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(Dis)empowered Whiteness: An Ethnography of the King Edward Park

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focusses on a group of poorer white South Africans who have settled, informally and illegally, in a former caravan park on the West Rand of Johannesburg, The King Edward Park. It is an ethnographic study that explores the socio-economic genealogies of the poorer white residents of the park, the everyday practices of making livelihoods, and attempt to reproduce ideologies of South African whiteness in a spatiality — the "squatter camp" — that has historically been associated with blackness.

The thesis draws on the historical notion of the South African "poor-white crisis" to investigate the continuities and discontinuities in the residents' understandings of normative whiteness and the links between whiteness, race, and class. It begins by contextualising the complexities of being poor, white, and unable to access formal housing in post-apartheid South Africa. After the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, white South Africans generally experienced a rise in economic power. Yet this thesis is written at a time when increasingly louder voices of neo-conservatives bemoan the supposed systematic oppression of white South Africans by the South African state. This body of work turns the gaze to a small number of whites who, without the support of the apartheid state, have been unable to find secure formal housing and have come to be known, colloquially, as "white squatters". Contrary to wide-spread reports that ascribe an exponential rise in white poverty to the implementation of affirmative action policies, I show how many of the residents of King Edward Park come from several generations of poverty, and outline the extensive kinship relations between the almost three hundred residents. This has produced an elaborate internal hierarchy of power that regulates activities, donations, and interactions with outsiders in ways that aim specifically to portray the park as a *white* informal settlement that ought to be thought of as exceptional. The thesis shows how the most central actors in the park negotiate being poor and being

white while making attempts to secure the support of both affluent neo-conservatives and the state's systems of support. Through a dialectical process, this thesis argues that, by drawing on notions of historical poor-whites, post-apartheid white neo-conservatism, and normative understandings of race and space, residents of the park have established themselves as a special kind of poor and so have created networks that secure their continued livelihoods.

KEYWORDS

Ethnography, informal settlements, poor whiteism, post-apartheid, poverty, whiteness

DECLARATION

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



Christi Krüger

March 2017

DEDICATION

For Anthony (2010 - 2014),

who saw too much and left too soon;

and for Candess, who has been there, always

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

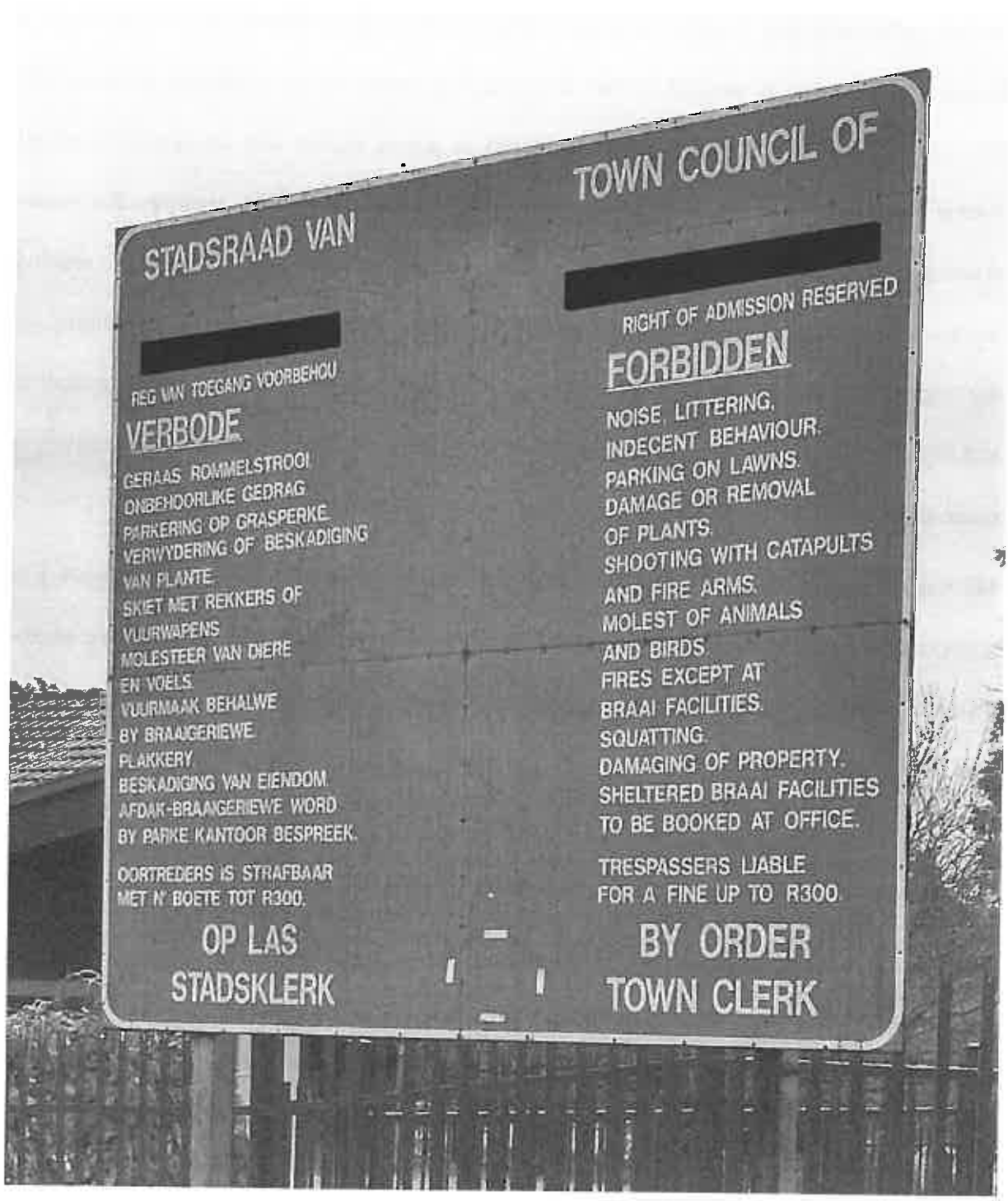


Figure 1: The sign that welcomes visitors to King Edward Park

Contextualisation and problem statement

The thesis tells the story of a group of three hundred poorer[1] white[2] South Africans who have settled, informally and illegally, in a space that I call the King Edward Park.[3] The Park, a former camping site, is situated on the West Rand of South Africa's Gauteng province and has, over the last fifteen years, housed hundreds of poorer whites who are unable to afford formal housing elsewhere. My thesis is an ethnographic study that explores the socio-economic genealogies of the Park's residents[4], their everyday practices of making livelihoods, and the reproduction of ideologies of South African whiteness in a spatiality — the "squatter camp" — that has historically been associated with apartheid-style segregation and South African blackness.[5] It is a study that therefore aims to understand how whiteness is made and unmade in areas that are frequently considered to destabilise whiteness.

My thesis critically examines the particular ways in which post-apartheid white poverty is contextualised and politicised, and how the residents themselves make sense of their socio-economic and political positions. Against the larger politically conservative narratives

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[1] Social positionality is always relational. In order to highlight some of the related positions of those who feature centrally in this thesis, I use the term "poorer whites" in relation to those white South Africans who find themselves impoverished after 1994. I do this for two reasons. Firstly, the term "poor whites", or "poor-whites" as styled in the thesis, holds a very specific historical meaning and should not be conflated with those who are poor and white in contemporary South Africa. Secondly, a central argument made here is that South Africans who are poor and white in the post-apartheid era continue to draw on different forms of capital through their perceived racial identity. I thus use the comparative form to flag the way social categories structures positionalities and access to resources.

[2] This project strongly draws on the racial categories that were deployed by the apartheid state: white, black African, coloured, and Indian. While acknowledging the deeply problematic nature of constructed racial classifications, these categories continue to be used throughout South Africa today. In fact, as this thesis argues, the notion of essential racial groups speak to the very heart of a South African society that is constantly structured and reproduced in terms of understandings of race and ethnicity.

[3] This name is a pseudonym, as are all of the respondents' names throughout the thesis.

[4] I refer to the people who live in the Park as "residents", rather than "occupants" or "squatters", in compliance with their own insistence that it is a space in which they belong and that they have made into a home.

[5] In terms of policies and practices, 1994 called for a clear departure from an apartheid consciousness and policies, including labels such as "squatter camp" and "slum", Huchzermeyer (2011: 8) argues. Others, like Makhulu (2015), have embraced the term. My thesis uses the term "squatter camp" with an awareness of the political weight that it carries and its possible derogatory implications. I use this term because, firstly, the residents themselves refer to the space in which they live as a squatter camp and, as my thesis argues, ascribe importance to this fact; and secondly because of the political weight that is given to the term "white squatter camp" (or *wit plakkerskamp* in Afrikaans), some of which may be lost without the racial and derogatory connotations that "squatter camp" conveys.

regarding white poverty after apartheid, which ascribe the renewed visibility thereof to the supposed socio-political and economic marginalisation of white South Africans, this study elaborates on the day-to-day life in a white squatter camp. By presenting a critical account of the social, economic, and political structures that have been established in the Park, as well as the life histories of those who reside there, my thesis displays the integrate and multifaceted ways in which the residents of King Edward Park have appropriated and internalised older notions of poor-white[6] morality and upliftment as a means to reproduce particular forms of whiteness.

The story of King Edward Park and its residents is one that is distinctly anchored in the South African post-apartheid moment. Yet, it cannot be understood without being thoroughly embedded in the contexts of apartheid and pre-apartheid South Africa. The political system of apartheid officially ended in 1994. Despite all of its familiarity in the context of South African politics, Dubow (2014: v) remarks that apartheid resists any easy definition. Apartheid was a political system, officially implemented after 1948, that sought to segregate South Africans in terms of race and ethnicity. It carried, Dubow (2014:10) notes, an additional moral and spiritual imperative.

South Africanist historian Herman Giliomee describes apartheid as having rested on several bases. These included "political apartheid restricting all power to whites, the enforced separation of existing communities, segregated education, protection for whites in the labour market, and influx control that restricted African movement into cities. The sixth base, which was the ideological cornerstone, was the setting aside of special land areas called reserves for African residency, later renamed black or Bantu homelands, or Bantustans for short"

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[6] Conventionally, this term is styled as "poor white". In this thesis I have selected to hyphenate it in order to better reflect the Afrikaans concept of *armblanke*. In Afrikaans there is a crucial difference between "*arm blanke*", describing a white person as poor, and "*armblanke*", which refers to the historical social category that I describe in my thesis.

(Giliomee, 2009: 500).[7] While apartheid may have ended in 1994, my thesis shows many of these ideologies still to be firmly intact, driving forward the idea of white exceptionalism.

In the two decades that followed the official end of apartheid, there has been an important shift in the politics that surround white poverty. This is a shift that is very directly related to the way politically conservative whites imagine themselves in the post-apartheid era: disempowered and marginalised by the South African government. Contrary to the idea that poorer whites *always* find themselves excluded from the wider white society, I thus argue that, collectively, the white political right and the residents of the Park have produced a politics in which poorer whites are meaningfully entangled within post-apartheid South African whiteness. Such an entanglement has, consequently, enabled the Park's residents to construct lives that look very different to the lives of other poor South Africans. It affords them economic, social, and political privileges to which other poor South Africans do not have access and enables the residents of King Edward Park to distance themselves from those whom they see as the "ordinary" poor. On the other hand, however, the very direct involvement of whites who aspire to uphold more conservative forms of whiteness means that residents often feel that they, too, have to display a commitment to these values.

The "new" poor: post-apartheid and poorer whites

My interest in post-apartheid white poverty, and the politics in which it is embedded, was initially prompted by the prominence of poorer whites in news articles, documentaries, photography, and on social media sites in the last decade.[8] Over the last fifteen years, media houses have frequently published pieces that seemingly seek to investigate the phenomenon

[7] For an elaborate discussion of the apartheid system, see Dubow (2014); Giliomee (2009: 403-633); Moodie (1975); O'Meara (1983); Posel (1991); and Van der Westhuizen (2007).
[8] A few example of projects that focussed on white poverty in the post-apartheid period are "*Arme blanken*" [Poor white] made by Dutch journalist and filmmaker Saskia Vredeveld in 2010, Jordi Burch's collection of photos entitled "Poor Boer", and Ben Krewinkel's photographic project "*Toe witmense arm was*" [When white people were poor] of 2009.

of post-apartheid white poverty. Titles such as "South Africa's New Poor: White and Bewildered" (Swarns, 2000); "Hardship Deepens for South Africa's Poor White" (O'Reilly, 2010); "Poverty, and Little Sympathy, in South Africa" (Macdonald, 2010); "Do White People have a Future in South Africa" (Simpson, 2013); "'Reverse Apartheid': South Africa's White Slums" (Euronews, 2013); and "Shocking Number of White Squatter Camps in South Africa" (BusinessTech, 2016) clearly establish the idea that white South Africans find themselves marginalised and disempowered after 1994.

The visual and textual content of these pieces all follow a similar narrative in which poorer white South Africans are described as having fallen into poverty after the end of apartheid. O'Reilly (2010) writes, for example, that some white South Africans have fallen on hard times following the introduction of "laws that promote employment for blacks and aim to give black South Africans a bigger slice of the economy". Similarly, the journalist John Simpson stated in a televised report in 2013 that white poverty is an ugly secret of the new South Africa. He claimed that at least 200 000 whites live in squatter camps across South Africa and described white South Africans as feeling like black Africans did under apartheid (Simpson 2013).

The tone in which post-apartheid white poverty has been reported on echoes, in many ways, the way in which white poverty has been contextualised by politically conservative and primarily white,[9] organisations. Solidarity Helping Hand[10] (2010), for example, presented

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[9] I do not characterise these organisations as exclusively white as many of the organisations that have been involved in charity work in King Edward Park insist that they are non-racial, despite the fact that I only ever encountered white members and representatives during my fieldwork.

[10] Solidarity is a trade union, formerly known as the Transvaal Miner's Association and the Mineworkers Union. In 2001 the union changed its name to MWU-Solidarity and has, since 2002, simply been known as Solidarity (Solidarity, 2015). Solidarity focuses primarily on the representation of white workers. They have taken a particularly strong position on affirmative action, describing it as "creating new forms of discrimination" that leads to "whites being seriously disadvantaged" (Solidarity, 2015). Solidarity Helping Hand is the charity affiliate of Solidarity that focusses specifically on Afrikaner poverty. It was established in 1949 to address white poverty after WWII, and currently has more than 30 000 individual monthly contributors (Solidarity Helping Hand, 2016).

President Jacob Zuma an official report on white poverty, urging him to urgently address white poverty. The fifteen-page report makes elaborate claims with regard to white poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. It alleges that, by 2010, more than 600 000 Afrikaners could be classified as living in poverty, that there were more than 77 "white squatter camps" in the city of Pretoria and more than 430 across the rest of South Africa, and that white poverty had increased by more than 150% since 1994. Additionally, the report also claims that 131 000 households cannot afford adequate housing (Solidarity Helping Hand, 2010).[11] These numbers differ significantly from those released by Statistics South Africa, which estimate the number of white households living in informal settlements at around seven thousand or 0,4% in 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2014: 41). Nonetheless, the latter statistic is hardly ever cited in mediated accounts of white poverty. Moreover, such accounts of post-apartheid white poverty fail to historicise the notion of poor whiteism.

Many accounts of white poverty in the post-apartheid era suggest that white poverty is a phenomenon that was completely absent during the apartheid years and has been brought about by the fall of apartheid. This, as Bottomley (2012) has shown, is not only untrue but also ignores the life histories of poorer whites who struggled financially throughout the twentieth century. In this thesis I draw strongly on the historiography of South African poor whiteism, the Afrikaners nationalists' reaction to the so-called "poor-white problem" during the 1930s and 1940s, and the ways in which the ideologies that underpinned the supposed "rehabilitation" of poor-whites in this time still influence the King Edward Park residents today.

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[11] I made several attempts over the previous two years to establish who the researchers were that compiled the Helping Hands report and which methods and measures were used. Solidarity and Helping Hand, however, declined to comment or provide me with more detail on the report. The non-profit organisation *Africa Check* reported that, upon its own inquiry, Helping Hand stated that the figures referred to above are outdated and that no reliable statistics are available with regard to white poverty and white informal housing (Rademeyer, 2013).

It is not only in South Africa, however, that poor whiteism influenced historical understandings of race and class. The notion of poor-whites as a distinct class of people who bring boundaries of race and class into question has been present since the mid-nineteenth century. The term *poor-whites* first originated in the American South during the 1870s in reference to the several million white Americans who were almost as poor as the newly emancipated African-American slaves (Giliomee, 2009: 315; Wray, 2006: 44). The emergence of a group of people who soon became known as poor-whites was viewed as signalling "a problem of degeneracy" (Wray, 2006: 66). In other European colonies, white poverty also intensified during the last few decades of the nineteenth century (Forde-Jones, 1998; Gillmer, 2007; Jackson, 2013; Stoler, 1989: 136-140).

In South Africa, the so-called poor-white problem of the 1920s and 1930s led to an extensive inquiry into the social-economic causes of poor whiteism and possible resolutions to the "problem". This report, known as the "The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission", comprised five volumes, each authored by a different researcher. The research, conducted in 1929 and 1930, resulted in an economic report (Grosskopf, 1932), a psychological report (Wilcocks, 1932), an educational report (Malherbe, 1932), a medical report (Murray, 1932), and a sociological report (Albertyn and Rothmann, 1932). Together these five volumes provide an insight into the socio-economic and political contexts in which the poor-white problem was embedded and provided a platform from which the Afrikaner upper classes intervened to solve the problem of poor whiteism (Bottomley, 2012: 115-120; Du Plessis, 2004; O'Meara, 1984: 26; Teppo, 2004).

Many contemporary studies of poorer whites in post-apartheid South Africa reiterate the intersections between race and class in the positionality of poorer whites, placing much emphasis on the stigmatisation of poorer whites by South Africans of all racial groups (see, for example, Teppo, 2004, 2009; Peens, 2012; Schuermans & Visser, 2005; Sibanda, 2012).

All of these studies suggest, to some extent, that poorer whites risk being unable to identify as and being considered white. Sibanda (2012), in her study of poorer whites in the city of East London, in the Eastern Cape, argues that white poverty is thought to be an abnormality within the broader white community and that the stigma attached to it brings about a state of "social death" for poorer whites. Similarly, Teppo (2009: 231) remarks that people of all racial groups look down on poorer whites in post-apartheid South Africa. In a review of South African urban geography after apartheid, Visser (2003) argues that white South Africans have become "invisible" after apartheid and specifically builds his argument around the "blindness to white poverty" (Visser, 2003: 226).

My thesis complicates arguments that suggest that poorer whites are necessarily stigmatised and that whiteness is limited to the white upper classes. As I demonstrate in the next section, this particular understanding of whiteness that views it as contained to a very specific and singular social position led to the idea that poorer whites find themselves outside the sphere in which it is possible to produce whiteness. Like Peens (2012) and Peens and Dubbeld (2013), I show how poorer whites and upper class whites often jointly produce narratives that aim to undo the stigmatisation of poorer whites. Both these papers unpack the complexities of white victimhood, racialism, and space through a study of four poorer white families in the town of Newcastle. In a situation where these white families view their whiteness as being under threat, Peens (2012) argues, they draw on racist generalisations and Steyn's (2005) concept of "White Talk" to establish their social position and defy poor-white stigmas. The use of White Talk to discursively portray poorer whites as victims is not used by poorer whites only but, as Peens and Dubbeld (2013: 18-20) show, is jointly produced by both poorer white families as well as the social workers who make attempts to intervene into their lives.

Herein lies an important distinction between post-apartheid understandings of white squatters and a phenomenon with which an international readership often compares it: the American concepts of "white trash" and "white trailer parks". On the surface it is easy to see why one would seek a degree of comparison between these concepts. Most pointedly, both instances speak to intersections of race/class which problematizes an understanding of whiteness as affording *all* persons considered to be white certain privileges (see, for example, Moss, 2003; Wray, 2006; Wray and Newitz, 1997). Moreover, the special organisation in both instances – a caravan park and a trailer park – urges one to consider a sense of share experience between those who reside in King Edward Park and those who live in American trailer parks. Yet, there are significant differences, theoretically and conceptually, between those poorer whites I describe here and "white trash". "Americans love to hate the poor," Wray and Newitz (1997: 1) state in the introductory remarks of their book *White Trash: Race and Class in America.* They continue to remark that, "there seems to be no group of poor folks they like to hate more than white trash." Other scholars too regularly choose to emphasise the class stratification that surrounds the notion of white trash (Goad, 1998; Isenberg, 2016; Jun, 2006; Moss, 2003; Wray, 2006). A common thread that runs through much of the literature on white trash and its place within American culture is the idea that poor American whites – the class of people who collectively constitute white trash - has been the subject of a deeply rooted classism.

White trash, within this theoretical framework, is considered to be an anomaly within the broader understanding of whiteness. Rather than highlighting the various ways in which whiteness is able to adapt and conform, white trash is viewed as exemplary of the fact that not all white persons embody whiteness.

One of the most central arguments of this thesis states that those persons who are considered to be white, at least within the post-apartheid South African context, are always implicated by

whiteness. While whiteness, as any ideology, may manifest in different ways, I argue here at even at the very margins of whiteness poorer whites still remain white and are thus positioned differently in relation to persons from other racial groups.

Whiteness after apartheid

Whether one takes the view that whiteness affords certain privileges to poorer whites or, rather, that critical whiteness theory does not pay sufficient attention to the way poorer whites are stigmatised despite being white, there is clearly an important relationship between whiteness, understandings of who is considered to be white, and white poverty. My thesis is particularly interested in post-apartheid formations of whiteness, and the ways in which poorer whites reproduce older forms of whiteness in order to assert themselves and the spaces where they live as "white". Since this thesis is specifically focussed on post-apartheid white poverty, I draw extensively on the formation of white subjectivities after apartheid and how this has influenced perceptions of poor whiteism.

As the previous section indicated, there is a long history of poor-whites being regarded as lacking the whiteness that is displayed by the white middle- and upper-classes. In his book *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*, Wray (2006: 136-139) argues, for example, that scholars of whiteness ought to take note of how white poverty complicates theories of whiteness. While it true that poorer whites do not occupy the same social positions as other whites, this thesis argues that this merely implies that whiteness, like many other social positionalities, is heterogeneous and manifests in different ways among different people and it not a uniform quality.

The field of critical whiteness studies, which informs this thesis' use of whiteness, initially developed in the United States during the early 1990s. Since Tony Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992) first introduced the notion, a growing

body of literature in a range of disciplines has focussed on "whiteness studies" or "white studies" as a means of (theoretically) subverting whiteness (Steyn, 2005: 120). At the centre of the critical project of whiteness studies is the idea of shifting the social gaze so that whites, too, become visible. "As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people", Richard Dyer (1997: 1) writes in his seminal book, *White*. This means that the social, cultural, economic, and political positions of those people who are considered white are assumed to be normal and natural, and are often accepted without question. Whiteness cannot function, of course, without a relation to blackness. In this seminal text *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (2008: 90) characterizes the ontological position of the colonised by arguing that, "[O]ntology does not allow us to understand the being of the white man, since it ignores the lives experience. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man." This relationality is important throughout my thesis, albeit not explicitly highlighted in all instances, in attempt to understand the ways in which the Park's residents construct, perform, and understand their own whiteness. As I show in chapters two and three, understandings of whiteness in the Park is deeply intertwined with notions of whiteness and blackness in the South African context.

Whiteness and blackness in the South African context take on particular and localised meanings. The South African sociologist and critical whiteness scholar Melissa Steyn (2005: 121) defines whiteness as "an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to people of European descent as a consequence of the economic and political advantage gained during and subsequent to European colonial expansion". Within the scope of critical whiteness studies thus, "whiteness" refers to the occupation of a social location of structural privilege in a racialised society as well as to the occupation of the epistemic position of seeing the world "whitely" (Taylor, 2004: 227; Vice, 2010: 333). While these definitions are

rather broad, they serve as a good departure point from which to understand whiteness in its most basic manifestation. South Africa has, of course, a long history of colonial and apartheid understandings of race and ethnicity and the emphasis of fixed racial categories through apartheid legislation. Given this historico-political configuration, whites in South Africa have never experienced their whiteness as invisible (Steyn 2005: 112). Throughout the apartheid era, race was emphasised through racialised social worlds. It is, therefore, important to distinguish between *whiteness* as an ideology that affords whites certain privileges, and *being considered white* as an extension of socially constructed racial categories. While South Africans may be acutely aware of the latter, they are not necessarily aware of the former and the position of privilege it affords them.

The visibility and emphasis on South Africans' *being white* was heightened, during the twentieth century, by Afrikaner nationalist efforts to prescribe to white South Africans which identities they ought to produce. The official end of apartheid, consequently, sparked a renewed interest in the construction and deconstruction of white South African identities, raising questions about the continued privileges whites enjoy, and the forms of identity whites have sought to embrace or reject. Consequently, many recent studies relating to this topic have focussed on white Afrikaans-speakers and the re-imaging of so-called Afrikaner identity (Blaser, 2004, 2007; Blaser & Van der Westhuizen, 2012; Du Pisanie, 2001; Engelbrecht, 2007; Lambrechts & Viljoen, 2010; Puttergill, 2008; Van der Waal & Robins, 2011; Verwey, 2008; Vestergaard, 2001). As one of the primary aims of Afrikaner Christian nationalism was to create a people of a homogenous ethic, and Afrikaners were consequently encouraged to construct identities that reflected the aims and values of Christian nationalism, the fall of nationalism meant that Afrikaans-speaking whites now had the opportunity to construct identities with more freedom.

For some white Afrikaans-speakers the dawn of the post-apartheid era implied the freedom to embrace more progressive identities, rejecting the ideologically-laden Afrikaner identity that was once prescribed by Afrikaner Christian nationalists (Giliomee, 2009: 703-704; Pienaar, 2012; Vestergaard, 2001). Others, however, elected to display a firm commitment to older, more conservative identities (Baines, 2013; Blaser and Van der Westhuizen, 2012; Vestergaard, 2001) and display feelings of nostalgia for the apartheid and pre-apartheid eras (Baines, 2009; Van der Waal and Robins, 2011; Van Zyl, 2008).

My thesis draws on various arguments presented by the literature that I have mentioned here. I do not elaborate extensively on the relevant arguments at this moment as chapters two, three, and six all discuss at length questions of whiteness, Afrikaner identity, and the politics that are evoked by the development of post-apartheid white poverty. Through these arguments my thesis demonstrates the importance of critically investigating whiteness in relation to white poverty. My arguments speak to one notion of whiteness that has been produced in the late and post-apartheid periods and that seeks to incorporate white poverty into an understanding of whiteness, rather than to distance itself from it.

The politics of poverty in the post-apartheid era

South African society today, as Julian Brown (2015: 148) argues, has inequality at its core. This does not mean, of course, that the only existing inequality is racial inequality. Scholars like Bond (2000), Gibson (2011: 111-1440), James (2014), and Southall (2016) have pointed out the rise of a post-apartheid black middle class. Within the scope of this thesis, however, the ongoing reproduction of a society that is marked by racial inequalities, and that is guided by apartheid and colonial structures, is central. This study is interested, specifically, in how white poverty is considered by many to be fundamentally different to the poverty suffered by other racial groups. In order to do this, it is necessary to take into account the broader socio-

economic conditions in South Africa. Contrary to the claims by white politically conservative groups that poorer whites are deliberately left without social state assistance, studies of poverty after apartheid indicate that poverty, unemployment, and unequal access to resources are problems that are most often found in communities that consist primarily of black Africans (Gibson, 2011; Ferguson, 2015; Makhulu, 2015; Nattrass & Seekings, 2001).

In fact, as Gibson (2011: 73) rightly notes, it is quite plain to see that there is a telling correlation between race and economic class in South Africa, with the majority of those classified as poor or very poor being black Africans. Two decades after apartheid, Brown (2015: 1) writes, South Africa is once again in flux, at a moment where the boundaries of politics and society are unstable and can change without much notice. Others, too, have observed how the political moment in South Africa is caught up in politics of protesting, the visibility of social movements, and attempts by citizens to make sense of the enormous wealth gap between the country's upper classes and the poor (Ballard, Habib, and Valodia, 2006; Brown, 2015; Gibson, 2011; Makhulu, 2015; Pithouse, 2008; Terreblanche, 2002).

Despite the significant changes — political, economic, and social — that South Africa has undergone since 1994, the "exclusivity of heavily guarded colonial spaces that Fanon describes has probably increased since the ANC [African National Party] came to power", as Gibson argues (2011: 72). Racial classification persists, gated communities and private security companies separate the rich and the poor, and poverty has remained as high as it was during apartheid (Gibson, 2011: 71-73). The ongoing reproduction of unequal structures that privileges white South Africans is further noticeable when one considers statistical data regarding poverty and unemployment. In 2014, 21.7% of South Africans were unable to afford the most basic nutritional requirements, 37% of South Africans could not afford both food and non-food items, and 53.7% of South African citizens were able to afford food and non-food items but still fell under the widest definition of poverty and depended on an

average income of less than R800[12] per month (Statistics South Africa, 2014).[13] Statistically, the number of whites who live below the three national poverty lines is very low in comparison to that of other racial groups. In 2011, less than 1% of white South Africans were living below the UBPL, compared to 54% of black Africans and 27% of coloureds (Statistics South Africa, 2014: 26).

Such statistics mean little to the residents of King Edward Park while they struggle to access formal housing, find employment, and make sense of their socio-economic position. As this thesis will argue, however, it is necessary to contextualise the lives of these residents within the broader politics of whiteness in which they are embedded. It is only once white poverty is considered in this way that the durability and reach of ideological whiteness can truly be understood.

Residing in King Edward Park

I visited King Edward Park for the first time in September 2013 and undertook my research over the next eleven months, completing my fieldwork in July 2014. I spent the majority of these eleven months in the Park, taking up residency in the home of one of the Park's families and volunteering at the Park's crèche.

I gained my first entry into the Park through the charitable organisation that supports the Park's crèche. In the month that preceded my first visit to the Park I made several unsuccessful attempts to contact and meet with Henry and Ilana, the Park's self-appointed managers. Finally, I reached Charlene who, with the assistance of two of the Park's female

[12] During the time of my fieldwork in 2013 and 2014, the South African rand was, on average, equal to £0.057 GBP and US$0.094. R800, at the time, was therefore equal to £ 45.60 GBP or US$ 75.20.
[13] These three levels correlate to the three different national poverty lines: the upper-bound poverty line, the lower-bound poverty line, and the food poverty line. In 2014, the rand value attached to these lines was, respectively, R753, R544, and R400 per capita per month (Statistics South Africa, 2014:7).

residents, teaches a basic curriculum to children between the ages of three and six.[14] I was slightly wary of entering the Park's community with the help of an outside sponsor rather than with the direct help of the Park's residents because, unfamiliar with the politics of the space, I feared that a seeming alliance with an outside organisation could potentially influence residents' attitudes toward me. Yet, when unable to make contact with any residents, I took up Charlene's offer. With her help I was able to meet with Ilana who listened to a brief outline of my research, and agreed that I could undertake research in the Park under the strict condition that I was not to take any photographs of children.

As chapter two will show, many of the activities in the Park are subject to Ilana and Henry's approval. On the whole, Ilana and Henry consented for me to move around the Park freely and take part in the day-to-day activities. I encountered some difficulties, however, with regard to interviewing the Park's residents. Henry and Ilana were both extremely reluctant to allow interviews which meant that I had very limited opportunities to conduct semi-structured interviews. Ilana's fickleness also complicated my research as when she determined offhand that I was not allowed to talk to a particular person, complained if she saw me taking too many photos, or decided that no resident was allowed to be interviewed at all.

During the first month of my fieldwork I drove to the Park every morning, assisted at the crèche, and getting to know the two women who volunteered there, Sunette and Meisie. I also became acquainted with some of the mothers who collected their children after school and, slowly, with some of their other family members. I did much the same work as the two other volunteers: serving breakfast and lunch, washing dishes, and cleaning the classrooms in the afternoons. These weeks at the crèche allowed me to slowly get acquainted with some of the residents, and also gave them the opportunity to get to know me better.

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[14] At the start of my fieldwork the staff at the crèche consisted of Charlene and her two assistants. In chapter five and six I mention two permanent teachers and a cleaner. The latter were appointed in January 2014, a few months after the beginning of my fieldwork.

During my first weeks in the Park the volunteers at the crèche patiently explained everyday life in the Park to me, elaborating on the rules and regulations, and providing me with a valuable understanding of the Park's history. When I explained to Sunette that my plan was to acquire an old caravan or Wendy house in order to conduct my fieldwork while living in the Park, she graciously offered me her family's spare bedroom.

Sunette Bester's family is large and includes herself and her husband, David; her mother, Joan, and her mother's friend, Michael; and Sunette's four children. By the Park's standards their home was relatively large and included a large army tent, a caravan, and a Wendy house. They also had a bathroom, kitchen, living area, and *stoep* (veranda).[15] Having an extra bedroom is most unusual in the context of the Park and the Bester family's ability to offer me the use of their spare room is testament to their position as one of the more stable families in the Park.

In late December, four months into my research, David's daughter and her young son came to visit. What was intended as a two-week visit soon stretched into a much longer stay and the family needed the extra bedroom I was occupying. Once again the family assisted me with negotiating my stay in the field. Sunette's mother, Joan, who acts as the Park's administrator and allocates the plots on which every household is allowed to stay, insisted that I could not move to the area where new residents are usually allocated stands. She insisted that I be given the plot directly adjacent to the Bester family's home where they would still be near enough if I needed any help.

It is likely that the insistence that I should not live in the less desirable eastern side of the Park was not only as a result of the friendship I forged with the Bester family, but also indicative of my class position. It was clear to most of the residents that I am firmly placed in

[15] A discussion of homes and the importance thereof for the formation of whiteness follows in chapter two.

the middle class. My class position was emphasised by my smartphone, my ability to drive to Johannesburg with my own car, and the fact that I could afford to share food, drinks, and cigarettes with other residents. Occasionally residents also commented on the fact that I could afford to do research for almost a year without having to do any other paid work.

The perceived class difference appeared to be of particular importance to the younger residents with whom I had more difficulty establishing relationships. Negotiating class was especially difficult during the first three months when residents suspiciously wondered if I was a social worker, and often tried to borrow money from me. My ethnic and racial history, on the other hand, created some commonality between residents and myself. The fact that I am a white, Afrikaans-speaking woman seemed to put them a little more ease than when, for example, they were approached by English-speakers or foreigners. Some residents struggled to express themselves in English and were worried that they would be misinterpreted or misunderstood because of their broken English. Observing local customs, such as addressing older residents as *tannie* (aunt) and *oom* (uncle),[16] seemed to put residents more at ease around me. I heard on one occasion, for example, how Ilana described me to another older resident as an "*ordentelike meisiekind*" (decent girl).

The research for this thesis comprised extensive participant observation, and semi-structured and unstructured interviews. As already explained, conducting semi-structured interviews was difficult as Henry and Ilana only permitted interviews if they had given their consent. As a result, many residents were weary to consent to being interviewed and remained hesitant even with Henry or Ilana's consent for fear that they might be accused of portraying the Park in a negative light. I was, as far as any of the residents knew, the first person to ever conduct academic research in the Park. Residents' experiences with "outsiders" who wanted to

[16] Conventionally and as a sign of respect, *tannie* and *oom* are used when addressing a person who is one's senior by ten years or more. In the Park *tannie* and *oom* are also often used to indicate respect to an unfamiliar person, regardless of age.

interview them had, therefore, been limited to journalists and politicians. As a result, I often found it necessary to explain the background to my own research and how I imagined my fieldwork to inform my thesis.

As a result of the difficulties surrounding more formal and recorded interviews, I conducted only seventeen semi-structured interviews with residents. I spoke to many other residents in a much more informal setting, without any recording device or interview sheet. For these conversations I made notes on the responses given and the conversations as a whole by hand. Residents were much more agreeable to this interaction. Interviewing sponsors, on the other hand, was much easier. Both regular and irregular sponsors were mostly very keen to speak about their involvement. A few of the women who frequently visited the crèche invited me to their homes where they felt more comfortable to speak about the Park.

I spent many hours working with other residents, sharing meals, and attending church services. Because housing structures tend to be small and dark, as they were without electricity, residents were often outside during the day. Finding someone who needed help with washing, cooking, or other small tasks was therefore quite easy. I found that these interactions provided me with valuable insights into the smaller day-to-day tasks, habits, and rituals of the residents. Having a close relationship with Sunette and Joan presented me with the opportunity of becoming acquainted with newcomers, as Joan captured their new names and needed someone to show them around the Park.

Establishing comfortable relationships with the women in the Park was relatively easy. My involvement at the crèche presented me with ample opportunity to become acquainted with the mothers and grandmothers in the Park. Interacting with the men was much harder and my contact with male residents was much more limited. Generally, as I observed in the Park, most male/female relationships and even casual friendships between men and women led to

rumours in the community of sexual interest. My interactions with men in the Park therefore usually followed after I had established a firm relationship with their (female) partner.

It is necessary, finally, to address the writing of my thesis in relation to the temporal aspects of the ethnographic research. At the time of writing the final paragraphs of this thesis exactly two years have passed since I finished my research in King Edward Park. For the Park's residents these have been two tumultuous years during which they finally had to leave the Park. After I completed my fieldwork I remained in contact with some of the residents who updated me on the events surrounding their move. Because of the time constraints attached to the completion of a doctoral project, however, I could not afford to extend my fieldwork to include their move from the Park. As I note in the concluding chapter, I did return for one day to speak to some of the residents and observe their last day in the Park.

Despite the fact that the Park no longer exists in the form that I describe in this study, the large majority of this thesis in written in the ethnographic present. The primary reason for writing in the present tense is, in part, a reflection upon an important part of the ethnographic method. Ethnography is always tied to the temporal; it is conducted within a particular time and space. It is this observation that has often led to criticism on the use of the present tense (Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Clifford, 1988). Quite rightly, it has been pointed out that the use of the present tense may lead to assumptions about the boundedness of "cultures". Using the present tense has further been criticised as atemporal (Stocking, 1983: 101) and as portraying anthropological research as ahistorical (Crapanzano, 1986:10).

The intention of using the present tense in this particular ethnographic study aims to emphasise the opposite of ethnography as ahistorical. Following Hastrup (1990) and DePina-Cabral (2000), I am of the opinion that the ethnographic present can be a useful analytic tool. In particular I argue with Hastrup (1990: 45) that, given the centrality of the ethnographic

method to the discipline of anthropology, the ethnographic present "is a necessary construction of time, because only the ethnographic present preserves the reality of anthropological knowledge".

The critique of anthropology as a colonial project, and the understanding that the ethnographic present supports this project, is also relevant in this regard. It has also been argued that the use of the ethnographic present tense aids to the portrayal of (particularly colonial) subjects as essentialist and static. As is always the case with any anthropological project, a thorough contextualisation is important. As I have set out in this introductory chapter, my thesis deals very explicitly with a group of people who can in no way be constructed or situated as colonised. While taking seriously the implications of the ethnographic present – and the anthropological project as a whole – in terms of its colonial history, I think that it is clear throughout my thesis that is does not situate the Park is ahistorical and does not positions the Park's residents as colonial subjects.

Thesis outline

Following this introductory chapter, my thesis begins by considering the way spaces in South Africa have been racialised. **Chapter two** examines the history of spatial segregation in South Africa during the twentieth century and the influence thereof on the spatiality of South Africa today. I argue that post-apartheid South Africa has largely continued to reflect the spatial organisation of the apartheid system. With much of apartheid's spatiality, as well as the ideologies that underpinned spatial segregation still in place, I argue that many South Africans continue to believe that certain racial groups belong in certain spaces. For many, this continuation means that squatter camps, or informal settlements, are spaces of blackness. Consequently, residents of King Edward Park have come to understand it as a space with a particular meaning: a white squatter camp that allows residents to produce specific forms of

whiteness while emphasising that they are different to other squatters and the space they live in different to that of other squatter camps.

Chapter three expands on the ways in which whiteness is produced within a space that is considered by many as "un-white". I use ethnographic and archival material to show how the residents of King Edward Park reinforced the historical notion of the "good whites" to position themselves as distinctly white against the material backdrop of the squatter camp. Foregrounded in my understanding of good whiteness as an ideological expression, this chapter demonstrates how residents continue to enforce and regulate the normative understandings of how one can assert oneself as a "good white", with a specific focus on the construction and organisation of homes. This chapter argues that, in the absence of the formal regulation of the home lives of poorer whites by the state, residents continue to self-impose markers of "good whiteness".

In **chapter four,** I unpack different understandings of the familial. I focus, specifically, on three different, albeit related, interpretations of family and the familial. Firstly, there is Ilana as an example of the post-apartheid *volksmoeder* and the Park as a family. Secondly, I point out the presence of Ilana's extensive "real" family as opposed to the family that is constituted by all the Park's residents, and lastly, I discuss the nuclear family within individual households. The image of the family, this chapter argues, is powerful as it creates structures that allow residents to access and exercise different forms of power within the Park. The ideas tied to the familial leave those who fail to comply with, or at least display an attempt to comply with, the forms and values of the nuclear family vulnerable. This chapter argues that the metaphor of the family is a powerful one that aids residents in challenging assumptions about white poverty and class, organising internal power structures, and in displaying aspirations that uphold "good white" norms and values.

In **chapter five** I explore the everyday livelihoods of the Park's residents and the primary ways through which economic capital is accessed. The chapter focusses on three different means through which residents access economic capital: state social assistance in the form of cash transfers, wage work, and donations the Park receives from outsiders. Building on the arguments of the previous two chapters, chapter five argues that many of the practices around employment, work, and donations are tied to the residents' assumption regarding how whites *ought* to live and work. This chapter argues that the ways residents access economic capital should be embedded in the social, cultural, and political contexts in which the residents live. Together with chapter four this chapter emphasises how residents in the Park draw on structures of hierarchy and power in the Park itself in order to negotiate capital.

Chapter 6, finally, focusses on the relationship between the Park's residents and their sponsors. The ways in which the Park's residents have managed to position themselves as exceptional and have continued to produce good whiteness are significantly aided by the involvement of several white and politically conservative organisations and individuals. While poor-whites historically presented fears of inter-racial mixing and threatened white supremacy in this way, the poorer white residents of King Edward Park now signal to white conservatives the decline of white power in post-apartheid South Africa. This is an important shift as it challenges the conventional intersections of race and class within the construction of poor whiteism. I argue that together the residents and their sponsors engage in a politics of homogeneity, wherein ethno-race in considered to be the sole determining factor in the white South Africans' socio-economic futures. This means that, despite the fact that poorer whites make for a very small percentage of white South Africans, they occupy a powerful place in the imaginations of politically conservative whites.

Together, these chapters unpack the socio-political and economic worlds of post-apartheid poorer whites. My thesis emphasises the multiple ways in which the Park's residents

negotiate everyday life in a white squatter camp, drawing on post-apartheid politics of poverty and well as historical notions of white poverty to ensure the continued exceptionalism of white poverty.

CHAPTER TWO

The spatiality of segregation: racializing place in post-apartheid South Africa

Introduction

The spatial organisation of South Africa has, since its first colonial encounter more than three centuries ago, been deeply influenced by the colonial logic of the spaces in which different racial and ethnic groups ought to belong. By the mid-twentieth century, while global politics were marked by processes of decolonisation, the politics of spatial segregation in South Africa continued to be explicitly racialised with the formalisation of the system of apartheid in 1948. The formal end of apartheid sought, among other things, to move away from the segregationist practices that had been imbedded in so many aspects of South African life. "Unmaking" apartheid proved to be a difficult task, however. More than two decades after the official end of apartheid, in 1994, social and economic inequalities remain highly visible throughout the country (Makhulu, 2015: xii). Despite some scholars[1] noting the emergence of a black middle class after 1994, large parts of the South African population have seen little change in their day-to-day lives. A drive through most South African cities displays a continuation of the segregation imposed by apartheid law: on the peripheries townships and informal settlements, mostly populated by black Africans, provide a stark contrast to the suburban areas where most whites still reside. Moreover, the rationale and discourses that informed practices of racial segregation linger (Ballard, 2002, 2004) and many South

[1] See, for example, Chipkin and Meny-Gilbert (2013), James (2014), and Southall (2015).

Africans continue to hold the notion that whites belong in certain spaces and are out of place in others.

Taking the idea as point of departure that South Africa has, for the most part, remained deeply racially segregated, this chapter contextualises King Edward Park within a longer history of the racial segregation of dwelling spaces. My aim is to show how post-apartheid poorer whites and so-called "white squatter camps" are persistently situated within the body of literature that address the historical phenomenon of "poor-whites" and the development of poor-white suburbs. This despite the existence of more recent scholarship on (black African) informal settlements and squatter politics in the post-apartheid period (see, for example, Huchzermeyer, 2011; Makhulu, 2015; and Pithouse, 2008), literature on which studies of post-apartheid poorer whites never draw. The spaces in which poorer whites live are treated as separate and different from the informal settlements in which black Africans live, an important absence that signals the distinct racialised lens through which poorer whites are viewed.

I argue that the persistence of normative ideas of spatiality and race means that South African whites understand the very concept of the squatter camp as implying a sense of blackness and that, by this definition, whites cannot be squatters. I show, however, that the residents of the Park chose not to reject the idea that they, too, are squatters out of hand. As a means to emphasise their own whiteness in relation to other — black African — and— squatter camps, residents engage in a process in which they negotiate being both white and squatters. The Park residents bridge this seeming contradiction by positing the Park as a *white squatter camp*[2]. This idea of the white squatter camp transcends mere description and is a way in which Park residents entrench forms of whiteness onto this space.

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[2] Note about the epistemological implications of white in this instance.

