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The making of Krugersdorp, 1887-1923

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INTRODUCTION

Overview, Literature Review and Chapter Outline

Overview

Perched on the western edge of the Witwatersrand, Krugersdorp was both a typical and an atypical mining town. It was typical in the sense that it sprang up virtually overnight like boomtowns elsewhere and it shared with these urban spaces a measure of precariousness and violence. It was unusual, however, because it was occupied by a large Dutch-speaking population of farmers who interacted with the English-speaking miners to a degree that was not found elsewhere. It was both a Boer *dorp* and a rough-neck mining town, serving as an agricultural centre as well as an administrative centre for the western goldfields. This intertwined history of 'Boer and Briton' makes Krugersdorp a fascinating place to examine.

Krugersdorp evolved in a complex way from a ramshackle, transient mining camp called the 'Devil's Dorp' where life was cheap, to a settled, stable and attractive small town possessed of paved roads, piped water and street lights, by the turn of the century. At the same time its Boer and largely British mining population shaped and moulded the town in ways that reflected their corresponding values so that its different parts were marked by contrasting 'Transvaal Republic' and 'Imperial Edwardian' architecture.

Churches sprang up at important crossroads in a way that suggests that their sponsors were trying to influence the transient white miners to settle, while white, English-speaking middle class professionals and shopkeepers built substantial shops and homes to demonstrate that they had struck down roots into the town. It was, however, a distinctly 'British' town that that they were planning to build based on 'British' stands and with all the shops and features of a British town reproduced on the veld.

In the years immediately following the South African War of 1899-1902, Krugersdorp acquired two new and distinctive characteristics. It became an overtly British chauvinist ‘Jingo’ town and large numbers of children were born in its environs. These were separate developments but were also intertwined in important ways.

In the aftermath of peace, Krugersdorp celebrated the crowning of the new British monarch by laying out the ‘Coronation Park’ on the Southeast side of the town, not far from the Paardekraal Monument further north. This latter monument had been built only a few years earlier to commemorate Boer victory over the British in the First Boer War of Independence, 1880-1. Across the town new British buildings like the Town Hall confronted older Transvaal Republican structures like the Police Station, Railway Station and Magistrate’s courts. The ideological struggle between Boer and Briton was inscribed into the built environment

Krugersdorp’s streets were regularly bedecked with Union Jacks and bunting over the next few years to celebrate a range of Imperial occasions as well as visits by eminent British figures. On one occasion, a giant gilded crown was strung across Market Street while a band played British marching tunes in the Market Square. Virtually all the new buildings erected during this period were constructed in the ‘Edwardian’ style and given patriotic names like ‘Victoria’ and ‘Jubilee’. Krugersdorp was transformed into a British town but still retained many of its older aspects as a Transvaal Republican Boer *dorp*.

During the same period, many hitherto transient white miners began to settle down in Krugersdorp and to raise families. Most of these miners were English-speaking and had British roots; some were from Cornwall, others had come from Britain via Canada, California, Australia and various South African mining towns like Kimberley and Pilgrim’s Rest. British victory in the South African War had given these nomadic miners the confidence to set down roots in Krugersdorp and to raise families or to bring existing families from overseas to live with them in the town. Within a very short period, Krugersdorp had transformed from a rough mining town of young males into a settled town with

a more balanced demographic mix of men and women. As families were established, Krugersdorp quite suddenly acquired hundreds of small children.

The impact of this demographic change was striking. Music halls, saloons and gambling dens faded away and were replaced by restaurants, concert halls, a park and a municipal library. Women pushed their babies in perambulators on the sidewalks and in the park. The local newspaper advertised a range of baby formulas, clothes and toys that local shops were stocking. Municipal building plans had to be altered to take into account this new reality. A swimming pool in the park proved too deep and had to be provided with a shallow end, playgrounds had to be built and a municipal fruit orchard had to be scrapped because of fears of juvenile theft. Above all else, the town had to build schools and had to ensure that it was safe for school children to walk to and from school by, for example, building a bridge over one of its streams.

These twin developments of ‘Jingo’ town and a ‘child-centred’ town became intertwined in an ‘imperial project’ of raising white English-speaking children as patriotic Britons. The schools were built in sturdy Edwardian-style manner and the curriculum emphasized British Imperial glory in history, geography and literature classes. School children were dragooned into parades on Empire Day and cajoled by organizations like the Guild of Loyal Women to write essays on the British Empire. Boys were recruited into cadet squads while girls began to learn sewing to prepare them for a life as ‘imperial mothers’.

This did not last, however, and by 1905 Krugersdorp had evolved into a more ideologically harmonious ‘hybrid’ town where a nascent ideology of South Africanism brought Boer and Briton closer together. There were many pressures that steered developments in this direction including the relatively small size of the town and its population. English-speaking townsmen, for example, interacted with Dutch-speaking farmers at the morning market, farmers bought goods from shopkeepers who hailed from Britain and both groups mingled regularly through a range of social activities including those organised by the Krugersdorp Club and the local rugby association. The built

environment began to reflect these changes, notably in the form of the Wanderers Sports Stadium that was established between the Paardekraal Monument and the Coronation Park.

These changes were reflected in Krugersdorp's youth who did not take well to the imperial project. Working class children were frequently absent from class according to School logs while Dutch-speaking children were deliberately withdrawn in protest against the process of 'Anglicisation' that was introduced into the schools. English-speaking parents were unhappy about the quality of both school buildings and the curriculum, leading to changes that reflected the nascent South Africanism described above.

Letters to the local newspaper extolled the virtues of the 'Colonial Boy' and 'Colonial Girl' in preference to the imperial project. The Boy Scouts movement, which represented a compromise between the colonial and imperial, attracted a few middle-class children when it was introduced a few years after the War. Even this opportunity failed to appeal to Krugersdorp's young working-class children who ran barefoot in the veld and swam in the dams nearby. One of the main reasons why Krugersdorp began to assume a different character was that the youth, particularly as they grew older, simply wanted to have fun and this meant dances where both sexes were invited. Their parents, inspired by the Edwardian 'Gospel of Fun' indulged them and a more relaxed philosophy of 'let and let live' South Africanism was the result.

Like mining towns elsewhere in the world, Krugersdorp matured into a settled town occupied by families but unlike such towns in Australia and California, it contained a substantial population of Africans, Indians and coloureds who were segregated into their own residential and business areas. While this was typical of most South African towns, Krugersdorp's racial spaces evolved in ways that were distinctive and unusual.

Indians penetrated Krugersdorp's commercial spaces to a degree that was unprecedented and yet faced harassment from the white-dominated Town Council that was so ruthless and unrelenting that Krugersdorp became the

benchmark of anti-Indian legislation and orchestrated social harassments like the boycotts of Indian-owned shops. Indians faced a barrage of municipal regulations and Provincial Ordinances aimed at denying them trading licenses and at confining them to a distant 'Indian Bazaar'. The white professional and commercial elite in the town used every opportunity to deny their Indian competitors a foothold in the town.

Inspired and led, at various times, by a young barrister called Mohandas Gandhi, Krugersdorp's Indians marched, protested and finally ignored the law, to set up shops in the centre of Krugersdorp around the Market Square. While these struggles were by no means unique in South Africa, they were unusual for their ferocity and the ingenuity that was employed on both sides. Lawyers and magistrates still cite *Dadoo v Krugersdorp Municipality, 1920* as case law to demonstrate how Indian shareholders in a company were able to evade restrictions on Indian land ownership. The evasion of law through the exploitation of legal loopholes was raised to a high art by Krugersdorp's Indian community.

Similarly, Indians still recall, whether they lived in Krugersdorp or not, the anti-Indian MP for Krugersdorp, Sir Abe Bailey who became their nemesis. Krugersdorp white shopkeepers and professionals led the rest of the Rand in innovative exercises such as the launch of the anti-Indian Krugersdorp White League and White Hawkers' Association. Indian location residents, for their part, defied the municipality and refused to move to a distant Indian bazaar in what was probably the earliest example of Gandhi's passive resistance on record. The struggle between white, mainly 'British' shopkeepers and their Indian, mainly Muslim, counterparts, was played out on two arenas, the courts and in the media.

The struggle in the courts, which has already been alluded to, was remarkable in the sense that Indian (and also Chinese, Assyrian and other 'non-white') shopkeepers won a dramatic series of legal battles. The real struggle, however, took place in the media and at the level of the semiotic where Indians were portrayed by their rivals in the lurid images of disease while

white shopkeepers were portrayed as price gougers seeking to make a profit out of the struggling consumer.

Although the battle was unequal in the sense that the local newspaper favoured the white shopkeepers, the Indian community of Krugersdorp fought a surprisingly successful counter-campaign that denied their reputation as disease-ridden while, at the same time, portraying Indian shopkeepers as the white consumer's best friend. White housewives, the poor Dutch-speaking residents of the white suburb of Burghershoop and white Dutch-speaking farmers clearly favoured Indian shopkeepers and constantly undermined attempts to isolate the Indian commercial community.

A comparison between the Indian community in Krugersdorp, on the one hand, and the African and Coloured community on the other hand presents both similarities and differences. Like the Indians, Africans and Coloureds were isolated into their own combined 'location' very early in Krugersdorp's history, starting in 1890. Krugersdorp's white-dominated Town Council adopted a relentless segregationism that kept black residents isolated from the white population in a range of ways, including a notorious sidewalks clause that compelled Africans (but not Coloureds) to walk in the streets and gutters rather than on the sidewalks which were reserved for white residents.

After the South African War, however, for a range of complex reasons but principally as a result of the adoption of the ideology of 'liberal segregationism' by influential elements of the white-dominated Town Council, the municipality began to offer concessions to the middle-class Africans and to the Coloured community as a whole. Broadly speaking, an attempt by the white middle class to strike an alliance with middle class African and Coloured elements in the face of increasing violence that emanated from the African working-class and *lumpenproletarian* elements who together constituted the 'dangerous' classes of Krugersdorp. Such concessions were never extended to the Indian community and it is remarkable to compare for example, the building of a 'Model Location' for Africans and Coloureds with the neglect of the Indian location in Krugersdorp.

Well-built houses were erected at the ‘New Location’ in 1912 for Africans and Coloureds, dressed out with red roofs and stone-coloured walls. A tarred road extended to its entrance and ‘innumerable trees’ were planted at this site which was at a higher elevation than distant neighbouring white suburbs. The Indian location, by contrast, consisted of low, mean shelters, some of which housed as many animal as human occupants. The houses were jumbled and crowded together in a haphazard way.

The houses in the New Location were, by contrast, neat, with aligned sides and streets organised into an orderly grid pattern. Clearly Indians were the enemies of the white-dominated Town Council, where commercial and professional interests predominated, while the African middle class was groomed to become their allies by having their new homes styled to British middle-class standards inspired, apparently, by the Garden City movement in the Britain.

Things did not, however, turn out as planned. Very few residents of the ‘Old Location’ were prepared to move to the relatively distant and isolated ‘New Location’. The houses there were more expensive to build and they were situated too far from white suburbs and the railway station for the large numbers of black women who made a living working as domestic service and by taking in laundry. Lumbered with an expensive white elephant, the white-dominated Town Council turned against the African middle classes and the Coloured community by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

A new location was established at Randfontein which was to become a ‘model’ of harsh or ‘repressive’ segregation that can be described as a ‘ghetto’. Devoid of shops, placed far from Krugersdorp and the only location on the Rand to be fenced, the Randfontein Location seems to be born out of a desire for revenge on the part of the white Town Council. Yet, surprisingly, the location became popular among Africans living in the Old Location and nearby mine locations who flocked to it in droves. The Randfontein Location grew rapidly, quickly overtaking the New Location as the second largest black

residential area and threatening to overtake the Old Location as the most sought-after location for local Africans to live.

Part of the explanation lies in its proximity to the small white village of Randfontein which provided some domestic work, but its main attraction was the proximity of the mines and the Railway station. Most black women – who formed the majority of the location's population – made a living from brewing and selling illicit liquor to black miners and the Randfontein Estates G.M. Co. Ltd. was one of the largest mines on the Rand, if not the world.

Those black women who made a living from taking in washing, found the proximity of the Randfontein railway station appealing as it was just a short, and relatively affordable trip to Krugersdorp railway station and the white working class suburbs in southern Krugersdorp. When the white Town Council built the Lewisham Location in 1920 it learnt its lessons and eschewed both 'Model Location' and 'ghetto', preferring instead a compromise that offered modest concessions to the African middle class while avoiding the harshest features of the Randfontein Location.

While black women helped to shape the racialised spaces of Krugersdorp's built environment in this way, white women also proved to be influential and helped to 'make' Krugersdorp into the town it became during World War One. White, middle class female activists organised effective pressure campaigns around temperance, women's suffrage and social purity that successfully weakened white male power and curtailed white male sexuality. Their success was short-lived, however, and by the last two years of the First World War, their influence began to wane.

The first and primary campaign of white female activism focussed on temperance and their main organisation was the Krugersdorp branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union or WCTU. While ostensibly campaigning for temperance, this body of about thirty women began a concerted campaign to turn Krugersdorp and its neighbours 'dry' in 1914 and 1915. Liquor licensing courts were harassed to the point that licences were

denied to a range of applicants and the whole suburb of Burghershoop remained free of liquor outlets.

Young men who enlisted to fight for Britain during the war were progressively denied access to liquor while serving for King and Country until even officers were forced to carry permission slips to obtain liquor. Patriotism of the fiercely ‘Jingo’ kind which was last seen in Krugersdorp shortly after the South African War, returned with a vengeance but it was appropriated for the cause of eradicating drink from the town. In 1916 Krugersdorp’s WCTU campaigned for a ‘Direct Veto’ to turn Johannesburg ‘dry’ with the intention of spreading this to campaign to Krugersdorp shortly thereafter.

A backlash from enlisted men, civilian men and women, as well as officers, meant that this victory was short-lived. The Liquor Licensing courts ignored the WCTU protestors and issued every liquor licence that they received in the years 1917 and 1918. The WCTU disappeared from the public and from local media thereafter.

A similar trajectory can be detected in the social purity and women’s suffrage campaigns that were also fought by the WCTU although other women’s groups such as the Krugersdorp Women’s Reform Club and the South African Women’s Federation also became involved. The campaign for social purity involved several different strands but its main aim was to raise the age of consent for girls to 16 years of age throughout the Union. In 1916 this ambition was achieved but the legislation was problematical and in the years that followed, little was heard of social purity issues.

Finally the campaign for female suffrage also peaked in the early years of World War One when the municipal vote and the right to stand as Town Councillors was extended to white women. In 1915, the first municipal election campaign was launched by women candidates in Krugersdorp but while they acquitted themselves well, none were elected. In 1916 and in the years thereafter, until much later, no female candidates stood for Town Council.

The common experience of all three campaigns was that they achieved substantial successes during the first two years of the First World War and then, having peaked, began to decline into obscurity. Part of the reason was that their missions were substantially accomplished but also the campaigns of female activists antagonized many white males and many white females as well. The main reason for the collapse of these movements was the prolonged nature of the war. The absence of men had provided white female activists some space but as the casualties mounted, white, English-speaking society began to rally behind what came to be called the ‘War Effort’. The social purity, female suffrage and temperance campaigns distracted from this patriotic effort to support the ‘men in uniform’ and divided society into competing sexes. A backlash in favour of domesticity finally won out and this led to a drift of female activists literally back to the home.

Krugersdorp was shaped by many different socio-cultural, political and economic forces over its first thirty-six years. While the white, mainly English-speaking middle class loomed large, their Dutch-speaking counterparts also played an important role. The white working class began to increasingly emerge as an influential force by the First World War when Labour candidates began to be elected and they influenced municipal policy, especially in terms of racialised space, as municipal voters who strongly supported segregation but also in terms of their plans to build a white working-class town.

The Indian traders and hawkers helped to ‘make’ Krugersdorp’s built environment by defying the Town Council and by infiltrating throughout the town. The African and Coloured middle and working class frustrated the Town Council’s plans time and time again as they pursued their own strategies for economic survival, shaping Krugersdorp’s racialised spaces in the process. Finally, both white women and white children played important roles in shaping and moulding Krugersdorp at strategic times in its history. This is how Krugersdorp was made.

