being the JRA's sole shareholder[149]. The nature of roads services as non-income generating, non-tradable components of the

[149] GJMC, Mayoral Committee, *Review of Service Delivery Agreement and Sales of Business Agreement: Johannesburg Roads Agency*, 13 September, 2001. GL.

GJMC's activities had led to their substantial penalization in the 1990s austerity climate. As a result, the department's capital budget had been almost frozen between 1996 and 1999, dropping from R296 million to R10 million (less than 2% of the overall GJMC capital budget)[150], 80% of which was spent for roads (almost entirely in repairs) and 18% for stormwater maintenance[151]. Only 18% of the overall departmental budget was employed in "townships roads", while 47% went to "major schemes" (GJMC, 2001). In 1999, 1,780 roads workers were employed by the MLCs in addition to the 484 hired by the GJMC to work on "metropolitan roads". At the same time, vacancies due to attrition and the employment freeze were estimated in 1999 at 1,626, or 47% of the service's fully manned level (GJMC, 1999e: 17).

Unevenness in levels of service delivery were also visible across the various MLCs. In fact, while in the Northern MLC the staff-to-road length ratio was 0.19 per km, the Southern MLC, which includes Soweto and Orange Farm, had a ratio of 0.33 (GJMC, 1998: 12). Conversely, the Council estimated in 1999 that R250 million per year were needed to maintain and upgrade existing roads and stormwater infrastructure. This meant a R100 million yearly shortfall which was causing a "dramatic deterioration" of services, especially in "sub-economical areas", where expenditure for major construction and upgrade has "literally come to a stand still"[152]. In case the existing shortfall had been filled entirely, the elimination of backlogs would have required at least 6-7 years.

While the city's road network is of approximately 7,500 km, 1,000 of which untarred, the construction of new roads was entirely left to private contractors, whose costs for repairing a pothole were estimated at about half of the Council's costs and whose prices for hot asphalt were approximately two thirds of those paid by the GJMC[153]. The majority of trucks and the near totality of heavy equipment (patchers, rammers, compressors, bomag machines) were subcontracted. Budget cuts, however, had led to reductions in contracts and

[150] Alan Agaienz, JRA Project Manager, Interview with the Author, 27 January 2000.
[151] Remaining services included footways, bridges, railway sidings and grass cutting. Traffic engineering was being transferred from Metro Traffic to the JRA, while traffic signals and street lights would be transferred from the Eletricity Department.
[152] GJMC, *Johannesburg Roads Agency Implementation Business Plan*, 7 June 1999, p.20, GL.
[153] Ibidem, pp.18-19.

equipments, the sharing of trucks by more than one team of workers, and the accumulation of backlogs, unfinished jobs and unserviced repairs.

Lacking a direct, market-related mechanism to raise revenues, the rationale for establishing the JRA was clearly related with the need to assert managerial authority and minimize costs, especially wages and salaries, which absorbed 24% of the 1999-2000 operating budget. In fact, as in the case of Pikitup, the JRA was constituted as a Council-owned private company in the form of a "proprietary limited" enterprise, and not a "Section 21" one. Among the aims in adopting this corporate structure the council cited the need to "avoid[s] the possible negative perceptions that may surround the establishment of a Section 21 company, which is very often the legal entity chosen for charity organizations", whereby instead "a profit-seeking work ethic will be easier to establish in a private company"[154].

The importance placed on "work ethic" in the establishment of the JRA -- whose stated aim is, according to what is by now a familiar refrain, to be economically viable and not to provide "entitlements" -- introduces the topic of the next section. It also allows to identify a crucial feature of GJMC's restructuring in the attempt to modify power relations in a sense detrimental to municipal employees.

5.4 iGoli 2002, Wage Labour Changes and the Reassertion of Managerial Control

When Pikitup and the JRA started operations on 1 January 2001 as going concerns with GJMC assets and workers, their service delivery agreements provided for the three years job security guaranteed to the former 14,000 Council employees that were transferred to the new council-owned utilities and agencies. According to GJMC's labour relations specialist, Makgane Thobejane[155], the measure was intended as a powerful signal aimed at allaying workers' fears of layoffs and at increasing trust towards iGoli 2002, which remained fiercely

[154] GJMC, Transformation Lekgotla, *Proposed Establishment of the Johannesburg Roads Agency: Legal Entity to be Established and Supporting Documentation*, 9 October 2000, GL.
[155] Interview with the Author, 16 March 2000.

opposed by the unions. He remained, moreover, confident that employment levels would not decrease after the three year period, which could be used to redefine career paths, skills profiles and grading systems to achieve a more efficient utilization of the workforce. The GJMC's has in fact tried to elicit workers' acceptance of restructuring by launching reassuring image-based campaigns. When I visited the Central Roads Depot in Benrose (early 2000), the place was the stage of a broader tour by a Council-sponsored theatre company performing a play called "iGirlie 2002". This was specifically designed to show workers that with the impending "transformation" their jobs would not be jeopardized since, among other explanations provided, "a computer can't clean the roads". Unions, which were previously notified that the play would be on issues related to HIV-AIDS, vociferously resisted the initiative.

My research in various waste and roads depots, however, showed that important changes in conditions of employment and workplace power relations were already taking place in the period of austerity and transition to iGoli 2002. Moreover, middle-level officials and executives of the new corporate entities regarded the whole process as an opportunity to reassert managerial control with an aim at ensuring greater task and time flexibility while containing wage and benefit costs. The waste management workforce is characterized by a historical predominance of migrant workers, which until the collapse of "influx control" tended to originate predominantly from Transkei. Research conducted by Melanie Samson (2004b: 110-111) shows that waste workers used to be recruited predominantly among the amaBhaka clans in rural Transkei, and even after the de-ethnicization of Johannesburg's municipal employees, the name "amaBhaka" remained as a derogatory ethnic name to stigmatise populations identified with lowly, unsavoury occupations.

To the ethnic stigma are added peculiar forms of gender subordination for the vast majority of female workers in cleansing functions like street sweeping. In this case, the collapse of the migrant labour system, which opened new urban employment opportunities for women, has led to the transfer onto the labour market of women's subordinate positions that in the sphere of domesticity are expressed in their confinement to cleansing jobs. Ethnic stigmatization and gender

hierarchies reflect and reproduce in this case vulnerabilities historically associated with migrancy and the municipal compounds. A further element of vulnerability is linked to the high number of casual workers[156], which is specific to waste management (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Employment and Workloads in Waste Management, 1998

Council	Employees	Employees (incl. Casuals)	Tons. of Waste per Employee	Domestic Units per Employee (Year)
EMLC	674	1016	278	148
NMLC	539	718	282	179
WMLC	330	560	415	247
SMLC	961	1151	645	204
GJMC	78	83	N/A	N/A

Source: GJMC (1998: 15).

In 1998, 36.6% of the GJMC's 2,582 waste workers were employed on a casual basis. This share increased over the following two years. At the end of 1999, out of 3,000 waste workers, 1,500 were casuals, out of a "theoretical" fully staffed level of 4,523, and all new positions were filled in this way due to the freeze in the recruitment of permanent workers (GJMC, 1999a:8). In some depots, up to 70% of workers were employed as casuals[157]. Casuals have no formal contracts, are not notified of their employment duration, are not covered by GJMC's benefits (medical aid, provident fund and housing scheme) and their length of employment can be as short as a single day.

Longer temporary contracts are equally excluded from GJMC's benefits, but provide for the same wage rates as GJMC workers and can be renewed for as long as 6 months or one year with an option of becoming permanent thereafter. Casuals' remunerations range from R35 to R45 per day, compared to approximately R60 for GJMC's street cleaners. The decision to hire casuals rest with the depot's manager, requires an authorisation from the MLC's technical

[156] Since a precise legal definition of "casual worker" does not exist in South Africa, the GJMC utilises the expression in two senses. First there are what can be called "casual-casual", or workers that, by working less than one full working day in a month, are excluded from UIF benefits. Then there are "permanent casuals", or workers that are regularly employed on a casual basis and work in such a capacity for at least one full day a week.

[157] Roelf De Beer, EO Waste Management, WMLC (Roodepoort), Interview with the Author, 19 October 1999.

service department, and is funded by the depot's budget. Lack of consultation in decisions to hire casuals was a major source of shop-stewards' complaints.

Permanent employment has been reduced largely through natural attrition but, considering the municipality's territorial expansion by about 10% in the 1990s and an average vacancy level of 22% estimated by the GJMC, the recruitment freeze implied a cutback in real terms of employment levels in the service. With a hypothetic natural attrition of only 5% a year, 650-700 permanent jobs could have been lost in waste between 1995 and 1999 (Barchiesi, 2001). Shop-stewards at the Avalon waste depot, which covers Klipspruit, Lenasia, Eldorado Park and the sprawling surrounding squatter settlements, reported that after 1994 local workforce had been cut by more than 50%, down to the 300 employees of 1999, mainly through natural attrition and redeployment to other depots, and their positions had been filled by casuals (Interview #82). Moreover, casuals are hired to fill staff shortages and perform intermittent tasks, such as the removal of illegal dumps. As such, they are largely concentrated in the poorer areas of the city, as in the SMLC, where in 1999-2000 the amount of money spent on casuals was 20% of that for wages of permanent workers, and the WMLC, were this share was 48% (GJMC, 1999a).

Municipal waste management in South Africa has tended to encourage casualisation through a language of community empowerment and residents' participation in low-wage, labour-intensive segments of the service. Experiments with "community contracting" in waste collection opened up spaces of low-end managerialism and entrepreneurship (Swilling and Hutt, 1999: 206; Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2000; Rogerson, 2001). They were also aimed at enforcing social control and political legitimacy by increasing trust for the municipality and minimising non-payment and illegal dumping. In such schemes, local entrepreneurs and community leaders recruit local residents to perform refuse collection details, while in some cases financial institutions provide funding and the Council covers fixed costs and risks (Sindane, 1999; Muncipal Infrastructures Investment Unit, 2001; Palmer Development Group, 1996: 116-117). At the same time, employment in community schemes can be used by parties in power and local councillors to establish networks of patronage in areas

with high unemployment. Conversely, organized labour regards with suspicion these initiatives, seen as expanding precariousness, low-wage exploitative conditions and competition with the permanent council workforce (MSP-ILRIG, 2000; Xali, 2000).

The fate of casuals under the new waste utility was a source of great uncertainty even in management's discourse. Pikitup's mandate was to provide stable employment to the GJMC's "permanent casuals", integrating them in the service's permanent headcount. Their wages, however, remained lower than former GJMC permanents, and equalization was phased in over a three-year period (Samson, 2004b: 119-121). In this sense, as Samson notices, under Pikitup fiscal austerity was confirmed and strengthened, far from being limited to a transient period of adjustment. In fact, investment prioritized income-generating activities, like collection, to the detriment of street sweeping. Moreover, vast geographical unevenness in the provision of services remained, the employment freeze was confirmed, and the GJMC phased out cross-subsidization of the service at a faster rate than expected. Finally, the whole GJMC fleet was contracted to a single company, Superfleet, which reduced the availability of trucks and increased the flexibility of tasks and functions performed inside waste collectors' teams (Samson, 2004b: 122-125).

Management's discourse on the long-term future of casualisation displayed high levels of ambiguity. Makgane Thobejane[158] maintained the Council's commitment to have all casuals hired as permanents by Pikitup. He also admitted, however, that one of the main rationales for the new utility was the widespread introduction of capital-intensive methods of collection, like the use of 240-litres bins, which would limit the capacity of the new company to absorb casuals. In this case, horizontal mobility and reskilling were seen as possible alternatives. Middle management was, however, of a different advice. An executive working on Pikitup's business plan argued that a corporatised waste service would allow a greater numerical flexibility and an easier recruitment of casuals because "the Council will no longer have political responsibility for that, the decision would be

[158] Interview with the Author, 16 March 2000.

strictly business"[159].

Casualisation in waste management is strengthened by the fact that the Council has preferred for a long time to use its own workers for labour intensive, relatively low-skill operations, while relying on contracts from private companies for capital-intensive equipment and tasks. Contracts, of a duration of up to four years, are usually entered for the provision of compactor trucks, with or without drivers and attendants included[160]. Under iGoli 2002, the use of contracts for trucks has become the GJMC's policy across the board through the subcontracting of the entire transport operations to Superfleet. Contractors work with teams of council workers that include loaders, sweepers and "boppas", or employees in charge of the distribution and collection of plastic bags. In 1999-2000 the GJMC spent R62 million in vehicles' contracts (15.8% of operating budget), plus R30 million in smaller, ad-hoc contracts for collection, street cleaning and supply of bins, bringing the total outsourcing costs to 23.5% of the operating budget (GJMC, 1999a: 17).

The council recognised that a substantial share of contracts' costs was caused by ad-hoc hiring of vehicles to compensate for the ageing and breakdowns of the council's fleet, which could not be attended due to funds shortages. Therefore, in this case as well austerity measures designed to restore efficiency ended up increasing costs. Moreover, the use of compactor trucks, required with the proposed 240-litres bins, increases costs threefold compared to smaller trucks collecting 85-litres bins (Swilling and Hutt, 1999: 204). Compactors, however, are particularly effective in treating inorganic waste, which predominates in more affluent areas. On the contrary, organic refuse, which requires less compacting and is more evenly distributed, could be more efficiently collected by council trucks with less capital intensity and more interactions between municipal workers and residents. Labour intensity in this case would enhance municipal workers' role in educating residents in differentiated collection, or in introducing in poor

[159] Roelf De Beer, Interview with the Author, 19 October 1999. It is to be noticed that at the time of the interview De Beer was also a member of the trade union IMATU, nominally opposed to iGoli 2002.

[160] In 2000, 34 out of 49 contracts in waste management (for a value of R 62 million out of R 94.5 million in total contracts, or 25% of the operating budget) were for the fleet and its maintenance (GJMC, 1999a).

neighbourhoods garden sites that are instead penalized as "non-income generating" (Barchiesi, 2001).

Therefore, the current fragmentation of the waste labour process, that for its income-generating collector activities comes to depend on capital intensive equipment on contract, reinforces urban inequalities by rewarding wealthy suburbs' consumption and waste patterns. At the same time, the use of compactors on contract dequalifies the contribution of municipal workers reducing it to mere manual loading. Instead, valorizing their role as providing expertise, advice and awareness on how to reduce waste at the source, for example through differentiation, recycling and composting, would emphasize the "knowledge" component in waste management while strengthening the positive environmental impact of the public service.

IGoli 2002's discourse of scarcity and austerity played, at the same time, a pedagogical and disciplinary role beyond its short-term, crisis management implications. In fact, the project was also aimed at shaping public perceptions towards accepting the market as the most efficient mechanism for resource allocation. Municipal service managerialism in making access to services dependent on the users' financial resources is combined to market-related efficiency criteria to reassert managerial authority inside the workplace. The connections between the managerialist reconfiguration of service delivery and the reassertion of management power in production are highlighted by the aim of iGoli 2002 as prioritizing "income generating" activities. In the case of waste such logics is particularly pronounced, and it translates into strengthening refuse collection paid by users over "unprofitable" community services like street cleaning and garden sites. The aim is to reduce levels of cross-subsidization and enhance "the ability to attract capital funding for critical short and long term programmes" while "identify[ing] external sources of funding and partners, where required" (GJMC, 1999a: 5-6). Providing profitable opportunities for private investors is the task of consultants who, following suggestions from World Bank advisers (GJMC, 1999a: 24) are centrally co-ordinated by a "lead consultant", a corporate technocrat that, due to the "lack of capacity or expertise within the council structures", becomes an extremely powerful figure.

In such a framework, labour, which is incidentally concentrated in "non-income generating" functions, is more liable to be regarded as a cost to be minimized, rather than as a community interface whose expertise and skills are to be enhanced and rewarded. As a matter of fact, middle-level managerial discourse strongly emphasizes this point, and gives a specific turn to the GJMC's stated aim of building employment policies "around processes", rather than "around people" (GJMC, 1999a: 33). In the words of a manager at Roads Central depot (Benrose), work reorganization in corporatised entities will mean the end of an era in which municipal work was for the "sick, lame and lazy"[161]. According to the JRA's project manager "a key lack of work ethic" is the main problem with the GJMC's workforce and the reason, rather than the shortage of trucks and equipment due to budget cuts, for most unfinished work. Therefore iGoli 2002, as a means to impose work ethic and wage labour discipline, comes as a dire warning for "people who are skimming from their backsides in the course of the day"[162]. The rhetoric of budget emergency greatly boosts such muscular managerial utterances, therefore fiscal austerity has an important impact in shifting workplace power relations, whereby permanent, unionized council employees are weakened by employment stagnation, production flexibility and casualisation.

Moreover, municipal managers and the GJMC see in the new market-based corporatised service entities, an important opportunity to revert municipal workers' gains in wages, working conditions and benefits. Compared to the private sector, municipal services tend to enjoy a higher level of job and wage security, even if not necessarily higher wage levels. Managers in both roads and waste complained about the excessive wages of their general workers, estimating them at up to R2,800 per month, rising to R3,500 when housing and health benefits are considered[163]. In both cases a more extensive use of subcontractors was mentioned as a possible way to "make workers more accountable to costs".

The same rationale is applied to working times, whereby waste

[161] Peter Howard, Manager, Roads Central (Benrose) Depot, Interview with the Author,16 February 2000,.
[162] Alan Agaienz, Interview with the Author, 27 January 2000.
[163] Roelf De Beer, Interview with the Author, 19 October 1999 and Alan Agaienz, Interview with the Author, 27 January 2000. After-deductions wage figures mentioned by both are, however, between two and three times higher than the actual net wage levels I could ascertain in my workplace interviews (see Chapter 7).

management's De Beer defines the prevailing 40-hours working week arrangements as "the biggest threat to our survival". Conversely, he emphasized that subcontracting has the virtue of achieving a higher degree of flexibility, a 45-hour week and a lower salary, counting on the fact that "there are lots of people out there who need a job". When asked about how he would respond to the unions' possible objections to such prospects, he commented: "I know, but they should be careful of what they promise to the workers, because they could end up shooting themselves in the foot". This confrontational attitude on the part of management confirms an option of unilateral restructuring where the role of the unions is categorized as that of vehicles to make workers accept flexible working arrangements and negotiate inside the boundaries defined by corporate profitability.

Finally, on the side of benefits, management identifies cost-cutting opportunities in capping the amounts of claims from medical aids and in reducing Council's liabilities and contributions for pension and provident funds. Both benefits are historically characterized by a proliferation of schemes, often inherited from pre-GJMC councils, to which the unions contribute with their own products. Less than 50% of the GJMC employees were covered by medical aid in 1997, with one scheme, Jomed, recruiting half of the combined schemes' membership[164]. High costs and low wages meant increasing levels of commodification of healthcare, whereby even workers that could afford medical coverage were rarely able to register family members as dependants (See Table 5.2).

[164] In 2000, monthly contributions for the "primary option", with no dependants and a R2001-3000 income, in a major medical scheme at GJMC, Bonitas, were R434.00. This figure can be related to the estimates on wages and medical contributions from my data in Chapter 7. It is however indicative to compare it with the payslip of a road worker at the Orange Farm depot, dated 27 January 2000. Out of a basic salary of R2,890.00, this employee paid R2,485.66 in deductions (R456.00 of which in medical aid), including housing, for a take-home pay of R498.34.

Table 5.2 Dependants for Members of Main GJMC Medical Schemes, 1997

Dependants (Member +)	Bonitas		Jomed		Munimed		Other schemes[165]		Total	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
0	34.5	34.5	34.6	39	32.6	34.5	23.1	23.1	33	36.4
1	14.8	14.8	18.9	27.3	19.6	28	12.2	12.1	17.3	24.1
2	16.5	16.5	16	12.3	16.6	13.6	20	20	16,6	13.8
3	16,5	16.5	18	12.8	22.1	16.9	19.6	19.6	18.3	14.4
4	17,6	17.6	12.5	8.7	9.1	7	25.1	25.1	14.7	11.4
Total	100		100		100		100		100	

Note: Column 1 refers to active members, Column 2 includes pensioners.
Source: GJTMC, Medical Aid Task Team, *Investigation into the Rationalisation of Medical Aid Schemes within the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council*, January 1997, p.15, GL.

In the case of Bonitas, probably the most popular and cheapest basic services scheme, approximately one third of yearly claims was for less than the amount of contributions with no dependants, while 72.6% of all members claimed less than 100% of expected claims and 49.8% claimed less than 50%[166]. Such low levels of claims in relation to contributions and total expected claims, however, did not prevent the Council from complaining about the "financially unsustainable" situation of medical benefits, where council liabilities had increased following the elimination of exclusions from schemes due to "risk rating" and the prescribed minimum benefits provided for in the 1999 Medical Schemes Act. Therefore, already in 1997 the council had adopted a strategy based on the proposed unification of existing schemes under one single scheme, to be fully privatized, combining a platform of basic services with employees' savings accounts and managed health care with capped claimable benefits[167].

A similar logic inspired the GJMC's approach to retirement benefits. Facing the fragmentation of 12 different schemes, generally inherited from apartheid-age municipalities and based on varying levels of employer and employee contributions, in September 2001 the GJMC embarked on a general

[165] Among these schemes, the main union scheme was SAMWUMED, run by SAMWU. Established in 1952 by SAMWU's precursor, CTMWA, and later called SAMWU National Medical Scheme as a "closed" Industrial Council plan, in October 2000 SAMWUMED was registered as a fully-funded scheme under the Medical Schemes Act. In 2004, it had 40,000 members nationally. See SAMWU, *SAMWU Medical Scheme*, Report Prepared for the Social Benefits Committee, 11 August 1998. SAMWU.
[166] GJTMC, Medical Aid Task Team, *Investigation into the Rationalisation of Medical Aid Schemes within the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council*, January 1997, pp.17-19, GL.
[167] Ibidem.

overhaul of the system. Following the approach indicated by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Council merged the existing schemes into a single fund, with contributions set at 15% of the contributor's wage for the employer and 7.5% for the employee. In previous schemes, employers' contributions were always higher than 15% and could be as high as 22% of the member's wage[168]. Moreover, historically municipal retirement funds were different from private sector ones due to the prevalence among the former of "defined benefits" schemes which, compared to "defined contributions" ones, provide better retirement incomes to long-term employees, while raising the employer's liability. By contrast, the new scheme reversed such a situation, in line with practices prevailing in the private sector, and increased the commodification of workers' retirement benefits in the form of a "defined contributions" fund[169]. These schemes limit the employer's liability and make retirement income more uncertain and fluctuating in accordance with the fund's market performance.

In the final analysis, GJMC management's offensive on wages, working conditions and benefits, framed within an aggressive reassertion of work ethic in the template of budget "emergency", is enabled by the transition from fiscally cross-subsidised services to profit-driven companies. In this sense a strong correspondence exists between growing commodification and market discipline in communities' access to services, and the reconfiguration of wage discipline in municipal workplaces. Such shifts, conversely, challenge the position and role of labour organizations as the actors through which a historically marginalised and vulnerable municipal workforce could in the past build stability and entitlements centred on wage labour.

[168] Trade unions can still retain their funds, as long as they have the same contributory share of the municipal fund. The 15% employers' contribution level was the minimum required by the government-appointed Katz Commission in 1995, with the maximum being 22.5%. The municipality's conservatism and cost-cutting approach was contested by SAMWU, whose official policy demanded a minimum employer contribution of 18%, see SAMWU, *National Bargaining Conference Resolutions*, 1998. SAMWU.

[169] GJMC, Office of the City Manager, *Restructuring of Retirement Fund Arrangements*, 13 September 2001, GL. The new fund is intended to absorb the 4,000 non-permanent employees to be hired by the new municipal services entities.

5.5 Trade Unions' Responses to iGoli 2002: The Case of SAMWU

Similarly to cases discussed with regard to the East Rand, iGoli 2002 configures a long-term process of transformation of waged employment which, under the initial impulse of responding to GJMC's contingent crisis, questions wage labour as the core of strategies and discourses of collective rights. Between 1998 and 2000, casualisation, resurgent managerial authoritarianism, pressures on wages, working conditions and benefits have in particular become the terrain of intensified confrontation between trade unions and the GJMC in the context of iGoli 2002's formative stages.

The modification in the material conditions of municipal workers related to the employment freeze, the obsolescence of Council infrastructure and the fragmentation of the labour force have been perceived by SAMWU in particular as heralding a trend to growing workers' disempowerment and devaluation. The union has also identified potentially detrimental effects on worker identities, power and links with communities.

The unionization of Johannesburg municipal employees has taken place during the 1980s in the face of coercive labour control and workers' vulnerability due to the territorial dispersal and isolation in the labour process and residential accommodations. To this was added the general instability of a working class predominantly made of migrants on contract, segregated in compounds, subject to deportation and under the surveillance of regulations of a highly repressive nature. The appearance of the employees of the then Johannesburg City Council on the scene of emergent unionism dates back to July 1980, with a strike of the 12,000 African migrants which were the bulk of the Council's 14,000-strong black labour force. Extra-workplace demands for migrants' dignity and stable residential rights were among the prime determinants of that strike, whose participants asked the Black Municipal Workers' Union (BMWU) for support. The BMWU had been launched only one month before the strike by Joseph Mavi, a former official of the African Transport Workers' Union (ATWU), a "parallel" union for black employees run by the conservative, white-dominated Trade Unions Council of South Africa (TUCSA). Mavi's expulsion from ATWU, which led him to

organize the BMWU, was caused by his demands for TUCSA's involvement in support of black squatter communities' rights (Keenan, 1981). When the Johannesburg municipal workers approached BMWU for help, the still weakly organized union advised caution to the strikers, but the strike spread out of its own momentum and on a largely spontaneous basis. The eventual repression of the mobilisation, with thousands of dismissals, arrests and deportations to the rural "homelands" delayed the unionization of Johannesburg municipal employees by almost a decade.

The national organization of municipal workers has given shape, however, to a very innovative pattern of unionization that combined different political traditions and orientations. Eventually, 1987 saw the birth of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), out of the merger of worker organisations that had members in municipal employment. The most important among them was the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association (CTMWA), a formerly conservative and bureaucratized union, born in 1928, which came to recruit a large stratum of Cape Town's "coloured" municipal workforce. In 1964 the CTMWA had been taken over after a prolonged confrontation by a faction of young organizers with an aim at democratizing it and making it responsive to rank-and-file membership. In the 1970s, 84% of all municipal workers in South Africa belonged to the CTMWA (Budlender, 1984; Buhlungu, 2001: 79-82).

The other unions that joined the CTMWA in establishing SAMWU were the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), a former "workerist" FOSATU multi-purpose union whose municipal members were moved to SAMWU, and three "community unions" emerged in the 1980s: SAAWU's municipal workers, the Port Elizabeth-based General Workers Union of South Africa (GWUSA) and the Municipal Workers Union of South Africa (MWUSA), a spin-off from Mavi's BMWU after its crushing by state repression after the 1980 strike. The peculiar blend of workplace-orientated and community-based trade unions that was at the heart of SAMWU was underlined by the fact that, although the CTMWA had a very strong emphasis on worker control from the shopfloor, its *raison d'etre* had also eschewed "narrow economism" and the union had supported community struggles in Cape Town during the first half of the

1980s (Ernstzen, 1991). Therefore SAMWU summarized and re-elaborated in a very specific way, by collapsing and transcending the "populist"-"workerist" divide inside its very organization, the trajectory that during the 1980s led to the emergence of "social movement unionism" out of the encounter of worker organizations with broad socio-political struggles.

During the 1990s, SAMWU, along with other public sector unions, was among the fastest growing COSATU affiliates, while the numerical weight of the organization moved from Cape Town to Transvaal/Gauteng (see Table 5.3)

Table 5.3 SAMWU Membership, 1987-2003, and Members in Transvaal/Gauteng Region

Year	Total SAMWU Membership	Members in Tvl/Gauteng	Members in Tvl/Gauteng as % of Total
1987	15,906	2,386 (Tvl)	15%
1990	59,014		
1993	73,342	24,936 (Tvl)	34%
1994	100,410		
1995	110,032		
1996	113,056		
1997	120,109	38,334 (Gauteng)	32%
1998	121,065		
1999	120,069		
2000	119,072	37,182 (Gauteng)	31%
2001	115,258		
2002	113,616		
2003	114,964	35,621 (Gauteng)	31%

Sources: SAMWU (1997a, 2003).

By 2003, SAMWU was the largest local government union in South Africa, with 55.9% of the total workforce among its members (52.9% in Gauteng), followed at a distance by the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (IMATU), with 71,412 members and 32.5% of the workforce (31.1% in Gauteng). At the same time, in 1999 SAMWU recruited approximately 23,000 GJMC workers, roughly equivalent to 70% of the workforce. Local government was, moreover, a heavily unionized sector, with a union density of 91% nationally and 91.8% in Gauteng.

The late 1990s, however, showed signs of a decline in SAMWU membership, coincidental with the introduction of restructuring, corporatisation and privatization in various municipalities. SAMWU's "Secretariat Report" to the 2003 Congress noticed the growing "lack of appeal" of militant and political

unionism and a reorientation of workers' preferences towards service unionism, the defence of jobs and benefits security among the possible explanations for numerical decline (SAMWU, 2003). At the same time, however, approximately 70% of SAMWU members in the GJMC were located in low-wage, low-skill hourly occupations, with a small contingent of fixed-term contracts (less than 2,000) and basically no casuals[170]. The increase in the numerical weight of this section of the workforce during the iGoli 2002 process could therefore be thought of as an added pressure on SAMWU's representative capacity.

Since the inception of policies of corporatisation and public-private partnership in municipal services delivery, along the lines recommended in the 1998 *White Paper on Local Government*, SAMWU has opposed such restructuring exercises, seeing them as tantamount to privatization and a threat to municipal workers' wages and conditions and to poor communities' access to affordable services (SAMWU, 1997a). SAMWU's opposition to iGoli 2002 was inserted therefore in the union's "anti-privatisation campaign"[171], even if the union accepted the "unicity" concept and the need to restructure service delivery in a uniform manner. Concurrently, the union regarded the linkage by the employers between restructuring and financial crisis as a device to enforce managerial authoritarianism and erode hard-won gains and customary employer-employees interactions:

> Whilst acknowledging the crisis, we are firmly of the view that national government has a moral (and indeed constitutional) responsibility to ensure that local authorities are able to meet their service delivery and staff obligations. When workers have resorted to industrial action in support of one or other demand, deductions were quickly made from salaries and wages. Many workers have even lost their jobs. Now, when workers present themselves for work, and indeed perform in terms of their employment contracts, they are simply not paid. Our members have shown great loyalty, commitment to service delivery and patience in continuing to work notwithstanding the uncertainty (…) of whether or not they would be paid[172].

[170] Hlubi Biyana, SAMWU Johannesburg Branch Organiser, Interview with the Author, 17 April 2000.
[171] Victor Mhlongo, SAMWU International Relations Officer, Interview with the Author, 19 May 2000.
[172] SAMWU, *Memorandum to Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development*, 23

The union's opposition to municipal privatization was premised on a *Framework for the Restructuring of Municipal Service Provision*, signed by COSATU and SALGA on 11 December 1998, which defined the public sector as the "preferred method" for service delivery aimed at universal coverage and a lifeline amount of free basic services. In the case of iGoli 2002, SAMWU accused the GJMC of unilateral implementation of restructuring in violation of the agreement. An early attempt to declare a dispute on the recommendations of the GJMC's *Organisation Review* was however withdrawn pending renewed negotiations.

The first meeting to discuss the plan between SAMWU and the GJMC took place on 25 February 1999 at the newly-established South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC). On 6 April SAMWU demanded a two-month moratorium on the implementation of iGoli 2002, which the GJMC accepted but only limited to labour-related issues. In May 1999 a special bargaining committee on iGoli 2002 was formed inside the SALGBC, and SAMWU demanded to stop the implementation of the plan as long as negotiations were in progress. The GJMC-convened "iGoli Summit" on 13 August 1999, however, concluded that sufficient consultation had been achieved, despite the fact that unions were not even present at the summit. On 27 September the GJMC adopted the "iGoli 2002 Transformation and Implementation Plan" and on 10 October SAMWU declared a formal dispute. The stalemate in negotiations led on 26 October to a strike based on SAMWU's demands for a moratorium, in which the police physically confronted demonstrating municipal workers[173].

In the same period, the ANC's GJMC Councillor for Pimville (Soweto), Trevor Ngwane, was expelled from the party for his criticism to iGoli 2002 and to the GEAR macroeconomic framework. The issue of municipal restructuring proved controversial for the ANC-led Alliance as well, with the Johannesburg branch of the SACP supporting the SAMWU strike. In January 2000, the ANC decided to directly intervene in an attempt to mediate between SAMWU and the GJMC. On 5 July, a "Record of Political Understanding" was signed at the

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July 1998, p.2. See also Ronnie to All Provinces, 24 July 1998, SAMWU.

[173] The chronology of events is based on M.Thobejane, *iGoli 2002, Transformation and Implementation*, cit.

SALGBC, setting a 30-day deadline to resolve outstanding issues and break the stalemate (Etzo, 2003: 154). An agreement on tariffs and service lifelines was achieved in August, but no progress was made on the overall plan, whose implementation proceeded nonetheless. On 10 August the Labour Court authorized the transfer of the GJMC workforce to the new corporate entities on a going concern basis.

In the meanwhile, SAMWU had decided to strengthen links with civil society organizations that were also opposed to privatization. In May 2000 an "anti-iGoli forum" was started, with the participation of some local branches of ANC-aligned SACP and SANCO, and various extra-parliamentarian left-wing groups (Etzo, 2003: 185-186). Following students' mobilization against a conference to popularize iGoli 2002 and co-convened by the GJMC at the University of the Witwatersrand, various organizations, including SAMWU and student groups, converged on 23 September to form the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). A renewed cycle of confrontation seemed to start with SAMWU's decision to go on strike indefinitely on 30 November. The strike was, however, suspended on 4 December, the day before the local government elections, in a date that can actually be taken as the end of SAMWU's direct opposition to iGoli 2002. Less than one month later, the new utilities and agencies started their operations.

The defeat of SAMWU's opposition to iGoli 2002 can be attributed to many factors, most of which converge to indicate limitations and shortcomings in trade union organizations as actors capable to contest broad social restructuring. At the same time, they reinforce an impression of crisis and erosion in the ability of wage labour to be a repository of imagery and policies for progressive social change. Some observers have emphasized that iGoli 2002 was from the beginning a technocratic process of decision-making implemented in an authoritarian way with a limited civil society participation which, despite the GJMC's stated aims, was largely cosmetic (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2002: 87-106). Technocratic decision-making was reinforced by the GJMC's adamant refusal of having representatives of labour and communities in the boards of utilities and agencies, as demanded by the unions. SAMWU officials share the impression that top-down

decisions sidestepped public participation. Johannesburg branch organizer, Hlubi Byiana, feels that the role of the union was from the start conceived by the GJMC as "rubberstamping" decisions taken unilaterally, which led to union-municipality relations that remained "purely adversarial". At the same time, when the plan was introduced SAMWU was surprised by the speed with which events unfolded and found itself in the position to negotiate a very complex general organizational and institutional overhaul. According to Byiana, as a union which had privileged either its militant background or workplace-based services to the members, SAMWU had neither the preparation nor skills adequate to the task[174].

Opposition to iGoli 2002 ignited, however, also debates and divisions inside SAMWU, which revolved on whether the union's most effective role is to contest broad social policies or to manage them primarily in the interest of its members. SAMWU's Gauteng provincial office emphasized pragmatism, based on the fact that, as Byiana puts it, "as a trade union, we are reformist". Therefore preference at this level was given to negotiating jobs and benefits security for workers under the new corporatised entities, in a way that separated labour issues from ideological oppositions.

Other voices inside SAMWU argue that, while the union's national headquarters remained staunchly opposed to privatization, moderate orientations prevailed inside the local offices, especially after the intervention of COSATU and the ANC. These latter were in this view worried that anti-iGoli militancy and the co-operation with radical civil society organizations could facilitate the rise of an anti-government rhetoric that could prove divisive for the Alliance[175]. In the final analysis, such debates point at problems and crises, already noticed on the East Rand, in the concept of "social movement unionism" in a post-apartheid context of wage labour decline, erosion of workers' protections, trade unions' institutionalization and hollowing out of labour as an engine of social citizenship. SAMWU's focus on community linkages and social movement alliances had been shaped by an awareness of the overlap in its members' lives between the

[174] Hlubi Biyana, Interview with the Author, 17 April 2000.
[175] Rob Rees, SAMWU Research Officer, interviewed in Etzo (2003: 185-186). See also Naidoo and Veriava (2005). It is indicative, for example, that before the December 2000 strike the APF used to meet in SAMWU offices, a practice discontinued since then.

provision of municipal services and the household use of such services. Therefore, opposition to iGoli 2002 was nurtured by a view of commodification of services as a two-pronged threat to both workers' power in production and to their rights as residents. Countervailing this discourse, however, SAMWU embodies also a tradition of service unionism emphasising worker benefits that is uncommon in the unions emerged from the 1980s climate of political radicalism.

Paul Johnston (1994) notices that a fundamental asset for public sector unions, which in many cases also explains their growing orientation to social movement unionism, is the fact that they can articulate their demands not only in commodified, wage-related terms but as "public needs" and as a matter of social citizenship. In a context of service privatization and marketisation, such themes carry substantial community legitimacy and could be conducive to broad social alliances (Clawson, 2003: 110-124). In SAMWU's case, however, political, institutional and organizational constraints, combined to the union's lack of preparation and to its declining ability to represent a rapidly casualising workforce, prevented an unambiguous resumption of social movement politics within a clearly articulated discourse of social citizenship and decommodification. In a frank assessment of setbacks in opposing municipal privatization, the *Secretariat Report* to the 2003 National Congress concludes that links between the union and civil society organizations "have not been taken seriously", and when only in mid-2000 such connections were ultimately formalized, it was too late for them to stem or meaningfully influence the iGoli 2002 process.

5.6 Conclusion

The restructuring of Johannesburg municipal services under the iGoli 2002 plan affects employees both as workers and as community residents. This case is therefore particularly indicative of the connections between social policies of commodification and residualism, analysed in previous chapters, and the changing position of wage labour in South Africa's post-apartheid society. In fact, by emphasizing cost containment and income generation, iGoli 2002 delegates to

market-based corporate entities the provision of municipal services in ways that enter an uneasy relationship with the reduction of inherited social inequalities. SAMWU's discourse has underlined to this end the necessity of a strong public service that, by playing a redistributive and decommodifying role can also protect municipal workers from the erosion of their shopfloor rights and power.

Conversely, the material conditions, wages, employment security and benefits of GJMC's employees have come under considerable stress from a process of restructuring presented as a necessary adjustment to emergency financial and fiscal conditions to be therefore conducted as a largely technocratic exercise. Even if this chapter is focused on the pre-implementation phase of the plan, with particular regard to roads and waste management, recent studies on Pikitup seem to indicate that such trends are indeed strengthened by the fully-fledged corporatisation of municipal utilities. Therefore, rather than a solution to contingent problems, iGoli 2002 has emerged as a structural reconfiguration of the nature of local services, of the relevance of the commodity form in determining access, and of the relationships between citizens' rights and consumer's individual market position.

Similarly to the East Rand cases discussed in the previous chapter, organized labour is affected by the transformation of work and employment at GJMC in far-reaching ways. On one hand, a trajectory of labour-community alliance and activism, to which SAMWU's tradition of "social movement unionism" is deeply tributary, is now questioned and shows significant inadequacies. On the other hand, SAMWU's ability to organize and represent a workforce whose permanent employees retire and are replaced by casual and contract labour is also questioned. The incorporation of former "permanent casuals" under Pikitup has taken place under unequal wage conditions and has been accompanied by an erosion of workers' benefits, especially medical aids and retirement funds. At the same time, subcontracting of services, especially in fleet management, has been widened and systematised. In such adverse conditions, a response could be the retreat in the defense of members' conditions and benefits, for which a deeply entrenched tradition of service unionism is readily available to SAMWU, even if this would minimize radical engagement with social policies.

The withering away of SAMWU's opposition to iGoli 2002 seems to indicate the likelihood of such an outcome.

While this chapter has provided a picture and analysis of broad trends in the restructuring of work and service provision in the GJMC, the next two will look at workers' experiences of, and responses to, such changes at the level respectively of the workplace and the community, by contrasting them with those emerging from the East Rand cases. My discussion of the relations between wage labour and social citizenship will therefore move the level of analysis from the structural dynamics of employment change to subjective elaborations at the grassroots level.

CHAPTER 6

When the Workplace Disappears. The Unfulfilled Promise of Wage Labour in Changing Experiences of Life at Work

6.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next analyse the ways in which the structural transformations in the social constitution of wage labour discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 with regard to the East Rand and GJMC workers are reflected in everyday workers' experiences, discourses and strategies. While this chapter looks, in particular, at the workplace-related impacts and dimensions of the crisis of wage labour, the following is concerned with how the changing significance of work in respondents' individual lives shapes their living standards, household access to social provisions, perceptions of community problems, sense of social and political agency. Both chapters address from an empirical perspective whether the emancipatory "promise" of wage labour in the process of democratization has been fulfilled in combining political freedom with workers' access to income and basic social provisions.