The chapter opens with an introduction to King Edward Park. It provides an overview of the Park, including a description of the procedures new residents have to follow, the ways spaces are allocated, and the general rules residents are asked to abide by. The introduction to the Park leads into a discussion of the two prominent Park managers, Henry and Ilana, as well as the regulation of entry to the Park through an informal administrator, Joan. In the following sub-sections I then contextualise the socio-political paradigms that are often applied to the Park. I do this by discussing two bodies of literature pertaining to poverty and housing: firstly, the development of housing provision after apartheid and, secondly, the way the South African government in the post-apartheid period has attempted to eradicate informal settlements and formalise housing for all citizens. This leads into a deeper analysis of the history of early twentieth century poor-whites and the consequent "poor-white problem". I draw on the historiography of migrant poor-white migrants to argue that the prominence of poor-whites across South Africa prompted Afrikaner nationalists, who feared racial mixing, to introduce the spatial segregation of whites from other racial groups. I conclude by arguing that the residents of King Edward Park differentiate their living space from other — black African — informal settlements, spaces they perceive to carry an inherent blackness, while not completely abandoning the idea that they, too, are informal settlers. I argue that white informal settlers negotiate contradictory social identities, namely of being white and being squatters, by constructing the concept of a white squatter camp.

King Edward Park: an initial introduction

King Edward Park, the field site on which this thesis focusses, is one of a number of so-called "white squatter camps" around South Africa. While white poverty was present during the pre-apartheid and apartheid era, the term "white squatter camp" only surfaced in the early 2000s. It is a term that carries great political weight and serves as far more than a mere spatial

descriptor. As I argue in the concluding section of this chapter, prefacing the phrase "squatter camp" with an explicit racial category attempts to highlight to supposed contradiction embedded within the term "white squatter camp". The term is also applied very loosely and lacks any formal definition. It appears that it is a term that was conceived by the media and politically conservative whites to describe some of the spaces in which poorer whites have been residing since the end of apartheid. Some of the spaces captured by the term "white squatter camp" can hardly be describe as squatter camps. Contrary to a conventional understandings of a squatter camp as a space that is occupied informally and without any legal claims to the land, many of the spaces referred to as "white squatter camps" are formal, albeit dilapidated spaces.

Given the wide-ranging application of the term, I find it necessary to outline and describe the specific "white squatter camp" that constituted my field site. Although many other spaces of poorer white dwelling are colloquially referred to as "white squatter camps", King Edward Park is, as far as my own extensive research has shown, one of the very few spaces that is inhabited almost exclusively by whites and where they are, in fact, living illegally.

As one turns into King Edward Park off the main road that runs through town, it can at first glance easily be mistaken for just another public park. Situated centrally in one of the medium-sized mining towns north-west of Johannesburg, and modelled on nineteenth century London public parks, it borders a local dam and is surrounded by leafy eucalyptus trees. On the stretched out lawns, *braai*[3] spots have been marked out, inviting families to spend weekends and vacations fishing and having picnics. At the entrance a large green sign welcomes visitors (see Figure 1, and G on Figure 2). Although the name of the town was officially changed in 2001 to reflect the inclusivity contained in the new Constitution, this

[3] A South African variant of barbeque, done outdoors on an open wood or charcoal fire.

sign still uses the town's former name. Below the names of the town and the Park, the sign presents visitors with a stern warning: in both Afrikaans and English it states, among others, that the following are forbidden in the park: noise, littering, damage or removal of plants, fires except at braai facilities, squatting, and damage to property.

The beginnings of the Park as a space of long-term informal dwelling are murky. Even among the residents who have lived there for a decade or more there are disagreements as to when and how exactly King Edward Park became a home to poorer whites. *Tannie* Gouws, who is in her mid-fifties, claims currently to be the Park's longest resident. She recounts that she moved to the Park in November 2000, but she is not able to recall much about the circumstances and the state of the Park when she and her son first arrived. She remembers that during the first couple of years at the Park she and a few others who stayed there more permanently paid a daily camping fee to the municipal office. Most of the poorer whites who stayed there at the time lived in caravans or larger tents. Many of the first residents, she explains, were able to buy a tent or caravan to live in. As far as she can recall, they paid R8 per day per camping site, which included a demarcated camping spot to set up a caravan or tent, the use of an electricity point, and the ablution facilities. The cost of permanently living in the Park was much less than renting even a small backyard room, and for *tannie* Gouws it was a convenient alternative when she could not afford formal housing.

This raises the question of how Kind Edward Park morphed into an illegal informal settlement when, originally, residents paid a fee as any camper would in a camping park? Residents I ask about this are uncertain. A large majority say that they moved to the Park well after nobody was paying any fees anymore. Sunette and her family, for example, moved to the Park in 2008. Sunette was told the story of how the Park had become a squatter camp by her neighbour in the Park at the time. As more and more people started moving to the Park, Sunette remembers the neighbour's account, word spread quickly about a place where

homeless white families could stay for a relatively small fee. Yet, a large number of newcomers could not afford to pay the camping fees. Eventually the residents of the Park collectively decided that they would no longer pay anything. Henry called a meeting, Sunette continues, and told the residents that all South Africans have squatters' rights, and they decided to stay in the Park until the local or national government provided them with alternative housing.

Because this decision made their stay in the Park illegal, there are several restrictions with regard to what the residents can and cannot do. It has also led to ongoing legal battles with the local municipality since as far back as 2007 around the question of when and how the residents would be moved from the Park. In 2009 the North Gauteng High Court ruled that residents cannot be evicted by the local authority without providing them with adequate alternative housing.[4] Ever since, the residents have found themselves in a strange and disconcerting state of waiting.

As I briefly mentioned in chapter one, rumours regularly circulate among the Park's residents about when they might eventually have to move and where to. For most of the residents the idea that they will eventually have to move out of the Park seems a possibility but one they never really consider as imminent. Henry, as the Park's informal manager and the residents' representative, attends all meetings with the city council, on his own and accompanied only by the residents' attorneys. The only information that the other residents have access to is that which Henry gives them and that is refracted by his understanding of the mediation process (a process that is prescribed by clause 7(2) of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19). Following their status as temporary squatters, the residents of the Park are under strict instruction from Henry to not erect any permanent, and

[4] I do not elaborate on the court case and the particulars thereof as this may compromise the identities of the Park and the residents who were directly involved with the case.

therefore structurally more stable, structures. They have learned from their past mistakes, Henry tells me when I ask about these rules, when the Park community tried to build more permanent structures only to be told to break them down again. Even vegetable gardens and fruit trees are regarded as "permanent" and residents are thus discouraged to grow produce.

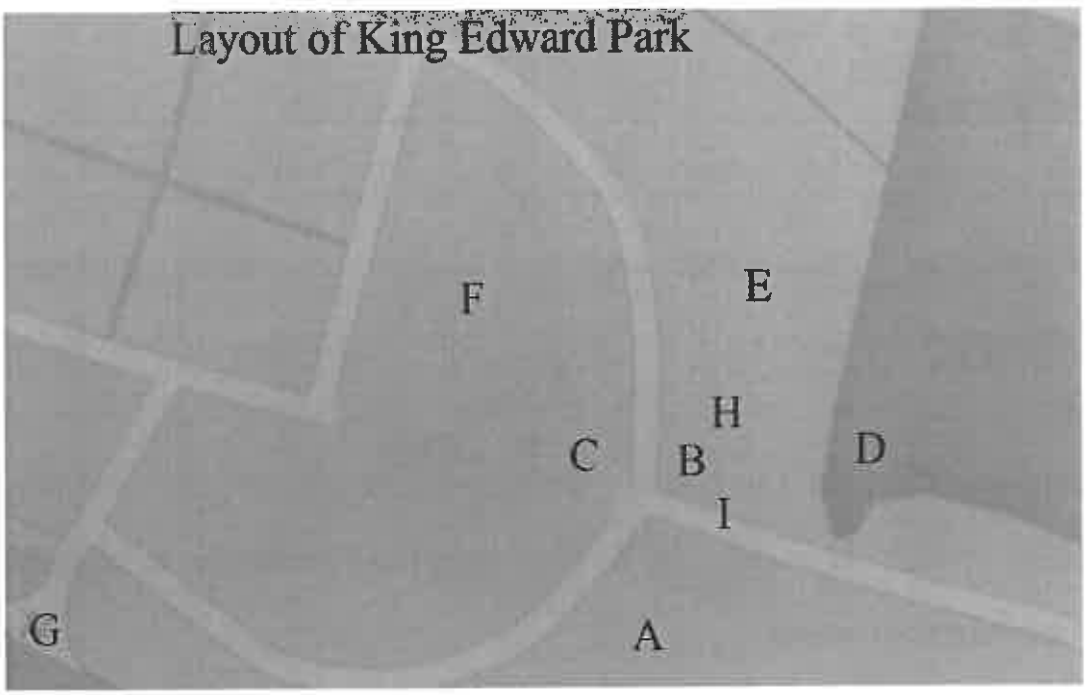


Figure 2: The spatial layout of the area in which the residents of King Edward Park stay
(Legend: the crèche; B: ablution block; C: Ilana and Henry's stoep; D: dam; E: eastern side of Park where newcomers are allocated a stand; F: elaborate structures; G: welcome sign; H: lapa; I: tannie Marie's house)

In September 2013 only three permanent structures remain as a silent testimony to the former caravan park: the ablution block (marked "B" in Figure 2), the former communal kitchen that has been turned into Ilana and Henry's *stoep* (porch) ("C"), and the small building that was once used as an office at the entrance to the caravan park and is now *tannie* Marie's house ("I"). Before *tannie* Marie lived in this small building, it was used as a library for the residents. Even earlier, the structure was used as an informal "clinic" from where Ilana's brother, Tony, provided residents with basic medicine he acquired from the local clinic. There is no longer any real need for such a "clinic" as a government mobile clinic visits the Park once a month and there is a hospital within walking distance from the Park.

The ablution facility has four toilets each for men and for women, as well as two bathtubs and two showers for women and three showers and a bath for men. The inside of the ablution facility is in a poor state, with several of the doors broken, toilets regularly not flushing, and taps missing on two of the bathtubs. Few residents thus use the communal baths or showers. Those residents without bathtubs in their homes mostly choose to wash in plastic tubs. As there are no other toilets in the Park, residents have no option other than to share the ones that are in working order. Several households have buckets for residents to use during the night time, which are then emptied into the toilets in the morning.



Figure 3: The ablution block



Figure 4: A broken door in the women's bathroom

From the *stoep* Henry and Ilana control and regulate much of what goes on in the Park. Four nights per week residents line up in front of the *stoep* to receive evening meals. When donated clothes and other goods are received, Ilana first sorts them into piles on the *stoep* before calling residents to distribute the donations. Every now and then a meeting takes at the *stoep* where all residents are addressed by Henry or Ilana, and disputes between residents are usually resolved at the *stoep*. Across from the *stoep* is the *lapa,*[5] an open structure with a tin roof on wooden poles ("H" in Figure 2). The *lapa* was initially intended to be a church but

[5] Known in both Afrikaans and South African English as "lapa", this is a traditional South African structure constructed out of wooden poles with a thatched roof. There are no wall panels. It is mostly used as an outside entertainment area.

the municipality asked Henry to break down what little of the church that had been built. The *lapa* now stands in its place and is used for church services on Sundays. Henry hopes that one day he will be able to turn it into a community hall.



Figure 5: The stoep

Residents sometimes narrate longer histories of the Park, especially when they speak to (often politically conservative) visitors or sponsors.[6] A long-time rumour that often resurfaces, and is regularly enquired about by visitors, tells the story of how the Park was once used as a concentration camp during the South African War.[7] It is correct that a concentration camp was erected very close to where the Park is today, but the precise site of the camp was a little further to the north. Regardless of this historical inaccuracy, the tale of the Park as former

[6] I use the word "sponsor" as it is used emically in the Park to refer to individuals or groups who make any kind of donation to the residents of the Park. A sponsor can donate or contribute in more or less any form or currency, from donating money or clothes to visiting the Park and providing a meal.

[7] The final years of the South African War (1899-1902), previously referred to as the Second Anglo-Boer War, was marked by the British "scorched earth policy". It entailed burning down Boer homesteads to deprive Boer guerrilla soldiers of their support. Boer civilians and displaced Africans were removed from their homes and placed in concentration camps. A total of more than 26 000 women and children, or roughly one third of all Boers, died during this time (Giliomee, 2009: 253-256).

concentration camp holds powerful political significance for many of the politically conservative sponsors. "It is more than a hundred years later and look, it is still a concentration camp where the politicians leave our people to die", one visitor remarks when I ask him about what he thinks of the urban legend of the concentration camp.[8] The idea that South African whites, and particularly Afrikaners, are in the same position today as they were shortly after losing the South African War is often used by sponsors as a way to cast whites as victims of the post-apartheid government. As I argue throughout this thesis, this is an argument with far reaching effects on poorer whites in King Edward Park.

Ilana, Henry and the stoep

At the beginning of my fieldwork there was a mutual consensus among all of the residents that Henry and Ilana Coetzee, residents themselves, are the caretakers and managers of the Park. Henry and Ilana moved to the Park in 2007, along with six of their children, and soon after started a non-profit organisation, Loving Saints, as a means to collect funds to support the Park's residents. Initially Loving Saints employed a few of their family members to help with processing the donations, but in actuality Henry and Ilana process most of the formal donations themselves.

As with the history of how the Park developed into an informal settlement, very few residents are able to recall how or why Henry and Ilana initially came to act as managers and caretakers.[9] One man remembers that, shortly after Henry and Ilana first arrived in the Park, there was a disagreement on the best way to use and distribute the available resources. He recalls Henry stepping to the fore and most residents agreeing with his initial ideas on how to proceed and that he, thus, became the caretaker figure. Another resident thinks another couple

[8] Quote from my field notes, 1 March 2014.
[9] In chapter four I elaborate further on the way in which Henry and Ilana tell the story of their move to the Park, and the implications of their own narrative for their position in the Park.

had previously acted as representatives of the residents, but claims they were ousted after stealing donations. After several years of managing the Park, Henry and Ilana's power is now firmly established. They have set up an extensive network of sponsors who regularly contribute to the Park. Importantly, Henry has worked closely with pro bono attorneys in an effort to fight eviction from the Park. Other residents have little knowledge of or insight into the ongoing threat of eviction and possible plans for alternative housing. Today, residents see Henry as irreplaceable in the efforts of keeping them in the Park and making sure that, if they move, it will be to a suitable space.

It is evident that Henry and Ilana are marginally better off financially than most of the other residents. They own two cars, a Nissan Sentra that Henry drives and an Opel Corsa parked in front of the *stoep* and borrowed by family members. They subscribe to DStv, South Africa's digital satellite television service, and their youngest son owns a relatively new PlayStation console.[10] The inside of the Coetzee house also speaks of a slightly higher style of living. A large gas stove, which is used to cook most of the Park's communal meals, stands near the kitchen door. Across the kitchen is a chest freezer where most of the Park's perishable foods are kept. Adjacent to the kitchen there is a lounge with two comfortable chairs and a large couch. Against one of the walls there is a display case with family photos and the children's sport trophies. They also own the Park's only washing machine, which Ilana carries outside and connects to a tap and a generator to use. In one corner of the house, which Henry converted into a study, is a working surface with a desktop computer and a printer. Here Henry completes the day-to-day administration of the Park's finances, writes emails and phones sponsors, and keeps records of bigger donations.

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[10] During the eleven-month period that I did my fieldwork, the Coetzee's DStv subscription was suspended twice as a result of non-payment but in both instances was reconnected the following month. In chapters four and five I discuss in more detail the specific forms of capital which Henry and Ilana can access as a result of their position as managers.



Figure 6: The stoep and, behind it, the entrance to Henry and Ilana's home

Henry and Ilana have an extensive say in the spatial organisation of the Park, and the day-to-day comings and goings of the residents. As I discuss in more depth in chapter four, Henry and Ilana's relationship with the rest of the residents is marked by a strong sense of paternalism that closely mirrors the form of a nuclear family.[11] Ilana is fond of describing herself as the mother and grandmother of the other residents, a maternal figure that nurtures and cares for everyone in need. Henry, in turn, fulfils the role of the traditional patriarch, dealing with all financial matters, controlling access to the Park and closely monitoring those living in the Park to ensure that they abide by the rules.

[11] The notion of the nuclear family as central to the production of a decent white family is one that is common in the Park. I discuss the importance of the familial, specifically in the context of Afrikaner historiography, in more depth in chapter four.

If a family wishes to move to the park, they first need to approach him to obtain permission to do so. The fact that all of the residents, including Henry and Ilana, have no permanent rights in terms of the land on which they are staying means that, technically speaking, there is nothing that can prevent anyone from setting up camp in the Park. Yet the Park's residents take the rule that newcomers need approval from Henry very seriously. Henry and Ilana tend to give preference to families with children and are somewhat reluctant to allow access to single persons, but hardly ever turn anyone away. According to Henry, they have no choice but to help families with children, and he considers younger single people, especially men, as troublemakers who often drink too much. It is important to note that, despite the moniker "white squatter camp", there is no official or unofficial rule that prohibits black Africans from moving into the Park, and Ilana often highlights her commitment to help struggling families regardless of race. In fact, there are nine black African residents who live right on the edge of the Park, and an Indian woman, Fatima, who occasionally stays in the Park with her partner, Boy. Yet they have little interaction with the white residents, and rarely take part in communal activities, unlike the way in which white residents interact and participate.

Henry and Ilana, together with their three youngest children and one of their grandchildren, live in an extensive structure next to the *stoep* (Figure 6). It comprises the large open *stoep,* a caravan where Ilana sleeps, a large kitchen and living room, three bedrooms, and a bathroom with a bathtub. The *stoep,* as I discussed above, is where many of the communal activities take place. It offers a view over the only vehicle entrance to the park, the ablution facility, and the *lapa.* From the *stoep* Ilana watches over the Park during the day, occasionally giving instructions or making an announcement with her bright red megaphone.

Joan and the regulation of entry

After Henry and Ilana, the resident to hold most say in the Park is Joan, a woman in her early sixties who lives in the Park with nine other family members.[12] Joan previously worked as an administrative officer at the Johannesburg City Council and so has taken on the role of administrator in the Park. In exchange for keeping record of all residents and seeing to the organisation of plots for every household, Joan receives a monthly grocery hamper to the value of R250, donated by sponsors.

Upon first arriving at the Park, new residents are met by Henry and then taken to Joan. Joan is one of the few Park residents who once knew a relatively comfortable middle class existence. For this, and her knowledge of administrative systems and computers, she is respected by residents and trusted to handle confidential information. In her caravan, next to a large military tent where the rest of her family stays, she has a desktop computer and a printer. She keeps detailed lists of every resident in the Park on her computer: their full names, ages, and identity numbers, as well as copies of their identity documents (IDs) or birth certificates.

New arrivals are asked for their IDs and children's birth certificates to ensure that they can later be traced, after which they are assigned a specific stand on which to erect a housing structure. In addition to the lists with residents' names and IDs, Joan also has corresponding lists to show which stand has been assigned to which resident or family. Stands have been marked by dividing the Park into four sections, A, B, C, and D, with each section further divided into smaller, numbered plots each of about five square metres. In this way it is easier to keep track of plots and families by assigning them, for example, to stand B6. Once an

[12] At the start of my fieldwork Joan lived with nine relatives. During my year in the Park this number changed as other family members came and went. I thus make reference, in other instances in my thesis, to Joan living with ten or eleven family members.

initial housing structure is erected, residents have to approach Henry if they wish to extend the structure further.

The question of which stand is assigned to which family is far more complicated than the random allocation of an open plot. Although Henry occasionally provides input, the responsibility of assigning stands remains with Joan. She uses a carefully devised method that takes into account the specific hierarchy that she sees existing in the Park. When residents first move in, Joan explains, she is likely to give them a spot on the eastern side of the Park (see "E" in Figure 2). The housing structures in this part of the Park are often very flimsy, consisting of tents and corrugated iron shacks (see, for example, Figure 7). It becomes almost immediately apparent that those residents who stay here have significantly fewer material possessions that those who live on the opposite side of the Park. The residents here, for example, do not keep space free as parking for cars, and there is no humming from power generators, indicating that these residents do not have individual generators.

Staying on the eastern side of the Park is undesirable because of three reasons. Firstly, it is closer to the dam ("D" in Figure 2). This means that it is much colder in winter and threatened by flooding during the summer months. Secondly, it is the furthest removed from the bathroom and the *stoep,* so that these residents are bound to arrive last when calls are made for residents to collect donations at the *stoep.* Lastly, the black African residents of the Park reside here. The fact that these nine residents stay here, and make no attempt to move to a better spot, reveals their relationship with the white residents.



Figure 7: Tents in the eastern corner of the Park

Down the narrow and dusty path that leads to the north-western corner of the Park ("F" in Figure 2) are more elaborate structures. Wooden Wendy houses,[13] caravans, and larger houses constructed from various materials are found here and create an air of permanence. There is even a double storey house with an outside set of stairs leading to the upper level (see Figure 13). Inside many of the bigger houses, the sound of a diesel engine indicates a generator running for several hours a day. Numerous larger houses have cars, motorcycles, and bicycles parked next to them under shading or in other make-shift garages. Some houses have small patches of grass planted in the yard and others have fenced off their yard with white picket-like fencing made from wooden pallets. An old oil drum outside a house is

[13] A Wendy house is a wooden structure, usually consisting of no more than two rooms (see, for example, Figure 9 below). While Park residents value Wendy houses as rather stable housing structure, they are manufactured and sold as garden sheds, children's play dens, or storing spaces.

usually a sign that residents have added a bathtub to their house and heat water in what is known as a donkey: they light a fire underneath the drum (see Figure 8) and lead the warm water into the house through a system of pipes. Various materials are used to construct inside walls or dividers in these more permanent houses: in smaller houses rooms it might be sheets hung in the middle of a room; more elaborate houses may have interior walls constructed from wooden panels, sheets of corrugated iron or even bricks. Some of the houses have gas stoves, in contrast to structures in the eastern side where residents mostly rely on donated meals or outside fires to cook.



Figure 8: A homemade water heater called a "donkey"



Figure 9: A Wendy house in the western part of the Park

Unless a resident or family becomes known as a troublemaker, residence in the eastern area is not likely to be long-term. Once new residents have stayed in this spot for about a year and have, as Joan puts it, "proven themselves [to be trustworthy and reliable]," they can negotiate for a better spot or better housing structure. In theory this is a fairly straightforward process based on the policy that families with smaller children and the elderly are the first to be moved to better quality housing as it becomes available. In reality, the process is, however, seldom as uncomplicated. As I argue in chapters three and four, the residents of the Park produce and are part of elaborate power structures and ideologies that include relations of kinship, gender, and ideas of whiteness and white poverty, that all influence these relocations.

The idea that one ought to prove oneself worthy of a better house or stand is closely tied to historical notions of poor-whiteism and normative ideas about white morality. As both Teppo

(2004) and Du Plessis (2004) show, a large part of the project of poor-white upliftment was aimed at instilling certain moral values through the ways in which poor-white suburbs were structured. The provision of housing in these suburbs was conditional and subject to the ability of poor-whites to that they kept certain moral standards that had been set by the city councils. Although this process is completely self-regulated in King Edward Park, similar principles apply. It is only once a family has displayed that it is respectable that it might be able to move to a better spot in the Park.

The formalities of living informally

The fact that King Edward Park is an informal settlement might suggest a sense of informality and disorganisation. Yet life in the Park is, as the discussion of plot distribution shows, closely regulated. When Joan has captured the details of new residents, she also adds them to a working schedule. According to the schedule every adult in the Park is required to spend one hour a week to clean the ablution block and, if necessary, help with the preparation of meals. In this way the ablution blocks are cleaned daily and other chores are rotated. Before heading to the *stoep* to collect mops and cleaning materials, residents report to Joan. They have to sign in and out before and after cleaning so that there is a clear record of those who complete their tasks dutifully and of those who neglect their chores.

Cleaning materials for the collective facilities are bought with residents' monthly contributions. Although those living in the Park have long ceased to pay the municipality for renting the camping spots, each person is required to pay R10 per month to the Park managers to be used towards cleaning material and the like. Failure to pay this contribution without a prior arrangement with Henry, or non-compliance with the cleaning schedule can lead to blacklisting. Residents on the blacklist risk not receiving a share of the communal meals, donations, or other help extended to residents. In practice, however, the list is not

monitored very closely. A blacklisted resident or family might be refused a meal once or twice, after which they will be treated as normal residents again, regardless of whether they have paid up or not.

In the first years of informal settlement in the Park, residents made use of the electricity points that had once supplied power to caravans and tents. In 2009 the electricity supply to the Park was cut off, however, sparking a long conflict between the residents, who want the city council to restore the power supply, and the city council, which refuses to do so on account that it would be too expensive to provide electricity to people who are illegally residing in a Park. Whilst the Park's manager engaged in negotiations for the installation of prepaid electricity meters, most residents rely on candles, gas and paraffin lamps, or small generators. Some households draw electricity from Henry. For a fee, the exact amount of which varies from one household to the next, these residents run an electrical extension cord from their houses to Henry's generator on the *stoep*. The generator is usually switched on for a few hours in the morning and a few more in the evening, but times are not strictly adhered to. Running the generator is, however, dependent on Henry having enough diesel. Some days, when both diesel and money run out, there is no power. Apart from the taps in the ablution facility, water is accessed at three communal taps around the Park, one next to the *stoep,* the second on the eastern side of the park, and the third on the western side. Early in the mornings and in the late afternoons women and children can often be seen carrying buckets of water to their houses.

Across the narrow road near the *stoep*, which separates the living area from the rest of the Park, a small crèche has been set up, where I volunteered during the fieldwork. The crèche started in a donated Wendy house, where two mothers from the Park took care of the smaller children during the day, and provided them with a small lunch. Since then it has expanded to include three classrooms, two permanent teachers, and a permanent cleaner. The children are

provided with breakfast and lunch, and an afterschool service is available to primary and high school children where they are assisted with their homework.

As the discussion of the broad organisation of the Park suggests, a lot of emphasis is placed on structure, cleanliness, and order. While Huchzermeyer (2008: 5) argues that many informal settlements are often quite formally organised, this organisational aspect in King Edward Park is something many residents see as distinguishing the Park from other squatter camps. They view the rules, cleanliness, and other formalities they adhere to as fundamentally different from behaviour in other, "normal" squatter camps, or at least in what they imagine other squatter camps to be like. In creating and adhering to the rules set by Henry and Ilana, and structuring the day-to-day life in the Park in a particular way, attempts to attach a particular meaning to the Park become visible.

In the concluding section of this chapter, I argue that residents purposefully construct the Park as a *white* squatter camp, which they view as different in character from other squatter camps. The view that white poverty is different from other poverty, and that the spaces where poorer whites live are fundamentally different from the spaces where poor people of other racial groups live, is fuelled by the forms of whiteness that have emerged in South Africa over the last century. It is also furthered by the ways in which South Africa was spatially structured to accommodate this whiteness. In order to contextualise this construction of a *white* squatter camp, I preface my argument in the next sub-section by discussing the continued presence of squatter politics in post-apartheid South Africa, and in the subsequent one by reviewing the rise of the so-called "poor-white problem" and the spatial "solutions" applied to it.

The promise of eradication: informal settlements after apartheid

The majority of legislation pertaining to the spatial segregation of racial groups was abolished during the last decade of apartheid rule. Yet two decades after the official end of apartheid, the spatial organisation of South Africa continues to be racially marked. This section discusses this persistent presence of informal settlements after 1994, and the various drives by government to eradicate them and to address questions of basic housing. I show how the continuation of informal settlements in the post-apartheid period is deeply rooted within apartheid policies of housing and segregation, but also point out the problematic ways with which these problems have been approached. The aim of this section is to disentangle King Edward Park and its residents, if only briefly, from historical South African poor whiteism and to question the idea that post-apartheid poor-white poverty is exceptional and ought to be considered according to a different paradigm than "other" poverty.

King Edward Park, despite frequently being situated within discussions of whiteness and post-apartheid poor whiteism, is one of a myriad of informal settlements, or squatter camps, throughout South Africa. Research released by Helping Hand, the charity wing of the trade union Solidarity, claims that up to 400 white squatter camps exist throughout South Africa, housing more than 600 000 poor-whites (Solidarity Helping Hand, 2010). Statistical data generated by Statistics South Africa shows, however, no significant presence of white informal settlements or squatter camps. In fact, according to data from the 2011 census, less than 8 000 white households are located in informal settlements. In contrast, an estimated 1.8 million black African households are situated in informal settlements (Rademeyer, 2013).[14] When comparing the number of black African households in informal settlements with that of white households, it is perhaps unsurprising, albeit no less problematic, that the residents and

[14] A household is defined as a group of people who share a dwelling and the same financial resources (Housing Development Agency, 2013).

sponsors of King Edward Park expressed the idea that informal settlements, or squatter camps, carry some kind of primordial link to blackness. In order to fully grasp the socio-political significance of a space like King Edward Park, one that is overtly referred to as a "white squatter camp", it is necessary to consider broader questions of South African housing and the continued prominence of informal settlements throughout the country.

There seems to be some confusion and disagreement within the contemporary grammar of housing politics with regard to the precise meaning of the terms "informal settlement", "squatter camp" and, more specifically, what constitutes a "white squatter camp". Consequently, many reports of "white squatter camps" refer to poorer whites who either live in make-shift housing structures in suburban backyards or in very dilapidated, albeit formalised accommodation. Questions about which kinds of spaces exactly constitute an informal settlement are not limited to "white squatter camps", however. There are many contradictions and uncertainties with regard to the exact definition of an "informal settlement" that the government has adopted since the end of apartheid (Huchzermeyer, 2008). In attempt to demonstrate the success of processes to eradicate informal settlements by 2014, the definition of an informal settlement was narrowed by the national government in 2007 (Huchzermeyer, 2008: 2). Still, many individual municipalities continue to define "informal settlements" on their own terms.

The National Department of Human Settlements currently defines informal settlements on the basis of the following characteristics: illegality and informality, inappropriate locations, and with restricted public and private sector investment (Housing Development Agency, 2012: 6). Closely related is the definition used by Statistics South Africa that informal settlements are "an unplanned settlement on land that has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, consisting mainly of informal dwellings (shacks)" (Housing Development Agency, 2012: 6-7).

It is important, firstly, to note the legal specificities of King Edward Park. While often compared to many of the so-called poor-white suburbs, such as Vrededorp and Jan Hofmeyr in Johannesburg, the Park is a decidedly different space from these urban spaces that had been socially engineered and designed to house poorer whites in earlier eras. There are, of course, continuities between the Park and poor-white suburbs, both materially and ideologically (Du Plessis, 2010; Parnell, 1989, 1993; Teppo, 2004). King Edward Park is, however, fundamentally different in the sense that residents have no right of occupation and since 2009 have been in constant battles with the local government that has been trying to evict them. Those who live in the Park do so under the protection granted by the Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act of 1998 and their future with regard to housing is uncertain.[15] This is important as it urges residents to discursively align themselves with other illegal informal settlers like themselves, rather than with poorer whites elsewhere, when addressing possibilities of future dwelling.

In a recent discussion of the question of white poverty and (informal) housing after apartheid, Bottomley (2012) examines the case of Symphony Way Relocation Area, commonly referred to as Blikkiesdorp,[16] a temporary settlement outside Cape Town. Blikkiesdorp is, however, fundamentally different from King Edward Park as it was prepared by the provincial government with identical one room shacks for people it had removed from elsewhere (Steinberg, 2015: 293). Blikkiesdorp was also never conceptualised as a space for exclusive settlement by poorer whites.

No study on post-apartheid white poverty, and particularly white squatter camps, has thus far contextualised poor whiteism within the literature of South African squatter politics. While

[15] The case of Grootboom (2000) is seen as a watershed in informal settlers' struggles against evictions and the right to housing (see Huchzermeyer 2003).
[16] The moniker "Blikkiesdorp" (literally "tin can town" in Afrikaans) is derived from the aesthetic of the uniform housing structures constructed of tin and zinc sheets in this settlement area.

this might be indicative of how few studies have focussed on post-apartheid spaces of white poverty, it also shows how deeply entrenched and persistent ideas about race and apartheid spatiality are. Failing to take seriously the broader South African politics of housing and informal settlement when thinking and writing about spaces of poor-white dwelling entrenches the idea that poor whiteism is exceptional and should be theorised outside of the paradigm of "normal" poverty and housing.

Despite the abolition of spatial segregation policies during the late apartheid and post-apartheid periods (see Huchzermeyer, 2011; Makhulu, 2015), the effects of these policies and laws continue to be widespread. In the two decades since 1994 there have been noticeable attempts to mobilise shack dwellers, squatters, and informal settlers. This has resulted in politically active and vocal civil movements, often referred to as "shack dwellers' politics" or "squatter politics" (Makhulu, 2015; Pithouse, 2008: 63). Both Pithouse (2008) and Nigel Gibson (2011) have written extensively about the emergence of Abahlali baseMjondolo, a shack dwellers' organisation that emerged in Durban in the 2000s, while Huchzermeyer (2011:12) draws attention to organisations such as the Inner City Forum, the Landless People's Movement, and the Homeless People's Federation. Active struggles for the qualified right to housing is by no means, however, a post-apartheid phenomenon. Richard Pithouse (2008: 63-65) notes that there exists a large body of literature, stretching from the mid-apartheid to post-apartheid era, on shack dwellers' and squatter politics (see, for example, Makhulu, 2015; Perlman, 1979; Posel, 1997).

The first post-apartheid measures to improve housing and eradicate informal settlements were introduced as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994. This programme was intended to facilitate the aim of the first post-apartheid government to deliver one million houses within the first five years in office (Huchzermeyer, 2011: 113). The government conceived of these areas in radically different ways from how the apartheid

government saw them as "squatter camps" and "slums" (Huchzermeyer, 2011: 8). The South African Constitution of 1996 included the qualified right to housing and protection against unfair eviction. And in 1997, the notorious apartheid-era Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act No. 51 of 1951 was repealed, as was the Slums Act No. 76 of 1979.

Once the government's initial target of one million houses had been reached in 2001, a new target was set: the eradication of informal settlements by 2014. Yet, as with RDP housing, the intense focus on the eradication of informal settlements kept the focus on the symptoms rather than seeking to identify the root causes of informal settlements (Huchzermeyer, 2011: 113-132). This shift in focus, from housing delivery to eradication, led to what is generally perceived as a failure to deliver adequate and long term housing. Many households were removed from informal settlements, only to be placed in transit camps. In this way, shacks and informal settlements were indeed being eradicated, yet the state did not have the immediate expenditure of housing delivery (Huchzermeyer, 2011: 115).

In the case of King Edward Park, *in situ* upgrades have never been an option. One of the primary reasons why the local government seeks to remove those living in the Park, according to the residents, is to make space for the development of a luxurious holiday resort. The option that has most often been discussed by the municipality, Henry tells me, is for the residents to be moved to a township about five kilometres from the Park where a transit camp is to be erected until permanent housing can be built.

While there are a number of chiefly ideological dissimilarities between the informal settlement in King Edward Park and other informal settlements, there are also many similarities and consistencies. In spite of these similarities I have rarely found discussion on post-apartheid poor whiteism to include the bodies of literature that engage with post-apartheid question of housing, squatter politics, and poverty. This might be, in part, due to the lack of a shared history with regard to housing policies. While white South Africans were

protected by the apartheid government, black Africans have long been involved in political struggles over housing and the right to the city (Huchzermeyer, 2011; Nieftagodien & Gaule, 2012; Pithouse, 2013). As a result, post-apartheid poor whiteism is mostly read in the context of the poor-white crisis of the 1930s and the consequent establishing of poor-white suburbs. In an effort to read my ethnographic research against both these literatures, I present an overview of twentieth century poor whiteism and the development of racialised housing projects in the following section.

Urban migration and the genesis of South Africa's post-apartheid "poor- white problem"

Narratives about poor whiteism after apartheid seldom follow the broader politics of poverty, state assistance, and social housing in South Africa that I have outlined above. *White* poverty, it seems, remains exceptional and opposed to *ordinary* poverty, and is situated within the historiography of "poor-whites" and the so-called poor-white crisis rather than contemporary debates regarding poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. In this section, I provide a brief history of poor whiteism during the first half of the twentieth century. The aim is to allow for a reading of King Edward Park not only against the more contemporary politics of poverty and informal settlements, but also against a longer history of poor whiteism.

The separation between the *white* poor and the *other* poor, and the assumption that poverty is a natural fact of life for the latter, opens the way for King Edward Park to be imagined as a unique space of poverty where meanings are made in ways that are different from how they are made in other spaces where poor people reside. Relating King Edward Park and its residents to the earlier politics of poor whiteism urges the revival of ideas that surrounded poor-whites in the first half of the twentieth-century. As such, the Park as a space of poor-white dwelling remains, to an extent, removed from the politics of informal housing in South

Africa and the residents continuously find themselves entangled in the ideologies, stereotypes, and rationale of the Afrikaner poor whiteism of the 1920s to 1940s.

The phenomenon of economically struggling poor-white, predominantly Afrikaner South Africans is widely referred to as the *armblankevraagstuk* or the poor-white problem. The poor-white problem is important for this thesis not only because of its lingering influence on older, pre-apartheid and apartheid conceptions of white poverty and the way the Afrikaner upper classes set out to rehabilitate poorer whites, but also because of its centrality to the development of early Afrikaner nationalist thought. This section specifically discusses the ways in which spatial segregation and normative understandings of white domestic spaces were posited as the most preferable solutions to this problem.

The poor-white problem, Giliomee (2009: 315) writes, was the most pressing social issue in Afrikaner politics in the early twentieth century and remained thus until the 1940s when it was finally overshadowed by questions of how to deal with racial problems. The graveness with which the poor-white problem was perceived is reflected in the politics of the time. D. F. Malan, who would later become synonymous with the official beginning of the apartheid system, chose the poor-white problem as the sole topic of his speech at the centennial commemoration of the Day of the Vow on 16 December 1938.[17] In the speech he compared the urbanisation of Afrikaners, and the closely related problem of poor whiteism, to the mythical Great Trek,[18] and urged Afrikaners to address the poor-white problem with the same

[17] The Day of the Vow, or *Geloftedag,* commemorated the so-called "Battle of Blood River" on 16 December 1838. The battle against Zulu forces was won by the Voortrekkers who had vowed to commemorate the day if God led them to victory. Afrikaner nationalist often referred to this victory as the sign that Afrikaners are the chosen people. In the post-apartheid period, this day is celebrated as Reconciliation Day.

[18] The Great Trek refers to the migration of about 12 000 white, primarily Dutch, farmers from the Cape Colony northwards into what would later become the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The migrants, known as *Voortrekkers*, developed distinctive beliefs concerning their destiny, their relation to God and their relation to the African polities they encountered on their travels and with whom they had serious conflicts. It is important to note that the trek would only be constructed as a single "great trek" a century later. In reality there were multiple and competing migration processes, at different times, spread widely over the South African interior. It was in the Calvinist construction of Afrikaners as a chosen people — itself the basis of the Afrikaner

bravery as their *Voortrekker* ancestors had shown (Malan, 1964: 121-130). The continued existence of South Africa as a white man's country, Malan (1964: 122) warned, was dependent on the successful resolution of the poor-white problem.

The notion of poor whiteism first surfaced in South Africa in the late 1880s. At this time, before the unification of South Africa in 1910, politics for Boers[19] and early Afrikaners was dominated by conflict with the British Empire and a desire towards self-determination (Giliomee, 2009: 279; Du Toit and Giliomee, 1983: 238-252). The Great Trek had resulted in the formation of two Boer republics by the early 1880s, the Orange Free State and the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR, and later Transvaal) (Giliomee, 2009: 162-194). A large majority of Boers living in these two republics made a living through subsistence farming. The beginning of diamond and gold mining in these two republics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century meant, however, that farmers were being forced into a market system that was increasingly organised around capitalist principles. This system, together with a fickle climate and soil conditions that proved to be very different from those in the Cape Colony, posed great difficulty to rural farmers (Giliomee, 2009: 319-322; O'Meara, 1983: 22-25). Economic problems were also impacted on by the principles of Roman-Dutch laws of inheritance that was used to determine inheritance in the Boer republics. According to these principles, property had to be divided equally among all of a farmer's sons. Over time, farms therefore got exponentially smaller until the size inherited by sons became unviable for farming (Giliomee, 2009: 321). The South African War from 1899 to 1902 further devastated the rural economy as many Boers joined the Boer forces in the war and were unable to

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nationalism on which apartheid ideology was built — that the Great Trek became mythologised and publically commemorated (Giliomee, 2009).

[19] The notion of an Afrikaner people really only began to take shape around Christian nationalist ideas in the 1910s. For this reason, the term "Boers", Afrikaans for farmers, is more applicable when referring to the people who migrated into the inland of Southern Africa as part of what is now considered the Great Trek. I discuss the development of the idea of a unified Afrikaner people in more depth in chapter three.

cultivate their land and because of the British scorched earth tactic that destroyed many homesteads and fields (Giliomee, 2009: 322).

Although all of these factors undoubtedly influenced the economic struggles of Afrikaners and increased their flow into urban areas in the first three decades of the twentieth century, it is difficult to ascribe the latter migration to a single factor. Charles van Onselen (1982: 365) argues that this movement has to be understood in terms of numerous and complicated motivations that guided Afrikaner migrants, such as the decline of employment opportunities in transport riding that had been widespread in rural areas; the introduction of more capitalist and industrial agriculture; the devastation caused in the countryside by the South African War; a series of natural disasters that affected farming; and the allure of newly discovered gold on the Witwatersrand.

The result of the combination of these factors was a rapid urbanisation process that Giliomee (2009: 323) describes as "almost always traumatic". Where fewer than 3% or 10 000 Afrikaners lived in urban areas in 1890, this number had moved up to 41% or 391 000 Afrikaners in 1926, and to more than 50% ten years later (Giliomee, 2009: 323). The Witwatersrand area was particularly attractive to Afrikaners who hoped to gain from the booming gold mining industry after the discovery of gold in 1886. Yet, in addition to the vastly different environment these Afrikaners now found themselves in, the urban economy was also firmly marked in favour of English-speaking whites (Giliomee, 2009: 323; O'Meara, 1983: 55). Afrikaners had to compete both with more sought-after English-speaking white workers as well as with unskilled black African workers who were willing to accept much lower wages. Giliomee (2009: 318) comments that, had South Africa been a racially homogenous society, the Afrikaner poor would have been able to become the urban proletariat. However, given the 200 000 to 300 000 African males who had already moved to

cities and towns as migrant workers, Afrikaners were faced with strong competition and were often unwilling to work for the wages that black Africans settled for.

It was in this context that the term 'poor white' developed in South Africa. While data is available on how many Afrikaners moved to urban areas in the decades after the South African War, no figures are available on the exact extent of white poverty during the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the introduction of the Carnegie Commission's first volume of its report on poor-whites, Grosskopf (1932: I-17) notes the difficulty the Commission faced in establishing a clear definition of who would be considered "poor-white". While the census bureau at the time agreed that a statistical count of poor-whites would be a near impossible task, the Commission agreed neither to define clearly what it meant by "poor-white", nor to attempt an estimation of how many poor-whites existed at the time. Grosskopf (1932, I-vii) estimates that, from a total of 1, 8 million whites in 1931, about 300 000 could be classified as "very poor".

Without any hard definition of what constituted a poor-white family, poor whiteism was mainly defined relationally and morally. As with all socially constructed categories, it did not exist in isolation but in relation to other racial groups. Most noticeably, "poor-white" was constructed in reference to the position in society of black Africans, the expectancies and colonial projects of the white English-speaking population and the local British administration, and the ideals of the rapidly mobilising Afrikaner nationalists. Poverty, for many whites, was not defined in terms of economic data but in relation to black Africans' position. Whiteness and the expectation of how whites ought to be compensated was therefore defined by "how a white person by virtue of being white *ought* to live in comparison to non-whites" (Giliomee, 2009: 318; emphasis in original). Rothman remarks that one of the most worrying signs of poor-whites during the late 1920s was that "their lifestyle is like that of backwards coloureds" (Rothman, 1932: 187). Newly urbanised and

poor Afrikaners were "expected by fellow whites to live like whites" (Giliomee, 2009: 324). This notion of "living white", ideas about the spaces that whites ought to inhabit, and concerns about how they should inhabit these spaces continue to dominate much of the discourse around poor-whites.

The idea that poor whites were expected to *live white* was complicated by the high cost of living in urban areas. In 1910, for example, the cost of living in Johannesburg was double that in London (Bottomley, 2012: 71). While the wages earned by skilled workers in Johannesburg also far exceeded those of skilled workers in London (Bottomley, 2012: 71), the high living costs were in particular a problem for unskilled and unemployed workers. By the 1930s white poverty had shifted from rural to urban areas to such an extent that it was now conceptualised as a predominantly urban problem. Despite Giliomee's (2009:315) assertion that the poor white problem was replaced by the question of racial organisation as the most pressing issue in Afrikaner nationalist thought towards the mid-twentieth century, the very nature of the poor white problem was thoroughly intertwined with ideas about Afrikaner-ness, white supremacy, and fears of racial mixing.

The common occurrence of poor white families living in racially mixed areas was a particular worry for the Afrikaner bourgeoisie. By 1914 the city of Johannesburg had grown to such an extent that it housed 250 000 residents and experienced an acute housing crisis (Bottomley, 2012: 30). Due to the high living costs very few poor whites could afford housing outside of racially mixed slums. Fears about whites living in these areas were twofold: that whites might embark on sexual relationships with people of other racial groups, and that white families, and especially white children, could lose or their white disposition (Giliomee, 2009: 343-346). As Afrikaner nationalism had not yet reached its pinnacle in the 1920s and 1930s, it was of great importance to Afrikaner nationalist leaders that those whom they considered "poor whites" were not lost to the *volk*.

Very soon after the arrival of the first poor whites on the Witwatersrand, the need for formalised housing for new and primarily white migrants became apparent. At the time the majority of new Afrikaner arrivals could not afford to rent any form of housing; they thus started squatting on unused, and usually state owned, spaces. The most well-known of these informal camps was that of Brickfields, near the present-day Newtown district in the centre of Johannesburg. Poor sanitation, a lack of streets, and overcrowding all posed significant risks to those who lived in the area, mostly in tents and small huts. In 1893 the government set aside an area west of Brickfields for housing for the urban poor. The newly developed area was called Vrededorp. Yet soon, as more and more poor whites arrived in the city, it too became overcrowded and extended across its borders to nearby poor black and Indian residential areas (Bottomley, 2012: 64-66). Later in the same year Jagersdorp (later known as Burgersdorp) was founded to accommodate the still growing number of poor whites (Bottomley, 2012: 66; Van Onselen, 1982:159). Vrededorp and Jagersdorp, together with an area known as Fordsburg and nearby Indian areas,[20] formed the centre of Johannesburg's poor white settlement, from the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth century (Bottomley, 2012: 66).