Literature Review

An historical account of the making of Krugersdorp between 1887 and 1923 is necessarily an interdisciplinary, multi-paradigmatic, eclectic project. Any attempt critically to analyse how and why an urban environment originated in a specific locale, took root and then rapidly developed through various stages into a major town, cannot be undertaken within the confines of single discipline. While history – or more precisely social history – is the dominant paradigm that provides the overall structure and much of the vital detail of this study, other disciplines and paradigms have also been utilized to prop up shaky structural sections and to fill in the blank spaces in the corners that social history cannot reach.

There are a several secondary sources that examine Krugersdorp's early years in detail in an attempt to explain how and why it was established. These sources also explore the multitude of problems that beset the first inhabitants and how these were ultimately overcome so that the town could become a permanently settled urban environment. However, these sources fall within the domain of antiquarian works and Afrikaner Nationalist history and so are problematical in various ways that need to be considered here. These sources must be approached with caution even though they appear to contain many important details and observations that shed light on the early Krugersdorp.

An early history of Krugersdorp by Ramsay MacNab and Smith is a good example of an antiquarian source.[1] It is undated but gauging by the content, it was written early in the last century. Strictly speaking, this work is really a trade directory and thus a primary source but it is prefaced with a lengthy introduction that recounts the town's early history in considerable detail with many illustrative photographs. Another important source is Burger's unpublished 'history' of Krugersdorp,[2] which also falls within the antiquarian mode. Another valuable source is a collection of photos with captions that was

[1] W. Ramsay MacNab and J. W. Smith, *Guide to Krugersdorp and the West Rand*, W. & A.K. Johnston Ltd, Edinburgh and London, n.d.
[2] Krugersdorp Public Library, B. Burger, 'Die Geskiedenis van Krugersdorp tot 1952', unpublished typed manuscript, 1953.

published to commemorate Krugersdorp's Centenary in 1987.[3] I have found all three works useful in terms of basic information as both works are packed with minutiae of painstaking accuracy.

These studies explain why Krugersdorp was given its name and relate revealing 'tales' concerning its early 'pioneer' days that provide important insights into the fragility of the town during its formative years. I have also used antiquarian works on other South African towns like Cape Town[4] and Johannesburg and the East Rand[5] for the purpose of comparison and context. The titles of these works suggest that they are concerned with 'social scenes', the 'streets' and the 'way of life' that are pertinent to a study of the making of town.

Antiquarian secondary sources have to be approached with caution, however, as these works ignore large swathes of the experiences of ordinary urban residents in favour of what was deemed 'colourful' or 'of interest'. These works were written as commercial propositions, to be sold to discerning middle class readers as so-called 'coffee table' books. Antiquarian studies have little in common with professional academic history apart from a superficial concern for the 'past' and the employment of a 'narrative' to 'tell the story' of a particular town's past. The word 'antiquarian' here refers to narrative that simply records events without analysis or historical interpretation. Historians seldom refer to such works as sources as a result.

Such neglect is, on the face of it, justified as in the South African case, black residents are almost completely absent from most antiquarian works and women are marginalized and trivialised into examples of 'fashion', a 'way of life' or used to illustrate arcane concerns like 'etiquette'. The writing is also overwhelmingly descriptive and if analysis is included, it is theoretically ill-informed, speculative and poorly supported by evidence. Antiquarian writing,

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[3] Krugersdorp Town Council, *Krugersdorp 100 jare/years*, Volks Beperk, Krugersdorp, 1987.
[4] See, for example, E. Rosenthal, *Fishorns and Hansom Cabs: Life in Victorian Cape Town*, A.D. Donker, Cape Town, 1977.
[5] See, for example, E. Rosenthal, *Gold! Gold! Gold*! MacMillan, London, 1970 and D. Humphriss, *Benoni, Son of My Sorrow*, Town Council of Benoni, Benoni, 1968.

furthermore, fails to inform the reader of the sources employed by the writer: there are no footnotes, no bibliography and no sense that what is being reported constitutes contested terrain and is the subject of historical debate. Like school textbooks, such work makes claims to authoritativeness by 'naturalising' the knowledge it puts forward as the 'truth' and need to be treated with caution.

I would argue that social historians are able, nonetheless, to extract valuable information from these works and under the influence of postmodernist theory, historians have become more open-minded about the range of 'texts' that can be studied and used in the pursuit of an understanding of the past. For example, the authors of highly regarded urban histories of Cape Town[6] made use of antiquarian sources to write an academically reputable book that was, the same time, designed as a viable commercial proposition.[7] My own study here as made liberal use of such work and has taken a similar approach to Afrikaner nationalist historical studies.

Schutte's work[8]is written in Afrikaans and exemplifies a standard Afrikaner nationalist brand of history that flourished during the mid-1970s. Like antiquarian works, it focuses narrowly the cultural, social and political doings of the local white elite, particularly the Dutch- or Afrikaans-speaking residents, from what van Jaarsveld called a 'kerktoringsperspektief'[9] (literally: 'church tower perspective', meaning a 'top-down perspective'). Such work concentrates on allegedly 'great men' while largely ignoring ordinary working class whites, white women and almost completely effacing Indian, Coloured and Africans except for brief mentions of 'servants' and 'labourers'. Black people either simply do not exist in this paradigm or, if they appear occasionally on the pages, it is to underscore their servile, inferior status.

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[6] N. Worden, E. Van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith (eds.), *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1998 and N. Worden, E. van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith (eds.), *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1999.

[7] C. Rassool, 'Interview with Elizabeth van Heyningen, Nigel Worden and Vivian Bickford-Smith', *South African Historical Journal*, 40, 1999, pp. 267-285.

[8] M.A. Schutte, 'Die Geskiedenis van Krugersdorp 1887-1900', MA dissertation, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1976.

[9] F.A. van Jaarsveld, 'Geskiedenis van die Alledaagse Lewe – 'n Nuwe Stroming in die Duitse Sosiale Geskiedskrywing', *Historia*, May, 1990, p. 12.

Afrikaners take centre stage in this account rather than English-speaking whites and are presented as a classless, homogenous national group or 'volk', living in the towns. This homogeneity is imposed by an elite, middle-class fraction that acted as 'cultural brokers' in devising and disseminating Afrikaner nationalism.[10]

Schutte's work typifies such work where categories of class, gender and race are largely absent and history is 'naturalised' through a presentation that relates little more than the concerns of a tiny fraction of white Afrikaner men living in the town. Like antiquarian work, however, such historical sources are both a gold mine and minefield of minutiae which cumulatively provides valuable insights into Krugersdorp's early years, albeit in a distorted fashion. The thesis is part chronicle and part hagiography for white Afrikaner men presented in the highly formulaic and meticulously organised framework that one finds in administrative policy documents.

This fragmentation of knowledge into ever-smaller parcels recalls Barthes's comments on the modernist project of administrative officials who imposed a stifling, grid-like classification 'net' over the town to convey the idea that 'nothing can escape man, that the world even at its most distant part, is like an object in his hand, and that all property is but a dialectical moment in the general enslavement of Nature'[11]. This is an approach to knowledge that 'speaks' the belief that 'nothing…could not be known, described and hence owned'.[12]

Schutte's work shares all these negative features of Afrikaner nationalist writing. Despite being a rare example of a female Afrikaner historian, she marginalises women in her account of Krugersdorp's history. She offers no analysis of the town's white and black working class or any systematic

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[10] A. Grundlingh, 'Sosiale Geskiedenis en die Dilemma in Afrikanergeskiedskrywing', *South African Historical Journal*, 19, 1987, p. 31

[11] I. Hofmeyr, 'Mining, Social Change and Literature with Particular Reference to the Mining Novel, 1870-1920', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980, p. 166.

[12] H. MacDonald, *Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, p. 11

analysis of the local economy in terms of a structural economic system of mining capitalism. Instead she relates a description in a Rankean positivist sense of simply recording a highly selective slice of 'facts' in order to reconstruct, allegedly, 'Wie es eigentlich gewesen' ('how it really was').[13]

This has also been the approach of Du Plooy's doctoral thesis on Krugersdorp's history which has presented a meticulous and more inclusive description of various aspects of Krugersdorp's past covering a much broader chronology than Schutte.[14] Du Plooy's inclusiveness may have been influenced by social history as there are a few references to such work in the footnotes but the study is essentially a chronicle that focuses heavily on white, male and elitist concerns. While not strictly in an Afrikaner nationalist mould, Du Plooy's attempts to present a-theorised, non-ideological history, however, her dependence upon the Krugersdorp Public Library's archives and neglect of other methods and sources, produces a history that is remarkably similar to that produced by Schutte in that it privileges white, mostly Afrikaner political and administrative concerns.

Keegan's criticism of Afrikaner nationalist historians aptly describes this form of writing: 'local history [becomes] a directory of local government, white religious and educational institutions and cultural organisations.'[15] Clynick added that,[16]

> …whilst rich in administrative detail and empirically exact on on matters of policy, [such writing] did not set out to explore… experience from the perspective of the ordinary people who appear to be largely absent from their accounts. The themes which they have explored reflect an unwillingness to go beyond a dominant Afrikaner nationalist historiographical school, exhibiting a theoretical poverty which systematically turns away

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[13] E. H. Carr, *What is History?* second edition, Penguin Books, 1990, pp. 8-9.

[14] J. Du Plooy, 'Die Sosio-kulturele Ontwikkeling van Krugersdorp Onder Munisipale Bestuur tot 1993', PhD thesis, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1998

[15] T.F. Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrialising South Africa*, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1988, pp. xvi-xviii.

[16] Kotze, J.S. 'Geskiedenis van die Wes-Transvaalse Diamantdelwerye', MA dissertation, Potchefstroom University for Christian National Education, Potchefstroom, 1972 and A.E. Krause, 'Die Lichtenburgse Aluviale Diamantdelwerye, 1928-1945, n' Socio-Ekonomiese Geskiedenis', MA dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1985.

> from questions about social structure, class interests and political consciousness.[17]

Both Schutte and Du Plooy produce a precise, clear and accurate account of the establishment of the town. Their detailed chronology of key events provides a skeleton which the flesh of social history can, with caution, be arranged to produce a more rounded and insightful study of the early years of the town. Thus, provided one is aware of the shortcomings of such work, they can be 'mined' with some profit. As Tosh points out, the 'historicism' of Ranke and his followers, the 'countless antiquarians', 'is by no means without important practical implications'.[18]

To understand how Krugersdorp came to be located in a specific place at a certain time and why it was so fragile during its early years and how it evolved over the period 1887 to 1923 is linked inextricably to its fundamental nature as a mining town, functioning in the interests of the gold mining industry on the western periphery of the Witwatersrand goldfields. While undoubtedly problematic, Marxist structuralist writings and a broadly materialist paradigm, are powerful tools for understanding how a mining boomtown emerged, took root and evolved on the western periphery of the Witwatersrand.

The leading Marxist structuralists – who were also referred to as 'radicals' and 'revisionists' – formed a 'school' in the early 1970s in reaction to 'liberal' writings that claimed that capitalism was 'colour blind' and that racial policies actually held back economic development. Racist policies were blamed on the cultural prejudices of mainly Afrikaner political figures whose racism was fomented by their experiences and those of their forefathers on the 'frontier' as 'trekboers' and 'Voortrekkers' who fought constantly with neighbouring black polities. This school comprised of what Smith[19] calls the 'Elder

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17 T.P. Clynick, 'Political Consciousness and Mobilisation amongst Afrikaner Diggers on the Lichtenburg Diamond Fields, 1926-1929', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1988, p. 18.

18 P. Tosh, The *Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, second edition, Longman, London, 1991, p. 15.

19 K. Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing*, (*The Changing Past*), Southern Book Publishers, Johannesburg, 1988, p. 164.

Statesmen', namely, Martin Legassick, Harold Wolpe and Frederick Johnstone together with the 'Sussex School of Poulantzian disciples' especially the 'Gang of Four' of Kaplan, Davies, O'Meara and Morris.[20] These writers were influenced chiefly by the writings of the Marxists Louis Althusser and Nico Poulantzas but also were influenced by the works of the French anthropologists Meillassoux, Levi-Strauss and Bloch and the writings of André Gunder Frank, particularly his dependency theory based on studies of Latin America.

Frederick Johnstone was the first of the 'Elder Statesmen' of this new school to pen a critique of the liberal paradigm.[21] He was influenced by the May 1968 student revolt in Paris and by his exposure to British left wing circles at Oxford. He was also influenced by the class analysis of Barrington Moore's 1967 study[22] and E.P. Thompson's seminal work which appeared in paperback in1969, although Johnstone preferred structuralist radicalism to social history.[23]

Martin Legassick was next out of the blocks and famously attacked the frontier thesis in a paper at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.[24] His work was influenced by Eugene Genovese and his seminal work on slavery.[25] Harold Wolpe was the first of these writers to develop what became the hallmark of Marxist structuralist writing as a theoretically-driven, macro-level analysis of South African's mining industry and its relationship to the state and international capital, with a special focus on segregation and apartheid. Wolpe famously advanced a 'cheap labour thesis' arguing that capitalism flourished

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20 *ibid.*

21 B. Bozzoli and P. Delius, 'Radical History and South African Society' in B. Bozzoli and P. Delius (eds.), *Radical History Review: History from South Africa*, *Radical History Review*, New York, 1990, (*Radical History Review*), p. 37, footnote 24.

22 B. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Allan Lane, The Penguin Press, London, 1967.

23 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968.

24 M. Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition in South African historiography' in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial Society*, Longman, London, 1980. See also Smith, The Changing Past, p. 173.

25 E. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: the World the Slaves Made*, Pantheon, New York, 1974.

under apartheid and that racism was 'rational' for capitalist economic development in South Africa.[26]

Wolpe explained that the 'reserves' subsidised labour costs for the mining industry that paid a wage that only covered the reproductive costs of the black miners living in the compounds on the grounds that the miners' families would be supported by means of subsistence farming in the reserves. It was this 'ultra-exploitation' of black migrant mine workers that enabled the mining industry to be profitable. While not a new idea (the Italian Marxist, Giovanni Arrighi who had put forward a similar thesis for colonial Rhodesia in 1970)[27] Wolpe framed this explanation in sophisticated Marxist terms that analysed the 'articulation' of 'pre-capitalist' and 'capitalist' 'modes of production'.

Wolpe was not a trained historian, however, and Bozzoli and Delius feel that his work 'stands somewhat at a distance from that of the other revisionists of this time', and that it drew heavily from a 'structuralist heritage' and so 'was not easily compatible with the more historical revisionism'.[28] This is an important distinction that is often ignored in historiography produced by liberal historians. It was Legassick that best represents a historically informed revisionism and who was the most influential of the 'structuralist Marxists'.[29]

Bozzoli and Delius claim that Legassick 'effectively remapped the outlines of South African history since the sixteenth century from a materialist perspective'[30] while Saunders describes him as the 'single most important figure in the radical challenge of the early 1970s'.[31] His work was sophisticated, and, under the influence of Genovese, avoided a vulgar reductionism of much 'structuralist' writing. These writers were actually quite

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[26] H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power: From Segregation to Apartheid,' *Economy and Society*, 1, 4, 1974.

[27] G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: a Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia', *Journal of Development Studies*, 1, 1970, pp. 197-234.

[28] Bozzoli and Delius *Radical History Review*, p. 21.

[29] See, for example, M. Legassick, 'Gold, Agriculture and Secondary Industry in South Africa, 1885-1975, from Periphery to Sub-metropole as a Forced Labour System' in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1977.

[30] Bozzoli and Delius, *Radical History Review*, p. 20.

[31] Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past*, p. 172.

different from one another, criticised one another's work and their influence was short-lived. By the time Johnstone published his famous manuscript in 1976,[32] the structuralist Marxist era was nearly over.

What made these writers distinctive according to Bozzoli and Delius was their willingness to subject empirical evidence to an engagement with 'theoretical and conceptual categories, often in a dialectical manner'.[33] Their work, particularly the writings of Wolpe and Legassick on the reserves, tended to be 'functionalist', however, assuming that since capitalism benefited from migrant labour from the reserves, the reserves must have been created for that purpose.[34] My thesis makes cautious use of these works to understand how the mining economy functioned and why a town like Krugersdorp could emerge and exist in the form that it did. I have also made use of a large number of studies on the Witwatersrand and Kimberley mining industries that were influenced by these works to establish a comparative context for Krugersdorp[35] as well as general historical works on the mining industry that lie outside this tradition and fall within a liberal or humanist Marxist tradition.[36]

The work of these early structuralist Marxists was complemented by the writings of the 'Poulantzians', a distinct sub-category of the structuralist Marxists who drew upon the work of Althusser and Poulantzas,[37] and who

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[32] F. R. Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold : A Study of Class Relations and Race Discrimination in South Africa*, Centre for African Studies, Dalhousie, London, 1976.