My findings confirm the picture of crisis and fragmentation in waged employment that emerged from the discussion of the restructuring of production and employment in East Rand's manufacturing industry and in the GJMC under "iGoli 2002". In particular, workers' experiences of change in the shopfloor show that the "promise" of wage labour is questioned by a series of interrelated trends that subjective perceptions clearly relate to the structural aspects of restructuring of work and production. As an anecdotal, but illustrative, indicator of workers' feelings of disillusionment with workplace change under the new democracy, only 6 respondents out of 220 reported unequivocally to be both generally happy with their present job and to have a positive view of their occupational future. My contention is that growing disaffection and weakening workplace identities are

mainly produced by a combination of disillusionment in the capacity of the new dispensation to change established patterns of power and inequality in the workplace, and new uncertainties within increasingly flexible production environments following more recent restructuring. In a sense, these findings confirm Sennett's (2000: 71) observation that "lack of attachment is also coupled with confusion. The (…) flexible workforce had little more clarity about where they stood in society". In the cases under examination, however, "confusion" is not the exclusive outcome of corporate change and production flexibility, but it also resents of the negative ways these changes have impacted on broad expectations for socio-economic change following political transformation.

The following pages look at the decline of workplace-based identities as related to the deprivation of content and meaning in individual experiences of work, to the increased insecurity due to labour market changes, and to the intensification of work due to employment flexibility and technological change. In all these three spheres, perceptions and feelings of growing adversities, disempowerment and exploitation are not necessarily the product of recent changes but they are also decisively shaped by the impression that political change has not led to reversing previous, long established forms of authority, hierarchy and inequality in the workplace. Responses to the crisis of the workplace as a place of social advancement, collective identity and solidarity take highly differentiated forms clearly linked to the specific circumstances of industry and locality.

Part of this chapter is also a discussion of workers' responses to the workplace-based aspects of the crisis of wage labour, and how alternative employment strategies are defined in the form of double occupation, informal work and entrepreneurialism. This discussion provides a link with the topic of the following chapter, which explores how the crisis of wage labour impacts on workers' access to decommodified social rights, perceptions of family and community problems, rights-based social citizenship discourses and sense of socio-political activism.

6.2 The Weight of the Past: The Unfulfilled Promise of Workplace Change

6.2.1 Fear and Loathing on the East Rand: The Betrayal of Shopfloor Transformation

Interviews with workers both at GJMC and in East Rand manufacturing companies reveal significant consistencies in the ways in which workplace-related problems are experienced and elaborated. The political context marked by the end of institutional racism and the emerging economic climate of globalisation and international competition consciously enter many workers' discourses of expectations and challenges. As a whole, the impact of such changes on everyday life in the workplace is not generally seen as conducive to greater empowerment, improved working conditions or enhanced control over jobs and tasks. Instead, pre-existing problems like managerial authoritarianism, racialised favouritism, unilateral modifications in tasks and workloads, and lack of skills recognition constantly resurface in individual narratives that reflect a deepening sense of vulnerability faced with the combination of these old problems with the impact of more recent restructuring.

Karl von Holdt's (2003) reassessment of Michael Burawoy's concept of "factory regime" usefully emphasizes the relationships between workers' "political incorporation" within the post-1994 democratic dispensation and their "workplace incorporation" as the renegotiation of forms of control, authority and hierarchy at the point of production. In his view of the "post-apartheid workplace regime", the shopfloor becomes a terrain of contestation over the moral, symbolic and normative frameworks that should structure the relations between capital and labour after the crisis and collapse of apartheid-age structures. Workers' agency is shaped by "a complex amalgam of popular, class and workplace identities, many of which (…) were forged beyond the workplace" (Von Holdt, 2003: 9). However, when it categorizes the range of possible outcomes of contestation – neo-apartheid authoritarian reassertion of racial hierarchies, union-driven reconstruction via codetermination, or management-driven "wildcat co-operation" to sidestep the union -- this argument focuses almost exclusively on workers' and

employers' attitudes towards trade union organization. This point of view does not question the fundamental unity of "the workplace" as the arena of contestation or compromise, the stability of "work" as a universe of meanings where social actors operate and the centrality of the trade union in shaping workers' collective agency. Instead, the picture emerging in this chapter does not fit any of Von Holdt's possible features of a post-apartheid workplace regime, and indeed questions the basic assumptions upon which those outcomes are predicated.

First, worker agency in the cases analysed here seems more concerned with defining subjective alternatives to the looming (and in few cases actual) disappearance of the workplace as a set of relations within which sense of stability, norms, values and ethics are reproduced, rather than with negotiating the features of a more humane, democratic and worker-controlled workplace regime. Restructuring and employment changes, with their burden of instability, precariousness, threats of joblessness, are often seen as the product of an unstoppable globalised economic rationality faced with which not only the workplace order, but the democratic government itself, are forced to capitulate.

Second, production and employment changes question the very meaning of "work" in workers' narratives, expectations and strategies. The widening reach of "atypical" and flexible forms of employment and the permanently impending threat of retrenchments mean that workers seem to lose a sense of worth in their work that is not merely instrumental, especially as this is no longer seen as conducive to fulfilling family and community responsibilities that act as extra-workplace determinants of work ethic and "disciplined selves" (Lamont, 2000). Rather, due to its inherent instability and unpredictability, the work effort is no longer regarded as a reliable foundation for "social contracts" between capital and labour at the point of production.

Third, collective workplace-based identities tend to play a decreasingly important role in workers' responses to restructuring in parallel with perceptions that the shopfloor as a place to advantageously negotiate the outcome of restructuring is becoming increasingly constrained. Rather, workers' imagery is much more responsive to the idea of *escaping* the workplace, its institutions and its structured patterns of interaction through strategies that range from the socio-

economic (search for informalised double occupations, self-entrepreneurialism), to the symbolic (reconstruction of community selves around religious motifs), to the political (attempts to become active in the community and trends to confine the union to a purely instrumental and defensive role).

Once the workplace ceases to be an unproblematic site of periodisation between an apartheid and a post-apartheid "regime", it is possible to better appreciate the coexistence of continuity and change in defining shifting meanings of work in a context of flexibility and globalisation. The immediate evidence that most workers mention to express their sense of betrayal and unfulfilled promise within the post-apartheid workplace resides in the continuities with the old racialised hierarchies and power relations. My factory case studies show, moreover, that the persistence of unequal power relations are not so much the product of the permanence of adversarial mindsets that, by preventing alliances and co-operation between workers and managers, do not allow to "de-politicize" productivity increases (Dickinson, 2003). Rather, co-operation between management and unions does not seem to cause a fundamental difference in this regard, especially as long as restructuring, retrenchments, casualisation and multi-tasking are presented as part of unavoidable adaptations to objective market forces and constraints. It is precisely the economic environment external to the workplace, as seconded and reproduced by the government macroeconomic policies summarized in previous chapters, that "freezes" past patterns of workplace inequality and disempowerment, projecting them into the new era of deracialised labour market regulation.

The most visible manifestations of the permanence of racialised inequality in workplace power relations have to do with authoritarianism and favouritism in the allocation of tasks and functions, in job advancement and skills recognition. While these features are commonly associated with the apartheid-era shopfloor (Kraak, 1987; Adler, 1993), here they contribute to a more general loss of job identities, meanings and perspectives that are primarily determined not by the existence of an authoritarian political regime and an apparent suppression of political citizenship, but by dynamics of restructuring clearly perceived as linked to the forces of liberalization and global competition. Workers' perceptions in this

regard do not seem to be primarily influenced by changes at the level of the labour process, or by the depth and spread of technological innovation. Wage labour is in fact losing its importance across the board both as a vehicle of collective identities and solidarity and as an avenue for further advancement and development in life. Therefore, companies that have significantly introduced new technologies, like Consol and MB Glass display responses similar to those where innovation is constrained by market uncertainties, like merchant establishments Baldwin's Steel and Paperlink.

At Baldwin's, however, workers' uncertainty about the future and their general disaffection are increased by the fact that the company is operating in an environment where the borders between sales and manufacturing, as explained in Chapter 4, are becoming increasingly blurred. As a result a process of routinization and deskilling is affecting here also monthly salaried workers that as a result of flexibility are now increasingly required to perform shopfloor functions that are felt as depriving the "conceptual", problem-solving features of office work, apart from reducing its comfort and stability. One self-defined "picker-loader" at Baldwin's is now in charge with loading structural steel on trucks for clients or for deliveries, a function that previously he was just co-ordinating from his office. In his words transpires how the impact of restructuring and the burdens of flexibility have been unfairly allocated along racial lines:

> Some of us blacks are not moving at all. I prefer to make myself as an example, even if I know 6 or 7. For 16 years I have been staffing one area, only names change: today I am loader, next week I am an expeditor, next month I'll be running as a clerk, but the job is always the same, no money improvement, promotions are made to suit whites.
> Q But your job description…
> A I don't know what's my job description, I don't have one. I no longer know what answer I am supposed to forward to my children who ask 'dad, what job are you doing?'. I am supposed to be called multiskilled because I am on the floor, I do the loading, I am in the office, I run around, I do the administration, come back here, answer the phone. The guys at the machine, I don't think they have a job description either (…). If one has to pick up those materials he must do as the boss says it should be done. He cannot think, he's not allowed to think. (Interview #2)

The racially unfair nature of these changes, and the fact that blacks remain predominantly confined to hyper-flexible occupations where thinking is not part of the process, emerge immediately upon further questioning. This worker's bitterness clearly indicates that the promise of wage labour still holds differential rewards:

> I brought some white boys here that didn't know anything and now they are sales managers, they are part of the directors, and they have gone through me. When they came in they found me, I showed them how we work, and from this department they moved onwards. Boys! I mean boys. I'm not undermining them, but today they are the senor guys, and I won't move an inch from where they left me behind. (Interview #2)

During the interview he showed me his payslip from which I could see that after 16 years at Baldwin's this worker's wage was R105 per week after deductions, taken mainly in the form of approximately R400 per week for the company's medical scheme. Even considering his wife's wage as an employee at Gauteng Health Department, which allows the family to pay for a housing loan and utility rates, he says that their combined wages are hardly adequate to feed their family, which includes two school-age children. When I entered Baldwin's shop-steward office, the venue for my interview, a poster was hanging from a wall. It said: "God came and saw my work and he was satisfied. Then he came again and saw my salary, he turned away and bowed his head and wept".

Issues of work intensification, unregulated multitasking and racially biased promotions and allocation of workloads are felt with great urgency among Baldwin's NUMSA members. Mike, head of the small shop-steward committee, told me that these are the main reasons why one of his co-workers and friend tried to commit suicide by hanging[176]. Lack of advancement for black workers into traditionally "white" jobs like external sales or, as a worker put it, "job reservation for whites and blacks" (Interview #16) is a widespread complaint at Baldwin's, and is used by workers to belie the transformative rhetoric adopted by

[176] At the same time, an atmoshpere of authoritarianism and intimidation was quite apparent in the ways workers were afraid of talking about these issues. Two workers agreed to have an interview with me on working conditions at Baldwin's only if I waited for them outside the factory gates and drove them home, because they did not want to be seen by their foremen.

the Dorbyl group in the Cooper era. As I have discussed earlier, the ideological offensive of management, geared towards redefining an image of corporate citizenship underpinned by employees' commitment to productivity and competitiveness at the overall company level, was quite effective in recruiting the support of NUMSA headquarters and, in some cases, shop stewards. At the workplace level, however, the contradictions and ambiguity of managerial discourse become apparent when confronted with the reassertion of previously existing hierarchies and authoritarianism, now put at the service of ensuring a flexible workforce unable to translate the expectations of political democratization into a new discourse of rights and entitlements in the workplace:

> Here, you see, apartheid is alive, there are jobs which are made for white guys. Why don't they give people a chance? It is better to try and fail than to fail to try. We once had a meeting and I said it seems to me that black people are used as doormats, if you have a mat in the door someone will come with mud in their shoes and wipe his feet there, that is what we have here. (Interview #6)

There are many indications, in Baldwin's workers narratives, of the perception that the permanence of apartheid-style workplace practices is dictated both by the need to maintain racial wage gaps as a condition for the company's survival and as a correlate of increasing flexibility, especially as a consequence of prioritizing structural steel special cuts to carve up new market niches and counter the decline in sales. According to a worker (Interview #9), after the Dorbyl takeover and a strike in 1991, which effectively put an end to trade union organizing at Baldwin's for six years, Dorbyl circulated and publicized an internal memo according to which Baldwin's "should try and put whites in key positions" to prevent further disruptions. The conclusion that many draw is that Dorbyl's claim to a participative, egalitarian corporate citizenship, which during the "Dorbyl TRC" became an explicit mirror-image of the deracialisation of citizenship spearheaded by the new government, actually stops at the factory gates, where "affirmative action as introduced by our new government is applicable only to the other side of the coin [employers], but our side of the coin is not receiving anything" (Interview #4).

Even at Paperlink, a company whose employees credit the new management with a transformative approach at the workplace level that stands in stark contract with past practices, workers resent the arbitrary imposition of multitasking, which blurs existing qualifications and moral assumptions of "fair" expectations from individual jobs in ways that connect workplace authoritarianism to historically entrenched patterns of abuse:

> I have been abused so much, to such an extent, that I am no longer willing to help… what department do I work here? That is the first question I ask to myself. I have to work in dispatch, in admin clerk, receiving clerk, I don't have a license but I am driving the truck… so I am not happy individually. I would leave this job immediately if there was something better. I got an offer from another paper merchant, they promised me better wages, but there are no benefits, provident funds and working time, they knock off any time. Lucas, from CEPPWAWU, tried to organize them, and people who organized have been chased away, not even retrenched". (Interview #141)

A colleague of this worker, a driver, more explicitly related his feelings of daily unfairness and humiliation to the fact that "managers are racist":

> Nowadays when you are a driver, it is as if you are working on the mine. You see, now my leg is broken, they shot me in September, in Doornfontein, trying to hijack me. If you are a driver they can kill you any time, any time. They have hijacked me three times, and you must answer for it, they will ask you a lot of questions, a lot of questions… They think maybe you sold it. That is unfair and humiliating. (Interview #147)

In companies like Consol, MB Glass and Nampak Corrugated, where technological innovation has represented, as discussed earlier, the most evident strategy to cope with newly liberalized domestic markets, the dilution of workers' skills and the resulting loss in job meanings and identities decisively question the advancement of black workers in artisans' positions, one of the most important features of workplace democratization gained during late apartheid worker struggles. Once a constitutive factor of unionized workers' self-awareness as a vanguard committed to workplace and societal change, and often achieved from very humble beginnings, such advancements and the sense of pride that went with

them, seem now irredeemably revoked, as in the case of a Consol artisan (Interview #197). He was hired in 1988 at a labourer's rate (approximately 25% the wage of an artisan) even if he had a matric and an NTC3 4-year qualification as a fitter (but, as he puts it "it was better to have a job rather than just sit in the township"). Becoming an artisan ("the first black electrician at Consol") was for him the outcome of a long struggle started by doing "piccanin" jobs for white employees in the early 1980s. In this case, far from enforcing a "labour aristocracy" type of consciousness, craft advancement is interwoven with a personal history of union militancy where workplace change and socio-political democratization have eventually come to be represented as coterminous. Yet, even if workplace inequalities have been partially redressed in a post-apartheid workplace where white artisans are now only a slight majority, new technologies have emptied his job of most of its content while confining him to a wage rate lower than his qualification and from where prospects for further promotion and recognition are constrained:

> In this department I am still the only black fitter working with four whites. Besides, the job got deskilled now because machines are capable of doing their own diagnostics and they can be fixed without having to stop them, and major repairs are done outside. A fitter's job is now mainly about inspection rather than fixing. (Interview #197)

At Union Carriage and Wagon (UCW), a "jobbing" company where artisan jobs retain a strongly manual character and where no recent technological innovation has taken place, employment insecurity and the fear of retrenchments are the weapons used by management to redesign job contents and conflate tasks to enforce lower rates of pay. Here, workers performing manual wiring and testing of electrical connections, an A Grade artisan position, are trained entirely on the job, apart from the training they might have received from former companies. As an employee in one of these positions (Interview #40) reports, he is now doing all sorts of low-level maintenance jobs in addition to the operations for which he is qualified (and which took five years for him to learn). The company had initially recognized his grade to retain his skills when all maintenance workers in his

department were retrenched. However, he was also eventually retrenched and rehired four months later at the rate of a maintenance labourer.

The weight of the apartheid past still impinges heavily on memories and narratives of UCW's workers, and as a result the sense of betrayal implicit in the continuation of workplace authoritarianism is perceived all the more acutely. Whites retain a majority in artisans' jobs, even if the new economic climate is impacting on their job security too, and most of them are currently recruited through FEDMO, the local labour broker. Their position is often not matched by actual qualifications or education, being rather the product of past privileges and what black employees regard as racially biased selection processes. Yet, their sense of security and company sensitivity to their needs is generally much more pronounced than for blacks. As one white artisan puts it, "UCW is a good company, a company that looks after its people" (Interview #37), for example by predictably providing for re-employment after periods of retrenchments and joblessness between contracts. When I asked this worker how relations between black and white workers have evolved between apartheid and the "new" South Africa, his elusiveness punctuated by embarrassed giggles articulated evasive responses that nonetheless sum up a self-reassuring genealogy of the workplace: "At that time we were working nicely, I have been working for a long time with blacks and I have never had a problem with them, but now everything is in a hurry, work is faster". In any case, he excludes that UCW was in the past a place of racial abuse and mistreatment, and when asked he could not remember any episode of racial conflict.

This narrative contrasts markedly, however, with black workers' own recollections. According to Sipho, chair of the NUMSA shop steward committee,

> It was cruel before… this company was a *volkstaat*, like the one the boers are requiring from the government as their own place. A guy like [the white worker quoted above] would address me only in Afrikaans, that was the language of the dominators. They are trying to change now but they stick, they are stubborn.
> Q: He said relations between blacks and whites haven't changed much over past 30 years. Do you agree?
> A: They have changed a lot compared to five years ago. Before it was cruel, black men weren't even supposed to come to the office, your

> supervisor could come, not you, otherwise you were fired on the spot, until five years ago. Maybe to his mind things haven't changed because he's not prepared to change. (Interview #21)

Sipho appreciates as one of the most visible signs of the post-apartheid workplace climate the fact that the burden of uncertainty and recurrent joblessness are now no longer distributed in a racially skewed pattern. They, indeed, affect the previously privileged as well, those workers whom, lacking proper qualifications, "Vorster provided (…) with papers when he realized that black men might take over in future, even if they didn't want to go to school, because they said 'why should I carry on since I am going to be on top of a black man?" (Interview #21). Growing workplace equality is especially translated into the downgrading of working conditions and job security across racial divides, but it hardly seems to work in the opposite direction. In fact, the advancement of black workers into high skill positions, desirable as it might be considered by literature on a "high road" exit from apartheid-age deskilling (Kraak, 1996; Hunter, 2000), has coincided for "jobbing" companies like UCW with greater business uncertainty due to intensified competition.

As seen in Chapter 4, UCW has particularly suffered due to difficulties in finding new contracts for new fully built wagons. As a result, artisanal skills have increasingly been deployed into low-grade occupations in maintenance and repair (Interview #28), where workers' wages and working conditions, moreover, are fragmented by the use of a labour broker and fixed term contracts. To give an idea of this level of fragmentation, a "coloured" worker employed as carpenter reports that a carpenter's job entailing the same range of operations can be graded anywhere between AA (more than R20 per hour) to D (R15 per hour) entirely on the basis of the foreman's discretion (Interview #29). The explanation that many foremen provide for this disparity is that "there is money for the black township, money for the coloured township and money for the white suburb" (Interview #29). Accusations of "corruption" and "favouritism" on racial grounds are widespread, despite the fact that the new human resource manager, Joe Lekhasi, has a reputation for fairness and transformative intentions. The prospect of

workplace change that his arrival brought seems to many workers revoked by the unfettered power that foremen continue to enjoy.

Therefore, not only existing racial wage gaps have not been addressed, but a continuous source of workers' complaints remains the persistent lack of recognition inside artisans' grades of "tacit skills" earned by black workers throughout their careers outside formal qualification systems and without company training (Wood, 1989; Leger, 1992). Sipho himself, a welder-assembler with a *de facto* AA artisan qualification, but developed entirely through a myriad of formal and informal jobs and not formally recognized, has last used a welding machine working on the 9M trains made by UCW until the expiry of its last contract, in 1997. As discussed earlier on, policies introduced under GEAR have meant a decline in spending in public railways equipment, which has confined UCW largely to repair jobs. For Sipho, this meant that democratization and workplace deracialisation have coincided with a process of systematic downgrading whereby his skills have become redundant and useless, confining him to menial wiring jobs with which he is deeply unsatisfied (Interview #21).

Workers' tacit skills and cognitive abilities -- often developed through complex networks that include previous jobs, community-based informal work and forms of neighbourhood self-help and reciprocity – supported an ethos and pride external to the wage relation. They are now, however, faced inside the workplace with invalidating and diminishing conditions that are no longer the product of institutionalized racial barriers, but of restructuring and employment uncertainty. In the final analysis, the sense of betrayal and violation of wage labour's "promise" is not alleviated in this case by the fact that the workplace has become deracialised, or at least sacrifices are now more equally shared than in the past:

> It's bad for everyone. Now even foremen get retrenched (…). It looks like a person is blown away, they are taken away from a family, you see. When we enter here we want to stay, because we get to know each other and it's sad to see other people staying at home when they've got a family. I also feel bad, really, because we have been together. (Interview #40)

Being "blown away" is, of course, a feeling more likely to be encountered in those cases where the disappearance of wage labour is experienced as a sudden, devastating impact, rather than as gradual process of "hollowing out" where a delayed sense of insecurity can at least prepare workers for life and work transitions. As noticed in Chapter 4, the collapse and closure of Kelvinator revealed peculiar forms of "company patriotism" that cut across race, age and class divides, with NUMSA's own constituency deeply divided on how to respond to management's corporate discourse and rescue plans. The image of a shared corporate identity, where both workers and managers are equally victims of uncontrollable macroeconomic forces, however, provides for shop-stewards a thin rationalization that hardly alleviates the sense of loss:

> People should try by all means to understand that it is a national problem, it is not one person's problem, but it becomes a traumatic situation because you are not given even a day's notice, you see; it comes automatically. (Interview #51)

Waiting for the fate of the company during protracted negotiations between NUMSA, management and potential rescue bidders, showing up at weekly report-back meetings held at "Freedom Square" -- the company's yard -- daily picketing, often with wives and children, in front of the factory gates in Garfield Road, Alrode: all this remained as a set of rituals reaffirming a collective identity and refusal to disappear for this once 1200-strong working class community. Workers' individual narratives, however, revealed a level of anguish and desperation that clearly combined the rapid disappearance of wage labour as a source of income and the inadequacies of workplace-based identities to counter non-negotiable economic dynamics:

> Q: What is going to happen to you now that the company is closed?
> A: Before I used to say that if the company survives I will survive. Now that the company is dead I must see where to go. It's not easy to say that I am going to go back home and start to be dependent again on my parents, it's not something I can do anymore. But as it is now I haven't paid my rent for two months, and the guy is starting to get pissed off and said I can't stay there for longer than two months. I am in deep problems in this moment, unless the company, of course, survives. Otherwise, I can go to the nearest lake and drown my problems.

Q: Don't say that!
[Everyone in the room laughs]
A: Just joking… but I'll have to go back to my parents and start depending again with my child… how can I do it?

In other workers' narratives, however, the betrayal of the promises of fulfillment through waged employment predates Kelvinator's closure per se, and once again the weight of the past reveals the inadequacies of workplace-based emancipatory discourses:

> I can't think of other things, I no longer have visions, plans and what-what. The treatment I received inside the company, I wonder whether we can have a sticker here where apart from our value it is written 'respect, honour and trust', that we respect one another whether you are a white man or a black man, and if we see one another so that you can accommodate me and appreciate me. I came to work here mainly because of the financial pressures that I had at home, but I was not feeling good, coming to work in this company meant dying mentally, because even our bosses, managers and foremen, they were not treating us well.
> Q: Would you say there was racism here?
> A: Yes, there is something like that inside the company, you feel very low, down, useless, hopeless, discouraged. When I had to attend to such and such a problem they shouted at me: 'Why? Why? We don't have people here! Production is slow!' (Interview #52)

Even in a case in many senses dramatic, like Kelvinator, therefore, it seems that the perception wage labour has irredeemably betrayed its own promise of social upliftment cannot simply be confined to employment insecurity and job loss. Rather, it is the very daily experience of work, the permanence of workplace despotism, the added pressures of restructuring, the consequent loss of meanings and, as I will explain in the next chapter, the mismatch between deprivation in the employment sphere and expectations of progress in the socio-political sphere, that define intolerable situations on top of which insecurity adds the burden of economic compulsion. Wage labour itself, therefore, often comes to be experienced in workplace narratives discussed in this paragraph as something akin to Patterson's notion of "social death" (Patterson, 1982), a loss of the sense of the self as person and member of a collectivity.

The next section will discuss the implications of workplace crisis in the case

of Johannesburg municipal employees, revealing important differences in the elaboration of grassroots responses from what has been noticed in this section, which largely depend on workers' understanding of the workplace-community interactions. While relatively "opaque" to manufacturing employees, such interactions are more clearly visible to municipal workers, and the crucial implications of this difference for workers' discourse of social citizenship will be explored at greater length in the rest of this chapter and in the following.

6.2.2 New Canaan, New Egypt: Constructing Memories at Johannesburg Municipality

Similarly to my manufacturing cases, workplace narratives at GJMC reveal attempts by Johannesburg municipal workers to make sense of uncertainties generated by current restructuring by relating them to a shopfloor genealogy dominated by continuities with authoritarianism and disempowerment. A temporality marked by a clearly defined "before" and "after" is actually particularly pronounced in the case of GJMC employees, probably as a result of the fear of losing stability and benefits that are characteristics of public and municipal employment. Workers in the waste and roads departments relate increasing insecurity and workloads, and decreasing content meanings on the job, to the unfolding of iGoli 2002 process. Municipal budget constraints and employment freezes, used by the municipality as part of an objective crisis scenario that ultimately requires the enforcement of market discipline under iGoli 2002, are viewed instead by workers as the result of deliberate neglect in the provision of municipal services and as a planned decay. Respondents see these processes as unfairly enforcing practices of workplace flexibility and multitasking, while facilitating what SAMWU regards as the privatization of council functions. Many of them hint at practices of "corruption", alleging councillors' private interests in companies that are perceived as possible beneficiaries of contracts from the new waste management utility, Pikitup, and the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA).

The legitimacy crisis suffered by the Council at the workplace level is strengthened by workers' rejection of the municipality's discourse of Johannesburg's fiscal crisis and by their mistrust as to its real intentions. At the same time, municipal workers' grassroots solidarity, and the radicalism of their response to iGoli 2002, are reinforced by two factors that are largely absent from my manufacturing cases and that shape very powerful normative frameworks at the heart of employment's "moral economy". Such factors make these workers very sensitive to perceived violations, unfairness and outrage, and relatively unavailable to the possibility of compromise solutions based on a shared corporate identity. First, municipal workers have a longer employment tenure, have spent most of their working lives in municipal employment (see Table 6.1) and have known each other for longer periods of time. Moreover, they are attached to their job by a set of benefits (company subsidies and loans, medical schemes, provident funds) that are qualitatively better than in private sector companies, including those operating in their own sector (Samson 2003, 2004a: 26-28, 36-40; Miraftab, 2004).

Table 6.1 Seniority and Job Changes by Sectors (Workplaces Investigated)

	Metal-engineering	GJMC-Municipal	Glass and Paper
Average Age of Interviewees	42.36	46.35	40.75
Average Years w/Current Employer	12.3	18.3	13.6
Workers with Past Employment Involuntarily Interrupted (%)	38.7%	26.0%	54.1%
- of which 3 or more interruptions	9.6%	--	20.9%
- of which 2 interruptions	12.9%	4.3%	25.8%
- of which 1 interruptions	77.4%	95.7%	53.3%

Finally, municipal workers' shopfloor communities are still largely the product of migration, and the rural-urban divide remains a powerful factor underpinning collective identities and sense of "otherness" vis-à-vis management[177].

[177] 48 workers out of the 80 I interviewed in the GJMC have migrated from rural areas to the Witwatersrand in search for employment between 1968 and 1988, with municipal jobs being the

Second, municipal workers' rejection of iGoli 2002 is facilitated by the fact that they understand themselves not only as workers, but also as residents of communities whose access to services is supposed to be adversely affected by privatization (MSP-ILRIG, 2000; Samson, 2004b). Seeing themselves as employed in and actors for the provision of municipal services reinforces the pride for their job, with the associated expectations of decent wages, adequate equipment, fair working times, acceptable workloads and respectful treatment:

> As workers our primary objective is to serve the community but the second primary objective of workers is to upgrade the standard of living of every individual. Rather than upgrading the standard if living of every individual we are receiving the contrary status as workers. Now generally we are saying the performance with regard to the current government compared to the previous deteriorated. We were expecting under the new dispensation good quality performance in terms of serving communities but we are not getting that. As workers also we were expecting that conditions of service would improve from bad to better but rather we are deteriorating from bad to worse. (Interview #103)

In other words, a high level of decommodification, in the form of employee-subsidised provisions and of cross-subsidised municipal services, has shaped the identities of Johannesburg's municipal working class to an extent that is not discernible among manufacturing workers that are more used to see their employment tenure and benefits responding to a rapidly changing market environment. Conversely, the historical experience of decommodification now feeds directly into SAMWU workers' opposition to and rejection of restructuring. As a corollary, while workers in many of the manufacturing companies I investigated credit management (for example Simon Koch at Kelvinator, Bill Cooper in the Dorbyl group, or human resource managers at UCW and Paperlink) with transformative visions and intentions, and therefore see them to some extent as fellow victims of market competition and globalization that

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first one for almost all of them. These workers, the majority of those aged 50 and above, come predominantly from Transkei (uMzimkhulu, ThabaNkulu, Mt.Frere areas), but also from Lebowa, Gazankulu, Northern Cape and QwaQwa.

require sacrifices from all to make the company survive[178], all this does not apply at GJMC.

Moreover, GJMC workers' longer tenure and deeper historical memory of workplace change makes more likely for temporality to play a greater role within the repertoires they use to give meanings to change and to reinforce their moral claims to entitlements and authority over manning levels, tasks and workloads. Compared to manufacturing workers, however, the ways in which the re-elaboration of the past "re-signifies" the municipal workplace of the present show a remarkable variation of overlapping themes which go beyond the mere denunciation of continuities with apartheid-age practices. At the same time, the construction and selection of memories from the past reveals significant contradictions and ambiguities when it comes for GJMC workers to compare the apartheid workplace with the one in the "new South Africa". In fact, on one hand, the uncertainties iGoli 2002 visited upon municipal workers are seen as the product of a long tradition of authoritarian workplace decision-making that, in the case of this particular sector, includes for many the experiences of coercive recruitment in rural areas and of life in segregated compounds. On the other hand, respondents contrast present stringencies and uncertainties with the past in terms that can unequivocally be defined as nostalgic.

The evocation of the past as an age of greater worker power and "better", "more manageable" or "acceptable" working conditions is more pronounced for GJMC workers -- for one of whom under iGoli 2002 everything has conversely become "abnormal, unusual, totally unacceptable" (Interview #87) -- than for East Rand factory employees. A 52-year old street sweeper in the Norwood waste depot, born in uMzimkhulu (Transkei) and residing at City Deep hostel since

[178] In general, workers in manufacturing companies are much more available than GJMC employees to consider the country's general macroeconomic context as an explanation and an alleviating circumstance for problems experienced in the workplace. This is the case also with manufacturing workers that are otherwise politically radical, like the following case of a self-defined "africanist" at Nampak Corrugated, which we will meet again later on: "if one is asking that question ["how has the company changed over past five years ?"], one must bear in mind the situation of the country at that time compared to now (…). We must take political considerations into question. Before we were not competing globally, now we are competing globally, there are more companies coming in and we have more competitors now, so machines have taken some of our jobs". (Interview #179)

when he started working for the Johannesburg City Council in 1968 aptly summarises these feelings:

> Before it was good, now it's too difficult. We have to sweep three streets for each worker, before it was not like that, when it was still City Council. The municipality now does not know how to sort out the shortage of staff, even when people die or go on pension they don't employ new people so the job stays with one person. (Interview #67)

These views are especially shared by younger workers that have always lived in the urban area and have entered the labour market after the collapse of apartheid, like Angelina, a street sweeper at the Avalon waste depot: "Now it's worse even than when the boers were sitting on our neck, worse than under apartheid. It was better before", on account that "the people in the apartheid system were coming to the people, never mind they were doing wrong, but they were coming to talk to the people" (Interview #89).

Workers at Norwood agree that before the amalgamation of the various city councils in the GJMC and its four Metropolitan Local Councils (MLC) in 1997, prelude to the "Unicity" envisaged by iGoli 2002, teams had more workers, which allowed for lighter workloads, smaller backlogs and tasks that more clearly fitted job descriptions and grades. Workers in roads report reductions of between 50% and 75% in serviced surfaces, mainly due to cuts in teams' size and to shortage of trucks and machinery (which are usually contracted from private firms). Another area in which the past favourably compares with the present is in the provision of equipment, tools and safety clothes (Interview #109). At Nancefield roads depot, which serves almost the whole of Soweto, tarring and patching is now entirely manual and done with elementary tools, which lowers the quality of the end product, and this in a compartment of municipal work which has great pride in its craft traditions and artisan skills.

Opinions according to which the pre-GJMC, or even the pre-1990s, past was preferable to the present, however, do not merely reflect an idealization of the apartheid era as an antidote to current disempowerment. Rather, the selective construction of memories -- as in Bauman's notion of "class historical memory" –

and of "ideal normative schemes" (Bauman, 1982: 115) largely originated within the workplace-community relationship and therefore "independent of the reality opposing them" (Bauman, 1982: 115) on the shopfloor plays a relevant role in workers' image of the past. In fact, many employees still appreciate a fundamental, positive discontinuity with a foregone workplace environment characterized by the presence of "baas boys", spies, *impimpis*, unpaid forced overtime and arbitrary dismissals (Interview #83). At the same time, this very discourse does not see a contradiction in nostalgically evoking the pre-transition era as a context where the union's strength and solidarity could still force the local municipalities to adhere to fair work practices and to respect the workers' moral economy:

> The job now is heavy, more than before, since we have got this new city council. Before, in the apartheid system, it was heavy but now like now. The old city council was not right because of apartheid, but we were working alright (…). Before we got training and with this new council we haven't got training. (Interview #109)

Therefore, the "before" GJMC workers miss seems to mean a phase defined in non strictly chronological terms, but as an age in which labour organizations on the shopfloor had the power to mobilize and successfully bargain over the restructuring of workplace life. IGoli 2002, presented as a sweeping, city-wide exercise respondent to objective global market forces appears now to foreclose that window of historical opportunities. It does not seem as coincidental, therefore, that indifference for workers' needs is stigmatized as one of the features of a GJMC management style obsessed with financial results, whereby, as Angelina said, in the past the union retained the ability to force managers to "come and talk to the people".

It is often the same workers that argue for the preferability of the past who are denouncing iGoli 2002 precisely for bringing back the most oppressive features of apartheid. The seeming contradiction in understanding change as departing from an idealized past, when it comes to workplace power relations, and at the same time going back to that very past, when it comes to oppression at a

broad socio-political level, is apparent from a group discussion I had with SAMWU members at the Avalon waste depot:

> W1: We are saying we are going back. Now we can say we voted for out government and we thought we were going to live better but because it is our government sitting there on top, they are making us suffer.
> W2: For example, when one is acting as a supervisor, he is doing the job of three supervisors…
> W3: …under apartheid you were never working for three people.
> W4: It is like coming from Egypt and now we are going back to Egypt. The old government was Egypt and we thought we were going to Canaan, but instead with this new utility we are going back to Egypt. (…) All these changes, I don't see green forward, I see red because as we used to work before, now it is not the same, it's different. (Group Discussion #1)

It is however instructive that the "return to Egypt" in this workers' narrative characterizes the permanence of a broad pattern of oppression and poverty that still originates from changes within the workplace and is then projected into an apocalyptic view of community-wide collapse. The workplace remains throughout these interviews the benchmark to evaluate social and political change.

6.3 Casualisation, Workplace Insecurity and the Crisis of Work-based Identities as Vehicles of Social Emancipation

As I have discussed in the previous two chapters, the two most visible manifestations of the transformation of work in the cases here investigated are the accelerating rates of job losses and retrenchments as a consequence of restructuring and the introduction of new technology, and the growing fragmentation and precariousness in contracts of employment. Both elements are clearly related to the weakening of collective solidarity and workplace-based identities. They are also evidence of the violation of what workplace surveys (Torres, 1995) identified as the new democracy's promise to uplift working conditions, workers' personhood and the dignity of wage labour. Workers' "historical memories", both in the East

Rand and at GJMC, serve precisely to shape feelings of violation and unacceptability triggered by recent restructuring in terms of work intensification and hardship.

Some of the manufacturing companies here analysed, which are facing increased domestic competition in the liberalizing climate of the 1990s, have tended to respond with an accelerated introduction of new technology mostly geared to cutting labour costs through increased productivity, reduced headcount and greater job flexibility. This is particularly the case of an industry like glass packaging where the rapid phasing out of tariffs is combined to the competition deriving from the use of materials, like plastics and aluminum, that are replacing glass containers. A standard practice in the industry has consisted in a "technicist approach" (Rosenthal, 1999: 143) that has combined massive technological innovation, increased flexibility of tasks and the aggressive promotion of corporate loyalty in a context of massive retrenchments, which creates important challenges for the unions. Companies where the possibility of technological innovation is more constrained, due to the nature of the production process (like for metal and paper merchants) or to persistent lack of demand for new products (as in the case of UCW), the quest for productivity has featured employment flexibility, including casualization and subcontracting, more prominently.

In all cases, however, workers perceive a rise in employment insecurity and the intensification of work as consequential, or at least closely linked, to technological innovation, job losses and casualization. Shop stewards at PFG Glass report increases in workloads of up to 50% over five years, largely due to "new machinery and heading for global competitiveness" (Interview #223). In companies like Kimberly-Clark and MB Glass these factors accompany multitasking and the blurring of established job descriptions and grade boundaries (Interviews #201 and 221). The fact that for most of these companies production levels and market shares often remain stagnant makes shop stewards aware that the maintenance of profit margins crucially depends on increased exploitation and tighter enforcement of workplace discipline. As I have noticed in Chapter 4, sectors like metal-engineering, glass and paper have recorded on the East Rand impressive waves of retrenchments throughout the 1990s, and in workers' narratives of current

restructuring the threat of job losses has come to compound both a reinforced and authoritarian managerial control of the workplace and the fears that come to dominate workplace life. Both trends converge in suppressing workers' attachment to their jobs by further eroding its perceived content and value, therefore invalidating views that waged employment is a vehicle to a "better life" and a more active social citizenship:

> The company is being productive, but with this restructuring they are working with less workers and the guys that remain behind, like me, they are doing a job which could be done by 4-5 people. One guy is doing all that, you know (…). And before when we were working harder we were doing money, but now we are working faster and we are not doing fuck-all, because they are telling us that even if we are working harder the company is not making money! It is like we are going back to the dark years, where we used to have slaves, people are being enslaved in this company because of restructuring. (Interview #181)

Conversely, what seems to increasingly shape individual workers' relations to their jobs is some sort of spirit of adaptation linked to the economic compulsion of retaining a monetary remuneration and the fear of losing it. The loss of a sense of collective power is a manifestation that usually preludes to and accompanies the reconfiguration of worker identities in such an hostile climate. A worker at Nampak Corrugated, a company particularly hit by retrenchments, brilliantly captures the link between powerlessness, insecurity and decline of wage labour as a tool for social advancement:

> We can't even strike over retrenchments, it is just what they call a consultation issue. And when workers on the floor every time see these retrenchments, there is no longer that feeling that when you were going to work you knew what you were doing. Now most workers just come to work for the sake of getting their pay because they know that they can be retrenched any time. *Before there was a motivation to go to work, a pride, but now most workers are not happy, they just work for sake of the money* because they know they have to support their families, they can't just stay at home (Interview #170)[179].