Despite being officially declared residential areas, suburbs such as Vrededorp, Burgersdorp, Braamfontein, Fordsburg, and Turffontein were, essentially, slums that housed poor families of all races, a state abhorred by the Afrikaner bourgeoisie. By the late 1920s, after the Pact coalition government came into power, mechanisms were put into place to officially address the poor white problem.[21] In addition to the 25 000 state jobs already filled by poor whites, the establishment of the Carnegie Commission to examine the poor white problem in South

[20] At the time Fordsburg, like Vrededorp and Jagersdorp, was established to house poor-whites. Only much later in the twentieth century, under apartheid rule, it was declared an Indian residential area.
[21] The Pact government refers to an alliance between Hertzog's NP and the Labour Party, known as "the Pact" that was formed before the 1924 election (Giliomee, 2009: 337).

Africa, and the opening of vocational and industrial schools aimed at training white men, the state began to develop state housing exclusively engineered for poor white families with vigour (Giliomee, 2009: 343-346). In 1930 the Central Housing Council of Johannesburg embarked on a project to provide subsidised housing to poor whites. One of the most important principles of this project, later adopted all over the country, was that poor whites could be rehabilitated if they became tenants of the state (Du Plessis, 2004: 885; also see Teppo, 2004). The first of these developments was in the Johannesburg suburb of Jan Hofmeyr with first occupation taking place in 1937. By 1939 a total of 431 houses had been built in Johannesburg for poor white nuclear families (Parnell, 1987: 69). The decades that followed saw more housing developments for poor whites.

The project of poor white suburbs developed across the country had a distinctly moral dimension.[22] Houses were built in a manner that was thought to further habits associated with the middle class: they had two or three bedrooms and were built on a separate plot of land with space to plant fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Qualifying applicants had to be white and earn no more than £20 per month and had to demonstrate that they received a stable monthly income. Privileges were given to larger families that had previously resided in slum areas (Du Plessis, 2004: 887). Parnell (1987: 83) and Teppo (2004) argue that this was an explicit attempt to turn residents of poor white suburbs into reliable and stable citizens.

The history of poor whiteism in South Africa, together with the way that white power dominated the country throughout the twentieth century, gives white poverty today a very particular meaning: poorer white South Africans who are unable to afford formal housing are thought to be quite dissimilar to poor South Africans from other racial groups. This opens opportunities to poor whites to set claim to and develop certain forms of whiteness, but also

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[22] I discuss the extent and content of these processes of moralisation, referred to as "upliftment", in more detail in chapter three.

makes it more difficult for them to engage with other poor people or make attempts to enter spaces of informal settlement that are not explicitly considered to be "white" in the same way.

Betwixt and between: constructions of the white squatter camp

Analysing King Edward Park as a squatter camp is thus complicated by the history of how white poverty was dealt with in South Africa in the twentieth century. It is shaped both by the historical presence of spaces that had been intended exclusively for the use by poor whites, and by the socio-political meanings associated with informal settlements that were taken up, very directly, in apartheid legislation. It thus becomes necessary to ask of King Edward Park: What kind of a space is it? How do the people who live there think of it? And how can it be understood and analysed in relation to the racially marked socio-political history of South Africa? Drawing on the literature on how post-apartheid governments have approached squatter camps and the residents' own historically infused ideas about racially marked spaces, this section suggests that King Edward Park is constructed discursively as a *white* squatter camp.

The concept of a *white* squatter camp, as I briefly mentioned previously, is more than a mere descriptive term of a camp occupied by white people. It points to the production of a space that holds meaning as both a squatter camp, understood by residents to indicate "non-whiteness", and a space of whiteness. Understood in this way the squatter camp of King Edward Park is one in which residents can align themselves with the contemporary squatter politics and state housing without undermining the production and display of their own whiteness. There are several components that assist us in understanding this combination of strategies.

It is significant, firstly, that both the residents of the Park and their sponsors understand squatter camps as implying blackness. By living in the Park residents are forced to confront this definition and have adjusted it by developing an entirely new understanding of the Park as alike and yet fundamentally different from other, "normal" squatter camps. When sponsors first visit the Park, they are often visibly upset when they see the tents and shacks in which the residents stay. When asked to share their thoughts on the Park they express, time and again, their disgust at having to see "white" people living in this manner. One sponsor explains that, "seeing blacks in squatter camps, it's what I know, you see it every day when you drive to work. But white people … our people shouldn't have to live like this" (Interview with Johann, 4 February 2014).

Residents themselves often describe that they used to understand squatter camps on a racial basis before they moved to the Park. Thelma describes, for example, how she never entertained the idea that whites could live in a squatter camp. As a child, she lived in a small apartment with her grandmother, aunt and cousins. Though they struggled financially, she never imagined that she would live in anything else but a house or apartment. As a child, she says, she thought that the term "squatter camp" referred to a place where black Africans live. Nearly all residents and sponsors draw this distinction between the spaces in which different people *ought* to live. Residents describe that they continue to experience a sense of discomfort at the thought of living in a squatter camp even after living in the Park for some time, in the case well over a decade. Many residents feel too embarrassed to allow family members to visit them.

Importantly, however, the residents' discomfort at staying in a squatter camp does not mean that they completely reject the definition of the space they live in as a squatter camp. In certain contexts, residents engage in mediating between the two often contradictory identities: being white and being squatters. This can put them in conflict with their politically

conservative sponsors for whom whites ought to never be squatters. Their opinion matters a great deal to residents: sponsors contribute to the Park because they consider that its residents are deserving of their assistance because they are white. This association of being deserving and whiteness carries a number of further corollaries, explored in greater detail in chapter three, which assume that because of being white these residents can be uplifted or rehabilitated. This implies that the forms of whiteness produced by residents serve to encourage the continued contributions of sponsors. If sponsors begin to think of the Park as just another squatter camp, one that is not exceptional through its whiteness, contributions might stop.

The South African landscape and the ways in which place has been racially and socially organised illustrate well the complicated political nature of place. The physical segregation policies that were put in place by the apartheid government, organising space according to a specific ideological end, demonstrate the political dimension of place as a marker of belonging *in* and *to* a certain place. The National Party's (NP) crude and racist slogans in the lead-up to the 1948 elections, "*die kaffer op sy plek*" (the kaffir in his place) and "*die koelies uit die land*" (coolies out of the country), [23] not only displays the blatant racism with which the party came to power, but also points to the relationship between racial categories and place held by apartheid's architects.

After the end of apartheid, as I argue above, much of apartheid's spatial organisation remained unchanged, in spite of the post-apartheid government's focus on the provision of housing. From my conversations with the Park's sponsors and residents, it seems that much of the apartheid-era thinking about the relationship between race and place has also remained unchanged: residents as well as sponsors emphasised the perceived "unnaturalness" of whites

[23] The derogatory terms "kaffir", to refer to black Africans, and "coolie", to refer to people primarily of Indian decent, were used politically within apartheid-era South Africa

living in informal settlements. The idea that particular racial groups belong in particular spaces clearly continues to dominate, at least in the site of my fieldwork.

Space, it has often been noted before, does not contain any inherent set of norms or meaning (see, for example, Lefebvre, 1991), Yet people, like the white squatters at King Edward Park, experience place as inherently meaningful and imbedded within particular structural norms. Tim Cresswell (1996: 17), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept that common practices and representations are determined by a dialectical relationship between the body and a structured organisation of time and space, argues that the values and meanings of places are in no way inherent or "natural", but rather produced and reproduced. Place and space are thus a "normative landscape" by which ideas about what is considered to be appropriate, right, and just are transmitted. Place and space can thus be used politically to normalise the idea that certain people belong in specific places and categorically *not* in others (Cresswell 1996, 3-19). This analysis is particularly fitting in the South African context. The fascination many seem to have with King Edward Park and the idea of the white squatter camp is illuminated once one considers the ideological constructions and implied meanings underlying the spaces of squatter camps in South Africa. As I discussed in the previous section, apartheid-era Afrikaner nationalists went to great lengths to instil the idea in South Africans that whites belong in suburbs that have been designed in particular *white* ways, and that other racial groups do not belong in these spaces. Place and space can, according to Cresswell, also be used to question or resist "normalising" practices by engaging in "transgression" (Cresswell, 1996: 9) that "serves to foreground the mapping of ideology onto space and place, and thus the margins tell us something about 'normality'".

Cresswell's thinking about the production of meaning and space relies heavily on Bourdieu's understandings of the social, the production of meaning, and the relation between objective structures and subjects. As I use these ideas myself in this thesis, I wish to briefly provide my

own account of Bourdieu in this regard. Bourdieu (1977: 73-74) theorises the social in terms of a dialectic of incorporation and objectification between structures and habitus. Similar to Emile Durkheim ([1912] 1995) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966), Bourdieu describes the social field as constituted by material conditions that he calls objective structures and that, in turn, produce the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). Bourdieu (1977: 78 & 1990: 11) describes habitus, a term that has also been used by authors such as Hegel, Weber, Durkheim and Mauss, as systems of durable, transposable dispositions. Habitus, in other words, exists in, through, and because of the practices of agents and their interaction with one another and their environment: ways of talking, walking, and acting. Habitus may even be as far-reaching as the way that someone looks or their taste in music. Bourdieu (1977: 95) further defines the term as "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted". I therefore understand habitus as a set of dispositions and internalised possibilities that allow individuals to orientate themselves with regards to the social world. However, the habitus that Bourdieu (1977: 72) refers is not merely produced by objective material structures. As the process as dialectical, Bourdieu is of opinion that, just as social structures produce habitus, habitus in turn reproduces structures. These dispositions are embodied in human agents and find their existence in the agents' interaction with each other and with their extended environment.

In order to construct the white squatter camp, residents implicitly hold some understanding of what a "normal" squatter camp is. These understandings would have been shaped by the apartheid-era definition of townships, as formal areas for exclusive black occupation. During this period, Dubow (2014: 182) writes, most whites in urban areas had never entered a township and had little idea about the place where African workers lived. This, he argues, led many whites to easily believe government propagated ideologies about Africans, such as the "*swart gevaar*" (black peril). In the case of those whites I met during my fieldwork, it seems

that Dubow's observations still hold in that few ever enter neighbourhoods occupied mainly by Africans. A large majority of the Park's residents moved there from suburbs in Johannesburg and the surrounding West Rand area that had been defined as for white occupation during apartheid. Most show an unfamiliarity with townships and informal settlements. With the exception of a handful of them, nobody has ever visited a township. Having intimate knowledge of township life, women in the Park tell me, is usually a sign that one is involved with crime as there was no other reason for a person to visit a township. At most, Park residents have seen such spaces from afar while driving by.

In the absence of any personal encounters with other squatter camps, or knowledge of life there, residents rely on extensive, but imagined, ideas of what other squatter camps are like. The manner in which residents compared the Park with "normal" squatter camps grants insight into how they imagine those settlements. Other than associating informal settlements as well as townships with blackness, it is noticeable how residents describe informal settlements as violent. When the possibility comes up that the Park's residents could be moved to a township or a transit camp close to a township, the residents' first reaction and primary objection relates to violence.[24]

The fear that they or a member of their family could be raped is by far the most commonly raised objection when residents discuss a possible move. "I am not a racist and I don't raise my children like that, you know that", Sunette explains her fear to me, "I will go anywhere if they give me a house. But I swear to one God in heaven that if they rape me or my children … I don't know what I'll do" (Interview with Sunette, 9 May 2014). At least seven other women listed the same similar fear as the only reason why they would resist being moved from the Park.

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[24] Also see Steyn (2005) and Steyn and Foster (2008) for a more detailed account of "White Talk" and the way it discursively depicts black Africans as violent and inherently criminal.

The fear of informal settlements and townships as violent spaces is of particular interest as the Park is by no means free of crime and violence. During the time I spent in the Park there were instances of rape, domestic violence was not uncommon, cases of the sexual abuse of children were investigated, and residents routinely complained of clothes and other belongings being stolen. All of these instances involved the residents themselves and perpetrators were, in most instances, well known to other residents. There were also a few cases of residents involved in serious crimes committed outside the Park. One former resident whose family still resides in the Park, for example, was found guilty on a charge of murder and two others were arrested for attempted murder and assault respectively.

Chilli, one of these men, shows me two tattoos on his forearm after he is released on bail: *2$6* and beneath it *because of money I fell in love with crime.* He does not want to elaborate on the first tattoo. It seems, however, to refer to the so-called Numbers, a group of local prison gangs known, respectively, as the 28s, 27s, and 26s. Often members will mark their affiliation to one of these gangs by having the gang's number tattooed on their bodies. A while later Chilli shows me the words *thug life* tattooed on his chest. Chilli doubts whether he will ever escape what he refers to as "the life of crime", he says when we speak about this tattoos. It has become a lifestyle and he doesn't see any reason to stop. Yet, despite the presence of violent crime committed by residents, none of the residents really feel threatened in this manner. Whenever I ask them about crime in the Park and their fears around it, they highlight that their only real concern was items of clothing that are sometimes stolen from communal washing lines.

As I briefly mentioned above, sponsors are often of the opinion that it is inappropriate for white people to live in shacks with no water and electricity. Often cars can be seen driving by the Park with passengers leaning out of the windows taking photos. In a BBC documentary entitled "The White Slums of South Africa" (Yates, 2014), British journalist Reggie Yates

expresses his shock at seeing white children in conditions of poverty, even though he notes that he is used to seeing black children in similar conditions. Yates' comment is significant as he finds the idea of whites' living in squatter camps disconcerting even though he himself is black. It highlights the fact that the normative relationships between race and space, and race and belonging, are ones that are deeply entrenched in an ideological sense, and are not simply the opinion of a few politically conservative whites. Cresswell's (1996) argument that we are socialised by ideological devices into believing that certain people belong in certain places certainly rings true when one considers the relationship between race and informal settlement in South Africa.

I am told, almost unanimously by respondents of all races, that whites do not belong in squatter camps. Take, for example, the way Marius describes the Park, in contrast to other squatter camps:

> Those of us who live here, who are living in the camp, we try to make sure that everything is clean and so on. The toilets are cleaned every day; we throw away the rubbish. We don't want this place to look like some of the other squatter camps you see with litter and things. We raise our children here; we're not used to this kind of life. (Interview, 20 May 2014)

For many residents the contradictions of being white but living in a squatter camp seem to present much difficulty. Some express their dismay at having to live in a squatter camp in private, but emphasise that they have tried to make the best of their situation. Residents explain that this implies a move away from the idea that whites ought to be privileged over other citizens. In an interview Anna explains to me:

> We used to come here to visit Bennie's sister and I always told him that I will never live here with these *damduikers*.[25] But sometimes God has other plans for you and you have to go where He sends you. These are different times, you know, because everyone is equal and the blacks are on top now. And I don't know, I don't think that's wrong because they also deserve a chance in life. So, in the end, we have to accept that this is how things are now. I just want the government to see that we also need help just like the people in the location.[26] We applied for a [RDP] house[27] so hopefully they will see that we also deserve the same as the poor blacks. (Interview, 10 June 2014)

Other residents express similar sentiments with regard to state assistance. Many agree with Anna that if they really want to access government assistance, they would have to reject the notion that whites ought to not be poor, or squatters. James Ferguson (2015: 14) writes, with regard to the programmes of state social assistance that were implemented after apartheid, that South Africans across all racial groups and classes seem to agree that poor citizens are entitled to such assistance. Ferguson's argument pertains specifically to the system of cash transfers, but there is a case to be made that the same could apply to the housing programme.

Following the idea that King Edward Park's residents are entitled to state housing, just like any other South African living in informal housing, the Park's residents tend to speak to discourses of human rights and equality. They draw on post-apartheid housing policy to argue that, since they identify as squatters, they ought to be treated the same as all other South African squatters. This train of thought is framed in particular by the perception inside and outside the Park that poor-whites in post-apartheid South Africa are, in general, treated *worse* by the state than poor black people. Residents are thus shifting from a focus on perceived

[25] Literally translated as "dam divers", *damduiker* is used derogatively to refer to a white person of low social standing.
[26] Location is an outdated South African term for township, referring to areas reserved for exclusive black residence during the apartheid period.
[27] As part of the post-apartheid government scheme to provide housing for the poor.

racial *differences,* as was done in the past, to an emphasis of the *similarities* within the broad category of "the poor", with all South Africans included within it.

Sharon, a woman in her late thirties, moved to the Park in 2009 with her three daughters, now aged 14, 18, and 19.[28] The term "squatter", Sharon explains, is an identity she attempts to embrace rather than resist. Since she first moved to the Park, she has attempted three times to move elsewhere, only to return to the Park a few months later. Despite the fact that she works as a waitress at a sports bar a few nights every week, Sharon says that the cost of living elsewhere is simply too high for her to afford it. After her most recent move out of the Park in early 2013, she and her youngest daughter lived with Sharon's mother for a few months. As her mother's only income is her government old age pension, Sharon felt it incorrect to expect of her mother to share this income with her and moved back to the Park. Her daughter, however, remained in the care of Sharon's mother, due to easier access to her school.

When I ask Sharon how she imagines her future, she shrugs. With Henry's help she tried to apply for a RDP house, but found the process of applying so difficult that she eventually gave up. She goes quiet for a minute when I ask what specifically had made the process a difficult one. Then she starts her story by telling me of the day she married a Chinese man. It was a few years back, maybe ten but she can't be sure, and she remembers it as a difficult time in her life. She had financial troubles and struggled to stop using [drugs]. She did not know the man called Ling for very long when she agreed to marry him, hoping that it might provide her with more stability. A few months later Ling disappeared, and to this day Sharon has no idea how to find him. This means that she is now stuck, Sharon explains, because she is unsure how to end the marriage without him being present; yet without proof of a legal divorce, the authorities will not allow her to apply for a RDP house. Sharon's story is similar to those of

[28] Sharon's two elder daughters have since married but both continue to live in the Park with their families. See chapter four for a more elaborate discussion of their family structure.

many other residents. Her neighbour, for example, was told that her family cannot submit a housing application because of her husband's criminal record. Many other residents cannot apply for RDP houses as they do not meet the criteria. Yet others submitted applications as far back as in 2007 but have no idea when they might reach the top of the waiting list.

Although Sharon gave up, if only for the moment, the idea of receiving state funded housing, she continues to believe that the best way forward is to make government aware of the fact that some whites are as poor as poor black Africans. As long as she and others are unable to afford formal housing, Sharon feels that it is up to the state to provide them with a space to live. In one interview she states:

> We are squatters, and there is no way around it. So that is how I see it. We are squatters and so we have rights. The municipality or whoever can't come here and tell us to go. It doesn't work like that anymore, because it is the new South Africa. Our government has a responsibility to provide for the poor people who live here. (Interview, 29 May 2014)

Ilana, the park manager, agrees with Sharon that there is little use in thinking about their situation in terms of race; this despite Ilana's own fears that "the blacks" may attack them if they moved to a township. She adds angrily that those individuals and groups who use the Park as an example of white oppression or neo-apartheid are not doing the residents any favour as it simply complicates their relationship with the local government. The bottom line, she states, in much the same way as Sharon, is that it is the government's job to provide its citizens with basic housing. Her conclusion is that since all who live in the Park are squatters, their housing needs are clearly not being met. Consequently, she and Henry will continue to battle with local government until all of the Park's residents have access to permanent housing.

While many residents continue to express the idea that whites, normatively, do not belong in squatter camps, and do not explicitly share Sharon's and Ilana's evaluation, they are also aware of the political implications that a full dissociation from squatter politics might have. For the time being, the Park's residents manage to sustain themselves largely because of the way white capital is redirected to the Park. However, residents are very aware and regularly point out that none of this is certain and that systems of support on which they rely may well change or collapse over time.

This presents the residents of King Edward Park with a dilemma: on the one hand, identifying as squatters opens up various possibilities in terms of government assistance and could potentially lead to the allocation of a government funded RDP house. On the other hand, the support network that the Park relies on extends far beyond state assistance and is in no uncertain terms tied up with the residents' perceived whiteness.[29] The Park's sponsors see their donations as a means to keep the Park's residents "white" in much the same way as nationalist interventions in the 1920s and 1930s sought to keep poor-whites white (Bottomley, 2012: 45; Teppo, 2004). The residents of King Edward Park are, therefore, very aware that maintaining and displaying certain forms of whiteness are necessary to continue to draw white capital to the park.

In short, the Park's residents have to find a way to position themselves as squatters who are, still, distinctly white. While conceding that they live in a squatter camp, they are determined that it has to *be* and *stay* a particular kind of squatter camp: a *white squatter camp*. If we take seriously the notion that place is not merely a reflection of ideology but is produced by, and in turn produces, ideology, it would imply that true whiteness can only be produced in an appropriately white place. In order to conceive of the Park as a *white* space, a place where

[29] A more detailed discussion of the relationship between the Park's residents, their sponsors, and the forms of whiteness that informs this relationship follows in chapter six.

whites are thought be belong and a place that would be able to reproduce, to borrow Teppo's (2004) term, "good whites", the residents take part in a collective effort to present the Park as a space of *good whiteness*. I elaborate in the next chapter on this idea of good whiteness, an ideological construction I see as flowing from the particular normative expectations that were placed on poor-whites in the mid-twentieth century. Constructing such a space — a white squatter camp — means not only constantly reaffirming one's own good whiteness, but also policing the habitus of other residents.

This contradiction is met by various forms of negotiation on the part of the residents. While emphasising, as I showed above, that they do not feel that poorer whites ought to receive material advantages that other poor squatters do not receive, residents assert that, morally, they can shape the space of the Park into one that clearly displays a sense of whiteness. Thus, the concept of the *white squatter camp* is born. This concept, as produced by the residents of the Park, imagines the Park as a squatter camp of a particular kind. It urges onlookers to see the Park as out of the ordinary and those who live there as out of place. By constructing a space in which meaning is explicitly produced by normative whiteness, residents seek to highlight the ways in which their own poverty, and their material surroundings, are "unnatural".

Conclusion

This chapter seeks to contextualise King Edward Park and its residents within both the contemporary politics of squatting, as well as the historiography of South African poor whiteism during the twentieth century. In order to do this, the first half of the chapter outlines the structural, spatial, and hierarchical organisation of the Park; introduces the key figures in the Park who continue to feature in the rest of the thesis; and gives an overview of the basic

ways in which poorer whites come to reside in the Park, and how the Park functions on a day-to-day basis.

The second half of the chapter then investigates what being white in a squatter camp means. While the residents of King Edward Park account for only a few of the millions of South Africans who reside in informal settlements or squatter camps, I argued that they see themselves and are seen by other whites as fundamentally different from "normal" squatters. Regardless of the fact that some residents indicate the need to accept that they are squatters and do not expect any preferential treatment from the state, the fact remains that they do not conceptually view themselves as squatters, but as *white* squatters. Their acceptance of the social position of squatter thus remains relational: it relies on the notion that white squatters are essentially different from black squatters. Thus, while self-identifying as squatters, the residents emphasise that being a white squatter sets one apart from being a "normal" squatter. In the squatter camp, a space that has ideologically been constructed as a black space, markers of whiteness serve to indicate that whites are somewhat out of place and that a white squatter camp is structured by different sets of values than other, "normal" squatter camps.

CHAPTER THREE

Post-apartheid upliftment and the production of good whiteness

The relationship between poor whiteism and normative whiteness, as it is exemplified by the white upper classes, is complicated. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when racial boundaries in South Africa were much less fixed than it would become during the apartheid era, poor whiteism presented an acute threat to the continued existence of the Afrikaner *volk*. For Afrikaners at this time, their whiteness was fragile and not at all a given. At the start of the twentieth century, Afrikaners generally had much less formal education than white English-speakers and many of the latter regarded them as barely white (Falkof, 2016: 6).

This chapter continues to explore the meanings of being white and a squatter in post-apartheid South Africa in greater detail. It focusses on the influence of historical poor whiteism in South Africa and the "solving" thereof, as well as on the construction of the Park as a white space today. The chapter opens with an outline of the struggles that newer residents face when they first move to the Park. I show that, without being aware of local meaning system that defines the Park as a white squatter camp, many newcomers battle internalised stigmas of poor whiteism. With the help of ethnographic examples this section shows how new residents feel uncomfortable with the idea of living in a squatter camp, primarily because of older stereotypes and stigmas surrounding poor-whites.

The chapter then turns to the concept of "the good white", as described by Teppo (2004) and applied to a class of poor-whites who were uplifted or "rehabilitated" during the 1930s and 1940s. I argue that residents of King Edward Park draw on, self-impose, and internalise measures that were used to rehabilitate poor-whites nearly one hundred years earlier as a means to display and produce a similar form of whiteness in the Park. I propose that we think of the ideological structures Teppo describes, together with the class of "good whites" it

produced, as *good whiteness*. Conceiving of it in this way provides an analytical lens through which to theorise the way poorer whites today utilise and reproduce good whiteness, while also accounting for disruptions thereof. This chapter looks specifically at good whiteness through the houses and homes of the residents of King Edward Park. By constructing the physical structures in ways that are thought to encourage and support good whiteness, residents consider themselves not only as performing their good whiteness towards outsiders, but also as encouraging other residents to adopt the same forms of whiteness.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the question of disruption. In King Edward Park, there are various and frequent interruptions in the attempt to display good whiteness. Disruptions in the Park, I argue, occur in many different ways and forms. Some residents choose to reject the ideology of good whiteness, while others are unable to produce it as their material means are too limited. In a situation where not all individual households display an explicit commitment to good whiteness, I argue that the Park and all of its residents, as a collective, is constructed as one large family[1] living in a single home. As such Henry and Ilana, who are seen as the parental figures in this household, are able to assert rules and structure the Park to mimic a good white home. Consequently, I conclude, the Park becomes the ultimate objective structure through which good whiteness is produced.

Fragile whiteness: stigmas and stereotypes

Bottomley (2012: 3) describes the invisibility of white poverty during the height of apartheid as part of a "magic trick" performed by the NP: through various state mechanisms the

[1] The image of the family has long been a very powerful one within the construction of the Afrikaner people, from the institutionalised emphasis on the nuclear family within the state support systems of the 1930s and 1940s to the romantic representation of rural Afrikaner families in the literary genre of the *plaasroman* [farm novel]. In the conclusion to the final volume of the Carnegie Commission report on poor-whites, Rothman (1932: 209) emphasises the importance of the nuclear family, and especially the mother, in the production of domestic and social education. She argued that the absence of a mother who is able to provide this kind of education was a very common occurrence in poor white households.

apartheid government managed to instil into the minds of South Africans the idea that the poor-white problem had been "solved". Although state intervention managed to radically improve the lives of poor-whites during the late 1930s and 1940s, it would be untrue to say that there were *no* poor-whites during the apartheid years. A large part of the NP's "magic trick" involved the moralisation of poverty. White poverty, as noted in the previous chapter, was not seen as a mere reflection of an economic position. Poor-whites epitomised Afrikaner nationalist fears at a time when they were unsure of the future of the *volk* (Koorts, 2013: 557; Malan, 1964: 121-130). Then, as a result of the project of poor-white rehabilitation, when racial categories narrowed and poor-white upliftment projects were firmly established, those whites who remained very poor and were unable to uplift themselves and their families were reclassified as anomalies, as "*slegmense*".[2]

In the decades preceding 1948, however, poor whiteism underwent many changes. In a drastic shift from his later thoughts D. F. Malan, for example, believed that poor whiteism was the result of poor-whites' own doing and that their depravity threatened the future of a civilised Afrikaner *volk*. A few years later, however, Malan adjusted his position to better align with the Afrikaner nationalist project of the time, seeing the poor-white problem as a result of cheap African labour, and advocating for harsher segregation policies as a way to solve the problem (Koorts, 2013: 555).

Despite the official end of apartheid in 1994, the ideologies that underwrote it linger. In chapter two I suggested that the motivation for residents' construction of King Edward Park as a *white squatter camp* is twofold. Firstly, many of their resources are acquired through donations by politically conservative whites who expect of poorer whites to display particular forms of normative whiteness. Secondly, idea that whites belong in certain *white* spaces is

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[2] Teppo (2004: 103) translates the Afrikaans word "slegmense" as "rubbish people or rotten people, people who have deteriorated." A literal translation of the word can also mean "bad people".

deeply entrenched in the minds of many residents. Chapter two concluded that residents of King Edward Park solve the conundrum of how whites can be residents of a squatter camp by viewing King Edward Park as a *white squatter camp*. It is, in other words, a space that is distinctly different from other squatter camps by virtue of having an essence of whiteness. The production of this white space, I argued, is made possible through a dialectical process. The Park, as a white squatter camp, is thus perceived as enabling the production of whiteness. This whiteness, in turn, then reproduces the white structure of the Park.

An intimate knowledge of this production and of the particular constructions of whiteness in the Park is only acquired through time however. While new residents are aware of the fact that the Park is a "white squatter camp", they often appear unsure of how to make sense of the space when they first arrive. Apart from dealing with numerous losses they may have suffered, new residents struggle to adapt to the idea of having to live in a squatter camp. Observing the way new residents are welcomed into the Park, how they express their feelings of shame at living in a squatter camp, and seeing the way other residents guide newcomers' understanding of how and why the Park is a white squatter camp, allows us some insight into the process of meaning construction. In particular, the following example illustrates how new residents are encouraged to view the Park in a particular way and how they are encouraged to construct their lives in the Park as distinctly *white*.

One example of a new family and its initial struggles with living in the Park is the family of Jan and Adele. They move to the Park together with Adele's daughter Chimoné late on a Monday afternoon. All their belongings are strapped onto the back of a borrowed *bakkie* (pick-up truck): a double bed, a couch, a small cupboard, a few items of clothing, and three boxes with the rest of their possessions. They left some furniture behind at their previous home in a mining town about 100 kilometres north west of the Park, because they cannot afford another return trip. For the time being, Henry agrees to let them stay in one room of

the tent of a family that is away for a few weeks because Jan and Adele do not have a structure of their own to live in and cannot afford to buy one. This is an unsecure arrangement to say the least: as far as I understand, the family to whom the tent belongs has no knowledge of the arrangement and it is unclear when it will return. Jan and Adele will either have to negotiate with the family to continue living in the tent or, more likely, will have to find an alternative arrangement.

A week later, a little luck sees to it that Adele and Jan acquired a Wendy house. The Wendy house was originally donated to a family that has left the Park in the meantime. As the original sponsor of the house asked that it be handed over to a family with children if it were to become vacant, it is now offered to Adele and Jan. The structure includes a large tent with a bathtub and small kitchen counter next to the one-bedroom Wendy house. It is rare for a new family without any of its own financial means to have access to this kind of a housing structure so quickly, but the sponsor feels that it is appropriate to offer it to this family as Adele's daughter is disabled.[3] Other residents, some of whom had hoped that they might receive the house, appear to hide their disapproval.

Despite the fact that residents regularly mention to Adele how fortunate she and her family are to receive a comfortable home so quickly, Adele is deeply unhappy during her first three months at the Park. As other new residents, Adele seems to be disturbed by the idea that her family is now living in a squatter camp. While talking about their move and the events that had led to it, for example, Adele compulsively touches the small engagement ring on her left hand, twisting it around her finger. She regularly interrupts her own train of thought with comments to the effect that she is thinking of selling the ring so that they can afford to move elsewhere. It is doubtful that the cash Adele would receive from pawning or selling her ring

[3] Chimoné has cerebral palsy and had a brain tumour that was removed when she was a baby. She has never attended school, although at the time of their move to the Park she was already nine years old.

will get the family very far. Yet, Adele's willingness to part with the only possession she views as valuable, and one that also carries much sentimental value, indicates her desperation to leave the Park.

The conditions in which Adele's family lived before moving to the Park do not seem very different from its current living arrangements. Some years earlier, Jan had worked as technician in one of the local mines where they had lived. Though they lived from one paycheque to the next, they could afford to rent a house, and owned a car. But then Jan, in his late fifties at the time, suffered a heart attack and could not continue the work he did before. Over the next year he was sometimes contacted by his former employer to do less strenuous work, but eventually he could no longer work at all. Adele had spent all her adult life caring for her children at home and, despite making effort, could not find any waged work.[4]

As their already small income dwindled, Adele and Jan relied on donations and food parcels from their local church. The years leading up to their eventual move to the Park saw several long-lasting miners' strikes across South Africa, the most noticeable being the 2012 strike that led to the widely reported Marikana massacre, not far from where Jan worked at the time. In the years following the violence at Marikana several other strikes followed, including the longest wage strike in South African mining history during the first two quarters of 2014 (Alexander, 2013). With the majority of breadwinners in mining communities, such as the one in which Jan and Adele lived, unable to earn wages, the local economies suffered severely. If they had been the only family struggling, Jan notes dryly, they would possibly have been able to find a way out. But there were hundreds of families in the same position. Before moving to the Park, Jan and Adele first moved to an apartment and later to a backyard

[4] In chapter 5 I refer to the fact that Adele eventually found employment as a floor assistant at a general grocery store. This occurred several months into their stay at the Park.

room. They heard about the Park through friends and Jan borrowed money to travel to the Park to speak to Henry. They moved to the Park four days later.

In the first few weeks after their arrival in the Park, Adele cried easily and often when speaking about their move. She is afraid that people will now think they are bad people for living here, as she gestures around the room. She is also scared that now that they are living in a squatter camp, they will never be able to move out. If someone heard that they were living in a squatter camp, she reasons, surely they would not want to offer her or Jan employment. Adele repeats the term "squatter camp" often when she speaks about their move, as though getting used to its strangeness on her tongue. She is especially worried about what other whites will think of them, outsiders who will assume that she is unworthy of help because of where she is living.

Like Adele, Jan seems horrified at the thought of spending the rest of his life in a squatter camp. Both of them are explicitly racist when they speak about the Park and their feelings on living there. It is hard to accept that he has to live "like a kaffir", Jan says, again alluding to the notion that certain spaces are only appropriate for certain people. When I query what he means with this, he explains that it is not the day-to-day experience that bothers him as much as the idea of having to tell his family and friends where they are staying. Jan imagines that they are likely to lose contact with all their friends now that they stay in the Park, because he doubts that anyone will want to come visit them in a squatter camp.

Racism aside, Adele generally goes to great lengths to "prove", as she once put it to me, that she and Jan are honest people. When I introduce myself to them during their first week in the Park, Adele immediately invites me into the Wendy house and asks me to sit down while she calls her daughter from outside. Adele asks the girls to fetch the Bibles from a small cupboard standing against the window. As the child is holding three Bibles in her hands, Adele encourages her to display her biblical knowledge to me while explaining that they feel

it important to bring up the child to know the Lord: "Tell the *tannie* what your father's name is", she says to the girl. "Jan", the girl replies.[5] She then sends the child off to play again. Once the child is gone, Adele explains that Jan has raised the girl as his own although he is not her biological father. Once again, Adele seems keen to and impress on me how they are respectable people despite having faced some obstacles.

Later on the same afternoon, Adele shows me more documentation in an apparent attempt to display some sense of personhood. As though wanting to show me that their history is authentic, Adele pages through copies of their identity documents, medical reports about Jan's health, and an official letter from the mine where he worked declaring him medically unfit. Before I leave, Adele stuffs a small piece of paper into my hand. On it she has written the name and telephone number of the general physician they saw in the town where they used to live. I should call the doctor if I want to know anything about her, Adele urges even after I explain, once again, that I do not doubt her story nor that am I interested in fact checking. The doctor knew their family well, Adele persists, and she would be able to tell me that they really are respectable people.

The next day Adele comes to find me again, this time to hand me a copy of a report that was written by a psychologist who evaluated her daughter some years back. Unsure of why she was giving this to me, I ask her if she wants me to read the report or needs help in another why. She shakes her head. No, she says, I can keep the report. She merely wants to hand it to me so that I can read it and explain to other residents that it is not that they not neglected to enrol Chimoné at school, but that she cannot attend school.

Even after a few months it is still evident that their move to King Edward Park has been traumatic for Adele and Jan. Crying to her neighbours, Adele frequently says that they would

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[5] Quote from my field notes, 13 February 2014.

have been better off had they not moved. She fears that social workers would take her daughter away if they found out where she lives. Jan is much quieter than Adele, but he also speaks of how he feels too ashamed to go outside, and consequently spends most of his time inside their house, lying on his bed and smoking.

Hearing new residents complain in this manner, and particularly express feelings of shame and regret, is very common. Yet long-time residents do not take to it kindly. They are always quick to point out to new residents like Adele that they ought to feel grateful for having access to a space like the Park. She could have found herself living in a *real* squatter camp, a neighbour tells Adele one evening, but instead she was in King Edward Park, a safe space amongst her *own* people. When another new resident complains about not knowing how to feed her children, other women quickly interrupt to explain the elaborate system of communal meals. At times, Henry, Ilana, or other long-term female residents intervene in the homes of new residents by showing them how they are *expected* to live. On one occasion, for example, Mara and Hen, who have both lived in the Park for some time, visit a new family's tent to show them how to use an old sheet as a room separator. If newcomers do not comply with the Park's expectations and are considered as not displaying the forms of whiteness that contribute to the idea of the Park as white, they are quickly ostracised by the other residents and are not likely to gain access to better housing structures, more donations, or other resources.

The way older residents make an effort to point out to newcomers the small markers of whiteness in the Park, and their reaction if newer residents fail to comply, is important. By explaining, for example, how some houses are organised, what is expected of different genders, how residents engage with sponsors, and how all the residents are "like a family", residents slowly habituate newcomers so that they, too, eventually come to view the Park as a "white squatter camp" that is different from other squatter camps.

This chapter explains closely what exactly these markers of whiteness are and how residents go about to incorporate them in their lives in the Park. In preparation for this discussion, I briefly discuss the construction of the notion of Afrikaners as a people and how this informs moral understandings of poor whiteism. The specific form of whiteness that residents aspire to, or indicate to aspire to, is one that was carefully crafted by Afrikaner nationalists during the twentieth century. It is this mode of whiteness, to which I refer later as good whiteness, that continues to shape much of how life is structured at King Edward Park.

The construction of the Afrikaners

Throughout this thesis I argue that Afrikaner nationalism, particularly how it conceives of what Afrikaner whiteness ought to be, is continuing to influence the formation of whiteness in South Africa. In the interactions between residents, and between residents and sponsors at the Park, the values and norms that were underwritten by Afrikaner Christian ideology are quite noticeable. Notions pertaining to Afrikaner Christian nationalism and poor whiteism were closely interwoven during the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, the idea of poor-white upliftment and the figure of the good white developed partly in reaction to nationalist fears of racial mixing and of the demise of the Afrikaner *volk*. These ideas remain integral to understanding white poverty in the post-apartheid context. I therefore briefly elaborate on the genesis of the Afrikaners as a people as a means to historically contextualise the arguments that follow.

Despite the firm political hold that Afrikaner nationalists had on South Africa during the apartheid era, the notion of Afrikaners as a cohesive ethnic group is one that was constructed only at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the period between 1890 and 1940 the concept and image of "the Afrikaner" was carefully constructed as politicians, civil servants, churches, and educators poured much of their energy into raising a consolidated group of

white Afrikaans-speakers who could become a ruling group (Giliomee, 2009: 355; Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 12). It was a process that took many decades and different ideologues, conjuring up shared enemies and creating nationalist myths (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 13). It is important to note that South Africa at the time looked vastly different from what it did in 1948 when apartheid was first formalised. The period between 1890 and 1940 was a tumultuous time in Southern African history and included migratory processes after the discovery of gold, two wars against the British, the creation of a political union by the four South African colonies, and the establishment of the National Party.

Although there were some efforts toward the end of the nineteenth century to recast Afrikaans-speaking whites as a single *volk*, (Giliomee, 2009), the founding of the NP marked the beginning of a politicised Afrikaner identity (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 12). The nationalism of the NP, deeply informed by a conservative neo-Calvinism, aimed to mobilise all Afrikaans- and Dutch-speaking whites as a homogenous Afrikaner *volk*. It is important to note, however, that not all nationalists understood the term "Afrikaner" to refer exclusively to white Afrikaans-speakers. D. F. Malan himself, for example, distinguished between Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaners and white Afrikaners as he thought "Afrikaner" connoted a commitment to patriotism and South African independence in any white South African, regardless of whether they spoke Afrikaans as mother-tongue or not (Malan, 1964: 98).

Driven by the deeply conservative religious views of many Afrikaans-speaking whites, the notion of a "chosen people" with a shared past and shared destiny further forged Afrikaners together. This was motivated by the emphasis on a collective history, specifically focussing on the events surrounding the Great Trek and comparing it to the biblical exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. The Afrikaners' Promised Land had little to no space for those who were not white. Caught between the dangers of the "*swart gevaar*" on the one hand and British imperialism on the other, Afrikaners saw themselves as an oppressed people who,

with the help of God, would eventually acquire the land that they were destined to rule. The perceived backwardness of Afrikaners, ethno-nationalists argued, could only be overcome through the development of an own identity and the establishing of separate social institutions (Giliomee, 2009: 356).

By the late 1920s, with nationalist ideology having firmly established Afrikaners as a mythically chosen people, poor whiteism was seen to stand in the way of absolute white supremacy. As a solution to the "problem" presented by poor-whites, projects of poor-white rehabilitation, as I outline in the section to follow, were established by various organisational arms of Afrikaner nationalism, including the state, the church, and other civil organisations.

"The good whites": the rehabilitation of poor-whites

Chapter two elaborated on the emergence of the poor-white problem in South Africa and initial attempts to spatially segregate poor-whites from the poor of other racial groups amongst whom they lived. The visibility of poor whiteism at the time created, among the Afrikaner middle class and elites, fears of racial mixing and the eventual decline of the Afrikaner *volk* as a civilised people. As a means to end the wide-spread phenomenon of poor whiteism in the 1930s, this section demonstrates how extensive "upliftment" or "rehabilitation" programmes were implemented across poor-white communities in South Africa. The overall aims of these programmes were to entrench and habituate, in the Bourdieusian sense, poor-whites into the habitus and conventions of the white middle class. The result of these interventions was a class of "uplifted" poor-whites whom Teppo (2004) calls "the good whites" and Du Plessis (2004: 884) refers to as "state tenants". Both descriptions point to the particular position in which poor-whites found themselves at the time and how this position was prefaced by their relationship with the state. While the state had put in place extensive programmes aimed at the upliftment of poor-whites on the one

hand, these programmes were, on the other hand, laden with moralist expectations. The result was a rather paternalistic relationship between the state and poor-whites: while extensive help was available, it hinged on poor-whites' ability to meet the criteria set by the state and the bodies that extended from it (Bottomley, 2012: 152-154; Du Plessis, 2004: 887-888; Teppo, 2004: 111-114).

The concept of the "poor-white" is one that was understood as conveying moral, social, and political meaning. The relationship between the state and poor-whites was complex, however, and became, in a Foucauldian sense, "entangled in a particular set of power relations between the state and its citizens, exercised through disciplinary power and bio-power, which rendered them both the beneficiaries and debtors" (Du Plessis, 2004: 883). As the NP entered into coalition with the Labour Party in 1924, the poor-white problem was a pressing socio-political issue for those whites who sought Afrikaner independence and white rule. The seriousness with which the task of solving the poor-white problem was approached is reflected in the nationalist *zeitgeist* of the 1930s and 1940s. On the occasion of the centenary celebration of the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1938, D. F. Malan directed his entire speech at the poor-white problem: "The Afrikaner trekker in the city must live, and South Africa expects of him to live, in spite of his poverty, as a civilised white man" (Malan, 1964: 126). Malan thus not only emphasises the importance of identifying as white, but connects it to a larger habitus of whiteness and, importantly, relates a moral expectancy and way of being in the world to maintaining such whiteness.

Like other nationalists of his time, Malan further expressed his belief that whites *ought* to live as *white*, supposing that there is a particular way of living that flows from being a white person. Critically, Malan focussed his speech, on what was arguably the symbolically most significant day for Afrikaners in the first half of the twentieth century, on impressing upon his audience the importance of eradicating white poverty. The success, of doing so was the most

determining factor, in Malan's mind, in ensuring that South Africa would remain a "white man's land" and that the Afrikaner people would remain a united people (Malan, 1964: 121-130).

In ongoing attempts to "solve" the problem of white poverty in the period from the early 1920s to the early 1950s, the work of the Carnegie Commission stands out. The five volumes of its report, based on research conducted between 1928 and 1930, reveal much about approaches to poor whiteism in South Africa at the time and include suggestions on possible rehabilitative measures (Grosskopf, 1932; Wilcocks, 1932; Murray, 1932; Rothman, 1932; Albertyn, 1932; Malherbe, 1932). The use of the term "rehabilitation" is highly significant in contextualising white poverty at the time: it is a term that has not only been used to describe the practices around poor-whites at the time, but is a term used in the Carnegie report itself (Grosskopf, 1932: xxviii). In terms of the "rehabilitation" of poor-whites, the following suggestions and comments should be emphasised. The commission warns on several instances that, although poor-whites ought to be helped, it should be done carefully as to not encourage dependency. Instead, rehabilitation should be structured in such a way that poor-whites can eventually be independent and self-reliant. The Commission also stresses the importance of the Afrikaner middle class educating poorer whites in what it calls *maatskaplike opvoeding* (social education). It is the duty of these more affluent whites, the Commission argues, to educate poor-whites on issues of frugality, moderation, health, and racial pride. It further discourages the provision of non-contributory material aid (*stoflike hulpverlening*) (Grosskopf, 1932: xxviii-xxxiii).