[33] Bozzoli and Delius, *Radical History Review*, p. 21.

[34] Saunders, *Making of the South African Past*, p. 189.

[35] For example, W. Worger, *South Africa's City of Diamonds*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987 and R. Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1890*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987.

[36] See, for example, G. Wheatcroft, The *Randlords – the Men Who Made South Africa,* George Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1985, A. Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy – the Struggle for the Gold Mine's Labour Supply, 1890-1920*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1985; P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, 'Company Town, Company Estate: Pilgrim's Rest, 1910-1932', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 2, 1993, pp. 171-200, G. Nattrass, 'The Tin mines of the Waterberg (Transvaal) 1905-1914' , *Contree,* 26, 1989, pp. 5-12; A. Mabin, 'Capital, Coal and Conflict: the Genesis and Planning of a Company Town at Indwe', *Contree*, 34, 1993, pp. 21-30 and T. Clynick, 'Community Politics on the Lichtenburg Alluvial Diamond Fields, 1926-1929', in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspective*s, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1987.

[37] The seminal works for each writer were, respecitively, L. Althusser, *For Marx*, Verso, London, 1969 and N. Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, Verso, London, 1978.

focussed more directly on the central state. Robert Davies, Dave Kaplan, Mike Morris and Dan O'Meara all worked as graduate students at Sussex University in the early to mid-1970s and began to produce work which analysed the South African state at various historical conjunctures in terms of 'class alliances' and 'fractions of capital' in a highly theoretical analysis.[38] They claimed that over time the 'power bloc' that wielded hegemonic domination over the South African state would undergo transformation as class alliances were reconfigured.

While the Poulantzians were innovative and sophisticated, they quickly attracted criticism for their reductionism. O'Meara, for example, disaggregated Afrikaner nationalism skilfully into a range of class fractions and class alliances, but in the process he made 'class' the 'sole category of analysis, all-important and determinant'.[39] Criticism came from within the ranks of the Marxist structuralists and Johnstone was among the first to note that 'class analysis remained essential, but it was not sufficient'.[40]

The 'socialist-humanists' like E.P. Thompson and British-based Marxists like Simon Clarke, attacked the Poulantzians for their 'mechanistic rigidities', the 'reification of rigid theoretical categories', and for their 'inherent functionalism and economism'.[41] Most glaring was their failure to take into account, sufficiently, the 'subordinated classes' and their tendency to focus from 'top down' in their explanatory models. These works are also very broad and an understanding of how a specific town emerged and set down roots cannot easily derived from their approach.

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[38] See, for example, R. Davies et al, 'Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, 7, 1976, pp. 4-34, M. Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism in the South African Countryside', *Economy and Society*, 3, 3, 1976, pp. 292-343 and O'Meara, D., *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital, and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner nationalism, 1934-1948*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983. For a contemporary critique, see S. Clarke, 'Capital, Fractions of Capital and the State: Neo-Marxist Analyses of South Africa', *Capital and Class*, 5, 1978, pp. 32-77.

[39] Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past,* p. 188.

[40] *ibid.*

[41] Bozzoli and Delius (eds.), *Radical History Review*, p. 24.

I have made critical use of a ‘neo-Poulantzian’ approach that, for example, identifies the role of an elite, white, middle-class, professional and commercial ‘stratum’ or ‘fraction’ as the hegemonic local interest group in Krugersdorp. I have also found it useful to explore how this class fraction developed shifting class and political alliances with other interest groups in the town to achieve its ends and how it was opposed by a fluctuating set of class alliances depending upon the issue at hand. This approach is taken throughout the thesis but is employed particularly in Chapter Five and Nine when analysing the struggle between English-speaking, white middle-class fraction of shopkeepers and professionals, on the one hand, and Indian, middle-class traders, on the other hand.

It was the humanist Marxists who constructed a specifically South African brand of social history that offered the most trenchant criticism of the structuralist Marxist and who insisted on the re-insertion of human agency into historical studies. I have drawn heavily upon this work in trying to understand how Krugersdorp set down roots and evolved into a permanent town.

Before discussing this dominant paradigm, there are two important additional paradigms and disciplines upon which my thesis has drawn to deal with the issues of transience and permanence, namely urban geography and anthropology, where certain influential works preceded the rise of social history in South Africa.

South African anthropology has shed light on black South Africans who began to settle in large numbers in urban areas for the first-time as ‘first generation’ urban migrants. Although initially transient, these residents eventually struck down roots and settled permanently in the towns on the Rand and this work is instructive for understanding Krugersdorp’s own transition from transience to permanence. Urban geography is particularly useful for shedding light on the spatial patterns that developed in the early Krugersdorp following similar racially defined segregated spaces of the ‘Apartheid City’. Both these approaches influenced the early social history in South Africa.

In tracing the roots of what he called 'South African Urban Historiography', Maylam acknowledged the contribution made by anthropologists like the Mayers[42] and Pauw[43], which he argued, produced the 'most of the more probing urban studies' in the early 1960s.[44] Such work influenced the later urban, social history by inspiring a readiness to engage with concepts and constructs such as class, gender, culture and race, in a critical fashion and to apply these understandings to empirical studies of the past. From the titles of these studies, it is clear that these anthropologists focussed on the processes of urbanisation and the transition from transience to permanence for first and second generation urban residents.

Probably the most widely cited anthropological writings in South African social history those of Longmore[45] and Hellmann[46]. Hellmann in particularly is acknowledged for her work which describes the lives of hundreds of first generation migrants tried to scrape a living in a densely packed 'slumyard' conditions of 'Rooiyard' in Johannesburg in the 1930s. Another seminal contribution by anthropologists was the work of the Mayers – already mentioned above – who traced rural Africans crossing the threshold from 'Red', or rural cultural status, into 'School' or permanent urban resident status.[47] Their book remains a seminal study that still influences works on urban social history that focussed on urbanisation, culture, consciousness and identity.[48]

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[42] See, for example, P. Mayer, with I. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen? Conservatism and the Process of Urbanisation in a South African City*, (*Townsmen or Tribesmen?*), Oxford University Press, New York, 1962.

[43] B.A. Pauw, *The Second Generation*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1963.

[44] P. Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography' ('Explaining the Apartheid City'), *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, 1995, p. 19.

[45] L Longmore, T*he Dispossed. A Study in the Sex-Life of Bantu Women in Urban Areas in and Around Johannesburg,* Jonathan Cape, London, 1959.

[46] E. Hellmann, Rooiyard: *A Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum Yard*, Manchester University Press, 1948. Hellmann's original MA dissertation was completed at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1935 and was considered so important and unique that the eminent anthropologist Max Gluckman facilitated its publication so that it could reach a wider audience (see 'Introductory Note').

[47] Mayer with Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen?* See also P. Mayer, *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1980.

[48] Bozzoli and Delius (eds.), *Radical History*. pp. 31 and 42, footnote 71.

Urban geographers began to apply theoretical insights to their studies of the built environment of South African cities and towns, during the 1950s and 1960s. Kuper, Watts and Davies applied the 'ecology' model of the Chicago School to Durban's segregated spaces in the late 1950s, in what they called a 'racial ecology model'.[49] Later Davies extended this approach in his study of Durban in the early 1960s[50] while Hart developed a similar analytical model for Johannesburg in the early 1970s [51]and then later refined it by focussing more narrowly on white residential areas in Johannesburg in the late 1970s.[52] This model was adopted and applied to Krugersdorp by Henning in the 1960s.[53]

As a geographer, Henning analysed how urban land was used in the town and explained these patterns in terms of the 'ecological' and 'sectoral' approaches employed by the followers of the Chicago School.[54] Henning was sensitive to Krugersdorp's broader context and noted, for example, how the 'growth of Johannesburg has greatly influenced the growth of Krugersdorp'[55]. Henning observed how Krugersdorp, together with Randfontein, formed part of an 'outer zone', economically dependent upon the central core of Johannesburg for many 'specialised functions and services', drawing upon the principles of Central Place Theory[56] in the process.

Utilising Hoyt's sector theory, Henning identified how wealthier residents in the town moved from Luipaardsvlei suburb to the more elevated and distant suburb of Eastern Extension, following the patterns predicted under this

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[49] L. Kuper, H. Watts, and R.J. Davies, *Durban: A Study in Racial Ecology*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1958.
[50] R.J. Davies, 'The Growth of the Durban Metropolitan Area', *South African Geographical Journal*, 45, 1963, pp.15-43.
[51] T. Hart, 'An Examination of Sectoral and Concentric Patterns in the Socio-economic Structure of Johannesburg', *South African Geographical Journal*, 55, 1973, pp. 32-39.
[52] T. Hart, 'The Evolving Pattern of White Residential Areas in Johannesburg', *South African Geographical Journal*, 58, 1977, pp. 68-75.
[53] J. Henning, 'The Evolution, Land Use and Land Use Patterns of Krugersdorp', ('The Evolution'), BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1963.
[54] See K.S.O. Beavon, *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City,* University of South Africa Press, Pretoria, 2004.
[55] Henning, 'The Evolution', p. 3.
[56] K. S.O. Beavon, *Central Place Theory: a Re-interpretation*, Longman, London, 1977. See also P. Daniel and M. Hopkinson, *The Geography of Settlement: Conceptual Frameworks in Geography*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1979.

theory.[57] Henning, thus, attempted to identify a class-based residential pattern in the town and to explain both social and spatial mobility, noting, for example, that the poorer white residents of the town, the Dutch-speaking 'poor burghers', lived in Burghershoop which was situated on low-value, low-lying land, west of the town proper and that most could never afford to leave this low status area.

Henning also commented on how residential and industrial areas developed in a linear pattern following the railway line.[58] The importance of the proximity of transport to and from work was emphasised in Henning's work in a thoughtful way that has influenced this study, as has his observations on the importance of the Central Business District and Burgess's 'Concretic Zone Theory'.

While Henning's work provided valuable insights, his study nonetheless contains a number of problems. Henning uncritically accepted a 'metropolitan' theory and applied it uncritically to the 'periphery' as a case study. A theory designed for a specific kind of city in an advanced industrialised world in the 1920s, is not likely to 'travel' well and it hardly needs to be said that Chicago in this period was substantially different to Krugersdorp in the 1960s. Indeed Henning could only make these theories 'fit' by ignoring the presence of black residents in the town in the 'locations', and by leaving out the massive mining industry on Krugersdorp's doorstep with its tens of thousands of black migrant workers housed in single-sex mine compounds. Still, Henning's analysis of the town's white working class, middle class and 'high class' residential areas was thoughtful and can be applied to my own work on Krugersdorp.

Another geographer who wrote about Krugersdorp was Proctor who penned a short article about 'Munsieville', a black residential space. Proctor's 1986 analysis of local and central state control imposed on Munsieville, a key black residential area, marked an advance on Henning's work which largely ignored

[57] Henning, 'The Evolution', p. 33.
[58] *ibid*., p. 36.

black spaces and suggests that he was influenced by the social history of the late 1970s and early 1980s.[59]

While focussed narrowly on a single location (a trait it shares in common with at least a dozen studies in South African urban and social history as will be demonstrated later), it does perceptively examine the tensions that existed between the local and central levels of government, particularly over strategies designed to shape the construction of black living space in ways that facilitated efficient control over black residents. Proctor's work, however, deals with a much later period than my own work and is of limited value for this reason but its concern with intra-state conflict and co-operation certainly has relevance to my work especially insofar as its focus transects with my own.

Humanist Marxism – the Emergence of the New Social History

The most sustained and damaging critique of Marxist structuralism came from a small group of radical historians who identified themselves in terms of a 'humanist' Marxist tradition and who began to develop a new approach to the South African past drawing upon a British tradition of 'social history'. While 'humanists' retained the 'class perspective' of the structuralists, they were influenced by Marxists like Gramsci who stressed the importance of ideology and culture as powerful forces in history. It was the development of this rich, insightful and complex social urban history for which these writers have become justly most well-known and it was for this reason that their works dominated serious historical writing during the early 1970s.

Historiographers usually cite February 1977 as the point of origin for this influential movement linking it to the launch of the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand. Saunders described this Workshop, and its successors that were held every three years, as 'a leading forum for the

[59] M. Proctor, 'Local and Central State Control of Black Settlements in Munsieville, Krugersdorp', *GeoJournal*, 12, 1986, pp. 167-172.

presentation of work in the new social history'.[60] One of its founders, Belinda Bozzoli, claimed that it 'facilitated many intellectual developments on the left'[61] while Maylam observed that it marked the start of an 'outpouring of work on South African urban history'[62]

In an introduction to an edited compilation of select papers from the workshop that was published a year later, Bozzoli explained that it was devised in the 'tradition of the Ruskin History Workshops… history from a grassroots perspective'.[63] The same piece further outlined the key features of a new social history. Firstly she noted that the History Workshop organisers privileged 'works in progress' that were concerned with 'local history'. Bozzoli made it clear that the organisers wanted to go 'beyond what is usually constituted by local history', interpreting history not as the 'compilation of highly empirical detail and anecdote', but rather as the 'interpretation of these things in a theoretically-informed context and across all disciplinary boundaries' [64]

Bozzoli insisted, nonetheless, that local history enabled historians to focus on the 'particular and unique system of class relations' on the Rand, where 'class whose significance is less national than local have been ignored', where 'patterns of conflict and repression occurring outside of the mining industry have barely been touched upon, while local forms of culture and consciousness are little examined.'[65] Bozzoli also asserted that the History Workshop wanted to move away from a conception of history that was concerned with '…so-called 'great men' of the mining industry, the state, manufacturing industry or even organised labour. Contributors were invited, instead', to submit papers that took the view of the 'common man' or the

[60] Saunders, 'Making of the South African Past', p. 185.
[61] Bozzoli and Delius, *Radical History Review*, p. 28.
[62] Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City' p. 20.
[63] B. Bozzoli (compiler), 'Introduction', *Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand*, (*Labour, Townships and Protest*), Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1979 , p. 3.
[64] *ibid*., p.1.
[65] *ibid*., p. 3.

'people', the 'subordinate groups of society, be they factory or mine workers, domestic servants, traders, diggers, the unemployed or the 'marginal''.[66]

Murray notes that the History workshop arose at a time when 'social and labour studies in South Africa shifted away from broad-based structuralist accounts set within South African political economy to historically-specific topics and subject matter'.[67] He argued that the workshop 'spearheaded' a 'drive' towards 'popular history', 'daily lived-experience of township residents' and 'human agency', leading to the 'enormous proliferation of social and labour studies'.[68] Smith observed that intentions of the first workshop were to

> popularise history, to help stimulate a historical consciousness among people, to break down the barrier between the professional writer of history and the workers who were the subject of his studies.[69]

The History Workshop model was taken up at the University of Cape Town and other liberal English-speaking campuses. A range of work broadly influenced by social history began to appear in edited collections of articles written by left wing academics from a variety of disciplines which were published in the late 1970s[70], 1981[71] and 1982.[72]

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[66] *ibid*.
[67] M. Murray, 'The Triumph of Marxist Approaches in South African Social and Labour History' ('Triumph'), *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 23, 1-2, 1988, p. 94.
[68] *ibid*., p. 95.
[69] Smith, *The Changing Past*, p. 165.
[70] P. Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies: Papers presented at the A.S.I.Studies Seminar*, (*Working Papers one*), vol. 1, African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1977.
[71] P. Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, (*Working Papers two*), vol. 2, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1981.
[72] S. Marks, S. and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa; African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870- 1930*, (*Industrialisation and Social Change*), Longman, London, 1982. There were several collections published during this time were written from a broadly leftist point of view and across disciplines, in a similar approach, but which focussed on pre-colonial and rural history in a way that nonetheless complemented social history that focussed on urban case studies, notably S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, (*Economy and Society*), Longman, London, 1980 and R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (*The Roots of Rural Poverty*) Heinemann Educational, London, 1977.