[179] Three workers out of 20 interviewed at Nampak Corrugated cite union membership as a specific reason to be targeted for retrenchments by a management who "like[s] non-union

In this case the diminution of meaning and "pride" in the job is heightened by the fact that talks about possible retrenchments, which followed the introduction of new conveyors, have a directly disciplinary overtone. In fact retrenchment plans are deliberately kept vague by management "as a tactic, to scare workers" and weaken their opposition. Retrenchments are periodically announced but details are not provided, therefore acceptance of increasing workloads is seeing as a way to escape this fate. The same worker reports that since retrenchments have taken place in his department workers have been working under a "tremendous pressure", with one worker performing the tasks previously done by two and with no one daring to object:

> If a manager comes and says, 'hey, you must work double shift' [i.e. two shifts, 16 hours, in a single day, FB], you can't say no, because they are scared and managers are taking advantage of that: if you don't want to work, the retrenchment is coming. They don't say that openly, but you can hear the tones, you know, even if they don't say it directly[180]. (Interview #170)

The use of the threat of retrenchment to unilaterally enforce more flexible and intense time schedules has been reported in many companies. At Consol it is not uncommon to meet employees that work for 16 hours a day for three consecutive days, with the possibility of being called any time, even in the middle of the night, to report immediately. The introduction of a "quick change" system as part of MB Glass' "three shifts, four crews" continuous operation system means that workers who change shift have only an 8-hours break, even if the system allows for two consecutive days off per week. The introduction of this system was facilitated by fears of retrenchments after the closure of the company's Durban plant (Interview #207). Conversely, the new time arrangement, despite its massive demands on workers' schedules, has created a split in what is otherwise a stable, strongly cohesive, powerfully unionized plant. In fact, many workers who

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members and those who don't know their rights" (Interview #177), whereby "if you fight management always you go down" (Interview #166, see also #161).

[180] Many workers at Nampak Corrugated have a *de facto* 80-hours working week due to the need of replace on a "double shift" basis workers that do not report for the following shift (Interview #175, 176).

commute weekly from KwaZulu-Natal approve the new system because it gives them more uninterrupted time to spend with their families (Interview #204). Other workers, however, reject this mechanism, which forces them to work three weekends per month and is therefore highly disruptive for their family lives and obligations (Interview #200). The MB Glass case is interesting, therefore, because it shows management's ability to unilaterally impose greater workplace flexibility under duress while at the same time appealing to the individualized needs of sections of the workforce for which flexibility can be presented as an opportunity of "self-realization".

At Baldwin's Steel, one of the strategies used to counter the slump in sales was, as I have explained, to diversify the company's activities towards special cuts of structural steel, for which new machinery was introduced at the same time that rumours of retrenchments were aired in the sales departments. As a result, according to shop stewards, much of the servicing for the new machines is often done on an unpaid overtime basis following managers' remarks on the difficulties facing the company and that "we are all part of the Dorbyl family" (Interview #4 and 11). The resulting workplace climate of fear, intimidation and authoritarianism is described by one worker in unequivocal terms:

> One of those tricks used by the company, they want to reduce a number of employees and they have more work for each employee in order not to employ casuals, those are the reasons they are using. Employees that go are never replaced, that is another tactic they use (…). Maybe the next time you'll come back only not to find me, you never know, these days anything is possible. I'm not saying I'm leaving, but they are just hinting that anything is possible these days. Today I'm here, tomorrow I'm not here, after 16 years.
> Q Well, they can't fire people just like that…
> A They can't fire, but they make means that you lose your job.
> Q What do you mean?
> A Frustrate you, make you run around, make you feel lost, many things. They won't fire you just like that, no, they are actually even scared of the rules of the game, of the courts and all that. (Interview #2)

Similarly to Sennett's "corrosion of character", the link between the threat of loss of work and the actual loss of power and meaning in subjective experiences of

work seems to be greatly reinforced by employment flexibility of a "numerical" kind (Standing, 1997). This is specifically related to the replacement of permanent workers with short-term contracts or casual employees. As I have explained, at UCW this practice, which led to the retrenchment of many workers which were re-employed as contingent employees, is enabled by labour broking. The fact that FEDMO is a peculiar kind of labour broker, whose workers are unionized by NUMSA and enjoy significant contractual protections in terms of contract duration, has undoubtedly contributed to establish fixed-term labour as the basis of the "social contract" between management and workforce.

Contract workers hired through FEDMO, often artisans retrenched from permanent positions, benefit from higher cash payments than UCW employees, due to FEDMO's strategy of building long-term networks of skills but also to the fact that the labour broker does not provide medical aid. When FEDMO arrived at UCW, the management tried to persuade workers to look for employment there, rather than being hired on 6 months contracts at UCW, using as an argument the fact that FEDMO had no provident fund contributions (Interview #35). A provident fund was ultimately introduced as a result of NUMSA's successful unionization of FEDMO workers.

UCW, on its part, enjoys the advantage of employing contract workers on overtime for flat rates that are lower than the contractual one-and-half or one-and-third rates. Moreover, it can use them for both high-skill functions and various low-skill operations at lower wage rates, counting on the fact that these jobs are of limited duration and, especially when, like at present, no fully built-up wagons are made, involve substantial amount of menial repairs (Interview #45). In this specific case, contracts have a duration of at least three months, can be terminated at a one week notice, and last as long as the individual is needed for repairs in his department.

Apart from undermining the position of permanent employees, the use of labour broking and fixed-term contracts creates significant divisions in the orientation that UCW and FEDMO workers have towards their job. Many workers, in particular have come to see labour broking in a positive light because this form of employment is seen as more responsive to short-term economic needs,

stringencies and crises in household income. A worker hired by FEDMO has been retrenched and re-employed on contract at UCW three times between 1996 and 1999. His current gross wage of R1300 per week is boosted by the lack of medical aid at FEDMO and by access to overtime (R550 per week for what amounts to a 72-hours average working week), for which UCW prefers the cheaper FEDMO workers[181]. Of course, the fact that UCW continues to retrench workers while using contract labour on overtime confirms workers' fears that retrenchments and flexibility are not mere responses to objective market demands, but they are used by management as a tool to adversely modify power relations. In the case of this specific individual, however, it is to be noticed that being employed by a labour broker carries with it an economic reward equal to about 50% of his weekly wage, which represents an important asset for his family's survival even if it means the loss of employer-subsidised healthcare and a growing intensification of work under exploitative conditions. It is no surprise, therefore, that this worker is happier with FEDMO rather than being a UCW employee, even if in his case the expression "permanent employment" has lost all significance and external economic compulsion shapes his life strategies much more directly than work-based ethics, solidarity and identity:

> You see, if you are unmarried and are not a husband your problems would be less than mine, especially on the finance. For those years when I was a permanent, I really didn't benefit anything, but I started to benefit when I started to become a contract, then I saw an improvement in my life, at home and in my life. I could save something like R500 a month while I am giving my wife enough money to support herself and her children, I could pay an equal share of the telephone bill and the electricity bill, and we still suffer. But before, when I was a permanent, I used to suffer more, I had lots of debits behind my back, I couldn't even afford to pay everyday expenses with the money I used to have in my pocket.
> Q But in this way your job is always on the line, is that a problem for you?
> A No… Actually… maybe I don't get an advise from other people…

[181] Overtime at UCW has greatly decreased after the expiration of the 1997 Zimbabwe contract, and company agreements set it to a maximum of 10 hours per week, used especially over weekends. However, specific departments like test bay, to which this specific case refers, have greater demands for overtime, which is usually performed by FEDMO employees to which the UCW agreement on this matter does not apply. At peak times and with new contracts, like at the end of the 1980s, overtime at UCW could average 30-40 hrs per worker per week.

> Q Which people?
> A Like you, who can tell me that in ten years things are going like this and that. Now I am just thinking that I have got a job here, I am just like a horse who's got now enough grass, I don't look at the outside and after that maybe I'll get another job. I have been in this situation for a long time, when the job is finished I have to sit down and wait for another one
> Q And how would you survive in the meanwhile?
> A God knows, I'll find something. (Interview #45)

At the same time, many UCW employees resent the presence of FEDMO in the company. They often voice their opposition by resorting to moral condemnation reminiscent of the working class "ethics of responsibility and commitment" that defines Lamont's (2000) concept of "boundary discourse":

> I am permanent and I care for my house, my children, everything. These guys [FEDMO's contract workers] come only to get the money and they are told they're going to stay for two months, after which they must go. But I am permanent, I am working here more than two months, and those guys don't care about what is going on here in the factory, they're only here to take their pay and they cannot look 3-4 years from now, they just say "*ek weer nie*"-- I don't know -- but here I have to do my best for the future of the factory, because I worry about my children. (Interview #27)

In the case of GJMC, as discussed in Chapter 5, budget cuts, fiscal austerity and the three-year freeze in new recruitments in the transition to iGoli 2002 have deepened long established trends in the subcontracting of vehicles and equipment and, in the case of waste management, in the employment of casual workers. Interviews conducted in waste and roads depots show that the most visible impact of the situation is a deepening manpower shortage, often combined with an expansion of neighbourhoods and areas of need to be serviced. As a result, heavier workloads and the multiplication of tasks to be performed question existing job descriptions and skill levels, without concomitant rewards or even adequate tools. On the long term, workers see the fully-fledged implementation of iGoli 2002 as leading to the loss of job security and benefits.

At the same time, the introduction of a profit motive in the future provision of municipal services is seen as impoverishing their quality in the case of the very

poor. Management's constant emphasis on cost reduction and wage containment, provides, as I have previously explained, a powerful, albeit contested, element in iGoli 2002 technocratic discourse. It in fact ultimately demonstrates in the workers' eyes that restructuring of the GJMC is a response to the Council's fiscal crisis that will ultimately make workers and poor communities pay a heavy price. Compared to my manufacturing cases, for municipal workers the plight of poor communities and their demands for decommodified services is here therefore immediately mobilized as a discursive strategy to enhance demands for worker power and security that do not primarily rely on workplace-based identities.

While casualisation is an enduring feature of municipal employment in South Africa, especially in waste management, the use of casual workers acquires new meanings under an employment freeze that many workers see as a logical prelude to the iGoli 2002 workplace environment. The image of older workers retiring and being replaced by casuals with no specific attachment to the workplace, in particular, conjures up fears of eradication of the municipal working class's "historical memory" and of its ethical codes and norms of a "well done job":

> Contracts were working there to put the caps, then our permanent guys are going to work and they find the caps fucked up and they have to fix them. I got injured in my back and now I can't sleep because I fell down the caps put there by contracts. Contracts are dangerous, they just leave the job fucked up. (Interview #132).

The use of contract workers is also considered as going against community needs:

> Contracts are doing their jobs in halves and then they leave, we as maintenance people who are running Soweto are supposed to finish the job they started, repair the damage they have done, and those people just go with the money, money of ours as Sowetans, money of ours as workers (…). At the same time we have people with experience who can do construction jobs and we can't do that for lack of funds and instead they have to finish up the job of contractors that are moreover wasting council's money. (Interview #108)

A Johannesburg roads manager, when asked, denied knowledge of such trends in the use of contract workers[182]. Workers' sense of outrage is nonetheless sharpened by the perception that management considers their wages a cost to be contained, and they consequently resent being defined as "idle" and "wasteful". The devaluation of subjective sense of pride and identification with their work is seen therefore as a tactic to increase their insecurity and prepare their future layoffs:

> We used to construct [roads] before, but now we are simply doing repairs, jobs have been contracted and since 1993 the construction of roads has been contracted out, that was the directive. When we were constructing we were sure that we were working but since then the capability of constructing roads has dropped and we feel sort of redundant, you know? We feel that we might lose our job because we are only doing maintenance but when we were doing constructions previously we had by all means the feeling that our job was secure. Since we are doing maintenance and cleaning there is a likelihood that we might be kicked out because we might be perceived as if we are idling, we are not working, and that is already happening: councilors are claiming that municipal workers are idling. (Interview #116)

Similarly to what I found in my cases from the manufacturing industry, municipal workers regard subcontracting as a way to enforce casualisation of employment and as a managerial tactic to restructure a more vulnerable workforce. The high costs of contracts and the poor quality of the jobs they perform are often quoted as evidence of the intellectual dishonesty in subcontracting's economic rationale and as an indication of its actual motifs. The perception than subcontracted operations are more expensive than jobs performed by council workers is widespread both in roads and in waste management. A SAMWU shop-steward processing payments for contracts at the Central Roads Depot in Benrose argues that almost all the depot's capital budget for 1999 was spent on contracted trucks at a cost of R20,000 per month per truck (Interview #136), a massive amount for a municipal service whose overall capital budget was drastically curtailed due to budget deficits. At the same time, workers complain that council drivers, whose wages are lower than for contract ones, are demoted to

[182] Alan Agaienz, Interview with Author, 27 January 2000.

"acting" positions in low-level repair jobs ("there are too many drivers in this depot who have to do sweeping", Interview #121). Far from being an unwelcome necessity due to GJMC's budget crisis, workers see the use of contracts as one of the causes of the crisis, and as a tool used by manager to achieve its real target of weakening their workplace strength and bargaining power.

For a sector like roadworks, where the use of atypical workers and casuals is historically rare, and where work identification is often nurtured in strong awareness of the skills and prowess required, issues of casualisation are particularly sensitive ("we are becoming like waste management", Interview #109). A constant thread across the roads depots I have visited is the view that a condition upon which iGoli 2002 and the restructuring exercise are premised is the disarticulation of municipal workers' communities whose cohesiveness is produced by a history of working class formation that made them extremely sensitive of their rights as workers and as residents in the community. Therefore, casualisation is considered as conducive to a workforce that is less attached to their work and their community, less aware of their rights, and therefore more available to see their livelihoods fully commodified, more exposed to short-term labour market fluctuations and with reduced cross-subsidised social provisions. In this sense, the destruction of workplace-based sense of security is considered as the first step towards the weakening of the link between work and social citizenship claims.

In the case of waste management, where the use of casuals is a long-standing and widespread practice, and a constant source of conflict between workers and managers, a generalized increase in this practice is noticed as concomitant with the employment freeze. As a result, cases of physical clashes between permanent and casual workers have occurred, like at Waterval depot (Interviews #82, 83, 84). Workers also complain for the erosion of time-honoured practices through which they once used to customarily regulate to some extent the employment of casuals, as in Inner City and Norwood depots, where the use of "lotteries" at the gates have been replaced by the management's unilateral decision-making in having casuals ferried by trucks from other depots, like

Marlboro, a practice once commonly used by the apartheid-era Soweto City Council:

> The casuals, I can't say, when we see these people coming to the gate nobody can say how these people are hired and we have to keep quiet because we don't know, and they say these people just want to work (…). Before people were hired in the depots and it was a, how you call it, *zama-zama*, there were the papers…
> Q: A lottery?
> A: Yes, but that was stopped. Now the council just brings people in but we don't know how they are hired. Last month we confronted them because this is still happening, trucks of people are downloaded in front of the gate and we don't know where they come from. And we told SAMWU that we don't want these people, we want people hired at the same spot and in the right manner. We have brothers who stay at home and aren't working and then the council hires these people…(Interview #91)

As with manufacturing companies, growing insecurity and casualisation are regarded as closely linked to work intensification and content deprivation, additional mechanisms that weaken workers' attachment to their work. A term drawn from the Council's technocratic parlance has entered workers' everyday conversation to capture the connections among these different aspects: "deployment". The word indicates the practice of constantly moving workers across depots to compensate for workforce shortages linked to expanded areas to be serviced and to the freeze on new employment:

> We have lesser staff, now, due to the deployment and the issue of people who have retired and died, so our workers are reduced and little people can take sufficient work. Previously we used to have large numbers of people who worked as expected but now less people are unable to cover the expected jobs. (Interview #118)

Shortages of staff due to constant "deployments" and to the addition of new areas to the Johannesburg municipality generally lead to an intensification of work due to the understaffing of teams, as in roads (Interview #92), or to the increase in the number of teams per truck, as in waste (Interview #91). As a result, it becomes impossible to service neighbourhoods regularly and backlogs tend to increase. On the topic, workers' knowledge directly challenges what one waste department

official defines as "proper management processes", openly advocating an increase in the teams-to-trucks ratio on account that "it is cheaper to have a team waiting than to hire a vehicle: rather let the team waiting for the vehicle than the vehicle for the team"[183]. A street sweeper from the Norwood depot servicing the upmarket Rosebank suburb attacks this argument as a mere tactic to increase job and time flexibility, in a context where one sweeper performs the operations once done by two and workloads and backlogs are noticeably increasing:

> If we go out at 9:00 we can't finish the streets and we have to make up the following days. And all those bloody jacarandas! When I go to sleep I am dead. (…) What this guy told you means that there will be more problems and people are going to stay out of job. Now the rubbish coming on Monday stays on the streets until Friday so the area stays dirty and the residents complain, and it's residents who pay me and they should be happy. Bring that guy here, and we are going to debate with him! (Interview #69)

The most important problem with deployment, reported in practically all the waste and roads depots is that, due to constant shortage of personnel, relatively qualified jobs like drivers or supervisors are performed on an "acting" basis by employees that often lack the relative qualification and are not paid accordingly. In the Waterval waste depot it was possible to meet 'boppas' (Grade 1 employees in charge of delivering plastic bags) employed as acting drivers (a Grade 8 job) for a R1200-1800 monthly wage compared to the R4260 that a regular driver would get (Interview #97). At Ennerdale roads depot supervisors are *net by die naam* (only by name) but the position "does not mean anything anymore" (Interview #102) and is performed by under-qualified, underpaid employees. While this reality reflect and enables a growing neglect for training on the part of the Council, it testifies to the extent of workers' disaffection and lack of identitication with their jobs.

Faced with a reality where it becomes increasingly difficult to strengthen claims based on their identities and pride on jobs whose meanings are increasingly devalued, workers' opposition to restructuring and to the erosion of their rights and powers turns to community-based discourses. Budget constraints and the impending corporatization of municipal entities are blamed for the deterioration in

[183] Roelf De Beer, Interview with author, 19 October 1999.

the quality of services, which negatively impacts on the relationships between workers and communities. If the workplace is seen as the first line of attack on workers' identity and ability to articulate citizenship claims, the disarticulation of the workplace-community continuum is seen as the following logical step. At the same time, however, GJMC workers' "affective work" **(**Hardt, 1999**)** in contact with local residents and handling human interactions and emotions reinforces workers' moral standing vis-à-vis restructuring and provides elements on which an alternative citizenship discourse can be developed to counter the inadequacies experienced on the workplace:

> We are not self-centred in terms of thinking about our benefits in the workplace. We are actually saying that we are workers and we are also part of the community, because for 8 hours we work here but at the end of the day we will be faced with a similar monster which is iGoli 2002 also as communities. (Interview #101)

Building a community-workplace solidarity repertoire involves, however, dealing with and mediating with a range of worker-community conflicts often originated by dynamics of casualisation and production flexibility. The increase in backlogs is, for example, an important cause of conflict inasmuch it leads to residents' complain. For waste workers servicing "garden sites" this is a daily reality when the sites are filled with refuse for which trucks, following the above mentioned "proper management processes", are not available.

Consequently, residents frustrated with overflowing sites and scavengers raiding the refuse direct their antagonism at municipal attendants in accidents that often involve firearms or stabbing, a fate occurred to three Norwood depot workers during 1999 alone (Interview #63). Waste depots that, as a result of the post-1995 GJMC boundaries, have come to include new informal settlements are particularly exposed to conflicts with communities for which the informal disposal of refuse often represents a rare, albeit meager, source of income. The Avalon depot has incorporated one of such settlements, the sprawling Freedom Park, on the Golden Highway to Soweto, whose residents regularly chase municipal waste collectors away, even if many workers try to articulate a discursive solidarity across this divide:

> It is a bad situation, when we go to Freedom Park we don't know whether we'll come back, and I blame the councilors there, the council must speak to these people and tell them that is us who are cleaning the place but the council doesn't talk to those residents. The council, when they call those people, they promise them jobs to clean the place, so when they see us they fight with us because they were promised jobs by the councilors. They want the vote so they promised them jobs. They tell them, vote for me and I will do something for you tomorrow, then they vote for them. (…) The councilors, they are gambling with our lives, so we have to run away. (Interview #97)

The office of the Ennerdale roads depot, which serves Orange Farm, is a makeshift *zozo* on an untarred, ground that become ankle-deep muddy when it rains. The depot was started when the Ennerdale local council was incorporated in GJMC's Southern MLC together with Orange Farm, previously run by the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA). Before 1997 a formal depot operated in Orange Farm and covered Ennerdale with workers deployed from Nancefield and Avalon (Soweto), and no local residents were hired to work on the premise. Rather, between 200 and 400 locals previously employed as casuals had their expectations of being hired permanently rebuffed due to budget cuts. Local residents' anger translated into demonstrations and *toyi-toying*, which forced the relocation of the depot to its current Ennerdale facilities (Interview #137). In an extremely marginalized area of the city, with little or no formal economic activity and where two-thirds of residents live in informal settlements (Fiil-Flynn and Naidoo, 2004: 14-16) municipal restructuring pits against each other impoverished residents and municipal employees.These latter, conversely, face increasingly exploitative working conditions, working without tools or basic protective equipment in an unhealthy environment, with no heating, dislocated panels and gaping cracks in the walls. This case further illustrates how restructuring of production and changing meanings of work project themselves onto the social fabric, but it also indicates the relevance of the workplace-community continuum in structuring a potential alternative discourse on rights and power.

6.4 Beyond the Factory: Individualisation and Entrepreneurialism as Responses to the Crisis of Wage Labour

Many recent analyses of workplace change in South Africa have argued for the emergence of a workers' approach to "engagement" of business whereby acceptance of the "inevitable reality of restructuring" (Rosenthal, 1999) is no longer merely coterminous with "compliance" but it can also indicate employees' willingness to proactively contest the outcomes of restructuring (Von Holdt, 2000; Hirschsohn, Godfrey and Maree, 2000). Findings from my municipal and manufacturing case studies, however, underline that in a context whereby restructuring questions deep-seated worker identities and meanings attached to wage labour as a vehicle for individual realization and citizenship claims workers' responses are not easily captured by binary oppositions like "capitulation" vs "compliance" or "resistance" vs "engagement". While such oppositions reassert the centrality of the workplace and of the wage relation as a repository of workers' selves, the most common responses I found tend rather to "peripheralise" the workplace and to transcend the wage relation. In the case of municipal workers this is achieved for example through the appeal to community needs and sense of morality, a factor that, as the next chapter will show, carries important implications for discourses of social citizenship and decommodification.

The appeal to the community and extra-workplace sources of collective solidarity is however more difficult for manufacturing workers, who tend to develop a less militant approach towards insecurities and vulnerabilities on the job, which in many cases involve ideas of cross-class "company patriotism", as seen in the case of Kelvinator. In stark contrast to GJMC employees, many workers in the glass-paper and metal-engineering companies tend to develop strategies to cope with the collapse of waged employment that rely on individualized forms of adaptation with a strong orientation to self-entrepreneurialism. A level of instrumentalism creeps in such strategies which, while recognizing the importance of defending waged employment as a crucial source of livelihood, rely on individual escape and defection from the workplace.

Self-entrepreneurialism mainly takes the form of starting individual businesses as an alternative or in addition to a factory job that is considered precarious, unrewarding or lacking fulfillment. A total of 19.3% of metalworkers, 9.7% of glass-paper workers and 4% of GJMC employees among my respondents perform double jobs, almost all of them on an informal, self-employed basis. In the case of metalworkers this figure grows especially due to the collapse of Kelvinator and by the highly fluctuating production schedules at UCW. The average income from second jobs in the case of metalworkers is R588 per month, compared to an average net monthly wage of R2202 (see also Table 7.1). A majority of workers, however, considers to pursue the avenue of double employment should the opportunity arise. Lack of capital, crime and difficulties in access to further education and training are the reasons most often cited as obstacles facing a self-entrepreneurial strategy that is usually expressed in terms of mere survivalism:

> The income for the workers is far too little to allow them to go out and buy what they may sell. On Friday they get their money, do grocery shopping for the family and on Sunday they are left with only 5 or 10 Rand, only enough to pay to come back to work on Monday, and on Monday they are borrowing money from other people. That's the life we are living in this company.
> Q: And what about you?
> A: I don't know, it's as good as I can get. There's this "*Tata ma Chance*" lottery, and if I can get maybe a million, that would be good business in Lesotho.
> Q: And if you don't win?
> A: I will stay here because in Lesotho there are no jobs. Vosloorus too is a problem when you don't have money, *ek se*, so my intention is to have enough money to run a business, because around here, *ek se*, you are taking a risk if you open a business because you don't sleep when you have got a business; too much crime, especially in the township. (Interview #4, Baldwin's)

Some workers who lost their jobs at Kelvinator have been planning to pool their provident funds payments with colleagues or retrenched neighbours to start various kinds of small businesses, even if more pressing needs like providing for basic family expenditures, paying for retail shops' accounts and refunding company loans take the priority to avoid being blacklisted or falling prey of "loan

sharks" (Interview #57 and 59). However, also the sheer desire to escape from the factory, and not mere desperation or fears about the future, plays a role, as in the case of this worker at Consol:

> If it wasn't for financial constraints I should have left this company long ago. As an alternative, I have got my industrial relations diploma, I am intending to take another course, there are possibilities in government posts but I must get my degree. But I don't think I will stay here.
> Q: Do you think your job is becoming insecure?
> A: No, no, my job is secure, it's just a question of it being a shit job. (Interview #181)

Survivalism unquestionably remains the main motivation for self-entrepreneurial strategies of response to the crisis of waged employment. At a company where the disappearance of stable jobs is particularly acute, UCW, an important source of income is provided by seasonal employment at SASOL's Secunda refineries during the annual shutdown. The shutdown and cleanup of the plant usually take place in September and December, for the duration of two weeks, when permanent SASOL employees are on leave (Interview #27). Cleaning the plant from oil and chemicals is an extremely dangerous job, performed mostly by scarcely trained casual and contract workers, whose use the unions recursively blame as one of the main causes of frequent deadly accidents. [184] UCW workers doing this job usually work for around 100 hours, spread mainly over weekends, amounting to up to 10 hours per day, with a total working-time flexibility:

> They don't worry about you. If you want you can work overtime, it's up to you, you are there to make money, you can work nighshift, dayshift, 7 to 7 maybe, or even 7 to 10, it's up to you. (Interview #27)

Reasons most commonly indicated for such choices have to do with the fear of being retrenched from UCW, but they are not confined to this element:

> The company can close any time now, retrenchments can take place any time, you can sit down without a job, there are other people there

[184] See Salgado, I. "Union Names Sasol's Seven 'Deadly Sins'", *Business Report*, 16 February 2005.

> who are also working at Sasol, I think now there are 30-35 of them. But it's not only people who are going to be retrenched.
> Q: Why do you go to work for Sasol?
> A: Other companies, they all close, there's no jobs around so the guys see on the newspaper that at Sasol there's jobs during the shutdown so they go there and got interviewed for a contract. At the gate they ask you from which company you are, then they check on the computer and let you in, because any people that works for them is on their computer, so they check on the computer if this guy is a returning guy or what. (Interview #27)

Apparently, labour brokers working for SASOL, like one I encountered called MSA, are also responsible for the recruitment of this workforce. But it mostly seems a competitive process, based on information provided by word of mouth or newspaper adverts, rather than on the activation of "social capital" in the forms of connections inside SASOL or in the community. Monetary wages paid to these workers are higher than for average SASOL operators (with whom these workers have no contact whatsoever) and could be as high as a skilled grade at UCW, but SASOL provides them no benefits. In this way, new divisions are created within SASOL itself, which weaken the locally employed workforce. The fact that the collapse of stable employment is functional to providing new reservoirs of cheap, unprotected labour for large corporations working in sectors with intermittent labour demand, like the petrochemical, has been documented elsewhere (Desai, 2002: 105-115). In these sectors, double employment creates therefore a labour market fragmentation where the borders between "formal" and "informal" economy tends to disappear, and where actually demands of companies operating in the formal sectors amplify the informalisation of labour contracts **(**Crichlow, 2000).

Few cases show, however, the extent to which double-job strategies can be functional to express individual self-valorization perceived as constrained within an increasingly meaningless factory environment. At the same time, such cases provide hints as to the variety of activities and the complexity of cognitive abilities involved in double jobs, and witness the relevance of extra-workplace formative experiences (Boegenhold and Staber, 1991). An MB Glass worker, for example, has a second job making potteries out of clay. As he says, he "nurtured that art

through the struggle" (Interview #111), being taught how to mold and paint while being an underground MK operative and during training in Zambia.

Sipho is a shop-steward and electrical fitter at UCW, whose attachment to the company has been constantly eroded by frequent retrenchments followed by intermittent employment by FEDMO, often too short to allow him to claim his UIF payment. The frustrations and deprivation arising from his waged occupation contrast markedly with the satisfaction and ambition Sipho derives from his parallel career developed on entirely self taught skills. For three hours after clocking off at UCW and before going home in Duduza, Sipho works as a self-defined "architect" in an office rented from an NGO involved in community mediation services in downtown Nigel. Here he drafts plans for all sorts of buildings, multi-storey, churches, extensions, and hires two helpers, one of which is practicing towards a formal qualification. Sipho himself does not hold any formal certificate, but "just a talent for drawing" (Interview #21) developed while making additions the house of his mother's and his family of 12. After having his plan examined and approved by the local building inspector, redrawing it numerous times and "learning by mistake", he was contacted by neighbours for similar operations.

Thanks to "being recognized by the community", he decided to start his practice in Nigel while remaining employed at UCW, which became *de facto* ancillary to paying the rent for his office. Even if what he earns in this business is approximately two-thirds of his UCW wage, it represents an important complement to his income coupled to a new sense of pride in providing a service to the community by charging fees that are far lower than those of formal architects. At the same time Sipho recognizes that a double income is a vital necessity for atypical workers and intermittent employees at a company like UCW whose reputation as a company that is constantly retrenching and hiring workers discontinuously makes local shopkeepers unwilling to allow for credit for which it is often impossible even to have access to UIF money as collateral.

In other cases, finally, double jobs and self-employment strategies are more consciously linked to a purposive escape from the factory and refusal of wage labour. Here, frustration, exploitation, humiliation and workplace authoritarianism,

not insecurity, fear of job loss or the need to survive, are the main reasons cited. An electrician-wirer at UCW has a second job as house electrician in Alberton, which he usually attends over weekends. In some cases, however, he actively sabotages his workplace functions to be able to do his other job:

> Sometimes I can take a day off here at work. Before there was no pay for sick leave, now it's paid so I can just take one day and bring back a fake doctor's note to cover up. Many people do it, even if one must be careful, they notice when someone brings doctor's notices 3 times a month.
> Q: So working at UCW for you is mainly something like…
> A: To improve my life, but the main thing is that I can really stand alone, I can work alone, the electrician job is what I really care about. (Interview #39)

The prospect of starting an independent business actually makes many workers view the possibility of being retrenched in a positive light, especially because provident fund payouts can be used to finance the new enterprise. In this sense, while wage labour and the workplace are further weakened as a site of identity and life strategies, unemployment is not necessarily considered as something unquestionably detrimental, but it can be seen as potentially revealing of new opportunities. Often the example of retrenched colleagues or neighbours that have successfully started similar activities is a more powerful source of inspiration than the image of acceding to whatever sacrifice to defend one's employment (Interview #182, 148). Sometimes a positive attitude towards retrenchments is part of a broader, intentional subversion of factory discipline which, according to worried shop-stewards, even aims at creating conditions to be retrenched so that provident fund money can be used not only to start businesses, but also to pay for household debts and "loan sharks":

> I discovered that people who don't want to work and have problems, account problems, problems with cash loans, and so on, they volunteer when they hear the company wants to retrench, they know that under packages they'll get lots of money to pay for their accounts. What the company is doing now is to say, 'We must work as a team and we have to explain people to learn not to come late', because people who come late enjoy coming late, sleeping at work and that is not the right thing. Even when we as shop stewards told

> them, 'No, you mustn't do this, let's wait what the company is going to do', and they say, 'No, the company told us they want to retrench, now you have to remind the company about that', and I say, 'No that's not my job, to remind the company to retrench people'. (Interview #1)

Finally, the search for individualized, self-entrepreneurial responses to the crisis of wage labour and to the collapse of workplace life, as opposed to trying and rebuild alternative collective and community-based claim-making and citizenship discourses, is often rooted in transcendental value systems and discourses of salvation where religion plays a major role. As Michele Lamont observes, "Religion also offers an alternative to social status and is often defined in opposition to it" (Lamont, 2002: 40). As such, it compensates for the failure in monetary and career-based notions of success with a view of mundane transcendence based on personal integrity, faith and morality, which can be highly individualistic and competitive. In particular, while workers belonging to more established denominations, like Roman Catholic, Lutheran and the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC), stress more the important of collective solidarity, individualism seems more linked to the discourse of Evangelical-type beliefs, as in the case of this self defined "born-again Christian" Kelvinator employee assessing the dramatic fate of his company:

> We have to believe we can do what we want with our lives. For example, in the parable of Lazarus, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he said before that: 'Take away the stone from the tomb of Lazarus'. What does the stone mean? The stone means disbelief, that people don't believe they can do whatever they want with their lives, they don't believe they can have their own houses, their own car and that's what we should do instead of relying on these whites to give us jobs. (Interview #56)

These examples seem to confirm observations, often referred to the collapse of formal employment in African societies where state institutions are incapable of defining alternative citizenship discourses. Here "survival strategies" to cope with socio-economic decline are contiguous with strategies of "extraversion" (Marysse, 2003) whereby individual agency creatively defines new "exit" opportunities out of the crisis of the, workplace-based in this case, collectivity. The next chapter will

explore more in detail how these differences reflect on workers' discourse of social citizenship and decommodification.

6.5 Conclusion

The processes of restructuring of production and transformation of forms of employment discussed in this chapter emphasise the relevance of the workplace as a site of contestation over working class identities and discourse. A crisis of wage labour as a vehicle of social advancement and the decline of workplace-based identities is a common thread that emerges across various cases, experiences and worker narratives. The interaction between persisting forms of exploitation, racism and authoritarianism inherited from the past and the new forms of insecurity and vulnerability generated by the post-apartheid socio-economic and competitive climate seem mostly to characterize the ways in which the crisis of wage labour is subjectively elaborated on the shopfloor in ways that reflect a growing detachment on the workers' part.

At the same time, the contestation over workers' identities and citizenship discourses that emerge in the workplace cannot be looked at in isolation from broader trends involving shifting power relations in social policy-making and employment trends. As previously noticed, restructuring and casualisation are enabled by societal changes that reaffirm inequality by legitimizing it within a newly deracialised discourse which belies the betrayal of wage labour's emancipatory promise. Such shifts are quite present in the ways workers make sense of current changes, the possibilities implied and the alternative discourses available. The sense of decline of workplace-based identities expressed across different cases, however, is not merely the product of externally-imposed production flexibility, atypical employment and the constantly impending threat of retrenchments. In fact, it is also the manifestation of a crisis of meanings and sense that emerge from within the wage relation and which makes its questioning, when not overt rejection, not uniquely dependent on economic factors or insecurity. It is ultimately a worldview where waged work itself used to be a

vehicle to ultimately achieve, as a worker here quoted put it "respect, honour and trust" in a democratized society that seems profoundly eroded.

It comes as no surprise, then, to notice an increasingly instrumental attitude, deprived of specific career expectations, towards individual jobs. This makes many workers see the prospect of retrenchment and unemploymeent as something not entirely "catastrophic" but as a reality which can hide new, unforeseen opportunities, especially when workers adhere to ideologies of individual self-entrepreneurship. The modification and the diminution of meanings attached to wage labour inside the workplace is a determinant in shaping workers' extra-workplace strategies at least as important as the fear to remain unemployed or to face poverty. In this sense refusal of work and fear of losing it seem to coexist in highly complex and often contradictory ways within worker narratives of restructuring.

Finally, the workplace emerges in this chapter as a "first line" of attack to the nexus between working class cohesiveness and social citizenship discourse. The difference that I have here noticed and which can be crudely summarized between community-orientated and individualist responses to the crisis conceals an extremely wide array of responses to the decline of waged employment, in ways that profoundly question monolithic view of working class solidarity. The following chapter will explore more deeply these questions by looking at how restructuring and employment change impact on workers' communities, with particular regard to levels of commodification and decommodification. Second, I will look at meanings attached by workers to the notion of their "community", and to the position the union has inside it. Third, I will analyse the ways in which changes in the meanings of waged employment inside the workplace and in the community impact on workers' sense of collective agency, on their expectation vis-à-vis the new democracy's ability to respond to the crisis, and on their social citizenship discourse more generally.

CHAPTER 7

Workers' Experiences of Commodification and Contested Social Citizenship Discourses

7.1 Introduction

When asked about challenges and changes facing his household's living standards during the five years before the interview, a worker at Baldwin's Steel replied:

> When I was still at school most of the things we never worried about, which now people are worrying about. For example, I'd go to school without any shoes on my feet, I couldn't worry, but now our children have to go out just from the bed to the kitchen and there must be shoes in their feet. You see, it's different, I could walk kilometers without shoes. Money makes the world go round… We were walking most of the time but now you must pay for taxi, locations are bigger now and to go from point A to point B you won't be able to walk. (Interview #3)

In addition to the workplace-based processes and dynamics analysed in the previous chapter, the image of wage labour as a vehicle of social emancipation is challenged by the deepening commodification of working class livelihoods in all the cases I have looked at. In particular, a growing dependence on the market for access to basic social provisions amplifies the detrimental effects of insecurity and casualisation on the living standards of working class families. Perception are widespread of worsening capacities to cope with changes and of shrinking financial resources available for basic reproduction expenditures. An analysis of wage disparities across sectors and workplaces seems of limited usefulness precisely because the monetary income available to individual workers is largely influenced by factors -- like the decision to join company medical schemes or to ask for company loans -- that largely originate from broader family needs and is heavily affected by the existence of alternative support, in the form of double

jobs, other incomes in the family or kin networks. Finally, race continues to play a role in such disparities due to the widespread persistence of "township rates", or racial wage gaps based on the alleged cheaper consumption and reproduction costs in non-white neighbourhoods (Interviews #8 and 28). The resulting high levels of variability in families "income", as opposed to individual workers' "wages" is reinforced by the fragmentation in types of contract of employment, which for example has a visible impact on workers' ability to access company loans.

As I have previously discussed, influential analyses (Nattrass and Seekings, 1997; Van der Berg, 1997) tend to identify workers in the "formal" economy as part of the "winners" from the South African democratic transition largely because waged employment is linked to employer-subsidised social provisions like healthcare, unemployment insurance and retirement benefits. The picture emerging from my interviews tends, however, to reveal a high unevenness, and a general decline, in access to wage-related benefits which challenge those contentions. In this regard, precariousness of employment inside the workplace and rising commodification outside act as interrelated, mutually reinforcing factors.

Generally declining levels of decommodification, taken as the portion of workers' reproduction expenditures that is either publicly provided outside of the market or that is cross-subsidized by the employer, increase the economic pressure on workers' remunerations, amplifying the gap between actual wages and levels of income considered acceptable for family reproduction. Furthermore, the growing inadequacy of the wage to cover household expenditures and family reproduction is reflected in vast areas of indebtedness with banks, retail chains and informal lenders at usury rates, the so-called "loan sharks"[185]. The widening gap between "wage" and "income" linked to commodification, on the other hand, emphasizes the growing inability of the wage to provide for access to social

[185] Recent studies show that short-term predatory lending in the form of cash loans linked to inability to pay for basic household expenditures is considered a major cause of rising indebtedness between 1995 and 2000 for all yearly income groups except the R15,000-25,000 and the above R150,000 one (Human Sciences Research Council, 2003). Some workers interviewed for this study have been physically threatened, harassed or beaten, even inside work premises, by "loan sharks" to whom they owed money (Interview #120).

services like healthcare, housing, retirement benefits, municipal utilities. Conversely, the breakdown of the wage-income relation has far-reaching implications regarding the articulation of alternative social citizenship discourses and the organizational means through which such discourses are asserted vis-à-vis the new democratic dispensation.

7.2 Commodification and the Reconfiguration of Working Class Lives

The uneven impact of commodification on workers' lives across the workplaces and sectors that I have analysed tends to further deepen the fragmentation in experiential worlds and materials conditions, thereby reinforcing the picture in the previous chapter on workplace- and employment- based dimensions of the decline of wage labour as a stable social subject. The substantial portion of workers' wages used to pay for social provisions like healthcare, education, housing, transport and utilities is combined to the withdrawal of cross-subsidization from both employers and the public sector.

Workers' tales of becoming increasingly unable to "cope", to save money at the end of the month, or to be facing growing difficulties in providing for families' basic necessities seem indeed to confirm a growing commodification of life in the cases here under examination. The ultimate questioning of the wage as a vehicle not only for socio-political emancipation but for basic household reproduction – in other words the widening gap between "wage" and "income" -- shifts, therefore, onto the broader society the crisis of wage labour's "promise" anticipated on the shopfloor, and creates a critical disjuncture in the post-apartheid "work-citizenship nexus".