In *The Making of a Good White: A Historical Ethnography of the Rehabilitation of Poor-Whites in a Suburb of Cape Town*, Teppo (2004) outlines in great detail the measures that were put in place to ensure that poor-whites were adequately educated in the art of being white. By tracing the establishment and social ordering of the suburb of Epping Garden

Village (renamed Ruyterwaght in 1990) over time, Teppo identifies processes of *opheffing* (upliftment). In order to rehabilitate poor-whites, several measures were put in place. Teppo (2004: 16) shows how professionals, such as teachers, social workers, and *dominees* (Protestant ministers), guided poor-whites in areas of work and free time, cleanliness and health, morals and sexuality, bodily appearance and behaviour, family life, social and racial relations, and the correct use of space and spatiality. Ideally, such rehabilitation would eventually enable citizens to move out of the poor-white area and into a middle class suburb.

Poor-white suburbs not only enforced racial segregation, but allowed for a newly conceptualised spatial organisation that was thought to enhance the effect of rehabilitative measures (Teppo, 2004). This happened on both a material and normative-ideological level. Materially, the size of the houses reflected ideals of Afrikaner-ness and whiteness: they were to be big enough for families to live in without being overcrowded, boys and girls over the age of seven were not allowed to share bedrooms and the parents were to have their own bedroom separate from the children (Bottomly, 2012: 15). Plots were large and in line with so-called white standards, and encouraged residents to grow vegetables and plant fruit frees. Small sheds were built in the backyards to allow residents to store coal for heating and cooking. These structures were purposefully built without windows and only small doors so that residents could not convert them into another room that could potentially be rented out (Du Plessis, 2004: 887).

Apart from the houses and stands, the broader architecture of poor-white suburbs also aimed to control, regulate, and promote moral and racial purity (Teppo, 2004: 114-120). The original layout of Epping Garden Village, for example, included the strategically dispersed homes of teachers, *dominees*, and police who could keep a watchful eye over the rest of the suburb's residents. The isolation of the suburb, accessible through only two entrance ways, made the monitoring of the comings and goings of residents easy (Teppo, 2004: 117). Jan

Hofmeyr, too, was designed to be quaint and suburban, with trees planted along its streets (Du Plessis, 2004: 887).

The rehabilitation process of poor-whites extended further than the physical segregation of poor-whites from other racial groups. Teppo (2004: 76-96) emphasises the central role that the white body occupied in these processes. An examination of these forms of embodiment shows that those who led the rehabilitation projects viewed objective structures, morality, and ideas about bodies and minds as closely interlinked (Teppo, 2004: 78-82). In their view, the successful rehabilitation of poor-whites required that their bodily practices and habits as well as their understandings of morality had to be altered. I make this point not to impose any notion of a supposed mind/body dualism, but rather to stress the far-reaching effect of the rehabilitative measures that were put in place. They required not the physical segregation of poor-whites from other race groups, but also attempted to intervene in almost every conceivable sphere of their lives.

As suggested by Teppo (2004: 19), Bourdieu's theory of habitus is a useful avenue through which to explore the rehabilitative interventions into the lives of poor-whites and the production of good whites. Bourdieu's description of habitus further supports the argument that I put forth in the next section in which I contend that the figure of the good white can be understood as an ideological manifestation of whiteness. It also speaks very directly to the argument presented in chapter two in which I applied a Bourdieusian approach to understand the construction of place.

Taking into account the dialectical production of social meaning that both Bourdieu and Cresswell describe, the project of the rehabilitation of poor-whites sought to naturalise poor-whites into white spaces and habituate practices that were, and continue to be, considered white. In line with my argument regarding the construction of King Edward Park as a white squatter camp, a current manifestation of processes of poor-white rehabilitation in the Park

would provide the ideological structure with which this white space is produced. In the sections that follow I elaborate on this idea. Even in the absence of formal projects of rehabilitation or upliftment, I show how residents continue to appropriate older ideas of how "good whites" are produced. I illustrate that such emphasis on the production and display of residents as good whites is present both in the physical structures where residents live and in residents' thinking about morality and respectability.

Conceptualising good whiteness

This section starts off by considering the notion of good whites as ideology. I assert that making the ideological functions of the concept of good whites more explicit allows us to understand how and why it has been able to reproduce itself so long after all official rehabilitation projects ended. Further, it also emphasises the ways in which poor whiteism was, and continues to be, entangled with normative whiteness.

The figure of the good white, as outlined by Teppo (2004), finds expression in King Edward Park in what I term *good whiteness*. An elaboration of the ways in which the Park's residents create and display good whiteness follows shortly. First, however, it is necessary to elaborate on my use of the concept of good whiteness. I view good whiteness as grounded within, and related to, the broader theoretical understanding of whiteness. Good whiteness is a particular form of whiteness that has developed from the specific local and historical conditions of whiteness in South Africa, and in relation to understandings of poor whiteism as a deviation from the norm that ought to be corrected. Good whiteness, therefore, is a form of whiteness that is aspirational. It is also, like normative whiteness, ideological and thus able to adapt, shift, and reproduce itself. It is this function, I argue, that has enabled good whiteness to be present, and internalised by residents, decades after the concept disappeared from any formal and institutional socio-political agenda.

Before I continue I wish to briefly note my own use and understanding of ideology. Following Paul Ricoeur, I draw on the concept of ideology that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels outline in *The German Ideology* (1965). Ricoeur (1986: 310) offers the following description:

> [I]deology is defined as the sphere of representations, ideas, and conceptions versus the sphere of actual production, as the imaginary versus the real, as the way individuals "may appear (*erscheinen*) in their own or other people's imagination (*Vorstellung*)", versus the way "they actually (*wirklich*) are, i.e., act (*wirken*), produce materially, and hence work under definite material limits, presuppositions, and condition independent of their will.

There are several reasons I find it helpful to explicitly[6] theorise that which Teppo describes as "the good whites" as ideological. Firstly, it makes clear the relationship between the idea of the "good whites" and whiteness. The illumination of this relationship is important because a) of the way in which whiteness informs and directs good whiteness, and b) it distinguishes the concept of good whiteness from other, very closely related concepts, such as *ordentelikheid.*[7] The latter distinction is very important in emphasising the immense power of white superiority and the successful way in which early interventions or rehabilitations entrenched the idea that poor-whites are fundamentally different from other poor people. Conceptualising

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[6] I deliberately express this idea as a more explicit interpretation of good whiteness as ideological as my own reading of Teppo's "good whites" suggests that it can be interpreted as infused with ideological content. However, as I argue in this section, I think that a more explicit development from "good whites" to "good whiteness" extends the concepts analytical functionality. I do not mean to imply that Teppo views the process of rehabilitation as not being ideological; she clearly states that ideologies were developed and imposed. However, I think that we need to make it overtly clear that the result of these practices themselves reproduced certain ideologies. The good whites were not simply the result of ideological devices, but they themselves became entangled in the ideologies of the time.

[7] *Ordentelikheid*, meaning decency or respectability, is an analytical term often used with reference to the making of moral meanings in the everyday lives of (predominantly) coloured people on the Cape Flats. When good whiteness is stripped of its racial connotations, much of its content shows remarkable similarities to *ordentelikheid.* Ross (2010: 37) reports, for example, respondents describing *ordentelikheid* as relating to manners, lifestyle, neatness and modesty, considerateness, and cleanliness. See also Ross (2015) and Salo (2010).

good whiteness as ideology, secondly, allows for an understanding thereof as dynamic and adaptable. Ricoeur reminds us that ideology "is always more than a *reflection*, is always also a *justification* and *project*". It is "something *in which* men live and think, rather than a conception *that* they pose" (Ricoeur, 1986: 250, 251, emphasis in original). Because of this function, ideology often remains invisible, operating silently, and allowing for distortion and dissimilation (Ricoeur, 1986: 251).

Good whiteness, therefore, is an ideology that has been present in the lives of poorer whites for several generations, instilled into children by their parents, grandparents, teachers, and churches. I am not asserting that *all* poorer whites have made an effort to become good whites. As I discuss in the final section of this chapter, there have always been disruptions and distortions of good whiteness, and this is equally true of King Edward Park. However, I think it is important to stipulate that even those whites who choose to reject good whiteness still remain entangled in it through their social position and relation to other whites. Good whiteness is thus always present in the Park because the residents themselves have internalised it. Away from any state control or official regulation, the poorer whites of King Edward Park are, as the poor-whites of the 1930s were, the beneficiaries and the debtors of good whiteness and the practices that instil it. Now, however, it is a self-regulatory process that relies entirely on being constructed and perpetuated by the Park's residents.

The good white home: good whiteness as displayed through homes

Teppo (2004: 18) remarks that, during her fieldwork in the late 1990s, poorer whites who lived in Epping Garden Village continued to present to her their commitment to being good whites. Similarly, I found many of the residents of King Edward Park intent on displaying their own ability to engage in the practices that constitute good whiteness and policing the good whiteness of other residents. In this section I outline some of the ways in which

residents express good whiteness and the values they attach to it. I argue that residents view the presence of good whiteness as crucial to conceptualising the Park as a white squatter camp. In the latter half of the section I narrow my discussion to examining the ways in which good whiteness is expressed through houses and homes. As we have seen, houses occupied a central position within the rehabilitation of poor-whites in the first half of the twentieth century. The homes of good whites, I argue, formed an integral part in constructing and maintaining good whiteness. Consequently, the white residents of the Park continue to structure their homes in ways that aid and display good whiteness.

The formalised nature of the project of good whiteness and the rehabilitation of poor-whites has long ceased. Yet, even without the institutional formalities that once guided and instilled good whiteness, the idea thereof is still very much alive among the residents of the Park. Through the residents' interactions with sponsors, the organisation of practices and structures in the Park, and residents' reflections on their social position, the idea that they ought to habituate, and display, good whiteness is constantly reproduced. In lieu of state or other organisations regulating the day-to-day lives of residents, as they did in twentieth-century poor-white suburbs, residents self-regulate the practices of their own poor-white rehabilitation.

Many of the Park's residents previously lived in areas that had been allocated to poor-whites in the twentieth century and are thus very familiar with good whiteness and the practices that support it. Especially older residents are able to vividly describe memories of living in poor-white suburbs. Lina, for example, shares the following memory of growing up in a poor-white neighbourhood in Johannesburg during the late 1950s:

L: I can't remember the name of the street, but it [is] there in Jan Bom.[8] You know Jan Bom, don't you?

Christi: Yes, I don't live far from there.

L: Oh, yes, you've said. But then it was different, you wouldn't know. It was even before RAU[9] was built. We lived there and I remember my mother, she would always hit me and my brothers if we came home dirty. She was very scared of the welfare in those days, they took dirty children easily. And, and, oh!, if she heard my brothers swearing, trouble! But I am grateful today, because my mother raised me right. (Interview by author with Lina, 5 June 2014)

Lina's narration is very typical of the memories and anecdotes that some of the older residents share with me. Although residents often highlight experiences of violence, both physical and structural, that they are exposed to through poverty (this is explored in greater detail in chapter four), they draw my attention, countless times, to the fact that they were raised to be good and decent whites. Emphasising concepts like cleanliness, being hardworking, honesty, sexual purity, and religious devotion, residents explain that they feel it is now up to them to make sure that they remain good whites and that they teach the values of good whiteness to their children and grandchildren.

Gerda or a lack of personal memories of good whiteness

Residents often mention the ways in which they attempt to ensure that they uphold and display in the Park the good whiteness with which they were raised. There are, of course, residents who did not grow up with parents, or who cannot recast their earlier lives as rooted in good whiteness. Yet, while they may not have had any personal experience of good

[8] A moniker for the Johannesburg suburb of Jan Hofmeyr.
[9] Rand Afrikaans University, now known as the University of Johannesburg.

whiteness, in the sense that it was produced in their own homes, the values that underlie good whiteness have a far enough reach that all residents are well aware of them. Residents who had particularly violent and volatile childhoods or experiences before moving to the Park therefore display their knowledge of good whiteness by contrasting it to their previous experiences.

Gerda, a woman in her mid-twenties who lives in the Park with her three young children, is an example of how residents contrast good whiteness to earlier experiences. Although Gerda's father and stepmother live also live in the Park, their relationship is strained. Gerda's father and mother separated when she was a baby and she spent the first few years of her childhood with her mother. When she was eleven years old, she was placed in foster care and spent her teenage years in three different foster homes. When Gerda speaks of her life in the Park and the future she imagines for her children, she often refers to her early years with her mother, and the absence of her father, as an example of how she does not want her children to be raised.

Despite living in the Park with her children, Gerda is adamant that her three daughters will be raised "right". When I ask what this means, she refers to her own childhood. She was always too ashamed to invite her mother to school events, she says, because her mother did not know how to act appropriately. Once, for example, she was completely intoxicated when attending one of Gerda's school concerts. For the sake of her own children, Gerda wants them to understand how a person ought to behave in public. She teaches them to be polite and is very strict if she hears her eldest child, who is six years old, cursing. She also worries that her children may appear dirty. The previous year she thus approached sponsors with her wish to find a bathtub. For Gerda, her mother's inability to perform good whiteness and to instil it in Gerda is a sign of moral failing. Whenever she herself is faced with difficulties, she reminds herself, as she grimly tells me, of how she does not want her children to see her in the same

light in which she sees her own mother. When Gerda is not present, other residents comment that the fact that she did not have a "good white" mother means that Gerda herself lacks certain traits of this good whiteness.

As I argue later in this chapter, these markers can be read in various different ways when considered as isolated events without any context. When put into the context of good whiteness and the practices that were seen as uplifting poor-whites and habituating good whiteness, however, these small gestures and signifiers serve as indicative of residents' attempts to reproduce and uphold good whiteness in the Park. The values and norms that are said to underlie good whiteness are frequently highlighted by residents when they seek to show how the Park, and their own individual households, should not be considered as a normal squatter camp and they not as normal squatters.

Joan; or an example of good whiteness

Throughout the Park there are many examples of the ways in which residents interpret good whiteness, how they came to be aware of it, and how they now choose to perform it. No life history, however, follows the history of poor whiteism and the consequent rehabilitation of poor-whites as closely as Joan's. Joan was born in the Johannesburg suburb of Vrededorp in October 1940 as the older of two children to an Afrikaans father and an English mother. She describes her parents as poor but hardworking people. Her father worked as a bus driver, while her mother stayed at home to take care of the children. Joan recalls her childhood in attentive detail and with great affection. Once or twice she mentions that her father was a heavy drinker, but mostly the stories about her childhood are focussed on the happier memories of a close-knot family. Talking about her childhood in Vrededorp, Joan makes sure to tell me more than once that her mother always made sure that she was clean, and warned her not to mix with children who were considered to be of a lower class and would be a bad

influence. Joan often describes her childhood in Vrededorp and the way whites lived there as "poor but decent". It is an expression that residents often use to argue that one can be honest and respectable even without many material resources.

In the early 1960s, Joan's family moved to the then newly established suburb of Triomf.[10] Although Triomf was designed to be a working class suburb and did the same level of social intervention as, for example, Epping Garden Village or Jan Hofmeyr, it soon became known as a poor-white area. After matriculating Joan managed to secure an administrative position at the Johannesburg City Council where she met her husband, Hannes. Hannes grew up in the middle class suburb of Melville, a stone's throw away from Triomf, and came from a more comfortable middle class family. After their wedding in 1963, Joan and Hannes moved into the house in which Hannes had grown up, and so Joan became, for a while at least, one of the good whites.

To illustrate the full extent of Joan's life as an example of a "good white" and how the end of apartheid complicated this social position, it is necessary to return for a moment to a morning in November 2013 when Joan and I are sitting at the back of a car, staring at the house in Melville where she had once lived. Joan is crying quietly. This house once marked her transition from poor whiteism into the working class. Likewise, its loss has marked her fall from a relatively comfortable working class status into poverty. On this particular morning, we are accompanied by Sophia, a European journalist and film maker who is producing a documentary about white poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. She spent the previous day

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[10] As a result of the introduction of the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954, the apartheid government embarked on large scale forced removals of black Africans from suburban areas. One of the most famous instances was that of Sophiatown in Johannesburg that was renamed Triomf [triumph] after its black African residents were relocated to the newly established township of Soweto. Triomf was consequently declared a "whites only" suburb that was intended to house working class Afrikaners (Giliomee, 2009: 507). Although it was not officially conceptualised as a "poor-white suburb" in the way that Jan Hofmeyr and Epping Garden Village was, it is often associated with poorer whites. Marlene van Niekerk's 1994 novel *Triomf*, which centres on a poor white family in this suburb, created much awareness of the relationship between the suburb of Triomf, poor whiteism and the complicities faced by poorer whites as post-apartheid dawned.

filming in the Park and interviewing residents. As is often the case when journalists interview Joan, Sophia was immediately interested in her story. One of the primary reasons for this interest, I suggest, is because Joan presents such a good example of the figure of the good white in post-apartheid South Africa. After an initial interview with Joan, Sophia thus suggested that they visit the area where Joan had previously lived. Joan agreed, albeit very reluctantly.

Earlier that morning, Joan and I sit in the front room of her house, having a cup of coffee and waiting for Sophia. I ask Joan how she feels about visiting the suburb where she once lived, her old house and her husband's grave. She tells me that she had nightmares about it the previous night. I ask her when she has last visited Melville. Slowly, she takes off her spectacles and blows her nose. She answers that she has not been back to the house since she moved out in 2004. She last visited her husband's grave on her sixtieth birthday, three years earlier. There is an anxiousness about Joan as she speaks of how she is dreading the day that ahead. Yet, when I ask her why she agreed if she finds it so hard, she does not answer my question. Instead she repeats, several times, that she wishes Sophia would arrive so that we can leave and everything can be over.

The drive to the city is quiet but for Sophia occasionally asking Joan questions about her life in the Park and her thoughts on post-apartheid South Africa. Clearly trying to elicit statements of discontent at the "new South Africa", Sophia keeps asking Joan: Do you feel your life was better before 1994? Is it more difficult for whites in post-apartheid South Africa? Do you think ending apartheid was a mistake? Joan replies with short sentences, peering out of the car window. As we drive into the city of Johannesburg and pass landmarks that she knows, Joan starts to comment on buildings we see. As though she has never contemplated the possibility of change before, she comments on how much some things have changed while others look exactly as she remembers them.

When we pass the cemetery where her husband is buried, Joan begins to cry. Once we stop in front of the house where they had lived, she stares at the house before shaking her head and sobbing into her hands. Sophia asks whether Joan wants to get out and walk closer to the house, but she shakes her head vehemently. "It would be too much", she whispers and lowers her head, again crying, as Sophia steps out of the car. With Sophia filming outside, Joan and I are alone in the car. I sit quietly, not wanting to intrude on what clearly is a very emotional moment for Joan. But after ten minutes or so Joan starts a conversation with me about the life she remembers before King Edward Park. It is a story I know well as she often speaks about it.

The house had been owned by her husband's family for three generations, Joan says. Hendrik's grandparents bought it when his mother was eight years old, and she grew up there. When she was older, she inherited the house and, in turn, let Joan and Hendrik move there after they married. Things started to go wrong when Hendrik suddenly died in 1999. Grief-stricken she took some time off from her work at the City Council. Upon her return, Joan explains, she was told that she was no longer needed and a black person had been appointed in her former position. Some years later, after her daughter's divorce, she took in Sunette and her grandchildren, which added financial strain.

From this point Joan's narration becomes hazier. At times she attributes the financial crisis she found herself in to affirmative action and not being able to continue working as a result of it. On other occasions, she vaguely references her involvement with "the wrong people". Regardless of the events that led to it, Joan eventually lost her house. After living in various apartments in and around the west of Johannesburg for a few years, she and her family took up residency in the Park.

Joan's acute reaction to revisiting her house highlights the tension between her earlier life and her current position in the Park. Like the newer residents whose experiences of loss and

shame I discussed earlier in this chapter, Joan expresses visceral feelings of loss and shame when she revisits the space that once attested to her good whiteness. Just as the majority of residents in the Park, some of whom previously lived in white suburbs, Joan mediates between her earlier experiences of a more comfortable life supported by the apartheid state's racial interventions and her life as a resident of the Park by introducing practices and structures into her life in the Park that reflect her good whiteness.

House and home

"Home" as the concept appears in King Edward Park is vastly different from the way most residents viewed the term before living in the Park. As I argued in chapter two, most residents indicated that, before they moved to the Park, they held the notion that a *true* white home could only be inside a white space such as a residential suburb. The material conditions in the Park have somewhat altered this view. And yet, many residents still view the home as a structure through which one can produce and display one's good whiteness. Following on my former discussion of the historical good whites and the production of good whiteness, I argue in this section that residents of the Park structure their homes in ways that is reminiscent of historical good white homes. I show that this is done through minute gestures that might easily go unnoticed if they are not read through the historical lens of poor-white rehabilitation and the formation of South African whiteness since the early twentieth century.

The concepts of house and home, even separate from their presence in the construction of poor-white suburbs, have often been discussed, and contested, in critical social theory. Despite the seemingly obvious relationship between the social and place, geography did not play any significant role in critical social theory until the 1970s. One of the earlier exceptions, though, was the notion of "home". It was especially within the tradition of humanistic geography that theorists, drawing upon the continental philosophical tradition and

the phenomenological approach, used the idea of the home and its relation to dwelling. Taking as point of departure Martin Heidegger's (1971) focus on dwelling as central to human existence, theorists such as Tuan (1974, 1977) and Relph (1976) located the home as one of the earliest places where people feel a sense of rootedness. For Heidegger (1971: 350), *dwelling* is central to human existence and foregoes any other human activity; It "is *the basic character* of Being" (Heidegger, 1971: 362, emphasis in original). Humanistic geographers draw on this notion of dwelling as *radical ontological security*, to argue that the home provides stability and security (Young, 2000: 189).

Naturally, one cannot simply conflate the concepts of "home" and "house". For many women, Rose (1993: 53) for example argues, "home" does not necessarily represent the tranquillity and stability on which humanist geographers insist: rather, the "home" can often be a space of oppression, violence, and disempowerment. Along with other critical geography theorists, thus, I argue that a housing structure does not necessarily produce any sense of home. The aim of this chapter, however, is not to critique and deconstruct the ways that residents reflect on their homes. There were, throughout my fieldwork, countless instances where homes seemed to represent none of the romantic Heideggerian aspects of homes or dwellings. Gender and sexual violence, abuse, and structural violence form part of the daily lives of many residents. I am interested here, though, in the ways that residents continue to display and produce forms of good whiteness through the way in which they create houses into homes, despite these disruptions and distortions. My interest is in particular in the ways in which residents choose to display their identity and give meaning to their lives, rather than in factual contradictions.

In spite of the lack of formal housing, the idea of "home" and the ways in which a person structures the home remain of central importance to the Park's residents. Homes are important not only because of the purported ontological security they provide (even if such

security is the result of, to use Marx's term, false consciousness), but also because of the meanings that they are able to produce and reproduce. I am particularly interested here in considering the relevance of the ways in which the (white) home took precedence in the rehabilitation of poor-whites during the previous century.

Although framed normatively in terms of morality, the heart of the project of poor-white rehabilitation in the twentieth century was located in place and space. Many of the interventions that were staged as part of the process of poor-white rehabilitation sought, first of all, to remove poor-whites from spaces that were deemed un-white. The production of a white habitus, or good whiteness, could only successfully take place once a white space had been created. Although place (as an objective structure) and practice were, therefore, thought to be mutually constitutive, the notion of a white home remained a key aspect in *living* white.

These concerns of creating a white space in which it is possible to live in a white manner equally apply to the present-day residents of the Park. The area where the Park's residents have erected their housing structures is not visible from outside the Park. To reach the housing area, one has to drive about two hundred metres into the Park. Despite the fact that passers-by can thus not see the squatter camp, residents are very aware of how the Park might appear to sponsors and, more generally, to those who are considered as "outsiders". When one walks through the Park, it is especially on the western side that the display of good whiteness through the means of houses is immediately visible. This is because it is the area where residents reside once they have "proven themselves". "Proving" oneself, an idea to which I already referred in chapter two, means that a resident has proven to other residents and sponsors that they (implicitly) understand the concept of good whiteness and are able to display it. One of the most immediate ways of establishing oneself as a good white is to display a home that presents recognisable markers of good whiteness.



Figure 10: A caravan in the park. Despite being surrounded by trees, the resident takes care to sweep in front of the caravan and to clean out the ashes from the cooking fire.

Many of the small housing structures in the western area of the Park have small patches of garden with nearly cut grass and, in one or two instances, a rosebush or two. Even before stepping inside any of these houses, the exteriors signal a seeming aspiration to a more middle class suburban lifestyle. Even though paint is hard to come by, many of the houses are painted. Three houses have wooden crosses attached to their outside walls, emphasising the families' Christian convictions (see Figure 12). On the door of his house, Jacques has written "*Klop asseblief voordat u inkom*"[11] in black block letters. Anna and Bennie have set up a satellite dish on top of their small Wendy house, despite the fact that the house does not have access to electricity.

[11] "Please knock before you enter". The use of the formal address "*u*", rather than the informal "*jy*", in Afrikaans is telling of the way in which Jacques wishes to convey his message.

Next to many houses washing lines have been put up, using wire and wooden poles. Helen explains that she insisted that her husband put one up because she feels uncomfortable hanging her washing over her roof like some of the other residents do. Hanging washing out of the windows or across the roof reminds her of what her grandmother had taught her when she lived with her in the suburb of Danville in Pretoria as a small child. People there were fined if they did not hang up their washing neatly, and her grandmother always told her that a good woman hangs her washing on a line or a rack and takes it down as soon as it has dried.

Houses in this western area, especially those belonging to residents who have lived in the Park for some time, often have a small *stoep* by the front door. The sizes of these *stoeps* vary. Some consist of a simple elevated platform built from slabs of wood or are marked off by old caravan tents erected in front of the house. Others are quite elaborate. Whenever the generators are running and there is electricity in the Park, residents with *stoeps* tend to sit outside, often with a radio playing Afrikaans pop music. In this part of the Park, many more houses have access to electricity and fewer families cook on outside fires.

The *stoep* in front of the Bester house is particularly striking. It is large and extends around the front and side of the house in a farmhouse style. To the side of the *stoep* is a door that leads directly into the spare bedroom. Across the front of the *stoep* David and Michael have fastened shading to keep out insects and provide shade. The *stoep* itself is furnished with garden furniture. A few of the old chairs have been repainted because they became too rusty. A small hatch has also been created that allows one to speak with someone in the kitchen while sitting on the *stoep*. Many mornings David sits here, smoking a cigarette and talking to Joan or Sunette while they are cleaning or cooking in the kitchen.

In front of the house, next to some small pot plants, David planted a peach tree that provides shade in summer but has never yielded fruit. Sponsors who walk through the Park frequently comment on this particular *stoep* and how homely it makes the house appear. One sponsor

remarks how the *stoep* with its fruit tree reminds her of her childhood home in the suburbs of Stellenbosch. This is a comment that is likely to reflect precisely the image that the Besters seek to create. Sunette proudly recalls how hard they worked since they first moved to the Park to make a decent home. Although she still very much wants to move to a "real" house, she feels that at least she do not have to feel embarrassed by her home when sponsors see it.

Although other residents mostly do not have houses as big as the Besters', they take similar pride in presenting houses that they feel reflect their good whiteness. One resident explains that one of the reasons why she did not want to move to a squatter camp was because squatter camps are "always" so dirty. Her husband nods in agreement and adds that dirt is not a problem for "the blacks" because they are used to and unbothered by filth. As whites, however, he thinks that they will never be able to live in an unclean space. His wife always makes sure to sweep the small, empty patch of dirt in front of their caravan every morning (see Figure 10). In it is a small thing to do, in this way at least their house appears neat. Mara, too, takes great care to sweep in front of her house. If she has time, she also borrows a rake from Ilana to create circular patterns in the sand after she has swept. Even on days when it is not Mara's turn to clean the ablution blocks, she tends to grab a mop and cleans the floor. She explains that her house is the closest to the ablution facility and that she does not like the way it reflects on her home if the bathroom floors and the area directly outside the ablution block are dirty.



Figure 11: A bathtub in one of the houses on the western side of the Park

The emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene is regularly addressed by residents. In line with the emphasis on hygiene within the initial project of poor-white rehabilitation in the twentieth century, most residents view a neat and clean house, in addition to personal hygiene, as an instant signifier of good whiteness. If a person cannot even use soap and water to clean their home, one resident explains, how can they expect anyone to believe that they are not just too lazy to work. Those who emphasise the importance of cleanliness all agree that it is important because, even without any money, one can still use water to clean. Sunette explains why keeping a neat and clean house is important to her in the following way:

> We have nothing. But we still have our pride and we have our upbringing. My mother taught me to keep my things neat and tidy and to take a bath every night. I swear before one Jesus that, since the day we moved into this place, there has not been one night when my children or I went to bed dirty. It would be easy for my children to

become like some of the others here, but I won't let that happen. (Interview, 9 May 2014)

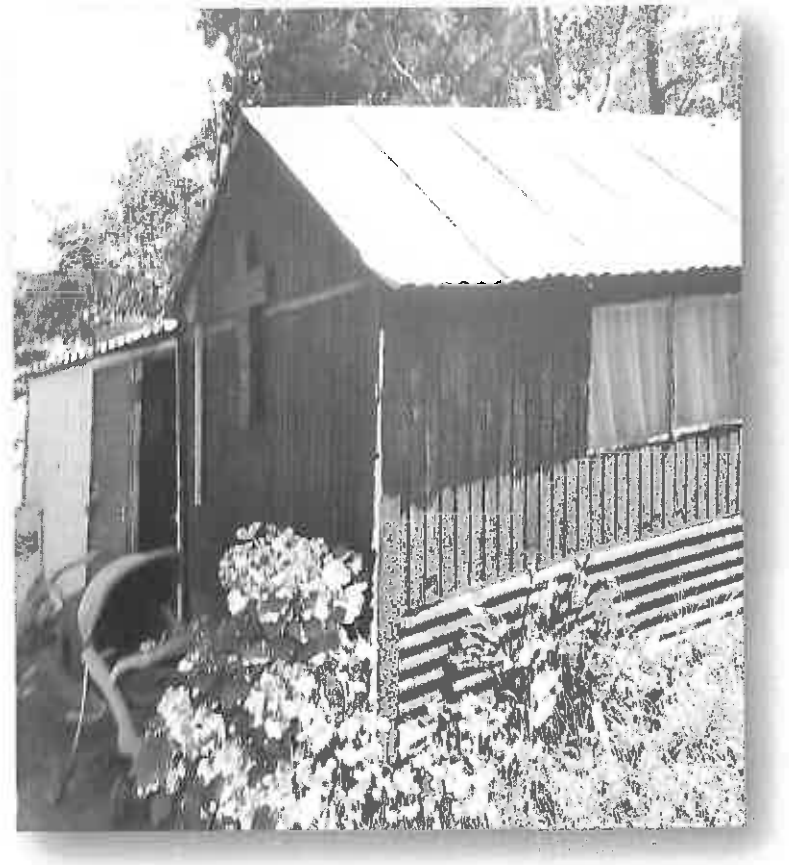


Figure 12: A house with a large cross fixed next to the front door

The interior organisation of these "good white" houses displays a similar sense of aspiration and mimicry as their outside façade does. While the exterior of the houses I have described invite onlookers to perceive the housing structures as belonging to residents who are committed to good whiteness, the interior of these houses display the residents' overt aspirations to such a life. If a resident or family has any extra money, it is usually first used to extend the home. By adding more rooms, particularly in households with children, it is easier to separate children from adults and children of different genders from one another. Within the framework of good whiteness this separation, or a commitment to it, is viewed as very

important. As an extension of the idea that sexual purity is an integral part of good whiteness, providing the means by which children of different genders can sleep far from adults is understood as a reflection of decency and as encouraging sexual purity. The high occurrence of teenage pregnancy, say women with younger children, serves as added motivation for them to keep their children "pure" by creating separate sleeping spaces.[12] Many of the older residents attribute the regular occurrence of teenage pregnancy to the fact that children are exposed, from a young age, to the sexual activities of the adults with whom they share confined spaces.

Extending a home is expensive. Adding even just one room to a house takes a lot of time and even more resources. To encourage residents to live in a way that is considered appropriately white, sponsors sporadically offer to pay for the expansion of a home. They are usually very explicit about how they see this as enabling residents to live morally more acceptable lives. Yet even without expanding their homes, residents attempt to create the impression of living in multi-roomed houses. To this end sheets are sometimes used as room dividers to create the idea of more private spaces.

Residents also display their commitment to good whiteness in religious ways. Many front rooms, or walls of one-roomed structures, are decorated with laminated Bible verses and smaller wooden crosses, much like the ones sometimes seen hanging against front doors. Over the door of one home, the family mounted a pair of golden praying hands that their eldest son sculpted from clay. Also displayed inside the houses are the report cards of school children and certificates of Sunday school attendance. In those houses where children practice sport, trophies and medals are displayed on show cases or bookshelves. Bibles are

[12] I discuss the differentiation between childhood and adulthood, and the way it is related to motherhood, more thoroughly in chapter four.

also regularly kept in the front room of multiple roomed houses where they can immediately be seen upon entering the house.

Appliances that appear to be in good working condition but are actually broken are frequently displayed inside the homes. Appliances such as kettles, televisions, and microwaves serve no other purpose except as memetic aesthetic link to middle class homes. It is an aesthetics that is purposefully structured, like the satellite dish on Anna and Bennie's Wendy house, to urge onlookers to consider the naturalness of such objects in a squatter camp. It also shows an attempt by residents to present their intimate knowledge of the ways of a middle class suburb, even if they no longer live in it. As an extension of the idea that residents highlight their own whiteness as a means to assert how they are out-of-place in a squatter camp, residents construct their homes in ways they believe will display their ability to produce good whiteness, despite their geographical location.



Figure 13: A house in the Park that residents proudly refer to as "the double storey"

In the construction of the white squatter camp, the production and assertion of good whiteness aid the process of meaning making. The white squatter camp therefore connotes more than simply the racial category of the majority of the Park's residents. The whiteness is rather produced through the constant presence of good whiteness.

On the disruption of good whiteness

From my discussion thus far, it is easy to conjure up a romantic image of the Park as a space where all residents lead lives that are completely aligned with the norms and values of good whiteness. The project of good whiteness in the Park is, however, one that often fails. Despite (some) residents' commitment to upholding good whiteness, there are instances among residents of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, rumours of the physical and sexual abuse of children, physical fights, and an array of other "transgressions" against the values of good whiteness. My aim is not to elaborate extensively on these transgressions; rather, I use them to focus on the reaction of other residents to the seeming absence of good whiteness in households in the Park. I show how the absence of a visible display of good whiteness in individuals or households, for whichever reason, disrupts the notion of the Park as a *white* squatter camp.

Roos (2015) notes that, even at the height of the apartheid regime when poor-white rehabilitation was perceived to have "solved" the problem of poor whiteism, there were whites who did not conform to the mould of good whiteness. Bottomley (2012:3) concurs when he remarks that the "problem" of poor whiteism was never really solved, but rather became well-hidden through the apartheid years. Similarly, residents of the Park periodically do not conform to good whiteness. There are multiple reasons for this. Some residents are simply uninterested in attaining and upholding the norms and values associated with good whiteness; others struggle to do so with the little social, cultural, or economic capital they

have at their disposal. Residents who live in smaller and more dilapidated housing structures, for example, cannot display or produce good whiteness through built structures in the manner I have described here. This becomes a vicious circle: the residents who do not conform to the Park's rules and expectations are moved to the eastern side of the Park. These residents, most often single men who drink heavily, make it more difficult for others on the eastern side to display good whiteness in the ways that residents and sponsors expect of them.

The housing structures in the eastern part of the Park present quite a contrast to those in the west. Couples and even small families live in smaller tents or in shipping containers with only one small window. Few of the houses here have bathtubs and residents carry big buckets of water to their homes from the communal taps. The spaces between the structures appear less neat: yellow grass grows between tents and structures and leaves and branches from the many trees are not swept and removed. Twice during my fieldwork trees topple over in this area and collapse on top of houses. One of the houses is almost entirely destroyed and its occupants have to find alternative housing. Roland and his elderly mother, who lived here, feel lucky, though, that they have not been harmed. In 2009 a resident was killed by a tree that fell on her tent.

As the housing structures in the east are smaller and allow for little activity other than sleeping, children who live here play outside most of the day. This, other residents complain, leaves the children dirty. There are often thick clouds of smoke in this area because residents use open fires for cooking and for heat. Residents are forced to keep some of their belongings outside if there is not enough space inside. This, they complain, attracts criminals who walk through the area in search of things to steal. They also accuse other residents of theft. Residents in the western part, in turn, complain that the eastern side appears dirty and untidy. Many of the men in the eastern area spend their days sitting outside their houses. Most

mornings they sit together, on old oil containers or turned over crates, drinking quarts of beer and smoking from as early as 7 o'clock.[13]

To the other "good white residents", such disruptions, even if primarily of a visual nature, are a great concern. They generally fear two things: that this type of disruptive resident might compromise the whiteness of the Park, and that sponsors may encounter these residents and decide to withdraw their support. Lientjie explains her concerns about other residents in the Park in the following way:

> My problem is not with my own children. I know where I come from. My mother taught me manners and I teach my children manners. You can come and see in my house. We are poor but we try. But some of the others here in the camp … they don't have that, how shall I say … they don't have that same background. And the sponsors don't know. They might come here, say, for a *potjie*[14] or something and they hear a child swearing. They don't know what goes on in my home; [so] the sponsors think that we are all like that. (Interview, 9 June 2014)

Lientjie's comment summarises the way most residents expressed their fears regarding those who do not conform to good whiteness. In line with historical ideas about poor whiteism there is the fear that one might be "contaminated" when in too close contact with a white person who rejects or does not have any sense of whiteness. In the case of those living in King Edward Park, residents have little choice but to continue living in close proximity with all the others residents — except if an extreme measure of segregating residents in the Park were introduced, which would be dependent on hegemonic power. In addition to this, residents are always aware and reminded of how heavily the Park relies on donations. These

[13] An interesting observation with regard to gender in the Park is that women are never seen drinking outside their houses, unless there is a party or another social event. Even those women who drink stay inside and never join the men outside. This speaks to the resilience of good whiteness as an ideology insofar as even those residents who challenge perceived ideas about respectability adhere to certain gender, social, and other norms.
[14] *Potjie,* meaning "little pot", refers to a traditional South African stew cooked in a three-legged cast iron pot over open coals.

donations, as I argue in chapter six, are motivated by the residents of the Park's whiteness. Sponsors make no secret of the fact that they support the Park because it is a white squatter camp. Even if residents, therefore, do not internalise expectations of good whiteness, they are still likely to make attempts to perform or mimic some form thereof to avoid conflict with sponsors.

Good whiteness in individual households is therefore important as it expresses the desire and ability of the members of the household to produce good whiteness. It is, however, equally important that the space of the Park, as a collective, is regarded as encouraging and upholding good whiteness. There are close links between individuals and the collective, and between the physical structures and subjective ideologies. Individuals are expected, and in turn expect of others, to produce and display good whiteness. Habituating good whiteness aids residents both to highlight their own "unnatural" presence in a squatter camp, thus allowing them to uphold the idea of the white squatter camp and to display to white sponsors that they are deserving of donations. To them it is thus as important for the Park to be perceived as white, as a site that carries some form of whiteness produced by the dialectics that I described in chapter two, as are individual households.

This argument can easily become highly abstract and prove difficult to relate back to everyday life in the Park. Let me therefore turn to a more explicit elaboration of the way the Park, as a collective that represents *all* residents, produces good whiteness. Much like individual households are structured to best produce good whiteness, the residents of King Edward Park have managed to find a "structure" that best expresses the good whiteness that is produced and upheld by the Park as a whole. They do so by imagining the entire Park as a home and the Park's residents as a large family.

During their day-to-day conversations with sponsors and other outsiders, residents often mention the fact that they see themselves as a family. Through their shared experiences of

being white squatters, residents express that they have come to think of the Park as their home and of the other residents as their family. Using the idea of the family as a metaphor is not novel (this is explored in greater detail in chapter four). "Family" has, throughout history, been used to explain relations between groups of people that are not necessarily related by blood. Within the mythical construction of Afrikaners as a people, the image of the family was a politically powerful one.

In the Park, however, there is a peculiar way in which residents, collectively, imagine themselves to be a family: it is overtly expressed in terms of the good white home of the twentieth century. The Park is, in the absence of a more formal house, a home and residents are urged to think of it as they would of any other "decent" home.

Within this Park-home, Henry and Ilana are firmly established as parental figures with the residents taking up the role of the children. Both Henry and Ilana, as well as the other residents, are very explicit when they frame the Park in this way. During one meeting, for example, Henry elaborates quite extensively on how and why the Park needs to be thought of as an extended household. His explanation relies heavily on his understanding of the notions of family and the home and, implicitly, the values that underlie a good white home.

When the older residents of the Park were children, Henry explains, most of them lived in formal houses or apartments. The lived in these houses with parents, or other guardian figures, who had absolute control over what happened in their homes. Henry emphasises more than once that parents had the authority to set house rules and could punish children who broke these rules. They could further decide how to decorate their houses, what to plant in their garden, and determine who had access to their homes. The way Henry sketches the childhoods of the residents is very idealised. In contrast to some of the life histories I refer to in chapter four, Henry portrays the lives of residents, prior to living in the Park, as though all residents had lived in white suburban areas or, at least, were good whites in poorer areas. His

description of how "all" residents grew up is important however, not for its historical accuracy, but for the way it places emphasis on how a good white home was (and continues to be) expected to look and function.

In the Park, Henry states, pointing out the obvious, living conditions are very different from how "they", the residents, were used to. Without the set boundaries of a private home and the structure that a family provides, Henry fears that the Park may become a chaotic and undisciplined space. The Park could well become, as he outlines in the rest of his speech, a "regular" squatter camp, dirty, violent, and unruly. However, instead of encouraging residents to keep their individual households as close to good white homes as possible, Henry tells residents that this is the reason why they have to conceptualise the Park as a family home. In this way they can ensure that the children in the Park grow up in an environment that offers them the same moral footing as the adult residents used to have in their childhood suburban homes. He emphasises how important it is to provide the children with structure so that they can receive a good education and pursue good jobs. In this way, thus, Henry imagines the Park's residents as both the poor-whites who have to be rehabilitated and those who oversee the rehabilitation. The children of the Park are imagined as those good whites who might, one day, more away and enter the middle class.

Conceptualising King Edward Park as a home is a curious way of bringing together the objective and ideological structures that constitute good whiteness. It provides, however, to those residents who are unable to do so through their individual dwelling, a means through which to express their good whiteness. For others, worried about disruptions of good whiteness or about residents who are uninterested in partaking in its construction, viewing the Park as a home provides some solace too. If the Park is a family, then residents find comfort in the knowledge that these residents will be dealt with by Ilana and Henry, the parents. The physical structure of the Park further supports the idea that the Park might be a home. There

are the communal meals at the *stoep,* church services at the *lapa,* and the shared bathroom. The hope in this collective construction is that, preferably, good whiteness will be produced in *all* residents if they live in an environment that is structured by good whiteness and mimics the good white home. If this does not happen, however, the Park as a good white home is bound to ensure that it remains a white squatter camp that displays to the white outside gaze its intention of reproducing good whiteness.

Conclusion

I have thus far paid close attention to ideas relating to the construction of whiteness within the framework of poor whiteism and the question of how residents go about living in a squatter camp, a space that many consider to be "un-white". This chapter focusses, in particular, on the everyday lives of residents in the Park and how they produce whiteness through the structures of the Park. It opened with a description of some of the issues new residents face and how they struggle to make sense of their (white) lives in a squatter camp. It then showed how residents evoke older ideas about poor whiteism and values thought to rehabilitate poor-whites to emphasise their own whiteness.

The project of good whiteness in the Park is one that fails often. Without the formal structures of upliftment that once guided good whites, the residents of the Park struggle to make do with limited material means. In an attempt to conceive of the entire Park as a space that produces good whiteness, residents often view the Park as a large home with the residents as its family. It is a rather fragile construction that imagines Henry and Ilana as parents and the other residents as children. The residents who aspire to good whiteness assert this construction with great vigour. Even when this construction of the Park as a home is distorted or disrupted, residents always recover and return to the idea that they are a big family.

The use of the familial in this way is politically powerful. It provides great authority to Henry and Ilana, as parental figures, but also sees the other residents as children who ought to be taken care of by their "parents". In the next chapter I elaborate more on the various expressions and manifestations of the familial in the Park. I argue that, while the image of the Park as a family is powerful, it is complicated by the presence of Ilana's "real" family. By reading together the various ways in which the "family" is present in the Park, I show how residents negotiate different forms of cultural, social, and economic capital.

CHAPTER FOUR

Imagining families: the fictive, the "real", and the aspirational

Introduction

In the context of poor whiteism and the "rehabilitation" of poor whites during the 1930s and 1940s, images of idealised nuclear families featured centrally. In the previous chapter I noted the importance of the home and of a particular organisation of the domestic sphere with regard to the historical upliftment of poor-whites. In its recommendations, the Carnegie Commission noted that the role of the woman in poor-white households cannot be emphasised enough (Grosskopf, 1932: xv-xvi). It advised that it ought to be through women and by educating and uplifting women that the rest of her family be influenced in a positive manner. The fifth volume of the commission's report, authored by M. E. Rothman (1932), is devoted entirely to a discussion of the research and recommendations regarding mothers and daughters. Many of these recommendations and prescriptions, I argued, continue to be seen as integral to the construction of good whiteness by the residents of King Edward Park. I consequently concluded chapter three by asserting that residents consider the Park to be white, and the residents who live there to be a family.

In this chapter I examine different meanings of the familial. Taking chapter three's concluding argument as my point of departure, I explore the idea of the Park's residents as a large family and focus specifically on Ilana's role in this imagined family. I argue that Ilana has positioned herself as a maternal figure towards the residents of the Park in a way that mirrors the idealised Afrikaner mothering figure of the *volksmoeder* (mother of the people). I assert that, in taking on the role of a post-apartheid *volksmoeder,* Ilana entrenches her authority in the Park and distances herself from the other residents. In so doing she contests the idea that she resides in the Park out of necessity and, rather, posits the suggestion that she

moved there because of her desire to help less privileged families. Ilana's positioning of herself as a *volksmoeder* who chooses to live in the Park is contradicted, however, by the presence of numerous members of her extended family in the Park.