The new social history spurred a range of postgraduate studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s like Kagan's MA dissertation on black spaces in early Johannesburg written in 1983.[73] These were pioneering works and, understandably, were subject to limitations. Kagan said little about the people who actually lived in these African settlements, their culture, their aspirations and the hard, daily grind of their lives. There was also little attempt to apply theory, for example, the ideas of Castells[74] that were available in the late 1970s. In addition, the very nature of her study, of African settlements, extracts these spaces artificially from their surroundings and although she notes that white neighbours protested against the presence of Africans in Sophiatown, little sense is provided of the context of white working-class residences and white middle-class suburbs. Many of the works that followed addressed some of these lacunae but just as frequently created new gaps of their own and reproduced many of Kagan's limitations.

In a remarkable postgraduate thesis, Koch wrote about the African working class 'slumyard' of Doornfontein in the 1930s. He built on the work of Kagan and a postgraduate study by Proctor on Sophiatown and its adjoining areas[75] which was later published.[76] Koch also drew upon the theoretical writings of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams as well as the literature of African writers who had lived in urban townships and wrote insightfully about their experiences[77] including articles to *Drum* magazine.[78]

Koch also consulted the work of the anthropologist David Coplan on the culture

[73] N. Kagan, 'African Settlements in the Johannesburg Area, 1903-23', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983
[74] M. Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, (*Urban Question*), Edward Arnold, London, 1977 and M. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, MacMillan, London, 1978.
[75] A. Proctor, 'Black Workers, Local Government and the State: A History of Three Johannesburg Suburbs – Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare', BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978.
[76] A. Proctor, 'Class Struggle, Segregation and the City: A History of Sophiatown, 1905-1940' in Bozzoli (comp.), *Labour, Townships and Protest*, pp. 49-89.
[77] For example, E. Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*, Faber and Faber, Johannesburg, 1959, M.Dikobe, *The Marabi Dance*, Heinemann, London, 1973 and C. Themba, 'The Bottom of the Bottle' in M. Dikobe, *The Will to Die*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1982.
[78] For example, T. Matshikiza, 'Twenty Years of Jazz', *Drum*, December, 1951.

of the black working class that was written in the late 1970s[79] and in the early 1980s[80] and other perceptive writers like Sole and Couzens.[81] These writings reflected a strong desire to embrace human agency with a strong cultural dimension among other 'non-economic aspects of class formation and class struggle'.[82] Furthermore Koch and similar writings were determined to adopt an interdisciplinary approach that sought to 'avoid the separation of literary and cultural studies into an academic ghetto of their own'.[83]

Coplan's work seems to have embraced the criticism of Levi-Strauss' structuralist anthropology and wanted to break down the dichotomies that characterised this work. Coplan argued for a blurring of the sharp lines between African residents in urban and rural environments, traditional and Christian as well as the educated and the illiterate. He argued instead, for 'continuities' between 'amaqaba' ('red', pagan) and 'amakholwa' ('believer, 'mission-school' African), the 'town boy', the 'blanket kaffir' and the 'civilised native' in a way that marks an advance on the approaches of the early anthropologists such as Hellmann and the Mayers. Differences between these categories, he argued,

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[79] D. Coplan, 'Marabi Culture: Continuity and Transformation in Black South African Urban Music', paper presented to the Society for Ethnomusicology, Annual Meeting, Montreal, 1979. See also D. Coplan, 'African Working Class Culture in Town and Country 1870-1930', Conference on Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness', University of London, 1980.

[79] D. Coplan, 'The Marabi Era: Social Implications of African Working Class Music Between the World Wars', unpublished, undated mimeograph, c. 1980, cited in E. Koch, "Without visible means of Subsistence': Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg, 1918-1940', History Workshop Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, February, 1981. Coplan's works were eventually published in the mid-1980s, see Coplan, D., *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, Longman, London, 1985. See also D. Coplan, 'The Emergence of an African Working-class Culture' in Marks and Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change*.

[80] K. Sole, 'Class Continuity and Change in Black South African Literature, 1948-1960', History Workshop Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, February, 1978, later published in Bozzoli (comp.), *Labour, Townships and Protest,* pp. 143-182. See also T. Couzens, "Moralizing Leisure Time': the Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg, 1918-1936', in Marks and Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change*, pp. 314-337.

[81] B. Bozzoli, 'Introduction: Popular History and the Witwatersrand' ('Introduction') in Bozzoli (comp.), *Labour, Townships and Protest*, p. 10

[82] *ibid*., p. 9.

[83] *ibid*.

were 'more apparent than real'[84] as all were responding to the profound changes brought about by colonisation.

Like his predecessors, Coplan traced the fascinating way that Africans adapted their existing and 'flexible patterns of meaning, value and organisation' to the new environments of 'mine, factory, town location, squatter camp…and open road'[85] in response to colonial capitalist expansion and the 'trauma of proletarianisation.'[86] Clearly such approaches are pertinent to my own work, particularly the early chapters on the transition from transience to permanence.

Koch applied these fertile ideas to the making of the African working class of the Doornfontein slumyard in Johannesburg, in the inter-war period. While Koch was willing to acknowledge the importance of structuralist writings[87] and stated that many different 'objective factors' shaped the industrial working class including the 'structural constraints' that characterised the economy as it shifted from mining to manufacturing capital during World War One, he clearly wished to diverge from this approach. Similarly, while he referred to the 'contradictions between different 'fractions' of capital, between local and central levels of the state and even within the local state, in a Poulantzian fashion, he nonetheless broke with these traditions in important ways.

Firstly, he argued that the 'objective factors' referred to above, were in turn shaped and 'humanised' by the African working class and he emphasised the 'self-determined' attempts by working class to make their urban living conditions more habitable through 'mental' or 'subjective' responses that combined 'in an integrated culture'.[88] These rather loosely and poorly conceived references to agency marked his first attempt to come to terms with the writings of E.P. Thompson and his critics, notably Perry Anderson, something that he admitted

[84] *ibid*.
[85] *ibid*., p. 359.
[86] *ibid*.
[87] E. Koch, "Without Visible Means of Subsistence' Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg, 1918-1940', History Workshop 1981, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981, p. 1.
[88] *ibid*.

he found 'difficult' given the 'tone and complexity of the debate'[89] and which he consequently failed adequately to address in this paper.

When his paper was published two years later in a collection of articles[90], Koch's understanding of this debate had advanced considerably and he drew also more heavily on Raymond Williams and, in particular, on Antonio Gramsci's prison writings, producing an insightful analysis in the process. From Thompson's writings, Koch noted that culture arises out of the way that social groups 'handle' their 'experience' of living in a set of objective conditions, creating a 'corresponding' set of attitudes, symbols, values and mores'. From Williams, Koch adopted the view that patterns of meaning are 'created in all forms of practical activity'[91] and he cited Williams's comment that these patterns of meaning become the means whereby a 'social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored'.[92]

Koch, however, also noted Perry Anderson's critique of Thompson's analysis and argued that 'there is no automatic way in which a class culture is generated out of the experience of common material conditions'. Instead, he argued, there was a 'spontaneous' process was rather shaped by 'multiple levels of popular leadership, organisation and intellectual work.'[93] Koch then cited Johnson[94] to argue that culture becomes a 'site of struggle in class society' where, on one level, this culture constitutes a coping mechanism enabled the working class to survive the stress of living under capitalism and where, on another level, workers' 'subjective attitudes' that emerge in this culture influences the degree of 'passivity or militancy' of those exploited by capitalism.[95]

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[89] *ibid*., footnote 4, p. 30.
[90] E. Koch, "Without Visible Means of Subsistence': Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940' ('Without Visible Means') in B. Bozolli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, (*Town and Countryside*), Ravan, Johannesburg, 1983, pp. 150-175.
[91] *ibid*., p. 154.
[92] Williams, *Culture*, London, 1981, p. 12.
[93] Koch, 'Without Visible Means', p. 155.
[94] R. Johnson, 'Three Problematics: Elements of a Theory of Working Class Culture' in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson (eds.), *Working Class Culture*, Oxford University Press, London, 1979.
[95] Koch, 'Without Visible Means', p. 155.

In his unpublished Masters thesis, completed in the same year, Koch developed his Gramscian conception of culture further to include the notion of 'hegemony' which he described as a 'means of exploring the subtle distinctions and interplay' between 'culture' and 'ideology'.[96] Culture in this paradigm referred to the 'activities and values that are actually lived and adhered to by people' while ideology referred to the 'processes whereby a dominant class' attempts to shape activities and outlook of the dominated classes'.[97] Koch's dissertation also conveys Gramsci's view that culture could serve as a 'force' equal to other material forces and the 'consciousness' that arose out of this culture could 'thrust back' and shape the very material conditions out of which it arose.[98]

Koch's understanding of the base-superstructure model was drawn from Engels who wrote that 'we make history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite assumptions and conditions'.[99] Koch, thus, rejected the view that 'base determines superstructure' and then drew upon Williams, to argue that 'determination' simply implies 'setting limits' rather than 'predetermination of outcome'. Thus, 'material conditions' can only 'determine' cultural responses by 'limiting the range of human responses that are possible within them and [by] exert[ing] a pressure on people who share these conditions to respond to them in a particular way'.[100]

Koch then addressed the debate between E.P. Thompson and Perry Anderson at a level of sophistication that was absent in his 1981 paper and ignored by his 1983 article. Thompson had famously claimed that the 'working class did not arise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making'[101] This refers to Thompson's 'co-determination' of working class consciousness where

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[96] E. Koch, 'Doornfontein and its African Working Class, 1914-1935: a Study of Popular Culture in Johannesburg', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1983, p. 10.

[97] *ibid*., p. 9.

[98] *ibid*., p. 11. According to Koch, Gramsci claimed that the 'granite compactness' of 'popular beliefs' could 'assume the same energy as material forces' so that 'consciousness' could 'thrust back' onto 'material conditions' which 'originally gave rise to it' and 'remould these conditions'.

[99] Koch draws this reference, in turn, from R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 85.

[100] Koch, 'Doornfontein and its African Working Class', p. 13.

[101] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin Books, London, 1963, p. 9.

he rejected the notion that 'class' and 'consciousness' could be treated as two separate entities, the 'one sequential upon the other', since both must be 'taken together'.[102]

Thompson's conception of class consciousness as 'coherent self awareness by a class of its collective interests and antagonism to other classes' opened his writings up to criticism from Anderson who, in Koch's view, 'correctly' points out that classes can and do exist without acquiring this sort of consciousness, indeed it is a rare occurrence in history and that it was appropriate to reassert the 'primacy' of class as 'an objective relation to the means of production, independent of will or attitude'.[103] Koch, however, defended Thompson by claiming that the 'creative' agency of the working class should not be understood in terms of 'coherent awareness' of a 'class-for-itself', but rather in terms of the 'more spontaneous cultural responses of the working class to the conditions that they encounter living under capital'.[104]

Koch then latched onto Thompson's central concept of 'experience' where 'class culture' is 'generated out of people's common conditions of existence' in a way that 'experience' bridges ideology and material conditions and lies 'half within social being, half within social consciousness'.[105] Thompson does not, however, argue that experience is, in the 'last instance', generated in 'material life' and so has been 'structured in class ways'. Thus, for Thompson and apparently for Koch, 'social being' does determine 'social consciousness'[106] in the 'final instance'.

Koch's approach to class and culture followed the approach of the new school of social history which Bozzoli remarks aimed

> …to confront and understand the history and nature of the

[102] E.P. Thompson, T*he Poverty of Theory & Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, London, 1978, p. 298.
[103] P. Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism*, Verso, 1980, p. 40.
[104] Koch, 'Doornfontein and its African Working Class', p. 14.
[105] *ibid*. p. 16, citing E.P. Thompson, 'The Politics of Theory' in R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 406.
[106] Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, p. 290.

> spontaneous consciousness of ordinary people; to develop an analysis of culture which takes account of class and capitalism.[107]

Bozzoli made it clear that the social historians were not advocating an understanding of culture as 'autonomous' but rather advocated an approach that located culture in a 'complex system of class relations which moves and underpins modern capitalism.'[108] Nor were the social historians proposing a 'plurality' of cultures of equal value in a single structure but saw culture itself as a contested terrain, a site of class struggle. This struggle needed to be located in specific places and periods because the 'complex interplay between these cultural and material issues varies with time and circumstance'.[109]

Koch also drew upon Raymond Williams's writings on 'residual', 'emergent', 'alternative' and 'oppositional' cultures, particularly the latter two forms and combines these with Gareth Stedman-Jones's observation that popular culture in working class London was 'defensive' and an 'alternative' rather than an 'oppositional' culture.[110] Koch applied this approach to argue that Doornfontein's African working class developed a culture that helped it both to 'accommodate' and, at times, to 'resist' their 'situation'.

For Bozzoli, however, it was not simply a matter that 'oppositional' cultures automatically resulted in a state of continuing resistance as the reality was more complex. She argued that it might be better understood in terms of Clarke's writings on subcultures which both share aspects in common with a 'parent culture' and diverge from it in important ways.[111] Culture and resistance were also linked in complex ways so that 'resistance' is 'embedded in culture' while the 'form of the culture may, in turn, be shaped by the experiences and perceptions of ordinary people, who may themselves have participated in acts of

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[107] Bozzoli, 'Introduction', p. 8.
[108] *ibid*., p.18.
[109] *ibid*., p. 23.
[110] G. Stedman-Jones, 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900, Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', J*ournal of Social History*, Summer, 1974, p.490.
[111] Bozzoli, 'Introduction' p. 25. See also John Clarke et al, 'Sub-cultures, Cultures and Class: a theoretical overview' in S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Sub-Cultures in Post-War Britain*, Hutchinson, London, 1976, p. 13.

resistance'.[112] Apparently for Bozzoli, culture is not granted a 'determining function' in this approach – even apparently in the 'last instance' - but it is privileged as a 'force' that shapes and is shaped by experience. I would approve of this interpretation and have adopted a similar approach in my own writing.

The political nature of resistance, in distinction from the more vague challenges of oppositional culture or sub-cultures, was an important focus of the social historians and their project of uncovering 'hidden histories'. Stadler's seminal study of Squatter Movements in Johannesburg in the period 1944-7, had a profound impact upon urban social history. Presented at the first History workshop in 1978[113] and then published in 1979 in the first collection of History workshop papers,[114] Stadler's study sparked a widespread interest in black urban resistance and protest movements among a number of academics.

Stadler's article on bus boycotts in Alexandra, which also took place during the Second World War, and which was published in 1981, became, along with Lodge's similar work on bus boycotts in Evaton,[115] as influential as his article on squatter movements[116] and inspired many similar studies. The most interesting and useful finding of his work, which he partly drew from Dikobe Modikwe,[117] was how spontaneous protest interacted with organised political activity and how non-political leaders, including criminal elements, interacted with political leadership, to produce a highly effective and successful protest movement.

In 1983, Stadler combined these two studies together and inserted insights from a unpublished mimeograph on the 'Food crisis of the 1930s' in Johannesburg, to

[112] Bozzoli, 'Introduction', p. 28.
[113] A. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield: Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947', History Workshop Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978.
[114] A. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields: Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947', in Bozzoli (comp.), *Labour, Townships and Protest*.
[115] T. Lodge, 'We are Punished Because We Are Poor: the Bus boycotts of Evaton and Alexandra, 1955-7' in Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers two.*
[116] A. Stadler, 'A Long Way to Walk: bus boycotts in Alexandra, 1940-45' in P. Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers two*.
[117] M. Dikobe, 'We Shall Walk' in Bozzoli (comp.) *Labour, Townships and Protest*, Appendix B.

produce an important article on how elements of the African poor, driven into desperation by dire economic circumstances, launched a series of determined 'community struggles' to demand shelter, cheap transport and other basic amenities necessary for survival.[118] The article appeared in the third of the series of collections of papers presented at the African Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand which marked this institution as the centre of the new, radical or Marxist humanist history.

This collection, edited by D. C. Hindson, who had recently carved a reputation as an insightful historian writing on the pass control system, marked a decisive shift from the two earlier collections that tended to focus on 'historical studies with a rural focus' to articles that were mainly concerned with 'the Post World War II period and dealt with urban issues'.[119] This change of focus was explained by the editor as 'clearly an outcome of escalating social conflict in Southern Africa in general during the 1970s' since the 'widespread urban upheaval symbolised by Soweto in 1976'.[120]

The collection focussed on both the historical and contemporary political mobilisation of the African urban working class as urban communities fighting for basic amenities and as workers in labour movements fighting for a decent wage and other rights. This combination of struggles in both workplaces and working class suburbs seems to have been influenced by the writings of 'urban Marxists' like Castells. All the articles dealt with 'class conflict' in one form or another and a number of articles explicitly 'address[ed] the issue of the impact of the struggles of dominated classes on authoritarian state policies'. These articles did, however, depart radically from both revisionist and liberal works, which had tended to ignore this question.