A useful starting point for the discussion is to look at the economic impact of commodification on workers' wages. In trying to draw conclusions in this regard from my interviews, a word of caution is nonetheless necessary. The numerical estimates presented below are not taken from a representative sample, therefore possible conclusions remain to some extent impressionistic. However, it is possible to define trends within my limited case studies that provide an

adequate picture of the realities upon which workers I interviewed construct meanings of commodification and strategies of response, which I will elaborate in greater detail.

7.2.1 Access to company-subsidised healthcare

As recent research has shown (May, 2000), in the South African case wages of employed workers usually provide an essential form of support for unemployed relatives within family networks, therefore wages themselves are important social safety nets and a source of decommodification for other members of the family. As Table 1 shows, my findings support this conclusion, while revealing significant differences across sectors.

Table 7.1 Remittances and Family Support Networks of Employed Workers

SECTOR	Average Wage (R/month)		Remittances to Family Outside Household		Average Remittances Sent (R/month)	
	Gross	Net	% sending remittances	Average Number of Persons Supported	All Workers	Only Workers Sending Remittances
Metal/engineering	3011	2202	48.4	2.47	R121	R416
Chemical	3708	2062	82.6	1.74	R251	R386
Municipal	2397	1326	54.1	5.15	R395	R838
TOTAL	3039	1863	59.5	2.91	R256	R547

It is first to be noticed that only a small minority of workers I interviewed have family members outside their households that benefit from state pensions and grants (17.3% of chemical workers, 12.5% of municipal and 9.7% of metal ones). Conversely, 64.5% of metalworkers and 47.9% of chemical ones have other income earners (formal or informal) in their household, with before-deductions average monthly wages of respectively R1688 and R1840 per month.

While both manufacturing and municipal workers tend in their majority to send remittances outside their households, differences in the number of persons supported on average indicate a variation in the mechanisms of support. Chemical and metal workers send their remittances mainly to family members located in urban areas near their workplaces (particularly East Rand cities affected by deindustrialisation and retrenchments). For example, 22.6% of metalworkers and

17.4% of chemical workers have working-age unemployed relatives living with them, while almost no GJMC employee does.

GJMC workers, instead, maintain stronger connections in rural areas affected by widespread, long-term unemployment, where extended family networks tend to prevail. It is indicative that municipal workers can send as much as three quarters of their net wage in the form of remittances, a choice that is often enabled by opting out of medical schemes (which for other categories are usually the biggest deduction) and by residing in hostel accommodations, usually 10-occupants rooms, whose monthly rental can be as low as R20-30. Therefore for the wage to act as a de-commodifying factor for relatives in rural areas, who often attend to land, properties and cattle that constitute post-retirement income prospects, requires trade-offs with access to social provisions like healthcare.

With the partial exception of municipal workers, payments for medical aid schemes represent the most important cause of variation between before- and after-deduction wages. Table 7.2 illustrates the impact of medical schemes contributions on the average wages of respondents. It should be added, however, that if only workers covered by medical schemes are considered, healthcare contributions as a share of average gross monthly wages increase to 15.1% for chemical workers, 21% for metalworkers and 11.5% for municipal. Municipal, and to some extent metal, workers' small increases are explained by the fact that mainly higher-wage employees (average of R2654 per month) tend to be covered, while low-wage ones are overwhelmingly uncovered. The already discussed nature of the South African healthcare system, whose resources are highly skewed in favour of private provision, is combined to other factors specific to company medical schemes that decisively reinforce the commodified nature of access to healthcare.

Table 7.2 Impact of Social Provisions Expenditures on Wages

SECTOR	Average Monthly Wage (Rand)		Average Household Size	% with more than one income in household	Average medical aid expenses (month)		Average education expenses (month)		Average utilities* expenses (month)		Average transport expenses (month)	
	Gross	Net			(a)	(b)	(a)	(c)	(a)	(c)	(a)	(c)
Metal/engineering	3011	2202	4.42	64.5	617	20.5	148	6.7	207	9.4	N/a	N/a
Chemical	3708	2062	4.34	47.9	496	13.4	238	11.5	274	13.2	156	7.5
Municipal	2397	1326	4.37	20.8	267	11.1	252	19.0	241	18.1	160	12.0
TOTAL	3039	1863	4.38	44.4	460	15.1	213	11.4	241	12.9	N/a	N/a

a)= in Rand
b)=as percentage of GROSS wage
c)=as percentage of NET wage
*= "Utilities" is here limited to water and electricity

Faced with rising administrative costs and premiums, also linked to the spread of the HIV-AIDS epidemic, and spiraling "medical inflation" **(**Council of Medical Schemes, 2001; Old Mutual 1999 and 2003), companies have tended to scale down the provision of medical schemes by introducing "cost-to-company" options as lump sum payments to employees. They also resorted to "managed care" products based on capitation and defined employers' contributions (TWIG-Old Mutual, 2000; Doherty and McLeod, 2002)[186]. These *de facto* cap the amount of subsidized services that the employee can claim. In both cases, reductions in company subsidization of workers' healthcare expenditures increase the level of commodification of the service by shifting costs onto the customer. Therefore, consumer discipline in the allocation of scarce monetary resources is reinforced under the pretense of individualized self-management of healthcare (Gordon, 2003: 210-261; Gottschalk, 2000: 114-136).

For example, in the mid-1990s the Nampak Group introduced in its companies (which include MB Glass and Nampak Corrugated) a Fedsure managed care option in parallel to the existing, company-subsidised MSP-Sizwe schemes, whose escalating costs were already driving many employees out of membership. This move was coupled to a reduction in employers' contributions from 70% to 50%. The company motivated the shift with the need to contain costs

[186] See also Shevel, A. "Medical Aid Rates Set to Gallop Ahead of Inflation", *Sunday Times*, 14 December 2003 and "Medical Aid Costs Continue to Hit Home", *Sunday Times*, 10 May 2004, where it is estimated that low-income earners (monthly income R2500-7000) will be the most adversely hit by these changes. According to the 2003 Old Mutual Healthcare Survey, 21% of South African employers have introduced "cost-to-company" products. Simultaneously, the number of companies providing healthcare payments to their pensioners has declined from 85% to 43% between 1995 and 2002. See also Bisseker, C., "On Borrowed Time", *Financial Mail*, 24 October 2003.

related to the spread of HIV-AIDS, and the Fedsure scheme caps HIV-related claims to R7,000 a year compared to R25,000 for MSP-Sizwe. According to shop-stewards in both companies, Nampak aggressively promoted the new scheme, making it *de facto* compulsory for all new employees (Interviews #161, 215 and 218). The lack of coverage for many services, including traditional healers, or *inyangas*, has convinced many MB Glass workers not to subscribe to the new scheme (Interview #110). In addition, at Nampak Corrugated management's unilateral decision making led local shop-stewards to "take the issue seriously" (Interview #161) and bring it to the fore in shopfloor conflict. As a result PPWAWU managed to win a workplace agreement that, as an exception to the Nampak company agreement, retains freedom of choice of medical schemes at Nampak Corrugated's Wadeville plant. Limits to the amount of claimable health benefits and increasing individual co-payments, as a result of schemes often introduced without consulting the unions (as reported at Paperlink, MB Glass and Consol), are common complaints in glass and paper companies.

Paperlink's owning company, Mondi, introduced in 1997 as the only company-subsidised medical aid an Anglo-American scheme (AAC Med) that caps benefits for general practitioners' visits and medicines, the most commonly claimed items, to R275 per year, even if the premium with no dependants for its basic Primary Scheme product is R80 per month (Interview #143). According to shop-stewards, 45% of employees (both hourly and weekly paid) at Paperlink have no medical coverage (Interview #141). Similarly, Baldwin's introduced unilaterally a Discovery Health managed care plan with benefits capped at R7000 per year to replace the old MSP-Sizwe scheme which, by management's own admission, was cheaper for the workers. Most hourly-paid employees, in fact, did not register for the new scheme, while many covered workers feel constrained in claiming benefits by the fear of reaching the yearly limit. Therefore, they often have to weigh present health risks of leaving ailments untreated against those of more serious accidents in the future (Interview #19). To facilitate the transition to the new scheme, Dorbyl's management had initially agreed to subsidise it by paying the difference between the old and the new premiums, but this company

subsidy was interrupted with effect January 2000, a decision explained by a manager in harsh and uncompromising terms:

> That is going to have quite a big impact. In fact, suggestions are that many will stop paying and it is a topic that we are going to be discussing in our 'transformation forum'. We have informed them [the union] that from January they'll have to make their own contributions and for some of them it's going to be tough. We have worked out that on average it would be R40 per month, which is quite a lot, and for some of them it's a hell of a lot more than R40.
> Q Are you negotiating this with the union?
> A We are consulting them, but we are not really negotiating. There is nothing to negotiate other than to advice them that their premiums are going up and obviously some of them will not be able to afford it.[187]

Cost-cutting measures introduced by companies in contributing to medical aids, and the consequent decline in coverage and increases in co-payments, are reported by many workers as one of the main reason to opt out of medical schemes altogether. Of the workers I interviewed, those who lack company medical coverage are 63.1% of metalworkers, especially due to the collapse of Kelvinator and atypical employment at UCW, 40.7% of municipal workers, despite the relatively more generous conditions in the sector[188]. Uncovered are also 32% of glass and paper workers, a percentage kept relatively low mainly by high coverage levels at Nampak Corrugated following the union's successful defense of free choice in that company. Conversely, the average number of dependants covered is relatively high (which carries obvious cost implications): 2.88 for glass and paper workers, 2.28 for metal and 2.05 for municipal, this latter a low number that might be due to a higher propensity to save on medical care in relation to this group's remittance behaviour.

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[187] Keith Roach, Works Manager, Baldwin's Steel, Interview with the Author, 27 October 1999. Apart from being considered more user-friendly by workers, the old scheme covered approximately 80% of most claim categories, with limits for private hospital care, it did not have overall caps and it cost on average R60-70 per month for basic products with no dependants, compared to the R140 of the new scheme. Conversely, this latter, with its "Vitality" options covers services like physical training more geared to the lifestyle of higher paid employees. In this case, therefore, it can be argued that low-wage workers subsidize to some extent the health expenditures of managers.

[188] The GJMC usually contributes for 75% towards the payment of premiums for the plethora of schemes operating in the Council.

The impact of healthcare contributions on worker wages, summarized in Table 7.1, leads to extreme differences between gross and net remunerations. Showing me his payslip dated 24 December 1999, a GJMC employee with four dependants on medical aid points at a net wage of R498 per month out of a gross remuneration of R2490, adding with dismay, "I am going to steal" (Interview #62). A worker at UCW who takes home R800 out of a R3500 gross wage argues that survival is ensured for him only by the additional R600 that he earns as overtime pay, often replacing his own retrenched colleagues (Interview #33). At UCW most employees and the near totality of contract workers are uncovered and according to one of them "only supervisors have medical aids" (Interview #37). One contract worker retrenched by UCW on a R900 net monthly wage, and re-employed by FEDMO at R1300, owes 75% of this increase to the fact that he has foregone medical coverage, counting on the fact that "a man like me doesn't get sick", with the rest of it being due to increased overtime (Interview #37). In this company, it was NUMSA shop-stewards that demanded the introduction of a managed care scheme, seen as more affordable, and applied to the engineering Industrial Council to move out of ailing industry scheme Steelmed[189].

In few cases, the rising commodification of healthcare coupled to the inadequacy of wages to keep pace with living expenses face workers with dramatic choices, especially when they or their dependants have to regularly pay for treatment. Joseph is a truck driver at Paperlink and a former CEPPWAWU shop-steward, a "soldier", as a colleague praises his dedication and commitment to his job and to the union (Interview #143). He supports a family with 5 children, two of which at school in Queenstown, his wife's birthplace. One of Joseph's daughter suffers from epilepsy, has been left partially paralyzed by a recent accident, and requires regular hospital visits. With no state social grants in the

[189] Joe Lekhasi, UCW Human Resource Manager, Interview with Author, 3 November 1999. Steelmed rules and the engineering industry national agreement stated that transfer to another medical scheme required the approval of 100% of Steelmed-covered worker. UCW, which already in 1994 had terminated its policy of compulsory membership to medical schemes, applied to move out of Steelmed with effect 1 January 2000. On 19 April 1999 Steelmed had announced substantial increases in contributions to face the requirements in the 1999 Medical Schemes Act, for schemes to have reserves equal to 25% of annual contribution income (Steelmed, *Circular to Members*, 19 April 1999). Failing to meet this target, Steelmed faced liquidation, was disbanded in 2000, and its 12,000 members were transferred to Sizwe (Jacques Scalomidi, MIBFA, interview with Author, 2 May 2000).

family, she depends entirely for her medical assistance on Joseph's wage, which from a gross R2100 per month declines to R700 after deductions. Deductions, on the other hand, are not limited to medical aid but they also include the repayment of a bank loan taken by using his provident fund as collateral to buy a flat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. He moved there with his family when he could no longer stay in the backyard room he was previously renting in Orlando East, where prices for new family homes and bonds for privatized municipal housing were skyrocketing. Once other expenses are taken into account (utilities, transport and remittances to Queenstown), what is left hardly allows Joseph to pay for food and other basic items, which leads to recurrent debts with "cash loans".

The limits to claimable medical benefits introduced under Paperlink's new managed care scheme force Joseph to painful monthly calculations and trade-offs between the need to provide care to his daughter and that of satisfying the rest of his family's basic needs, which is the main reason for constant indebtedness. In fact, if it was not for his daughter's condition, he would be able to move to a cheaper medical aid product, which would allow him to save approximately R100 per month and therefore stay out of personal debts.

Joseph's case is hardly unique of how rising commodification of basic services undermines wage labour's capacity to adequately contribute to families' income. In the rare cases where family members are employed in sectors with relatively generous health coverage, like the public service, employees tend to register as their dependants. In cases where medical expenses are relatively exceptional and unpredictable, community networks like *stokvels* and club accounts provide vital help as a form of healthcare funding broadly investigated in other African societies (MacIntyre and Hotchkiss, 1999). Otherwise, the refusal of commodified healthcare provision can take the form of rationalizations played out at a mainly cultural and epistemological level as a criticism of, or skepticism towards, mainstream curative medicine and re-evaluation of traditional practices. In this way worker responses to commodification of healthcare make the body itself a contested terrain, an "embattled zone of governance" (Prakash, 1999: 144) where grassroots forms of knowledge challenge the meanings and practices imposed by the "disciplinary techniques" (Ong, 1987) of the market. Therefore

many workers complain that medical schemes' coverage does not extend to *inyangas*, "witch-doctors" and herbalists. The re-evaluation of grassroots knowledge is not so much intended to claim a superior curative potential of these practices, but it often becomes an explicit rejection of commodification[190] and an assertion of the gratuity of healthcare, reinforced by the appeal to transcendental powers and religious affiliations:

> Q Are you under medical aid?
> A No, never been for 23 years.
> Q Why?
> A Good question. A person like myself, I don't use medicine. If I am ill, I use just water, coffee and tea. My family is not covered either, they are only covered by the church. ZCC is like a clinic, ill people are treated in the church. I am also a doctor, and a priest: if one is sick I know what to do.
> Q Can you give me some examples of treatment that you have provided recently?
> S I mustn't explain everything, because it's a secret [laughs]. Even AIDS I can treat. I only help those who come to us, everybody, and it's free. I can only say I tell the guy to bring me the coffee and tea, and I make something. Someone came before me, from the headquarters, to teach me that, how to make medicines. *The ZCC is against the use of medicines because the church has got to help you, freely*. You pay when you buy tea or coffee, that's it. (Interview #157)

The need to send regular remittances to extended families in rural areas profoundly shapes GJMC workers' behaviours with regard to medical aid, and is responsible for a broad lack of coverage among their low-wage, most vulnerable sectors. At the same time, this factor seems responsible for a different kind of trade-off for workers that sacrifice their medical coverage to support their families. According to shop-stewards at Nancefield roads depot, 90% of workers are uncovered and when, during a meeting to explain the purpose of my research I asked how many of the present were covered, only two out of 15 raised their hand. When I asked the same question to workers in the Ennerdale depot, whom under the old TPA administration had compulsory coverage, only five out of the 16 persons present replied in the affirmative. I gathered similar, albeit highly

[190] The general theme of the use of cultural repertoires in making sense and opposing forms of discipline based on the commodity form is analysed in Taussig (1980).

impressionistic, findings from my visit to the Waterval waste depot, where many workers still live in municipal hostels, especially Selby and Anthea (Industria). An exception, which seems to confirm the importance of migrations and remittances, is provided by the Avalon waste depot, in Klipspruit, previously falling under the Soweto City Council and where, according to SAMWU shop-stewards, most workers are covered by medical schemes. Here, apart from many migrants from Transkei, Gazankulu and Tzaneen, there is a large complement of workers either locally born or whom have resided in the area (mainly Soweto, Eldorado Park, Orange Farm and Grasmere) for a long time.

7.2.2 Housing Financing and Loans

The structure of commodification of workers' lives become clearer, and its extent fully evident, once housing expenditures are added to the picture (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 Types of Housing and Housing Expenditures

SECTOR	Type of Dwelling –formal (%)			% with no toilet inside	% in informal housing*	% in hostels	Average bond/rent (month)	Bond/rent as % of net wage
	1-2 rooms	3-4 rooms	5+ rooms					
Chemical	15.8	36.8	21.0	31.5	26.4	--	R612	29.7
Municipal	5.9	17.6	11.8	35.2	35.3	29.4	R375	28.2
Metal	8.3	45.8	16.7	25.0	25.1	4.1	R419	19.0
TOTAL	10.0	33.3	16.7	30.0	28.3	11.7	R457	24.5

*= Including backyard rooms/shacks

Once housing expenditures are added to those reported in Table 7.2, it can be noticed that -- after medical aids contributions are deducted from workers' gross remunerations -- services like education, transport, utilities and housing absorb on average 61.9% of after-deduction wages for glass/paper workers and 77.3% for municipal workers, while for metal workers payments for such social provisions (excluding transport, for which I have no reliable data) is on average 35.9% of net wages. Once remittances are added, the impact of these extremely high levels of commodification are heightened, which leaves to most workers, especially municipal ones, almost insignificant resources to provide for basic family needs and consumption.

Only a small percentage of respondents (9.3% of manufacturing workers, no municipal worker) have built their houses by benefiting either from government subsidies or RDP housing projects[191]. Those who have, tend to express a sense of dissatisfaction for subsidies that allow the construction of only very small dwellings with poor materials. In fact, all the cases of self-built housing have cost between R15,000 and R30,000 only for materials, faced with government subsidies that, for households with less than R800 per month, vary between R15,000 and R16,000. Even in this way, access to "social capital", in the form for example of friends in other workplaces who can sell materials at discounted price or use company vehicles to help (Interview #6), seems to be more relevant than meager and uncertain government support. In the final analysis, however, self-built accommodations often tend to be mere *ukhukhus*, informal dwellings (see Table 7.3) made of wood, paperboard and corrugated tin, mostly without running water, often without proper connections to the power grid, where almost 30% of workers interviewed for this study live. In few cases, ownership of an *ukhukhu*, or of a stand upon which to build one, is cited by housing officials as evidence of property, therefore as a ground to reject subsidy applications, which are seen as helping "only people who don't have anything" (Interview #22).

Other complaints regarding subsidies point at what are considered discriminatory housing policies at local government level. A "coloured" UCW employee living in Geluksdal, near Brakpan, laments that while residents in old council houses in nearby Tsakane and KwaThema could obtain ownership title deeds after 15 years of bonds repayment and benefited from debts write-offs, new houses built with government subsidies in largely "coloured" communities like Geluksdal are "scandalizing" in terms of size and quality. Local residents call these houses "Unos", like the automobiles, to underline the lack of space in these low-income dwellings (Interview #24).

In few cases subscribers bought new houses through developers that were expected to apply for subsidies that never materialized, which led to boycotts of bonds repayment. One of such cases involved Khayalethu Loans, a public-private project of the South African Housing Trust, whose bonds payments were

[191] Moreover, only two workers have received the full R15,000 subsidy.

boycotted by 300 Tsakane residents, including one of my informants at Baldwin's[192]. The local branch of the ANC-aligned South African National Civic Association (SANCO) intervened by trying to convince residents to resume payments while waiting for an independent evaluation, which also never arrived. Failure to benefit from the government's housing policy is felt in this case with a bitter sense of betrayal:

> I understand the previous government was giving you R15,000 if you were a first time homebuyer. Now these people are talking another language, they say [that when we expect subsidies] we're talking about a previous government. But we were boycotting the previous government, now we are talking about this government. When you check the previous government's subsidy the money was R15,000, but this one, they are talking about less than that, depending on your income. So we are saying no, we are not paying. I think COSATU must try to sort this thing out, we must get the money from this government. (Interview #4)

In general, lack of access to subsidies seems to confirm the shortcomings of the subsidy scheme in creating an adverse selection for low-income people who are formally employed[193]. In fact, workers whose household income is higher than R3500 per month are excluded from the subsidy, and if they approach that ceiling they receive allocations that are insufficient not only to build a house but to access credit as well. Conversely, developers prefer to service the very poor and the unemployed who are more likely to receive the full subsidy. Meanwhile, formally waged workers remain excluded from credit, a fate that particularly strikes intermittent employees, as in the case of UCW. According to some recently retrenched workers from this company, "people who sit in the office" (Interview #21) refuse lending as soon as they hear the name UCW, linked to a reputation for employment uncertainty.

The most common way for respondents to build a new house is, however, to borrow from private lenders -- predominantly banks, private developers and "non-

[192] In 1995 it was estimated that half of all Khayalethu loans were not serviced, and reports complained that the government's "Masakhane Campaign", aimed at stimulating payments, clashed with "an intractable 'culture of entitlement' among SA's blacks" (Charney, C., "A New Point of Departure on the Bond Boycotts", *Business Day*, 14 December 1995).

[193] Petal Thring, P&DM, University of the Witwatersrand, Interview with the Author, 22 May 2000.

traditional retail lenders" like NGOs and housing associations -- securing such loans with accumulated provident funds contributions used as collateral. Using provident funds as collaterals is the overwhelmingly most common way of securing mortgage lending for people in waged employment in South Africa (National Housing Finance Corporation, 1995; Tomlinson 1998; Jones and Datta, 2000: 403-408). Alternatively, contingent and contract workers or employees that lack the seniority to build up sufficient provident funds contributions tend to be excluded from housing loans, apart from smaller "employer-backed loans", usually less than R5,000, used for house renovations and repaid through payroll deductions.

On the other hand, due to prohibitive costs and the lack of public financing for newly built housing, purchase of housing from banks, developers or councils through monthly bond repayments remains the most common way of access to home ownership. Rental housing (including backyard informal accommodations and hostels) is less frequent, involving 38.5% of municipal workers (living mainly in hostels) and 41.4% of metal workers, who live mainly in backyard rooms and shacks. This might explain why the average amount of monthly housing payments for this group is lower than for chemicals (see Table 7.3), and further testifies to the deepening poverty and precariousness of living conditions already noticed for metalworkers, particularly in coincidence with Kelvinator's closure and UCW's retrenchments. Yet, the number of workers still living with parents without paying rent is negligible across the three groups, a figure that reinforces the impression of pride and achievement attached to starting an independent life, especially after marriage, despite the rising financial difficulties and the growing commodification of housing.

In conclusion, my findings indicate that public subsidies for low-cost housing have the somehow contradictory and paradoxical effect of increasing the commodification of housing provisions for waged workers whose monetary income is an impediment for the subsidy and a deterrent for other forms of low cost financing. Moreover, in this case, not only has earning a wage an effect that is in direct contradiction to accessing social provisions, rather than being conducive to them, but using provident funds as collaterals jeopardizes retirement

incomes as well, therefore increasing the likelihood of a commodified post-employment life course.

In a context of inadequate public support for workers' housing needs, access to company loans and repayment conditions can become areas of heightened workplace contestation. Workplace-based negotiations as a surrogate for access to social housing rights, however, reveals and confirms the already noticed erosion in wage labour's strength. No company I investigated has a housing lending policy that is not based on provident fund- or employer-backed loans, and most of them have reportedly tightened the requirements for access, the size of loans and the repayment conditions. According to shop-stewards, Consol, for example, is planning to replace its existing loan facility of up to 80% of the house value, depending on contributions and seniority, with a loan limited to 10% of the house value, capped at R33,000. A similar move is apparently under way at MB Glass, a company which, as discussed in Chapter 4, already in the 1980s had developed a Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project as an experiment in company welfarism during a short-lived private housing development surge on the East Rand. That process was spurred by late-apartheid expectations for expanding low-income housing markets in black townships that authorized optimistic expectations of working class home ownership based on stable access to waged employment, which ultimately failed to materialise[194].

Provident fund-backed loans are relatively more generous in paper companies, but they are never higher than R20,000 (Paperlink, see Interview #87). Moreover, the size of loans is linked to house values and provident contributions, therefore to seniority, which penalizes young and intermittent workers[195].

[194] Still in 1988, only 5% of Metal Box provident fund members had access to viable housing finance even for the cheapest products. The project was established to encourage working-class home ownership, following negotiations between the company and NUMSA with an aim, among others, of providing an answer to growing social conflicts, land invasions and rent boycotts in Duduza, KwaThema and Tsakane. See Hendler, P., *Metal Box Provident Fund Housing Project 1988/89 Final Report: Employee Benefit Funds and Financing and Delivery of Low-Income Housing*, DHP, PLANACT, 25.14.16.

[195] According to the rules of Mondi, which owns Paperlink, loans are linked to housing values and cannot exceed 50% of accumulated contributions. To claim a R40,000 loan, therefore, approximately 15 years seniority on an operator wage, without claiming benefits during periods of unemployment, are required (Interview #87). Only three employees out of 20 interviewed in this company would fit this requisite, which is generally unusual also for the vast majority of manufacturing companies I looked at, which are relatively less generous than Paperlink. Half of Paperlink workers I interviewed have company loans, which they repay through payroll deductions

Employment uncertainty and fear of retrenchments are further constraining factors, since unemployment could lead to the loss of provident contributions used as collaterals for loans. Complains on lack of access to company loans, and their inadequacy in buying even the most basic materials are widespread. According to a Nampak Corrugated employee, company loans barely allow workers in lowest-wage positions to "buy two bricks per week" (Interview #98). In some cases, rejection of loans applications is accompanied by abuse and humiliation: a worker at Paperlink had a loan application rejected by a human resource officer who allegedly suggested him to rent a container as an accommodation more suitable for Africans (Interview #144).

Workers at Baldwin's report that the company refuses loans applications on a selective and discretionary basis to punish poor performance and absenteeism, and management then stopped providing loans altogether, citing impending retrenchments as a reason (Interview #1 and 3). Such behaviours reinforce, even among moderate and co-operative workers, the impression of a company that is insensitive to extra-workplace needs of its employees, despite Dorbyl's pretensions of a community-responsible management style:

> The company is not looking after its workers. This company is big, but we start from scratch and we struggle to get the houses and they don't give us loans, they send me to the bank and the bank wants too much interest. They don't do nothing for us, to help us to improve our lives (...). Even if you aim not to *toyi-toyi* to change things, managers force you to *toyi-toyi*. (Interview #3)

7.2.3 Retirement Benefits

The near totality of workers I interviewed, especially those in hourly-paid positions, belong to provident funds, rather than pension funds, not only due to the possibility of using contributions as collaterals for housing loans but also, as noticed, because of the fact that lump-sum provident funds payments provide an

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averaging approximately R400-500 per month out of an average gross wage of R2181 per month. Nampak Corrugated has a housing loan scheme for which 5 years seniority are required to qualify, for 10% of the housing price capped at R80,000 (Interview #98).

income during extended periods of intermittent unemployment. Provident funds remain, moreover, a crucial source of livelihoods for extended families in the event of loss of a sole breadwinner's wage (Ardington and Lund, 1995). Compared to the situation of medical aids, where most workers I interviewed belong to company schemes, industrial provident funds -- like the Chemical Industry National Provident Fund (CINPF)[196], the Metal Industry Provident Fund (MIPF), the SAMWU Provident Fund at GJMC -- generally constituted by bargaining council agreements and with equal employers-employee representation in boards of trustees, are prevalent.

In many ways, echoes of past union struggles for worker-controlled retirement funds, discussed in Chapter 3, resonate in such institutional arrangements, as does a generalized rejection of pension funds as a largely post-retirement monthly income ("only whites like pension funds", Interview #19) run by private financial corporations (considered, as one worker puts it, "lots of *tsotsi* business", see Interview #155). Nowhere is the relevance of the issue for the unions more evident than at UCW, where NUMSA conducted its most successful battle precisely in forcing the labour broker, FEDMO, to join the Engineering Industry Provident Fund (EIPF).

Exceptions are provided by Baldwin's and by the two companies belonging to the Nampak Group. In fact, MB Glass' own Metal Box Provident Fund, administered by NBC, is another remnant from its "company welfarism" age. Nampak Corrugated, on the other hand, contributes 50% of contributions to a Nampak Contributory Provident Fund, also managed by NBC (Interview #94). Finally, Baldwin's employees are mainly covered by Dorbyl Group funds. The cases of Baldwin's and Nampak's are linked to the mounting trend that sees companies shifting from "defined benefits" (DB) to "defined contributions" (DC) schemes. Reasons provided for such changes are usually related to the increasing costs of insured benefits provided under defined benefits schemes, especially in relation to factors like the HIV-AIDS epidemics that tend to shorten workers' lives[197]. "Defined contributions" funds, on the other hand, allow employers to

[196] At the time of writing negotiations were in progress to merge the CINPF with the PPWAWU National Provident Fund (PNPF), following the formation of CEPPWAWU.
[197] Jan Mahlangu, CEPPWAWU National Benefits Coordinator and CINPF Coordinator, Interview

limit their financial exposure by shifting risks on employees, making their retirement benefits more dependant on the fluctuations of financial markets, and often forcing them to voluntarily increase their contributions to protect future claims. Some workers, quite significantly, resent the increase in healthcare contributions, preferring instead to have their retirement contributions raised to protect their benefits. Similarly to what has been already noticed with medical schemes, this process in the end amounts largely to a reduction in employers' responsibility and participation towards workers' retirement benefits and to a deepening commodification of post-employment income.

Union officials either support or do not antagonize the shift from DB to DC funds. Indeed, both MIPF-EIPF and CINPF are currently structured as DC funds. In fact, high, recurrent long-term unemployment and rising insurance costs are seen as constraining the benefits available under DB schemes, which moreover reward long employment tenure. For workers that have to face growing employment uncertainties, therefore, the riskier, but cheaper and potentially more rewarding DC funds are preferred[198]. They are also, however, creating uneasiness, sense of uncertainty and frustration among workers involved. The implications of adopting DC funds appear, for example, to be quite clear for a weekly-paid employee at Baldwin's:

> Before I had a statement and I knew how much I was going to get and the pension was protected. But now I don't know any more. Sometimes I read in the paper there's a company that is closing down, managers who invested with Alex Forbes [Baldwin's DC fund's administrators, FB] and they didn't get enough money. That is when I started saying, 'This Alex Forbes, I don't like it'. It worries me, one day they send you a leaflet saying this month we made 2%, this month the markets were down. I don't want my pension to be on fluctuating markets. (Interview #5)[199]

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with Author, 12 April 2000.

[198] *Ibidem*, and Paul Biyase, NUMSA National Benefits Co-ordinator, Interview with the Author, 18 April 2000.

[199] It is indicative that Baldwin's has retained the DB option for its pension fund, which mainly covers managers, supervisors and high-wage weekly employees, while it introduced a DC provident fund mainly for hourly paid shopfloor workers.

Benefits, especially the fate of provident funds and housing subsidies, are one of the main areas of concern for GJMC workers and SAMWU members in the transition to iGoli 2002.

The unification and rationalization process upon which the GJMC was built out of the various apartheid-age councils in the Johannesburg region has left a legacy of institutional fragmentation in benefits organizations, and a wide array of pension funds, provident funds and medical schemes. At the end of the 1990s, 13,500 out of the 29,000 GJMC employees belonged to approximately 11 medical schemes (more than 50% of which to Jomed)[200]. Nine different retirement funds operate in the metropolitan council, including the SAMWU National Provident Fund. This latter, with 20,000 members nationally (3,000-4,000 in Johannesburg alone) and the third largest membership in South African local government, is also one of the main union-based provident funds and a product of a strong tradition of orientation to members' services in South Africa's democratic municipal trade unionism[201]. Pension and provident funds were mostly of a defined benefit kind and contributions ranged from 7.5% to 9.5% of the employee's salary for employees and from 16% to 22% for the employers. Finally, a municipal housing subsidy to which the Council contributes 1.5% of an employee's wage provides a monthly payment of up to 30% of the person's wage[202].

Compared with the situation in private companies, GJMC's benefits package is more generous, employers' contribution share is much higher – most private retirement schemes work on the basis of 7.5% contributions from employers and employees -- and addresses a wider spectrum of needs, like housing. The shift from municipal services departments to independent corporatised entities envisaged by iGoli 2002 determines widespread anxiety in both the union's offices and the depots. In particular, SAMWU is afraid of the

[200] GJTMC, *Medical Aid Task Team, Investigation into the Rationalisation of Medical Aid Schemes within the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council*, January 1997, SAMWU.
[201] GJTMC, *Pension Fund Task Team, Investigation into the Rationalisation of Pension and Provident Funds within the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council*, January 1997, SAMWU.
[202] Hlubi Biyana, SAMWU Johannesburg Branch Organiser, Interview with Author, 17 April 2000.

council's intentions to transfer its employees from the existing funds to schemes run by corporate administrators along private sector lines, which would involve lower employer contributions, defined contribution schemes[203] and, therefore, a growing commodification of retirement provisions. As an alternative, the union proposed the "secondment" of existing schemes for a transitional periods, as opposed to "transfer" to new schemes. "Secondment" would imply that the council remains as the employer and, to protect retirement benefits, rules of the funds are not changed. According to SAMWU organizers, however, GJMC has

> major problems with the idea of secondment, they are concerned with productivity, that people are not working and council feels that they are paying too much in wages and contributions to individuals[204].

The perception, already examined, that the municipality intended to use restructuring to reassert managerial control on the workplace and contain workers' strength by undermining job security and employment conditions, is therefore transferred onto the terrain of social provisions. The union identifies here the increasing commodification of retirement income and benefits as a tool through which workplace power relations themselves could be profoundly modified. Such fears and worries are mirrored in workers' narratives and analysis of service delivery changes. Apart from casualisation and the threat of job losses, loss of benefits, especially housing subsidies, and the uncertain fate of the provident funds figured prominently among the perceived threats of iGoli 2002. At the same time, however, the "secondment" of retirement contributions did not resonate in workers' demands on the shopfloor. On the contrary, more pressing, immediate needs and the fear of layoffs -- despite the reassurances by the *mansapala* (the GJMC) that no retrenchment would occur during the first three years of implementation of iGoli 2002 -- made many workers demand the full reimbursement of their accumulated contributions before the transition to the new utilities and agencies. In this sense, the contrast between the union's militant

[203] The adoption of a unified, municipality-wide DC scheme was already advocated in 1997 by the Council's task team in charge of reforming municipal retirement funds, see GJTMC, *Pension Fund Task Team*, cit., p.28-29.
[204] Hlubi Biyana, cit.

rhetoric of resistance to iGoli 2002 and workers' preoccupation with daily survival and hardships could not be more marked:

> Coming to iGoli 2002, I am shivering like a branch from a rotten tree. There is the possibility for salary cuts and even the possibility of being kicked out, because the people who are going to run this business will say they don't have enough money to pay us and we must know that we are no longer working for Greater Johannesburg, so you can pack your stuff and just go (…). The council is harassing us because they don't want to give us our money like pension funds, provident funds. All those money they deducted from our wages must come back to us, because council is changing now and employing contractors, so we want our money before we can enter those utilities, and the Blue Card money, the UIF. The *mansapala*, is supposed to give us what it owes us before it goes to utility.
> Q: The municipality says they won't retrench anyone.
> A: It can happen. it's like when you make a proposal to a lady, you can promise her anything, that you will buy her this and that, even if you can't, and that is what they are trying to do with us (…). There is a person, appointed city manager, Khetso Gordhan, he's the one who has transformed railways to Metro Rail: how many people lost their jobs there? (…) When they say our jobs will be secured for just three years, that is nonsense to us, we don't want that. If they can say our job is secured for 3000 years, that is alright, or 300 years, not three years. When they talk about three years they make us confused. That is why we say, before they do anything they must give us our benefits back and we can start thinking where we want to go with them. (Interview #138)

The demand for full reimbursement was not only unanimous at the Central roads depot (Interviews #113-124), but it was also combined to massive resentment towards SAMWU itself, due to its failures to inform the workers and indecision in "demanding our money back"[205]. As these cases show, however, demands for reimbursement revealed that the prospect of unemployment was regarded as somehow inevitable. Securing a lump sum payment could cushion the resulting uncertainty and provide opportunities for self-employment, to "make job creation for the poor people who are not working" (Interview #114).

[205] In this depot, the fact that SAMWU introduced me to the workers encountered substantial hostility. During my presentation of the project I was verbally assaulted by a worker shouting anti-SAMWU arguments almost in tears, while another worker called me a Council's spy. Only after considerable negotiations I was allowed to conduct interviews, whose participants, however, declined to provide their names, asked me not to tape the interviews and expected me to "go straight to the union and tell them that the people have said that they want their money back".

7.2.4 Municipal Services and Utilities

The picture of widespread and deepening commodification of working-class lives emerging from this chapter is, finally, completed by an analysis of problems related to access to municipal utilities (especially water and electricity). Recent research has underlined that municipal utilities provide an important terrain to observe trends in commodification (Barchiesi, 1998; Fiil-Flynn, 2001; McDonald and Pape, 2002; McDonald and Ruiters, 2004; Naidoo, 2004). In fact, restructuring of local government finances and changes in forms of local service delivery have emphasized "cost recovery" and the introduction of market-related rates as conditions for access. The introduction of devices like pre-paid meters for electricity and, more recently, water, and the disconnection of services for rates defaulters, have been particularly emphasized as tools to enforce user participation in the funding of services. Therefore, the shift from service subsidization by local councils to individual user payments redefines the nature of utilities from services to commodities, decisions to purchase which become a matter of individual consumer discipline in the allocation of scarce monetary resources.

Having a formal waged employment does not necessarily protect workers across the various sectors from declining access to local services. 15% of municipal workers interviewed lack running water in their houses and use communal taps, while 19% of chemical workers, 18.5% of metal workers (concentrated especially at Kelvinator), and 42% of municipal workers (24% of the total sample) cannot afford electricity as a regular source of heating, for which they use therefore paraffin stoves, coal stoves or heated bricks. A significant share of chemical workers (20%) is repaying arrears from past rates boycotts (for an average of R152.7 per month), while 6% of my overall sample was participating in boycotts at the time of the interview. Confirming findings of research done on the topic (Booysen, 2002), it seems that lack of financial resources, rather than socio-political militancy or preconceived refusal to pay, is the main reason for defaulting.

In general, it is possible that metalworkers' visibly lower expenses for utilities compared to other categories (see Table 7.2) is a reflection of the critical conditions faced by many UCW and Kelvinator's employees, which constrain the use of water and electricity. The internalization of consumer discipline and the need to exactly calculate consumption to better control how increasingly inadequate wages are spent are, however, attitudes that can be ascertained across the spectrum. The broadening adoption of, and more positive attitudes towards, pre-paid consumption of electricity is a clear indication of the reconfiguration of users as individualized customers of a discrete commodity, rather than as beneficiaries of a service rendered through public cross-subsidization. Therefore, more than half of all workers interviewed buys pre-paid electricity (69% of municipal workers, 55% of metal workers and 25% of chemical workers), with a strong preference for this form of access also among those who have metered consumption.

The use of pre-paid cards has also been successful in containing costs, even when as I explained many workers do not use electricity for heating. While there is no substantial difference in the use of prepaid meters between workers with and without electric heating, it is nonetheless indicative of reinforced consumer discipline that almost all of Kelvinator's ex-workers who don't have electric heating use prepaid meters. Chemical workers' payments for prepaid cards and metered amounts are, respectively, R96 and R162 per month, for municipal workers they are R108 and R239 per month, while metalworkers pay, respectively, R111 and R174. Overall, expenses for prepaid electricity are on average R108 per month, compared to R170 per month for metered consumption. It is, however, to be noticed that workers with electrician-types of jobs have a strong opposition to prepaid meters, blaming their colleagues' acceptance of them on "bad influences" that prevent them to see how prepaid cards actually tend to increase the costs of consumption, for example by turning off boilers when the inserted amount is exhausted, which requires more electricity to re-heat the cooled-off water, while meters allow for thermostatic regulation of the temperature (Interview #23).