The presence of two different conceptions of Ilana's family, the "real" and the "fictive", frequently creates conflict between residents. It arises in particular in situations where donations are distributed and suspicions arise among residents that Ilana and Henry privilege their "real", or biological, family. Yet, despite the tension between understandings of "real" and "fictive" families, I argue that residents allow for both understandings to be present in the Park as it is the familial that ensures them access to resources acquired by Henry and Ilana. I use the notion of social capital to argue that residents employ the metaphor of the family to embed and reaffirm their relation with Henry and Ilana. As Henry and Ilana chiefly act as mediators between the Park's residents and their sponsors, I argue that residents have the need to confirm their own relationship with Henry and Ilana.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of a third way in which the "family" manifests itself, namely within the individual household or *huisgesin.*[1] Within these individual households, families are encouraged to preserve or strive toward the nuclear form. At the same time, however, residents are able to expand their interpretations of the "nuclear family", allowing, for example, for same sex relationships and domestic partnerships to be considered nuclear families. The discussion examines perceptions of childhood and adulthood, paying particular attention to the gendered ways in which adulthood is constructed. While motherhood is used as the measure for adulthood in young girls, men and boys enjoy greater fluidity as adulthood

[1] There are two words in Afrikaans that can both be translated into English as "family": "*gesin*" and "*familie*". When I speak of "family" in this section I am referring to the Afrikaans concept of "*gesin*" or "*huisgesin*". This refers to one's immediate family, those with whom one most often shares a home. The *familie,* in turn, includes all extended relatives. The *gesin* is different from the concept of the nuclear family, though, as it does not necessarily call for a precise form and can include, for example, a single parent household, step-parents, or grandparents.

is linked to the ability to work but is not in any way fixed. The discussion on the composition of families concludes by addressing the role of social workers in the Park. Many residents, in particular mothers, perceive social workers as ominous figures. I outline some of the instances in the Park where children have been removed from their parents' care and present the narratives that parents use to make sense of these events. Finally, the chapter discusses the gendered nature of child-caring in the Park and the particular difficulties that single fathers face because of these gendered perceptions of parenting and the potential of losing custody of their children.

Stoicism and self-sacrifice: Afrikaner women and the volksmoeder ideology

Upon entering King Edward Park, Ilana's influence on its day-to-day organisation is almost immediately noticeable. On most days she sits on the *stoep*, observing the Park and ensuring that everything runs smoothly. Even in the areas not directly visible from the *stoep* she can sometimes be heard, her voice booming over her red megaphone, calling residents or berating someone. On school days she spends the first couple of hours of the morning in the kitchen or on the *stoep* dishing out porridge to school children. Occasionally, if conflict breaks out in the Park, residents will call for Ilana to mediate. She does this with authority, confident of the power she yields inside the space of the Park.

As I observed in the concluding section of chapter three, the metaphor of the family is often used by residents to describe the Park and those who live there. If the Park is imagined as a large nuclear family, a good white family, Ilana is undoubtedly its matriarch. It is a role that Ilana has not only taken on by herself but also that others ascribe to her. I consequently argue that Ilana, as matriarch, has established herself as a post-apartheid *volksmoeder* who selflessly cares for the poorer whites in the Park. In doing so, she has managed to create some distance between herself and the rest of the Park's residents, a point illustrated below. This

allows for the idea that Ilana, unlike other residents, lives in the Park out of a sense of duty rather than because of necessity.

During the first half of the twentieth-century, in a context where Afrikaner nationalism was often gendered male, the trope of the *volksmoeder* is one of the most well-known ideological manifestation of female Afrikaner nationalism. *Volksmoeders* were seen as the ideal Afrikaner women, ready and willing to support the male Afrikaner Christian nationalist in all of his cultural and political endeavours. The figure of the *volksmoeder* draws heavily on essentialist notions of gender. Du Plessis (2010: 16) stresses the constructed nature of the *volksmoeder* figure:

> The *volksmoeder* — literally, the mother of the people — is an older, idealised form of Afrikaner womanhood that, through a particular set of historical processes, was refashioned into Afrikaner nationalism's version of the mother of the nation, incorporating, or operating alongside, other constructions such as the Voortrekker mother, the Afrikaner women, and the Boer women.

The idealised nature of this construction is easily noticeable within descriptions of *volksmoeders*. Elsabe Brink (2008: 7), for example, lyrically describes the *volksmoeder* as a portrait of a woman. In the introduction to her essay on the figure of the *volksmoeder* she writes: "[*S*]y *is beeldskoon, beeldryk, beeldspraak*" (Brink, 2008: 7), which can roughly be translated as "beautiful, imaginative, and metaphorical". Though this literal translation lacks the poetic quality of the original, it nonetheless points to the persistent idealism with which the *volksmoeder* was conceived and is still thought of. An "orthodox" reading of the *volksmoeder* understands Afrikaner women's highest calling to be found in her own home, where she is to physically and morally produce the *volk* (Vincent, 2000: 64).

The origins of the *volksmoeder* concept are tied closely to the construction of Afrikaner nationalism as an organised political project.[2] In chapter three I discussed early twentieth century Afrikaner nationalists' attempts to unify Afrikaans-speaking whites into a single Afrikaner ethnic group. They imagined Afrikaans as a sacred and shared language, ascribed divine significance to the Great Trek, and cast Afrikaner women as guardians of moral order and racial purity of the Afrikaners (McClintock, 1995: 368). The role of women becomes especially important as they are seen as the producers of the male-gendered Afrikaner nationalist, entrenching in him the moral and political ethos of Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaner men, post-South African War Afrikaners believed, embodied the political and economic agency of the Afrikaner *volk* while women were the keepers of tradition, morality, and spirituality (McClintock, 1995: 377). Because of this gender division and how it limited women to the domestic sphere, Afrikaner nationalism "would be synonymous with white male interests, white male aspirations and white male politics" (McClintock, 1995: 369).

The reading of Afrikaner nationalism as a predominantly male ideology with women's roles confined to the private and domestic sphere is shared by other scholars of Afrikaner historiography (see, for example, Bradford, 2000; Giliomee, 2009; Vincent, 2000). They disagree, however, on whether this also implies that Afrikaner women were apolitical and whether the *volk* can be described as consistently male gendered throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth century (Bradford, 2000; Kruger, 1991; Van der Westhuizen, 2013). Bradford (2000) argues, for example, that the *volk* was re-gendered during the South African War as women took over farms and headed households in men's absence. Regardless of the gendering, I argue that the absence of women in the organised political arena in no way means that women where not political. As Vincent (2000) shows, Afrikaner women from

[2]Although there are noticeable links between the *volksmoeder* ideology and Afrikaner nationalism in this instance, there are other examples of mythicized and idealised female characters. Margorgata Drwal (2013) argues, for example, for similarities with the *matka polka* [Polish mother].

different classes actively shaped the construction of the *volksmoeder*. Consistent with the post-Kantian emphasis on embodiment through dialectical processes I have followed throughout this thesis, Du Toit (2003) suggests that the work of women in domestic and other more private spaces is not to be underestimated and argues for an Afrikaner historiography that includes women as political agents. Her work on the role that the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging* (Afrikaans Christian Women's Organisation, ACVV) played in the rehabilitation of poor-whites during the 1930s demonstrates how women's work in the so-called domestic sphere shaped the political sphere Afrikaner nationalism.

Current debates regarding the *volksmoeder* ideology focus primarily on two questions: the agency of Afrikaner women during the first half of the twentieth century, and the continued existence and reproduction of the *volksmoeder* ideology. The questions are interlinked, but here I focus on the latter through my discussion of Ilana as a post-apartheid *volksmoeder*. In a study of post-apartheid middle class Afrikaner women in Cape Town and Johannesburg, Van der Westhuizen (2013: 199) argues that "the *volksmoeder* is alive and well". While her respondents generally understood the term "*volksmoeder*" in itself as archaic, the normative values it held in the past still retain their purchase amongst them: they identify self-sacrifice, servility, sexual access and giving birth to children all as critical components of post-apartheid *volksmoeder ordentelikheid* (Van der Westhuizen, 2013: 199). Van der Westhuizen finds, however, that her respondents imagine multiple *volksmoeders*, and suggests that her respondents are drawing on both the past as well as other articulations of femininity in constructing their understandings of the *volksmoeder*. Like Van der Westhuizen's middle class women, Ilana does not necessarily use the term "*volksmoeder*" to describe herself. Yet, her descriptions of how she came to live in the Park and of her function there show an uncanny resemblance to the normative values of the *volksmoeder* ideology.

In the next section I use the idea of the post-apartheid *volksmoeder* to analyse how Ilana positions herself in the Park. I argue that she establishes herself not only as an authority figure, but also distances herself from the other poorer white women in the Park. In this way, she portrays herself as a strong and self-sacrificing matriarch who lives in the Park in order to uplift others, rather than as a woman who lives there out of necessity. Her role as *volksmoeder* is recognisable not only through her own assertions, but also through its affirmation by the other residents.

"The people call me 'ma'": Ilana as post-apartheid volksmoeder

Ilana describes herself as a tough woman. "I know I'm a bitch", she regularly quips before adding that she acts in this manner because she wants the best for "her" people. As a reborn Christian, Ilana views her devotion to helping others as a divine command. And when she addresses members of the media, she literally describes herself as mother and grandmother to her people. During one interview with a local media house, she states:

> I was put here as a manager to look after the people and to care for them. I love them very much; these people are like my family. The people call me "ma Ilana" [mother Ilana] and the children call me "*ouma" [grandmother]*. And that is what I am. I am a mother and a grandmother to all the people here".[3]

In reality, however, I have never heard anyone who is not biologically related to Ilana address her as in these ways. For most of the residents she is simply "*tannie* Ilana" (aunt Ilana). Yet others use the same language to describe Ilana's role. She is the Park's mother, Ella tells me, and that Ilana is the one who will see to it that everyone has something to eat and somewhere to sleep, even if that means that she goes hungry herself. Many other residents describe Ilana as a maternal figure, strict but loving, who keeps all her "children" in line and sees to it that

[3] Verbatim quote from my field notes, 13 October 2013.

the Park remains a respectable space. When a sponsor once mentions that she is too scared of Ilana to speak to her directly, a resident woman who overhears the comment laughs heartily at the idea that anyone could genuinely be too scared to speak to Ilana.

Even before she utters a word, however, Ilana conveys a sense of authority. She is well over 1.8 metres tall and broad-shouldered. She dresses comfortably, mostly in t-shirts and tracksuit pants, because it allows her complete her work around the house and the Park more easily, she explains. Once every two months she takes her seat on the *stoep* where her son, Boetie, colours her hair, covering her natural light-brown hair with a metallic blonde colour. She speaks in a deep but clear voice, with a slight husk that is probably the result of her chain-smoking. Even without her megaphone Ilana's voice is often heard echoing through what she considers as "her" Park.

Ilana's temper is well-known. One afternoon, after Boetie fails to wash the dishes as she had asked him to do, I witness Ilana throwing every single dirty dish into an outdoor rubbish bin. When she catches wind of conflict anywhere in the Park, she does not think twice before marching down to the household in question, determined to solve the problem. Yet she speaks with fondness when she speaks about the other residents. There is a distinct maternal tone to be detected when she refers to her *mensies* (little people).[4] There is no doubt that she sees the residents as her responsibility, the children whom God sent across her path to help.

Despite the overtly political way with which sponsors, politicians, and the media speak about the Park, Ilana detests the insinuation that she and Henry set out to help only poorer *white* people. Ilana sees herself as mother to *all* who need care. She explicitly rejects the notion that whites are treated unfairly in the post-apartheid era. *Unfair* in this context takes on a dense and complicated meaning that is informed by Ilana's ideas regarding justness, retribution, and

[4] Afrikaans uses the diminutive to indicate affection. Ilana's use of it here is indicative of her affection towards the other residents.

forgiveness. Illana argues that there is a distinction between being treated *fairly* and being treated *equally*: while she thinks white South Africans are not necessarily treated equally to other South Africans, she sees this "inequality" as fair. Evoking ideas of trans-generational sin, Ilana argues that it is just for whites to live with these "inequalities" as it is the only way to compensate for the unjust way whites treated other racial groups in the past. Ilana believes it is absolutely necessary to repay the debts of her forefathers in this way if South Africa is to ever become a truly integrated society.

It is very possible that the idea that injustices can be transferred from one generation to the next is inspired by Ilana's religious convictions. It also shows a close resemblance to earlier Afrikaner nationalist ideas about the *volk* as a mythical chosen people. God's people, Ilana explains to other residents on one occasion, spent forty years wandering the desert before He finally led them to the Promised Land: she believes that her people too will eventually be led into a Promised Land of their own. Until such a time, however, it is up to women like herself, mothers of the nation, to see oversee the welfare of her people. In the context of the Park, Ilana thus sees herself as the mother whose task it is to see to it that, both physically and morally, none of the residents stray too far from good whiteness.

In their day-to-day tasks and roles in the Park, Henry and Ilana closely follow traditional gender roles. Henry oversees the maintenance of the Park and is in charge of the Park's finances, while Ilana deals with the "domestic" aspects of Park life. Among her "motherly" tasks are waking up at four o' clock to cook breakfast for the children before they leave for school, seeing to it that all families receive their share of donations, overseeing the preparations of all communal meals, and intervening when she feels a family or household is not respectable enough. Ilana receives all donations when they are delivered to the Park. It is strictly against the rules for any other resident to accept them. Ilana then spreads the donated goods out on the *stoep* and sorts them into heaps. She decides which items to distribute

among residents and which to keep in the "storeroom", a cupboard next to the *stoep* where items are kept to sell or to hand out to residents when required. Whether goods donations are handed out immediately, kept until a later stage, or sold is solely up to Ilana's judgement.

In cases of domestic disputes or instances of domestic violence, Ilana steps in to resolve the conflict. Only once she has evaluated the situation does she decide whether the police or a social worker should be called. Inversely, if other residents call the police to attend to a dispute or argument, Ilana meets them and usually is the one to decide whether the complaint is valid. If Ilana believes a complaint is not valid, she simply tells the police officers that everything is under control and sends them away again.

In some disputes, Ilana may decide to move a family to a different house. This usually happens when she feels that neighbours are causing too much trouble and, much like one would with siblings, that it is better to keep them further apart. At other times she may instruct a family to move to a new plot or house if she feels another family is more deserving of the housing structure or space which they had been allocated. Very tellingly, residents usually oblige when they are told to move, even if they feel that they are being moved unfairly. As I demonstrate below, arguments about whether Ilana gives preferential treatment to some of her closer family members at times erupts between Ilana and other residents. Ilana, however, rarely loses an argument.

Aside from the conflicts and disagreements that I discuss later in this chapter, residents mostly describe Ilana as a caring but tough maternal figure. Their descriptions echo with the qualities attributed to twentieth century *volksmoeders*. One characteristic regularly mentioned is Ilana's stoicism. Being in charge of the Park is not easy for Ilana, Sunette comments, and it has hardened her. Having to make sure that everyone is taken care of means that Ilana has often witnessed abuse and neglect. Ilana tries to remain unemotional and to not get too involved with residents, but she is still affected by what she sees, Sunette goes on. She never

cries in public, but at night she prays for the people of the Park and cries for all the sadness she has seen. Interestingly, I heard this exact same story of Ilana crying at night when alone from four other women with little variation. Anna similarly comments on Ilana's stoicism: residents don't realise, she complains, how much pressure Ilana is under as manager and care taker of the Park, a responsibility that she has accepted without complaint.

Many women in the Park have anecdotes of instances where Ilana helped them out. Rina tells the story of how, when she moved to the Park with her sons at the beginning of a very cold May with no warm clothes, Ilana brought over some from her own children's closet. Other residents relate similar stories of Ilana handing out meals to families without food. When a new resident laments not knowing what her family would eat that evening, other residents angrily respond that Ilana would never let anyone in the Park go hungry. Yet, during disputes between residents and Ilana, residents are equally quick to complain to me that Ilana keeps or sells items donated for distribution to all, and that she likes to take credit for things not of her own doing at all. Once the conflict is resolved, however, most residents revert back to describing her as a caring maternal figure.

Although Ilana refuses to speak to me about her life before King Edward Park, she and Henry generally inform journalists that their move to the Park had been motivated by Ilana's need to help others. When they first heard that poorer white families were living in the Park, as Henry narrates the story, Ilana felt compelled to help. Both agreed that they would have to permanently move to the Park to truly provide this help. Ilana in turn explained in an interview with an international newspaper that she knew she had to move to the Park because this was the Lord's message to her. As a result, she tries not to complain when she goes about her daily work in the Park as it is what God asks of her. It is important to note, however, that this is a narrative that Henry and Ilana only repeat when speaking to visitors. When alone with other residents they are much more likely to complain of financial difficulties.

The idea that Ilana moved to the Park because she felt compelled to help others is very important to understanding her role in the Park as that of a post-apartheid *volksmoeder*. There are three points that I would like to highlight in this regard. The first is that Ilana and Henry's portrayal of themselves as managers is decidedly gendered: it is only Ilana who was supposedly compelled to help poorer people. While Henry is equally involved in the Park, and enjoys equal authority, they never explain how he felt about their move, or if he previously felt the need to do charity work.

The second point is Ilana's image of the self-sacrificing woman helping her people is transferred in a gendered way to her own children. When asked about their thoughts pertaining to poor whiteism after apartheid, Ilana two older sons reply without exception that post-apartheid has disadvantaged them and that they badly want to move elsewhere. Ilana's daughter Sussie, in contrast, always gives an answer very close to that of her mother; she suggests that she may stay in the Park because her mother told her it is virtuous to help those less fortunate than oneself.

The third and last point is that other residents participate in constructing Ilana as a *volksmoeder* when in public. More personal information of Ilana's past and how, for example, one of her children was serving a life-sentence after being convicted of murder is spoken of only in private. Or how she used to drink so heavily that she could barely afford to feed her children. When talking to sponsors, however, residents collectively uphold the image of Ilana as a stoic mother, always ready to sacrifice her own comfort for that of others. This point is important as Ilana could never entrench the image of herself as *volksmoeder* alone. For it to be successful she not only needs to both portray herself in this particular way, but for others need to uphold and contribute to this construction. A collective construction is further important as it extents to the imagining of the entire Park as a family.

Henry and Ilana's move to and residency in the Park, and their work there, are thus filled with interesting contradictions. While they present their move as motivated by philanthropy towards the outside, they make little effort to legitimise their move to the Park in moral ways or hide their past life of poverty when talking to residents. For the purpose of this chapter the exact circumstance of, and motivation for, Ilana and Henry's move to the Park is less important than the way they tell it to specific individuals. The exact motivation for their move seems irrelevant to other residents of the Park. Most residents show profound respect for Henry and Ilana. When I first ask them about how Henry and Ilana came to manage the Park, most appear puzzled by my question: Ilana and Henry's authority and work in the Park has naturalised. Other than Sunette, all residents reply that this was not a question they had ever posed themselves.

Differentiating herself from residents who have no other option but to live in a squatter camp, and situating herself as a post-apartheid *volksmoeder* therefore becomes a marker of class stratification for Ilana. If she is a *volksmoeder,* she is aligning herself with those respectable middle class women who uplift poor-whites, rather than with poor-whites themselves. As mothers of the *volk*, the middle class members of organisations such as the ACVV and the *Oranje Vroue Vereniging* were especially concerned that poor-whites living in mixed race slums would eventually be lost for the *volk* (Giliomee, 2009: 343). Members were expected to take responsibility for poor-whites in their towns and neighbourhoods (Du Toit, 1992: 2). The image of the *volksmoeder* was considered to be the ideal towards which Afrikaner women ought to strife — patriotic, self-sacrificing, maternal, and stoic — and middle class Afrikaner women saw it as their duty to impress upon poor-whites the seriousness of adopting these characteristics (Blignaut, 2012: 113).

This seems to be the image on which Ilana modulates her own position in the Park. Rather than forming part of the group of people who present a threat to whiteness and who struggle

to hold on to respectable and accepted forms thereof, Ilana is part of those whites who uplift and guard the boundaries of respectable Afrikaner whiteness. Rather than evoke the image of a poor, white woman who stands at risk of not being white enough, Ilana positions herself to be understood as a strong-willed Afrikaner woman who uplifts the poorer whites around her. The idea of Ilana as a *volksmoeder* is complicated, however, by the presence of her extended biological and legal family in the Park. It disrupts Ilana's narrative of maternal figure and creates friction between those who are perceived as Ilana's "real" family and those who are her "Park" family.

Prior to the park: the complexities of life histories

The notion of Ilana as *volksmoeder* implies, of course, drawing on a metaphorical expression of family. The application of this metaphor in the context of Ilana's role in the Park is complicated by the presence of a large group of Ilana's relatives who reside in the Park. I argue that their presence and the life histories they present disrupts the idea that Ilana is fundamentally different from other residents. My aim here is not to scrutinise these histories, as they are told by Ilana and her younger brother Bennie, for truths but to draw out the complicated nature of the notion of family that underlies them. I argue that Bennie, like Ilana, makes sense of his current socio-economic position by turning to Biblical ideas of trans-generational guilt and sin.

The life stories of Ilana's close relatives suggest a life history for her that stands in fair contradiction from the one of Ilana the *volksmoeder*. Discussion and making sense of Ilana's extended family is made more difficult by the sheer number of relatives who reside in the Park. My own count of the residents who are, to my knowledge, related to Ilana either biologically or lawfully revealed a figure of higher than 50%.

The way in which Bennie recalls his life before the Park contradicts the idea that white individuals rapidly became impoverished after apartheid, and instead points to generational poverty that had crippled his family for decades. It supports the idea that white poverty never really disappeared after the rehabilitation efforts of the first half of the twentieth century, but merely became less visible. Bennie's life history thus quite starkly contradicts Ilana's narrative of her own life. While she portrays herself as a *volksmoeder* who lives in the Park by choice, Bennie tells the story of how he has few options outside the Park.

Bennie *knows* poverty, he says. He tells his life story as one that is marked by poverty, violence, and abuse. Six children (of which Ilana, Maggie, and Bennie now reside in the Park) were born to Johnny and Magriet Bennet in the 1960s. Johnny was an alcoholic who struggled to keep a steady job and moved his family around often. Mostly they lived in the greater Witwatersrand area, but once or twice they also moved to cities further away, Bennie recalls. When Bennie's father was drunk he regularly assaulted his wife and children. Once, he was a teenager then, his father beat him so hard that he collapsed on the kitchen floor. His older brothers had to drag him out of the house and his sisters cleaned up the blood on the floor. Growing up Bennie felt that he had little hope of escaping the poverty he was raised in. It was all he knew, he explains, and he has never seen anyone *truly* escape it. Being the youngest child he watched his older siblings struggle. Although he tried to live a good and honest life, he found it difficult without any other family to turn to. He proudly notes on several occasions that he is the only one of his brothers who has never been to prison.

Bennie and I get along well and talk regularly during the time I spend in the Park. Sitting underneath one of the large trees in the Park we share a cigarette while he tells me of his childhood memories and his life before his conversion to Christianity. The stories that he shares with me are vastly different from to the narratives, especially by the conservative right, that are often associated with white poverty after apartheid. It also, perhaps, provides some

explanation about the reasons why Ilana is so reluctant to speak about her life before she lived in the Park. Bennie speaks of drug and alcohol abuse in his family, about how he wishes that his mother had left his father, and about the crimes for which his siblings and nephews have and are serving time in prison.

Unlike Ilana, Bennie reflects on his past unreservedly. For him and his partner Anna, very little has changed since the end of apartheid. As before 1994, he does not have waged work now. The house in which he lives now is not much better than the houses and spaces in which he lived before 1994. In fact, he muses, his life might even be a little better now because, at least, he receives a disability grant that he did not have before.

Rather than drawing on post-apartheid tropes of poor whiteism, Bennie evokes Biblical references when reflecting on his family's long history of poverty. Bennie, like his sister, often refers to Biblical content when he speaks. Paraphrasing from the book of Exodus, Bennie explains that he believes God visits the iniquity of the fathers on to the children to the third and fourth generation. He thus sees his family's circumstances as the product of the sins of his own father. For Bennie there is little to do but turn to God and lead a moral life to ensure that future generations do not suffer the same fate. The past cannot be undone, he tells me when we speak about his religious conviction and his ambition to become a pastor. To him this means that there is nothing he can do now to escape God's wrath. All he can do is to trust that, ultimately, God will never abandon his children. By committing to a moral life, he believes, he and his siblings can ensure that their children and grandchildren will not suffer God's wrath in the same way.

That God punishes the children of those who have committed wrongs is an idea that Bennie and Ilana share. Yet they have differing interpretations as to what the term "family" in this instance means. Bennie understands it literally, relating it to his own biological family. Ilana understands it figuratively and metaphorically and applies it to "her" people in the Park.

These two interpretations correlate closely with the different ways in which the familial manifests itself in the Park. While most of the time the residents of the Park view themselves as one large, close-knit family, in line with Ilana's understanding, knowledge of Ilana's "real" family, Bennie's understanding of family can lead to conflict and disruption.

Conflict and contradictions: "real" and "fictive" family

We are here dealing with two different understandings and manifestations of "family": the family as all residents of King Edward Park is based in conceptions of social cohesion, while the family as the extended Bennet family is based on biological or legal relationships. In this section I reflect more closely on some of the conflicts that arise between these two manifestations of family. Conflict is sparked specifically around the struggle for equal access to the resources that are donated to the Park. Yet, residents do not keep the distinction between a fictive family and the biological one constantly alive: it surfaces only as a tension when there are arguments over donations. Once the conflict is resolved, most of the residents move swiftly back to the idea that she sees all residents as her children and grandchildren. There are thus residents who are deeply resentful towards Ilana at times when they feel marginalised, but reassert the fact that the Park is a family and all its members are equal at all other times.

Before I continue with my discussion of the ethnographic details of families and the struggle for resources, I should briefly comment on my use of the concepts of "real" and "fictive" families. Anthropologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Lewis Henry Morgan, and Henry Maine all drew distinctions between biological kin, termed "true" or "real" kin, and non-biological kin, which they considered to be "fictive" (Carsten, 2004: 142). I follow Carsten's (2004: 141), however, in my understanding that "fictive" does not necessarily imply that such relations are made up or untrue. Rather fictive refers to something that is fashioned or made.

In my discussion of kin relations in King Edward Park, I loosely use the term "real" in reference to kin related genetically or by law, and the term "fictive" when referring to residents' imagined structures of kin. Moreover, as I elaborate later in this chapter, I imagine both these understandings of family as a means to express and establish social capital, and thus allowing residents to access different forms of capital.

In the Park the naturalness of biological kinship is a given. Women in particular often comment on the *natural* bond between mothers and their children. When discussing the role of social workers and the instances where children have been removed from their mothers' biological care (as I discuss later in this chapter), women often complain that non-biological caregivers could never know how to best care for a child, regardless of circumstances. Yet residents are able to negotiate this primordialist notion that highlights the importance of blood relations with the idea that family can also be made through social relationships. As I argued in chapter three as well as earlier in this chapter, the notion that all residents have become a family through their social relations, is widely held in King Edward Park. The image of the Park as family serves to emphasise the values of good whiteness and attempts to subvert some of the stigma surrounding poor whiteism, seen in particular in Ilana's example.

In spite of the romantic images that can be evoked by the manner in which the residents describe themselves as a close-knit family with everyone willing to sacrifice for the others, resources in the Park remain scarce. By far the most resources used to sustain the Park and its residents is received through donations. Chapters five and six present more detailed arguments relating to the politics of donations and distribution. In this chapter, however, I am interested in the way the internal power structures of the Park influence the distribution of donations.

When I ask residents about the distribution of donations, most agree that it is only fair for all donations to be divided equally among everyone in the Park. A problem arises, however,

when donations are not suitable for equal distribution. Some donations only contain a few grocery items, while others are big individual items such as a bed or a couple of mattresses. If something cannot be equally divided, Henry and Ilana decide as managers to whom the donation is to be given. It is at this point where conflict usually arises. Two ethnographic examples provide some insight into a very typical conflict between Ilana, Henry, and other residents in relation to the accusation that Ilana privileges her biological family.

The first example takes us to a Tuesday morning when Sunette, two other female volunteers, and Ilana stand in the crèche's storeroom looking at fresh vegetables, boxes of rice and pasta, and preserved foods that were delivered that morning by a middle-aged white man. As always when a donation is not received by Ilana or Henry, the delivery to the crèche sparks an argument between Ilana and the two volunteers. Ilana demands that the food be immediately taken to the *stoep* for distribution, while the women insist it should remain at the crèche as it was acquired through Charlene, the crèche director, who gave the instruction for it to be placed in the storeroom. They ought to respect Charlene's wishes, argues Sunette.

Ilana fiercely defends her position: all donations have to be delivered to the *stoep* to ensure that everything is fairly distributed among all residents, regardless of who secured the donation. After Ilana leaves, things quietened down. Sunette sits on a chair in the storeroom, making a list of the donated items while she waits for Charlene to arrive. The other two women also sit, talking among themselves, when David walks in to ask what the argument was about. The volunteers tell him about the morning's events, diplomatically as Ilana's sister-in-law Anna, one of the volunteers, is also present. As I note elsewhere too, residents are weary of complaining about Henry or Ilana when one of their family members is present.

David seems less worried about Anna's presence in the room. Ilana only cares about her own family, he declares angrily, and unlike many others in the Park, who have been trying to find employment, she and her entire family just sit around the Park all day doing nothing. This is

the reason, he explains, why he never goes to the *stoep* when donations are being distributed: by the time Ilana calls everyone to the *stoep* and allocates them a share of the donated goods, she has long taken all of the best clothes and food for her own family. He is too proud to stand in line only to be handed torn, second hand clothes, he asserts. David leans closer, as though telling us a big secret. He whispers that Ilana and her family account for more than half of the Park's residents, but that they do not tell this to any of their sponsors this for fear that it may cause the donations to dry up. Those sponsors who have found out how many relatives of Ilana's live in the Park never returned, he claims, because "everybody knows" that the Bennet family means trouble. But everyone in the Park knew, he claims, that Ilana continues to search for sponsors mainly to provide for her own family.

In the second example, which mirrors David's argument, a man stops alongside the western area and seems to call over the first person he sees. Pop happens to walk by and eagerly accepts the two refuse bags filled with clothes from the man. She walks towards her sister-in-law's house, not far down the road, dragging the bags with her. Sitting on the *stoep* of the Bester home I hear her call her sister-in-law Melissa to come outside and help carry the bags. It is a wonderful start to the weekend, she shouts down the road, and laughs.

Pop and her sister-in-law have almost reached Melissa's house when Ilana's voice thunders across the Park. Never leaving the *stoep,* Ilana yells for Pop to bring the bags to the *stoep* immediately. From where she is in the road, Pop argues with Ilana: the sponsor stopped *her* and asked if *she* wanted the clothes, she complains, and he said nothing about having to share it. Eventually, after Henry and several other residents join the argument, Pop relents and angrily throws the bags onto the *stoep*. Later in the afternoon Pop complains: since Ilana always has access to donations first, she keeps all of the best clothes for her own family. Another woman adds that the residents have no idea whether Ilana actually sells the clothes

she says she is putting aside for this purpose and whether the money made in this way is in fact used to sustain the Park, as Ilana always claims.

A few days later, I sit down with Pop's husband Marius who raises similar complaints to those of his wife with regard to access to donations; both mirror David's position from our first example discussed above:

> You'll see always, when the sponsors come here and they drop off stuff … who is it that helps Ilana? You'll see it's always that family of hers. All of them together on the *stoep,* sorting the clothes and stuff. And little Nico always runs around here with new clothes. The other day I asked him where he got that shirt and he said he got it from the storeroom. Now I ask you, tell me what would happen if someone else went and just took something from the *stoep*? (Interview, 20 May 2014)

Yet, despite the frequent, albeit whispered, complaints from residents about how Ilana gives preference to her own family when it comes to the distributions of donations, none of the residents was ever able to give me a specific example of something that had been given to Ilana's "real" family rather than to one of the other residents. In the majority of cases complaints arise from instances such as I have described above. The conflict arises not necessarily because Ilana gives a donation to one of her family members, but because other residents are reminded that they cannot accept a donation without sharing it. I need to explain, however, that it would be incorrect to infer that Ilana and Henry always divide donations equally. One only needs to spend an hour or so in the Park to notice that Ilana's children all have relatively comfortable houses in the more desired areas of the Park. By virtue of spending time together, her children and grandchildren also have access to other privileges that Ilana and Henry's position in the Park affords them.

Ilana's "real" family members, in turn, strongly disagree that their relationship with her provides them with preferential access to resources. Bennie states in no uncertain terms that

he does not benefit much from his sister's position in the Park. He loves his family and feels fortunate to be have them close, he explains, but he owns as little as anyone else in the Park. He has to keep to the rules while living in the Park, the same as everyone else. If he and Anna have nothing to eat or if they run out of cigarettes, they know that Ilana will help them, but this is true of all residents, Bennie points out. When I ask him whether he benefits in any way by having his sister as the Park's manager, he thinks for a long while. He and Anna sometimes spend their evenings at Ilana's house watching DStv. And still he barely has decent clothes to wear, Bennie says as he points to his old shirt. People tend to forget, Anna adds, that many of Ilana's family members are employed and can afford more luxuries than unemployed residents. Ilana's sister Maggie similarly denies receiving any preferential treatment. She works as a cashier and earns a weekly wage. This allows her to buy things other residents cannot, she points out, creating the idea that she is better off than other residents.

For the argument that I am constructing in this chapter, it is less important whether or not the allegation that Ilana's "real" family is privileged is true or not and more significant that residents actually consider it to be the case. The perceived unequal treatment of residents raises the question: why do residents continue to draw on metaphors of the familial, reaffirming Ilana's status as maternal figure, while criticising the way she uses her authority? In the next section I contemplate the use of the family as an expression of social capital. I argue that residents continue to portray the Park as a large family as it provides them, through Ilana and Henry, with access to the extensive support networks that Ilana and Henry have established.

Familial networks as social capital

While some conflict arises on a day-to-day basis in the Park, resulting from various different disagreements, the most explosive arguments, a few of which I described above, pertain to access of donated resources. Donations, alternatively expressed as economic capital, are not the only form of capital that is important for creating a sustained livelihood in the Park. Although economic contributions are important, access to them is granted through social capital. I argue in this section that the idea of the Park as family can be understood as a form of social capital. Social capital, when theorised in this way, grants the residents of King Edward Park a sense of membership and recognition and thus allows residents shared access to economic capital to which, otherwise, they would not have any claim. The notion of King Edward Park, I contest, is therefore an expression of a form of social capital. By staking a claim to this capital, residents who are unable to otherwise access sponsors or donations ensure that they are not excluded from the economic capital that enters the Park.

My understanding of capital is based on Bourdieu's (1986) argument that capital carries not only an economic value, but also includes noneconomic forms, such as social and cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986: 248-249) describes social capital as

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group — which provides each of its members with the backing of the collective-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

He goes on to argue that these relationships may exist

> only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application

> of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform those who undergo them; in this case, they are more or less really enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges.

The volume of social capital that each agent possesses, Bourdieu (1986) argues, is dependent on the number and size of connections within the network that an agent can effectively mobilise, as well as the volume of the economic, cultural, and/or symbolic capital possessed in her own right by each of those to whom she is connected. An orthodox Bourdieusian analysis is not possible in the instance of the Park, however, as this explicitly link the notion of capital to the higher classes and considers lower social classes not to possess any capital, a position I do not share.

On the basis of the concept of social capital, it is possible to identify different networks providing access to different sets of capital in King Edward Park. It is very likely, however, that no other residents have established as many, and as extensive, networks as Henry and Ilana have. During their years of managing the Park, they have created relationships with numerous sponsors, both individuals and organisations. These sponsors, in turn, are located within their own social networks that they draw on when making contributions to the Park. Without the support of these extensive networks, discussed in greater detail in chapter six, much of how the Park's currently runs is at risk of collapsing. The continued use of the metaphor of family, I thus assert, can be interpreted as a way in which residents entrench the relationships that provide them with access to various forms of capital. A rich illustration of the way the Park's residents mobilise social capital, and how this relates to other forms of capital, follows the events surrounding a young boy's death and funeral in the Park. It serves to display how residents adapt and renegotiate the definitions and boundaries of kinship and, by extension, are able to draw on other networks and the capital located within them.

On the afternoon of Good Friday in 2014, Cindy and her four-year old son Anthony are in a car accident. Little Anthony dies on the scene. The residents of the Park immediately begin to mobilise to arrange a funeral. In their capacity as managers, Henry and Ilana immediately start to speak about raising money to cover the costs of the burial. Although the Park's residents are seldom asked to contribute anything more than their R10 monthly fees, Anna and Bennie decide to walk around the Park asking for donations towards the funeral. By the end of Easter Sunday, the residents have raised R230 among themselves. Henry has been able to raise another R4000 from sponsors to help cover costs.

Cindy tells me that she has relatives who live outside the Park, only about a fifteen-minute drive away, although it seems that she has little contact with them. This side of the family also has financial struggles, Cindy explains, but is very critical of the fact that she lives in the Park. On Tuesday Henry mentions that Cindy's brother phoned to tell him that no contributions from the Park was necessary as the family was be able to pay for Anthony's funeral in its entirety. He suggested that Henry use the money that has been raised to upgrade the *lapa* instead. Henry's idea has been, for some time, to turn the *lapa* into a community hall. With the extra money, he and Cindy's brother concluded, Henry could do this and name it in honour of Anthony.

Significantly, the conversations about the funeral arrangements do not include Cindy, but rather take place between Henry and the rest of her family. In the two days that follow, there are more discussions as Cindy's family realises that it will need the money raised by the Park after all. This seems to create some tension between the Park's residents and Cindy's family. Henry feels strongly that he should have been left to arrange everything himself, while other residents are insulted that the family initially declined the Park's contributions.

Anthony's funeral takes place the following Friday morning, a week after the accident. As we make our way from the church to the gravesite, it emerges that two different receptions have

been planned for after the burial. Cindy's family plan on having a reception at the church, while the Park's residents have arranged for a reception at the Park. The tension between Cindy's family and the Park's residents comes to a boil when a couple of residents overhear one of Cindy's family members comment that she hopes that none of the residents would attend the church reception. The residents are deeply upset and, when the information spreads to all residents at the funeral, they huddle together, discussing the matter.

The residents are upset that Cindy's family has ignored the fact that Anthony's "family", thus his Park family, wishes to have a reception for him at his home. Bennie says angrily that he is upset by the implication that the Anthony's biological family does not want to be associated with the Park and its residents. Mara is unsure of what the family expected; after all it was they, the residents of the Park, who had taken care of Anthony and his mother for years when their family completely neglected them. It seems to her, she continues, that Cindy's family fears the residents will somehow disrupt the reception at the church because they live in a white squatter camp. Here we thus see, once again, how not only the metaphor of the family is deployed but how is speaks to understandings of good whiteness in an attempt to subvert stigmas of white poverty.

After the burial, the mourners begin to disperse; the Park's residents return to the Park, Cindy's family goes to the reception at the church. Her brother walks over to Cindy to ask her where she would be going. She pauses for a moment before confidently answering that she will be going back to the Park because that is where her family is. Next to me, Mara gives a confident nod and whispers that Cindy obviously knows who her real family is.

On the way back to the Park, Cindy and three other residents drive with me. As we drive Mara and Bennie talk about how angry they are with Cindy's family. They have to remember that, in God's eyes, everyone is equal, reminds Bennie. Cindy, sitting in the back of the car, is mostly quiet. She doesn't care what her other relatives think, she eventually says softly. She

knows who her true family is: the people who looked after Anthony and herself when they needed help. Her blood relatives will all go back to their homes after the funeral and will soon forget about her again. The residents of the King Edward Park, however, will go home with her, support her, and see to it that she is well taken care of. Back at the Park, a large banner hangs in front of the crèche, where food and drinks are being handed out to residents. On the banner is a photo of Anthony, and underneath it the words "Anthony Botha Community Hall".

The events around Anthony's funeral somewhat complicate understandings of "family" and its functions. Rather than the biological family being privileged over imagined or constructed family, all of the Park's residents — including Cindy — acknowledged that the Park's residents, and not Cindy's biological relatives, ought to be considered as her true family. In many other instances, residents have stated, implicitly or explicitly, that they prefer staying in the Park and considered it their "real" home and family as opposed to relatives living outside. "Maybe we could go elsewhere, I don't know. But I don't know if I could leave here and leave everyone behind. We're all a family here, and families don't just leave. You have to look after your family", says Danie (Interview, 29 May 2014). He has a son in Johannesburg who has invited Danie and his wife to stay with him, Danie tells me, but he has always refused and chooses rather to stay in the Park. On another occasion a resident tells me how her sister and brother-in-law pleaded with her to consider living with them when she was visiting them for a week. With a hint of pride in her voice, she explains that she told them she was happy and taken care of in the Park.

And yet, regardless of these claims that indicate that residents choose between the Park and elsewhere, very few residents are likely to have viable alternatives to staying in the Park. By asserting that all residents are like family, they are rather reaffirming their access to shared networks and resources. This does not mean that asserting family relationship with other

residents is false *per se,* but rather emphasises their ability to reposition themselves as best to access capital.

Forming families: the making and unmaking of family

I have thus far addressed the dialectical relationship between objective structures and ideological manifestations at several points. In chapter three I argued that the material organisation of housing structures aids residents in producing and upholding good whiteness. Residents also imagine the entire Park to be a home and themselves to form a family. In this chapter I have explored the ways in which the metaphor of the familial might be used as an analytical tool to understand the politics of King Edward Park.

Here I turn to an outstanding aspect that I have neglected up to now, namely the families who inhabit these houses. I begin with a discussion of the idea of the individual family, or *huisgesin.* Although residents are encouraged to structure their families in order to closely mimic the nuclear family, this is done with great leniency. I move to a discussion of how children and adults are defined in the Park and how one is thought to become an adult. I pay particular attention to the gendered nature of this transition, and describe how girls are considered to be women only once they have children of their own while for men there is no definite marker of adulthood. The last aspect I look at in terms of families in the Park is the presence of social workers. Although social workers visit the Park only infrequently, residents perceive them as a real threat. I analyse the gendered manner in which mothers narrate their experiences with social workers, in particular when this leads to the removal of a child. Gender plays an equally problematic role for single father-headed households. Fathers experience their gender as threatening in a context where men are thought to be less suitable as parents, and they fear that social workers might take their children away from them because of the absence of a mother.

Aspirational families: mothers, fathers, and children

In the rehabilitation efforts of poor-whites during the 1930s and 1940s, families were encouraged to conform to the idea of the nuclear family, composed of father, mother, and their children living in the same household. Fathers were expected to head the household and support the family, while mothers were supposed to care for the children and enhance the moral life of the family.[5] Ferguson's work on the Zambian copper belt suggests that in some contexts the idea of the nuclear family becomes an object of fantasy symbolising a comfortable, respectable, Christian middle class life. And it is the family that many in King Edward Park strive toward. But the idea of the nuclear family takes on its own form in the Park: while very few families in the Park are pure nuclear families, the attempt to achieve such a family indicates the aspirations of residents, and the links they assume to exist between certain forms of morality and corresponding social classes.

Unlike the situation in the first half of the twentieth century, couples who co-habit in the Park are considered to be a nuclear family. Much like the situation that Ross (2010: 82) describes in her work on the Cape flats, a couple whose relationship is considered stable is regarded as equal to a couple which is legally married. In King Edward Park couples are encouraged to wed but, because weddings are costly, it is not expected. There were, for example, no weddings during my time in the field though three couples became engaged. The same condition of stability applies to same-sex relationships, though it is expected that these relationships will mimic heteronormative gender roles: one partner should adopt a more feminine gender identity and act as the "wife" while the other should have a more masculine gender identity and would be considered the "husband".

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[5] See Rothman (1932) for an elaborate discussion of the desired form for Afrikaner families. She gives a detailed outline of the gender divisions that ought to exist in households and the "tasks" of mothers and fathers.

In these examples it is noticeable how the form of the nuclear family is encouraged but is done so with some fluidity. In instances of domestic partnerships (in the absence of a marriage), the intention to commit to one's partner is considered as enough to constitute a basic nuclear family. No other resident will dispute that a household is not a nuclear family on the basis that there has been no legal or religious ceremony. Same sex relationships, too, are widely accepted in the Park. The same guidelines apply for same-sex couples (during my stay in the Park there were four such couples) than for any other couple. As long as residents can detect a division where one partner is seen as more feminine and as more masculine, and they are committed and monogamous, they are not regarded as different to other couples. Thus, Manie and Steven, who are in a long term relationship, are raising Manie's teenage daughter from a previous relationship. Their family is, however, considered a nuclear family and other residents even comment on the good example they set for younger couples in the Park.

Sponsors, in contrast, seldom share residents' interpretation of the nuclear family. As devoted Christians and often extremely conservative, sponsors view couples living together without being married as a lack of commitment to good whiteness and the moralities attached to it. Similarly, they frequently react with disbelief when they encounter the queer residents of the Park. To them, the residents of the Park are failing to live according to their aspirations and they chastise unmarried couples or pregnant teenagers. The residents, however, retain their own sense of the familial and of what is considered acceptable and not. Satisfying sponsors in terms of morality is, after all, only one of many reasons why residents choose certain family structures and imagine gender, childhood, and adulthood in particular ways.

Being considered child or adult separates those who are expected to produce nuclear families from those who are considered junior members of an already existing family. Two means are usually applied to distinguish between adults and children: school attendance and parenthood.

The former is particularly relevant when dealing with sponsors who focus on assisting children. To decide whether a child qualifies for a donation, the sponsors define a child as someone who attends school. As soon as a teenager leaves school permanently, she is no longer considered a child and is excluded from resources made available to "children". In this way a teenager of 19 is considered a "child" as he attends high school, while one of 14 but no longer attending school is thus considered an adult. Ronnie, for example, left school a year ago when he was 14. He is no longer able to accompany his same-aged friends on trips organised by sponsors, does not qualify for breakfast and lunch, nor for birthday or Christmas presents. Twenty-year-old Wynand, on the other hand, continues to have access to all of these services on account of still attending school.