The writings on culture and resistance described above influenced an entire generation of social historians and postgraduate students in the eighties and

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[118] A. Stadler, 'The Politics of Subsistence: Community Struggles in War-Time Johannesburg', in D.C. Hindson (ed.) *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 3, (*Working Papers three*), Ravan, Johannesburg, 1983, pp. 51-64.
[119] D.C. Hindson, 'Introduction', in Hindson (ed.) *Working Papers three*, p. vii.
[120] *ibid*.

nineties. A cluster of local histories produced in the early 1980s by Cohen, Gilfoyle and Chaskalson on the East Rand and Vaal Triangle regions, has demonstrated the importance of examining political resistance in highly specific local conditions in a similar vein.[121]

Probably the most influential social history of them all was Charles van Onselen's *magnum opus*, a social and economic history of the Witwatersrand in two volumes, *New Babylon* and *New Nineveh*, published in 1982.[122] Van Onselen noted that he was heavily influenced by the leading Anglo-American social historians, especially E.P. Thompson, Gareth Stedman-Jones and Eugene Genovese.[123]

Van Onselen's work covered a broad range of issues from examining how Zulu 'washermen' who trained under Indian employers in Natal subsequently made a living on the Witwatersrand washing clothes for white, English-speaking, miners. Van Onselen also traced how white Afrikaner cab-drivers competed with their 'coloured' counterparts and white women employers confronted sexual tension with black male 'houseboys' during the 'moral panics' of 'Black Peril' and African women emerged as domestic servants or the 'witches of suburbia'. While van Onselen did not theorise race, class, gender or ethnicity in explicit ways, this should not detract unduly from the power of his insights.

Although social historians explicitly challenged Afrikaner Nationalist history and its 'objectification of blacks, and its implicit or explicit racism', they had

[121] M. Chaskalson, 'The Road to Sharpeville', BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985; J. Cohen, 'A Pledge for Better Times: the Local State and the Ghetto, Benoni, 1930-8', BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1982 and D. Gilfoyle, 'An Urban Crisis: The Town Council, Industry and the Black Working Class in Springs, 1948-1958', BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981.

[122] C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, vol. 1, *New Babylon*, (*New Babylon*), Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982 and C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, vol. 2, *New Nineveh*, (*New Nineveh*), Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982.

[123] Van Onselen, *New Babylon*, p.xvii.

surprisingly little to say about race itself.[124] Race and ethnicity clearly has salience for social historians as the use of categories like 'black' and 'white' are used explicitly to identify the focus of their studies, but it was rarely problematised and analysed in theoretical terms.

This is, perhaps, understandable, as these radical historians overtly challenged the apartheid system and this may have made them uncomfortable with an approach that emphasised race and ethnicity in their analysis as this could be construed as legitimisation of the apartheid project. Nonetheless, this is a weakness that needs to be addressed for as the social and urban historian Paul Maylam, has noted

> [I]n the last twenty years or so there has been little innovative theorising, few breakthroughs in the historical analysis of the South African racial order [although] greater attention and weight [was] afforded to racial thought and racial theory.[125]

Bickford-Smith's work did address the issues of race, racism and ethnicity more explicitly in his remarkable study of Cape Town[126] and while he failed to analyse these categories in terms of theoretical models, his observations are richly insightful. His work in particular debunked the notion that nineteenth century Cape Town was an 'exceptional' case where 'liberalism' was supposed to have produced a more inclusive and racially tolerant society.

I would concur with Posel, Hyslop and Nieftagodien[127] who have recently defended the record of the social historians despite its 'lingering silences' by

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[124] R. Greenstein, 'Identity, race, history: South Africa and the Pan-African Context', Seminar Paper no. 405, Institute for Advanced Social Research, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 5, cited in D. Posel et al, 'Debating 'race' in South African scholarship', *Transformation*, 47, 2001, p. i.

[125] P. Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*, Ashgate, Sydney, 2001, 4.

[126] C. Saunders, 'Review Symposium: C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, volume 1, *New Babylon*, volume 2, *New Nineveh*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982' in *Social Dynamics*, 8, 2, pp. 85-6.

[127] *ibid.*

arguing that precisely because race was ubiquitous, nearly all of the literature dealing with apartheid – and presumably its segregationist predecessors – intrinsically encompassed race and racism by tracing the experiences of ordinary people' who were almost always 'black people'. These writers also note that the

> growth, ideologies and politics of black resistance movements have attracted academic interest, and some of the ambiguities and complexities of racialised modes of power have been explored (even if the manner of that racialisation was not itself the focus on discussion).[128]

The new social history's focus on 'hidden history' of 'voices from below' also meant that they were more sensitive to uncovering women's history in order to address the neglect of previous historical schools and criticism produced by a emergent scholarship in feminist history. Much of the earlier work by Koch, Proctor, Kagan, Sapire and others considered the role of women in cultural and political struggles for survival in urban settings, particularly the brewing and selling of illicit liquor, in the course of tracing the history of working-class Africans in the city. Over time, more work emerged that made women the centrepiece of the case studies.[129]

For example, Gaitskell's work focused on the uniformed prayer associations or *manyanos* (also known as *isililo*) that became a central part of the culture of many African married women in urban and rural areas. Gaitskell noted that missionary organisations promoted a culture of 'social hygiene' within African

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[128] *ibid.*

[129] See, for example, H. Bradford, "We are now the men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside, 1929' in Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict*, pp. 292-323; J. Wells, "The Day the Town Stood Still: Women in Resistance in Potchefstroom, 1912-1930' in Bozzoli (ed.) *Town and Countryside* ; D. Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-1939', *Journal of African History*, 24, 1983, pp. 241-256; D. Gaitskell, 'Wailing for Purity: Prayer Unions, African Mothers and Adolescent Daughters, 1912-1940' in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870-1930*, Harlow, 1982, pp. 167-194; C. Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1990; C. Walker (ed.), *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, London, 1982; E. Bradlow, 'Women at the Cape in the Mid-19th Century', *South African Historical Journal*, 19, 1987, pp. 51-75 and K.A. Eales, 'Gender Politics and the Administration of African Women in Johannesburg, 1903-1939', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991.

society, particularly among African women and their adolescent daughters. Like the 'social gospel', 'social hygiene' principles were widespread amongst evangelical organisations on both sides of the Atlantic.[130]

A key component of this culture was a conception of moral purity that focussed specifically on the prevention of premarital sexual relations among adolescents. Thus, like Couzens, Gaitskell was interested in demonstrating how aspects of European culture came to be successfully imposed upon African indigenous cultural forms, largely displacing it but also incorporating elements that could be assimilated into it. Gaitskell's focus was placed upon religious organisation however, rather than mining capitalism or the state. Gaitskell's approach described here has influenced my own work especially Chapter Seven that examines white female political activists in Krugersdorp during the war years.

The social history approach on producing empirically-rich case studies meant that most social historians, including those who wrote explicitly on women in history, did not theorise gender adequately and did not seem to engage with the contemporary feminist writings in a meaningful way – although Eales's work may be an important exception.[131] Furthermore, much social history ignored women in its focus on class, community and culture. Bickford-Smith's work, for example, used gender-free categories of 'workers', 'councillors', 'Malays' and 'Afrikaners' that disguised the reality of exclusively male groups that remain unproblematised and unanalysed. My own work, particularly, Chapter Seven, has attempted to weave theory and empirical research in a way that hopefully overcomes this limitations.

The 'New Geography'

Mabin described the 'New History' that emerged out of the late 1970s as the 'cutting edge' and that history had, as consequence had become the 'most dynamic research discipline in the country, and its products are eagerly read

[130] D. Gaitskell, 'Christian Compounds for Girls: Church Hostels for African Women', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6, 1979, pp. 44-69

[131] K.A. Eales, 'Gender Politics And The Administration Of African Women In Johannesburg, 1903-1939', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1991.

by academics and studies alike in every potentially related discipline, geography included'.[132] Mabin also recorded the emergence of a 'new geography' that developed a distinctive South African and geography-specific version as 'people's geography' or 'humanistic geography'. The result was an outpouring of work written by geographers in a broadly social history paradigm. I have found this work useful due to its relatively greater emphasis on spatiality which is a neglected aspect of Marxism humanism, presumably because it originated in more structuralist models including Marxist structuralism.

Beavon and Rogerson were among the earliest geographers to research and write the 'new geography' in studies on the black 'casual poor' in Johannesburg and their strategies for 'making out' or surviving in a harsh economic environment as self-employed informal traders.[133] Beavon focussed on hawkers[134] while Rogerson famously wrote about those who plied the 'coffee cart' trade.[135] Although constrained by the nature of their discipline, their work shed light on the lives of ordinary black urban residents in ways that approximated some of the features of social history and which inserted a more rigorous conceptualisation of spatiality into studies of the urban social and built environment. The pioneering work of these writers transformed South African geography[136] ushering a more materialist, Marxist-based

[132] A. Mabin, 'At the Cutting Edge: the New African History and its Implications for African Historical Geography', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 12, 1 1986, pp. 74-80, ('At the cutting edge'), p. 78.

[133] K.S.O Beavon and C.M. Rogerson, ' Hawking and the Urban Poor: How Not to Make Out in the contemporary South African City', paper presented at the South African Geographical Society Conference, Cape Town, 1979. K.S.O. Beavon and C.M. Rogerson, 'The Resistance of the Casual Poor in Johannesburg', *Contree*, 7, 1980, pp. 15-21. C.M. Rogerson and K.S.O. Beavon, 'The Awakening of 'Informal Sector' Studies in Southern Africa', *Southern African Geographical Journal*, 62, 1980, pp. 175-190.

[134] K.S.O. Beavon, 'From Hypermarkets to Hawkers: Changing Foci of Concern for Human Geographers', Occasional Paper no. 23, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1981.

[135] C.M. Rogerson, 'Making Out in the 'City of Gold': the Coffee Cart Traders in Johannesburg', Paper presented to the Association of American Geographers Annual Conference, Louiseville, 1980.

[136] K.S.O. Beavon, 'Trekking On: Recent Trends in the Human Geography of Southern Africa', *Progress in Human Geography*, 5, 1981, pp. 159-189. See also J. Crush, and C. Rogerson, 'New Wave African Historiography and African Historical Geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, 7, 1983, pp. 203-231.

'radical geography'.[137]

By the early 1980s, urban geographers were increasingly influenced by the urban social historians to explore the hitherto 'terra incognito' of black townships[138] and wrote short but perceptive articles about Soweto[139], Sophiatown[140] and Johannesburg's Western Areas[141] in a way that complemented the work of urban social historians by taking a more rigorous spatial perspective.

Christopher raised connections between South Africa's urban form and the 'colonial city' identified by King[142] that were reiterated by a later, fuller study on the Apartheid City in 1982 by the geographers McCarthy and Smit.[143] My own work has been influenced by Christopher's conclusion that the Apartheid City and its predecessors were 'but one of the variants of the more widely distributed colonial city'[144] and his broad, comparative approach while retaining the insights of Marxist humanists and structuralists.

Wellings and McCarthy shifted the trend in the new Geography from what they called 'white conscience areas' such as domestic servants, urban poor and black housing which rendered black subjects as 'spectators', and focussed instead on political conflict where black people became active agents like transportation boycotts, rent struggles and resistance to forced resettlement.[145] Parnell has added a remarkable series on articles on white

[137] J.J. McCarthy, 'Radical Geography, Mainstream Geography and Southern Africa', *Social Dynamics*, 8, 1982, pp. 53-70.
[138] K.S.O. Beavon, 'Black Townships in South Africa: Terra Incognita for Urban Geographers', *South African Geographical Journal*, 54, 1982, pp. 3-20.
[139] See C.M. Rogerson and K.S.O. Beavon, 'Getting By in the Informal Sector of Soweto', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geographie*, 73, 1982, pp. 250-265 and A.J. Christopher, 'From Flint to Soweto: Reflections on the Colonial Origins of the Apartheid City' ('From Flint to Soweto'), *Area*, 15, 1983, pp. 145-9.
[140] D.M. Hart and G.H. Pirie, 'The Sight and Soul of Sophiatown', *Geographical Review*, 74, 1984, pp. 38-47.
[141] Pirie, G.H. and Hart, D.M., 'The Transformation of Johannesburg's Black Western Areas', *Journal of Urban Histor*y, 11, 1985, pp. 387-410.
[142] A. King, *Colonial Urban Development*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1976.
[143] J. McCarthy and D.P. Smit, *The South African City: Theory in Analysis and Planning*, Juta, Cape Town, 1984.
[144] Christopher, 'From Flint to Soweto', p. 148.
[145] Wellings and McCarthy, 'Whither Southern African Human Geography?' p. 337.

housing and the role of white officials[146] that echoes Sapire's keen insight into the role of the Location Superintendent in her thesis, [147] while Robinson has combined Foucault's concept of power with spatiality to illuminate how the state racialised space, in numerous articles,[148] taking historical geography in a new direction.

These works were influential on my own studies, especially those that consider how formal and informal channels of political power were used by different interest groups to pursue their agendas in Krugersdorp as dealt with in Chapters Four, Six and Eight. The role of officials is especially explored in Chapter Six while Robinson's insights on Foucault and spatiality can be found scattered throughout this study.

The Challenge to Social History

By the late 1980s social history in South Africa had reached its zenith and Murray, an academic writing from the University of New York, captured a sense of celebration with his declaration that 'Marxism has evolved as the dominant intellectual perspective in South Africa'.[149] In the years that followed, however, social history would come under increasingly harsh attack.

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) hearings brought history into the public eye in an astonishing way but at the same time it shifted interest for many students and academics to the contemporary rather than to the past. Many humanist geographers and political scientists correctly anticipated that a

[146] See, for example, S. Parnell, 'Sanitation, Segregation and Natives (Urban Areas) Act: African Exclusion from Johannesburg' Malay Location, 1897-1925', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 17, 27, 1991, pp. 271-288 and S. Parnell, 'Creating Racial Privilege: The Origins of South African Public Health and Town Planning Legislation', J*ournal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 3, 1993, pp.471-488.

[147] Sapire, H., 'African Urbanisation and Struggles against Municipal Control in Brakpan, 1920-1958', PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990.

[148] See, for example, Robinson, J., 'Power, Space and the City: Historical Reflections on Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Urban Orders', in D. Smith (ed.), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanisation and Social Change in South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992 and Robinson, J., 'The Politics of Urban Form: Differential Citizenship and Township Formation in Port Elizabeth, 1925-1945', *Kronos*, 20, November, 1993, pp. 44-60.

[149] Murray, 'Triumph'.

post-Apartheid government would have to address the complex and difficult problem of building a non-racial urban environment on the still-living remains of the Apartheid city. These geographers wrote increasingly about 'management' of the urban environment in the future rather than explore social history themes concerned with the distant past.

A new group of historians and other academics influenced by a broadly 'postmodern' tradition, began to seriously question the social history project. Roger Deacon, writing from the University of Natal, fired a broadside at social historians who have attempted to distance themselves from a vulgar 'structuralist' conception of Marxism that gives primacy to economic determinants. Although these writers broadened the concept of 'class' – by evoking the concepts of 'experience' and 'culture', for example – they remained, in the final analysis, 'materialists'. As a result, he argued, they could not escape from an 'essentialist conception of history' where the 'economic' was the 'ultimate and primary determinant of social reality'.[150]

Saunders, complained that the triumphalist overview of social history by Bozzoli and Delius in their introduction to a special edition of *Radical History Review*[151] demonstrated that they wished to 'establish a tradition of radical scholarship culminating in the kind of history which they approve'. Saunders speculated that radical history in South Africa may have required a coherent and definable adversary in the form of an authoritarian and racist Nationalist government to define itself and its purpose. He noted, furthermore, that at a History Workshop held in February, 1990 at the University of the Witwatersrand, 'there was little of the old fire'.[152]

Saunders was also concerned about the failure of this school to attract black scholars and produce African historians. He cited Colin Bundy, who had written social history on both rural and urban themes, who asked, 'where are

[150] R. Deacon, 'Hegemony, Essentialism and Radical History in South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, 24, 1991, p. 167.
[151] Bozzoli and Delius, 'Introduction' in Bozzoli and Delius (eds.), *Radical History Review*.
[152] C. Saunders, 'Radical History – the Wits Workshop Version – Reviewed', *South African Historical Journal*, 24, 1991, p. 164.

the Young Turks?'[153] Saunders also noted that the fourth collection of History Workshop Papers, published in 1989[154] had attracted almost unprecedented criticism for the 'disparateness of its contents', with the social historian Jeremy Krikler going so far as to claim that the editors were guilty of an 'evasion of synthesis.'[155]

Freund, a broadly leftist historian who has written about the Indian working class and someone who could be expected to support radical history, noted (in his otherwise glowing review of *Radical History*) that the interdisciplinary approach of the social historians had caused 'considerable annoyance'. He explained that social historians and other social scientists treaded on one another's toes due to its 'lack of boundaries'. Freund suggested that radical history had declined into a position of 'relative weakness' as an 'intellectual enterprise'.[156]

Worger, a historian who has written a history of Kimberley in a broadly materialist way, also admired the 'excellent academic work' represented by radical scholarship, but he, too, castigated its 'smug and patronizing tone'.[157] He correctly noted that there was some confusion in the definition of 'radical' in the *Radical Review* because Delius and Bozzoli used the term interchangeably with 'left wing' in the sense of adherence to Marxist categories and yet it was used to include individuals like Solomon Plaatje and W.M. Macmillan.