The preference for prepaid use is generally explained by the possibility this system allows to strictly discipline consumption and to make transparent when sacrifices have to be made:

> You know how much you use, you don't have to talk to anybody, you just have to cut somewhere along the line, but you won't get a statement that says you owe R1000 and you don't know what to say (…). If someone doesn't have money he shouldn't use electricity, he should try other means, it's his problem. (Interview #33)

Increasing user payments for utilities related to policies of access based on "cost recovery" confirm trends discussed in this section with reference to other social provisions like healthcare, retirement benefits and housing. All these have seen the shift of a rising portion of the financing burden onto workers' wages, a concurrent decrease in employer subsidization and limited coverage from public programmes. In conclusion, an increasingly commodified access to social services and provisions mirrors the strains imposed on workers' wages by restructuring and growing insecurity within a disempowering workplace environment, as elaborated in the previous chapter. Commodification outside the workplace reinforces the erosion of workers' strength inside and questions the significance of the wage form as a vehicle for social inclusion and citizenship, rather than mere survival, which conversely shapes a large part of workers' narratives. The next sections will look at how challenges to waged employment are experienced within workers' social life and how this translates into agency and strategies of social claims.

7.3 Impacts of Commodification on Living Standards and Community Life

The previous chapter has discussed the differential forms and impacts of the mobilization of community-based themes and discourse in intra-workplace claim-making strategies with which workers respond to restructuring. While the appeal to community needs in some cases reinforces, as seen expecially for municipal workers, demands for morality and fairness at work, the meanings of local

communities themselves, and the position waged workers and their families occupy inside them are deeply questioned and challenged by interconnected trends of commodification explored in the previous section. Therefore, for most respondents, the extra-workplace spaces of the community, the family and the household are materially experienced as areas of declining living standards and difficulties to cope with basic consumption due to employment uncertainties and the amount of resources shifted towards commodified social provisions. The sense of precariousness that is primarily felt in the workplace is therefore amplified within residential neighbourhoods where "everything is about money" and "things are more and more expensive".

The sense of frustration derived from such realities tends to be all the more pronounced especially insofar these workers eschew a mentality based on "handouts" and state protection and place great pride in the capacity of their work to provide for family needs. The moral universe surrounding work in relation to family and community responsibilities emerged, on the other hand, in many workplace interviews from the previous chapter, where having a permanent employment was assumed, in ways that reflect a recurring theme in South African labour historiography (Goodhew, 2000; Vincent, 2000), as specifically conducive to family obligations and community respectability. Conversely, unemployment and job losses are associated by most respondents to social decay, community disintegration and crime as moral opposites of rightful employment. Simultaneously, disruptions in the relations between employment and family life largely reflect rising vulnerability within the sphere of employment itself (Crompton, 2002). In this sense, links between waged work, family and community define workers both as "disciplined selves" (Lamont, 2002: 28-33), which heavily invest in their own work as the main vehicle for social inclusion, and as "caring selves", whereby work is not seen in isolation from moral criteria for success, such as providing for the family. In the final analysis, once the web of ethical meanings and standards that are bestowed upon the wage are challenged by commodification, the vision that social citizenship and inclusion are enabled and strengthened by wage labour is irredeemably eroded.

Compared to five years before being interviewed, 54.5% of respondents reported a decline in their families' living standards, 24.2% did not find substantial differences, while for 21.2% (approximately half of which had started a double occupation over the same period) there was an improvement. In the case of metalworkers, more hardly hit by deindustrialisation and retrenchments, 57.1% reported a decline, which include various cases with more than one household income, and 14.3% an improvement. In this group, 19 out 60 respondents said that monthly household income is inadequate for basic necessities, and 26 out of 60 experience a total inability to save money by the end of the month. For 35 of them food is the main household expenditure, followed by transport (11), education (7) and accounts with retailers (5). At crisis-ridden companies like UCW and Kelvinator, but also among GJMC employees, indebtedness with "loan sharks" is widespread, which is all the more significant considering the respondent's reluctance to talk about this topic.

The self-biographical conceptualizations that inform my informants' sense of residential communities resonate with the structural dynamics and processes that shaped the experiential world of South Africa's black working class between apartheid and democracy. They are at the same time manifestations of the subalterns' ability to articulate before and during the transition localized trajectories of liberation by connecting to, and creatively adapting, broader oppositional discourses of race, class and gender. Therefore, the experience of migration, life in segregated neighbourhoods and compounds, and, especially in the case of East Rand workers, the violence that accompanied the post-apartheid transition, are integral to the extra-workplace determinants that have shaped working-class communities within a general trajectory of urbanization and layering of the rural-urban divide (Stewart, 1981; Sitas, 1983; Webster, 1985; Moodie, 1994).

The complex interplay between structural determinants of waged working class formation and subjective responses, repertoires and values attached, often oppositionally, to the process is what ultimately shaped respondents' awareness of belonging to "community" spaces. Wage labour provided at the same time a force of exploitation and degradation, but also the repository of discourses and practices

of solidarity, resistance, pride, respectability (Bozzoli, 1991). In a previous chapter I have explained how the organized and ideological trajectory of South African trade unions in the struggle against apartheid refused to be contained within the terrain of the wage and workplace bargaining by investing it with demands and expectations related to community upliftment and access to social rights. Simultaneously, the space of the "community" is not reducible in these cases to the mere socio-economic forces shaping residential localities in their functional articulations with the factory (Dawley, 1976; Cumbler, 1979). Nor can the sense of residential working-class communities be reduced to a mere projection of workplace-based collective solidarity, meanings and identities (Bozzoli, 1987). The relationship, in this case, cuts both ways, and discourses of needs, rights, morals, ethnicity, religion and citizenship that are developed from interactions in households and localities invest wage labour, the workplace and working-class discourses.

In the previous chapter I have underlined how these themes are mobilized to structure feelings and utterances that express deprivation and disempowerment experienced at the point of production. Similarly, the sense of collective power and cohesion brokered by wage labour and union organization inside the shopfloor is projected on the residential locality in the form of normative codes, expectations, regulatory ideas and discourses, where for example the relevance of the urban-rural interaction remains pre-eminent. In the past the action of powerful organizations based on waged employment was seen as reshaping the rural-urban relations as a divide where rurality and ruralised mindsets were increasingly identified with conservatism, reaction and persistence of pre-modern identities. This trend became more pronounced in the 1990s with the growing distancing of union organizations from migrants' hostels (Taylor, 1991; Chipkin, 1994).

In the cases I investigate, however, the crisis of wage labour, its unfulfilled promises, its increasing instability that make linkages with visions of emancipation and social citizenship blurred and hollow, tend in many respects to alter this relation. Now it is the city itself, its expensiveness, its hyper-commodified lifestyle to be regarded by many as a place of instability and dislocation. Therefore even for many workers that have been residing for long

periods of time in urban areas, rurality often comes to be idealised as a space of renewed opportunities, of more relaxed forms of life, or more ethically-minded patterns of interaction, of social order vis-à-vis the disorderly forces of restructuring and global competition. Idealization of extra-urban life forms is here often phrased more in terms of building a strategy of "exodus" from the decay of waged employment, a theme that graphically surfaced in the "Egypt vs Canaan" trope used by a worker in the previous chapter, rather than as reference to material and calculable opportunities. The surfacing of such forms of anti-urban imagery are all the more relevant considering the importance, also noticed in Chapter 6, that community needs and morality play in reinforcing workers' claims, especially in the GJMC, vis-à-vis workplace restructuring.

Marginalized urbanization and subaltern insertion in waged employment provide common foundations for most of my respondents' trajectories into the working class, and defined the social conditions out of which waged labour was linked to an emancipatory imagery throughout the transition to post-apartheid democracy. Conversely, cases in which insertion in formal employment was the result of downward social mobility are few and relatively exceptional, like that of a Baldwin's employee that between 1979 and 1989 was a professional soccer player in the NPSL and, following an injury, had to give up "an expensive life which I can't afford any more, taking my family out, I had a car, my kids were attending a multiracial school, and I managed to buy food from the shop" (Interview #18). Most exporters, though, experienced wage labour as a, certainly conflicted, process of social advancement.

For two groups of workers, Kelvinator's "founders" and GJMC employees, migrancy is a widespread feature of working class formation. As discussed in Chapter 4, the former group was mainly made of previous Barcep' workers, older and with longer tenures than other Kelvinator's employees, and with which Simon Koch built a "social contract" based on family-type ideology and employee share ownership when he took over the company in 1996. The collapse of the company left many of them with no other prospect than becoming dependant on relatives and wives, or pool their provident funds' payments with colleagues in the hope of starting small businesses. In this way, incidentally, suspicion and recrimination

left by the company's closure between older and younger workers could to some extent be bridged in the quest for new avenues of survival. Many others were simply faced with the choice of using their provident funds to repay debts and accounts, or falling prey of "loan sharks". For a minority, the return to rural communities was a possibility, especially when family networks in rural areas allowed survivalist activities in subsistence agriculture or cattle grazing on "chiefs' land" (Interview #60).

A substantial portion of municipal workers still live in hostels like Anthea, City Deep, Nancefield, which could host up to 4,000 people in 10-beds dorms. The persistence of this elements, which goes back to the coercive processes of recruitment under the migrant labour system, is amplified by the fact that many workers have left the hostels "looking for greener pastures" after the first democratic elections, or were chased by "migrant workers that were politicized to be Inkhata members" (Interview #129) during township violence in the early 1990s. Moreover, not only elderly workers reside in hostels as a remnant of an age in which "the council asked the *amaKhosi* ["Chief"] for people to work for two cents per week, cheap labour, people from the farms, who didn't know about money" (Interview #88). In fact, also younger workers in their 20s, escaping unemployment from the former "homelands" and arriving to the depots' gates to look for casual jobs, end up in the hostels, like the following 29 year old employees at GJMC's waste department:

> The rooms can accommodate 8 or 10 people, but in my room we are 14. They keep promising they are going to change these hostels but until now nothing has changed, there is water leaking and everything is bad. It is still the same as under apartheid, no change. (Interview #96)

Many workers from rural areas regard the return to their places of origins as a force countervailing employment uncertainty wrought upon them by restructuring. Such attitudes often militate against the development of urban-based militancy and nurture a sort of fatalism based on the identification of the "city" with a "workplace" that becomes increasingly precarious. This is the case of a 60-year old worker from ThabaNkulu (Transkei), who has worked in the Johannesburg

waste department since 1969 and lived in Anthea hostel (Industria) since 1971. He sends R1,500 of his R1,800 monthly wage to Transkei, where he provides for his wife and six children, none of whom with a formal occupation:

> A1: I want to go back to Transkei because I don't have any family here and I can't bring them here [laughs]. As our culture, I think we don't belong with Johannesburg. The graves of our family are in the homeland, we come here just to work, not to sit, not to get some house here. We could, but when I retire I am supposed to sell that and go back to my roots.
> [A female colleague nearby overhears our discussion and laughs]
> Q: Why are you laughing?
> A2: It's about this thing of going back… I was born here and I must stay here.
> A1: They wouldn't have anywhere to go back to, but we were born outside of Johannesburg, in Mpumalanga, Transkei, and we are supposed to go back there. You see, those people left their houses and their brothers and bought houses here and then when they had to go back they no longer knew where they came from…
> A2: Ahhhh! I don't agree, I know where I come from, I know where my grandfather's place is, Pietersburg, but I am not planning to move there!
> A1: When their grandfather passes away their grandchildren forget everything about their roots [the other worker laughs], but we, our family is there and we come here just to work and after few months I travel back there. If I die here in Johannesburg they will take me back to my forefathers to bury me there at home, we must be there to the grave of our forefathers. (Interview #106)

For other workers, the decline of waged employment leads to a re-evaluation of rurality as a dimension that can shelter the individual from the negative perceived social and moral consequences of unemployment. In these cases, attempts to reassert masculinity and household authority are not foreign to the development of anti-urban rhetoric:

> At home [Gazankulu] it is better than in Johannesburg. In Johannesburg you need a lot of money, you cannot stay here without money, you see, so at home I can get food by ploughing, *mielies*, you know, selling bananas and mangoes, it's better. Life is harder here if you don't have good money. If you are not working, to get a divorce is very easy, but now somebody thinks he cannot lose his wife because he's not working, but that is to start thinking something wrong. (Interview #177, Nampak Corrugated)

It would be, however, misleading to read respondents' attitudes to urban and rural life as merely the reflection of a polarized divide between younger and older employees or between "urbanized" workers and "migrants". Things seem indeed to be more complex, and an approach that could be defined as "resurgent ruralism" has been developed by fully, second- or third-generation urban workers that have come to see the reconstruction of community and economic possibilities in the rural areas as a form of escape from the decline of waged employment in the city. A Paperlink employee born in 1940 in Orlando West (Soweto), after the forced removal of his family from Kaserne (Johannesburg) during the early stages of the township, is now planning to move to GaRankuwa (former Bophuthatwsana), where his father transferred to his family's land and bought some cattle in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto revolt. While always opposed to follow his father to GaRankuwa ("the riots were bad for the kids who couldn't go to school, but they were good for me") he is now re-imagining rural life as an opportunity to reconstruct in his old age the pride, authority and respectability shattered by unfulfilled workplace expectations and increasing commodification of life at home:

> Life in Johannesburg is not that good, because it is too fast, everything here is too fast, people kill each other, do what-what, robberies, hijackings. *Eisch*! It's very terrible, you can't buy, can't have anything nice, when you stay in the location you must carry a gun all the time and I can't live like that. And people don't have respect for each other, they behave very reckless, you can't expect help from somebody and if you have something better than them that will start jealousy and they will try to remove that from you. There is no solidarity. (Interview #157)

Others are more skeptical of unwarranted idealizations, and look at opportunities in rural areas with a more strictly utilitarian and calculating mindset, which is nonetheless revealing of the growing burden of commodification on family life. The following respondent's father moved to QwaQwa "looking for a homeland", but for him, born in Soweto, economic necessity seems the deciding factor in his future life strategies:

> Q: Are you planning to retire to QwaQwa?
> A: It is not attractive to me, I don't like the place. The way I see that place is the way we are living in Soweto, I don't see it any different. Before, when homelands were doing things like farming, people had cows, there was action, but now when I look at that place, it is like I am living in Soweto, I don't see anything different. If I had land and some cattle and I could grow my *mielie* I would move there. In Soweto I pay rent, pay electricity, everything is money, everything! (Interview #165, Nampak Corrugated).

Diverse views and arguments with which rural-urban interactions are articulated in workers' community and family discourse seem not easily reducible to a mechanic opposition between "rural" and "urban" forms of consciousness. They rather appear useful as commentaries on the problems experienced within the urban setting itself, which most workers accept as their primary experiential world. Perceptions of what are the most urgent problems experienced by the respondents in their residential communities are mostly associated with images of social decay and subversion of the moral order revealing anxiety with rising uncertainty, concern for greater stability and a strong orientation to family values (Klubock, 1997; Lamont, 2002: 30; Kaufman, 2003). The social constructions of the sense of stability and instability already noticed inside workplaces are transferred and reflected in the community, where the decline of wage labour is considered as tantamount to no less than social chaos. Crime, in particular -- almost invariably linked to growing unemployment as a cause and as an effect inasmuch it scares investors away -- is the most pressing community problem emerging from my interviews, relegating issues like HIV-AIDS, or access to social services to distant seconds:

> I have been treated bad in my life many times, but now I have to have guns pulled out at me by young *tsotsis*, children really, and that is too much for us. Schoolchildren walk around with guns and if I go to the police they are running for cover, but if you beat your wife you go to jail, but for crimes and hijackings the police doesn't come". (Interview #130)

It is to be noticed that the view of domesticity emerging from this quote, whereby "beating your wife" is seen as separate and different from "crime", indicates that one of the ways in which life treats this respondent badly could be to frustrate his masculinity. Many other respondents articulate a sense of growing inability to take care of the family as a result of retrenchments and insecurity. As a matter of fact, "family violence" or "violence against women" is indicated as a specific problem, apart from the broad heading of crime, by only a tiny minority of respondents (three, all of them women). The use of crime as a metaphor for social collapse linked to unemployment points therefore at deeper anxieties with the erosion of age and gender power within the household, which in their way provide a conservative response to the crisis of a male breadwinner role linked to waged employment.

Reassertion of masculinity as a bulwark of social stability and a pillar of community moral order is widely voiced across different cases, in forms often mainly defensive, sometimes overtly conservative:

> As in our customs, you are responsible for your family, I must make sure everything is in order, that my children and my wife have enough food. Even if she's working I shouldn't rely on her money. (Interview #88)

Other male workers express resentment at the fact that, faced with a decline in household living standards, rising expenditures and growing commodification of social provisions, double family incomes become a necessity and wives have to look for jobs. This leads to a renegotiation of the gender division of household labour, and the shift of some family care responsibilities on the husband (Interview #9; see also Harries, 1994 and Lindsay, 2003). Masculinity, on the other hand, is not the only way in which the decline of wage labour is turned into a construction of community problems around a conservative discourse of "moral scare". Another factor cited with some regularity (21 respondents out of 220) as linked to crime and conducive to job losses is immigration. A small but visible minority of respondents identifies foreigners at the same time as responsible for growing unemployment and actors in spreading criminal behaviours:

> Here in SA we didn't know what drugs, cocaine were before, so South Africans must get jobs and the foreigners must go out. (Interview #56).

The fact that this respondent's hostility towards criminalized foreigners conceals anxieties with labour market competition is then revealed by the mixed sense of admiration and alarm with which he recognizes that "they know how to get things done, they know how to find work".

Finally, the conservative social imagery with which the crisis of wage labour is translated into a discourse of community order and morality leads some respondents to criminalise community radicalism that, emerging outside the traditional ambits of working class politics and organization, responds to decommodification with forms of direct action. While conducting my interviews, for example, a wave of fees and rents boycotts had spread in many sections of KwaThema, organized by a "KwaThema Electricity Crisis Committee" (KTECC) in protest against the installation of prepaid meters and disconnections for residents who defaulted on arrears. A UCW worker living in KwaThema, for example, while reasserting the civic duty and community responsibility of paying for arrears, quickly dismissed KTECC's form of activism:

> Two weeks ago in our location they robbed Eskom to get electricity but now the police is trying its best, they arrest those people (…). [They] make a lot of wrong things, smash company cars, so Eskom doesn't dare to come to KwaThema. (Interview #35)

It is, moreover, significant that, even if many workers blame increasing commodification of life and access to social provisions for their declining living standards, very few (23 out of 220) directly mention issues related to commodification (including evictions, utilities disconnections, municipalities' refusals to write arrears off) as community problems. This is all the more striking considering the importance of access to services and community justice in workers' discourse, especially in the GJMC, *inside the workplace*. In this sense, it seems easier for respondents to raise the threat of commodification to underline the erosion of their wages and job security, rather than directly tackling commodification with an activist discourse at the community level. At this level,

instead, waged employment is reasserted as a cornerstone of an order that is at the same time economic, social and moral, whereby the decline and uncertainties faced by wage labour are therefore easily translated into a defensive, conservative discourse.

The ambiguities here emphasized in the meanings attributed to commodification and the decline of waged employment within workers' communities contribute to problematise the notion of community as a disputed social and symbolic space. Competing, often contradictory, discourses and ideologies are used in this space by social actors to position themselves within broad socio-economic changes characterized by high levels of uncertainty and where stable identities are deeply questioned. Such ambiguities and quandaries also raise, however, issues related to the agency of actors involved and to their ability to shape coherent claims, strategies and responses. The final section of this chapter will look at how respondents' views of entrenched working class organizations are affected, how views of trade union activity and government delivery are modified, and how all this impacts on workers' discourse of social rights and citizenship.

7.4 Workers' Agency and Social Citizenship Discourse in the Crisis of Wage Labour

Unionization and shopfloor organizing have been experienced by respondents in highly differentiated ways, largely dependent on factors related to age, timing of insertion in the labour force, periods of recruitment and length of union membership. Such differences, conversely, profoundly influence views of the unions' role and possibilities in response to the crisis of wage labour, growing instability and commodification. At the same time, different responses help to shed light on the dilemma, emerged at the end of the previous section, of the persistence of extra-workplace understandings of the crisis that emphasize defensive and conservative worker identities. In fact, a large majority, albeit by no means unanimous, trend across different experiences tends to regard union organization alone as inadequate to stem the tide of changes and reverse their

most undesirable effects, even if most workers continue to rely heavily on the union for defense and protection within their specific work environments.

It is possible to gather from older workers' narratives of union organizating from apartheid to the "new South Africa" not only the expectations for socio-economic and political change that accompanied unionization, but also the diversity of themes and emancipatory discourses the unions injected in workers' everyday lives. For many migrant workers the union was the actor that made oppression legible within segregated compounds and factory gates, and made liberatory possibilities emerge out of an oppressive system of social and labour control. Others recall unionization as essentially a process of development of social and political consciousness out of an opening to community struggles and a gradual questioning of the boundaries of the workplace and of the wage relation. For others, finally, the union was a force capable to effectively bargain for workers' rights and power on the point of production, counterbalancing the exploitation and precariousness that are constitutive of black working class formation in South Africa.

The story of Vukile (Interview #201), a shop-steward at MB Glass is particularly illustrative of how the experience of union organizing could bring all these strands together. Born in 1960 in KwaZakhele to parents from Korsten (Port Elizabeth), and therefore classified as "coloured", Vukile was first exposed to the climate of shopfloor worker militancy developing around Durban in the 1970s while visiting relatives in Pinetown. After school he found employment at the Ford plant in Struandale (Eastern Cape), where he absorbed the discourse of political radicalism emanating from "community unions". He joined one of them, MACWUSA, where he was recruited by the historic leader Thozamile Botha in 1979, when "unfortunately or coincidentally" a strike wave started and "all hell broke loose". Conflict in that period took place between "workerist" and "community" unions, and between pro-ANC organizations and Azanian People's Organization's (AZAPO) supporters. In the process, Vukile came to regard wage labour in nuanced terms, as a factor enabling a discourse of solidarity and struggle, but also as a boundary that confined emancipatory desires, preventing strategic choices more attuned to a radical vision of political freedom and social

liberation. The contradictory tensions between oppression and liberation that emerged within the wage relation were ultimately resolved by Vukile with a radical political choice. Following experiences of dismissals and arrests that for him were evidence of the limits of a purely workplace-based struggle, his brother, who was in exile but also conducting underground activities inside the country, recruited him as an Umkhontho we Sizwe (MK) underground operative.

After some training in Zambia and a growing frustration with the climate of tension, repression and internecine strife in the Eastern Cape, in 1984 he finally moved to Katlehong South (East Rand), where the unions were particularly active with local social movements to resist evictions and forced relocations. In the East Rand he initially worked "under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church", of which he is a member and under which he did further studies in Lesotho, since it was "the best education you would ever get in Southern Africa". At the same time, his political work in the East Rand, "working from Khotso House under the guidance of Moss Chikane and Reverend Frank Chikane", included the political education of migrants from the Eastern Cape and helping some of them to join the exiled opposition. Finally a relative who was a shop steward at Metal Box's Leondale plant found him a job there in 1986. While his identity as an underground MK operative was concealed from his colleagues, and recruitment inside the factory was deemed too dangerous, the workplace and the union were a basis and a cover for an essentially political type of activism.

At the same time, Vukile was not merely instrumental about belonging to the union, as he worked to organize an underground structure of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), before it was recognized at MB Glass. Union and political activism were ultimately seen as mutually reinforcing because "we were all people working together in terms of pursuing our political aims". Vukile combined his political radicalism with a remarkably pragmatic approach to workplace struggle, for example refusing to embark on illegal strikes before the union was recognized, which was regarded as "shooting ourselves in the foot". After the union was recognized he became a shop steward in 1987. Subsequently, Inkatha supporters inside MB Glass started organizing their own union, UWUSA, and clashes with CWIU members erupted inside company premises. COSATU

unions' policy at the time was that "we need not to draw the dagger inside company premises", mainly not to jeopardize political networks. In the first half of the 1990s, when MB Glass started retrenching and Vukile was scheduled for layoffs, he went back to full-time political activism, this time amidst the turmoil and violence that in Katlehong confronted residents at Kwesini hostel, an IFP stronghold, and township people during apartheid's final phase. His task was first "a kind of conscientising and politicizing" among informal settlements residents recently migrated from the Eastern Cape, and then organizing the local "self-defence unit":

> It was comprised of people who were mostly illiterate, they were not educated, and our task was to convince them that we were fighting for a just cause and also convince them that they must not believe in ethnic leanings, that was after Madiba came and called ourselves and said, look here, you must form your own self-defense units. (Interview #201)

In general, the experience of violence in the early 1990s surfaces in other companies I researched, like Consol[20] and Nampak Corrugated, and it played a decisive role in strengthening community links and pro-ANC allegiances among East Rand workers. Once rehired by MB Glass in 1997 as a palletizing machine operator, Vukile now sees its position in the company as stable and relatively satisfying. The company is strongly unionized, with a tradition of militancy that managed to win comparatively generous in-house wage agreements, and where having a political background is considered as an asset ("we are not used to rely too much on our union officials because we have what it takes to be self-esteemed"). Moreover, he lives in a two-room RDP house given to him as "a reward for my contribution to the struggle". As he puts it, "We pushed the breadline level, that's what we fought for", and he is overall satisfied with his situation in the company and in his community. Rather than reinforcing a conservative attitude towards problems facing the "new South Africa", however, his long-standing ANC and SACP membership does not make him forget the

20 Here, according to a worker, IFP supporters spread rumours that if they had joined COSATU "their money would be used to kill workers" (Interview #181).

importance of a strong and independent union movement to struggle for socio-political change:

> I don't think we have to rely on the government when we want to pursue our aim, more especially as labour. For that matter we do have a right to see that the government hasn't done enough for labour as such, we as workers need to be independent. (Interview #201)

I have delved in some detail into Vukile's self-biographical narrative as particularly illustrative of an organizational and political trajectory that for many workers came to represent the union as the harbinger of a discourse of democracy and citizenship. Functional to this was a growing sense of inadequacy towards the workplace and the wage relations as sites where the struggle was initially confined. At the same time, working class organization became in the imagery of many East Rand workers a vehicle for structural social change that was not merely delegated to political leadership, even when the option of a negotiated exit from apartheid emerged at the institutional level.

For many respondents, however, the sense that wage labour solidarity and union mobilization could continue to effectively strive for fundamental social change started to be increasingly questioned once it emerged that, instead of being the avenue for broader and more protected social rights, wage labour was becoming increasingly unstable and vulnerable. The macroeconomic and productive restructuring that accompanied the birth of democratic South Africa faced workers with new forms of exploitation and insecurity, taking place under the rule of a friendly government and with a legislation protecting trade unions and centralized bargaining. While the tide of retrenchments started mounting, not only was the identification of responsibilities made difficult by shifting conjunctions of policy-making and economic globalisation, but the very power of the unions on the shopfloor came to be seen as ineffective and endangered. A colleague of Vukile at MB Glass had also approached the unions in the 1970s, when "I was at school and I was fighting for my rights, when the apartheid regime was forcing us to learn Afrikaans" (Interview #212). The strength of the union as a vehicle for change dawned on him when CWIU was recognized at MB Glass in 1986, when "counseling people told management they can't see how they could

fight the union". He identifies the period before 1991, in particular as an age when "we always got what we want", and strikes for plant-bargained wage increases were regularly successful. From 1991 on, however, "management started to turn things around" with a first wave of retrenchments, followed by another one two years later, in a context of heavy technological innovation, for a total of approximately 250 laid off workers.

A new sense of powerlessness crept in on the shopfloor, where it became clear that the new government's legislation and policies validated restructuring as an ineluctable, purely market-driven, politically "neutral" process:

> We didn't go on strike because the LRA [Labour Relations Act] was in favour of them having retrenchments. They said it was an operational requirement, then there was a second restructuring which was made in that period and they brought in some subcontractors, like in canteen, and later spares of bottle manufacturing and molds have been outsourced. (Interview #212)

At Nampak Corrugated, CEPPWAWU shop-stewards tend to agree that relations between the union and management in the post-apartheid workplace environment have improved, also due to new African human resources and work managers and to the fact that innovation and retrenchments are discussed in a "weekly action group" with a 60% union representation. Even in this context, however, shop stewards recognize that workers' power on the shopfloor has been weakened, the union is confined to a predominantly defensive position and options to exercise collective power are constrained:

> We are no longer fighting like before. We had a Nampak national strike in 1990, especially in the corrugated division and the paper division. That was a big strike, it took us three months and three weeks (…) Those strikes have taught us many things, they taught the management a lesson, but they taught us also a lesson because many people have lost their jobs after the strikes. As workers we have been victims of that, we have lost in terms of our salaries and we have lost in terms of our comrades being fired during those strikes. (Interview #180)

In other companies, like Consol, management is, moreover, seen as maintaining an adversarial approach towards the unions as a presence "they want to do away with", and whereby committees to discuss technological innovation and retrenchments "are only for communication" (Interview #185). According to a respondent in this plant, the situation for the union was better in the 1980s because management, even if "they had all these racial problems" accepted to recognize the union after prolonged confrontation. Then, when in 1995 the company introduced its plans for restructuring and downsizing,

> the union was not prepared because we were not sure what was going on, what they were referring to, we didn't know that this restructuring and outsourcing was a monster or what. Before 1995 we had a good relationship with managers and we had job security. Then in 1995 they started talking about this downsizing, what-what, they came up with all these names. They said we had to compete globally to enter the world market and for us to compete they had to downsize (Interview #195).

Here too, the marginalization of the union as a source of workers' strength is considered as the product of a conjunction between shifting power relations and an economic and legislative environment favourable to business:

> it is better with the devil you know. The managers in those years were arrogant but were better than the managers of today. In fact even the LRA in those years was much more better [sic], it was more union-friendly than the LRA that we are having today whereby you cannot strike if the company is restructuring. In the older days I could organize a strike now and take all the workers but today you can't do that, because of the LRA that we are having. (Interview #181)

Many workers talk nostalgically of the 1980s as an age in which unions were more capable to tip the workplace power relations in workers' favour. A Kelvinator employee, for example, fondly talks about the 1987 strike and sit-in which won NUMSA the recognition at his employer at the time, Brollo Africa at Elandsfontein, an historic locale for metalworkers' struggles: "It was a very well organized strike and we got recognition, it was very, very surprising how easily we won that one" (Interview #56). Now, however, the unions' weakening and loss of power tend to reflect a sense of disillusionment due to the lack of fulfillment of

what union struggles seemed to promise at that time: making wage labour the foundation for citizenship, rights, social insertion.

Sometimes union organizations have found themselves confronting their own members who expressed their frustration through spontaneous, unstructured industrial actions. Chapter 4 has already dealt with intra-union confrontations which accompanied Kelvinator's demise. In 1991, union organization at Baldwin's Brakpan plant has actually been eradicated following an unprocedural strike due to a slight delay in the payment of weekly wages. The seeming minor nature of the problem revealed however pent-up anger and anxiety among workers facing increasing economic pressure. The action escalated after hourly-paid shop-stewards decided to side with the strikers while weekly-paid NUMSA members, backed by local organizers, condemned the action and continued to work. The intra-union confrontation, with the former group accusing the latter of "drinking tea with management" (Interview #1, 6 and 16) was the prelude to the eventual dismissal of the entire workforce and to the relocation of much of the plant's operation to the company's Isando facilities. Only in 1997 could NUMSA start organizing Baldwin's Brakpan factory again.

Faced with a decreasing union's ability to shape workplace power relations and to articulate a discourse of rights and citizenship with regard to a government ruled by an allied party which introduced pro-business industrial relations legislation, many union members share the opinion that "the union is ineffective because whatever it demands, their laws and their structures won't allow anything. They'd just tell me about the economy, all these things" (Interview #160). Some workers blame union structures for bureaucratizing tendencies and a growing distance from the workplace, as in the case of this NUMSA shop-steward at Baldwin's:

> We restarted the union here in 1997, and NUMSA Wits or National has done nothing to help us reorganize, they don't even tell us what happens in Dorbyl's shop steward council. Is Dorbyl paying them? I always call [NUMSA national official's name].
> Q: Well, he was telling me that Bill Cooper sounds almost as a union guy…
> A: Managers know [this NUMSA official] very well, he was a crane driver and now he's a big man… I don't get enough money, even the

> organizers don't get enough money, but the man has a house in Tsakane, and a house in Katlehong, and in Delpark, somewhere around there: three houses, man! You can ask yourself the question: why are our leaders relaxing too much? (Interview #1)

Respondents display a wide variety of opinions as to what course of action the unions should take. Four main groups of answers emerge. The first option, particularly strong, quite predictably, among GJMC employees, but also among glass and paper workers, argues for a more radical, fighting union movement ("by *toyi-toying* things can be improved", Interview #168) that asserts its independence outside and against the ANC if necessary:

> It was the workers who changed the government, we were *toyi-toying* for this new government, we were part of it and now what we want from the government really is to address our problems, because we are not earning. And now when we *toyi-toyi*, when we start to fight, they say we are killing our economy, our economy is going down. So we ask ourselves: can't we fight anymore? (Interview #166)

Sometimes this opinion is related to a view that union radicalism can be enhanced by struggling not only for employed workers but for broader social rights that can materialise the promise of the new democracy:

> The union has to engage the government, because the government has been voted by us. The previous government was oppressing us but now we are in a democracy so now if we have some complaints those people must hear us (…). Every night I am always dreaming about whether I will lose my job, where will I go? What will happen in ten years time in our country if people are not working? The union needs to be more militant in engaging the government, because in the present day I can't be happy that I am working. If the union says, hey, let's go and fight the government and I say no, I can't go there because I am working, then I will be killing myself, at the end of the day I will lose my job. *The union must fight both for the unemployed and for the people which are working*. (Interview #217)

The main areas of conflictual "engagement" are usually identified in "trying to convince the government that companies must stop retrenching workers" (Interview #170) -- also because "if the union keeps losing members it will go

down the drain" (Interview #216) -- and in demanding changes to the LRA to allow strikes over retrenchments and to force companies to disclose financial information that can enable workers to evaluate operational requirements for layoffs.

Second, a call is discernible for the unions to be more active as service organizations and develop skills to negotiate with managers the outcome of restructuring exercises. Once more in an unsurprising way, this view is particularly strong at Kelvinator, where many workers expressed dissatisfaction with the union's ability to deal with technical issues raised by management to support the decision to liquidate. Therefore, being a union member is not primarily geared towards structural change and broad social citizenship discourses, but it is predominantly regarded as a form of protection at the point of production:

> When management brings its statements here, do we have on our benches qualified chartered accountants? NUMSA said they don't have any, so how can they read the financial statements? (…). The union is like our lawyer in this company. (Interview #52)

Third, and in radical opposition to the first group, there are respondents who blame the unions for their excessive radicalism which, by scaring off potential investors with unrealistic demands, prevent employment creation. This view is discernible across different companies but it is more concentrated at Baldwin's, where the sad memories of the 1991 strike are still alive. In some cases this argument is presented in clearly conservative overtones:

> When there was the strike then I went to work, and they started *toyi-toyiing* in front of my house, calling me sellout. The problem in South Africa is that unions are too militant: tomorrow Telkom is going on strike, teachers might also go on strike. If we are realistic, we have a government here who says, 'Look, we know people are suffering but the cake is too small'. Telkom has given jobs to thousands of youth who passed their matric and now they want to go on strike, and when they go on strike maybe they will get 10.5%, but in the long run, what is it going to happen? Telkom will retrench people because they cannot cope now. (…) But now radicalism is gone at Baldwin's and maybe I can even go back to the union, because it's more interested in

> "building the company. Before it was just intimidation, now it's a free country. (Interview #15)

Finally, a small minority holds the view that the priority is to fight for structural socio-economic change and social rights, and that the union alone is not adequate for this task. This orientation, which privileges the terrain of social movement-type of organizing, is generally shared by those that identify commodification, evictions and disconnections of services as most pressing social problems. In this case, there is also a clearer perception that the struggle for democracy in South Africa was closely linked to social rights and provisions:

> When we refer to the previous manifesto of the ruling party, we were actually saying there must be a community-driven RDP, that simply means that the community should reconstruct and develop their areas, the local councils should be influenced by the community because they are actually serving humanity, they are serving the communities. (Interview #108)

Some respondents, in particular, have been taking part in organized rents and fees boycotts within organizations like the KTECC in KwaThema or similar groups in Daveyton. Others support networks of activists who broke away from ANC-aligned structures like SANCO but still articulate their demands through legal ways, like a group self-defined as "Skeleton" in Thokoza. In these experiences, boycotts are not necessarily and self-consciously articulated in a political sense, sometimes they are a self-reproducing practice inherited from the apartheid period, "just an automatic thing, we just don't pay anymore. By now it has become a second nature" (Interview #8). Community-orientated discourses, however, can also take a markedly self-help, entrepreneurial flavour which emphasizes the importance of self-reliance as an alternative to dependence on government spending. Such views are often expressed in moderate political terms:

> People say Thokoza is too radical and they can't go there, they say people there aren't good, they are too rude. We are trying to improve that. We must try to be one, we have a 'Simunye project' that tries to build houses without the help of the government, or we repair sewerage so that we don't have to call for the municipality to come because we pay people from here in the location. We also address problems of crime

> and violence without waiting for the government. (Interview #57)

In conclusion, attempts to rearticulate a sense of worker agency in response to the crisis of wage labour and to challenges facing union organizations seem to take place at the convergence of diverse, often contradictory, perceptions and visions. In particular, a sense of growing inadequacy of existing models of union organizing mirrors the decline of wage labour as a vehicle of entitlements and identities in workplaces and communities.

Yet, as already noticed in my discussion of the ambiguities of working class "conservatism", wage labour in different ways remains at the center of respondents' moral and symbolic order, and radically alternative, community-orientated political identities that directly tackle commodification are relatively eschewed. Workers' orientations to government and discourses of rights seem to confirm these observations. When specifically asked, a majority of my respondents (35%) trusted trade unions over the government as a representative of their interests, followed by those who answered that they trust both (28%). Some answers expressed trust for the government but skepticism as to the motives and morals of government officials as individuals. A deep distrust of, when nor overt hostility towards, the government is particularly pronounced in the case of GJMC employees:

> It's my government who I have voted for that is my problem. Because they said they were going to change the things and we would be going to live in harmony. But now because it is our government sitting there on top, they are making us suffer. I see only fear, and the crisis, and it is our government who is creating all these things because these people from the municipality are part and parcel of the government. Now the government is saying they are making changes, but we don't trust them any more. Residents don't know nothing about the changes, they are hitting us as the working class because about these changes what I see is privatization. (Interview #89)

Most respondents are actively identified politically with the ANC -- either as members (36.4%) or as "supporters" (12.8%) – or with its allied organizations, SANCO and SACP. 15% of them identified community-based groups (burial societies, *stokvels*, club accounts, self-help groups, women's groups, unaffiliated

civics) as their main arenas of associational life, while 14.2% indicated the churches. Support for the ANC still resonates with discourses of rights and expectations that structured anti-apartheid mobilizations, and which sit increasingly uncomfortably with current realities and social problems:

> If I continue to support them maybe I can make them make those changes. You see, in the past we were suffering, I could not go to that robot, they would catch me when I didn't have a reference book. Now the ANC has fought for us and we are free because of the ANC, that is why I support the ANC. [Yet] when we were fighting we expected to get something, I didn't expect to be treated like this. (Interview #148)[21]

Therefore, it cannot be assumed as a contradiction that strong pro-ANC loyalties, nurtured in entrenched political consciousness and identities, are coupled to predominantly negative opinions of "delivery" during the first six years of democratic dispensation. Responses to these questions, however, reveal once again profoundly divided views between municipal and manufacturing workers. In fact, approximately 60% of workers interviewed defined themselves as unhappy with progress in social delivery by the government. While 88% of municipal workers expressed this view, however, less than half of manufacturing workers (48%) did.

Perceptions of main problematic areas in government socio-economic policy and delivery are closely related to the nature of problems experienced by respondents in their workplaces and how they are reflected in their residential communities. This indicates an understanding of difficulties and vulnerability that is not mainly based on individual causes and responsibilities, and reinforces the impression that the crisis of wage labour is deemed as profound as to require structural policy interventions. Therefore, tariff barriers and reforms to company laws are mainly mentioned by Kelvinator workers, UCW employees refer to the collapse in public transportation, changes in the LRA to constrain managerial prerogatives on retrenchments are demanded by MB Glass and Consol workers.

21 "Being treated like this" refers in this specific case to problems in having access to a housing subsidy.

Only 14% of respondents mention social expenditures not related to education (housing subsidies, public healthcare, income support for the jobless) as a priority area of government intervention. In some cases, respondents are apparently unaware of this aspect and mention it only when specifically propped, like in the case of workers demanding lower taxes once I raised the alternative between lower taxes and higher social spending (Interview #183).