Despite these definite lines between childhood and adulthood, both identities are fluid, arbitrary and, at times, contradictory. While Henry generally considers anyone out of school an adult, he frequently warns parents and children that any person younger than eighteen *has* to attend school. This rule is rarely enforced and is mostly brought up in the presence of sponsors who often emphasise the importance of completing secondary education.

The nuclear family unit, together with work divisions in each household, are highly gendered, as is a child's transition into adulthood. For boys the distinction between childhood and adulthood is much more fluid than it is for girls. For girls, motherhood serves as a definite marker of adulthood, both for others and for the girl herself. Although teenage pregnancies are frowned upon by sponsors, and most parents explicitly state that they want their children to finish high school before having children, motherhood is something to which many younger women in the Park greatly looked forward.

The gendered differences in the way boys and girls are considered to transition into adulthood echoes the classic anthropological question Ortner poses in her 1974 essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Ortner speculates that one of the reasons for the way that

women have been considered as inferior to men is that women are considered as closer to nature, while men are associated with culture. The association with nature flows from the fact that women give birth to children, so that they are not only considered physiologically closer to nature, but their social role as nurturer positions them as seemingly closer to nature (Ortner, 1974: 74). The idea that women are, and *ought* to be, closer to nature manifests unmistakably in the Park. It is visible not only in the ways that households are organised, but also in how girls are considered to become women.

A very good example of the gendered nature of adulthood and how ideas of natural womanhood emerge in the Park is Meisie, who has lived in the Park with her grandmother since she was thirteen. Meisie is about to turn eighteen when I meet her. She left school when she was 16, after completing grade ten and lives in a caravan with her boyfriend Rex. Her grandmother does not approve of Rex and since Meisie moved in with her, she and her grandmother hardly speak to one another. Meisie managed to secure a position as volunteer at the crèche the previous year for which she is paid R350 per month. Rex is unemployed.

In late September 2013, only a few weeks after I first meet her, Meisie reveals that she is pregnant. Every morning while we wash the crèche's dishes she excitedly talks about having her own family. She and Rex plan to marry after she turns 18 next April. They would like to do so sooner, but this would require her grandmother's consent who refuses. Meisie plans to stop working after the wedding and take care of the baby. Driven by Meisie's decision to leave the crèche, Rex manages to find employment as a waiter only a few days after Meisie announces her pregnancy. Although he has to ride 15 kilometres to work on his bicycle, Meisie says that Rex does not mind because a more stable income might allow them to move to a small apartment in town.

Soon, her new status as a pregnant woman gives Meisie the ability to engage with the other women in the Park as a woman and no longer a child. Where she was previously thought of

and treated as a teenager, she now eagerly partakes in conversations about pregnancy and motherhood. While some older women consider it unwise for Meisie to have a child at her age, most women give her advice, ask about her about morning sickness, and discuss baby matters in general. Many a morning Meisie stops and has long conversations with other women. Sometimes they speak about raising children, while at other times their conversations are lighter as they complain about their partners, talk about home-making, or discuss what they will be making for supper. They also frequently discuss Meisie's options with regard to nearby state hospitals and share their own experiences of being pregnant and giving birth.

Meisie, however, has not taken a pregnancy test, nor has she visited the clinic. One afternoon, seven weeks into her pregnancy, a shaken Rex arrives to tell Sunette that Meisie has been taken to hospital with severe stomach cramps. The next morning Rex stops by the crèche again. He looks slightly despondent while he tells us that Meisie is not pregnant after all. The women standing around shake their heads and frown upon hearing Rex's news. Meisie is just a child who wanted to play house, Linda says with a click of her tongue. The others murmur in agreement.

When she returns to the Park a few days later, Meisie does not speak about the pregnancy. Most women are of the opinion that she was not pregnant at all, though some do not think that she lied intentionally and that she truly believed she was pregnant. Maggie suggests that her inability to know intuitively whether she was pregnant and that she neglected to visit the clinic prove that she is not ready to be a mother. Especially the women who already have children seem to share an understanding that a woman knows intuitively about pregnancy and parenthood.

It is not uncommon for pregnant women in the Park not to visit the clinic during their first two trimesters. During my fieldwork there were six pregnancies in the Park. Four women only visited the clinic in their third trimester, the other two late in their second trimester.

When I ask a few of the pregnant women and some new mothers about their experiences of the public health system, two women feel it is not necessary to visit the clinic earlier. A woman *knows* if she is pregnant and can prepare for the birth of the child on her own. The only reason for visiting the clinic at all is to make sure they will have access to the nearby hospital when going into labour. To be a *woman*, therefore, means that one instinctively knows if one is pregnant, to have inborn knowledge of how to prepare for birth, and, importantly, to have the ability to know if something is wrong with the foetus and medical advice is needed. In this setting, Meisie proved a child and not yet a woman as she was unable to know whether she was really pregnant.

Meisie's experience highlights the social capital that motherhood affords young women in the context of the Park. When Sussie became pregnant with her first child at 15, her pregnancy soon afforded her a sense of adult agency. She stopped attending school and discussed the possibility of moving out of Henry and Ilana's house to stay with her partner. The space of adult agency that a young woman moves into with her first pregnancy allows her much more space to make decisions for herself, and to be treated as an individual in herself.

For men, experiences of fatherhood do not carry the same amount of social capital, nor is there any indication of definite links between fatherhood, adulthood, and masculinity. Caring for children is seen as belonging strictly to the female domain. Therefore, the men in the Park experience much more fluidity with regard to the relation between fatherhood and adulthood.

Gender in the Park is regarded with little fluidity. The categories of male and female are considered fixed, both biologically as well as socially. Motherhood is believed to flow naturally from womanhood, thereby defining childhood and adulthood. Men are less bound to what is seen as the domestic area. The task of constructing and holding together a nuclear family, or some semblance thereof, is firmly considered to be the responsibility of women. And womanhood, as opposed to childhood, is determined by one's ability to be a "natural"

mother. A different marker for adulthood lies in a person's ability to perform waged work, a marker generally applied to men. As I will argue in chapter five, this is complicated by the scarcity of waged work. Still, in the context of the Park, it is the *potential* to work and the definitive end of one's formal schooling that differentiate those who are men from those who are boys.

"The welfare is on us": social interventions and its implications

"The welfare" is an ominous figure in the Park. She is not seen often, but the knowledge of her very existence is ever-present in the minds of parents. Mostly referred to by the outdated moniker of "the welfare", social workers are considered with suspicion and great caution. Historical work on poor whiteism is filled with discussions of the relations between poor-white women and social workers, though there is a scarcity of such studies in the in the post-apartheid period. Most significant is the work of Peens (2012) and Peens and Dubbeld (2013), in which social workers are described as reinforcing the idea of "reverse racism" against poorer whites. The relationship between residents of King Edward Park with social workers differs significantly from that described in this literature (see also Peens, 2011: 62-89). Whereas Peens and Dubbeld (2013: 18) argue that poorer whites and social workers jointly produce white talk that reinforces whiteness, the residents of King Edward Park harbour distinctly antagonistic feelings towards the (white) social worker who serves the Park.

When I first ask residents whether social workers are ever called to the Park, I elicit strong opinions from women: the territory of social workers is considered as falling squarely in the realm of motherhood. Fathers generally just shrug and refer me to their female partners. Women share the outspoken and almost unanimous view that social workers are not ever to be trusted. Several mothers explain later that they rather prefer to visit Ilana and Henry if they

feel that an intervention is needed. Henry and Ilana know the residents well, the elderly Ouma ponders, and they know whether and how to help. But once you call a social worker, she warns me, you are unlikely to ever get rid of her again. I ask her to elaborate on this statement. Ouma's answers are illusive, as she never quite points out why social workers are unfair or wrong:

> O: That woman needs to stay away from this place. She only comes here to make trouble. We had so much trouble with her, she even wanted me to lose my children. I almost lost my girls because of her.
>
> C: Why did she want to take your children?
>
> O: Because she is fucked up. (Interview, 30 April 2014)

The interventions by social workers, experienced by the residents both in the Park and in their lives before they moved there, is a topic that few residents are comfortable to speak about. It is a topic only few women discuss with me well into my fieldwork after numerous discussions about many other topics. When they talk about it, their stories tend to be about the experiences of other residents, neighbours or acquaintances. Sharon tells me, for example, about a distant relative of hers in the Park whose new partner is rumoured to sexually abuse her children.

There is a worker that is assigned to the Park, Joan explains, and I will meet her sooner or later. This is about the only information I am able to garner about the social worker in the Park from the residents themselves. I also speak to Charlene, the sponsor who heads the crèche. She herself has given up on calling the social workers who are assigned to the Park, she sighs. They are severely overworked and struggle to keep up with their work, she states. In the past when she called a social worker, it took as long as two weeks for them to visit the Park. By that time, the bruises and marks on the children's bodies had long faded, and

without anyone willing to make a statement, the social workers could not do much. Despite the fact that all of the residents seem to know the Park's social worker, Santa, several months go by before I eventually have a chance to meet her. Over the span of my eleven months in the Park, I only see her three times, and am never able to interview her.

Regardless of how infrequently Santa visits the Park though, residents are very aware of the fact that she can, potentially, visit them at any time. Because of the gendered nature of domestic politics, it is predominantly the women who are affected by the perceived threat of social workers. Having one's children removed by a social worker has severe implications for perceptions of one's morality, but also for understandings of motherhood and womanhood. Yet, over time, many women confess that some of their children are in foster care or in children's homes. Their testimonies of their experiences of having children taken away from them are marked by attempts to display their "innocence" in the matter. It further weaves together many of the topics I have addressed in this thesis thus far: race, class, morality, and, always, a seeming attempt to imagine a future that will be better.

Hannah is a woman in her early thirties who lives in the Park with her husband Gerrie. Hannah's children were two and four years old when they were removed from her care. The first time I officially meet Hannah is on the afternoon of Anthony's funeral. By that time her children have been in foster care for close to three years. Still, Hannah is convinced that they will soon be returned to her. She describes the events that led to the removal of her children as follows: her youngest child, a boy, died at the age of three weeks. Hannah fell into a severe depression and the social worker decided that it was better for the older children not to remain with the family. She and Gerrie see the children whenever they can, usually every second Sunday and under supervision.

In 2014 Hannah tells me that she is pregnant again. She is unsure when the baby is due because she has not managed to see a doctor. Hannah is intent on keeping this baby so that,

when her older children are returned to her care, they can all live together as a family. If she can show that she is capable of caring for this new baby, Hannah believes, the social workers assigned to her case will realise that her depression no longer affects her and that she is now more than able to care for her children. In the attempts to regain custody of the children, Hannah and Gerrie have decided to not submit an application for a RDP house. Despite struggling to make ends meet in the Park, they reason that they have a better chance to have their children returned while they live there than if they live in a township, where an RDP house is mostly likely to be situated. If and when Hannah's children will be returned is unsure. It is likely that there is much more to Hannah's story than a depression preventing her from taking care of her children. One of Hannah's neighbours quickly comes to find me after overhearing our talk. It is true that Hannah's children were removed after her youngest child died, she whispers. But the reason why they were taken was because the social workers suspected that she herself had killed the baby.

The Park is filled with many such stories. Often, if mothers do choose to speak about children that have been removed from their care, their narratives are filled with contradictions or other residents decide to elaborate on their stories. Many removals seem to have followed allegations of sexual abuse or heavy drug abuse by parents. Yet the mothers with children in foster care rarely admit to any wrongdoing.

In the time I spent in the Park, nobody was ever formally charged for sexual abuse, but there were many rumours of children being abused. An example particularly relevant to the discussion here is that of Shelley and her four children. This case is the first instance of sexual abuse that I hear about when I start spending time at the Park. Shelley and her children live with Tommy, Shelley's partner. Residents frequently speculate that Tommy is sexually abusing Shelley's two daughters. The eldest, who is fourteen, ran away from home shortly before my arrival. She was found after three days and returned to her mother.

One morning, a few months into my fieldwork, Sunette calls me. There is trouble at Shelley's house, she says. The younger of her two daughters climbed into a tree the previous night and refuses to come down. Other residents, Sunette says, think that she climbed up there to get away from Tommy. When I walk outside the ten-year old girl is sitting in a large tree not far from the road. Although some residents have also come outside to see what is going on, most just passively shrug that there is nothing they can do. Henry and Ilana have been informed of the matter and will take care of it, they state. As Charlene had told me, it takes more than three weeks for Santa to finally visit the family. The child, like the rest of the family, denies any claims of sexual abuse, one of their neighbours later tells me. Yet, a few months later all four children are placed in foster care, not because of alleged sexual abuse but because Henry finds *tik*[6] in their house and calls the police and social services.

In some instances, as with Shelley's children, all children in a particular household are removed at once. In other cases, however, some children are removed, but if a new baby is born it is not necessarily taken as well. This means that there are many households in the Park where some children have been placed in care, while others stay with their parents in the Park. Susan and Mike, for example, have three children who were placed in foster care several years ago, but have since had four more children. They are closely monitored by Santa who leaves these four children with their parents; but in mid-2014 these too are placed in a children's home. Nadine and Johnny have four children, of whom only the eldest two were initially placed in a foster home. The two younger children were only removed eighteen months later when Johnny was arrested for attempted murder and bail was refused.

Many of the women who had children removed during the time that I spent at the Park responded to it by reaffirming and displaying good whiteness, or at least a version thereof.

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[6] South African slang for crystal methamphetamine.

After Julia and Dylan's four children are removed in April 2014, for example, less than three weeks go by before Julia announces that they are moving to an apartment. Like Hannah, Julia believes that living in formal housing will significantly improve the chance of having her children returned to her care soon.

Other families, however, are unable to afford housing elsewhere as easily as Julia and Dylan. When Susan and Mike's children are removed, the couple walk six kilometres every Thursday in order to attend a support group for parents who struggle with addictions. Upon completion of this three-month course, Susan calls over her friends in the Park to show them the certificate of attendance that they have hung on a wall in their tented house. In this action, a firm commitment of aspiring to a particular form of whiteness is visible, a good whiteness that is anchored in a commitment to overcoming obstacles and maintaining a nuclear family. At the same time, however, the examples also show how these attempts often remain aspirational rather then ever become reality.

As noted above, it is the mothers or other female caregivers who are seen to be responsible for the moral upbringing of children. If a child is removed from a family, it is therefore considered to reflect poorly on the mothering figure much more than on the father. This calls for an investigation of households that do not have a female caregiver. In the Park there are only two such households, both with single fathers taking care of their small children. The relationship between single fathers and normative ideas about parenthood illuminates some of the ideas set out in this section. The very fact that they are male, I argue, presents both men with the risk that their children might be taken from them.

One sunny morning in January, I am walking to collect water. A little boy, Daniel, runs past me towards his family's Wendy house, one hand covering his face. I wave at him in greeting but he runs straight into the house without looking back. Later that day I see Daniel again. I ask him why he was running so quickly. The boy points to his face. Beneath one of his eyes

there is still the hint of a bruise from where he fell at the crèche a few days before. His father, he explains, instructed him to make sure that he stays out of sight if he sees Santa's car turning into the Park.

One of his father's biggest fears is that Daniel will be placed in foster care. Any bruises, Frank seemingly reasons, will increase the chances of Santa thinking that he is neglecting his son. Santa has never reviewed Frank and Daniel's case. Yet, Frank is a single father. His fear of having Daniel removed is not only based in their poor living conditions and his unemployment, but is also linked to ideas about gender and childcare.

Daniel's mother passed away shortly after his birth and Frank has been taking care of him ever since. For the past seven years Frank has been unable to find any form of employment and his only income is the child grant that he receives, together with some money he earns by selling recyclable materials he gathers around town. Frank and Daniel settled in the Park five years earlier. Frank's elderly mother joined them for a short period after they moved to the Park, but then went to live with her brother instead. As Daniel's sole caretaker, Frank fears that social workers may consider him inadequate because he is a man. He takes extra care to make sure that the little boy is always neat, clean, and well dressed. Frank does not allow Daniel to play outside without supervision. In stark contrast to most other children who go around barefoot, Daniel always wears socks and shoes which he is not allowed to take off, even during playtime at the crèche. In the absence of a mother figure, Frank explains, he wants to be sure that nobody may think that he is not capable of taking care of a child.

Boy, who has a three-year-old daughter named Jacklyn, shares many of Frank's concerns. Jacklyn's mother, Fatima, lived with them until Jacklyn was eighteen months old. During this time things did not run smoothly between Boy and Fatima and they had an on-off relationship. Fatima was the only Indian woman in the Park and the relationship was characterised by antagonism. Many residents are of the opinion that Fatima's racial identity

means that she is by default a poorer wife and mother than a white woman would be. Moreover, Fatima was known in the Park to be a drug addict.

Shortly before Jacklyn's second birthday Fatima left the Park for the first time. She has returned to the Park several times since, only to leave again after a month or two. For Boy this presents a dilemma: he fears that Fatima's unstable presence in Jacklyn's life may do the child harm, but is also scared that, without a maternal figure in the household, social workers could take his daughter from his care.

The fears of single fathers like Frank and Boy affirm the general notion in the Park that women *ought* to care for children. Their fears are sustained despite the fact that, as far as I am aware, social workers have never made any inquiries with regard to either of these men's children.

Looking back over this section on "the welfare", several factors relating to the family come together: the moral ideas attached to the nuclear family as an idealised form, and more concrete structures such as the social service system put in place by the state. Each individual family, much like the metaphoric expression of the Park as family, is guided by both these aspects. Yet, unlike the fluidity and invisibility of ideological devices, the structures imposed by the state are fixed, though there can be some fluidity in how individual people implement these systems.

Conclusion

Employing the familial as analytical tool through which to understand the politics of the everyday in King Edward Park, this chapter shows that there are not only various ways in which to read the "family", but also different ways to imagine the familial. Through a discussion of three different manifestations of the familial — the imagined or fictive family, the "real" family, and the nuclear family — I indicate how the notion of the family is, in

many ways, central to life in the Park. Although each expression of the familial is distinctive and applies to different parts of the Park, each of the three manifestations draws on already existing networks or relationships and, in turn, serves to create and imbed similar networks.

CHAPTER FIVE

Of welfare money and white work: economic capital and distribution politics

Introduction

Afrikaner political conservatives, the national and international media, and the sponsors who support King Edward Park all position the residents of the Park in a very particular way: the phenomenon of whites being poor after apartheid is the direct result of post-apartheid economic policies. They often cite affirmative action and black economic empowerment policies as the primary reason why poorer whites have struggled to find employment after 1994. This line of argument, which ascribes post-apartheid poor whiteism solely to a change in political rule, fails to take into account two points identified by this thesis. Firstly, it ignores the complex life histories and familial entanglements which I have described in the previous chapter. Secondly, it does not account for the more informal ways in which residents have managed to access economic capital, a point examined in greater detail in this chapter. As I have briefly mentioned at various points in the previous chapters, residents often struggled to make ends meet long before the end of apartheid, and the sets of events that lead families to take up residency in the Park speak to a plethora of social, political, interpersonal, and historical conditions.

Contrary to the claims that *all* poorer white South Africans find themselves without any access to viable economic resources, I argue in this chapter that residents have found several different avenues through which to access capital. While these avenues may not result in vast amounts of economic capital, they shed light on the diverse ways in which residents access

cash and other forms of capital. I also emphasise, throughout the chapter, the fluidity of meaning of economic capital, work, and distribution. For this I draw on the work of Hart and his colleagues on the "human economy" (Hann and Hart, 2011; Hart, 2013; and Hart, Laville, Cattani, 2010). Hann and Hart (2011: 8) describe the human economy as referring "to wellbeing, to the satisfaction of all human needs — not just those that can be met through private market transactions, but also the need for public goods, such as education, security and a healthy environment, and for intangible qualities such as dignity that cannot be reduced to dollars spent per capita". They argue for a human economy that speaks to persons (and not simply individuals) whose choices are motivated both by "rational" calculations, but also by the familial, social, and political contexts in which they are embedded (Hann and Hart, 2011: 9). Based on this approach, I argue that the economic positions of those living in King Edward Park should be read in the broader context of the Park. The discussion thus examines in particular the specific relationships that inform residents' choices and access.

I begin this chapter by discussing residents' access to cash through state programmes of social assistance. I show how the majority of households with children and elderly residents receive a monthly non-contributory cash transfer, or state social grant. To provide a context for this, I present an overview of the expansion of state social assistance as implemented since the end of apartheid. Although the state has recently introduced biotechnologies which are increasingly bio-individualising the process of accessing social grants, the residents continue to rely on the social structures of the Park to access their grants. Even when the social grant system aims to transfer cash to an individual person, the broader processes surrounding the system are imbedded in the everyday social life of the Park.

The chapter then turns to a second source of income in the Park, waged work. The analysis addresses three different, but closely related themes. Firstly, it examines the role of piecework in a situation where there are few permanent employment opportunities. Secondly,

it investigates how the notion of "white work" influences residents' employment prospects. On the one hand, seeing certain forms of work as inappropriate for whites limits residents' job prospects. On the other hand, the fact that sponsors share this notion can at times be beneficial for residents: there are situations where sponsors offer work to residents in what seems like attempts to counter what they see as negative effects of affirmative action. Thirdly, it elaborates on a number of small businesses that residents have set up in the Park, thus circulating the cash that residents access elsewhere.

The concluding section of this chapter considers a third means of securing capital: sponsored donation. I detail the processes involved when the Park receives donations and discuss the highly regulated system that Ilana and Henry, as managers, have implemented to distribute them. Often, however, residents sell donated items. While sponsors view this as dishonest, residents see it as their right as ownership has been passed on to them.

State social assistance: welfare money to cash transfers

One of the most far-reaching policies developed by the South African government post-1994, alongside its RDP policy, is its expansive programme of social assistance. In an economic context where, twenty years after apartheid, South Africa continues to be one of the most unequal societies in the world (Seekings and Nattrass, 2008, 2015), this social assistance has been invaluable to many households. This section examines the particular ways in which state social assistance enables agency and shapes relationships in King Edward Park.

I show how the expansion of state social assistance has granted many residents greater individual agency. The form that this assistance takes affords recipients a commodity that is otherwise scarce, namely cash. This allows for greater individual agency in lives that are otherwise mostly regulated by the rules and structure of the Park. However, while cash payments open individual agentive avenues that are otherwise hard to pursue, the entire

system of state social assistance still has to be understood within the power structures of the Park. Despite the increasing institutional emphasis on individual access to state social assistance, embedded in biotechnologies, residents continue to rely on already existing structures of power and hierarchy in the Park.

State social assistance, informally known as social grants or cash transfers, forms the core of most families' monthly income. Households with children under 18 and seniors over 60 receive state social assistance in the form of monthly cash transfers, though there are a few exceptions. In most cases these cash transfers are the most secure form of income residents have, as well as their only access to cash. This is even the case in instances where residents are employed, as employment is seldom permanent, disputes over wages arise between employers and employees, and wages are late or not paid at all. Receiving a social grant thus allows residents a little more agency than they would otherwise have or than they had under the apartheid government.

State social assistance in South Africa today is unconditional and non-contributory. In contrast to the conservative political notion often aired by sponsors that the state intentionally excludes whites from these programmes, all residents have access to state social assistance. Any South African citizen, permanent resident, or refugee may apply for and receive social assistance providing that their annual income does not exceed the means test that is attached to social grants (South African Social Security Agency, 2015). None of the residents' incomes exceed the limits imposed by the means tests and so most qualifying residents have applied for and receive grants.

The reach and extent of state social assistance have broadened significantly since the end of apartheid. The beginnings of state social assistance in South Africa (far removed from the extensive unconditional system of today) can be traced back to the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and wide-spread fears about poor whiteism (Ferguson, 2015: 72-76; Giliomee,

2009; O'Meara, 1983). The first steps towards an extensive, albeit highly racialised system of social assistance in South Africa was the introduction of the Old Age Pension Act in 1928.[1] This act made provision for whites and coloureds, both men and women, to receive a monthly pension as recommended by the first report of the Carnegie Commission (Neves et al, 2009; Seekings, 2006: 4).[2] The Old Age Pension Act was only one of the measures imposed by the reigning Pact Government to uplift poor-whites and assert a clear racial hierarchy (Seekings, 2006: 5).[3] Other programmes by the Pact government to uplift poor-whites and assert a clear racial hierarchy followed, including support for the disabled and poor parents (Seekings, 2008: 30). Old age pensions were later extended to include Africans and Indians, but continued to be highly unequal with a growing gap between whites and black Africans (Neves et al, 2009; Pauw and Mncube, 2007, 12). Social assistance was only deracialised in 1993 shortly before the official democratisation of South Africa (Seekings, 2006: 30).

At the time of this de-racialisation the term "social assistance" had a much narrower application than it does today, and the majority of assistance was provided in the form of old age pensions. Regardless of a wide-spread notion[4] that South Africa was introducing pure neo-liberal economic policies post-1994, South Africa expanded the social assistance system from 1996 onwards to reach almost a third of the population by 2015 (Ferguson, 2015: 5). In July 2015 approximately 16.7 million recipients received monthly social grants, a considerable rise from the estimated 3 million recipients in 1994 (Seekings, 2008: 31; South African Social Security Agency, 2015). This large increase is largely due to the introduction

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[1] Some analysts argue that the South African state is, in essence, a welfare state. Seekings (2008: 28-30) counters this by pointing out that the governments of both the final apartheid years and the post-apartheid years have opposed this title, even if many welfare elements were being implemented. Government ministers have rather preferred the term "developmental state" and have sought to move from non-contributory social assistance programmes to ones that are contributory.

[2] Although coloureds were included in the Old Age Pension Act of 1928, they were to receive a smaller pension than whites (Seekings, 2006: 4).

[3] The Pact Government came into office in 1924 and comprised of a coalition of the Afrikaner republican National Party and the pro-British Socialist Party (Giliomee, 2009: 329; Seekings, 2006: 3).

[4] See, for example, Bond (2002).

of the child support grant (CSG) in 1998, an unconditional monthly transfer of R100 for all qualifying children between the ages of zero and seven. Eligibility was extended to the age of fourteen in 2005, and to the age of eighteen in 2009 (Neves et al, 2009; Schreiber, 2014: 268).

Different means tests are applied for the different grants.[5] To qualify for a state old age grant (SOAG) grant, a person's yearly income may not be more than R61 800 or the combined household income of two applicants may not exceed R123 600. CSGs require a child's primary caregiver to have an annual income of no more than R38 400 if single or an income of R76 800 for a combined household if married. In order to qualify for a care dependency grant (CDG), aimed at caregivers who permanently care for a child that has a severe and permanent disability, an individual may not earn more than R162 000 if single, or R324 000 for a combined household if married. Disability grants (DP), like CDGs, require submission of up-to-date medical reports indicating that a person's disability has left them unable to work (South African Social Security Agency, 2015).

In King Edward Park the most common grants are CSGs, SOAGs, and DGs. The cash transfers paid every month to grant recipients in the Park are, technically speaking, their own to spend at their individual discretion. In about 2008 or 2009, Sharon tells me, there was some disagreement over the cash that residents receive from social grant payments. A group of residents felt that *all* money, including the grants, ought to be pooled together so that all of the residents could be equally looked after. All meals should be cooked together and all other expenses should be shared. Another group opposed this suggestion, arguing it would be unfair. It is unrealistic to expect people to simply hand over their money, Sharon says. If everyone works hard and they all earn more or less equally, it might work, but she and others

[5] All of the amounts attached to the means tests I cite here are based on the means criteria during my time of writing, from 2014 to 2016.

felt that some residents were bound simply to sit back and wait for their share of the pooled money. The rather socialist ideals of the group that made the proposal thus gave way to the current system: donations are divided equally but the money that each person receives through grants or wages is theirs to spend as they wish.

For some families the grant barely covers their monthly expenses. Elmien, a single mother of three children, uses most of the money from a CSG grant to buy groceries and nappies for the two smaller children after which little is left. In good months when she only has to pay for the basics, the nearly R700 she receives is enough. In bad months, when a child is sick, she has to buy firewood, or has some other unplanned expense, it is usually too little. In the leaner months she pools some of her children's grant money together with her sister's so that they can buy groceries in larger quantities, at slightly lower prices.[6] She finds this convenient, and preferable to borrowing money against high interest rates. Yet she does say that she sometimes argues with her sister if one of them feels the other took more than her fair share.

Elmien's struggles are similar to most of the households that depend solely on social grants: most have barely enough cash to cover their monthly expenses. Most of these households receive two or three CSG grants by which they receive between R600 and R1 000 per month. The money is used to buy groceries (mostly rice, pap, bread, eggs), candles, paraffin, cigarettes, and airtime for the cell phone. For larger meals with more protein, and larger household items, these families rely on the sponsored meals and other donations.

For households or families who are slightly better off, the social grants allow them to break away, if only momentarily, from the communal structure of the Park. The Bester household, for example, has a tradition to hold a *braai* on the day grants are paid out if a family

[6] It is common for close relatives, such as siblings or adult children and parents, to pool their money together. This usually only extends to two or three people. I never found any other saving practices, such as *stokvels*, an informal savings club where neighbours or relatives pool their savings together, to be present in the Park.

member's birthday falls in that month. Once Sunette, Joan, and Cindy withdraw their cash, they walk to the nearby supermarket and buy meat for the *braai*, together with crisps and cold drinks, and a small birthday gift. The family take great pride in the fact that this event does not extend to the entire Park. It is just for *our* family, Sunette explains the tradition. Other families have similar traditions. Maggie, for example, tries to take her smaller children to a nearby resort once a year for a day of swimming and fast food. To cover the resort's R50 entry fee, she saves a small amount every month. While Linda and her family do not have any set rituals, she tells me with a hint of pride that, with the cash her partner receives through his SOAG, they are able to choose which communal meals they'd like to share in. If the meal has chunks of soy, which neither of them like, she has the freedom to cook something else for supper.

Despite the ways in which post-apartheid social assistance has enabled individual agency, my ethnographic research in the Park highlights how it remains entrenched in the shared social. The particular form that state social assistance takes not only reaffirms a particular relationship between the state and its citizens, but also produces specific relationships between the recipients themselves. Residents in the Park borrow and lend each other grant money, assist each other with advice on how to apply to and access grants, and understand the role of the state as having to, among other things, provide for its poorer citizens.

The introduction of biometric measures to and the increasing techno-politics involved in the social assistance system are particularly apt examples to highlight these relationships. The Social Assistance Act of 2004 transferred the responsibility of administering social security grants from provincial governments (as regulated by the Social Assistance Act of 1992) to the national government. To fulfil this task, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) was established. In 2012 SASSA implemented biometric measures aimed at limiting fraud (Breckenridge, 2014: 181-193; Donovan, 2015; South African Social Security Agency,

2013).[7] The implementation and administration of the new system was outsourced to a private company called NET1 UEPS Technologies, Inc.

Known as "proof of life certification", the application process entails that grant holders' biometric information is captured electronically which is then used to verify their identities every month. Each grant recipient is issued with a SASSA MasterCard bank card (in collaboration with Grindrod Bank Ltd), which is linked to an individual bank account opened on behalf of the grant holder. The bank card allows holders the same privileges as any other debit card in South Africa (NET1, 2012). In order for the monthly cash transfer to be paid to the grant holder's account, the application process includes an identification verification procedure that first has to be completed. While some points of payment have microphones and other fingerprint scanners that allow for identification of the recipients, the grant recipients in the Park all rely on telephonic verification.[8] Technically a toll free number and free SIM cards distributed to recipients should ensure that the verification process is cost free (South African Social Security Agency, 2013).

SASSA promises timely and accurate payment through its slogan, "Paying the right social grant, to the right person, at the right time and place. *Njalo*!" (Zulu for always). Yet for many residents the verification process is not quite this simple. Because public telephones are far away and often out of order, residents complain, they often rely on cell phones to make their monthly call. This means owning or borrowing a phone, and having access to electricity to charge the battery. Grant recipients without a cell phone nor with access to electricity rely on

[7] I remain unconvinced that this new system has effectively curbed much fraudulent activity. Even after its implementation, two women in the Park continued to receive their CSG grants despite the fact that their children had been placed in foster care three and five months earlier, respectively. In addition, resident complaints suggest that unauthorised deductions were being made from some of the grants.

[8] Residents have differing reasons for choosing telephonic verification. The most common reason I hear for this choice is that the resident are not aware that there are other means of accessing the cash.

the goodwill of neighbours for borrowing a phone or charging it. Anna, for example, usually charges her phone at her neighbours' house for a few hours every night.

For residents who are not well liked or who are more marginalised in the Park, the identification process is more complicated.[9] Thomas and Lilly, for instance, live in a shipping container on the most eastern side of the Park with their two children. The container is small, no more than three square metres, and has no electricity. The couple own a cellular phone but cannot charge it without the help of others. Although I always find them to be pleasant and have had engaging conversations with Thomas, neither of them has many friends in the Park. When I ask Agnes, who lives on the opposite side of the Park, why people seem to dislike Thomas and Lilly, she tells me to watch closely when donations are next handed out. They always take as much as they can without any regard for equal distribution, she indicates. Just the previous week, she goes on, she heard Lilly telling her daughter to take three tubes of toothpaste when donated toiletries were handed out. Another resident told Agnes that Thomas and Lilly's two children walked around asking people to buy them something to eat at an athletics meeting. Agnes shakes her head as she is hanging up her laundry on rope tied between two trees in front of her house. Lilly is a lazy woman, Agnes says, but even more she doesn't like Thomas. Agnes' nephew with his partner and baby stay in the container next to that of Thomas and Lilly and they observe that Thomas smokes *dagga* (marijuana) late every evening. The smoke travels through their shared wall and gives the baby asthma.

Because they do not have many friends in the Park, Thomas and Lilly walk to town to find a public phone when they have to make a telephone call. If they cannot find one that is a working, Thomas barters a couple of packets of instant noodles with other residents to charge

[9] See chapters two and three on the internal organisation of the Park and the idea of "proving" oneself to be a "good white". The residents I am referring to here are, typically, those who are considered by "good white" residents not to be "good whites".

his phone, or a handful of tobacco[10] and a few tea bags for using theirs. He never approaches Henry for this, however. Other grant recipients in similar positions do the same, and barter food, alcohol, or cigarettes to access a phone. Cigarettes, especially, are always in high demand and one can easily trade a few loose cigarettes for the quick use of a phone.

For residents who do not have close enough relationships with other residents to borrow phones or share in their electricity, the system of state assistance continues to come at a cost. This cost may not be significantly high, but it contradicts the idea that an increasingly biotechnical programme of assistance enables less complicated ways of accessing state grants. While the technicalities of accessing social grants have become increasingly individualised through the introduction of biotechnologies, the wider politics of social assistance continue to be embedded in the social and political contexts of the Park.

Even without these social implications of the current form of state assistance, accessing social grants is deeply rooted within already existing hierarchical structures of the Park. One of the most noticeable indicators is the manner in which new residents are guided through the process of applying for social grants. There are times when new residents who are entitled to social grants have not applied for them yet. The reasons for this vary: a previous application had been turned down because it was incomplete; or a person had been previously employed and the annual income was too high to qualify for one; or a person is unsure of the application process and or unaware of her eligibility. Since entry into the Park is very formalised, it is easy to establish whether a family receives a grant and, if not, whether it is eligible to do so. Such newcomers are usually assisted by Henry and a few other women to submit their applications. This is mostly done, however, at Henry's time and convenience.

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[10] Thomas rolls his own cigarettes with old newspaper and loose tobacco. Most of the other smokers in the Park can afford cigarettes from Henry's tuck shop (as I discuss later in this chapter).

Jan and Adele, whose move to the Park I discussed in chapter three, did not receive any state social assistance when first arrived in the Park. I describe their experiences with the social assistance system to illustrate the complexities of applying for a social grant through the Park's structures. Jan, who had been employed until a few months before their move to the Park, is eligible for a SOAG grant as he turned sixty the year before. Chimonè, additionally, is eligible for a CSG or, possibly, a DCG. When I ask them about the possibility of receiving social assistance, Adele and Jan both look sceptical, however. Adele doesn't think that Chimonè will qualify for a grant as she has never been to school.[11] Both Adele and Jan are also cynical about the non-racial nature of social grants. Convinced that white men are not considered for SOAGs, Jan and Adele have never considered applying for this grant.

Some days later I speak to Adele again where she sits outside the Park on an old tyre, waiting for Jan and Chimonè to return from town. Adele still seems quite dispirited. She spoke to some of the other women, she tells me, who explained the CSG and SOAG grants to her and promised to help her family with the applications. Sarah and Gina also took her to Henry and he will make sure that all their documentation is in order. Henry told her that he will help Jan apply for the SOAG grant. Henry promised to contact a school for disabled children and, once Chimonè is enrolled there, they can apply to receive a CSG for Chimonè.

Several months go by as Adele waits for Henry to help her complete Jan's SOAG application and to contact the aforementioned school. Despite the local SASSA office being only three blocks away, neither Adele nor Jan ever seem to contemplate visiting the office without Henry. Besides, Adele explains to me, Joan still has Chimonè's birth certificate and they have to wait for Henry to make copies of it. Moreover, Adele thinks that Henry knows the SASSA

[11] I discussed the details of Chimoné's disabilities and the reasons why she had never attended school in chapter three.

officials well and with him there it will be much easier to complete the process and is more likely to be successful.

Two months later Henry finally makes the three copies and delegates the task of helping with Jan's application to Maria. Every day, Chimonè plays around the Park with Henry regularly saying that he will make arrangements for her to go to school the next week. Regardless of their severe financial need, Adele and Jan don't seem very bothered by the delay. Rather, they express gratitude that they are now part of the King Edward Park community where Henry and Ilana see to it that everyone's needs are met. In the meantime, they make ends meet by selling donated clothes, having communal meals in the Park, and sometimes borrowing small amounts of money from other residents.

It is not only the newer residents who leave problems or uncertainties regarding their grants to Henry or Ilana. Even residents who have received a CSG grant since its inception in 1998 often prefer Henry and Ilana to liaise or negotiate with the local SASSA officials rather than contacting the agency themselves. News about changes in the systems is conveyed through word of mouth, with residents approaching Ilana or Joan if there is anything they do not understand.

November 2013 stands out in my fieldwork as the month in which the new biotechnologies are first used by grant recipients in the Park. On the grant payment day in late November, all of the Park's CSG recipients return from town without any money. It seems that no CSG payments have been made at all. I sit next to Sunette on her small *stoep* as women stop by on their way to the bathroom or Ilana's *stoep* and ask if they, too, have not received any grants. Like all other recipients, Sunette doesn't know much and tells the women to wait for Ilana to come back from town. A few women wonder if they made the verification phone call too late, while others are sure that it must be a problem with the payment system. When Ilana returns

to the Park, she too without her children's grants, most of the residents assume that there is an error in the SASSA system.

Just like Adele and Jan, residents trust Ilana and Henry to address the matter on their behalf. Indeed, Ilana and Henry visit the local SASSA offices early the next morning. When they return, Ilana calls a short meeting. Payments, she announces, will be delayed until the mid-December when recipients will receive both months' grants. From my observations only three residents visit the SASSA office independently to inquire about the delayed payment. Others rely on Ilana and Henry to make the relevant enquiries.

It remains unclear to me, as it appears unclear to most of the recipients, why the payments were delayed. Since social grants are the biggest source of income for many households, one may assume that delayed payments will create a big upset. Yet the women who now have to make ends meet without their CSGs continue to be quite calm. Remarkably void of anger and frustration, the majority of the CSG recipients seem content to wait for the cash to be transferred nearly three weeks later. None of the recipients makes made any additional inquiries to what Ilana and Henry had done. Liz, a single mother of three children, explains that she is simply relieved that her children's grants have not been revoked. Talking among themselves after Ilana's meeting, a few other mothers reason that it may even be better that the grants are only be paid later. Receiving two months' payments at once means that they can afford a nicer Christmas, one mother notes.

When I ask about the possibility that they make their own inquiries into the matter, the women look at me puzzled. Gina eventually suggests that there is not much they can do. Ilana has visited the SASSA offices already and surely none of the other women will achieve anything that Ilana could not. Sophie mentions that she will borrow money from her sister who lives outside the Park. That, together with the communal meals and other donations, ought to see her and her two children through the month.

When the grants are finally transferred three weeks later, very little of the lavish Christmas celebrations many imagined seem possible. Much of the money is used to pay off debts and loans incurred during this period and to buy groceries. Due to the school holidays in December, children do not receive their regular school meals and parents thus have to buy more groceries than usual.

This section shows the tension that exists between the technical systems through which residents access (or are supposed to access) social grants, and the reality of residents' day-to-day experiences with doing so. While the state seems increasingly intent to focus the process of social assistance on the individual — through fingerprints, voice recognition, private PIN and bank accounts — residents choose to continue viewing the process of receiving social grants as part of the broader shared life in the Park. It is true that the physical cash residents receive is considered to be individually owned, but the larger processes of accessing this cash draws on established networks of power, knowledge, and social and cultural capital in the Park. State social assistance is always *social,* and thus implies not only a relationship between the state and citizens, but also between the citizens themselves.

The meaning of work: moralities, politics, and economies

As shown above, state social assistance accounts for a large percentage of the cash income of many households in King Edward Park. Due to its perceived moral virtues, however, waged work continues to be the most preferred means through which to access cash. This section elaborates on some forms of waged and unwaged work that the Park's residents engage in, the most important of which is piecework. In line with how residents emphasise conventional gender roles, men mostly seek piecework outside of the Park, while women tend to find ways of earning cash inside the Park.

Given Afrikaner nationalism's historical roots in Calvinist theology, and the rehabilitation interventions into the lives of poor-whites during the 1930s, it is not surprising that both residents and sponsors place significant emphasis on the importance of finding and engaging in waged work. It follows the conventional thinking about labour, capital, and distribution found in most capitalist societies. Most such societies, Ferguson (2015: 20) notes, assume that distribution is organised through "the market": labour is exchanged for money, which in turn is used purchase goods. Working, in the capitalist sense, is taken to be a natural order and not a social convention (Weeks, 2011: 3). In the context of the Park, this definition of "work" is expanded by the Weberian notion of "protestant ethics" (Weber, 2002). The neo-Calvinism that informed Afrikaner Christian nationalism was heavily shaped by the protestant work ethic which Weber analyses. As I discussed in chapter three, poor-whites in the 1930s were explicitly encouraged to engage in waged work in order to enter the middle class. Waged work, in this sense, is not only a means through which to earn an income, but has a moral dimension. Yet finding waged work is difficult in the very competitive climate of post-apartheid South Africa marked by high rates of unemployment.

As I noted in the introduction, conservative political groups frequently attribute the perceived recent increase in white poverty to the implementation of affirmative action and black economic empowerment policies. While not referring to any specific racial group, Ferguson (2015: 4) argues that the ANC's neo-liberal approach to employment growth has been largely unsuccessful. In the absence of the creation of new employment opportunities and the decline of industries such as mining and agriculture, South Africa continues to battle with exceptionally high unemployment rates. Contrary to the idea that whites have specifically been targeted by economic policy, statistics show that unemployment rates among white South Africans are still significantly lower than for any other racial group.

White unemployment was calculated to about 5% in 2004, compared to 33% amongst black South Africans. In the first quarter of 2015, overall unemployment in South Africa was estimated to be around 26%.[12] This translates to more than fifteen million unemployed South Africans (Le Cordeur, 2015). Yet unemployment amongst white South Africans remained low, with rates of around 7% (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Irrespective of these numbers, political conservatives remain unconvinced and, as I discussed in chapter one, claim that up to 600 000 whites live in poverty. As I will argue in chapter six, a large majority of the sponsors who contribute to the Park are convinced that white poverty, such as that in King Edward Park, is solely produced by government's discrimination against white citizens.

Real men and real work

Understanding the nature of work that residents do and the other means in which they engage to make money requires appreciation of the gendered nature of work in the Park. The previous chapter noted that gender divisions in the Park place women in domestic spaces while men are tasked with being breadwinners. This strongly reflects the dominant twentieth century dogma that waged labour is an important foundation for male personhood (Ferguson, 2015: 148). In much the same way as *real* women are expected to bear children and be a mother, *real* men are expected find waged work, or at least attempt to do so. While it is perfectly acceptable for a woman in the Park to receive a CSG grant and not seek any other work while she cares for her children, a man is expected to be the breadwinner and provide for his family. Yet very few men in the Park have permanent employment. There are several factors that make it difficult for men to find work. While affirmative action policies have very little bearing on men's job searches, these are rather impeded by men's low levels of formal

[12] This number refers to the 'narrow' definition of unemployment only: it considers only the unemployed who are actively searching for employment. When taking into account the 'broad' definition of unemployment, namely including the unemployed who are willing to work but are not actively searching, the number is significantly higher around 40% (Le Cordeur, 2015; Klasen & Woolard, 2008).

education, substance abuse, and lack of the material resources necessary to access job openings.

Very few men in the Park have completed high school. All of the men I spoke to left school after grade 9 or 10. This significantly limits their employment prospects. Many men had been attending technical high schools where they were taught the skills that are typically associated with semi-skilled labour, including, for example, welding, building, and woodwork.

Gert is one of these men. His skin is a dark shade of red with deep wrinkles across the forehead, the result of spending many hours outside when he guards cars at a shopping mall. Gert left school shortly after he turned fifteen. He was a child, he says, who didn't understand the value of an education. Later he adds that he used lots of drugs when he was younger. He cannot remember exactly when he started experimenting with drugs, but thinks he was thirteen when he first started smoking *dagga* with his friends. They started smoking cigarettes a few years before, Gert recalls, when he must have been in standard two or three.[13] He went from cigarettes and *dagga* to harder drugs. In this time, his late teens and early twenties, he borrowed money from family and mostly lived with friends. Some years later Gert realised he needed to find an income. He gestures to where two of his children are playing nearby. He met his wife, she fell pregnant, and he set out to find employment, realising that he now had a family to provide for. It was hard, he says softly, and he relapsed a few times but couldn't afford a rehabilitation centre.