Worger particularly expressed concern that after twenty years of radical scholarship, Bozzoli and Delius were still claiming that they had not yet reached 'the stage of making statements on a larger scale'. He added that

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[153] *ibid*.
[154] P. Bonner, I. Hofmeyr, D. James and T. Lodge (eds.), *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa*, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1989.
[155] J. Krikler, 'Waiting for the Historians', *Southern African Review of Books*, 3, 6, August/October, 1990, p. 16.
[156] B. Freund, 'Radical History Writing and the South African Context', *South African Historical Journa*l, 24, 1991, p. 155.
[157] W.H. Worger, 'White Radical History in South Africa' ('White Radical History'), S*outh African Historical Journal*, 24, 1991, p. 145.

these writers also claimed that the social historians' intellectual agenda would consist of 'domain construction' rather than 'theory construction' until their work 'matures'.[158] He thought that after more than a decade of social history, was it not time for a 'little maturity and a bit of theory'.[159] Worger also noted the 'insularity' of much of South African social history where the footnotes indicate little reading of articles north of the Limpopo[160] and reflected on the dominance of white scholars.

At the same time those geographers who wrote 'geographies of protest' or the 'new geography', began to shift away from social history in the early 1990s and addres new concerns of a post-apartheid South Africa. Rogerson and McCarthy, for example, edited a collection of geography articles that was published in 1992 which they claimed marked a 'contemporary transformation of South African geography into a phase of undertaking new geographies of post-apartheid reconstruction'.[161] Geographers were being drawn out of the ivory tower and conducted research for the Urban Foundation and the Development Bank of South Africa[162] instead of a geographical version of social history. Geographers were also disillusioned by their treatment by social historians and Rogerson bitterly noted that the new geographers had been left out of an allegedly 'exhaustive survey of radical historiography' by Bozzoli and Delius which cited works by 'historians, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and even musicologists; [yet] nothing by a geographer appears to warrant mention'.[163]

Geographers were not the only academics drawn away from the past and towards the pressing needs of reconstruction. Political scientists, sociologists and town planners also began to abandon the study of the urban past and focus on urban policy making, management and issues such as housing. It is striking that two works on the 'apartheid city' published in the early 1990s

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[158] Bozzoli and Delius (eds.), *Radical History Review*, p. 21.
[159] Worger, 'White Radical History', p. 147.
[160] *ibid*., p. 152.
[161] C.M. Rogerson and J. McCarthy (ed.), *Geography in a Changing South Africa: Progress and Prospects*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1992, p. 5
[162] J. Crush, 'Beyond the Frontier: the New South African Historical geography' in Rogerson and McCarthy (eds.), *Geography*, p. 11.
[163] *ibid.*

dealt only superficially with urban history and focussed much more on contemporary issues and future urban policy.[164] A review of these books and a collection of case studies of individual cities[165] noted that in all three volumes, articles evoked the term 'space' and yet it is 'never fully theoretically located'.[166] Clearly there had been a shift to theory construction and a sense developed that any academics that failed to theorise, would be left behind.

Social history also came under attack from a new quarter, from academics who had embraced postmodernism theory and its variants. Vaughan, writing from the University of Oxford in 1994, noted how what she called 'Africanists' had failed to embrace 'colonial discourse theory' that had been so influential for historians writing on South Asia. Instead, historians writing about colonialism in Africa had embraced ideas around the 'invention of tradition' and the 'construction of custom', which, she argues, had developed 'largely independently of the influence of postmodernist theories' and that, as a result, postmodernism had been passed by', to the former's detriment.[167]

Rather than embrace the works of Said, Babha and Spivak, historians had become interested in the works of Gramsci.[168] As a result, Vaughan wondered, 'how much we may conceal rather than reveal through employment in our narratives of 'African voices'…and through the populist appeal of an anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist 'people's history'?[169] Vaughan favourably cited an article by De Kock that claimed that the radical tradition was marked by a 'retreat' into 'micro-history', and that it was peculiarly 'white' and 'western' and which avoided any discussion of the 'politics of history' and 'historical representation'.[170]

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[164] M. Swilling et al (eds), *Apartheid City in Transition*, Oxford, Cape Town, 1991 and D. Smith (ed.), *The Apartheid City and Beyond*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1992.
[165] A. Lemon (ed.), *Homes Apart*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991.
[166] R. Haines and G. Wood, 'Space for Theory', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 12, 1, 1993, pp. 92-103.
[167] M. Vaughan, 'Colonial Discourse Theory and African History, or has Postmodernism passed us by?' ('Colonial'), *Social Dynamics*, 20, 2 , 1994, pp. 1-23.
[168] *ibid*., p. 13.
[169] *ibid*., p. 14.
[170] L. De Kock,'"People, Power and Culture' and the Ethics of Historical Representation', *South African Historical Journal,* 27, 1992, pp. 243-253, cited in Vaughan, 'Colonial', p. 20.

In a commentary on Vaughan's article, David Bunn noted that historians had been anticipating the arrival of postmodernism with considerable trepidation lest its deep theoretical abstraction infect local historical analysis like the 'academic equivalent of downy mildew or leaf wilt'.[171] Bunn argued, however, that that this feared 'postmodernism' really referred to 'questions of the subject, of textuality, and of agency being advanced by post-structuralist theory'.[172] Bunn defended the social historians and went on to argue that 'colonial discourse' did not exist as a 'unified critical field' and, in any case, what can be identified in this tradition constitutes a 'narrow, hermeneutic tendency already falling out of favour'.[173]

In any case, argued Bunn, he could see no reason why Gramscian notions of hegemony should be opposed to discourse analysis, as Gramsci was a key figure for many of the theorists mentioned in relation to discourse theory. The writings of Said and Spivak, and Gramscian notions of 'hegemonic contestation', could combine easily with the notion of a discourse. By reacting so violently to discourse theory, African historians were eliminating theory altogether from their discipline, argued Bunn, so that 'instead of providing the wellspring for the elaboration of new method, theory had become a way of marking an exterior to a specialised academic discourse.[174]

In the midst of these increasingly damning critiques, the fifth collection of History Workshop papers, based on the Workshop held in February 1990, was published in 1993.[175] The editors, for their part, demonstrated that they

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[171] D. Bunn, 'The Insistence of Theory: Three Questions for Megan Vaughan', *Social Dynamics*, 20, 2, 1994, p. 24.
[172] *ibid*. Bunn does, however, explain that by 'postmodernism' he means that historians fear a 'theoretical 'thing' on the edge of discourse of African history…a word for what must be barred, for what is outside – nothing more'. In this sense, then, as it is 'presently imagined', postmodernism will 'always be 'passing by' African History, no matter how welcoming the latter discipline might be'. (p. 29)
[173] *ibid*., p. 31.
[174] *ibid*., p. 33.
[175] P. Bonner, P. Delius and D. Posel (eds.), A*partheid's Genesis, 1935-1962*, (*Apartheid's Genesis*), Ravan Press and Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 1993.

were aware of many of the criticisms that were directed at social history and noted that,

> previous History Workshop volumes have underscored the importance of the view from below. This volume inserts the state more forcibly into the picture, in order to understand apartheid as shaped simultaneously by struggles from below and interventions from above.[176]

Saunders noted that while the contributors to previous volumes had 'much to say about culture, consciousness and class' while saying little about 'politics or the economy as such', this volume's shift of focus to the 'making of apartheid' would enable the 'social and the political-economic to be integrated.[177] Saunders remarked that the social historians had learnt from past mistakes and were notably more self-critical than they had been in the past. Saunders argued that while the state was given more attention, important aspects of 'history from above' are ignored, for example 'the ideas of white politicians and the intricacies of electoral politics, are given no attention.'[178] In short, Saunders claimed that what was needed was, '…a set of more rounded and broader studies, which rest on an exhaustive reading of the secondary and archival material'.[179]

A notable absence in this volume, notwithstanding the comments made by Vaughan and Bunn, was a failure to engage with postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches. Even the 'bible' of radical history, the journal *Past and Present*, had engaged in an exchange of views on ''History and Post-Modernism',[180] yet this debate had not yet made any apparent impact on South African social history. In 1994 social historians at last began to grasp the nettle at a conference entitled 'Paradigms Lost,

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[176] Bonner, Delius and Posel (eds.), *Apartheid's Genesis*, p. 3.
[177] C. Saunders, 'Apartheid and its Genesis', review article, *South African Historical Journal*, 20, 1994, p. 136.
[178] *ibid.*, p. 141.
[179] *ibid*., p. 143.
[180] See L. Stone, 'History and Post-Modernism', *Past and Present*, 131, May 1991, pp. 217-18 and P. Joyce and C. Kelly, 'History and Post-Modernism', *Past and Present*, 133, 1991, pp. 204-13,

Paradigms Gained' which marked the twentieth anniversary the *Journal of Southern African Studies*.[181]

Etherington whose sensitive work on missionaries placed him within the materialist, radical school of social history, noted that many individual papers argued that 'postmodern, poststructural paradigms have displaced neo-Marxist , materialist ones'.[182] Helen Bradford, a stalwart among social historians and a regular contributor to History Workshop compilations, claimed that 'older conceptions of the opposition between fact and fiction have been disrupted' by 'key postmodernist challenges to the discipline of history'.[183]

The overall tone was defensive. Etherington, argued that paradigms were 'slipping' rather than 'lost' and that there was 'still plenty of recognisable social history and even some Marxism on offer'.[184]Paul Rich, writing from the University of Warwick, and a stalwart from the early days of radical history who wrote about South African Liberalism, asked the question that was on everyone's mind if not their lips: 'Is South African Radical Social History Becoming Irrelevant?'[185] He observed that there was a 'general crisis of nerve among the academic left in southern African studies and its slowness to come to terms with the post-Cold War world'.[186] He noted that a 'sense of loss' had been made 'particularly tangible' by the closing down of the Centre for Southern African Studies in York University due to declining student numbers and the 'collapse' of the revered journal *Work in Progress*. Rich felt that

> …any analyst of contemporary Eastern Europe should know that it is impossible to insulate intellectual trends there from what is happening in the rest of global politics, even if we are not living in some kind of 'end of history', in the Francis Fukuyama sense. The collapse of the Eastern bloc has well and truly ended the hopes some radicals had in the early 1980s for a model of

[181] N. Etherington, 'Fissures of the Post-Apartheid Academy' ('Fissures'), *South African Historical Journal*, 30, May, 1994, pp. 205-8.
[182] *ibid*., p. 206.
[183] H. Bradford, 'A Series of Abortions: Olive Schreiner and Loss of an Unborn Child', cited in Etherington, 'Fissures', p. 207.
[184] *ibid*., p. 207.
[185] P. Rich, 'Is South African Radical Social History Becoming Irrelevant?' *South African Historical Journal*, 30, May, 1994, pp. 191-7.
[186] *ibid*., p. 191.

> collective, regional self-reliance in southern Africa…the new South African state emerges as a rather ordinary one, experimenting with the usual bland mixture of Keynesian demand management and market economics. [187]

Rich also noted that radical social history, after years of pre-eminence within South African studies 'faces the prospect of being sidelined by other disciplines such as economics and political science, which are going to be rather more useful to state bureaucrats and planners, as well as to aspirant members of the new black political elite.'[188] In retrospect, Rich's crystal ball gazing appears to have borne out as student numbers enrolled in history classes fell dramatically, notably at the University of the Witwatersrand that was the spiritual home of radical social history and where most of its original founders were, and are, still working.

Jenny Robinson, an urban geographer – already mentioned above – who had written on the urban past by drawing creatively on the works of Foucault and Walzer to locate 'power and knowledge' in the city,[189] rebuked urban social historians for their collective failure to engage with theories around spatiality.[190] In her review of *Apartheid's Genesis*, Robinson remarked that the book marked 'a high point in the trajectory of the South African social-history school, although in some ways it may well also signal its demise'.[191] Robinson felt that urban social history was on the right path in bridging the 'sacred gap' between its focus on 'history from below' and the 'more conventional social-science concerns with the state and national economic power'. She, however, noted that it was to continue further in this direction, it would have to 'confront the conceptual frameworks which have so far worked only to silently support apparently factual historical narratives.'[192]

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[187] *ibid*., p. 192.
[188] *ibid*.
[189] Haines and Wood, 'Space for Theory', p. 100.
[190] J. Robinson, '(Dis)locating Historical Narrative: Writing, Space and Gender in South African Social History', *South African Historical Journal*, 30, May, 1994, p. 144.
[191] *ibid.*, p. 146.
[192] *ibid*.

She made the insightful observation that urban social historians shared with the post-structuralists a concern to 'explore the specific and contextual' rather than to elaborate 'grand narratives'. She also noted that urban geographers had become increasingly interested in those aspects of post-modernism that 'resonated with traditional themes in the discipline concerning regional and spatial variability.'[193] She proposed that the '…micro-geographies of administrative strategies, social control and individual and collective actions could help us to understand how apartheid racial domination was maintained, and perhaps why it collapsed.'[194]

In 1995, the *Journal of Southern African Studies* published its 'special issue' on 'urban studies and urban change in South Africa', where the editors, Hilary Sapire and Jo Beall, reiterated many of these now familiar criticisms of the urban social history sub-field.[195] They particularly noted that there had been insufficient attention to the 'city as a whole'[196] and much urban history had been 'history-in-the-city' rather than 'history-of-the-city'.[197]

Paul Maylam made a number of incisive criticisms in his survey of South African urban historiography over two decades, noting that 'theoretical influences have been stronger in the case of some urban historical geographers than with urban historians'. He cited, with approval, the work produced by Robinson[198] and Hart in this regard.[199]

While Maylam edited a volume of urban social history articles on Durban in the same year,[200] it is striking that in the years that followed, he became

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[193] *ibid.*, p. 147.
[194] *ibid*., p. 154.
[195] H. Sapire and J. Beall, 'Introducing Urban Change and Urban Studies in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, March 1995, pp. 3-18.
[196] *ibid*., p. 7.
[197] *ibid*, see P. Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography', ('Explaining the Apartheid City'), *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, 1995, pp. 19-38, especially p. 20.
[198] J. Robinson, 'The Power of Apartheid: Territoriality and State Power in South African Cities – Port Elizabeth 1923-1972', unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1990.
[199] D.M.Hart, 'Master Plans: The South African Government's Razing of Sophiatown, Cato Manor and District Six', unpublished PhD thesis, Syacuse University, 1990.
[200] P. Maylam and I. Edwards (eds.), *The People's City: A History of African Life in Durban*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1995.

increasingly engaged in theoretical discussions around postmodernism and its application to historical study. At the end of his review article, Maylam advocated a deepening of the approach already tentatively adopted in *Apartheid's Genesis* of exploring the 'relationship between the central state and the local state in the making of urban policy' and 'broad issues of state-capital relationship'. He seems to disagree with Robinson's support for ongoing 'microstudies' as these 'case studies have…often stopped short of illuminating [these] large questions'.[201]

While he stressed the 'continuing salience of materialist-type analysis in the field of urban history', Maylam felt that urban social historians could usefully adopt 'some of the concerns of post-modernism'. He cited, in particular, the 'discourse of urban policy and management' as a field that could yield useful insights.[202] Susan Parnell, an urban geographer – already mentioned above – who wrote about the urban past in a broadly social history perspective, and Alan Mabin, based in Town Planning and someone who was associated with the urban history school since its inception and who had written extensively about mining towns, together offered a stinging rebuke of radical history.[203] They claimed that these microstudies had effectively treated urban segregation in a way that implicitly accepted 'race' as a 'legitimate and primary category of inquiry', indeed it 'fostered racially constructed research'.[204]

Instead they argue that urban social historians had to shift their attentions to 'history from above' and 'post-modern notions of European coding of space and communities as 'other.'[205] Social historians had also to trace how 'urban managers' and 'modernist planners' constructed the segregated city in their attempts to 'reduce fire risks, improve health, supply clean water and [provide]…financially effective administration'.[206]

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[201] Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City', p. 37.
[202] ibid.
[203] S. Parnell and A. Mabin, 'Rethinking Urban South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, March 1995, pp. 39-61
[204] *ibid*., p. 42.
[205] *ibid*., p. 47.
[206] *ibid*., p. 48.