The most widely cited priorities for government interventions are, however, "job creation" (31.8%) and education and training (30%). Both preferences indicate a persistent relevance of discourses of social insertion based on employment, self-activation and entrepreneurialism -- which mirror the noted importance of work in community discourses of order and respectability – despite the fact that wage labour is perceived as increasingly and "structurally" embattled in providing access to income, coping with commodified existence and nurturing collective identities. Conversely, a discourse of social rights and social citizenship as premised on policies of redistribution and decommodification is relatively marginalized by respondents. Many of them actually explicitly deny that the government has specific responsibilities to protect the income of unemployed workers. Sometimes, neglect of social rights as a government intervention is motivated by growing apathy and "wait and see" attitudes, even by workers who recognize that the struggle against apartheid was also a struggle for "people's rights" like healthcare or affordable housing:

> I try not to think about these things because I don't think anything is going to change, we have been fighting for a long time and now people are tired of fighting. (Interview #14)

Faced with similar results and the centrality of "job creation" in the expectations of South Africa's poor, Craig Charney (1995) took them as evidence of their "patience" and reduced expectations, as an indication of their aversion to radical demands, and as a sign of suspicion towards working-class organizations and militancy, seen as inimical to job growth. Therefore, Charney's argument presents attachment to waged work and demand for decommodification and redistribution as opposed and mutually excluding. Such conclusions to some extent resonate

with my own observations on "working class conservatism". They are, however, methodologically premised on binary mutually excluding oppositions – for example on whether "higher wages" or "jobs at lower wages" are preferable – that obscure individual and collective experiences of transformation and decline in wage labour's conditions. It is precisely such experiences that ultimately make working class conservatism and moderation concepts fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. The impression emerging from my findings is that demands for job creation coexist with a widespread, and problematic, perception that wage labour does not guarantee social inclusion, rights and acceptable living standards even for formally employed workers. Therefore, rather than being merely opposed to decommodification and redistribution, the discourse of "job creation" expresses also a need for policy interventions and is not satisfied with individualized strategies.

To address the seeming contradiction surrounding wage labour -- the contrast between its gradual disappearance in society and its persistent centrality in popular discourse of rights and entitlements -- a useful analytical key is provided by scholars, specifically within postcolonial theory. They have, specifically, looked at how institutions and official ideologies related to the development of subaltern subjectivities from below (Chakrabarty, 1988; Gooptu, 2002; Cheah, 2003). Common to these analyses is the realization that the origins of subaltern discourses and demands cannot be understood as entirely separate from and indifferent to institutional discourses emerged from national liberation movements. Rather, institutions continuously provide repertoires that are variously utilized within subaltern communities to structure claims and contest meanings and strategies.

In this sense, workers' demand for "job creation" can be understood as the community extension of a widespread concern with protection of jobs inside the workplace, and as the appeal to government to protect the social status of wage labour. Workers' autonomy and the search of a common ground with the post-apartheid institutions coexist in unstable ways. At the same time they indicate the ability of institutional discourses, mainly from trade unions and the nationalist tradition, to "resignify" (Butler, 1997) grassroots desires and shape their reflexive

understanding of social problems by positing wage labour as a primary source of subjectivation. Here "jobs" come to mean not only employment in an abstract sense, but a set of dignified working conditions, including stability, respect and adequate wages, identified as necessary for social advancement and to fulfill family and community obligations. This section has also emphasized, however, how competing discourses are emerging to challenge attempts to reassert a view of social citizenship centred on wage labour. Such competing discourses try in particular to build community-based views of rights either in the form of anti-urban "escapes" from wage labour, or by emphasising an entrepreneurial view of self-help and self-sufficiency or, in admittently a minority of cases, to privilege social movement activism to elaborate an autonomous discourse of decommodified social rights independent on waged employment.

7.5 Conclusion

The crisis in wage labour's capacity to structure individual and household lives, to nurture strategies of social advancement and emancipation and to provide for rights and dignity, observed in the previous chapter, is confirmed by analyzing respondents' community lives, perception of social problems, discourses of social citizenship. The main factor that at the level of residential spaces mirrors wage labour's vulnerability and instability in the workplace is a widespread and growing commodification of workers' lives. This makes access to the wage an increasingly inadequate measure of households' security and a problematic form of access to social rights and citizenship.

Workers' perceptions of and responses to commodification tend to rearticulate the borders between individual agencies, workplace and community in highly diversified, complex and contradictory ways. Commodification amplifies the anxieties and insecurities generated by adverse workplace changes, disclosing visions of social and moral decay associated with the hollowing out of waged employment, questioning the ability of union organizations to provide effective responses and producing generally negative attitudes towards progress in social delivery by the government. An autonomous discourse centred around social

citizenship rights, decommodification and redistribution of resources, however, is limited to a minority of cases. It is actually more likely to see criticism of waged labour coded as anti-urban ideologies as in old and resurgent forms of "ruralism", often with strong traditionalist overtones.

For the majority, the crisis and disappearance of wage labour is the hallmark of negative social changes, when not overt catastrophic decay, and endangers a social and moral order based on age hierarchies, masculinity, male breadwinner's pride and gendered structuring of household authority. Anxieties with regard to crime, and to a smaller extent immigration, reveal a proclivity for strategies emphasizing the restoration and stability of the private sphere and of immediate neighbourhoods, rather than alternative forms of community activism or political engagement.

At the same time, it would be reductive to read these findings as unproblematic evidence of working-class "conservatism", as self-conscious downscaling of social expectations or as mere endorsement of individualized solutions. First, a crisis of wage labour is perceived as structural, its impacts in terms of poverty and precariousness are not blamed on failings on the part of the individual. Then, "job creation" essentially emerges as a way of contesting from within institutional discourses, from the government and the unions, reminding those in power of their historical obligations to fulfill workers' emancipatory desires. It is indicative in this regard, that "job creation" is a widespread demand, not only confined to those facing specific forms of precariousness and insecurity that are either the product of job losses or of fears for their own jobs. Social citizenship discourses do not emerge spontaneously in a vacuum and they always resent of the institutions' ability to structure grassroots discourses and desires. This factor is particularly pronounced in a South African case marked by national liberation politics with a strong pro-working class rhetoric.

Finally, the problematic reassertion of wage labour in respondents' citizenship discourse, and the contradiction created with a social reality of crisis and weakening of waged employment, stimulate in a minority of cases dynamics of contestation based on community movements and decommodification. Despite the limited extent of this trend, the powerful resurgence of social movement

politics and radical decommodification demands that has taken place in the first half of the 2000s (Desai, 2002) makes it a worthy object of future investigation.

The next chapter will look at how the crisis of wage labour in post-apartheid South Africa has been elaborated within the social policy and social citizenship discourse of the democratic state, and the ways in which government institutions respond to the social experiences and perceptions emerged from the decline of waged employment.

CHAPTER 8

Wage Labour Discipline in South Africa's Social Citizenship Discourse: From "Developmental Social Welfare" to "Comprehensive Social Security"

8.1 Introduction

Cases of transformation in waged employment and changing workers' meanings of social citizenship in the last four chapters emphasise three general conclusions out of highly diversified processes. First, wage labour's "promise" of social emancipation for East Rand and GJMC workers has been substantially questioned by production restructuring and labour market changes. Second, workers perceive the decline of wage labour as a condition for a dignified workplace life, collective identities and stable community and households not as a matter of individual market failure but as the result of structural dynamics requiring systemic policy interventions. Job losses, growing precariousness and uncertainty define in such perceptions a sense of fragility as part of the waged condition. Third, going back to the definition of social citizenship as a "contested field of signification" advanced in the Introduction, no structured alternative image of social rights is emerging to "re-signify" the emancipatory discursive space vacated by the crisis of wage labour. In particular, demands for social citizenship based on decommodification, or the rearticulation of grassroots identities in the form of social and community movements do not seem to play a decisive role in shaping workers' responses. When the theme of the "community" is indeed mobilized, that often takes place in defensive ways, to reinforce workplace-based claims or to protect forms of authority and status endangered by the erosion of waged employment.

The specificities and discrepancies emerging from workers' narratives over the last two chapters, moreover, validate the methodological choice, explained in my Introduction, of focusing on particular case studies to highlight

the links between social processes, discursive elaborations and the contested production of space at local levels. Under economic globalisation and neoliberal policy restructuring, as Brenner (2001) argues following Henri Lefebvre's concept of "state mode of production", the regulatory functions of the state tend to be separated from a sphere of social reproduction that is "contracted out" to the private sector. The process takes place essentially on a local scale, where the state "rescales" (Swyngedouw, 1996) space by promoting the competitiveness of localities according to their potential on global markets. The "uneven development" processes fostered by restructuring establishes new territorial hierarchies and geographical inequalities. Unequal processes of mobilization of space as a productive force are relevant both to the East Rand's decline as a manufacturing area and, on the contrary, to the rise of a "contracting" model of local state in the GJMC under the "global city" imagery of "iGoli 2002".

My cases also show that a further reason to appreciate the importance of locality resides in the contested nature of local restructuring. New modes of state regulation clash with established traditions of solidarity and organization, the significance of labour in the social order, and histories of struggle that also shape, "from below", localities in highly specific ways. Specificities also include the ways in which the decline of wage labour is elaborated within alternative strategies and grassroots discourses. Evelyn Nakano-Glenn's (2002: 2) observation that it is at the local level that labour and citizenship are primarily "brought into the same frame" emphasizes that practices that shape identities and contestation at the local level often diverge from institutional perceptions and elaborations in the national state. Discourses and modes of signification of the labour-citizenship link within post-apartheid policy-making constitute the object of the present chapter.

A multiplicity of meanings and practices emerge from the scenario of crisis in waged employment, as reflected in the ambiguities inherent in demands for "job creation" discussed in Chapter 7. In the final analysis, such demands lend themselves to differing interpretations. They could, on one hand, be seen as confirming Slavoj Zizek's view, mentioned in Chapter 1, of rights-based discourse as an "hysterical demand for a new master", meaning that demands for

"delivery" and "jobs" in the absence of structured challenges to established social power relations are doomed to reinforce atomized patterns of subordination on the market. On the other hand, however, the fact that political power is reminded of its responsibility in the sphere of job creation can also indicate a deeper inability of the government's post-1994 developmentalist and de-racialising agenda in enforcing an identification between "citizen" and "worker", or a self-understanding of citizenship as premised on waged employment.

In this chapter, I discuss how the relations between wage labour and social citizenship are elaborated and framed in the policy discourse of the democratic South African government. My aim is to relate the reconfiguration of the relations between work and citizenship "from below", as emerging from the previous chapters, with the ways in which such relations are articulated in official policies. Chapter 3 has defined the post-apartheid social citizenship arrangement as characterized by hybridity, contestation and pragmatic adaptation. Debates on the reform of the South African system of social security will be analysed in relation to such a framework.

I look, in particular, at the trajectory leading from the 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare to the 2001 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System (Taylor Committee). My argument is that these two nodal points encapsulate a contradictory evolution in the South African official discourse on the relations between work and social citizenship. In fact, across the whole process waged employment, work ethic and wage labour discipline remain the priority forms of social inclusion, which determines a highly problematic relation with the social and material decline of waged employment. At the same time, however, the passage from the White Paper to the Taylor Committee takes place in the context of debates on decommodification as a mode of access to social provisions. While initially absent from the post-apartheid policy discourse, decommodification has in particular emerged in the work of the Taylor Committee to identify social provisions not related to individual labour market positions. In the final analysis, the ways in which "decommodification" is inserted in labour demands, expert discourse and official inquiries is conducive to new controversies, contradictions and conflicts.

8.2 "Laudable Citizens" and "Silly Fools": Developmental Social Welfare Policy as a Work-Commodification Nexus

As seen in Chapter 3, the transition to a post-Apartheid institutional dispensation had inherited welfare and social security structures characterized by a substantially residualist approach to public spending, high levels of commodification – particularly in retirement benefits and healthcare -- declining coverage, as in the case of unemployment insurance, and various forms of unevenness and inequality. During apartheid's final decades, the biggest strides in terms of equalizing access to social assistance had been accomplished with the State Old Age Pension (SOAP) programme, where black beneficiaries came to outnumber whites by the end of the 1980s. Conversely, the vast majority of unemployed workers, employees in vulnerable occupations, sectors like agriculture or domestic services, or "working poor" in casual and informal jobs remained largely uncovered by social insurance or social assistance schemes, while workers who lost their jobs largely relied on withdrawing their accumulated contributions to provident funds.

As Van der Berg (2002) argued, the late apartheid state had expanded especially those programmes, like the SOAP, that had a relatively small number of white beneficiaries, and therefore a more limited likely opposition to the reduction of white benefits, which was required to expand coverage to blacks in a context of shrinking public resources. Other factors, previously discussed, in limitating the decommodification of social provisions included the resistance of public providers, especially in healthcare, the absence of a labour's comprehensive agenda on social security and the adoption by the government of free-market restructuring, which was compounded by the consolidation inside the ANC of a work-based approach to social inclusion that relegated public provisions to "safety nets" for targeted groups of the "very poor" population.

The post-1994 democratic government's approach to the restructuring of the social security system was heavily conditioned by the above factors, whose

macroeconomic and fiscal stringency was tightened with the adoption of GEAR in 1996. The task of redesigning the provision and administration of social grants in a unified national system, bringing under the newly formed Department of Welfare and Population Development a host of formerly racially-based programmes and reincorporating the systems run by the "independent" TBVC (Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda, Ciskei) states, was a prime challenge confronting the ANC government (Louw, 1998). Programmes included means-tested provisions (mainly SOAP, maintenance grants, family allowances, disability grants) usually addressed to permanently unemployed and extremely marginalized sectors, rather than to people in employment. The implications of their restructuring for the emerging government's vision of the relationships between waged employment, decommodification and social provisions were, however, far-reaching.

From the early stages after the 1994 elections, debates on reforming South Africa's system of social grants had largely focused on how to insert welfare policy within strategies of growth and development framed within scarce state resources and the need to promote economic competitiveness and productive employment (Liffmann, Mlalazi, Moore, Ogunrobi and Olivier, 1999). Therefore, the government and the ANC started looking at ways in which the role of families and communities could be strengthened as the core of a welfare strategy which, by promoting "responsibility" and "self-empowerment", could also reduce claims on the state as provider of grants. In this sense, the role of the family in post-1994 social policy discourse came to resemble what Donzelot identifies as functions of "moralization", "normalization" and "tutelage". By making the "improvement of the family living conditions of the 'disadvantaged'" (Donzelot, 1979: 69) the central goal of social policy, they allow to deflect criticism of structural inequalities and of downsizing of the public sphere, while reproducing and monitoring wage labour's discipline and ethics.

Two immediate targets of early post-1994 policy debates were the financial "unsustainability" of the existing social grants in view of the elimination of racial

barriers to access (Van der Berg, 1998)[206], and the associated danger of welfare "dependency". This latter, in particular, by increasing pressure on state funds had also the purported effect of weakening work ethic and wage labour discipline. Along these lines, Servaas Van der Berg (1996: 13), for example, decried the danger that existing social programmes could cause "perverse incentives to work search behaviour", whereby "laxitude" in the means test could lead to social grants "leaking" from the "poorest" to the "not-so-poor".

Other policy analysts argued for choices clearly orientated to a "workfare" model, where UIF and social grants are make explicitly "conditional on the work effort", rather than compensating the "victims of circumstances" (Olivier, 2000b: 29; Olivier, 2000d). The extent to which such "circumstances" include poverty wages, vulnerable occupations and unstable employment is, however, let unelaborated in this argument. Similarly, Minister of Labour Tito Mboweni advocated a closer link between UIF and employment services (Meth, Naidoo and Shipman, 1996: 37)[207], a position that was rejected in the 1996 report of the Labour Market Commission appointed by Mboweni himself and which, based on substantial comparative evidence, rejected the idea of "workfare" (Dept. of Labour, 1996).

Mainstream intellectual and policy arguments revealed a fundamental, interlaced hostility of a "Malthusian" kind both to the poor, accused of parasitical scheming to distract scarce resources from productive activities, and to social programmes. Echoing Hirschman's "perversity thesis" discussed in Chapter 1, these were often seen as encouraging moral and behavioural corruption by sapping work ethic and discipline. The 1996 Report of the Chikane Committee,

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[206] In 1999 the SOAP covered 61.7% of all grants beneficiaries, and 70% of all grants expenditures. Disability grants stood at 21.6% of beneficiaries and 24.1% of expenditures, the parent allowance component of the State Maintenance Grant (phased out between 1998 and 2001) covered 5.8% of the beneficiaries and 4% of the expenditure, while child grants (including the child allowance component of the SMG) covered 7.8% of beneficiaries and 2.7% of the expenditures (SAIRR, 2000: 240). Grants and other social security expenditures covered almost 90% of the Welfare Department's budget (the SOAP alone was more than 60%), while approximately 3% was allocated to "social assistance".

[207] In 1996 the job placement rate of UIF applicants via employment services was only 17%, while a mere one third of recipients voluntarily applied for placement (Meth, Naidoo and Shipman, 1996: 39). It is indicative of the centrality of "job creation" discourse that COSATU supported the general thrust of Mboweni's argument, even if it cautioned against using social benefits to "coerce people into low paid job" (COSATU, 1999c: 6-7).

responsible of devising a national system for the administration of social grants and the standardization of related procedures, suggested a whole set of techno-scientific practices. Under the guise of improving systemic efficiency, the proposed procedures identified and constructed the welfare recipient as a subject of state knowledge and Foucauldian-type normalizing judgments with a strong moral connotation. For example, under the rubric of "prevention of fraud and corruption", a task group chaired by Wim Trengove discussed mechanisms of beneficiaries' identification and data storage. The task group started with the premise that "fraud" was not confined to intentional criminal behaviour but it meant all cases in which "money is paid to people who should not be in the system in the first place" (Dept. of Welfare, 1996a: Ann.C, 7.4). Incidentally, this raises the question of whether beneficiaries who failed the means test and, without their knowledge, were still "in the system" could be considered as "fraudsters". Moreover, the task group expressed skepticism for an identification of beneficiaries that relied only on ID documents, expressing interest in the system of "biometric identification" (i.e. fingerprints) used in the NP-governed Western Cape, which was ultimately rejected only because of its lack of practicality[208]. In this particular instance, therefore, the state's relation with poor people on welfare was clearly characterized by stigmatizing identification which bordered on criminalisation.

Arguments that attached a stigma on the poor and welfare recipients based on their alleged "way of life", for which wage labour was seen as a moral, apart from social, corrective greatly influenced institutional debates. In an early speech, the first post-apaartheid Welfare minister, Abe Williams (National Party) raised the threat of "welfare dependency" by openly supporting the solution adopted in the USA with the "welfare to work" reform programme, which was explicitly aimed at making welfare grants temporally limited and conditional upon the recipient's ability to enter productive employment:

[208] The introduction of a national system of biometric identification for grants beneficiaries was eventually in progress at the time of writing. South Africa is, in fact, one of very few countries in the world to have introduced such a national system which, as Breckenridge (2005) remarks, builds upon a long tradition of systematic personal identification and surveillance that dates back to apartheid's counterinsurgency policies.

> We must at all costs avoid a dependency syndrome. As President Bill Clinton said, 'Social welfare must create a second opportunity, it must not be a way of living'[209].

The ANC, of which Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi was Williams' Deputy Minister, did not dispute this point, but rather tried to frame the question of welfare reform in terms of "active labour market" policies, which were also encouraged by GEAR. A focus on reducing the "culture of entitlement" shifted financial burdens from the SOAP towards more targeted interventions for special needs. To this end, the ANC proposed fiscal measures and a relaxation of the means test to exempt income derived from retirement schemes and annuities in order to encourage retirement savings, minimize dependency on the SOAP -- whose real value had declined by 20% between 1993 and 1997 (Van der Berg, 2001c: 9) -- and "link social security grants to developmental programmes" so that recipients could be "empowered to become self-supporting"[210]. Arguing in 1995 for the need for a national contributory insurance scheme, the ANC chairman of the parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Welfare, Cas Salojee, added that the SOAP would have soon become "unsustainable". He supported targeting the old-age pension for "people who cannot fend for themselves"[211], rather than having it accessible on a universal, albeit means tested, basis, which could replace retirement income, therefore "destabilizing" the welfare system[212]. In early 1995, Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Finance had recommended that "an active labour market policy (…) must replace pensions as the mainstay of social security for poor people"[213].

It became therefore apparent that the emergent post-apartheid policy consensus on social citizenship did not support a move towards a more universalist direction of what was already a highly uneven, selective and targeted system. It rather promoted further selectivity in already existing means tested, highly residualist programmes. Waged employment was seen as alternative, rather than complementary, to the public provision of income grants, and

[209] *Hansard*, 19 October 1994, p.3297.
[210] *Hansard*, 16 May 1995, p.1215, G.Fraser-Moleketi (Minister of Welfare).
[211] *Hansard*, 20 June 1995, p.3028.
[212] *Hansard*, 28 March 1996, p.931.
[213] *Hansard*, 28 March 1995, p. 368.

"productive employment" was regarded as minimizing the impact of welfare services, rather than conceptualizing these latter as addressing areas of poverty and vulnerability inside wage labour. The emphasis on private retirement savings, moreover, further shifted financing responsibilities on the side of the individual, therefore increasing pressures for commodification.

Social insurance and unemployment benefits systems did not undergo fundamental changes under the ANC's first term of government (1994-1999). Welfare services and social security grants were, however, the object of intense legislative and policy activity. A major preoccupation in such exercises concerned the possibility of escalating costs due to the equalisation of access in previously racialised programmes within a macroeconomic framework of self-imposed resource scarcity. Similar considerations were prominent in the work of the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support, appointed by the Welfare MINMEC (the committee made of the national Minister and the nine provincial ministers). The Lund Committee was mandated to investigate the feasibility of social grants with particular regard to the State Maintenance Grant (SMG) established in terms of the 1992 Social Assistance Act (Dept. of Welfare, 1996b; Vorster and Roussow, 1997; Liebenberg, 1997; Zain, 2000). The SMG consisted in a means-tested allocation made of two components: a parent allowance of R430 per month (the same as the SOAP) and a child allowance of R135 per child per month up to a maximum of two children. Due to administrative inadequacies and the exclusion of TBVC states from the system, the SMG ended up benefiting largely "coloured" and Indian families, with only 2 African children out of 1,000 receiving it by 1996.

The Lund Committee, which released its report in August 1996 after an admittently non-consultative and non-participative process, recommended the elimination of the SMG and its replacement with a new Child Support Grant (CSG), initially set at a mere R75 per month for age groups from 0 to 6. The SMG was eventually scrapped by the Welfare Laws Amendment Act No. 106 of 1997, which scheduled a gradual phase-out process due to take place between 1998 and 2000 via three successive cuts. The new Child Support Grant which replaced the SMG was set to R100 per month, a level initially rejected by the

Lund Committee, and the eligible age was lowered from the SMG's 16 to 4-to-9 years. The parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Welfare, which was never consulted on the matter, had proposed a R135 grant for children aged 0 to 9 up to two per family. Even if this proposal was ultimately unheeded, it constituted the first time in which a parliamentary committee challenged an ANC minister, revealing deep tensions within the ruling party itself (Calland and Taylor, 1997: 212).

The government's final decision to scrap the SMG and replace it with a much reduced CSG was the first major elimination of social benefits in South Africa's social security history (Makino, 2003: 12). It also rebuffed research showing that a compromise solution of expanding the R135 child component of the SMG would have added limited financial costs while ensuring a far better coverage than the CSG[214]. Research conducted in 2000 revealed that, even before the third and final cut of what was left of it, the SMG provided an important source of support for households "on the brink of total collapse" and its elimination would have led to significant income reductions, growing inability to pay for basic necessities, housing evictions and the stretching of relatives' SOAP income (Vorster, Roussow and Muller, 2000: iii, 64). As a result of deepening commodification of life, many former SMG recipients would be forced to look for low-wage or informal employment or even force children to enter the labour market (Vorster, Roussow and Muller, 2000: 69). An observer usually inclined to underline the generosity of South African social welfare grants, Servaas van der Berg (2001c: 9), commented:

> The savagery of the 1998 reform of public financial support for low-income single parents suggests that the government is passing a significant portion of the burden of budgetary austerity onto the poor.

Using arguments decrying the "racial bias" inherent in the SMG and lamenting the financial "unsustainability" of its extension to the whole population, the

[214] Initial international expert opinion required for the Report had recommended a universal benefit for children from 0 to 9 without means test, a proposal that the Lund Committee rejected. According to Lund, a R135 grant would have allowed to cover only 7-12% of children aged 0 to 9, while the proposed R75 allowed to cover 24-39% of children aged 0 to 4 (Haarmann and Haarmann, 1997: 16).

Committee promised "bad consequences for some but good consequences for more" (Makino, 2003: 12) as an outcome of the cuts. The Lund report followed a vociferous ANC offensive in Parliament against the SMG, in which social welfare expenditures not directly related to productive employment were invariably presented as wasteful and parasitical (Vorster, Roussouw and Muller, 2000). Moreover, arguments based on racial equality were explicitly used to justify a reduction of state social spending for the poor. Saloojee denounced the costs of the "racialised" SMG as being tantamount to "funding a tenth province"[215], recommending as an alternative to "challenge the beneficiaries to participate and work in some socially needed project"[216]. The SMG, supported for political convenience by minister Williams, was also seen as a vehicle for National Party patronage (Lund, 1998: 14).

The Lund Report moved from a frank recognition of the policy underpinnings of the post-RDP scenario as essentially consisting in:

> Do not ask for too much more; save money through more effective management and through downsizing the bureaucracy; and redistribute within the present envelope (Dept. of Welfare, 1996b: 2.7).

In a later paper (Lund, 1998) Francie Lund, chair of the committee, contended that replacing the SMG with the CSG was the only way, given the impossibility of extending the SMG itself, to save that social grant allocation in the face of demands from within the government for its overall suppression. The Lund Committee, however, provided a broad ideological justification for its recommendation to eliminate the SMG as the need to promote individual responsibility, reduce dependence on government "handouts" and prioritise waged employment as a means of social insertion:

> A concern with social security benefits is that they may reduce the likelihood of people seeking jobs or other ways to provide for themselves. Does receiving an unemployment benefit make it less likely that a person will seek actively for further employment? Does receiving a State Maintenance Grant for herself and two children

[215] *Hansard*, 20 June 1995, p.3028.
[216] *Hansard*, 28 March 1996, p.1232.

> make a woman less likely to take up work opportunities? In a country with such high unemployment rates, a simplistic answer to this question is: 'but there are no jobs to be had anyway'. This is so, but labour market patterns are changing internationally, with more and more people (especially poorer people) making their own jobs, or engaging in a range of productive activities, some waged and some unwaged, to put together a living. South African wages for women, and for women in small towns and rural areas, are so low that the value of the State Maintenance Grant may commonly be higher than the lowest local wage (Dept. of Welfare, 1996b: 3.5.4).

The perceived threat of having social grants at a level higher than the lowest paid jobs conjured in this passage images of perverse incentives to lone motherhood and unregulated reproduction, which are akin to the "welfare queen" stereotype at the heart of the conservative anti-welfare backlash in the USA during the 1980s (Block, Cloward, Ehrenreich and Fox Piven, 1987). At the same time, the characterization of social grants as a direct threat to work ethic and wage discipline provided the Lund Report with its moral and pedagogical foundation. It is to be noticed from this point of view how hard work and users' ability to pay for services are made to be self-reinforcing in shaping virtuous citizenship and responsible parenthood around a nexus that strictly links wage labour and commodification:

> In South Africa the new government instituted the Masakhane Campaign which aimed to instil in the general populace a culture and acceptance of paying rates and taxes in the areas in which they lived. The campaign has had to contend with years of conditions during which a culture of resistance to an illegitimate government condoned - and even lauded - non-payment. A similar campaign to build a culture in which parents accept their responsibility towards their children, and in which those who pay are regarded as responsible and laudable citizens rather than weak and silly fools, is urgently needed (Department of Welfare, 1996b: 5.3.2).

The generalized civil society outrage that followed the publication of the Lund Report forced the convening of parliamentary public hearings in early 1997, even if Minister Fraser-Moleketi warned that "there is no turning back" (Calland and Taylor, 1997: 212). Labour expressed a particularly strong opposition in the

ultimately ill-fated hearings. The CWIU defined the impact of the Lund Report as "to perpetuate and intensify the effects of apartheid" (cit. in Zain 2000, 15). COSATU's response rejected the subordination of social policy to self-imposed budget constraint. It also demanded a new system of parental support linked to social security interventions to address labour market vulnerability, without which a policy of piecemeal cutbacks was deemed to be "a recipe for disaster" (COSATU, 1997b).

Central in the discourse of state withdrawal from the provision of social services became the emphasis on the role of families and communities that found a central place within the policy framework of "developmental social welfare", which accompanied Fraser-Moleketi's rise to the position of Minister of Welfare in 1996. The concept of "developmental social welfare" was inspired by the work of James Midgley, who defined it as "interventions that promote economic development", linking therefore the welfare function to economic growth and competitiveness as a replacement of "maintenance-oriented social programs" (Midgley, 1997: 180). The author recognized, however, the colonial origins of the concept, which was transplanted in third world governments' policy discourse to signify the reduction of social spending in "unproductive" programmes and the allocation of scarce resources to economic development. Lewis (2000) and Cooper (1989) argue, along these lines, that the rhetoric of individual empowerment and community development that link welfare and economic growth in colonial and postcolonial policy discourse acts as legitimation and rationalization of spending constraints, coercive inducements to wage employment and policies of structural adjustment.

The colonial origins of "developmental social welfare", its focus on public sector withdrawal, its functionality to established social hierarchies and its subordination to market relations are, however, absent in South African elaborations of the concept. Leila Patel was the scholar and, as Director General of the Welfare Department from 1995 to 1999, the government official that most popularized "developmental social welfare" in the country, making it the cornerstone of the 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare. In her highly influential work "developmental social welfare" becomes the reclamation of an

authentically "African" mode of social assistance, where self-help, work ethic and community-based reciprocity are reinserted -- in ways highly reminiscent of Lewis' (2000) analysis of colonial welfare discourse -- in the realm of local traditions and "indigenous knowledge".

Explicitly influenced by Midgley, Patel (1992: 34) claimed that "in pre-colonial times, the welfare needs of individuals were met through the wider society, and communalism, co-operation and mutual support by individuals and the social group were highly developed". She therefore regards the intervention of Western "institutional" welfare models, based on curative approaches, technological deployment and bureaucratic allocation of resources, as a "distortion" of such "authentic" indigenous roots. In this view, apartheid welfare policy was "biased" in privileging white urban workers by creating a close, "paternalist" link between benefits and formal employment. Late apartheid policies of privatization and market-based stabilization of the black population had, conversely, turned social policies into increasingly residual mechanisms (Patel, 1991: 104-108). As a response, post-Apartheid democracy would be required to develop a system based on "self-reliance, dignity and respect of tradition" (Patel, 1991: 105) to build an "alternative welfare delivery" model defined as "authentic development which has grown out of the real conditions and traditions of life in South Africa" (Patel, 1991: 124). Following the 1955 Freedom Charter, the "right and duty to work" were reasserted as the basis of social inclusion and benefits.

Rather than advocating a universalist expansion and decommodification of benefits previously related to waged employment and racial status, such a model recovered alleged customs of self-help and community support by positioning them in the context of self-imposed constraints in the allocation of state resources, shrinking public spending and reassertion of waged employment as the primary form of social inclusion. Moreover, rather than demanding a reversal of late apartheid privatization, Patel recommended a strengthening of partnerships between the state and the "progressive voluntary sector" based on principles of "participation", "volunteerism", "fees for services" and "reciprocity" (Patel, 1991: 109). It is to be incidentally noticed that the neo-

traditionalist rehabilitation of communitarian spirit, self-help and ethics of responsibility in such a context carries an uncanny similarity with discourses, analysed in Chapter 3, used by Segregation and Apartheid governments to justify residualism, commodification and exclusion of the, especially rural, African majority from services. As a summation of the logics inspiring her framework, Patel recommended "affirmative action" policies, "which means that selective social policies, rather than universal social policies will need to be applied to achieve such social goals" (Patel, 1991: 260). In this sense, universalism was deemed unfeasible and undesirable in a context whereby scarce resources imposed cost containment "without sacrificing equity" (Patel, 1991: 286).

Patel's analyses and recommendations decisively shaped the process that led to the formulation of the White Paper on Social Development, a process that she also coordinated in her institutional capacity as Director General in the Welfare Department. The White Paper was predominantly concerned with the rationalization of existing social grants, rather than with devising an overall restructuring of the social welfare system. Its elaboration was intended as the culmination of a broad consultative process which, by involving progressive organizations coming from the anti-apartheid mass democratic movement together with traditional welfare NGOs, presented itself as an alternative to the expert-based, technocratic policy-making of the previous regime[217]. After the Department issued a discussion document based on detailed situational analyses, a Draft White Paper was published and referred to a broad consultative process. This led in 1995 to a National Consultative Conference held in Bloemfontein, with the participation of a vast array of social welfare organizations that together with the national Welfare Department had started a consultative National Welfare Forum in September 1994 (Lund, 1998: 11). The "technical working group" emerged from the Bloemfontein conference finally produced the White Paper, which was published in February 1997. COSATU, however, did not take part in the consultative process because it rejected the Draft White Paper on account of its lack of vision on the government's role in social provisions and expanding social security. At that stage, however, the federation was still framing

[217] Leila Patel, former Director General in the Department of Welfare and Population Development, Interview with the Author, 22 June 2000.

its demand for an extended social safety net in terms of means tested social assistance (Makino, 2003: 10), without a comprehensive view on the universal provision of decommodified social services.

The White Paper (RSA, 1997) reaffirmed the notion of "developmental social welfare" as geared towards providing citizens with an "opportunity to play an active role in promoting their own well-being". The priority on individual self-activation, under the guise of "empowerment" discourse, was combined with a view of social security and social services as "investments which lead to tangible economic gains" (RSA, 1997: 1.8). Public spending expansion was seen as dependent on economic growth in a context where "the high expectations of many people for the new democratic government to deliver welfare services and programmes to address pressing needs cannot be fully met in the short-term" (RSA, 1997: 1.9). Market forces, productivism and individual responsibility came therefore to provide strict constraints to redistributive and decommodifying policy interventions. Equally important in justifying the reduction of governmental responsibilities was the emphasis on "community development" and the concept of *ubuntu* (RSA, 1997: 2.24) as a discourse of mutual support and care in providing for the communities' basic needs. The use of *ubuntu* as an alternative to traditional welfarist approaches is by some regarded as functional to

> radical cuts in social assistance schemes for older people and a shift of responsibility from the government to the individual, family and community (Van Eeden, Ryke and De Necker, 2000: 18).

Finally, the document's constant insistence on the importance of the family as "the basic unit of society" recodified care in terms of caregiving within a private household sphere defined in "gender-neutral, functionalist and moral terms" (Sevenhuijsen, Bozalek, Gouws and Minnaar-McDonald, 2003: 306). Rather than focusing on household inequalities and disfunctionalities, the notion of "family" advanced in the White Paper was ideologically premised on the reproductive role of the woman as an enabling factor for the male breadwinner's

earning a wage as the ultimate guarantor of "independence" and "empowerment".

The substantially residual role of public spending in the provision of social safety nets was frankly expressed in Chapter 8 ("Enhancing Social Integration"):

> Whilst welfare programmes should be available to all South Africans, the focus must be on the poor, those who are vulnerable and those who have special needs. Particular attention should also be paid to addressing the needs of people in rural areas, informal settlements and the parts of urban areas where people are not integrated into the mainstream of society (RSA, 1997: 8.4).

Selectivity was, on the other hand, framed with a clear reference to the post-apartheid macroeconomic policy framework:

> In view of fiscal constraints, it is not possible for the welfare function to grow in real terms in the medium term. Real growth will be accommodated by restructuring the welfare function. The Ministry for Welfare and Population Development will however continue to advocate increases in real terms in order to redress the underfunding of this component (RSA, 1997: 8.11).

The White Paper's residualist orientation accompanied its emphasis on reducing dependence on state social assistance and increased self-reliance (RSA, 1997: 6.22). Means to achieve this included, among other things, "active labour market policies" to facilitate the employment of targeted groups, "more stringent and appropriate means testing and eligibility requirements" and targeted training programmes to "divert people from the welfare system"[218]. The centrality of wage labour was reasserted as the primary vehicle of social insertion and as a tool to reduce welfare "dependence". The document does not, however, mention the possibility of expanding social security coverage for vulnerable employees

[218] More stringent definitions of the means test, finalized at reducing claimable benefits and pushing recipients onto the labour market, were actually introduced in 1996 and 1998. In the first occasion, the "clawback", or the effective marginal tax rate (the percentage reduction of benefits per additional unit of income beyond a miminum "threshold" entitling to full benefits), was reduced to encourage recipients to accept low-wage jobs whose income was partially excluded from the means test. To avoid the unintended increase in benefits that such a change caused by raising "cut-off" levels (the levels at which benefits stop being paid), the 1998 amendment introduced exclusion levels for fixed assets, therefore making ownership of a dwelling a proof of means, and cut-off levels were lowered. These changes allowed to expand areas of exclusion from benefits, facing pensioners approaching cut-off levels with the prospect of a 21% average income cut in the event of loss of pension. The savings enabled by such a restrictive reconfiguration of grants eligibility were calculated in approximately R100 million, or 0.5% of the Welfare Department Budget (Van der Berg, 2001a).

and working poor. As a partial concession to COSATU's concerns, the White Paper makes a reference, absent in the Draft White Paper, to a "comprehensive social assistance to those without other means of support, such as a general means tested social assistance scheme" (RSA, 1997: 7.26.b).

Commenting with hindsight on the White Paper's significance and impact, Patel (2001) argued that the model it proposed -- revolving around "family centered and community-based programmes" to be contracted out, where desirable, to welfare NGOs[219] (Department of Welfare, 1999: 19-25) – could respond to recipients' "passivity" and "dependence" by encouraging entrepreneurial values specifically addressed to "disadvantaged groups". They would ultimately benefit from

> opportunities (…) to be empowerment partners in the privatization of state assets and through licensing of operators to run public services (…). Disadvantaged groups that are organized have been invited to participate as potential shareholders in commercial ventures without making capital contributions (Patel, 2001: 39, n.11)

The argument went on by praising the potential for job creation in this approach, dubbed by some as "mixed economy of welfare" (Lund, 2001). While the crisis of waged employment does not figure as central in the White Paper's construction of South Africa's "social question", its sub-text reveals a specific and quite significant orientation. The document ultimately and "programmatically" departs from approaches based on universalism of access and decommodification of provision, by promoting further selectivity and privatization. To reinforce the point, wage labour discipline is presented as a stark alternative to welfare "dependency", while dependency, vulnerability and inequality caused by the wage relations are obscured (Smiley, 2001). In doing so, however, the White Paper refrains from coercive arguments and utilizes an empowerment discourse whereby "job creation" is combined to entrepreneurship, in an explicit endorsement of government sponsored policies of "black economic empowerment". Ultimately,

[219] This approach was, for example, identified as a priority in the provision of disability grants. It was, in particular, contained in the *Social Welfare Action Plan* adopted to implement the White Paper's recommendations. The Plan advocated solutions based on public-private partnerships to decrease welfare dependence and prepare recipients for productive employment (Van Eeden, Ryke and De Necker, 2000: 14).

entrepreneusrhip as a surrogate and substitute for redistributive social policy echoes workers' strategies, discussed in Chapter 6 and 7, of market-based solutions to the crisis of waged employment. The policy discourse of the ANC itself was in the same period veering towards a marked condemnation of "entitlement culture", whereby expecting "delivery from the high" was chastised as part of apartheid's "psychological legacy":

> The idea that 'the world now owes me a favour because I was a victim of apartheid oppression' may well be understandable, but it simply confirms and continues a cycle of dependency (ANC, 1997).

At the same time, according to Patel, the emphasis on the functionality of the welfare system to economic growth within the GEAR framework responded to the need of rescuing the most advanced features of the existing system, like the SOAP and children grants, from pressures inside the government, especially the Finance Department, demanding more substantial cutbacks[220].

Labour's opposition to the framework and vision of the White Paper was especially voiced in a November 1996 submission to Parliament in which COSATU proposed amendments to the document. The federation's criticism is summarized by Neil Coleman, according to which the White Paper amounted to the

> appropriation of a developmental discourse to serve conservative ends and legitimize the idea that social security depends on community self-help, which is ludicrous. The fact is that one of the tragedies of the first term of government was that people can be attracted by these discourses, it is an emperor with no clothes sort of phenomenon. And really, we saw that in the context of South Africa, which has extreme poverty and extreme dependency, with the majority of people who don't have access to social welfare, they were trying somehow to pass the burden onto them to develop their own social security networks which was part of a broader economic package to divest the state of responsibility and to shift the burden from the state to poor communities[221].

[220] Leila Patel, Interview with the Author, 22 June 2000.
[221] Neil Coleman, Head, COSATU Parliamentary Office, Interview with the Author, 24 October 2000.

COSATU's amendment, in particular, stressed that the White Paper did not address the fragmentation and unevenness characterizing the social security system, reasserting the primary responsibility of the state in meeting "basic needs" and providing a "security net". It finally advocated "income support for the unemployed" and an integrated approach to link welfare policy to social security and to labour market measures strongly focused on job creation (COSATU, 1996).