Eventually he saved enough money to pass a Code EC driver's licence as well as a professional driving permit (PrDP), allowing him to work as a long-haul truck driver. He struggled to keep one job and moved around a lot. Before they moved to the Park, he spent

[13] Grade four or five, when he would have been ten or eleven years old.

almost two years working for a towing service. Gert describes this time as his family's most stable. Pulling out a cellular phone, he shows me photos from this time on his Facebook page. He scrolls through pictures of his two oldest children in the kitchen of the apartment they lived in, the car they owned, and the towing truck he used to drive.

The towing company he worked for became insolvent in early 2012 and again his family had no income. By this time his wife was pregnant with their fourth child and, despite doing all he could, he was unable to find a job. They moved to King Edward Park in the second half of 2012. The longer he is without a job, the harder it becomes to find one, Gert explains. In the meantime, his PrDP has expired and he cannot afford the renewal fee. Without a valid PrDP many companies will not even accept an application from him.

Once they moved to the Park, Gert explains it became even harder to find employment than before. During their first few months, Gert shared a cell phone with his wife, but as it was without internet access he could not search for vacancies online. He has since bought a second-hand Blackberry phone, but often cannot afford to pay for data services. Most of the time he thus relies on others telling him of openings or walks around town to make inquiries. A friend printed two copies of his curriculum vitae that he keeps in a plastic sleeve. Whenever he wants to apply for a position he walks to the post office to make additional copies. It is not expensive but there have been times when he could not afford the copies. Once he had to decline an interview because he did not have money for transport to get there.

Gert's story is similar to that of many of the men in the Park. Apart from struggles with addiction, several of the men have spent time in prison, making it even more difficult to find employment. Many also share Gert's view that living in the Park complicates the search for employment. Aside from feeling that people outside the Park see it stereotypically as a place where lazy addicts live, quite a few mention the difficulty of finding employment without access to the internet or a phone. They also raise the issue of not having the appropriate

clothes to wear to interviews or meetings. Gert only has one pair of sandals, for example, that is old and worn but he has no choice but to wear it with more formal trousers when he goes to interviews. Bennie cannot wear any trousers with buttons because of his illness and thus only wears tracksuits.

In spite of these difficulties, men are expected at least to express a willingness to do waged work. This is important not only in terms of constructions of masculinity inside the Park, but also when sponsors visit. Sponsors strongly favour traditional gender roles, and regularly ask the Park's men about work. The men's replies are nearly always the same: that affirmative action is hindering them as white men and that they are therefore trying to find piecework.

The next section outlines some of the ways in which residents find piecework, as well as the form it usually takes. This discussion highlights both the gendered differences in approaches to work, and some of the complicated social and political problems residents face when searching for employment.

Piecework inside and outside the Park

Permanent employment is rare for people in the Park. There are four men who have permanent jobs as boilermakers. The others rely on contract work, or piecework. Residents view this form of work as waged work, though most often it technically forms part of the informal economy (see Hart, 1973) and is not regulated by the formal market. While piecework affords them extra income, it also leaves them vulnerable and without the protection of labour regulations. During my fieldwork I heard several complaints that pieceworkers were being paid less than the previously agreed upon amount. In such instances there is little a pieceworker can do. In frustration, Bennie once visited the person who owed him money at home, threatening to burn his house down. Such approaches hardly ever lead to

a desirable outcome, and in reality there is little pieceworkers can do with regard to the dishonouring of agreements.

In the strict sense of the term "piecework" refers to employment where one is compensated for doing a thing or task, regardless of the time required to complete the work (Hart, 2016). In the Park (as in South Africa more generally), the term refers to the work of a day labourer, where there is no expectation of it leading to any further work. Residents also use the term when they refer more generally to work outside of the formal sector. The types of piecework which the men engage in around town are washing cars, painting, gardening, fixing cars or electronics, building, and installing shelves or cupboards.

The town where the Park is located has many unemployed people, Boet complains while walking to the panel beater where he occasionally works. This means that he is only called to work whenever more workers are needed to complete a specific task. He is seldom called more than once a month, and sometimes months go by while he waits for a call. Competition for work is stiff and if Boet does not respond quickly enough, the available piecework goes to someone else. Boet has considered moving to a town with more employment opportunities, but lacks the funds to do this. Unless he is offered a job that also offers him relocation costs (an unlikely scenario), he will have to stay in the Park.

Some pieceworkers, like Boet, stay in the Park and only head into town if they hear about a specific work opportunity, or go there at the end of the month when pieceworkers are in higher demand. Boy has a contact at a business which calls him if it needs help. Some of the younger residents occasionally do welding work that they hear about through the boilermakers. Others, like Bennie, have more structured routines. In order to extend his

disability grant, Bennie spends four mornings a week searching for piecework.[14] He walks around the suburbs where he seeks odd jobs like mowing lawns, washing cars, or other small jobs in and around houses. Bennie usually leaves shortly after eight in the morning, dressed in his brown work boots and a yellow shimmering jacket, and returns after lunch. On the days when he is successful, he earns R50 for the day, but he accepts less if he needs to. Even if he wanted to, Bennie cannot accept more permanent employment as it might place him at risk of losing his disability grant. He is content with what he is able to make in this way, and takes me around town to point out the houses where he regularly finds piecework.

In contrast to the men, women in the Park hardly ever search for piecework by walking around town or going from one house to the next. [15] There are, however, some women who have relatively stable jobs outside the Park. Joan occasionally works at a nearby pharmacy, and Angie is a cleaner at a local business. Adele, after a few months in the Park, started working as a floor assistant at a general dealer. Karen has a contact who occasionally offers promotional work at supermarkets or intersections to the younger women. This earns Karen and her sister-in-law between R80 and R100 per day, usually on the last day or two days of the month. Sharon works as a part-time waitress, and Susan and Maria work as cashiers, at a supermarket and the local cinema respectively. Unlike the men, however, women who do not have a set arrangement to work outside the Park do not go around town in search of work.

In contrast to men, women have far more opportunities to earn money inside the Park. The most common one is caring for children while their parents work. There is little permanence in this work as parents' employment status changes often and mostly with little advance notice. Yet there are always some adults who require care for their children while they are at

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[14] Bennie has received a disability grant since 2011 when a large tumour was found in his small intestines. It was removed but due to post-surgery complications he suffers from seizures and can no longer do formal work.
[15] I do not elaborate extensively on the implications of this gender division in this chapter. I want to briefly note, however, how it once again reinforces the nature/culture dichotomy I discussed in chapter four.

work or elsewhere. It might only be for one afternoon or evening, or it could be for a longer period.

Watching one to three children for an afternoon earns a woman about R20. Payment is always negotiated every time care is required as parents are often not able to pay so much and some women are willing to accept less. The negotiation is dependent on the position the parents occupies within the informal hierarchy in the Park. Ilana's children, for example, easily manage to arrange babysitters for their children in exchange for a lift to town, a meal, or a few beers. Residents who are not part of the inner circle of the Bennet family usually pay a little more.

There are frequently arguments between parents and carers if parents fail to pay the agreed-upon fee. While carers regularly vow to these parents to never look after their children again, they hardly ever keep this promise though they may begin requiring payment in advance.

Parents who have more secure employment have standing arrangements with women to look after their children. There are also some families who have moved out of the Park but still use the Park's women to care for their children.[16] If the children are young, the parents will drop them off early in the morning; if the children attend school, the parents instruct them to walk to the Park after school. The tasks of carers include making sure that the children have lunch after school, attend any after-school programmes and do their homework, and keeping an eye on them until their parents come home or pick them up. For these more permanent arrangements, parents and carers negotiate a weekly rate that, typically, amounts to between R50 and a R100 per week.

I use the word "permanent" very loosely here. The employment status of residents, together with their ability to pay for child care, changes frequently and without much warning. Lukas

[16] During my fieldwork there were three such families.

and Susan pay Patricia R80 per week to take care of their three children while they both work. About three months into this arrangement, Lukas loses his job as car guard. He stays home and takes care of the children himself. When Lukas finds work again as a car guard a few months later, the agreement with Patricia resumes. Lukas again loses his job, two months later, and once more stays home with the children. By the time Lukas goes back to his car guarding job for a third time, Patricia is taking care of another family's children.[17] The job of taking care of Lukas and Susan's children then goes to Meisie, who recently stopped volunteering at the crèche, at a newly agreed rate of R70 per week. The lower rate, Susan explains, is because Meisie is young and does not have her own children. Patricia, on the other hand, has three children of her own and can thus ask a higher rate.

Women can occasionally earn a few rand by cleaning other residents' houses. They can earn approximately R10 for a room and about R30 for an entire house. At times residents may also negotiate for single tasks, such as making a bed or washing some few dishes, to be completed for R2 or R5. The cleaning women are hired in particular by employed men who live alone. Henry always asks Anna when he wants his room cleaned and pays her R20 for it. Among the legal avenues of earning money, cleaning is the least desirable way for women to earn money. This is because of South Africa's long history of employing primarily black African women as domestic workers (Cock, 1980; Ginsburg, 2011). If offered any alternative, women in the Park are unlikely to accept cleaning work.

An indication of the racial lens through which cleaning work is seen and of the presence of systematic racism in the Park is the employment of Sarah, a black African woman, as cleaner at the crèche. The decision to employ Sarah, who works at the crèche five day per week, was

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[17] It is not uncommon for a person to lose the same form of employment three times in less than a year. Car guards work informally and are required to pay a daily fee, usually between R20 and R40, to a third party to secure a spot. If a guard cannot afford to pay this amount, the spot is offered to another one. Car guards often "lose" their jobs when they cannot afford the daily rate. However, soon the replacement car guard cannot afford the fee, and is himself replaced.

taken after some discussion between the volunteers at the crèche and the sponsors. Her appointment comes in addition to the engagement of two permanent teachers, two resident volunteers, the sponsors who take turns to spend mornings assisting, and me. In the past, before Sarah was hired, the resident volunteering women did the little cleaning that is required throughout the day. This includes washing the dishes (around twenty plastic bowls and spoons at breakfast and lunch), wiping the tables where the children eat, and sweeping the classrooms after the children leave.

Once Sarah is hired, the white women stop cleaning altogether. In the Park, when there are only white women present, accepting cleaning work is seen as an act of desperation. If a black woman is present, however, it is immediately considered as utterly humiliating for a white woman to do any cleaning. Without much consideration, the Park women at the crèche seem to assume that Sarah will also wash the dishes they use for meals they eat when at the crèche. Beforehand there was an understanding that each woman would either wash her own dishes after a meal, or that we would all take turns to do it. With Sarah present, all of the white women simply put their dirty dishes next to the children's dishes and walk off. This begins immediately on the first day that Sarah starts working at the crèche, without any discussion about which tasks she will take over from the other volunteers. Much like the idea of naturalised space (discussed in chapter two), it seems that all of the white women at the crèche simply assume that some forms of work are more appropriate for certain racial groups. The following section shows that this understanding is very common among the Park residents more widely.

The display of racial superiority among white women at the crèche, assuming that black Africans ought to work *for* rather than *with* whites, illuminates understandings of whiteness and its implications for work in the Park. Cleaning work is undesirable as it is thought to be more suitable for black African women. The next section examines in greater detail how

ideas about normative whiteness seep through understandings of which work whites ought to do. This leads to situations where residents turn down work because they consider it inappropriate for whites, or because they judge the wages offered as not appropriate for a white person.

White work/white wages

This section elaborates on the concept of "white work" and "white wages". Informed by the discussion of good whiteness in chapter three, I argue that residents understand certain forms of work as inappropriate for whites. By engaging in work that is not "white enough", residents feel they are humiliating themselves and risk being seen as less white than others. The concept of white work limits residents' employment opportunities as many residents refuse to do work that they view as inappropriate for white workers. There are instances, however, when the notion of white and un-white work benefits residents. The section concludes by showing how sponsors who share the idea of white work can provide residents with privileged access to employment opportunities.

Because the work around town that residents can apply for is unskilled and semi-skilled, these jobs do not regularly face official implementation of affirmative action policies. A more frequent problem is the fierce competition that residents face when searching for work. The problem is thus not that employers turn down residents' applications because they are white, but rather that residents are not willing to work for the wages on offer and that black Africans are willing to accept. The residents of the Park therefore have to find work that is thought to be appropriate for whites and that pays accordingly, while competing with a large population of unemployed workers of other races. This is not unlike the problems faced by the Pact government in the 1920s (Giliomee, 2009: 332-335; O'Meara, 1983: 80). In the post-apartheid period, however, the unemployed white population no longer has the benefit of job

reservation through a nationalist government. As I show later in this section, however, residents experience a miniature form of job reservation through the interventions of politically conservative sponsors.

For Mickey, a painter and builder in his late thirties, the biggest obstacle when searching for work is not affirmative action. Rather it is the competition from black African men who are willing to work for lower wages than he is. From where he sits on an old tyre in front of his house, he gestures towards the *lapa* that he helped build a year or so earlier. He built large parts of his three-roomed house in the Park as well, he says and gives me a detailed description of how he went about it. In the past, referring to the apartheid era, it was much easier, Mickey argues. People understood that all cultures have their own place and if you went to look for work, as a white man, there was always something to do. His wife's father, for example, had few qualifications but found work on the railways. Back then, he muses, people were poor but there were ways to escape poverty. Today he has little hope for the future. He'd rather stay here and help around the Park than humiliate himself by earning the same wage as black African builders.

"Kaffir work for kaffir pay" is how Brandon describes the type of work that is available to him. When I ask what he means, he elaborates:

> Look, before Mandela took over, there was a certain way. But then … see, when the blacks came in … there were changes. Say, if I worked as a builder — because I'm a builder — then I went to the site and then maybe I would later on become a supervisor. If you worked, you went somewhere. Then things started changing. The blacks, they also wanted to be the boss. Look, I'm not saying that he can't do the work. Maybe he can. But there are differences. Us, we white people, we are educated and they are African. They have that African in them that makes them work

> differently. So now it is not right that I have to go and the black who knows nothing tells me how to do my work. (Interview, 30 May 2014)

Other residents' ideas on appropriate work echo Brandon's thoughts on whiteness and work. One morning, David tells me how he once considered hitting a journalist when the journalist asked Sunette whether she would consider working as a cleaner. David interprets this question as an insult. Cleaning or custodian work is not appropriate for white women, he says. Even at the crèche, David points out, there is a black woman who does the cleaning.

Understanding certain forms of work as un-white complicates job-searches for residents. Accepting certain forms of work, for certain wages, is believed to reflect poorly on one's ability to be a good white. In a market that is over-saturated with employment seekers who do not see work in the same racialised manner as do the Park residents, and who are willing to work for very little, residents' chances of finding any more than piecework is limited. The exception to this is when residents are offered work by outside sponsors who share their views of white work. Within the current context of conservative whiteness, who hold the unflinching belief that poorer whites are targeted by racist government policies, the concepts of white work and white wages hold benefits for some of King Edward Park's residents.

Some sponsors of the Park visit the Park with the intention of finding whites to employ. They consider it only fair for a white employer to employ whites, given the loss of opportunities whites suffer as a result of affirmative action. Dawid, one such potential employer, explains his reasoning to me in the following way:

> You have the ANC and they are giving jobs to their own people. The blacks are on top now and they are getting back at us for everything they feel went wrong [during apartheid]. So what can you and I do? I say we should retaliate by doing the same thing. How many white guys out there use the labour of blacks? Many. I think … it just makes sense to me to come to places like this and rather get white guys here,

> guys who have been kicked by the black government, and to give these guys a chance. (Interview, 29 November 2013)

Thus, while residents sometimes refuse work that they do not consider white enough, they are able to benefit at other times from the interventions by outsiders who seek to appoint only white workers. David is a resident who has taken thorough advantage of work offered in this way. If all other residents were to do the same, David argues, it would significantly lighten the Park management's financial burden. What David imagines is a type of co-operative system where white employers can always come the Park and find reliable workers, and residents can access work they otherwise would be unable to.

David is well-acquainted with most of the sponsors in the Park. In the six years that he has lived in the Park he has worked with many sponsors on various projects and has established himself as an honest and reliable man. At 59 years of age, he is also one of the oldest men in the park who still has an income other than state assistance. Despite soon being able to receive SOAS, David plans to continue working as long as possible. Emphasising the idea that, while state social assistance is something citizens are entitled to, it is better to keep working, he says to me:

> Next year I can receive pension and I won't say no to that. Same as the children's welfare money. It is money owed to us by the state and if we don't take it, it will probably be wasted in some [or] other way. But I don't see why I have to stop working. It keeps me busy and if I can still work, I think it's the right thing to do. (Interview, 4 May 2014)

David prides himself on the relationships he has established with sponsors. If one is willing to work, he expresses, sponsors soon realise that white men like him do work that is far superior to that of men from other racial groups. This is because whites are able to work independently and do not need constant supervision, he claims. David thinks he is unlikely to

find permanent or formal employment again, given his age and race. Yet with his dedication he has found several avenues by which to earn a regular income. One sponsor introduced him to the principal of a nearby primary school and he is now employed to direct the school's crossing guards in the afternoon. It usually takes him no longer than half an hour every afternoon and he is paid R1000 per month, sponsored by the local branch of the Democratic Alliance. Because the school now knows him, he is called in whenever they have evening events to guard the cars that are parked on the school's rugby field. David proudly tells me that the principal also refers third parties to him if, for example for a wedding reception that was held in the school hall. They do not pay him a fixed rate but ask individual car owners to give him small a donation. Often he is also given left over food and drinks. The donations David receives usually amount to R250 or R300 per evening. He is also paid another R1000 per month, paid by Yahweh Ministry, to take the Park's children to school and home again.

David frequently reminds his stepsons that whites from outside the Park are always looking for honest white men to appoint. He informs me that he often sees sponsors come to the Park offering work to residents. Yet some of them experienced too much trouble with the Park's residents and eventually took the opportunities elsewhere. He lists the names of a few men who became troublemakers at sponsors' places of employment. Some only worked for a week or two before deciding not to go back, creating the impression that people from the Park do not want to work. There was one man, David continues, who did not even attend the interview that was arranged for him. He took the transport money the sponsor had made available to him to get to the interview and bought beer and a small bag of *dagga* instead.

David notes that luckily there are still many people who wanted to help the Park's residents, but confides that he is afraid that sponsors will eventually choose to extend their help to other, more worthy whites elsewhere. This fear impressed on David the need not only to embody good whiteness at all times, in public and in private, but also to display good

whiteness in the type of work one engages in. We thus return, once more, to the notion that one ought to live in a certain white manner in order to access certain forms of whiteness. The knowledge that the white outside may be watching is never far from the minds of those residents who are committed to the project of good whiteness. Every now and then one hears a resident muse about the possibilities that sponsors might offer if they see a resident working hard and being committed to pursuing opportunities outside the Park.

The notions of "white work" and "white wages" clearly point out how the economic worlds of residents are embedded within social and economic contexts. The political power of the ideology of whiteness is illumined when we see residents, even when in severe poverty, turning down work that they consider not to be "white work". The concept of "white work" does not exist in isolation, however. As sponsors continue to visit the Park, offering "white work" to residents, residents continuously encourage them to uphold this notion and clearly express the opinion that whites ought to be privileged over other racial groups. This does not mean that residents are not critical of white interventions in the Park, a topic that is investigated in detail in chapter six.

The business of internal economies

In the absence of formal employment opportunities and the scarcity of piecework, residents often find innovative ways to access cash in the Park. I have already discussed a few above, for example how women find work as childminders or cleaners. This section discusses the ability by some residents to set up more permanent businesses, both legal and illegal in character. The ability to set up an informal business often depends on social and familial networks in the Park. The following discussion of tuckshops, the provision of electricity, selling of illegally imported cigarettes and alcohol, cash lending, and alleged sex work shows

how cash circulates in the Park itself. It also shows the difficulty of drawing clear lines of distinction between legal and illegal, and debtor and creditor.

The small business that is most quickly spotted in the park is Henry's tuck shop. In the centre of the Park opposite the *stoep*, Henry's tuck shop is located in the small front room of an asbestos building (see Figure 14). It is usually manned by Ilana's former daughter-in-law, Tasha, and is open from 9 a.m. to the early evening. It sells a variety of items including canned food, bread, milk, sweets, cigarettes, aspirin, toilet paper, airtime, and cooldrinks. Its prices are much the same as those at the nearest supermarket. A second tuck shop is set up in the front room of Saartjie's house and sells items very similar to Henry's tuck shop. As Saartjie's house is less centrally located and does not sell cigarettes, her tuck shop is slightly less popular. It seems, however, that because of Henry's position in the Park, there are always residents who are angry with him and choose rather to buy from Saartjie.



Figure 14: Henry's tuck shop

While some residents buy at the tuckshops out of a sense of loyalty towards those running them, others do so because they find it an inconvenience to walk all the way to the supermarket for only a few items. They buy groceries at the supermarket when they receive their grants or wages, but buy from one of the tuck shops during the rest of the month.

Some items, in particular cigarettes, are cheaper to buy from Henry's tuck shop than supermarkets. The reason is that supermarkets do not stock off-brand and untaxed items. All of the Park's smokers who do not buy loose tobacco to roll their own cigarettes buy their cigarettes from Henry. His tuck shop stocks a large variety of unusually cheap and unknown brands of cigarettes such as Savannah, Malimbo, Dullah, Safari, and Prince (see Figure 15).

They are all sold for R12 for a pack of twenty. Bennie and Michael, who occasionally accompany Henry to buy stock, explain that Henry buys the cigarettes for R70 per carton from Chinese vendors on the East Rand.



Figure 15: An example of the Malimbo brand of cigarettes sold at Henry's tuck shop. The design of this brand shows a distinct resemblance to the branding and design of Marlboro cigarettes.

Henry's tuck shop also sells painkillers that Henry buys from a pharmacy and repackages in smaller quantities. The medication sold at the tuck shop is not displayed like other products and customers have to ask for it specifically. Yet not all requests for medication are fulfilled. While waiting to be served at the tuckshop, several women in line with me explain how their friend is not allowed to buy painkillers from the tuckshop anymore. Henry suspects that she is addicted to them and has instructed the woman working in the shop to not sell medication to her anymore.

Twice during my fieldwork the police come to the Park to search Henry's tuck shop for illegal merchandise. Although this does not happen regularly, Henry seems to have a well thought-out plan for these kinds of instances. On both occasions Henry seems to have been warned shortly beforehand that the police was en route to the Park. He parks his car next to the tuck shop and quickly loads the alcohol[18] and cigarettes into it. On top of them he places boxes of crisps and cookies, filling empty spaces with loose packs of sweets. He then drives off, telling whoever is near enough to hear that has to deliver the sweets to his daughter in Brakpan. He stores the goods at some friends or family for a few days after which they reappear in the shop.

Another source of income for residents in the Park is outsourcing electricity. A small generator is one of the first items residents invest in when they find employment. Yet, this is only possible for those who live in structures that can be locked securely, for if it is not locked away securely at night, it is very likely to be stolen. Residents who do not own their own generator can pay those with a generator to extend an electrical line to their housing structure for a couple of hours a day. Henry runs by far the most lucrative power supplying venture. At the back of his home, secured by a structure of wood and corrugated iron, Henry keeps a generator that is large enough to provide small amounts of electricity to several households. Depending on the size of the family and their home, Henry asks between R800 and R1400 a month to connect a residents' home to the generator. He then provides between two and five hours' worth of electricity per day. The precise duration of time for which the generator will supply electricity every day is not specified and dependent of the amount of diesel that is available. If Henry has no money to purchase fuel for the generator, there is no power. This is often a source of conflict between him and those to whom he supplies power,

[18] The tuck shop itself did not sell any alcohol, but Henry occasionally provides storage space to Nico for alcohol he sells from his house. Nico's business is discussed later in this section.

with the latter accusing him of extortion. As for most of his business ventures in the Park, Henry claims to make very little profit. He claims that most of the money he receives is used to buy diesel. Those who buy power from him vehemently disagree.

Lukas and Susan have paid Henry to supply their household with electricity. The few hours of electricity they have access to every day is only enough for few lights at night, and to charge their cellular phone. Neither of them views their arrangement with Henry as desirable. Yet, as their youngest child suffers from asthma and they cannot afford a generator of their own, they do not want to risk having no electricity and continue to pay Henry for power. Lukas is very explicit about the fact that he feels exploited by Henry. He summarises his thoughts on the matter as follows:

> Do yourself a favour and just count. How many people in this camp pay Henry for power? I think maybe ten or more households. We pay him R850 a month and we get a few hours here and a couple there. Just think about it. If ten people are paying him R800 a month, that's a total of more than R8 000. There is no fucking way that he spends that on petrol [diesel]. (Interview, 3 June 2014)

Other households with access to generators have similar agreements with their neighbours to supply electricity in exchange for a daily or weekly fee. In some instances, when a household owns a generator but cannot afford fuel, a neighbour will buy a few litres of fuel in exchange for shared use of the apparatus. Yet no generator except Henry's is large enough to provide power to several households at once. For these generators usage arrangements are therefore mostly between two households, primarily between neighbours. Such arrangements are fragile. Because they are used so regularly, generators break rather frequently. Other disputes arise when one party is regularly unable to buy its share of fuel, or when the household that owns the generator accepts money but does not purchase the requisite fuel.

A third form of business is the offering of short term loans to residents. Nico, Ilana's son, is able to do this as his employment status provides him with sufficient spare cash. Bennie and Anna regularly borrow small amounts from Nico. When I ask them about the high interest rates that Nico charges, between 100% and 200% depending on the amount and his relationship with the borrower, Bennie says that he does not consider the interest rates unfair. Business is business after all, he tells me, and it is the way all lenders work. Other residents prefer borrowing from Nico because they trust him. He is Ilana's son which affords him credibility. Nico won't disappear, one man says, because his whole family lives in the Park. Therefore, residents always know where to find him and can complain to Ilana if they feel cheated.

For most residents in need of cash, the only alternative to borrowing from Nico or other residents with cash to spare are the *mashonisas* (unscrupulous money lenders)[19] in town. Residents are quite wary of the *mashonisas*. While they charge interest rates as high as Nico's, they tend to require borrowers to hand over their bank cards so that the *mashonisa* can immediately withdraw the money owed on the agreed upon date of repayment (also see James, 2014: 113). Not only does Nico not require a bank card as security, but he allows for renegotiation if the borrower needs to extend the repayment date.

Nico has also set up quite a lucrative business of selling alcohol in the Park. It is relatively easy to purchase beer in the Park at any time of day, either from Nico himself or from his business partner Jason, Maggie's husband and Ilana's brother-in-law. About once a week Nico and Jason drive to a nearby liquor store where they buy several cases of Black Label beer. They sell the beer from their respective houses. Nico also sells bottles of Mokador Coffee, an inexpensive aperitif, and Old Brown Sherry, which he purchases in bulk at Makro,

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[19] *Mashonisas* are mostly unregistered in terms of the National Credit Act. See James (2014) for a detailed discussion.

a whole sale retailer. During the day when Nico is at work as boilermaker, residents buy from Jason, who is unemployed and at home. When Nico is home, residents prefer buying from him as he allows certain residents to buy on credit.

While it is illegal to sell alcohol in this way, Nico and Jason make no attempts to hide it. As with Henry's cigarettes, most residents either do not realise or do not nor care about the illegality of their purchases. It is simply the most convenient and cost effective way for them to buy alcohol and cigarettes. The buying and selling of other illegal substances, most notably *dagga*, *tik*, and *nyaope* (a street drug that combines heroine and cannabis) are handled more cautiously and greater care is given to hide its use. It is possible, however, to buy these substances without having to leave the Park. *Dagga*, especially, is very easy to come by. Many users grow it outside their homes, but there are residents who prefer to buy it. Bennie finds it convenient to buy *dagga* from other residents, because his Wendy house is close to the *stoep* and it will be hard to hide a *dagga* plant from Henry and Ilana. Most residents who grow *dagga* hide the plants beneath other big-leafed plants, or at the back of their home if it faces away from any paths through the Park. Still, *dagga* plants are easy to spot throughout the Park. Every so often Ilana walks through the Park, instructing her sons to pull out any *dagga* plants she sees. Soon after, however, they reappear.

Despite the fact that some growers attempt to hide their *dagga* plants, most residents do not object to its presence. One woman tells me that she prefers her husband to smoke *dagga* as it calms him down. When he does not smoke, he tends to be very aggressive and breaks their furniture. The origins of other drugs in the Park are significantly harder to trace and the residents who know where and how to buy it keep the details to themselves. Yet evidence of the drugs can be spotted. A person visiting the ablution block shortly before sunrise can find a broken lightbulb, fashioned into a pipe, hidden behind one of the toilets. Some women use

it to smoke *tik,* Bets comments when she walks into the bathroom as I am looking at one of these homemade pipes.

Those who use drugs other than *dagga* hardly ever admit to it, making it hard to trace their life cycle in the Park. When I ask some residents where one can buy them, they always say that they are not sold within the Park itself. But a few blocks away, in the infamous Jaguar Street, it is easy to find almost any drug, Mara says. There, among sex workers and their Nigerian pimps, the residents who use hard drugs find their fix. However, Mara says sternly, being caught in Jaguar Street or having hard drugs found in your possession is the surest way for being evicted from the Park, without the prospect of being allowed back.

To conclude this discussion, it is necessary to address the issue of sex work in and around the Park. It is a difficult issue to examine as residents unconditionally refuse to discuss the topic. Yet it is a question often raised by sponsors. I often hear them asking residents the same question: there is so much poverty in the Park, surely some of the Park's women must be sex workers?[20] Without exception the answer is always and by everybody an unequivocal "no". The women explain that Ilana will never allow such things in the Park. There have been times, they explain, when sex workers came down from their usual spots in Jaguar Street to stand at the Park's entrance. In the instances where these women are white, it causes those who drive by to assume that the women live in the Park. If Henry catches wind of sex workers anywhere near the Park, he or Ilana immediately go over and tell them to leave.

And yet, despite this firm denial there are instances where I hear whispers of women in the Park offering sex in exchange for cash, drugs, or alcohol. I use the word "whisper" very literally here as it is always only alluded to in soft and hushed tones, mostly not accusing anyone outright. If I ask the speaker to repeat or explain what they said, they delicately

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[20] It is true, of course, that sex work is not confined to a single gender. However, in the conservative world view that many of visitors hold, it never seemed to occur to them to extend their question to men.

change the subject or claim that they cannot remember what they said. Piecing together the scarce bits of gossip about sex work in the Park once again lead us to the centrality of the moralities tied to good whiteness and the prominence of racialisation in relation to morality. I have come to understand that the sex workers who are regarded as problematic are always white women. Sex workers who are not white are not considered to pose any threat to the Park as residents assume that there is little chance of outsiders thinking that they reside there. Sex work is also, as I noted, entwined with gender and sexuality. For a white woman to engage in sex work is consequently seen as a very direct subversion of good whiteness. Unlike other forms of disruptions of good whiteness however, there is, according to the residents, little hope of rehabilitating such woman. Unlike other forms of transgression such as drug use the sexual nature of sex work is considered to taint women's bodies irreversibly. When Sally is raped one night by four men who are unknown to her, a mother at the crèche whispers to me that there has been rumours of Sally doing sex work a few years earlier. This, according to the mother, is likely to explain why she became a victim of rape.

Donations and distributions

The residents of King Edward Park gain access to cash, as I have shown, through state social assistance, occasional piecework or other forms of employment, or small business enterprises. The donations that the Park receives from sponsors, though, contribute as much, if not more, to the collective capital resources of the Park. In this concluding section I discuss the processes that guide the distribution of donated items.[21] I argue that these processes have been quite formalised and the rules regarding distribution are strictly enforced by Henry and Ilana. Yet many donated items are resold by residents. Although sponsors are very critical of this practice, I argue that residents view it as a practical means to add to their cash income.

[21] I present a detailed argument with regard to the political ideologies that frame the relationship between sponsors and residents in chapter six.

This once more points towards the different meanings attributed to capital. While sponsors view the selling of donated goods as dishonest, residents perceive these items as their own property that they can use or dispose of as is best for them.

Donations are strictly controlled by Henry and Ilana. All donations, as the Park's rules strictly prescribe, are to be shared amongst all residents. Henry views donations as crucial for the functioning of the Park. Since he and Ilana do not receive any official assistance or funding, they rely solely on donations to provide for the needs of the residents, in particular to feed everyone and to ensure that every household has at least a basic housing structure. Sponsors range from individuals who quickly stop by to drop off old clothes or furniture, or churches which donate a number of meals every few months, to organisations or individuals who are more closely involved and donate cash or groceries every month. In theory, the system through which donations are received and distributed is quite simple: all donations are considered to be communal and are received by Ilana in her capacity as Park manager. She sorts through the goods and compiles an inventory. She then decides which items to distribute to the residents and which ones to keep for resale in the storeroom next to the *stoep*. Food supplies are generally put aside for the communal meals. The only exception to this is when a sponsor explicitly asks for food donations to be distributed to the individual households. This happens in situations when sponsors are concerned that their donations will not reach all the residents as they might be taken by Ilana. In such cases sponsors tend to ask that their donations are given to specific types of people as for example to elderly residents or to single parents. Henry generally does not approve of donations going to specified households but if sponsors insist, he complies.

After sorting donated clothes, Ilana lays them out on the *stoep*. She then uses her megaphone to call all residents to come and pick out what they can use. If the clothes are all of very

specific sizes, Ilana calls out specifically what sizes are available: "There are size ten and twelve women's clothes on the *stoep*!" or "Men's shoes, size nine! Size nine, men's shoes!"

Ilana or one of her children keeps a close eye on the residents' search through the clothes to make sure than nobody takes more than their fair share. There is a common understanding amongst residents that, depending on the size of the donation, everyone can take only one or two items until everyone has picked something. Once everyone has received something, residents who are interested may take one or two additional items. This continues until all clothes have been distributed. Residents who try to take more than their fair share are very quickly scolded by others and told not to be greedy. Thus, although there is no exact division, residents receive a more or less equal share of the donated clothes. There are residents who choose not to take any donations. David, whom I discussed earlier in this chapter, takes pride at not having to go to the *stoep* to receive donated clothes. Residents like him are in the minority, however. Even if residents choose not to wear the donated clothes, they will choose some to sell or barter with.

Larger or more expensive items, such as furniture, are usually distributed according to (Henry's evaluation of) need. With the help of Joan, Henry keeps a list of items that residents urgently need. This typically includes beds, mattresses, or materials to construct or expand houses. Residents frequently complain that Henry does not circulate these items fairly. Henry always assures those who complain that he, together with others to whom he refers as the "camp management", understand the needs of residents and that it is their duty to make sure that the most urgent needs are met first.[22] While Henry's evaluation of urgent need at times undoubtedly privileges his and Ilana's family, it also seems to follow the logic of good

[22] The "camp management" is, technically speaking, a structure that collectively oversees the wellbeing of all residents. In addition to Henry, the group is made up of two sponsors, Joan, and two residents who act as general representatives. The group hardly ever meets, however, and the sponsors who are members only step in if they feel that Henry has made a decision that is grossly unfair.

whiteness. Henry emphasised, on many an occasion, the importance of seeing to it that children of different genders do not share a bed. He therefore tends to give mattresses to households where children share beds. His distribution of materials to add more rooms to housing structures follow a similar line of thought. Henry is much more likely, for example, to provide residents with building material if they wish to add a bathroom or an extra bedroom, than if they want to add a living room.

Regardless of how often Henry and Ilana repeat that residents are not allowed to accept donations for themselves, residents continue to attempt to smuggle donations into their homes. When a resident accepts a donation and does not take it to the *stoep*, she has to be very quick about hiding it. Yet there always seems to be someone who claims to have seen them. With only the word of the witness, Ilana and Henry cannot do much. They are unlikely to physically search for the alleged donation. They mostly call the resident in question to the *stoep* and demand for the donation to be handed over. Such accusations tend to lead to long arguments, often starting with Ilana shouting out from her spot on the *stoep*, but hardly ever develop into anything more. In some instances, such as the example of Pop and the donated clothes I discuss in chapter four, a resident might eventually give up and hand over the hidden donations. More often than not, however, residents vehemently deny having accepted anything so that Ilana is eventually forced to drop the matter.

Of the donated clothes that are taken to and distributed from the *stoep,* very few items are eventually worn by the residents themselves. Once residents feel they have enough clothes to make do with, they sell the rest. Selling clothes in the Park is not difficult. Walking through the camp I often pass black women who softly ask, "*Klere*?" (clothes), indicating that they want to buy clothes. It is common knowledge among residents that everyone sells, or has in the past sold, donated clothes. Yet sponsors react furiously when they hear of this practice. Many see it as a sign that the residents are not grateful. In a Maussian sense, sponsors view

their donations as a gift that ought to be reciprocated with the upholding of good whiteness. Selling donations transgresses the idea that sponsors have of residents gratefully accepting donations and using them in their original form. For this reason, residents keep the selling as quiet as possible and try never to speak of it in the presence of a sponsor.

On their own, residents present an alternative view on the selling of donations. It is not dishonest, Bennie reasons. For him the bottom line is that he often needs cash more than he needs extra clothes. He points towards a makeshift clothes line a few metres away from where we are sitting in front of his house. On the line his and Anna's washing is drying. They have enough clothes for now, he says. It therefore seems irrational to him to keep heaps of clothes in their one bedroom Wendy house, while having to borrow money from Nico to survive through the month.

This idea that cash is more useful than clothes is a widely shared one. For many families, struggling to get by on their social grants, the selling of clothes can be their only access to cash. For the residents, reselling donations is a practical matter, not one of dishonesty. Sunette explains it in this way:

> The sponsors say that people sell things for drugs. But it's not fair because some of the people in the camp are honest. What is my child supposed to do with a duvet if she does not even have a bed? You tell me, because I don't understand. I think it is just that the sponsors, sometimes, they want to help, but they don't really understand … they don't understand that everyone does not need the same thing. We do what we have to do. (Interview, 3 June 2014)

As I discuss in greater detail in chapter six, sponsors to the Park are overwhelmingly motivated by a politically conservative agenda. Whether consciously or unconsciously they support the Park because they view the residents as victims of the post-apartheid system. While I will show how residents often agree with this, at least conversationally, the system of

donations that I have outlined in this chapter indicates how residents do not necessarily agree with the sponsors' ideas about how donations should be used. Selling donations, as residents frequently do, indicates how residents express agency, in spite of having limited access to capital. As I noted in this section, the politics around donations and distribution point out the way in which multiple meanings are attributed to, and derived from, forms of capital. Guided by the understanding of charity and donations, residents structure the process of receiving, distributing, and using donations in ways that aim to please sponsors, while still maximising its benefits for residents.

Conclusion

I noted in the introductory comments of this chapter that the economic should be contextualised within the lived world where it exists. I have therefore aimed to contextualise the residents of King Edward Park's access to different forms of capital within the broader social and political contexts of the Park. As the discussion of state social security, work, and donations demonstrates, the concepts and ideas relating to various means of income are fluid and at times difficult to differentiate from one another. Concepts like individuals and collectives, legal and illegal, and formal and informal are frequently presented as binaries. In reality, however, they are interwoven, collapse into one another, and inform each other. Like the categorical construction of the economic, the social, and the political, I suggest that these terms provide more productive insights when used together, rather than opposed to one another.

The examination of the ways in which residents access cash and other forms of economic capital displays how their difficulties in finding permanent employment often have no clear links to post-apartheid economic policies. And yet, despite the myriad of factors that contribute to the poverty of the Park's residents, sponsors continue to relate contemporary

poor whiteism explicitly to the end of apartheid. This framing, as I argue in the next chapter, places residents of the Park in a challenging position. The donations the Park receives from its sponsors account for much of the Park's collective capital; the continued support by sponsors, I show in chapter six, dependent on residents' complicity in expressing their socio-economic position in a specific and highly political manner.

CHAPTER SIX

A politics of homogeneity: remobilising ethnicity and the construction of poorer whiteism

Introduction

On 24 July 2008 Jacob Zuma, then president of the ANC and set to become the president of South Africa, visited a white informal settlement in Pretoria, about eighty kilometres north east of King Edward Park. At a "poor-white" informal settlement called Bethlehem he addressed a crowd of about one thousand poorer whites at a meeting that was organised by Solidarity. Zuma told the crowd that he had not known that there were white South Africans who were poor (Williams, 2008). Two years later, Zuma re-visited Bethlehem. During this visit, Helping Hand officially handed a report it had compiled on white poverty to the president in which it requested him to urgently address the issue of white poverty. On the eve of Zuma's 2010 visit, Dirk Hermann, Solidarity's general secretary, remarked that "government employees are not even aware of white poverty and the government does nothing to include white people in the future of South Africa" (Hermann, 2010).

Hermann's insistence that the South African government is not aware of *white* poverty and excludes whites from the future of South Africa is exemplary of a very particular post-apartheid discourse regarding the position of whites in South Africa. This chapter argues that the continued exceptionalism of post-apartheid white poverty produces a very specific relationship between poorer whites, like the residents of King Edward Park, and politically conservative white South Africans. Most crucially the chapter shows how conservatives mobilise the idea that white poverty is the result of government marginalising white South Africans.

The first section displays how politically conservative whites see poorer whites as "victims" of the post-apartheid era — in contrast to the arguments of the preceding chapters that put this position in doubt. To this group of whites, post-apartheid white poverty serves to confirm the perceived "marginalisation" and "oppression" of white South Africans. While residents do not necessarily hold the same political views as their sponsors, they continue to welcome visitors at the Park because of their contributions to the Park. Imagining the Park's residents as victims of the post-apartheid government, I argue, allows their politically conservative sponsors to engage in "White Talk" (Steyn, 2004, Steyn and Foster, 2008) that positions all white South Africans as marginalised and disempowered victims.

A neo-conservative project: poor-white tropes as symbol of 'reverse racism'

Images of poorer whites in post-apartheid South Africa have been published exceptionally widely (Krewinkel, 2009; O'Reilly, 2010; Vredenveld, 2010). Equally widely distributed are news reports of white South Africans who have fallen on hard times, following the democratisation of the country (see, for example, Burrows, 2016; MacDonald, 2010; O'Reilly, 2010; and Simpson, 2013). Such reports, alluding to the exceptionalism of white poverty, are not limited to small publications aimed at political conservatives, but appeared in both locally and internationally read and influential publications such as *The New York Times*, *BBC News,* or South Africa's *Mail & Guardian.* Almost without exception, white poverty is reported to have resulted from the end of apartheid. The reports observe that whites find themselves disempowered and disenfranchised by policies such as affirmative action. The idea that the residents of King Edward Park are economically poor solely as a result of affirmative action and black economic empowerment policies is, however, a gross oversimplification. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the life histories of the Park's residents reveal more nuanced and layered reasons for why they came to live in the Park and

unable to afford formal housing. In the minds of many of the Park's sponsors, however, the story of poorer whites in post-apartheid South Africa is quite straightforward.

In this section I speak to this specific positioning of poorer whites as "victims" of the post-apartheid era, most prominently by politically conservative whites. Residents do not necessarily see themselves as victims, but are still entangled in the broader national politics of conservative whiteness, white economies, and white poverty. Many of the sponsors who support the Park are motivated by a political narrative that imagines poorer whites, like the residents of King Edward Park, to be disempowered and disenfranchised by the post-apartheid state. I argue that the Park's sponsors understand the relationship between whiteness and poverty in much the same way as they view the link between whiteness and space, outlined in chapter two: poverty and squatting are fundamentally contrary to whiteness. Convinced that the post-apartheid government, and specifically the ANC, has set out to deliberately exclude white South Africans from the formal economy, these sponsors view the economic upliftment of poorer whites as their responsibility. This is an argument with far reaching consequences for the residents of the Park: it ties their access to various forms of capital to the presence of a very conservative political narrative.

A large network of exclusively white sponsors, both Afrikaans and English, has established itself in the Park. Discussions with them reveal that their involvement in the Park is guided by a deep-seated political conservatism. Sponsors openly express their shock and disgust at the sight of whites living in informal housing structures. In line with my argument that the very space of an informal settlement is regarded as un-white, sponsors often note how unnatural it seems to them that whites have to live in a squatter camp. One sponsor who visits the Park to donate old mattresses explains how hard it is for him to even go into the area where residents live and that he prefers to go no further than the *stoep*. Seeing whites live like *this*, he goes on, is unnatural and it is a sight that he finds almost too upsetting to stomach. A

similar situation develops when a sponsor asks me to deliver a pot of leftover food to a family whose baby is ill. When I invite her to accompany me, she replies that she is scared of what she may see if she goes deeper into the Park. While she feels compelled to help the Park's residents, she is afraid that she may cry if she witnesses the living conditions of residents more closely.

Annette, a sponsor who volunteers at the crèche on a weekly basis describes her initial discomfort and shock at the sight of the Park:

I am used to it now. I am not scared anymore. But at the beginning … I used to cry every time I drove away from this place, I wanted to take the children with me. You see terrible things here … I don't think people deserve to live like this. (Interview, 26 January 2014).

Another sponsor, Jo, presents his thoughts on the idea of whites living in squatter camps and being poor as follows:

> It is a culture thing. There is something like forty-seven different cultures in this country and we will always be part of a Western culture. They [black Africans] have African culture, so for them, they are used to living in shacks. I see it with the workers on my farm, you know? But we, people who are Western, we were not intended to live like this. (Interview, 18 December 2013)

While different in their choice of words and phrases, these two quotes both identify a presumed disruption of embedded ideas about who belongs where. Together with the examples presented above, they are exemplary of the way in which many sponsors reacted to the Park. Sponsors appear at the same time disturbed by the sight of whites living in a space of informal settlement, and compelled to intervene in some or other way. Primordial understandings of race and ethnicity, together with fears of a hopeless and dystopic future for white South Africans, urge many visitors to become and stay involved. Upon first meeting me, and hearing about my research, many sponsors immediately mention the statistics that

AfriForum and Helping Hand have circulated (for the latter see chapter one). Many seem shocked that the government does not intervene to ensure that *white* squatters are appropriately supported and provided with formal homes. Motivated by the Biblical command to love their (white) neighbours, and the fear that the Park represents the future of all white South Africans, sponsors are determined to keep the exceptionalism of poor whiteism intact.