Both Parnell and Mabin had become involved in advising non-government organisations, local governments and community organisations around issues of urban management in the post-apartheid city and it is not difficult to see that they wanted a new kind of urban social history so that they would 'find in those experiences some lessons for present day participants in erecting 'a new state'.[207] Finally, they also argued for an engagement with global debates around 'race and the city' and develop 'comparative research'.[208]

Tim Nuttal and John Wright, both historians writing from the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, shed further light on the implications of these well-meaning warnings, but now they were concerned with the fate of historical study itself.[209] They added their insights to the now considerable number of articles that had been written over the late 1990s about the 'threat' of postmodernism to South African history including contributions by Etherington,[210] Bottomley,[211] Allen[212] and Maylam.[213] There is insufficient space here to explore these arguments fully except to note that these articles seem to be either overly pessimistic in their appraisals of the 'threat' posed by postmodernism and insufficiently helpful in proposing ways in which social historians could adapt their research and writing to take into account the criticisms cited above.

Minkley and Rasool writing in the late 1990s, offered one of the most trenchant criticisms yet of the social history project. They claimed that social

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[207] *ibid.*, p. 51.
[208] *ibid*., p. 61.
[209] T. Nuttall and J. Wright, 'Probing the Predicaments of Academic History in Contemporary South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, 42, May 2000, pp. 26-48.
[210] N. Etherington, 'Postmodernism and South African History', *New Contree*, 40, 1996, pp. 28-41.
[211] J. Bottomley, 'Paradigmatic Confusion in the History of the 'New South Africa', *New Contree*, 39, August, 1996, pp. 28-44 and see also J. Bottomley, 'History as Artefact and South African Historians as Jugglers of Fictions, Purveyors of Snake Oil, and Other 'Suspect Narratives', *New Contree*, 42, 1997, pp. 5-17 and J. Bottomley, 'Postmodernism – South Africa's 'Third Force' – Subverting the Dominant Power Relations', *New Contree*, 3, September, 1998, pp. 7-26.
[212] G. R. Allen, 'Is There a Baby in This Bathwater? Disquieting Thoughts on the Value of Content in History', *South African Historical Journal*, 42, May 2000, pp. 290-306.
[213] P. Maylam, 'Dead Horse, the Baby and the Bathwater: 'Post-Theory' and the Historian's Practice', *South African Historical Journal*, 42, May 2000, pp. 121-135.

historians relied on oral testimony to uncover 'hidden history' and to 'democratize the historical record', yet failed to interrogate the weaknesses of this method and were 'particularly silent about memory as either a theoretical or historical category'.[214]

They pointed to Keegan's comments that human memory was an 'indispensable resource' yet it was 'given to error, misconception, elision, distortion, elaboration and downright fabrication'.[215] This recalls Luise White's comments that 'first-person accounts are often metaphors rather than descriptions'[216] and her personal observation that her second interviews with the same informant often produced new information that flatly contradicted the older information of the original interviews.

While White was reluctant to argue that informants lied and noting that social historians use 'political academic terms for false' like 'fictive' and 'metaphorical', she tried to explain away such anomalies by suggesting that the informant had time to reflect upon the first interview and that this led to the changed story as new aspects were remembered. She also notes that informants sometimes change elements because of who was in the room and noted that the audience could shape the informants' testimony so that the telling of their lives was 'negotiated and re-presented (as opposed to represented)' in the process.[217] These are useful criticisms but they are hardly new to practising historians who have made similar observations of their discipline and practice.

Minkley and Rassool citing Hofmeyr[218] argued that social historians mined' the information derived from oral testimony for 'facts' rather than focussing on

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[214] G. Minkley and C. Rassool, 'Orality, memory, and social history in South Africa' in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee (eds.), *Negotiating the Past: the making of memory in South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1998, p. 91.
[215] J. Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1988, pp. 159-62.
[216] L. White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, (*Vampires*), University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, p.35.
[217] *ibid.*, p. 40.
[218] I. Hofmeyr, *'We Spend Our Years as a Tale That is Told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom',* Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994, p. 9.

the words or the way the testimony was presented. This information was highly selective and far from allowing their informants to 'speak', they imposed their own narrative in the form of 'nationalist and culturalist teleologies of resistance to generate a grand narrative of experience, read as 'history from below''.[219]

They argued that individual informants are simply inserted 'or 'inscribed' into the 'collective memory as resister, or a variant thereof' and that history imposes or 'binds' collective memory to its historical model of 'modern domination and resistance.[220] If these views – and they are merely views rather than well-supported arguments – are true, then it would seem that no social history is possible. Most practising historians, however, would argue that they are aware of their 'positionality' when conducting interviews and that they always corroborate oral testimony with other sources when establishing 'factual' information about the past. Professional historians, furthermore, always do analyse the words, gestures and tone of the interviewees along with the content in order to establish its veracity.

White also argued that social historians' attempts to ensure that 'authentic voices' appeared in academic texts meant that the 'colonial subjects have been enframed as they have been represented'.[221] She observed that selection and omission by the historian, particularly exclusion of information that appeared chaotic or unreliable, meant that 'historian's reorganization gives some meanings great and renewed power and strips others of their intensity'.[222] Her conclusion is less harsh than the dismissive tone of Minkley and Rassool and she argues rather for an 'expansion of historical epistemologies' to take these criticisms into account and, in particular, to encourage social historians to consider rumour and gossip as valid sources that illuminate how their informants really see the world.[223] Most historians can live with such advice and it can only add texture and depth to their studies.

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[219] Minkley and Rassool, 'Orality', p 94.
[220] *ibid*, p. 99.
[221] White, *Vampires*, pp. 49-50.
[222] *ibid.*, p. 24.
[223] *ibid*., p. 55.

The Current State of Social History

Urban social history continues to be researched and written in what is still referred to as the South African English-speaking universities or 'liberal' and 'historically advantaged' universities. Students still take history courses that are recognisably discipline-specific. Urban social history case studies produced by the History Workshop are still widely read by students who write essays using these studies. The value that an essentially materialist urban social history has in shedding light on otherwise enigmatic aspects of the urban past makes it so useful, insightful and compelling, that there seems no doubt that it will continue to be taught and studied for many decades to come.

Popular history, a close cousin of urban social history, seems to be alive and well as books on Soweto[224] and Kathorus[225] testify, although the latter attracted the same kind of criticism that urban social history has been subjected to in the past decade. For example, a reviewer recently complained that Bonner and Nieftagodien treated Kathorus as an 'island separate from the rest of East Rand, or from the Witwatersrand as a whole'.[226] The review also argued that by choosing to write a 'chronological rather than a thematic history of Kathorus' the authors 'risk[ed] creating a sense of historical determinism'.[227]

While such criticism has become tediously repetitive, social historians can no longer ignore them and need to take them seriously and act accordingly. My own work on Krugersdorp has attempted to situate the town in a broader context of the Witwatersrand and other mining towns around the world, for example. My study has also attempted to look at the town as a whole, combining themes and chronological approaches, to integrate different

[224] P. Bonner and L. Segal, edited by S. Fraser, *Soweto: A History*, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1998.
[225] P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien, *Kathorus: A History*, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 2001.
[226] P. Gervais-Lambony, 'Urban Social History', review, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28, 4, December, 2002, pp. 846-7.
[227] *ibid.*

suburbs, ‘locations’ and the central business district as well as linking the town with its rural hinterland and nearby mines.

The ‘case study approach’ or ‘micro-study’ is still needed to produce the intensely rich detail that urban social history requires. A shift from ‘local history’, another defining feature of the radical urban history project, to regional history, comparative history or even a return to analyses of the political economy at the national and state level, would require imaginative reworking of social history. A proper synthesis of many related case studies in a specific city into a coherent ‘city-wide’ study is both necessary and desirable.

Urban historians writing in the social history tradition can, and should, engage more with ‘history-of-the-city’ rather than ‘history-in-the-city’, consult a wider range of related sources, including those from outside South African itself and from a variety of disciplines. Urban social historians can, and also should, move beyond ‘domain construction’ and start to produce at least modest, ‘middle level’ theory from their work, as they widen their reading. There is nothing intrinsic to urban social history that precludes the perceptive application of theory and the creative development of new theory.

In 1999 Glaser offered an optimistic approach to the onslaught of the ‘New Humanities’ or postmodernism that is still applicable today. In a review of three texts by historians who explicitly critique postmodernism[228] Glaser, using Windschuttle, noted that postmodernism produced history that was simply unconvincing. Foucault was notorious for his ‘sloppy research’ and for ‘periodisation that was up to a hundred years’ out’, for a conceptualisation of power that was ‘frustratingly vague’ and for historical passages – devoid of any footnotes – that were simply wrong or, at best, crude. Similarly postmodernist accounts of the interactions between colonisers and colonised

[228] C. Glaser, ‘The Empir(icists) Strike Back’, *The English Academic Review*, 16, December, 1999, pp. 8-21. R. Evans, *In Defence of History*, Granta Books, London, 1997; K. Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering Our Past*, The Free Press, London, New York, 1997 and E. Hobsbawm, *On History*, Abacus, London, 1997.

peoples in Mexico and Hawaii were revealed to be misleading and often lacking in any useful insight.[229]

Glaser then applied this approach to postmodern books on South African history[230] with similar results. For example, he felt that Crais's work on the Eastern Cape frontier which makes use of a Foucauldian analytical framework, 'ultimately build[t] only very incrementally on a body of radical frontier historiography'.[231]

Sumit Sarkar, writing from the perspective of Indian historiography, was similarly defensive about social history or its variant as 'subaltern studies' (at least in its early form), and argued that postmodernism – or its variant 'postcoloniality' – had largely supplanted the former, had added little to our historical understanding of India. At the same time, it opened up space for hagiography, notably for works that advanced the interests of Hindu chauvinism.[232]

Both Glaser and Sarkar felt that social history was still relevant and useful. Glaser pointed out that Evans defended social history by demonstrating that, while problematic, it still produced a 'history from below' notwithstanding the criticism of postmodernists that historians had 'usurped the voices of the powerless' and that the position of typical historians as largely white, middle class 'aliens' or 'outsiders' offered certain advantages of distance.[233]

Provided that social historians were self-aware, foregrounded their positionality and wrote with empathy and sensitivity, Sarkar and Glaser saw no reason why the history of ordinary people could not still be uncovered. The

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[229] *ibid.*
[230] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990; C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 1992 and A. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, Verso, London, 1996.
[231] Glaser, 'The Empir(icists)', p.17.
[232] S. Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, first published 1997, Fourth Impression, 2002, p. 3,
[233] Glaser, 'The Empir(icists)' p. 15.

alternative, suggested Sarkar, was to ignore the subaltern altogether.[234] Sarkar has also defended subaltern studies in India, observing that recent historical writings have focussed narrowly on elitist colonial and post-colonial discourses while ignoring ordinary Indians.

Glaser, like Sarkar, was willing to take on board the perceptive insights that posmodernism brought to historical understanding and he particularly noted that the 'New Humanities' asked 'interesting questions' about the past. The resurgence in the history of ideas and institutions was attributed to the influence of postmodernism and had yielded valuable insights. Sarkar, too, saw some value in postcoloniality and observed with approval that some formerly stalwart social historians like Gareth Stedman-Jones have produced some insightful understandings by combining the best aspects of both approaches into a study of the 'language of classes'.[235]

In summary then, urban social history need not be abandoned but must rather be adapted in the ways that have been outlined here to meet the constructive and well-meaning criticism that has been directed at it over the past three decades. Its future depends upon its re-invention along these lines. I would like to suggest two ways that social history appears to be re-inventing itself which my own work has in particular explored.

Making Regional and International Linkages

Nieftagodien has broken with the pattern of 'history-in-the city' where a narrow focus on a single township had become the norm and argued for the 'centrality of regional urban planning' on the 'development of the Witwatersrand'.[236] Although he focussed on Springs on the East Rand and proposed to write a 'local history' in the social history tradition of 'ordinary black people', Nieftagodien focussed on two different locations of Payneville

[234] *ibid.*
[235] G. Stedman-Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-class History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.
[236] N. Nieftagodien, 'The making of Apartheid in Springs: Group Areas and Forced Removals', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1995, p. 11.

and Bakerton in a comparative approach. He also made use of comparisons between these spaces and others on the Rand, including Munsieville, Krugersdorp.[237] He focussed on the East Rand Administration Board archives and situated his study in a broader regional analysis of the East Rand. This 'regionalist' approach marked an important improvement on the narrow microstudies of earlier social history and has been the approach of my own study which locates Krugersdorp in the West Rand and makes frequent comparisons and linkages between Krugersdorp and other Rand towns and cities.

Nieftagodien developed these themes in his doctoral thesis which focussed deliberately on regional history by researching the implementation of urban apartheid over the whole East Rand.[238] While this work clearly took its cue from radical historiography, especially social history, it, nonetheless defined as one of its main concerns the 'emergence of modernist planning discourse in the pre- and post-1948 state'.[239] This suggests an unusual and refreshing willingness to advance social history into 'history from above', to 'history of the city' and to engage with discourse theory and the postmodernist critique of modernity.

Nieftagodien also takes seriously the call by Mabin and Parnell for social historians to write on local government and offers a nuanced analysis of considerable sensitivity to trace how political alliances developed in white politics to facilitate various aspects of the implementation of apartheid.[240] In the process, Nieftagodien challenged the approach that local government was merely a 'transmission belt' for the ideas of the centre by highlighting tensions that arose between the central and local levels of the state.

Nieftagodien also moves beyond regional history and comparisons with towns beyond the East Rand, to consider how the National Party government drew

[237] *ibid*., p. 128.
[238] N. Nieftagodien, 'The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: The role of local government and resistance', PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2001.
[239] *ibid.*, p. 6
[240] *ibid.*, p. 6.

upon international planning policies in devising their urban segregationist projects. Rather than treating South Africa as an 'exceptionalist' case, Nieftagodien noted how the Nationalists made use of current international modernist ideas like the 'Garden City' movement and other aspects of 'modernism' that included 'state intervention, Keynesian ideas, social democratic and welfarist policies…local public works programmes'.[241]

Jonathan Hyslop has also advanced social history in new directions to focus on contextualised biography. Hyslop's main contribution was to widen the scope of social history from its narrow scope on local case studies to a far broader canvas which in the case of his work, extended to the British Empire itself. While Hyslop does not overtly situate his work in the social history school, he is interested in uncovering the history of 'ordinary people' from the working class through biography.

In a paper that set out the broader context of his biography, Hyslop argued that the white working classes of the British Empire were not 'discrete entities' linked to specific 'nationalities' but instead were a highly mobile 'imperial working class' that moved between different parts of the Empire. He pointed out that white miners traversed thousands of kilometres between the mining towns of Cornwall in Britain, to similar mining towns in Australia and South Africa.[242]

Hyslop, who drew upon the work of Stoler and Cooper,[243] argued that labour history operated in a nation-state framework that was 'profoundly misleading and anachronistic' and argued instead for Empire as the 'geo-social framework'.[244] His approach challenged the case for South African 'exceptionalism' that explained the 'white labour policy' of white workers in

[241] *ibid*., p. 71.
[242] J. Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class Makes itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia and South Africa Before the First World War', ('The Imperial Working Class'), paper presented to the Institute for Advanced Social Research seminar, no. 449, University of the Witwatersrand, 1999, p. 1.
[243] A.L. Stoler and F. Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda' in F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions in Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.
[244] *ibid*., p. 2.