COSATU's amendment to the White Paper saw the emergence in the federation's policy discourse of themes linking universalism and decommodification to miniminise labour market dependence. COSATU's universalism was still tempered, however, by the acceptance of the means test, as reflected in the White Paper's Section 7.26 (Makino, 2003: 11). The amendment, however, started to problematise the role of wage labour in social inclusion, which departed to some extent from the traditional primacy of job creation in COSATU's discourse. For example, the initial joint response to GEAR by the union federations COSATU, NACTU and FEDSAL had focused its "social" component almost entirely on demands for employment creation policies (for example in public works and labour intensive housing development) and progressive taxation, while issues of social security, welfare and decommodification went entirely unnoticed (COSATU, FEDSAL, NACTU, 1996).

Internal union debates had meanwhile emphasized the need to develop a concept of "social wage", disentangling it from its "dangerous" (Lloyd and Rix, 1996: 6; NUMSA, 1996: 14) conflation with the long-established demand for a "living wage", considered as a mere monetary quantity that as such carried the unintended effect of further commodifying workers' access to services. COSATU's 1997 "September Commission" articulated a concept of "social wage" that was still framed in terms of countercyclical economic interventions -- including demand stimulation, reducing non-wage costs for employers and bringing the poor into the "mainstream of the economy" – to counter what was identified as a *skorokoro* scenario of low growth and modest social delivery (COSATU, 1997a). The Commission however defined "social wage" in a comprehensive way, which revealed the urgency of an autonomous social citizenship discourse, as:

> an economic floor below which no South African should sink. The social wage comprises direct income transfers (such as social security and retirement benefits) and social subsidization of the costs of basic needs (such as housing and health) (COSATU, 1997a: 61-62).

At the federation's Policy Conference in May 1997, finally, the concept of social wage was further refined in ways that highlighted the uneasy coexistence of features from past and recent discussions. "Social wage" meant in fact "goods and services that would allow people to function effectively as part of society", but also non-targeted, decommodified provisions independent from formal employment (COSATU, 1999b). Kumiko Makino (2003: 14) suggests that COSATU's mode of institutional engagement could have played a role in the federation's discursive shift. In particular, COSATU-aligned researchers and intellectuals took part in the government-appointed labour policy exercise that produced the 1996 report of the Labour Market Commission. While this latter did not specifically address issues of welfare policy apart from the UIF, it was nonetheless exposed to research produced through the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In particular, Guy Standing and other economists were debating issues of decommodified income and universal income grants, which are dealt with specifically in the following sections as an original contribution to South African welfare debates.

8.3 Comprehensive Social Security, Decommodification and the Crisis of Waged Employment

COSATU's reponse to the White Paper on Social Development marked the beginning of an engagement with the social security policy process out of which two concomitant trends emerged. First, trade union debates became more aware of a generalized crisis of waged employment, not only in terms of joblessness but of widespread vulnerability and poverty within formal occupations. Second, the vastness and the urgency of the crisis required new approaches to transcend former compartmentalized views of social welfare. Traditional labour discourse

and practices had in particular maintained a clear separation between state-provided social assistance and social security for the poor, long-term unemployed and groups with special needs, and a realm of employment-based, employer-funded social insurance for the employed, mainly in the form of unemployment benefits, retirement and healthcare. During the ANC's first term, however, union-based research had indicated that poverty and vulnerability extended well inside wage labour, determining exclusion of benefits especially for casual and atypical workers and stretching the limited resources made available through state grants for poor households[222]:

> Despite the propaganda that you see in the media about COSATU being a narrow, economistic worker elite blah-blah-blah, the reality is that we could have adopted a very different strategy, we could have negotiated with the private sector, for health care benefits, for housing benefits funds and retirement funds. But instead on all these issues we are not interested in private sector but in a public strategy which is based on employment, and in a policy position that social wage must extend across society and get to unemployment people, to the poor, etc. We have mobilized in support of social security, the social wage for unemployed as well as unorganized workers[223].

According to Coleman, COSATU's amendments to the White Paper marked the beginning of a mode of engagement based on the attempt to activate parliamentary debate as a means to advocate policy change. The federation relied on the support of Portfolio Committee chair, Cas Saloojee whom, albeit cautious on the expansion of social grants, refused to see them as mere state "handouts". Moreover, Parliament seemed to provide a promising avenue following opposition from the ranks of the ANC itself to the implementation of the Lund Report. The development of COSATU's notion of "social wage" as a broad set

[222] Particularly influential was the research produced by Claudia Haarmann, which showed how the overall system of social assistance contributed to a very limited extent (less than 50%) to close the poverty gap for most of the poorest 40% of the population (Haarmann, 2000: 121), that the system of unemployment benefits heavily penalized casual workers and the working poor (Haarmann, 2000: 133), and that the only really effective mechanism of social protection was an increasingly embattled and overstretched SOAP. Her research, moreover, dispelled conventional wisdom on employment being *per se* a viable mode of social insertion emphasizing how up to 60% of the South African population is "continuously deprived of the minimum standard of living" (Haarmann, 2000: 181).

[223] Neil Coleman, COSATU, Interview with the Author, 24 October 2000.

of state-funded contributory and non-contributory benefits tried to combine universalism and decommodification to respond to the crisis of wage labour. Elements of selectivism and support for means testing in the federation's policies cam under critical scrutiny. In the final analysis, COSATU's positions revealed a growing uneasiness with the persistent, decontextualised centrality of wage labour in the government's social citizenship discourse, confronted as it was with the collapse of waged employment in the broader society.

Labour's engagement in the policy process was also a prime determinant in the government's reassessment of social security in ways that, especially after Zola Skweyiya replaced Fraser-Moleketi as Welfare Minister in 1999, opened a policy debate on decommodification, albeit within a programmatic and discursive framework that continued to regard employment as the primary form of social integration. An important development in this regard was the Presidential Jobs Summit convened at NEDLAC in October 1998, which saw the participation of representatives from the institution's four constituencies, labour, business, the state and community organisations. For the government the summit was an attempt to

> maximize the application of financial and organizational resources to strengthen the employment impact of existing policy initiatives, introduce new feasible initiatives developed by the Social Partners and fast-track implementation (…). Buy-in from the Social Partners should encourage a higher success rate from any of the projects. (…) in regard to macro policy issues it is the governments (*sic*) view that that it is inappropriate for the Jobs Summit to be seen as a platform to try and bring about major changes to the governments (*sic*) policy. It would be equally inappropriate for government to try and bring about major changes to the basic policies of business and labour (RSA, 1998b).

Therefore the government's position combined a minimalist approach to policy changes, a continuous adherence to resource constraints and a focus on employment creation within existing programmes. Part of this approach was the promotion of small-medium enterprises and active labour market policies, which included special employment programmes like "community-based public works", job placements and advice. Among the contributions requested from labour was

"to organize members to pay for rents, services, etc.", which reflected state attitudes clearly at odds with decommodification agendas. The three union federations, COSATU, NACTU and FEDSAL, jointly responded by submitting 21 "programmes for job creation" for discussion at the summit. The 21 programmes maintained a strong emphasis on waged employment as the core of labour's response to poverty and inequality (COSATU, FEDSAL and NACTU, 1998). They however demanded increasing funding from employers (in the form of prescribed pension funds' assets and a "solidarity tax") and from the government to finance such projects, a point that the government opposed.

Moreover, three of the 21 programmes were not strictly employment related and directly addressed issues of decommodification. Programme No. 1 demanded the development of public rental housing (COSATU, 1999d) to be driven by a new housing parastatal, even if that included a "considerable strengthening" of the Masakhane campaign for services payment. This latter point assuaged the concerns of the government, which however remained opposed to ideas of public housing and remained "focused on incentives which enable private sector delivery and private ownership", being at most prepared to concede some public pilot projects without questioning its basic housing strategy (RSA, 1998b; Vlok, 1998). Programme No. 19 was dubbed "support measures for the unemployed", which included strengthening the UIF also through an increase in state contributions. Programme No.20 recommended "to provide a basic income grant for poor South Africans, particularly for the unemployed". Such a Basic Income Grant (BIG) was seen as part of a "comprehensive social security system", in explicit reference to Section 7.26 of the Welfare White Paper. The demanded BIG was set to R100 per month to be provided on a universal, non-means tested basis. Monthly incomes higher than R3000 would repay the BIG in the form of taxes, while incomes higher than R5000 would repay twice the BIG in the form of a "solidarity tax".

In this way, for the first time South African labour organizations explicitly advocated a universal income transfer not dependent on, or related to, individual positions in employment or on the labour market. Significantly, the BIG's universalism was seen as separate from, and alternative to, a mere

expansion of the UIF on the basis of a "dole" system. The idea of the BIG remained however linked to the promotion of domestic demand and facilitating job seeking and employability for the long term unemployed, and the R100 figure represented a prudent estimate of a "winnable" gain aimed at lifting recipients up from absolute poverty[224].

Labour's demands were strongly influenced by COSATU's "social wage" notion, which had been adopted by the ANC-SACP-COSATU Alliance at its September 1997 Summit. It was there agreed to push for a "comprehensive" approach to social security, even if no consensus was found on the minimum standards that should define the social wage. It was also noted that the Finance Department would likely resist the most ambitious aspects of a comprehensive social security programme, like the unions' demands for a single payer, publicly funded national health insurance (COSATU, 1997c). A further point of divergence between COSATU and the ANC government concerned the former's rejection of "active labour market" policy programmes, especially when seen as an alternative to income support measures and social benefits (Coleman, 1999; Patel, 1999). The 1996 Labour Market Commission (Dept. of Labour, 1996) had expressed criticism towards active labour market policies, seen in principle as coercive measures of a "workfare" type aimed at redeploying labour and developing skills in ways that discouraged employees' motivation. However, the Commission, reflecting the Labour Department's strategy of "balancing security and flexibility" but also its lack of vision on decommodified protections for vulnerable employees[225], encouraged active labour market measures as part of a comprehensive "social plan". According to the Department such a plan had to be focused on protecting and re-training workers adversely affected by industrial restructuring so that they could find alternative jobs "albeit often at a lower pay" (Dept. of Labour, 1999: 33). Part of such measures were an enhanced linkage between UIF and employment services and measures facilitating re-employment, also in sectors where relaxations of collective bargaining coverage and statutory

[224] Fiona Tregenna, COSATU Parliamentary Office, personal communication, 27 March 2002.
[225] Cynthia Alvilar, Acting Chief Director, Labour Market Policy, Department of Labour, Interview with the Author, 13 June 2000.

working conditions in terms of working time, overtime pay and leaves could be contemplated (Jansen, 2001).

COSATU's attempt to advance demands for decommodifying interventions both inside the ANC-led Alliance[226] and in the Jobs Summit were part of what Coleman defines "mobilization of ideological support"[227] for the "social wage" and "comprehensive social security". NEDLAC played a decisive role in COSATU's strategy, which aimed to combine civil society mobilization, parliamentary work and building consensus among social interests within corporatist bargaining. It was at NEDLAC that demands for a "comprehensive" restructuring of social security and for a decommodified BIG were particularly raised. On these issues, the government did not have a unified or substantial position at the time of the Jobs Summit. Such gaps, however, were used to forestall further NEDLAC negotiations on the proposed BIG, which were delayed to the process of reform of social security emanating from the Summit's recommendations[228]. At the same time, NEDLAC's division in four separate Chambers did not help efforts at coordinating negotiations on social security change in a "comprehensive" direction. At the time of the Jobs Summit the Labour Market Chamber was engaged in the negotiation process from which the amendments to the UIF described in Chapter 3 emerged.

The bulk of negotiations on social security were, however, supposed to take place in the Development Chamber, with which the Labour Market one had feeble links, with the result that social security and labour market negotiations were scantily related[229]. Such disconnections probably facilitated COSATU's focusing on its own constituency in the UIF negotiations, which could explain its relatively minor emphasis in NEDLAC negotiations on the question of

[226] The Alliance Summits held in 1997 and 1998 had separate commissions on labour market and social security. The 1997 summit agreed to submit the notion of "comprehensive social security" for discussion in the committee on social delivery of the ANC's National Executive Committee. See Neil Coleman, interview with the Author, 24 October 2000.
[227] Interview with the Author, 24 October 2000.
[228] Ravi Naidoo, Director, National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), Interview with the Author, 15 October 2000.
[229] Bengeza Mthombeni, CEPPWAWU Deputy General Secretary and COSATU Representative in NEDLAC's Labour Market Chamber and on the UIF Board, Interview with the Author, 12 June 2000.

inclusivity of social security provisions[230]. Finally, representatives from the Department of Finance used their position in the Public Finances Chamber to stonewall proposed social policy on account of financial sustainability considerations[231]. In many occasions conflicts between government's representatives ensued, as in the case of the Department of Finance's opposition to the Department of Labour's demand to restore the role of the state as an underwriter of the UIF[232]. NEDLAC's limitations in this regard were reinforced by the fact that, differently from proposed labour policies, negotiations within this institution on socio-economic policy are not mandatory. In the final analysis, NEDLAC's inadequacies as a vehicle for structural policy change within a framework of stringent macroeconomic constraints were confirmed. So were the doubts on the institutional bias in COSATU's approach expressed by the federation's official Oupa Bodibe, according to which not enough attention was paid for the task of building "critical mass" through social mobilization and coalitions, while "we have relied too much on parliamentary work and NEDLAC"[233].

It could be reasonably assumed that the lack of broad social interactions, combined with the limitations and the compartmentalization of NEDLAC's processes and COSATU's own neglect of demands emanating from "atypical" and vulnerable sectors of the labour market impacted on labour's BIG idea. In the end, the BIG emerged only with great uncertainty and timidity inside a framework that continued to privilege job creation and employment-based demands. For Bodibe the BIG is not so much a measure to provide decommodified income and reduce market dependency, but it is rather "about facilitating entry in the labour market and participation in the economy"[234]. Coleman admits that the BIG demand was not initially considered as a strategic terrain where advances were likely. COSATU itself was rather led to emphasise

[230] Michelle De Bruyn, NEDLAC Labour Market Chamber Co-ordinator, Interview with the Author, 7 November 2000.
[231] Neil Coleman, Interview with the Author, 1 December 2000.
[232] Anusha Makka, NEDLAC Public Finance and Monetary Policy Chamber Co-ordinator, Interview with the Author, 7 November 2000.
[233] Oupa Bodibe, COSATU Secretariat Co-ordinator, Interview with the Author, 5 December 2001.
[234] *Ibidem*.

this issue by the depth of the employment crisis and by the tempo of public debates and civil society skepticism of the capacity of the labour market to advance viable solutions[235]. The view of BIG proposed by COSATU, in particular, strongly resounded with an approach that prioritized the grant's importance in facilitating labour market participation, especially among discouraged long-term unemployed. In the federation's documents the BIG's main beneficiaries are often indicated as "the unemployed", rather than South African citizens, which would include the working poor. COSATU, moreover, enunciated the BIG's benefits as "reducing poverty, redistributing resources within the country, and enhancing people's employability and opportunities for self-employment" (COSATU, 2000: 9.5). COSATU also regarded the notion of "social wage" as rewarding household work, therefore reducing and "socializing" direct reproduction costs and encouraging employment at the lower end of the wages and skills ladder (COSATU, 1998: 38-40).

Therefore, COSATU's demand for a universal basic income was still framed within the discourse of "active labour market" measures. It was also largely ancillary to waged employment, whose centrality was not questioned. Labour's interpretation of the BIG, combined with the pragmatism that shaped its modest proposed amount of R100 per month, was substantially at odds with most progressive positions emerging in international debates on universal citizenship income. Such positions, in fact, tended to claim decommodified forms of income in response to realities in which

> the centrality of the labour contract as the foundation of the social order shows signs of erosion. Or rather, it continues to be counted upon as central, but it fails to perform its function as the cornerstone of allocation and distribution and hence (by implication) of social order (Offe, 1997: 82).

Therefore, in these views universal basic income, far from being finalized to labour market reinsertion, was motivated by the structural failure of wage labour to provide alternatives to poverty and marginality. Rather than confining the problem to unemployment only, such debates recognized the role of expanding

[235] *Ibidem* and J. Baskin, "Pay the Citizens of South Africa", *Mail & Guardian*, 24 January 1997.

precarious employment in reproducing poverty from within the wage relation. Conversely, civil society's critique of "developmental social welfare" expressed in the campaign, of which COSATU was part, against the Lund Report started developing a discourse of social rights and entitlements where the demand for a universal basic income rejected official arguments based on "dependency" and was not primarily focused on the labour market. For example, during 1998 the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) convened "poverty hearings" across the country (Ray, 1998) that emphasized the vast areas of exclusion from existing social provisions and the vulnerability of low-skill employees, intermittent and informal sector workers, especially women, which remained uncovered by both contributory insurance schemes and state-funded social security (Liebenberg and Tilley, 1998: 14, 16). As a result "all vulnerable and disadvantaged groups" were indicated as the main beneficiaries of forms of basic income.

The 1998 Jobs Summit had agreed to investigate the BIG proposal within the context of a comprehensive restructuring of South Africa's social security system. For this purpose, in March 1999 a Task Team[236], which heard submissions from the departments of Welfare, Labour, Finance, Transport and Health, was established in NEDLAC and mandated to give effect to the Summit's recommendations and to investigate principles of a future system of "comprehensive social security", including social provisions for people excluded from the labour market (NEDLAC, 1999a). Even if it was not in itself a tripartite institution, the Task Team was required to report to NEDLAC's newly established Jobs Summit Supervisory Structure (JSSS). At the same time, the government had started at the end of 1998 its own consultative process aimed at devising options for a comprehensive system of social security by forming an "interdepartmental task team" with the aim of elaborating an integrated approach[237].

[236] The membership of the Task Team mirrored NEDLAC's structure of interest representation. The Team's members were Kobus Kleyhans and Barry Shipman for Business, Fezile Makiwane and Shadrack Mkhonto for Government, Ravi Naidoo for Labour, Peter Matthews and Pat Horn for the Community constituency (NEDLAC, 1999).

[237] Members of the interdepartmental task team were Fezile Makiwane (Dept. of Welfare, Chair), Alex van den Heever and Patrick Masobe (Dept.of Health), John Kruger (Dept. of Finance),

In its first deliberations the NEDLAC task team agreed, among other, to establish the state's role as a contributor to the UIF and to a national retirement fund for all employees, with provisions for housing finance and healthcare. The implementation of the BIG was, however, initially not discussed (NEDLAC, 1999a). The team had, in fact, focused on the limitations of the UIF, finding that it covered less than 40% of the economically active population and provided benefits to less than 6% of the unemployed. It therefore recommended an income grant for the structurally unemployed, which would have, however, worked on a "dole" basis, through a means test and rewarding the length of unemployment. In early 2000 the government's thinking was that income grants had to be reserved only to beneficiaries living below the poverty line (Makino, 2003: 15). The "conceptual framework" drafted by the NEDLAC task team in July 1999 defined "comprehensive social security" as including:

> Social security benefits provided due to loss of income, non work-related social security benefits for people outside the labour market, privately provided benefits, e.g. retirement and health schemes, public service delivery e.g. transport, housing, health care (NEDLAC, 1999b).

The basic principles of the system were identified in its being "affordable", "sustainable", conducive to economic development and to the "ability of the poor to improve their own conditions and to increase their economic activity". Moreover, the public provision of social assistance was intended to "try to reduce dependency on the state through promoting self-sufficiency". While labour demanded that social security had to contribute to the "redistribution of productive assets", business' position opposed an integrated administration of social security grants. It defended, instead, the existing three-tier system made of a means-tested, "pay as you go" social assistance, a contributory social insurance to be based on defined contributions, and privately provided benefits. Finally, business remained opposed to a universal BIG, preferring the European model of the "guaranteed minimum income", means tested and conditional upon availability to work. Such a

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Sagren Govender (UIF), Fanie Kruger (COIDA), Lukas Bakkes (South African National Defence Force) and Annari Roux (Road Accidents Fund), see (RSA, 1999).

system was seen as more favourable to a "work orientated contributory system of social protection" where "great importance is attached to work generally for reintegration into society and economic independence"[238].

To confirm the technical and ideological constraints facing prospects of redistribution and decommodification within the emerging social security framework, the Director General of the Department of Social Development (former Welfare Department), Lucy Abrahams, remarked that social security "is more about economic realities than social realities" (NEDLAC, 1999c). Decrying the excessive amounts of money spent in state cash grants "which are neither necessarily developmental nor sustainable", Abrahams concluded that "economic realities should be an important consideration", whereby "one cannot talk about a comprehensive social security system outside the current macro-economic environment".

At the end of February 2000 NEDLAC disbanded the JSSS and its Management Committee took responsibility for monitoring the implementation of all Jobs Summit agreements. The following month the NEDLAC Task Team reported to the Management Committee that it had completed its task of drafting a term of reference that defined long and short term elements of a comprehensive social security system. Four short-term programmes were indicated as a priority: employment, retirement, safety nets (including the BIG and disability grants) and healthcare. A committee of experts was requested to present recommendations to the various ministries and to cabinet by mid-2000 (NEDLAC, 2000a).

Meanwhile, in July 1999 also the government's Interdepartmental Task Team on comprehensive social security had released its report (RSA, 1999). The document identified various problems with coverage and access to social provisions. Particularly emphasized was the crisis in the healthcare system, whereby a "negligible" proportion of incomes lower than R5,000 a year and only 20% of incomes between R5,000 and 11,000 were covered by private medical schemes. On the contrary, public expenditure in hospital care had constantly declined in real terms between 1998 and 2000, down to approximately 50% of 1990 levels, and the costs of private schemes, especially "open" ones, were

[238] Shipman to Koestlich, 29 February 2000, Author's collection.

spiraling. It was noticed that the per-capita public health expenditures in 1999 were lower than in 1995, while 20% of privately insured claimants consumed 55% of the national healthcare expenditures. As a result, an increase in healthcare expenditure as a portion of the GDP was mirrored by a decrease in the quality of the service and levels of coverage, while the public sector was covering more recipients with less resources due to the private sector's "dumping" of high risk claimants (RSA, 1999: 20-21). Committee member Van den Heever, in particular, harshly stigmatized such a scenario, encouraged by government policies aimed at "privatizing everything and pick up the pieces afterwards"[239]. As a result, the Council for Medical Schemes calculated that only the amount of tax cuts for private medical schemes which, as Van den Heever puts it, "refuse to cover bad risks to make a fast buck", were four times higher than the total public healthcare expenditures.

Finally, the government's task team report emphasized the high level of commodification and selectivity in South Africa's social security system, whereby the 22% of the GDP spent in social protection (including housing benefits) was largely directed to the private sector (13% of the GDP), while only 3% was spent on public pensions and grants, 3.5% in public healthcare and 1.5% in public housing. In the case of pensions, while private contributory schemes (covering one third of the pensionable population) represented 7% of the GDP (and 80% of all pension expenditures), the public SOAP stood at only 1.9% (RSA, 1999: 38-39). Finally, while the equivalent of 11.3% of the GDP funded social expenditures through private insurance contributions, the share of the general public revenues

[239] Alex van den Heever, Advisor to the Council for Medical Schemes and Co-ordinator of the Dept.of Social Development Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security, Interview with the Author, 29 November 2000. According to van den Heever, in 2000 the private health sector, which covers 20% of the population, spent between R 5 and 8 billion only for administrative costs, while the entire public hospital system's costs were R 4 to 5 billion. As evidence of the power of the private healthcare industry, "I'll give you some examples of the kind of individuals and groups we are talking about. We had within 3 years in one company people developing personal assets of over R400-500 million, for one individual. You have got in another company of similar size virtually every single one of their senior managers arriving to meetings in Ferraris, two of their senior managers have their own private airplanes. We have another company whose person arrives at meetings in a helicopter. In these entities, their managers' combined individual personal wealth exceeds the entire senior management expenditure in the entire public health system many times over, and they are probably 20 individuals!"

was only 8.2% (RSA, 1999: 22), which reduced the potential for redistribution and cross-subsidization.

The interdepartmental task team concluded its report by discussing available policy options. Similarly to the NEDLAC process it recommended a restructuring of the UIF which included underwriting from state revenues, it proposed a universal social health insurance scheme with mandatory contributions, a minimum benefit package and exemptions for recipients below the poverty line. It also recommended to investigate changes to the pensions system. A mandatory, contributory, earnings-related defined benefits social insurance pension was proposed to provide flat rate benefits with replacement rates ranging from 50% of lifetime income up to a maximum of four times the median earnings. This proposed pension scheme could integrate the SOAP and coexist with defined contributions private pension schemes. While recipients who do not meet the means test would be exempted from contributing, the proposed social pension was aimed at encouraging savings for retirement, thereby reducing the pressure on the SOAP. This latter was suggested to be changed into a universal contributory scheme. Finally, a maximum monthly R320 benefit was proposed for households earning less than R520 per month (RSA, 1999: 26-29).

The rationale for the proposed changes confirmed the government's allegiance to the GEAR framework, its reluctance to modify existing income distribution and its opposition to radically redistributive measures. The language of the task team's proposals was couched in an overarching emphasis on social control and the prevention of "crime and unrest" (RSA, 1999: 30). Far from adopting a universalist orientation, they explicitly recommended the stratification of recipients in three target categories. The "poorest of the poor" would be exempted from contributions, "middle-income" recipients would be entitled to "moderate but reasonable benefits and services", and "high-income" groups would afford to supplement public provision with "well regulated" private services. Once again, inequalities in individual market positions were objectified and "naturalized", whereby the ability to purchase social provisions on a commodity basis and as an alternative to overcrowded public services remained a prerogative of affluent strata.

8.4 "The Wage-Income Relationship is Breaking Down": The Taylor Committee's Problematization of the Work-Citizenship Nexus

After expert knowledge and societal consultation had run their course by outlining scenarios and proposals for future policy changes, the speed of social security reform saw an acceleration in early 2000. In January, Minister Skweyiya announced that the country was facing "a deep social crisis (…), a time bomb of poverty and social disintegration [which] has the potential to reverse the democratic gains made since 1994". A "Ten Point Programme of Action" to be implemented over the five following years would therefore recommend ways to "correct the weaknesses in our welfare system". The call for comprehensive social security was there combined, in stark departure from the developmental social welfare approach, with the recognition that

> our social policies assume the ability of families and communities to respond to the crisis. Welfare has proceeded as if these social institutions are fully functional and provide the full range of social support that is required to restore the well being of people. Such a "business as usual" approach cannot continue (Dept. of Social Development, 2000).

In March, the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa, chaired by Prof. Viviene Taylor, was appointed by Cabinet. The composition of the 18-member Taylor Committee included academia-based experts, with a substantial predominance of jurists and economists, representatives from various government departments and labour-aligned research organizations[240]. The lack of direct representation from organs

[240] Members of the committee were Viviene Taylor (Chair, special advisor for the Minister of Social Development), Fezile Makiwane (Dept. of Social Development), Pieter Le Roux (University of the Western Cape), Elias Masilela (Dept. of Finance), Alex van den Heever (Council for Medical Schemes), Charles Meth (University of Natal), Shadrack Mkhonto (UIF Commissioner), Guy Mhone (University of the Witwatersrand), Anthony Asher (University of the Witwatersrand), John Kruger (Dept. of Finance), Marius Olivier (Rand Afrikaans University), Ravi Naidoo (NALEDI), James Chiumya (Dept. of Transport), Patrick Masobe (Council for Medical Schemes), Nobayeni Dladla (Chief Director of the Presidency), Doris Sikhosana

of the civil society was compensated by a series of public hearings, following a model already used for the White Paper on Social Welfare, scheduled for the end of 2000[241]. Moreover, econometric research, scenarios and simulations were provided by various individuals and institutes, including labour-friendly Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), which had developed the model used for COSATU's BIG proposal[242], NALEDI, the National Institute for Economic Policy (NIEP), and researchers Claudia and Dirk Haarmann. Among the international experts who "shared valuable experience" (RSA, 2002: vii) with the Committee was ILO economist and BIG supporter, Guy Standing.

The mandate of the Taylor Committee included, for the first time in the history of South African social policy, investigation, policy recommendation and budgeting to cover an integrated set of areas of intervention and government departments related to the provision of social security. It addressed in particular the national pension system, social assistance grants, social insurance schemes, unemployment insurance, health funding and insurance, but it did not specifically address housing policy and the provision of municipal services. Overcoming the fragmentation of South Africa's social security system and addressing areas of exclusion and lack of coverage identified by the Interdepartmental Task Team were also part of the mandate of the Committee.

The expert knowledge and research provided to the Committee reflected to a large extent the problematization of the relationships between labour market and social exclusion that after the Jobs Summit had entered welfare policy debates. In particular, much research was sympathetic to the BIG concept, seen as addressing long term exclusion from waged employment and problems in labour market participation through means that are in principle universalistic and decommodified. Some researchers and the Democratic Alliance opposition,

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(University of Natal), Michael Masutha (MP) and Brenda Khunoane (Dept.of Health). Francie Lund, invited in the committee, declined due to other work commitments (RSA, 2002: v).

[241] Civil society organizations harshly criticized the composition of the committee during its public hearings. SANGOCO's Abie Dithlake stigmatized in particular the committee's bias in favour of academic experts, the exclusion of community representatives and the lack of community participation in a process that he saw as "distant from the daily lives of communities". He then recommended SANGOCO's "poverty hearings" as an example for the Committee to follow, see Oral Record of Hearings of the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security, collected by the Author, Pretoria, 10 October 2000.

[242] Fiona Tregenna, personal communication, 27 March 2002.

however, supported the BIG from conservative positions, which reflected the controversies and ambiguities in international debates on the concept.

Pieter Le Roux (2001, 2002, 2003), for example, proposed to fund the BIG through an increase in consumption taxes, in particular the Value Added Tax (VAT). He rejected alternative modes of funding based on the income tax because this latter is applied only to middle-to-high incomes and therefore the informal sector would be "unfairly advantaged". Besides, taxing income and corporate profits, he argued, would increase overall tax burdens (regardless to the impact of such measures in reducing social inequality), which contravened the aims of a government intent in cutting corporate and high-incomes taxation[243]. With Le Roux's VAT-based funding model, instead, it was up to the poor's household expenses, rather than to fiscal redistribution, to pay for the basic income grant of the "very poor", whose limited consumption would lead to a positive BIG-VAT trade-off.

Opposition to redistribution was here combined to a view of the BIG as aimed essentially at labour market insertion, which meant that the grant had to be low enough to prevent recipients from refusing low-wage jobs under the familiar guise of avoiding "poverty traps" and "perverse incentives". For Le Roux the BIG would also contribute in to entrepreneurialism among the "disadvantaged" by stimulating demand in the informal sector, which is excluded from the VAT, encouraging the poor to accept conservative economic policies if they gained the impression of benefiting from them (Le Roux, 2001: 28). Moreover, the BIG is seen as functional to introducing compulsory preservation of pension benefits, a long standing demand of insurance and finance capital, as an acceptable policy trade-off. Finally, Le Roux reassured possible concerns arising from the fact that with his model 80% of the population would still receive a net transfer of money by arguing that the net transfer for a nominal monthly R100 BIG directed at the "poorest of the poor" would be no more than R70[244].

[243] To contextualise Le Roux's claims, it is to be noticed that the government's 2003 Budget provided to extend the CSG from age 7 to 14 by 2005-06, at a cost of R6.4 billion. Raising immediately the recipients' age to 14 would have cost R9.8 billion, while with a further R5.7 billion the grant could be extended to children up to age 18. To evaluate the fiscal impact of such an increase, the 2003 budget had decided for a R 13.4 billion *cuts* on income tax (IDASA, 2003).

[244] A more far-reaching conclusion in Le Roux's (2001: 38-39) reasoning was that using the VAT

Another member of the Committee, Anthony Asher (2001: 64) presented an argument that bore striking resemblance to the "schooling the native body to hard work" line of thought discussed in Chapter 2. He decried as causes of South Africa's social problems "sexual promiscuity", "wasteful consumption" and "rampant crime" caused by "limited respect for the rule of law" by "young men (…) inadequately socialised as they have been brought up without role models or discipline – in their families, schools or at work". He went on noticing that "even well-intentioned attempts by the non-poor" can lead to further problems, as in the case of means-tested state grants, which create poverty traps that "penalize formal jobs efforts" and "undermine production". Poverty was therefore conceptualized as essentially a moral-psychological condition that "undermines ambition and wisdom" making people "wait for others to help and to lead them" and carries other forms of "self-destructive behaviour" as "the result of moral failure" (Asher, 2001: 66). Asher concluded by indicating the "way out" as reinforcing "people's moral beliefs" that included privileging productive employment through a "job creation programme paying low wages", deemed preferable to the BIG, and schooling aimed at encouraging "traditional family values and entrepreneurial aspirations" (Asher, 2001: 67-68).

Conservative support for the BIG revealed the persistence in expert discourse of a modality of knowledge of the South African social question that identified the main cause of poverty in the specific attitudinal, moral and behavioural characteristics of groups variously designated as "poor", "very poor" or "poorest of the poor". While blaming and stigmatizing these latter for their socio-economic conditions, such analyses disabled critical reasoning on the role and failures of socio-economic institutions with regard to the perpetuation of structural conditions that reproduce and deepen poverty. Therefore, the solutions identified from this perspective invariably tend to verge on a pedagogical

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to fund the BIG would have allowed to eliminate the means test from the SOAP, which would become *de facto* universal (even if at lower benefit levels), allowing to introduce the compulsory preservation of private pensions for retired workers who could in this case count on SOAP as a partial retirement income. In this way, by encouraging a further erosion of the SOAP, which would also become funded through VAT (therefore through household expenses) the BIG would directly serve the purpose of privatization of old-age provisions. The author supports, on the other hand, the elimination of the means test because it promotes poverty traps that disable the development of productive assets and entrepreneurial spirit among the poor. Therefore the BIG is also functional in this view to the promotion of work ethic and entrepreneurialism.

discourse of individual ethics, responsibility and hard work which ennobles the imposition on the most vulnerable sectors of painful trade-offs between expenses on basic necessities and the access to meager monetary transfers presented as avenues to self-entrepreneurial salvation.

Compared to their conservative counterparts, more left-wing supporters of the BIG that provided research for the Committee emphasized the role of the grant in addressing structural socio-economic and labour market failures, and they therefore accentuated the importance of redistribution and decommodification for a universal BIG provision. For example, EPRI produced a bold report supporting the use of income and company taxes to fund the BIG on account of South Africa's substantial "under-taxation" when compared to other developing economies. As a result a raise in total tax burden of 5 percentage points, or 50 billion Rand, was deemed sustainable to fund additional social expenditures (Van Niekerk, 2002). Conservative and progressive positions, however, shared a construct of social citizenship ultimately enabled by work not only as an income-earning activity but as a disciplinary and pedagogical ideal essentially averse to welfare "dependence". Equally similar was the way in which both groups, reminding Ashforth's (1990) critique of expert discourse, identify "poverty" and "exclusion" as attributes of social groups defined as "problems" for whose "solution" science has to be applied. Marius Olivier (2000c: 11-12), for example, invites to focus on the causes of social insecurity, which in the South African case disrupt the relations between work and social inclusion since they are related to mass unemployment and lack of benefits for "atypical" workers who do not fall within the UIF's definition of "employees".

In contrast to Asher's and Le Roux's emphasis on the poor's faults and responsibilities, he advocates redistributive social solidarity within a coherent approach to social security. He also concludes, however, that benefits must be "constructed in such a way as to "actually and actively encourage labour market participation". The social security framework is then infused with "adherence to the *work ethic imperative*" and a "movement to *active labour market policy measures*" (Olivier, 2000c: 35, own emphasis). Moreover, Olivier envisages "new models of social security" for atypical and informal labour, to be delivered

through community-based projects like micro-lending, saving schemes, self-help organizations, *stokvels* and other forms of "mutuality" and "reciprocity" (Olivier, 2000c: 36-38; Dekker, 2001; Lund and Srinivas, 1998). In this way, the concept of "informal social security" for atypical and informal workers recovers ideological themes related to "community development" as an enduring legacy in South African welfare discourse, turning them in the direction of a "two-tier" social security system where only formal workers continue to benefit from public spending on "risk-based" interventions. Even if they configure social marginalisation not as a "risk", but as a normal existential condition, these arguments legitimize the abdication of public spending responsibilities that are "outsourced" to the poor's survival strategies[245].

Writing from the standpoint of an imaginary future where South Africa has won the soccer world cup and the BIG has long been introduced, Guy Standing (2003) recounts his responses to arguments according to which the BIG "would induce laziness" being "a disincentive to labour":

> Compared with means-tested schemes, a universal grant actually provided a greater incentive to search and to take jobs, *particularly low-wage jobs or low-income, own-account activities*. Since these were precisely the kind of new work opportunities that were emerging, this was crucially important (Standing, 2003: 13, own emphasis).

Standing's argument is ultimately rooted in a view of human nature where "the vast majority of people without work, and able to work, do in fact *want* work, since work provides at least part of an individual's social and economic identity" (Standing, 2003: 16, own emphasis). In the context Ashforth (1990) discusses it was rural Africans that had to be put to work. In the above arguments, instead, the BIG is intended to perform the same function for new problem populations like the "lazy" poor, the low skill jobless workers, the structurally unemployed for which, to paraphrase Ashforth again, "social inclusion" is the star and "work"

[245] Inside the Committee, Olivier and Asher supported the concept of "informal social security" as a way to unlock the "under-utilised resources of the poor", an argument that was rejected by Meth and Naidoo on account of its ideologically biased entrepreneurial rhetoric, see *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, pp.122-124.

is the compass. It is, finally, to be underlined that both conservative and left support for the BIG is expressed in opposition to the means test, which, acting as a "poverty trap", discourages the search for waged employment and entrepreneurial activities. South African debates on the BIG indicate, therefore, that, once social grants are kept at appropriately low levels and decommodification is sidestepped, universalism can be more conducive than selectivity to the enforcement of wage labour discipline.

Michael Samson et al.'s (2003) comprehensive survey, produced for the Taylor Committee, of the "social, economic and fiscal" impacts of the BIG refrains from mentioning the provision of decommodified income as an inherently desirable social policy objective, regardless to whether recipients are in waged employment or not, or to whether they are willing or unwilling to accept low-wage jobs. Rather, among BIG's economic impact they cite increasing possibilities for training and education finalised to finding employment, providing "a social stake for the economically disadvantaged" (Samson, 2002; Samson et al. 2003: 28). The role of the BIG is further praised as improving employment chances and lowering pressures on workers' wages (Samson et al. 2003: 29). In this view, in fact, the BIG would cushion reproduction costs of urban workers, especially for extended families in the rural areas. A "free labour" imagery is thereby restored where the wage returns to be a purely economic quantity and the price for a market transaction disentangled from household needs, community-based demands and "moral economy".

The radical separation between wage and assistance, and between production and reproduction, ultimately reintroduces a discursive dichotomy between urban economies driven by increasing productivity and rural societies characterized by backwardness and "dependence" on "handouts". Research produced to explain high levels of unemployment in rural areas argued that access to social grants was a determining factor for the unemployed's attachment to their household, which conversely "reduces their search activity and employment prospects" (Klasen and Woolard, 2000: 19). Therefore unemployment was seen as the product of individual "location decisions" accompanied to a general image of rural stagnation as opposed to the self-

entrepreneurial dynamism and mobility of urban labour markets. As a consequence, the solution to the problem of unemployment could be inferred as a combination of unemployed people's behavioural change and reduction in household-based social grants.

Challenging methodological individualism, other members of the Committee tried to look at the potential of social transfers to decommodify community lives and reducing the dependence of non-income earning poor on market relations. For Ravi Naidoo, the 1998 Jobs Summit had been "largely a PR exercise", which however inserted in the policy discourse the idea that in defining poverty the distinction between employed and unemployed was of limited usefulness, while access to a waged job *per se* insufficiently guarantees individual circumstances and abilities to stay out of poverty. As a result, concepts of "wage" and "income" had to be disentangled, and to "decent work" based on labour market transactions and monetary wage had to be added "decent income", including social grants and transfers, as an independent policy priority[246].

The chair of the Committee, Viviene Taylor, looked at the task of reforming social security in ways that recalled the sense of urgency in Minister Skweyiya's "social crisis" statement. In particular, in her view a shift from a system based on risk to one addressing the needs of poor communities was not intended as a way to valorize a "community survival and coping mechanism discourse" that, similarly to what the 1997 White Paper suggested, shifted on the poor the burden for their own upliftment. Rather, she privileged a notion of "income poverty" as a socio-systemic, needs-based, not risk-contingent concept that emphasized how also people in formal employment could be socially excluded and marginalized[247]. A focus on the needs of poor communities was therefore critical of "Eurocentric social security models based on full employment as a viable/realistic goal", and identified wage labour as part of the causes of "chronic poverty", not only as its main solution. Taylor's opposition to means testing was, however, pragmatically phrased in terms of "selective

[246] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.230.
[247] Viviene Taylor, Special Advisor to the Minister for Social Development, Interview with the Author, 8 August 2001.

universalism", or universal provision within clearly identified social problems, rather than universalism in the form of generalized decommodification. The discontinuities between the framework of the Taylor Committee and that of the White Paper's "developmental social welfare" model are clearly expressed by Fezile Makiwane, Director for Social Security in the renamed Department for Social Development:

> Within the White Paper process social security was seen as a small residual programme whereby the poor had mainly to see for themselves and provide for themselves. Clearly what the government is saying is that it's not a residual programme, it is an important part of a welfare state and there should be a comprehensive social security system[248].