South Africa as a product of local conditions or 'ideological infection' from the settled, especially Afrikaner, population.

Instead, Hyslop argued, racism was also a characteristic feature of white workers in Britain and Australia that was transmitted through the international circulation of labour especially around the turn of the century. In this way he also challenges recent work in the USA by Ignatiev and Bonnet on Britain, who explained 'whiteness' as conceptions that were socially constructed exclusively within these nation states.[245] In Britain, Australia and South Africa, 'white labourism' emerged and circulated between these three places with its 'weird combination of racism and egalitarianism'.[246] Cornish miners, coming directly from Cornwall or via Australia were conspicuous in the leadership of South African white miners' associations and trade unions and played a key role in the adoption of a racist white labourism. Hyslop explained that 'Cornish vector' operated by means of what Belich (1996) called 'Crew Culture' that shared

> The same manners, customs, slang, prejudices, dress, leisure habits, virtues and vices – the same subculture…Crews were prefabricated communities into which new members could easily slot'[247]

This 'crew culture' enabled new Cornish miners to be rapidly assimilated into the racist views of white labourism. Thus, Hyslop concluded, 'the imperial working class did not 'become white': it *made itself* 'white''.[248] I find Hyslop's approach, like those of Nieftagodien to be both fascinating and liberating and I have worked along similar lines in my thesis. This applies particularly to Chapters Three, Four and Seven which situate local history in a much broader context of contemporary ideas that circulated throughout the British Empire.

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[245] *ibid*. See also N. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, Routledge, New York, 1995 and A. Bonnett 'How the British Working Class Became White: The Symbolic (Re)formation of Racialised Capitalism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11, 1998, pp. 316-340.
[246] Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class', p. 6.
[247] J. Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Penguin, Auckland, 1996, p. 428.
[248] J. Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class', p. 16.

Inserting Spatiality and the Meaning of Place into Urban Social History

Agnew and Duncan have highlighted the neglect of spatiality in much writing on sociology, including socio-historical categories used in social history, and propose an exploration of ways to bring the geographical and social 'imaginations' together. Similarly, Massey refers to the need to construct the 'geographical constitution of cultures'.[249] Social history, with its focus on local history, usually a clearly defined geographic 'slice' of a town in the form of a suburb or township, has always been sensitive towards spatiality along with its associated concepts of territoriality, place and landscape, but like so many other concepts these were never theorised, problematised and applied in a critical, reflective way. Space has often been treated by social historians in a taken-for-granted way as the background a particular socio-economic struggle without considering how space itself could act on material forces.

Social historians have also considered the importance of 'place' and its meaning but this remains undertheorised or even sentimental. This seems particularly to be the case for places that were subjected to forced removal like Sophiatown and District Six by informants. Social historians are well-positioned to adapt their understandings of experience to develop an approach on the 'experiential dimensions of place'[250] that can take social history beyond nostalgia and emotionalism.

In the early 1970s, Marxist urban geographers began to examine the working class in terms of the two key concepts of 'working class consciousness' and 'spatiality'. In the process they drew heavily upon Antonio Gramsci's writing work on the relatively neglected aspects of the 'superstructure' of politics, law, culture, ideology and religion[251] to explore how the working class interacted with the

[249] D. Massey, 'Spatial Construction' in G. Valentine and T. Skelton (eds.), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, Routledge, London, 1998, p. 123. Thanks to K. Mooney for this source.

[250] M. A. Godkin, 'Identity and Place: Clinical Applications Based on Notions of Rootedness and Uprootedness' in A. Buttimer and D. Seamon (eds), *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1980, p.73. Thanks to K. Mooney for this source.

[251] N. Bobbio, 'Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society' in C. Mouffe (ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, cited in I. Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, (*Marxism and the City*), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 15.

urban environment. This required Marxists to engage with spatiality, a concept that did not 'fit' easily into either the base or the superstructure of the traditional Marxist theoretical model.

Levebre was one of the first Marxists to recognise the importance of spatiality as something that operated beyond merely the 'built-environmental', asserting that it constituted a 'force of production' and an 'object of consumption'. He claimed that space had been alienated from workers by the capitalist system and advocated the 're-appropriation' of space for human purposes[252] as an important socialist aim. Levebre's contribution is important but, according to Castells, he reified space to a point of 'spatial fetishism'.

Castells, a leading urban Marxist, attempted to adapt Marxism to the realities of the urban lived environment, without going as far as to privilege spatiality as Levebre had done. Castells devised, instead, the notion of the 'means of collective consumption' that incorporated a spatial dimension into workers' struggles around urban issues.[253] For Castells, the city was a 'distinctive domain of consumption, reproduction and collective action' within the capitalist system.[254] Castells did not, however, explore the meaning that the city had for people who lived in them. Recent work by Katznelson and Walter, as well as older studies such as Lynch's work, can illuminate these aspects.

Katznelson claimed that capitalism was experienced in 'particular locations at particular times' and proposed a theoretical model of class that incorporated 'features of the organisation of social existence' both 'at work and off work'.[255] Capitalist cities constitute concrete lived worlds both at work and at home and working people learnt to 'construct maps of their social terrain in both domains'.[256] Cognitive mapping bridged social being and social consciousness as an 'urban-centred engagement' with capitalism which constituted the working

[252] Katznelson, *Marxism in the City*, p. 98.
[253] *ibid*., p. 99. See M. Castells, *Urban Question.*
[254] cited in Katznelson, *Marxism in the City*, p. 113.
[255] *ibid*., pp. 204-5.
[256] *ibid*.

class as ‘social actors’ and it was this process which, in turn, constituted working class consciousness. In this way, ‘space and place’ served as a ‘mediating element’ between large-scale social processes and social consciousness.[257]

Katznelson's concept of cognitive mapping drew on Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ which Katznelson understood as the way that people come to ‘represent their lived experience’ which, in turn, became a ‘normative guide to action’.[258] Importantly, though, the ‘class dispositions’ that resulted from these representations were not merely ‘mirrors or reflections of class realities’ but rather ‘plausible and meaningful responses to circumstances’.[259] Katznelson, thus, drew upon postmodernism’s concerns with ‘cognitive and linguistic dispositions’[260] to explain how working class experiences at work and at home have been ‘mapped’ by workers into a normative guide that ‘conditions’ a self-conscious collective action by workers in pursuit of its interests as a class. Katznelson inserted both spatiality and the state into Marxist analysis that is instructive for urban social historians.

Cognitive mapping is a fundamental ability and activity that enables people to comprehend the world around them through the production of mental representations or ‘maps in the mind’. Kevin Lynch is generally considered to be the most influential writer in the field of cognitive mapping and a pioneer who has inspired a range of studies of human interaction with the built environment and the ‘maps in the mind’ that it produced.[261] Lynch was influenced, in turn, by a number of studies of human orientation produced mostly by psychologists like Tollman (1948), and by geographers and

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[257] *ibid.*

[258] *ibid*., pp. 208-9. Katznelson draws on P. Bourdieu, Distinction: *A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984.

[259] Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, pp. 208-9.

[260] *ibid*., pp. 204-5.

[261] K. Lynch, *The Image of the City*, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1960, fourteenth printing, 1977.

anthropologists, including the celebrated 1913 article by Trowbridge on 'imaginary maps'.[262]

Lynch's famous book, published in 1960, sought to study the 'mental image of that city which is held by its citizens' concentrating especially on the 'visual quality' of that image and the clarity or 'legibility' of the 'cityscape'.[263] Lynch explained that just as a printed page is legible as a coherent pattern of recognizable symbols, so the city could also be legible as long as its distinctive elements were arranged into a similarly coherent pattern. Portugali developed Lynch's ideas to argue that cognitive mapping requires an understanding of both '…the structure and the architecture of the mind and the environment'.[264]

Lakoff developed Lynch's ideas by arguing that when people move through the city they construct 'image schemas' derived from the 'basic experiental level', to represent the 'structure or experience of space'.[265] It is the combination of these elements, however, into total patterns or complexes that is crucial as it can reinforce or enhance the 'imageability' of the spatial environment.[266]

Another approach to imageability is Gibson's concept of 'affordances' that was drawn from his 'ecological approach'.[267] Affordances, according to Neisser, a follower of this approach, are the 'potentialities' that exist in the environment that make a certain kind of action possible.[268] Affordances are not a property of environments alone, however, but a property of the 'relation' between

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[262] C.C. Trowbridge, 'On Fundamental Methods of Orientation and Imaginary Maps', *Science*, 38, December, 1913, pp. 888-897.
[263] Lynch, *The Image of the City*, p. 2.
[264] J. Portugali (ed.), *The Construction of Cognitive Maps*, (*Cognitive Maps*), Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1996, p. 21.
[265] G. Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987, cited in Portugali, *Cognitive Maps*, p. 35.
[266] *ibid.*, p. 85.
[267] J.J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1979.
[268] Niesser, U. 'From Direct Perception to Conceptual Structure', in U. Neisser (ed.), *Concepts and Conceptual Development: Ecological and Intellectual Factors in Categorization*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 21 cited in Portugali (ed.), '*Cognitive Maps*, p. 20.

organism and environment, so that while 'the structure and architecture of the brain/mind afford[s] certain cognitive potentialities, so do[es] the structure and architecture of the environment'.[269]

Walter argues that a real 'sense' of a place had to go beyond perception and cognition to grasp it holistically in what he called 'expressive intelligibility'. People understand the spatial environment through a blend of experience, intellect, common sense, feeling and imagination. Too frequently, he argues, various disciplines focus only on one or other aspect of the urban experience, whether is it is environmental psychology, architecture, city planning, local history or geography. What is needed is the 'whole synthesis of located experience', which includes the way 'we imagine as well as the sights, stories, feelings and concepts [that] gives us the sense of the place'.[270] This is an approach that social historians could do well to adopt.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One

This Chapter critically examines how Krugersdorp emerged as a town in 1887 and explores how and why it was extraordinarily vulnerable to collapse during the period leading up to the South African War of 1899-1902. The town and its inhabitants were characterised by transience as both white and black miners left their families at home and lived in a rough-and-ready existence in a harsh environment with little commitment to the town. As a result most buildings were flimsy and the town lacked resources which only served to reinforce this attitude of transience. The unsettled nature of the early pioneers influenced the impermanence of the town and vice-versa. This Chapter explores the reasons for Krugersdorp's fragility, focussing on its weak mining sector and its violent, 'masculinist' sub-culture.

[269] Portugali (ed.), *The Construction of Cognitive Maps*, p.21.
[270] E.V. Walter, *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment*, University of Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 1988, p. 2.

Chapter Two

A nascent middle class composed of an elite fraction of white male professionals and shopkeepers played a vital role in ensuring that Krugersdorp became a settled town. Many of these men brought their families with them to the Rand and invested heavily in their businesses and private homes that took the form of substantial stone or brick-and-mortar buildings, especially churches and associated structures. By making use of cognitive mapping and semiotic analysis, drawing upon 'social semiotics', this Chapter suggests that the example of commitment by these families were 'read' by the mobile white working class as a 'message' of permanence that inclined them to settle as well. The improved economic conditions that came with British rule after the South African War were also important as were the efforts of the white middle class to turn Krugersdorp into a town that was suitable for women and children.

Chapter Three

The early town of Krugersdorp was occupied by mostly English-speaking British or Australian white miners and the main part of the town was designed as a British mining town using 'English stands' in a grid pattern. The town was, however, surrounded on most sides by rural plots occupied by Dutch or Afrikaans-speaking, white farmers or 'Boers' and also acted as an agricultural town for the large Krugersdorp District. The British town dwellers interacted with 'Boers' at the Market Square as they bought the produce sold by the Afrikaner farmers. This relationship was amicable but distant. This distance was reflected in the formation of the 'District Township' which was located to the north of the town as a Boer town using 'erven' instead of stands. The two 'halves' of the town remain relatively close but separate: a mosaic

This Chapter explores how tensions increased between Boer and Briton as war approached and examines how the built environment reflected these changing ideological tensions as the Boer authorities inscribed a chauvinistic 'Transvaal Republican' power onto important buildings while the British

residents retaliated after the South African War with celebratory ‘Imperial’ architecture, ornamentation and park building. At two important stages, however, in 1897-8 and 1904-5, the English and ‘Dutch’ halves of Krugersdorp reconciled and this was reflected in the built environment. Black residents were caught up in these ideological struggles in peripheral but nonetheless important ways.

Chapter Four

This Chapter explores how demographic shifts, as single white men married, settled down and raised families impacted upon the built environment and led to an ideological struggle over schools, schooling and education. It is argued that attempts to develop support for a British imperial ideology in Krugersdorp’s white youth backfired for a variety of reasons and, instead, a nascent form of ‘South Africanism’ emerged as the dominant ideology of town’s white residents.

Chapter Five

The struggle over the provision of residential space for the black, mainly Coloured and African residents of Krugersdorp developed in a complex way that is analysed in terms of ‘liberal’ and ‘repressive’ strands of ‘segregationism’ and the fluctuating and shifting forms of resistance that black residents developed against the local authorities. This study which follows a social history approach but which is dependent upon documentary evidence rather than oral testimony, sheds light on class and gender aspects of the early black residents of the town and deals critically with race and ethnicity through the prism of the ‘history of ideas’.

Chapter Six

Indian residents struggled for the right to operate in various ways in the retail business, especially as ‘shopkeepers’ but faced relentless pressure from their white, mainly English-speaking competitors. Their rivals used their formal

control over the Town Council as well as informal channels like boycotts to support their own commercial interests at the expense of Indian traders. An important strategy of the white shopkeepers was to ‘quarantine’ Indians by portraying them as ‘disease ridden’ and ‘infectious’. However, the plans of the ‘English’ shopkeepers were frustrated by various groups seeking their own interests including white, Afrikaner farmers, poor Afrikaner residents in the town and English-speaking white women.

Chapter Seven

White, female middle-class activists pursued a range of social reforms including temperance and social purity as well as the municipal vote with mixed success. This Chapter explores why these organisations arose when they did and examines their structures, tactics and efficacy in challenging white male patriarchy. The relationship between these women and other similar organisations around the country and internationally is explored while the relations between these women and Afrikaner white women is also examined and linked to the ‘War Effort’ ideology that emerged during the First World War, in order to illuminate how the War at first helped and then hindered their campaigns

Chapter Eight

By Union, politicised white working-class municipal candidates known as ‘labourites’ began to be elected onto Krugersdorp’s Town Council, in line with similar developments elsewhere on the Rand. Many of these candidates identified themselves with the South African Labour Party (SALP) which was formed in 1909 and advocated an explicit platform of municipal reforms for Krugersdorp. These reforms, it is contended, aimed to shape Krugersdorp according to a vision of a white working-class town. These reforms, for example, advocated municipal socialism in the form of the ‘municipalisation’ of basic services like the supply of electricity and worked for the employment of substantial numbers of white working-class employees by the municipality.

Other proposed reforms, which were not successfully implemented, included site value taxation and a Saturday Half-Holiday. This Chapter analyses municipal, Provincial and Parliamentary elections closely to argue that the SALP fared far better than conventional historians have suggested because they focussed closely on 'bread-and-butter' issues that were important to the white working-class electorate. By 1917, however, the labourites began to lose influence in Krugersdorp and although they fought a rearguard action, they had become much less influential by the end of the First World War.

Chapter Nine

Indian residents successfully evaded legal restrictions on their ability to trade and live in prime commercial spots in the town and this developed into a protracted and bitter legal struggle fought mainly in local but also in provincial and national court rooms. This Chapter explores how the law itself can become a site of struggle and examines what the implications were for ordinary Indian residents, particularly for Indian shopkeepers.

The Town Council adopted this approach because informal, extralegal tactics such as the boycott of Indian traders and a white hawkers' association – as described in Chapter Five – failed dismally. A white commercial and professional elite used the law to deny trading licences to Indian traders and to restrict the activities of Indian hawkers, with some initial success.

Increasingly, however, the Indian community began to strike back, challenging the Town Council robustly in the courts and developing legal loopholes that enabled them to run commercial enterprises in the heart of the town. The formation of limited liability companies was one of the most effective ways to evade restrictions on Indian ownership of land but this was challenged by the municipality in the famous court case of *Dadoo Ltd v Krugersdorp Municipality, 1920.* In the end the Council won a hollow victory but incurred heavy debts and made little difference to the widespread commercial success of Indian traders in the heart of Krugersdorp itself.