In their opening remarks at the Committee's public hearings, Taylor and Social Development Director General, Angela Bester, emphasized the uneven coverage of benefits in the existing system, which excluded vast areas of low-income workers, and the ways in which inequalities were perpetuated by the predominance of costly and discriminatory private forms of coverage and by the poor's lack of visibility in policy-making and societal bargaining institutions[249].

In the Committee's discussions and deliberations, however, orientations that looked at the restructuring of South Africa's social citizenship in the direction of universalism, redistribution and decommodification were fiercely contested. In the final analysis, the emphasis on social security as a mechanism orientated to job creation and wage labour discipline, rather than to the provision of decommodified forms of income as an autonomous policy objective, tended to prevail. The rhetorical question raised by ANC Member of Parliament, Michael Masutha, "If you have all these nice social benefits, where is the incentive to want to go back to work?"[250], seemed to reflect the mode of the majority. In his case, the issue was raised to propose further cuts to state grants, for which a

[248] Fezile Makiwane, Director for Social Security, Department for Social Development, Interview with the Author, 16 October 2000.
[249] Oral record of Hearings of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security, collected by the Author, Pretoria, 10 October 2000.
[250] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 6 October 2000, p.17.

valuable juridical precedent was provided by the legal opinions supporting the 1997 abolition of the SMG, according to which "the Constitutional Court will never give a grant the same level of protection it would give property"[251]. Charles Meth's urgent plea for the Committee to "take a stand" against the "racist and sexist" concept of "workfare"[252] encountered responses that in some cases argued for the use of grants as forms of coercion and inducement to perform low-wage jobs. Such arguments occasionally led to extreme suggestions. A submission from the Development Bank of Southern Africa, strongly criticized by Olivier and others, supported the partial adoption of *de facto* payments in kind in the form of food vouchers linked to a smart card as part of the pay package of low-wage workers[253]. On another occasion, Meth asked whether research was available on ways in which volunteer schemes or wage subsidies could provide incentives to socialize to work the "about a million and a half to three million" young "unsocialised, dangerous" male unemployed. Department of Finance's John Kruger provided the following reply:

> I mean, the biggest thing in there is actually the American literature on the incarceration of that population [amused reaction]. I am, no, I am serious, I kid you not (…). The business of welfare to work as it is practiced in Britain [has] a much more integrated system, rather than the kind of fragmented thing that you have in the United States (…) so that incarceration for example in the United States varies very greatly from state to state (…). The point about that system is that it has coerced people into… it has done away with the entitlement system of benefits and it has coerced them into a system into which they only receive benefits if they enter and they go through the stages of the programmes. But the point about it is that it is hugely expensive.
> TAYLOR: And is it actually defensible?
> KRUGER: To attempt to introduce a system like that is actually, well, I do not know if it is affordable (…). All of the OECD countries for example have got programmes of one source or another designed to

[251] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 7 October 2000, p.2. Masutha continued by arguing that while the SMG precedent "legally covered" future cutbacks on social grants, these should take place in a short period of time since constitutional jurisprudence was changing, giving socio-economic rights a "property right-kind of protection".
[252] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.1, pp.93-94.
[253] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.196.

> address those particularly unemployable males who seem to be more problematic[254].

Eventually Kruger conceded, faced with Taylor's doubts on the "socializing" value of these practices, that the mass incarceration of "unemployable males" was not a viable policy option for South Africa, but only because of financial unaffordability and the fact that most South African unemployed are female.

While entrenched ideological frameworks played an important part in shaping the Committee's intellectual debate, further constraints on the range of available options emanated directly from its position in relation to policy processes and institutions. An overarching preoccupation was, in particular, to present the Committee's possible recommendations as "sustainable" in light of the role of the Department of Finance as custodian of macroeconomic and fiscal discipline. According to Taylor[255], the very publication of the Committee's report, which was ready by July 2001, had to be delayed until November upon her insistence for the Department of Finance to provide a significant input and avoid an *ex post* veto on the Committee's recommendations. For Makiwane, acceptance of the BIG idea by the Finance Department required presenting the grant as conducive to "reducing crime and increasing work-seeking behaviour"[256], which for Asher included the BIG's functionality in creating jobs "even if this has to take place at wages below the minimum"[257]. To these concerns Kruger, from Finance, replied that his department was specifically concerned not so much with the job creating impact of the BIG, but rather with its cost combined to that of other grants[258]. In relation to the Department's alleged short-termism in its stance on costing, Meth observed "it bothers me very much, that is really a problem (…). It is such a gross issue that it stinks to the core"[259].

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[254] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, pp. 238-240.
[255] Interview with the Author, 8 August 2001.
[256] Fezile Makiwane, Interview with the Author, 16 October 2000.
[257] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.216.
[258] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.217.
[259] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.247-248.

Similar problems were raised with regard to the relationships between the Taylor Committee's process and the reform of the UIF, discussed in Chapter 3, which was simultaneously underway. The Unemployment Insurance Bill (UIB) that was negotiated at NEDLAC had left wide areas of exclusion from UIF coverage (domestic workers, public employees, atypical workers). The Committee was divided between those supporting the idea that the UIB process had to be delayed pending the Committee's arguably more progressive recommendations, and those who wanted to push the UIB forward for approval not to jeopardize its financial coverage. UIF Commissioner Mkhonto, however, argued that detaching the UIB from the work of the Committee implied "a lot of compromises, some of them (…) very reactionary"[260].

The debates in the Taylor Committee revealed a discursive contestation of the linkage between work and social citizenship whereby the reassertion of wage labour discipline tended to prevail over alternatives based on the decommodification of income. Social policy solutions that were inspired by this latter, like the BIG, were eventually predominantly seen as tools to facilitate labour market insertion, rather than devices to minimize labour market dependency. Such outcomes reflect, on one hand, perceptions "from below" of the structural nature of the employment crisis in the country, as discussed in the previous chapters. On the other hand, however, the Committee's solution to the gradual disappearance of decent, stable, well rewarded wage labour, with the associated imagery of emancipation and citizenship, reaffirmed wage labour as a disciplinary and moral device. While not addressing wage labour crisis in terms of identifiying structural alternatives, therefore, the Committee's emerging social citizenship discourse connected at an ideological level with the job creation, self-entrepeneurial motifs arising from the grassroots responses to the crisis.

The final report of the Taylor Committee reflected such tensions, ambiguities and contestations in the attempt to "resignify" the work-social citizenship nexus[261].

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[260] *Transcripts of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security*, Meeting of 19 and 20 April 2001, Vol.2, p.246. At the same time, according to Mkhonto (Interview with the Author, 2 October 2000), the Department of Finance and NEDLAC's business constituency requested to wait for the conclusion of the Committee's work as a delaying tactic to prevent the implementation of the financially onerous UIB agreed upon at NEDLAC.

[261] "Commodification" and "decommodification" are never mentioned in the report, while "social

The document recognized that "poverty and inequality in South Africa are rooted in the labour market" (RSA, 2002: 25), where "the wage-income relationship is breaking down" (RSA, 2002: 32) in terms both of unemployment and low-wage jobs. These latter were, however, identified within racial hierarchies (albeit with the recognition of widening disparities in African wages) and sectoral inequalities (with farmworkers and domestic workers being at the lower end of the spectrum), more than being related to differentiating typologies of labour contracts and to the emergence of "atypical" and flexible employment (RSA, 2002: 26). Manufacturing and public employees tended therefore to be represented as "relatively privileged", even if the household-based statistical measurements that supported these conclusions did not address wage sharing across extended families. As a result "poor" and "informally employed" are identified as the target groups, each with specific needs produced by the "two-fold nature of the South African economy" (RSA, 2002: 35), of social security policy. In recognizing that the UIF covers only 5% of the unemployed and that 60% of the poor have no social security coverage whatsoever, the report suggested that the growth of employment-linked benefits contributed to exclude the unemployed, informal and temporary workers.

The growth of "chronic poverty" also among the formally employed, moreover, challenged a Western view of social security focused on the "deserving" unemployed, especially in its "workfare" variant (RSA, 2002: 39). The conclusion was, in any case, that widespread lack of coverage exerted an upward pressure on breadwinners' wages, undermining "any worker support for labour flexibility" (RSA, 2002: 31). It seems therefore that the report actually regards social grants as facilitating the creation of low-wage, flexible jobs rather than reducing dependence upon them. The ability of informal sector employment alone to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality was, however, questioned, and the report's defense of social grants eschewed a merely residualist discourse to advocate decided redistributive interventions. These were however coded in a language that, apart from poverty reduction, sought to "enable household members to engage in the risk-taking behaviour so necessary to the generation of additional income" (RSA, 2002: 28).

The report defined "comprehensive social protection" as the provision of

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citizenship", mentioned only once, is not one of its central concepts.

> The basic means for all people living in the country to effectively participate and advance in social and economic life, and in turn to contribute to social and economic development. Comprehensive social protection is broader than the traditional concept of social security, and incorporates developmental strategies and programmes designed to ensure, collectively, at least a minimum acceptable living standard for all citizens. It embraces the traditional measures of social insurance, social assistance and social services, but goes beyond that to focus on causality through an integrated policy approach including many of the developmental initiatives taken by the state (RSA, 2002: 41).

Defining social protection in terms of a "package" of provisions to be available for all without requiring trade-offs among them addressed the Report's three-pronged conceptualization of poverty as involving "income", "capabilities" (like health, housing and education) and "assets" (divided in "income-generating" and "social capital"), but it also emphasized the need to "avoid dependence on cash benefits". The principles for administering such a social protection "package" were summarized as: "universal-as-possible" access, provided in a "non-work related manner and whose availability is not primarily dependent on an availability to pay" (RSA, 2002: 42). The universal components of the "package" were identified as the BIG, CSG and SOAP grants, free and adequate public healthcare, free primary and secondary education, and a lifeline of free water, electricity and sanitation.

Such a stark departure, in the direction of decommodified provisions, from the "special needs" emphasis in the 1997 White Paper conferred to "income poverty" a *de facto* priority. At the same time, however, the report presented "income" as a flat set of basic provisions that, in accordance with constitutional jurisprudence, could allow the state to "buy time" (RSA, 2002: 43) and delay more far-reaching redistributive measures. The report's criticism of public sector cutbacks and arguments that fiscal resources could be made available by reducing state support for private social security led it to reclaim a greater flexibility in macroeconomic and fiscal constraints, and a more progressive taxation which could enable, among other things, the total elimination of the means test (RSA, 2002: 47). The question of the BIG was discussed in the fifth

chapter of the report, which supported the idea of a monthly R100 basic income grant to address coverage gap and "encourage risk-taking and self-reliance" (RSA, 2002: 61). The report, however, acknowledged that "the conditions for an immediate implementation of the Basic Income Grant do not exist" (RSA, 2002: 62-63). Even if this conclusion was motivated on the basis of institutional inadequacies, it nonetheless represented a capitulation to conservative concerns and to the discourse of fiscal discipline. To confirm this, the report also rejected EPRI's "under-taxation" argument as the basis for an "immediate" implementation of comprehensive social protection (RSA, 2002: 64), opting instead for a "phased" approach (from 2004 to 2015), where due attention was paid to "issues of fiscal feasibility". Over the implementation period, the share of the GDP in terms of funding for universal provisions was supposed to grow from 6.5% in 2001 to 11.7% in 2015, while a strong expansion of mandatory contributions for insurance schemes should see the share of this kind of expenditure rise from 0.6% to 7% of the GDP over the same period (RSA, 2002: 148). Conversely, a more immediate and "urgent social imperative" is job creation, for which the report endorses various active labour market policies, including labour-intensive public works programmes, for which however it cautions on their limited impact and their wages, as low as R300 per month (RSA, 2002: 73).

By the end of 2004, the main recommendations of the Taylor Committee report had made limited and uneven inroads in fundamentally reshaping South Africa's social security system and social citizenship arrangements. The most important area of substantive implementation is the institutional one, where a Social Security Agency in charge of the centralized administration of social grants has been introduced along the lines proposed by the Committee. Recent announcements of the government's intention to introduce a social health insurance are also aimed at translating into practice Committee proposals. The Committee's most ambitious suggestions for decommodification and redistribution have been, however, forestalled by the intense hostility of the government and the ANC. The BIG, in particular, has been at the centre of a resurgent civil society mobilization spearheaded by the "BIG coalition", started

in 2001 with the participation of civil society organizations, academic entities and COSATU (Frye and Kallmann, 2003).

COSATU's support for the BIG allowed the issue to remain on the agenda of ANC policy debates and of the 2003 "Growth and Development Summit" (GDS) convened to identify programmes to address the unemployment crisis. The outcomes of such discussions, however, revealed a gradual foreclosure of spaces of political possibility for the basic income grant. The resolutions of the ANC's 2002 National Policy Conference supported the implementation of the Taylor Committee's comprehensive social security framework, but they never specifically mentioned the BIG. Rather, great emphasis was placed on the creation of short-term employment in the form of public works programmes for the sake of "pride and self-reliance of communities" (ANC, 2002). The final statement of the 2003 GDS commended once again public works and parsimony in limiting social grants to the non-working population. Reassertion of work ethic under the principle of *letsema*, intended as volunteerism and mobilization for development, in the government's *Vukuzenzele* ("Arise and Act") programme came to symbolise self-sacrifice, responsibility and renunciation of financial rewards in the ruling party's public discourse (Twala, 2004).

Conversely, in his 2003 "State of the Nation" address President Mbeki reaffirmed that the task of his government is to "reduce the number of people dependent on social welfare, increasing the numbers that rely for their livelihood on normal participation in the economy" (Mbeki, 2003). Few months after the publication of the Taylor Report, Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel had lambasted the BIG as an "unsustainable" and "populist" idea (Makino, 2003: 19). Subsequently, ANC ideologue and government spokesperson Joel Netshitenzhe agued for an emphasis on public works and volunteerism, adding that the best form of social inclusion for South Africans remains to "enjoy the opportunity, the dignity and the rewards of work". COSATU's Neil Coleman replied that in the country's context of mass unemployment, "offering the 'dignity of work' as opposed to social grants" is tantamount to a "cruel illusion" (Coleman, 2003: 122). The sidestepping of the BIG and of social policies of decommodification more generally, and the aggressive enforcement of work ethic and wage

discipline, lead Kumiko Makino (2003: 20) to conclude that the government and the ANC have ultimately preferred a "workfare" over a "basic income" response to the structural crisis of waged employment. The limitations, timidities and self-restraint with which the issue of the BIG was discussed in the Taylor Committee and in its final report, however, authorize doubts on whether even such a measure, if actually adopted, would have effectively provided an alternative to dependence on increasingly unstable, exploitative and unrewarding waged occupations.

8.5 Conclusion

The elaboration in the post-apartheid social policy discourse of, and responses to, the decline of waged employment as a mode of social insertion relates to the scenario outlined in previous chapters in ways that reinforce substantial continuities with the past while opening new spaces of contestation. Commenting on the social welfare system defined by the 1997 White Paper, Sevenhujisen et al. (2003: 305) write:

> We may conclude that there are different normative vocabularies at play that do not always fit easily together. The overarching framework can certainly be characterized as neoliberal; this shows in the emphasis on (economic) self-reliance, the development of human capital and respect for human rights. The neoliberal vocabulary is joined, however, by the more social democratic-orientated values of need, equity and basic welfare rights. But there is also an outspoken communitarian influence at play, stressing the family and the community (read women) as the primary location of care, which is potentially reinforced by invoking the principle of Ubuntu.

Such observations confirm the role of pragmatism and hybridity in the ideological and institutional practices that define South Africa's post-apartheid social citizenship arrangement. At the same time, while the flexibility of the system allows to accommodate multiple constituencies, in particular the demands of organized labour, it also permits to articulate them around a hard core of

principles and discourses reproduced through expert knowledge, macroeconomic constraints and technocratic decision-making.

A set of markers of continuity in the government's post-apartheid discourse are particularly evident: the centrality of wage labour in promoting social inclusion; the residual role of social provisions reduced to ensuring safety nets for the non-working population rather than to reduce dependence on the labour market; the construction of "poverty" in behavioural and psychological terms functional to advocating the poor's responsibility, initiative and sacrifice as primary modes of emancipation; the opposition to state "handouts" presented as perverted inducements to dependency and moral relaxation; the pre-eminence of work discipline and ethic as underlying conditions for effective citizenship; the use of community-based pseudo-traditional motifs to legitimize differential treatments between urban and rural areas, and between formal and informal economies. All these aspects, moreover, reveal the power and the importance, underlined in the Introduction, of morality and pedagogy in shaping scientific and policy elaborations of South Africa's "social question". In this regard, it has been noticed (Van Eeden, Ryke and De Necker, 2000: 22) how the welfare policy of late apartheid and of the ANC government share the view that autonomy and independence are essentially a prerogative of the individual and that upliftment from poverty is ultimately a matter of self-activation on the market, towards which public policies play an essentially supportive and remedial role.

The policy trajectory presented in this chapter, from the 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare to the 2001 report of the Taylor Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security, has tended to reaffirm the role of wage labour as the main vehicle of social insertion even in a context of erosion, when not disappearance, of wage labour as an emancipatory force in workers' daily lives, practices and imagination. In doing so, however, the signification of the wage labour-social citizenship nexus operated by the policy discourse "from above" has not been merely arbitrary or coercive. It has rather proved to be highly respondent to narratives and strategies that "from below" have tried to identify a way out of the jobs crisis in the form of individual entrepreneurialism and ethics. This convergence enabled a re-signification of South African social citizenship around

"job creation" discourses, where the government could present itself as committed to restore a social and moral order based on work, while eschewing responsibilities in the sphere of redistribution of resources, modification of social power relations, and reduction of dependency on the market.

The ANC's mode of "regulating the social" is not, however, without ambiguities and contradictions. The process that from the 1998 Jobs Summit has led to the Taylor Committee has been marked by a growing social awareness of wage labour's structural inadequacy to provide decent living standards. As a consequence, the simple equivalence between poverty and unemployment has been questioned even within official discourse. Moreover, expanding, predominantly African working class poverty has blurred the borders between employment and unemployment and widened the chasm between wage and income.

As a result, the Taylor Committee has, in a contested and controversial way, inserted a visible decommofication element in policy discourse, aided by civil society mobilization and organized labour's reorientation out of its traditional productivist paradigm. The most visible development in this sense has been the debate on the BIG as a measure potentially combining decommodification, universalism and redistribution. However, both the Taylor Committee and COSATU's analyses have retained a strong "active labour market" understanding in their approach to BIG. As a result, the status of the BIG concept remains unclear and torn between the function of supporting job-seeking behaviours or providing an income that is independent from individual labour market positions and vicissitudes. The Taylor Committee's obsequiousness towards fiscal sustainability and resource constraints, and its reluctance to back its BIG proposal with a strong implementation plan, did not help to steer the debate in the latter direction, nor did its prudence in determining the monetary amount of the proposed BIG. Under these conditions, the shift from selectivity to universalism heralded by the BIG idea can paradoxically become a reinforcement for wage discipline and commodification, by making the unemployed more ready to accept low wage jobs and provide for the retirement age with their own savings.

Finally, the hostility encountered by the BIG, and by the idea of decommodified universal income more generally, within the government and the ANC reproduces the dilemmas and the political quandaries inherent in the reassertion of wage labour discipline in a social context of wage labour decline. Social inequality, decay and impoverishment in workers' and communities' lives, in fact, question wage labour's "promise", which remained largely unfulfilled in the dawn of the new democracy.

Conclusion

Writing at the end of the 1980s about his experience in the union movement, Alfred T. Qabula (1989: 68-69), *imbongi* poet and worker at Durban's Dunlop plant, used the metaphor of a forest "full of wild fruit and dangers" to signify an imaginary place where "the homeless and the frightened", the insurgent and the militant could express resistance through escape from oppressive factory routine, police brutality, managerial racism and corrupt "traditional" authorities. The forest was also a place for those who "refused to work for nothing". Trade union organization is for him a road leading through that forest, where the black working class could regain fairness, dignity, just wages, citizenship:

> What we have made moves forward
> When its wheels wear out, our unity jolts it forward
> When they block it on its way to Capetown
> it does not lose its power, it roars ahead
> it grumbles on, with flames and fumes and anger (Qabula, 1989: 70)

Qabula's poem was published in 1989, the year before South Africa's transition to democracy began. The aim of this dissertation was to provide some elements to evaluate what is the current state of that "forest", or what has happened during democratic government's first decade to the space of claims, expectations, collective power and citizenship imagery that wage labour built out of its constitutive exploitation during the struggle against the racial socio-political order.

The making of South African democracy has been a process whereby, for the first time in the country's history, the languages and practice of state sovereignty have been geared towards equal citizenship rights and de-racialised social inclusion. An assumption underlying my research is that the use of sovereignty and governmentality for the purpose of social inclusion cannot be statically reduced to impersonal juridical formulations of rights, but as a dynamic process it is socially constructed and discursively mediated. Similarly to nation-

states everywhere, the new South African democracy was faced with the challenge of balancing universal enunciations of rights with the need to build forms of social discipline and control allowing the management of claims, demands and expectations arising from an extremely peculiar and dramatic context of social inequality. As in Gilles Deleuze's classical formulation, sovereignty cannot control what it cannot internalize, therefore discourse and ideology play a decisive role in translating the impersonality of the norm into languages that mirror grassroots desires. During the twentieth century expert knowledge at the service of the policy process refined statistical measurement as a tool that, by bridging the divide between the abstraction of the norm and the concreteness of social subjects, "invented" the economy and society "as part of the reconstruction of the effect of the state" (Mitchell, 1999: 93).

My definition of wage labour, social citizenship and their interactions as "contested fields of signification" underlines the importance of such a "translation" of norms into subjectivity, whereby sovereignty turns identities forged in labour's past struggles and demands into disciplinary icons, ethical obligations or, to recall Nelson Mandela's argument cited in the Introduction, "patriotic" praise of sacrifice. Biersteker and Weber (1996: 11) contend that "the meaning of sovereignty is negotiated out of interactions within intersubjectively identifiable communities". Here, competing state agencies and sovereignty discourses are in constant flux, constituting each other and both trying to articulate social subjects through rights, entitlements and responsibilities designed to elicit loyalty, predictability and rationality. The trajectory of the capitalist democratic-representative nation-state has framed a specific "intersubjectively identifiable community", wage labour, into a "social question", for whose solution the enunciation of social rights provided the *trait d'union* between state sovereignty and social inclusion.

This process, structured by practices of "governmentality", is characterized by recursive dynamics of mutual, non-reciprocal, often conflictual signification and re-signification. On one hand, social citizenship re-signifies wage labour, away from its possible radical claims, in the sense of work ethic, industriousness, parsimony and thrift. On the other hand, subjects emerging from wage labour and

its transformations try to signify abstract social citizenship discourse through changing and diversifying claims where, as Zizek would say, rights-based discourse never entirely suppresses a "leftover" of unspecified desire. From this perspective, the transition from state-driven welfarism to neoliberalism only changes the object of signification. Wage labour discipline becomes individualized, market-dependent and opposed to decommodification, which under the welfare state was, on the contrary, used as a tool to promote work ethic. Conversely, social citizenship claims are expressed by a broadening variety of subjects where the politics of identity and difference tends to supersede the homogeneity of class imageries, no matter how relevant class remains as a condition of legibility of structured oppression (Aronowitz, 2003).

In the African transition to post-coloniality, of which post-apartheid South Africa is part, the contested signification of the nexus between wage labour and social citizenship acquired highly specific features related to the constitutionalisation of labour as "free" and formally disentangled from previous forms of extra-market coercion. Freedom meant for labour both the recognition of the legitimacy of its citizenship claims and their channeling within the new disciplinary counduits and forms of hierarchical control defined first by the nationalist-developmentalist state and then by structural adjustment. In this process postcolonial discourse based on the romanticisation of anti-colonial resistance floundered (Scott, 2004: 130-131), but at the same time wage labour started to be questioned as a mythical repository of dignity, freedom and citizenship. It became instead an arena of contestation where dignity, freedom and citizenship have to be claimed vis-à-vis former resistance leaders turned into political elites and "patriotic" entrepreneurs.

The transformations of work in post-apartheid South Africa analysed in these pages reflect a similar trajectory. The promise of "free" wage labour in a democratic society came to emerge in black workers' opposition to apartheid, which transcended conditions of oppression, vulnerability, precariousness, institutionalized racism, coerced migrancy, urban segregation, workplace despotism. Social movement unionism in the 1980s enriched labour's imagery with a social citizenship discourse where, in response to the collapse of

livelihoods in the communities, issues of decommodification rose to prominence, albeit in uneven and contested ways. In their being re-signified as avenues to political freedom and social citizenship, the wage relation and the workplace were also criticized and transcended in workers' imagery. The late apartheid state and the ANC government in the new South Africa, however, shared to a significant extent a view whereby free labour could contribute to social stability and self-responsibility as an alternative to unruly social demands. The democratic government could accomplish this goal because it enjoyed the political legitimacy that the previous rulers, like colonial regimes in general as Frederick Cooper noticed, were lacking. The re-signification of the wage labour-social citizenship nexus in the new South Africa benefited from a legitimate constitutionalisation of wage labour, in the sense of work being regulated by the market and subtracted from despotic coercion. As a result the role of productive employment as the central vehicle of social participation, economic independence and political virtue was emphasised. The scenario defined by post-1994 neoliberal policy making allowed to reassert individual work ethic as an alternative to decommodified social provisions, rather than emphasizing these latter as an alternative to labour market dependence.

Public spending curtailment strengthened the historically entrenched selective and residual patterns in South African welfare policy, while leaving to labour market and family mechanisms the burden of reproducing livelihoods within increasingly commodified social relations. The decline of wage labour in post-apartheid South African society, and the hollowing out of its emancipatory promises as discussed in chapters from 4 to 7, are not only the result of permanent mass unemployment, growing casualisation and impasses in trade union politics, exacerbated as these might be by economic restructuring and liberalization. Indeed, the voices that emerge from chapters 6 and 7 are those of formal, permanent, mostly unionized workers, many of whom with skilled grades and many others with an employment duration that makes them see the transition out of the apartheid workplace regime as an empowering experience. Yet, these voices tell stories in which socio-economic decline, impoverishment, lack of fulfillment, precariousness and financial inadequacy are primarily experienced

from within formal waged occupations. Continuities and changes in relation to the past play a decisive role in shaping workers' discourse of wage labour crisis. The permanence of authoritarian, racialised practices in the workplace is compounded by deepening insecurity and, at the level of communities, increasingly commodified access to healthcare, housing, retirement income, transport and municipal services. Material realities of working class poverty and disempowerment emerging from my fieldwork findings roundly refute views that see waged workers as new "relatively privileged" middle class layers clearly separated from the poor and the unemployed. Instead, my rejection of binary, polarized categories as explanations for South Africa's social question is also an urgent call for further research into the ways in which wage labour reproduces poverty and social marginalisation.

Workers' generalized awareness of the structural nature of the decline of wage labour are associated with patterns of response that, conversely, are far more complex, diversified and ambiguous. My findings do not authorize the conclusion that an alternative social citizenship imagery, let alone one premised on decommodification, is rising from the ashes of wage labour's emancipatory project. Workers' perceptions of stable waged employment's generalized disappearance, heightened by the cataclysmic impact of unemployment in poverty-stricken townships, are associated with various strategies -- from attempts to reconfigure community lifeworlds to individualized self-activation -- that proactively and creatively express a growing indifference to wage labour as a material reality.

From this point of view, my findings support the conclusion, which sits uncomfortably with those who argue that labour market exclusion nurtures attitudes to passivity and "dependency", that agency and initiative are not thwarted by job insecurity and vulnerability. These may in many case indeed provide new opportunities, albeit at a largely survivalist level. When I moved from the level of strategies to that of discourse and signification, however, "job creation" remains the cornerstone of grassroots long-term responses to social crises. This apparently contradictory result is clarified by unpacking the meanings attached to the "job creation" demand, which to a large extent expresses not so

much a longing for factory work, but a nostalgic, and often quite conservatively-phrased, evocation of a social order based on wage labour as a guarantor of established forms of authority and deference.

The post-apartheid policy discourse has responded to the material collapse of wage labour as a condition for dignified existences with an aggressive reassertion of wage labour centrality as a mode of social inclusion. Instrumental to this development have been the use of expert knowledge in categorizing poverty as lack of employment, the recodification of poverty as a moral and behavioural construct in order to divide "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, the resumption of pseudo-traditionalist themes of colonial origins as a way to emphasise self-help and responsibility, and the stigmatization of welfare "dependency" as a justification for the withdrawal of decommodified social provisions. Out of this policy trajectory, wage labour emerge as a "master-signifier" of social existence. In a truly Lacanian sense, it in fact envisages an idealised social subject -- the patriotic, hard-working, law-abiding, family-responsible, morally frugal and politically moderate poor – whose very material absence reinforces its claim to discipline more "unruly" desires. The re-signification by the ANC government of wage labour as an ethical construct in direct opposition to claiming "handouts" responded to, and was influenced by, the permanence of "job creation" in rank-and-file views as an imaginary solution to social problems.

Crucial in this interaction is the role of trade union discourse which, after the decline of social movement unionism, is increasingly challenged to elaborate new languages and demands to address social constituencies beyond union members themselves. Indeed, the democratic transition has largely coincided with the strengthening of a mode of argumentation in trade union leadership that has marginalized social citizenship views based on decommodification. For example, while I was writing this conclusion, Neva Makgetla, COSATU's most distinguished economic expert, expressed the opinion that the inadequacy of retirement benefits should be countered mainly through job creation policies[262].

Important shifts, discussed at the end of Chapter 8, in labour and scholarly consensus, and renewed contestations in South African policy discourse indicate

[262] N. Makgetla, "Best Retirement Policy for Workers is Job Creation", *Business Day*, 29 July 2005.

the emergence, albeit in controversial and often ambiguous ways, of innovative readings of the country's "social question". These provide a nuanced picture of modes of labour market insertion that generate poverty and social exclusion, and overtly advocate the provision of decommodified forms of universal income as an autonomous sphere of policy intervention. Further developments in these debates are open to great uncertainty, as they remain hotly contested and will probably be affected by a global contestation of neoliberal discourse whose outcomes are as yet unpredictable.

At the same time, a recent resurgence of radical social movement politics identifies commodification -- in the form, for example, of housing evictions, water and electricity cutoffs for rate defaulters, and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS – as a priority terrain of contestation. On the question of the basic income grant as well, civil society mobilization has played a crucial role, sometimes in alliance, sometimes in substitution of organized labour. Future research on conflicts over the meanings of social citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, therefore, will require a close attention to identities and claims that, inhabiting the space of desires and claims "left over" by the decline of wage labour, could disclose new possibilities to re-signify the South African transition.

List of Interviews

a. Workplace Interviews

- Baldwin's Steel, Brakpan (Interviews #1-20): #1: 12-07-1999; #2: 12-07-1999; #3: 15-07-1999; #4: 19-07-1999; #5: 19-07-1999; #6: 19-07-1999; #7: 22-07-1999; #8: 26-07-1999; #9: 26-07-1999; #10: 28-07-1999; #11: 28-07-1999; 04-08-1999; #12: 04-08-1999; #13: 10-08-1999; #14: 12-08-1999; #15: 12-08-1999; #16: 18-08-1999; #17: 18-08-1999; #18: 03-09-1999; #19: 07-09-1999; #20: 14-09-1999.

- Union Carriage and Wagon, Nigel (Interviews #21-40): #21: 24-07-1999; #22: 24-07-1999; #23: 24-07-1999; #24: 31-07-1999; #25: 31-07-1999; #26: 07-08-1999; #27: 07-08-1999; #28: 14-08-1999; #29: 14-08-1999; #30: 17-08-1999; #31: 17-08-1999; #32: 25-08-1999; #33: 25-08-1999; #34: 01-09-1999; #35: 08-09-1999; #36: 08-09-1999; #37: 15-09-1999; #38: 15-09-1999; #39: 22-09-1999; #40: 29-09-1999.

- Kelvinator, Alrode (Interviews #41-60): #41: 05-10-1999; #42: 05-10-1999; #43: 12-10-1999; #44: 12-10-1999; #45: 20-10-1999; #46: 20-10-1999; #47: 26-10-1999; #48: 28-10-1999; #49: 28-10-1999; #50: 04-11-1999; #51: 04-11-1999; #52: 04-11-1999; #53: 11-11-1999; #54: 18-11-1999; #55: 18-11-1999; #56: 18-11-1999; #57: 23-11-1999; #58: 23-11-1999; #59: 25-11-1999; #60: 02-12-1999.

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  Group Discussion #1: 10-11-1999.

- GJMC Roads, Johannesburg (Interviews #101-140): #101: 07-11-1999; #102: 07-11-1999; #103: 13-11-1999; #104: 20-11-1999; #105: 26-11-1999; #106: 03-12-1999; #107: 06-12-1999; #108: 06-

12-1999; #109: 13-12-1999; #110: 13-12-1999; #111: 17-01-2000; #112: 17-01-2000; #113: 17-01-2000; #114: 26-01-2000; #115: 26-01-2000; #116: 05-02-2000; #117: 05-02-2000; #118: 12-02-2000; #119: 12-02-2000; #120: 19-02-2000; #121: 25-02-2000; #122: 03-03-2000; #123: 10-03-2000; #124: 10-03-2000; #125: 10-03-2000; #126: 23-03-2000; #127: 23-03-2000; #128: 23-03-2000; #129: 29-03-2000; #130: 29-03-2000; #131: 29-03-2000; #132: 11-04-2000; #133: 11-04-2000; #134: 11-04-2000; #135: 14-04-2000; #136: 14-04-2000; #137: 14-04-2000; #138: 17-04-2000; #139: 17-04-2000; #140: 20-04-2000.

Group Discussion #2: 01-11-1999.

- Paperlink, Germiston (Interviews #141-160): #141: 21-02-2000; #142: 21-02-2000; #143: 29-02-2000; #144: 29-02-2000; #145: 06-03-2000; #146: 06-03-2000; #147: 13-03-2000; #148: 13-03-2000; #149: 20-03-2000; #150: 20-03-2000; #151: 22-03-2000; #152: 22-03-2000; #153: 31-03-2000; #154: 31-03-2000; #155: 05-04-2000; #156: 05-04-2000; #157: 13-04-2000; #158: 13-04-2000; #159: 21-04-2000; #160: 21-04-2000.

- Nampak Corrugated, Wadeville (Interviews #161-180): #161: 01-03-2000; #162: 01-03-2000; #163: 01-03-2000; #164: 04-03-2000; #165: 04-03-2000; #166: 11-03-2000; #167: 11-03-2000; #168: 11-03-2000; #169: 17-03-2000; #170: 17-03-2000; #171: 17-03-2000; #172: 24-03-2000; #173: 24-03-2000; #174: 30-03-2000; #175: 30-03-2000; #176: 06-04-2000; #177: 06-04-2000; #178: 15-04-2000; #179: 15-04-2000; #180: 15-04-2000.

- Consol Glass, Wadeville (Interviews #181-200): #181: 04-03-2000; #182: 08-03-2000; #183: 08-03-2000; #184: 15-03-2000; #185: 21-03-2000; #186: 27-03-2000; #187: 27-03-2000; #188: 27-03-2000; #189: 03-04-2000; #190: 03-04-2000; #191: 03-04-2000; #192: 10-04-2000; #193: 10-04-2000; #194: 22-04-2000; #195: 29-04-2000; #196: 29-04-2000; #197: 05-05-2000; #198: 05-05-2000; #199: 08-05-2000; #200: 12-05-2000.

- MB Glass, Leondale (Interviews #201-220): #201: 01-04-2000; #202: 01-04-2000; #203: 08-04-2000; #204: 08-04-2000; #205: 12-04-2000; #206: 12-04-2000; #207: 16-04-2000; #208: 16-04-2000; #209: 23-04-2000; #210: 28-04-2000; #211: 28-04-2000; #212: 06-05-2000; #213: 06-05-2000; #214: 09-05-2000; #215: 13-05-2000; #216: 13-05-2000; #217: 16-05-2000; #218: 16-05-2000; #219: 16-05-2000; #220: 20-05-2000.

- Sappi Enstra, Springs (Interview #221, shop-steward): 19 May 2000

- Kimberly Clark, Springs (Interview #222, shop-steward): 24 May 2000

- PFG Glass, Springs (Interview #223, shop-steward): 27 May 2000

- Roelf De Beer, EO, Waste Management, Western Metropolitan Local Council, 19 October 2000

- Andy Fenn, Financial Director, Kelvinator, 20 October 1999

- Fernando Perneta, Labour Broker, UCW-FEDMO, 21 October 1999

- Keith Roach, Work Manager, Baldwin's Steel, 27 October 1999

- Joe Lekhasi, Human Resources Manager, UCW, 3 November 1999

- Simon Koch, CEO, Kelvinator, 17 November 1999 (by telephone)

- Alan Agaienz, Project Manager for the Establishment of the Johannesburg Roads Agency, 27 January 2000.

- Peter Howard, Manager, GJMC Central Roads Depot, 16 February 2000.

- Anton van Niekerk, Manager, GJMC Waterval Waste Depot, 17 February 2000.

- Edgar Kgosi, Human Resources Manager, Sappi Enstra, 7 March 2000.

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- Ellen Roberts, Logistics Manager, Paperlink, 5 April 2000.

- William Sithole, Human Resources Manager, Nampak Corrugated Wadeville, 10 April 2000.

b. Trade Unions and Policy Interviews

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- Osborne Galeni, NUMSA National Organiser for the Dorbyl Group, 11 August 1999.

- Zweli Livi, NUMSA Alberton Local Organiser, 16 September 1999.

- George Madiseng, NUMSA Springs Local Organiser, 11 November 1999.

- Makgane Thobejane, GJMC Labour Relations Specialist, 16 March 2000.

- Andile Nyambezi, CEPPWAWU Germiston Local Organiser, 7 April 2000.

- Hlubi Biyana, SAMWU Johannesburg Branch Organiser, 17 April 2000.

- Dinga Sikwebu, NUMSA National Education Co-ordinator, 18 April 2000.

- Paul Biyase, NUMSA National Benefits Co-ordinator, 18 April 2000.

- Elias Monage, NUMSA National Engineering Co-ordinator, 20 April 2000.

- Jan Mahlangu, CEPPWAWU National Benefits Co-ordinator and CINPF Co-ordinator, 25 April 2000.

- Victor Mhlongo, SAMWU International Relations Officer, 19 May 2000.

- Petal Thring, Lecturer, Graduate School of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand, 22 May 2000.

- Bengeza Mthombeni, CEPPWAWU Deputy General Secretary and COSATU Representative in NEDLAC's Labour Market Chamber and Unemployment Insurance Board, 12 June 2000.

- Cynthia Alvilar, Acting Chief Director, Labour Market Policy and Director of Research Policy, Department of Labour, 13 June 2000.

- Leila Patel, Director General, Department of Welfare (1995-1998), 22 June 2000.

- Shadrack Mkhonto, Unemployment Insurance Fund Commissioner, 2 October 2000.

- Ravi Naidoo, Director, National Labour and Economic Development Institute, 15 October 2000.

- Fezile Makiwane, Director for Social Security, Department of Social Development, 16 October 2000.

- Neil Coleman, Head, COSATU Parliamentary Office, 24 October and 1 December 2000.

- Sanjee Singh, Assistant Director, Policy and Evaluation, Gauteng Housing Department, 1 November 2000.

- Michelle De Bruyn, Labour Market Chamber Co-ordinator, NEDLAC, 7 November 2000.

- Anusha Makka, Public Finance and Monetary Policy Chamber Co-ordinator, NEDLAC, 7 November 2000.

- Alex van den Heever, Advisor, Council for Medical Schemes and Department of Social Development, Co-ordinator of the Taylor Committee of Inquiry, 29 November 2000.

- Lucky Mphafudi, Chief Town and Regional Planner, Human Settlement Policy Directorate, Department of Housing, 8 May 2001.

- Diat von Broembsen, Chief Director of Policy Planning, Department of Housing, 7 August 2001.

- Viviene Taylor, Advisor to the Minister of Social Development, 8 August 2001.

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b. Archives

DH: Resource Centre of the Department of Housing, Pretoria.

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GL: Library of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, Johannesburg.

LP: Library of Parliament, Cape Town.

NUMSA: Collections of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, Johannesburg.

SAMWU: Collections of the South African Municipal Workers Union, Johannesburg.

Wits DHP: Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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