When sponsors visit the Park for the first time they are directed to the *stoep*. Here they are met by Henry or Ilana. When a new sponsor is not merely dropping off clothes or other items, the initial meeting usually involves the sponsor discussing with Henry and Ilana how they want to become involved, and what it is that they can offer the Park. Sponsors who volunteer at the crèche[1] go about the Park with a little more ease but, like other sponsors, very seldom wander further than the *stoep* or ablution facility. Ilana and Henry tend to receive visitors, including sponsors, with a vague sense of suspicion. Before introducing them to any other residents or showing them around the Park, Henry or Ilana carefully probe the purpose of the visit. Still, they hardly turn away anyone who wishes to visit the Park, interview residents, or make a donation. Once given the go ahead by Henry and Ilana, visitors are able to speak to residents more freely. Sponsors or other visitors are usually accompanied through the Park by Henry or Ilana, or another trusted resident of the Park. The visitors who are happy to walk around the Park are usually journalists and photographers, looking for residents to interview and photograph. Interviews are regulated by Henry, however, which means that the same residents tend to be interviewed over and over again. Sponsors, in contrast, seem to shy away

[1] The crèche has its own volunteering system, somewhat separate from that of the Park's other sponsors. It is supervised by Charlene, the head of Yahweh Ministry which funds the crèche and all other activities relating to the Park's children. The crèche's volunteers consist mostly of mothers from a nearby private school. The volunteers visit the crèche once a week each for two to three hours a day to assist the teachers and play with the children during recess. Volunteers also deliver a cooked lunch to the crèche every weekday. Although all of this is organised through Charlene, Henry and Ilana have to approve all of the activities and events. They can, and have asked volunteers to leave the Park.

from any direct interacting with residents inside the Park. They prefer to stay around the *stoep* or *lapa.*

Despite having ambivalent feelings about the frequent visitors to the Park, the majority of residents receive them very politely. While a few residents request visitors not to take photographs of them or their homes, I never encounter a resident who turns away a visitor who wants to speak to them. Privately, as I examine later in this chapter, residents express their irritation with the constant presence of visitors and at times complain about their disregard for the residents' privacy. They never bring up these complaints in the presence of a visitor, however; the ideology of good whiteness has been deeply internalised by them. Respectability and hospitality are integral parts of displaying good whiteness and residents pride themselves on begin good whites who welcome visitors, even if it sometimes is inconvenient or intrusive. In addition, residents are thoroughly aware of the noteworthy amount of capital that visitors bring to the Park. Turning visitors away therefore also means turning away potential capital investments. I am referring here not only to economic capital, but also to the social and cultural capital that is afforded to the Park by visitors through the particular way in which poor whiteism is framed. Although journalists, for example, seldom add any economic capital to the Park, the ways in which they keep the Park and its residents in the public mind and reassert the political narrative of poor whiteism, create other forms of capital that the Park benefits from.

"White talk" and post-apartheid white victimhood

While, as I demonstrate in the latter half of this chapter, residents do not always agree with the political beliefs of their sponsors, they seldom openly contradict the sponsors' opinions of white poverty and post-apartheid South Africa. The reason for this is most likely not to disrupt the ideas that keep white capital tied to the Park. This section shows that the

relationship between the Park's residents and their sponsors offers some benefits to sponsors, too. Spaces like King Edward Park offer politically conservative whites a tangible example with which to argue that white South Africans are oppressed, both economically and politically. The mutual construction of an "oppressed white" trope is thus beneficial for both residents and sponsors: it provides residents with continued visibility and sustained capital support, while giving political conservatives the opportunity to emphasise poor whiteism as a symbol of the oppression that whites are said to suffer under the leadership of the ANC. Throughout this discussion I seek to highlight the importance of understanding poor whiteism in the post-apartheid context.

Politically conservative Afrikaners draw strongly on the presence of poorer whites in informal settlements to maintain that white South Africans are systematically oppressed (O'Reilly, 2010; Roets, 2015; Simpson, 2013; Van Heerden, 2014).[2] Many assume that the Park's residents are unable to find employment because of affirmative action. This idea forms part of a wider discursive trend that positions South African whites as victims of the current state. As Blaser and van der Westhuizen argue, those whites who subscribe to this view feel disillusioned and traumatised by the transition to democracy and thus re-construct themselves as victims of marginalisation. Steyn (2005:131) identifies this positionality of whiteness as victimised as a typical feature of "White Talk". Ernst Roets (2015), deputy CEO of AfriForum, presents his understanding of whites in post-apartheid South Africa in this way (I quote extensively as he offers a unique insight into this understanding):

> I believe that the topic of "whiteness" is a misdirected topic. I believe that a solution to the so-called problem of "whiteness" will do little to move South Africa forward,

[2] Disentangling the ethnic and racial identities of sponsors is difficult. The politically conservative sponsors of the Park tend to draw on, and call for a return to, a conventional Afrikaner identity as prescribed by Afrikaner Christian nationalists. While all the Park's sponsors are white, they are not all Afrikaans-speaking. Because my thesis focusses on the everyday lives of the residents of King Edward Park rather than their sponsors, I do not elaborate extensively on the latter's identity politics.

> as white people are not to blame for South Africa's contemporary crisis. I believe that we might just as well initiate a conference about "blackness" and how black people need to change their way of thinking. But if we discuss "blackness" we are only allowed to discuss how black people have been exploited in the past and not how black people need to change their way of thinking. Because the latter would be racist. If, however, we discuss "whiteness" we are only allowed to discuss how white people need to change their way of thinking and not how they are currently being exploited. Because the latter would be racist. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the story of post-apartheid South Africa: A story of double standards. A story in which the President of the country can argue in Parliament that people who are in the minority should have less rights and in which he openly argues that every single thing that is wrong with this country can be laid at the feet of the white man's ancestors.

He counters accusations of white privilege in the past with a discussion of present-day "black privilege":

> It is the privilege to be able to stand on a stage, in front of the State President, and say that all white people are criminals and should be treated as such, without him blinking an eye. It is the privilege to sift potential candidates for the appointment of judges based on their willingness to execute the ANC's political ideology. Black privilege is the privilege to determine who are legally allowed to be labelled African and who aren't.
>
> It is the privilege to lash out against apartheid for implementing racist policies, but to then turn around and do the exact same thing and get away with it. It is the privilege to be admitted to study medicine and become a GP or a surgeon, despite the fact that you did not comply with the minimum requirements to be admitted into medical school in the first place, while white youths who do comply are turned down, because they are white, to make space for you, because you are black. And the worst of all:

> Black privilege is the privilege to believe and argue that your race is so superior that you are excluded from the very definition of racism and that you can never be racist, simply because you are black. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the ultimate form [of] racism.

Roets made these comments at a roundtable discussion entitled, "Whites, Afrikaans, Afrikaners: Addressing Post-Apartheid Legacies, Privileges, and Burdens", hosted by the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection in Johannesburg, on 5 November 2015. Although Roets' remarks were made in his capacity as AfriForum representative, the two sections I have quoted above summarise very accurately the arguments made by the Park's sponsors with regards to whites' position in South Africa. Within the discursive positioning of whites as victimised, Steyn (2005: 131) argues that "being placed on a more equal footing is presented as marginalisation; the binaries that underpin whiteness are seen to be simply reversed. Whites, it is averred, are in 'the same' position now as black people were in the past under apartheid".

The language that the Park's sponsors use to express their opinions regarding whiteness is mostly typical of this "White Talk". One sponsor explains to me why he feels that white South Africans are not only unfairly discriminated against by employers, but cannot express their dissatisfaction:

> The thing is that in the old South Africa, if you could do the job, nobody cared. But now, you will find that the white man will have more qualifications, he has more knowledge, but the job will go to the black. I see it at my place of work. Blacks who started after whites, who don't have the same education we do … but who gets the promotion? And you cannot say anything, because then you are a racist. (Anonymous sponsor, 11 December 2013)

He expresses his fears about the future of white South Africans and, specifically, the vulnerability of poorer whites:

> … that man … I don't know his name, but he went to Canada, he was a refugee.[3] Do you remember? Yes, but they sent him back. Because people don't know, they don't realise what is happening here at this very moment. Maybe one day we all will have to flee, and then what? What will happen to people like this? They cannot afford to go anywhere; they will be the first to be killed. (Anonymous sponsor, 11 December 2013)

The view that whites may be physically harmed often emerges in my conversations with sponsors. Initially, they tend to frame their concerns in terms of the economic, blaming affirmative action for a rise in white poverty. However, it frequently appears that their concerns extend to the fear that whites may be physically harmed or even killed. Yet, these concerns are frequently overshadowed by an overemphasis of economic oppression and marginalisation. In line with Steyn's description of "White Talk", the Park's sponsors tend to view policies that seek to establish racial equality as marginalising whites.

Some sponsors are of the opinion that it should not be assumed that whites have access to capital and other racial groups do not. As André, who sporadically visits the Park to distribute vitamins and fresh fruit, explains to me: South Africans are being taught, culturally, to help poor black Africans. "We", implying white South Africans, are taught to ignore the plight of poorer whites and focus only on the problems faced by other race groups. He therefore sees it as the responsibility of more affluent whites to ensure that the plight of poorer whites is made visible. After the end of apartheid, he argues, the ANC put policies in place to ensure that

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[3] The sponsor is referring to Brandon Huntley, a white South African who sought refugee status in Canada in 2008, claiming that whites are being persecuted by black South Africans (Silber and Geffen, 2009). After initially being granted asylum status in 2009, the decision was overturned in 2010 by the Federal Court of Canada (Poplak, 2011).

apartheid is reversed, and whites are the ones being oppressed. The world is oblivious to the idea, however, that white South Africans are thus being marginalised and oppressed. The people and poverty in places like King Edward Park must be "exposed" in order to challenge the stereotypes around white South Africans as necessarily being wealthy and powerful.

Sponsors' vehicles, clothes, and contributions frequently suggest that they are firmly positioned in the upper classes. By far the majority of vehicles driven by sponsors are luxury cars and SUVs. Over time, as I establish relationships with those sponsors who visit the Park frequently, I learn that many of their children attend private schools, and listen as they tell me excitedly about their overseas holidays. Among the professions of those involved with sponsoring the Park are medical doctors, farmers, attorneys, business professionals, and accountants.

Many of the Park's sponsors can therefore not use their own lives to make a convincing argument for the oppression of whites. In spite of the general pessimism that the sponsors make about the economic changes of whites in the post-apartheid period, I find little evidence that any of the visitors struggle to make do. Not one of them was unemployed, and none could describe an instance from their own life where they were significantly disadvantaged by the new economic policies. Instead visitors answer by using stock phrases, such as "everyone knows this is happening", or "you hear about this all the time".

In the imagined oppression of white South Africans and institutionalisation of a "reverse apartheid", images of white poverty are therefore immensely powerful. In the absence of concrete examples of oppression and marginalisation from their own lives, political conservatives use white squatter camps, such as King Edward Park, are a reference point to anchor their claims. For the politically conservative white sponsors, convinced of the imminent fall of *all* forms of white power, white poverty projects the future of all whites in South Africa and the existence of spaces comprising only poorer whites are a clear signal of

the oppression of whites. Evoking a phrase regularly uttered by residents, "you could be one paycheque away [from living in a squatter camp]", sponsors assume that every white South African can at any moment fall victim to discriminatory practices and end up in an informal settlement.

This view selectively ignores some of the crucial influences and contexts that have led some poorer whites to have no other option but to move to the Park. When the sponsors look at the Park and its residents, they do not see the complexities of the everyday life of poverty. Rather, they see an ominous sign of things to come for *all* white South Africans. The following section analyses this explicit disregard of the real life of the Park's residents.

Whiteness in the post-apartheid moment

Over the two decades that followed the democratisation of South Africa a large body of scholarly work focussing on identity formation of white Afrikaans-speakers after apartheid has emerged. Many have investigated the destabilisation and deconstruction of a traditional Afrikaner identity after the end of apartheid. Late apartheid, many posit, brought about a crisis of identity for white Afrikaans-speakers (Blaser, 2004, 2007; Blaser and Van der Westhuizen, 2012; Steyn, 2004; Vestergaard, 2001). As the rise of Afrikaner nationalism depended heavily on the construction of a homogeneous ethnic group to whom a specific Afrikaner identity was prescribed, the fall of Afrikaner nationalism thus implied the end of an axiomatic traditional Afrikaner identity. White Afrikaans-speakers were described as now having the opportunity of constructing self-chosen identities that did not need to comply with the ideological devices of Afrikaner Christian nationalism. Vestergaard (2001: 21) argues that post-apartheid white Afrikaans speakers can be divided into "heterodox Afrikaners [who] welcome the new challenges and champion the opening of the social field, [and] the orthodox [who] resist change and cling to established values".

The sponsors who contribute to the Park can broadly be captured by Vestergaard's orthodox Afrikaners. They are committed to the idea that white privilege and its boundaries should be guarded. They firmly believe that white South Africans are marginalised and that without the intervention of more affluent whites, whites who live in squatter camps might be left entirely to their own devices by a government that actively ignores their needs.

The rise of a more conservative faction among white Afrikaans-speakers has become particularly noticeable in popular culture and in opinion columns in local newspapers and magazines during the 2000s. In 2007, the Afrikaans singer Bok van Blerk caused a controversy when he released the song "De la Rey" which became extremely popular among conservative Afrikaaners. The song references Boer general Koos de la Rey[4] and asks, in present tense, "*Sal jy die boere kom lei*?" (Will you lead the Boers?) In spite of Van Blerk's vehement denial that the song was to be interpreted within a post-apartheid context, conservatives appropriated the song and further controversy was sparked when old South African flags appeared at his concerts.

For the song "*Tyd om te trek*" (Time to leave) on his next album, "*Afrikanerhart*" (Afrikaner heart), Van Blerk produced a music video that shows him sitting in an old farmhouse, while his white female lover hands out sweets to black African children and dances with them. The following scenes show African men with machine guns, first stabbing a photo of Van Blerk with a hunting knife and then bombing his house. The video concludes with Van Blerk running away from African men in military fatigues who chase him through fields, while his blonde lover leads black women and children away from the scene.

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[4] Koos de la Rey was a Boer general during the South African War. Van der Waal and Robins (2011: 766) note that he was known for his initial reluctance with regard to participating in the war. He later became well known for his leadership during the war, particularly for his role in the Boers' guerrilla warfare tactics.

Van der Waal and Robins (2011: 765) argue that the reactions to "De La Rey" point to a sense of nostalgia among Afrikaners. It "re-appropriated Afrikaner symbols and perceptions in the name of cultural revitalisation, but highly selectively. Afrikaner cultural memory was plumbed for the heroic struggle of Afrikaners against British imperialism, with no reference to the shame of apartheid or the unfinished business of the present" (Van der Waal and Robins, 2011: 765). Other cultural forms and productions carry a similar conservative nostalgia. Afrikaans writer Deon Opperman has written and produced two musical theatre productions, "*Ons vir jou, Suid-Afrika*" (Us for you, South Africa)[5] in 2008 and "*Tree aan! Dit was die dae toe ons troepies was*" (Fall in! Those were the days when we were troops) in 2011, exploring the South African War and the South African-Angolan Border War of 1966-1989 respectively. Both productions were intended to serve as homage to "forgotten" Afrikaner heroes and explore how Afrikaners can know who they are, and dream of a future, if they do not have the right to remember their past.

The prominence of implicit and explicit references to Afrikaner identity, and the socio-political position of white South Africans are important for various reasons. Here I focus on two. Firstly, the presence of Afrikaner identity politics in popular culture illuminates how ideas around the position of Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa are not limited to the formal political or academic spheres. They have filtered through to become part of the everyday consumption of culture by many politically conservative whites.[6] They are consumed through popular music, in films, and at the theatre, in productions that explore, often without much nuance, the supposed "marginalisation" and "oppression" of white South Africans today. Secondly, the manner in which Afrikaner identity politics understands

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[5] This title is borrowed from the chorus of *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* (The call of South Africa), the official national anthem during the apartheid era.

[6] Despite the fact that many of my discussions with sponsors revolved around notions that seem to speak explicitly to "Afrikaners", these ideas were often shared by politically conservative, English-speaking whites in the context of my fieldwork.

whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa is underpinned by fear. This fear seems to imagine not only the future material marginalisation of all white South Africans, but also the complete oppression of whites, including of their cultural identity. It speaks to the fear that the history of Afrikaners and other whites might be erased and Afrikaners will only be remembered as the *volk* that created apartheid. The description of a younger generation of Afrikaners by Pieter Mulder, the leader of the Freedom Front Plus party, is insightful here: "... the typical member was excluded from opportunities due to affirmative action: 'he' was discriminated against for being white and an Afrikaner; 'his' history had been erased from the official version" (as quoted by Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 289).

In line with Mulder's reference to the meaning of Afrikaner history, a number of sponsors, most pointedly men, raise the issue of Afrikaner suffering during the South African War in our conversations. Many have heard the rumour that the Park had previously been a concentration camp and feel it appropriate to describe the lives of its present-day residents as similar to the lives of the Boers who were kept in camps during the war. What is needed, says Hans, a local business man who donates a Wendy house, is a radical intervention by Afrikaners to make sure that white poverty does not lead to a vicious circle in which whites end up with no capital and nobody to turn to. Another visitor, who undertakes a six-hour drive from Mbombela (Nelspruit) to speak to Ilana about helping the Park, is even more direct about his fears. This, he says as he is pointing to the row of houses across from the *stoep,* is the future of all whites in South Africa. It is like Zimbabwe,[7] he goes on as his wife nods vigorously. It will become more and more difficult to live in South Africa until one day we (implying white South Africans) will wake up and there will be nothing left. He has told

[7] White conservatives often hold up the politics of race, citizenship, and belonging in post-independence Zimbabwe as example for the path they see South Africa taking in future. Zimbabwe's controversial land redistribution programme of the late 1990s and early 2000s saw many white famers losing their land without compensation.

his children the same thing and encourages them to emigrate once they finish their university degrees. I ask him why he feels this way and he refers me to the Helping Hand report on white poverty. If whites continue to fall into poverty at this rate, he concludes, he sees little hope for the future.

The idea that South Africa is bound to become a failed African state is expressed by several other sponsors too. "Look at the rest of Africa and give me one reason to believe that there is a future for us here", says Sarina when I ask her about the possibility of increased state social assistance (Interview, 29 November 2013). Shortly before the national election in 2014 one of the sponsor volunteers at the crèche notes, when Malema comes [into power], they are going to kill all of us. Such Afro-pessimism, to borrow Steyn's (2005: 131) term, positions poorer whites as victims. In the minds of these politically conservative sponsors, poorer whites are trapped: where affluent whites can emigrate and seek opportunities elsewhere, poorer whites are in a context where they might, one day, be killed or left for dead. Sponsors thus want to intervene before it is too late and South Africa becomes another failed African state. Through their capital interventions, they imagine, a collective white economy may be constructed that is strong enough to uplift poorer whites and ensure that they do not have to rely on the state for social assistance.

The examples above are in some ways extreme, and yet very typical of my conversations with sponsors, and of the conversations sponsors regularly have with residents. It is true, of course, that the views expressed by visitors are not shared by all other white Afrikaans-speakers. But while many Afrikaners seek to distance themselves from a traditional Afrikaner identity and its values, support for more conservative organisations is growing. AfriForum, which is very vocal in calling for the recognition of the oppression and discrimination faced by white South Africans, declared 100 000 active and paying members in June 2014. By mid-2015 this number surpassed 150 000 paying members.

In the Park, most of the sponsors are quite open about their conservative views and speak freely about their fears of a future under an ANC-led government. This is not only true of sponsors, but also of visiting journalists who frequently comment on the "lack" of exposure given to white informal settlements in South Africa. A common opinion among visitors seems to be that an overemphasis on the experiences of black African poverty has led to the invisibility of white poverty.

At the root of the fear that all whites may become part of an invisible class of poor-whites is the idea that one's socio-economic future is solely determined by race or ethnicity. The detailed account of residents' life histories and day-to-day lives in the previous chapters make clear, however, that residents' poverty is much more complicated and nuanced than being merely the result of their racial classification. The next section examines how residents become complicit in the discursive move of privileging race and ethnicity in arguments about white poverty. In doing so, residents and sponsors together partake in a politics of homogeneity that simultaneously negates other social categories and contexts, and absolutises ethno-race as the single most important marker of life in the post-apartheid period.

Towards a politics of homogeneity

What I have outlined above is a social phenomenon in which a group of persons who perceive themselves as sharing an ethnic identity mobilise to extend their social, cultural, and economic capital to others whom they claim should be part of this group but are excluded for political reasons. They fear that the future could mean losing their own capital and becoming like the excluded group. This section analyses the way in which political beliefs structure the relationships between the Park's residents and the sponsors. I present a concise outline of the concept of ethnicity, after which I display how sponsors use the idea of a primordial and fixed ethnic identity to imagine themselves as similar to the Park's residents. This is

expressed in their fear that any white person could potentially find herself in a similar position some time in the future. I argue that sponsors negate the relevance of all social categories other than ethno-race in order to construct a political argument that sees race as the sole determining factor of a person's future in the post-apartheid era. I refer to this practice of absolutising the importance of race as a politics of homogeneity.

Max Weber (1968: 389), one of the few classical theorists to pay attention to the concept of ethnicity, defined ethnic groups as "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of colonialisation or migration". Guibernau and Rex (1997:3) point to two major implications of Weber's understanding of ethnicity. Firstly, Weber draws a distinction between ideas of ethnicity and those of race (he sees the latter as biologically determined). Aside from any possible commonalities pertaining to both common customs and racial characteristics, Weber emphasises that ethnic grouping also relies strongly on the subjective perceptions of the characteristics I mention above. He therefore wants us to consider both the perceptions of those who share certain characteristics as well as those who react to them (Guibernau and Rex, 1997: 2). Secondly, Weber argues that shared ethnicity does not necessarily lead to the formation of an ethnic group. Rather, ethnicity facilitates formations within the political sphere (Weber, 1968: 389).

Comaroff and Comaroff offer the best current-day analysis of ethnicity for the purposes of this thesis. In the prologue of their book *Ethnicity Inc.*, they remark that towards the late twentieth century, as the Cold War came to an end, ethnicity "was supposed to wither away with the rise of modernity, with disenchantment, and with the incursion of the market". Yet, it is a concept that has remained very much alive. In fact, ethnicity is more implicated than ever before in the economics of everyday life (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009: 1). Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 38) explain the nature of ethnicity in the following way:

> ethnicity is neither a monolithic 'thing' nor, in and of itself, an analytic construct: [...] 'it' is best understood as a loose, labile repertoire of signs by means of which relations are constructed and communicated; through which a collective consciousness of cultural likeness is rendered sensible; with reference to which shared sentiment is made substantial.

The content of ethnicity is always the product of specific historical conditions and frames "the motivation, meaning, and materiality of social practice" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009: 38).

The Comaroffs' description captures the intimate links between ethno-race and the economies of the Park that sponsors of the Park put forward, facilitated by both residents and sponsors' understandings of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. In the rest of this chapter I show how sponsors understand ideas of race and ethnicity as integral to the future of South African whiteness. I do this by presenting ethnographic examples of the way a shared ethno-race is emphasised by the sponsors and how they assume that their beliefs are always shared by the Park's residents.

One afternoon, for example, a middle-aged white man introduces himself to me as Gerhard. He informs me that he collected bedding from neighbours and friends after he heard that some of the people in King Edward Park do not have enough blankets. Gerhard watches as a few young men who live in the Park offload the five or six duvet sets that he has collected. He leans against the frame of his Mercedes and searches for the right words to express why he feels he has to contribute to the Park. "Fuck", he says before immediately apologising for cursing in front of a woman. The one thing that he cannot understand though, he says and shifts our conversation slightly, is why Afrikaners as a collective cannot come together and

find a solution for this problem. A project such as Orania,[8] Gerhard says, ought to expand to make sure that it does not exclude poorer whites. He feels that a good solution for the lack of employment opportunities for poorer whites would be to move them to a space like Orania where they will be able to live and work without having to fear racial discrimination.

The idea that Afrikaners, as a collective group, ought to provide poorer whites with spaces where they can live and work is one that sponsors often raise. Some who are not familiar with the politics of the Park inquire as to why organisations like the Orania Foundation, AfriForum, or Solidarity have not intervened to provide a solution to the problem of white poverty. There seems to be little doubt among these sponsors that white South Africans, and particularly Afrikaners, have to create the structures of support for poorer whites. This should be done by more affluent whites who ought to intervene in every possible way to ensure that poorer whites are not fully reliant on the state for assistance. Their ultimate goal, one man explains to me, is to buy a large piece of land where poorer whites can be housed and helped to set up businesses or find work. This idea is, of course, very similar to the idea of poor-white rehabilitation of the 1930s. It is, of course, not possible for politically conservative sponsors to express their ideas in the same *rehabilitative* grammar that was once used by Afrikaner nationalists. That would have significant implications for the residents of the Park, and other poorer whites and would contradict the politics of homogeneity that sponsors engage in. They thus express their ideas in terms of a *volkstaat,* rather than in reference to poor-white suburbs.

While no organisation has, at the time of my fieldwork, raised enough capital to embark on a project that will see the Park's residents move away without the help of the state, some sponsors continue to intervene in ways that allow for residents' basic needs to be met

[8] Located in Northern Cape province, the town of Orania has been turned into an Afrikaner *volkstaat* (people's state) since 1994. It is known for its policy of prohibiting anyone who is not white to enter the town. See De Beer (2006) for an overview of the ethno-history of the town.

privately, and without reliance on services provided by the state.[9] Consequently, key services, such as education and basic health care, have become regulated by sponsors. Different sponsors pay, for example, for every child to attend a private pre-school in the year before they enter primary school. Sponsors have also set up networks that ensure that every child and senior person (and sometimes other residents as well) regularly see a private general physician. Although a public hospital is located no more than a five-minute walk from the Park, sponsors insist that residents see the private doctor instead. If a resident needs medication, sponsors collect it from a pharmacy and arrange for a follow-up visit. The sponsorship networks in the Park stretch as far as having a veterinarian visit about twice a year to care for the residents' pets. On one occasion, several cats and dogs were neutered on a make-shift operating table in one of the crèche's classrooms.

All of these forms of sponsorships and donations are extended to the Park primarily because sponsors imagine the residents as disempowered by race and ethnicity. The social field in South Africa, when read through the lens of this conservative ethno-racial episteme, is constructed of notions of ethno-race and the various relations produced through and by racial categories and their meanings. For them, South African society is one that is almost entirely governed by race and, in the post-apartheid period specifically, by the idea that whites ought to be marginalised and excluded from the centre of socio-economic and political activity. The trope of the "oppressed poor-white", socially and economically marginalised by "reverse apartheid", believed by many whites in South Africa and abroad, portrays residents as victims of a cruel and racist post-apartheid regime. It encourages whites to see in King Edward Park, and those who reside there, a glimpse of their own future.

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[9] The eviction of the Park's residents a few months after the completion of my fieldwork urged sponsors to intervene more aggressively in terms of land and capital.

As this narrative trope assures continued support for the Park, residents have little incentive to contradict any of their sponsors' assumptions and provide more nuanced life histories when conversing with visitors. Conversely, spaces of white poverty like the Park are crucial examples for political conservatives who wish to make more visible the "plight" of white South Africans and to raise awareness of the "oppression" of whites. In order to argue successfully that *all* whites are at risk of falling into extreme poverty at any minute, a complete negation of all other social facts and categories, unrelated to ethno-race, is required. If sponsors and residents were to acknowledge the role of historical poverty, class struggles, or other social forces, it would be much harder to argue that the single factor determining one's economic position in society is race.

In the early attempts by nationalists to construct all white Afrikaans-speakers as a single *volk* (see chapter three), poor whiteism presented considerable problems. Nationalists aimed to create a united and pure Afrikaner *volk* by highlighting the European ancestry of Afrikaners, thereby affirming their superiority to Africans. Poor-whites put the assumption of superiority into question. Present-day conservative whites are taking up the idea of a united *volk* and positing it as the only way to ensure Afrikaner' survival.

As the Park is a symbol for the "oppression" of white South Africans for conservatives, it often finds itself in the middle of political moments in which residents would otherwise be unlikely to be interested. The following describes one such situation. It shows how, despite the fact that residents do not share the political views of sponsors, they do not voice their opinions and beliefs in public.

One Thursday in the spring of 2013 a group of five or six people stop by the *stoep*. Dressed in red to symbolise the blood "of those who have lost their lives and in protest against the inhumane Slaughter and Oppression of White South Africans" (Red October, 2013), the group briefly speaks to Henry before walking over to the open grass area opposite the

housing structures. It is 10 October, the day previously commemorated as Kruger Day or Heroes Day.[10] In the weeks leading up to this day, a group of white right-wingers announces that they will use the day to formally protest the continued discrimination against white South Africans. In Pretoria around 250 whites march to the Union buildings early that morning to hand over a memorandum to the president of South Africa. Led by the Afrikaans singers Sunette Bridges and Steve Hofmeyr, protestors carry red balloons and wave *Vierkleur*[11] flags as they walk.[12] Their memorandum, addressed to the South African government, calls on government to take action against:

> the inhumane Slaughter and oppression of the White South African Ethnic Minority; the killing of our people on our farms and in our towns and cities; the destruction of our infrastructure, the deterioration of government hospitals, the deteriorations of our educational system, dirty dams and rivers, uninhabitable parks and public areas, dangerous neighborhoods, filthy streets and the disintegration of our road network; the brutal torture of the elderly and defenseless, the mothers, fathers and children of this minority group; corrupt governance, racist Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative Action excluding white South Africans from the job market and making it impossible for businesses and companies to make contributions to the thousands of white people living in squatter camps and our children in orphanages. (Red October, 2013)

The group insists that white South Africans face systematic genocide, and the organisers describe the march as an international call for the recognition of the plight of whites in South

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[10] Kruger Day commemorated the birth of ZAR president Paul Kruger. The NP changed the day to "Heroes Day" to remember the heroes of South Africa's history.
[11] The *Vierkleur* (four colour) flag was the official flag of the ZAR. In the post-apartheid period it has become a symbol for white conservatives to denote their dissatisfaction with the so-called "new" South Africa.
[12] Although Bridges and Hofmeyr were first known as singers, both have entered the public arena as "human rights activists". Fiercely outspoken about their belief that white South Africans are superior and severely discriminated against, Bridges and Hofmeyr have been involved in several campaigns to raise political awareness and address "black racism".

Africa. On the whole, the campaign appears to be rather unsuccessful in drawing the kind of attention it hoped for. However, given the way in which this movement discursively positions itself and all other white South Africans as an oppressed and marginalised minority, it is unsurprising that it selected King Edward Park as one of the spaces in which to activate the Red October campaign.

After the initial group spoke to Henry, a few more Red October members arrive. They drive up in a *bakkie* and a few cars, with red balloons and stationary, a small sound system with speakers and a microphone, and camping chairs. As the group starts to set up the chairs and sound equipment, residents wander out of their houses to see what is going on. One of the women from the Red October group waves the residents closer. Turning to Sunette, I ask if she knows what is going on but she just shrugs her shoulders. Eventually about fifty residents gather on the lawn. A visitor proceeds to hand out red balloons to everyone to symbolise the blood of white South Africans. Another distributes black permanent markers.

A woman stands on the back of a *bakkie* and outlines, briefly, the campaign's rationale. She reminds residents that this day is meant to commemorate all white South Africans who have been victims of the post-apartheid ANC regime. She requests all residents to use the marker pens to write the names of friends and family who have been victims of violent crimes on the balloons. They will then let the balloons fly and recite a prayer in a symbolic cry for divine intervention.

I stand next to Ilana towards the back of the group and listen to the low-key conversations amongst the residents. The message about the writing on the balloons is quickly skewed. Some residents state that they are supposed to write down the names of loved ones who have died, others that they should write short messages to friends and family whom they miss. A woman next to me wants to write a note to her brother's family which lives in Cape Town

and which she does not see often. Across from us someone else is writing the name of an aunt who died of cancer the year before.

After a few chaotic minutes in which everyone decides what to write on the balloons, the residents wait with the balloons in their hands for further instructions. At a count of three by the woman on the *bakkie* everyone let their balloons go. It is an anti-climactic sight when the balloons only rise a few centimetres into the air and then fall back to the ground. Some children who are standing around with their parents chase after stray balloons, some of which burst loudly as they hit the grass.

Next to me Ilana keeps a close eye on the events and mumbles softly. Her hands shake as she lights a cigarette. The balloon that she did not decline, yet did not release is still in her left hand. She is furious, she tells me in a whisper. She doesn't approve of these political organisations coming to the Park as she does not believe in discriminating against anybody. She wants no part in any activity aimed at politicising the Park and strongly condemns it. The Park and everything in it belongs to the Lord and she feels that nobody has the right to insert a political agenda in her work here. Still, she does not intervene, nor does she ask any of the visitors to leave. She allows them to finish with their proceedings as planned and grimly waves them off when they finally leave.

From conversations with Ilana, Sunette, and a few other residents, it seems that none of the Park's residents are familiar with the Red October group or have any knowledge of the campaign beyond what they were told when the group arrived. This could be read as a lack of agency held by the Park's residents. After all, without the donations, input, and publicity provided by individuals and organisations such as the Red October movement, the Park would not be able to function. It may true, at least to an extent, that the residents do not have any other option but to allow politically conservative sponsors like these into the Park. And yet, as I have stated throughout this chapter, residents are quite aware of the importance of

poor whiteism for political conservative sponsors and take care to structure their engagement with them in ways that seeks to maximise the benefits they offer.

Complying with, or at least not directly contradicting the narratives put forth by the Park's sponsors has, in the past, often greatly benefitted the residents. Other than the ongoing donations the Park receives, larger interventions by sponsors have prevented the residents from being evicted. As early as 2008 conservative organisations such as the Freedom Front Plus and AfriForum became closely involved with the Park when the city council made its first attempts to have the residents of King Edward Park removed. Over the next five years several *pro bono* attorneys, mostly acquired by these organisations or other sponsors, represented the residents in court cases pertaining to the possible eviction of the residents.

Whereas residents engage in much more nuanced discussions of their socio-economic positions and the conditions that led them to the Park when in private, they publicly adopt "White Talk" language that reinforces the politics of homogeneity. In agreement with their sponsors, residents also identify the economic policies of the post-apartheid state as the single critical factor producing white poverty. Residents are able to clearly articulate their role in this kind of white politics, as Anna illustrates here when she speaks about visits by political parties or other politically orientated organisations:

> They [the Freedom Front Plus] come here just before the elections or when they are bringing the TV with them to film them handing out food and making promises. But then we don't see them again until the next election or if they want something else from us. They like to act as though they do everything for us, but really many of these people don't give a fuck. [...] Not everyone [breaks their promises in this way]. There as some people who are good and who make sure that we are okay. But many of them ... I don't know ... for them it is about something else. (Interview, 10 June 2014)

Sunette has a slightly more contradictory opinion on the matter. While she often expresses her annoyance when political organisations visit the Park, she also expects wealthier whites to help poorer whites. In the following quote she asserts, for example, that helping is one's biblical duty rather than a political duty:

> I don't know. I guess I don't really care. I think it's fair that sponsors help us. The Bible says that: help your neighbour. So if people can help then they should. I don't really care about politics but if people are going to come here and make us a *potjie* then I won't say no. But I don't like it when the politicians come here before the elections and then you never see them again. (Interview, 3 June 2014)

In another conversation Sunette explains how prominent political figures could in fact help the Park and its residents:

> Ja, it's hard to say. We've been in the camp for six years. I've met a lot of people like Bobby [van Jaarsveld], and Sunette [Bridges], and Steve [Hofmeyr].[13] I think Kurt [Darren] is also going to come here in December.[14] But here is my thing: I don't want to be ungrateful but why can't they do something. Especially Steve. He has a lot of money … and think … I think it would work if he could get us a piece of land somewhere, maybe a hectare, and then we could all live there. Or maybe, I don't know, if he could get fifty people to all chip in and do that … just rent a place and we people who live here in the camp can live there, take care of it. (Interview, 9 May 2014)

Despite having ambivalent feelings about political interventions in the Park, residents mostly comply with and participate in a very conservative narrative when speaking to visitors. Ilana, for example, may complain that the Park is used by conservative whites to further their own

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[13] She is referring to Afrikaans singers Bobby van Jaarsveld, Sunette Bridges, and Steve Hofmeyr. All three visited King Edward Park in the last five years.
[14] Kurt Darren is also an Afrikaans singer.

agenda, but will never bring up her opinions when speaking to sponsors. She tends to refer media to residents who she thinks will be appropriate to interview on the topic of poor whiteism after apartheid. All of these residents were, unsurprisingly, employed prior to 1994 and mostly ended up in the Park because of events that can broadly related to racial politics, thus allowing for the continuation of the trope of disempowered whites after apartheid.

Residents like Joan, who previously led moderately comfortable lives, are thus the ones who are always allowed to share their stories with visitors. Those who have stories that are less aligned with conservative ideas about whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa are much less likely to be asked to speak to journalists or potential sponsors. Aside from Joan, the residents who are encouraged to speak to sponsors tend to be younger, often born in the 1990s. They have never been formally employed and many now have families of their own in the Park. Even young men who are employed tend to repeat that they feel disempowered by the post-apartheid government.

Nico works as a boiler maker. He is one of the few men in the Park who earns a regular wage. Still he expresses anger at the position in which white South Africans find themselves. Twenty years after 1994, Nico explains to me, the ANC can no longer blame apartheid for black poverty. He argues that younger whites like himself had no part in apartheid and should therefore not be implicated in any policies that seek to restore equality. During apartheid, he says, there were more jobs, more food, and a better life for most people. Nico believes that whites taught South Africans of other racial groups most of what they know. For him, thus, it is only fair that affirmative action policies should no longer influence appointments.

The voices of young residents — white, Afrikaans and unemployed — speak to a trope commonly found among conservative whites in post-apartheid South Africa: the trope of the disempowered white man, forever being punished for the assumed race and gender he was assigned at birth and the privileges this has afforded him. It is one that is often held up by

conservative political parties and civil organisations as example of discrimination against whites. This line of argument implies a complete denial of the historical continuity of ideologies and power. Those who advocate for the recognition of the "struggles" faced by disenfranchised white men argue that the end of apartheid as an institutional system also immediately ended any privileges that it might have afforded white South Africans. Since apartheid legislation is no longer in place, they argue, all South Africans now have equal access to opportunities and it is therefore unfair that affirmative action policies are applied.

In private, some of the residents reflect with clarity on the exceptionalism of poor whiteism and the complex social factors that give rise to poverty. AJ, for example, is a man in his early thirties who lives in the Park with his wife, their three children, and his mother. A few years before moving to the Park they lived in Durban where, he tells me, he made a living for himself and his family as an artist. Now unemployed, he still tries to sell some of his pencil sketches, but hardly earns more than a few hundred rand a month. When I ask AJ about the years immediately prior to his family moving to King Edward Park, he stares into the fire in front of his tent, thinking, before looking back at me. Losing his income was his own fault, he answers. The same is true of many people who live in the Park, he says, but most are too cowardly to admit it. He drank too much, and used drugs that caused him to not care about his family and their life. After his son was born he tried to stay sober for a while, he explains, but it was hard when surrounded by "wrong friends".

When reflecting on his own life history and comparing it with the lives of others in the Park, AJ speaks with insight:

> The thing is that it's too easy when you're a white man, see? Like, it's easy to just go, like, … I can't find a job because of affirmative action or whatever. But for me, you have to be honest. I fucked up and I'll tell you now: take a walk around this Park and ask the boys. They'll all spin you some bullshit story about how it's not their fault.

> [...] When the sponsors get here you should listen: then all of a sudden everyone wants to be a pastor and work for the church. I'll tell you now, people don't want to take responsibility. It used to be easy, in apartheid, you can get away with a lot of shit. Now things have changed and people don't want to face that. Being white ... it won't help you anymore". (Interview, 3 May 2014)

AJ expresses the strong opinion that residents purposefully present half-truths. His critical observation of the other residents signals the discursive position I outlined in the previous section: a default position of concurring with the idea that one's ethno-racial identity determines one's future in South Africa. He also hints at the connections between this narrative, the political beliefs of sponsors, and residents' ability to situate themselves as in agreement with these beliefs. Other residents, too, referred to the performativity that is brought about by the constant stream of visitors and the knowledge of visitors' expectations.

Few other examples illustrate so plainly residents' ability to fluently navigate the complexities of their life histories as Joan's interaction with visitors. Joan is one of the residents most often asked to speak to members of the media or sponsors who visit for the first time. Her narrative choices when speaking to these visitors touch most of the issues brought up by neo-conservative whites when focussing on post-apartheid whiteness and the political-economy. In telling her own story to visitors Joan always flags the loss of her job due to affirmative action and ascribes her continued unemployment and that of other family members to racial prejudices. This life history expands to a much more detailed narrative when she tells it to me in private. Over several months Joan relates the story of the loss of her partner, her struggle to continue working while suffering from severe depression, the difficulty of having to provide for her daughter and grandchildren after her daughter's divorce, and sharing her house with a man who later sold some of her furniture to buy drugs. While the most basic facts remain the same, Joan's private story is one that has much less to

do with post-apartheid politics and much more with the complexities of human relationships and the difficulties of dealing with death.

As is evident from examples above, residents react in varying ways to sponsors. Some tend to be more welcoming and embrace the opportunity to speak to visitors, while others shy away. There are also, of course, some residents whose personal political opinions are more closely aligned to those of the sponsors than others. Nico, for example, seems genuinely to believe that his race is keeping him from moving into the middle class.

There are many times when residents embrace the presence of sponsors in the Park. Around the holiday season, for example, festive meals are prepared by sponsors and interactions are focussed on the religious celebration of Christmas, rather than any political discussion. At other times sponsors visit to *braai* with residents and provide them with a welcome distraction from everyday life in the Park. Even in these less pointedly political interactions, residents and sponsors are drawn together by the idea that they are, in some sense, the same. In their focus on ethno-race and disregard for other social categories, the idea is being reaffirmed that being white inevitably ties together all white South Africans.

The remobilisation and politicisation of a specific ethnic identity — that of the traditional white Afrikaner — evokes a politics of homogeneity. This politics, I argued in this section, imagines all white South Africans as oppressed and in danger of being completely excluded from the formal economy. This assures that politically conservative whites are able to ascribe the ongoing privileging of poorer whites to attempts to counter the economic marginalisation of whites.

What follows is, therefore, a collective production, by both residents and visiting sponsors, of a narrative that singles out race as the sole determining factor in one's socio-economic position. In actuality there are other social positionalities, relationships, and ideologies, as I

have pointed out throughout this thesis, that also guide the day-to-day activities in the Park, the relationships between residents and outsiders, and understandings about the position of poorer whites. In order to sustain the argument of exclusion, other social categories such as gender, class, and sexuality are subdued and at times silenced out altogether. In the section that follows, I argue that these silences do not imply the absence of assumptions about, most pointedly, class.

Intersections of race and class: conflicts and contradictions

The previous section examined the overemphasis of ethno-race and the negation of other social categories such as class and gender in an attempt to deal with white fears of exclusion. This section discusses the importance of the apparent absence of assumptions relating to class and classism. I demonstrate that, while class concerns are generally absent from the conversations between residents and sponsors, the latter do not hesitate to draw on classist stereotypes of poor whiteism in private. Residents too seem sensitive to the classism that sponsors at times display in their actions and behaviours.

When poor whiteism was first identified as a problem by early twentieth century nationalists, it manifested as a social issue in which race and class had become meaningfully entangled. As attempts were made to construct all white Afrikaans-speakers as a single *volk*, the idea of a stable Afrikaner middle class proved central. The specific form of whiteness that the notion of an Afrikaner *volk* strived towards was a whiteness that simultaneously established itself as distinctly African while reproducing the practices of European "civility". Unlike English-speaking South Africans, this myth would have it, Afrikaners truly belonged in Southern Africa; but unlike black Africans, Afrikaners had the ability to retain their superior European rationality and morality. The threat of poor whiteism was therefore twofold: it put Afrikaners at risk of falling into a lower social class by socially integrating with other Africans, and it

risked Afrikaners being perceived as of a lower social standing than their English counterparts.

In the final volume of the Carnegie Commission report on white poverty, Albertyn (1932: xix, 36-39) ascribes the inability of poor-whites to enter the working or middle class to living too closely with other races, and in particular with black Africans. Throughout the five volumes of the report and many other similar writings of the time, emphasis is placed on the direct correlation between desired forms of whiteness and class positions. Rothman (1932: 114-117) suggests, for example, that poor-whites should interact with the (white) middle class as frequently as possible in order to instil their habits and norms as firmly as possible.

Once the visitors have left and the residents are alone, their economic position becomes as important for them, if not more so, than their racial classification. While attempts to establish a sense of whiteness are always noticeable in the Park, most of the residents display an acceptance, albeit begrudgingly so, that their socio-economic position is unlikely to radically change in the foreseeable future. Residents, a general deep seated racism notwithstanding, are much less concerned with the politics of race, and tend to pay more attention to the broader discourses on poverty and state assistance once they are alone. Conversations are much less focussed on the idea of being *white* and poor, and are directly more towards the idea of being poor, regardless of one's racial identity. As I argued in chapter two, residents are very aware of the fact that government can potentially provide them with assistance, as with the provision of houses. A good example of this is residents' experiences with local government officials and housing projects. When I ask Ilana about the possibility of receiving RDP housing, Ilana shares an anecdote of their experiences with local government officials a few years earlier. Contrary to the opinion of sponsors that poorer whites are purposefully being excluded from state assistance, the government officials who helped the residents apply for housing offered to put them at the top of the long list of applicants waiting for RDP houses.

Ilana says that they were surprised by the offer, made to them by local officials in 2010. They declined, however, because they realised that it would create conflict between the Park's residents and other applicants who are waiting for RDP houses as well. As the residents' decline of this offer was motivated by their fears of being violently attacked if black African applicants thought they were unfairly privileged, this is not an example that can be read as a move towards non-racialism by the Park's residents. However, it points towards the way residents are contemplating a future where they might not be able to rely on the protection of white capital in the way that they have.

Residents realise that the accessing of state assistance calls for a rhetoric very different from that used by sponsors. Residents are able to switch their rhetoric quickly, or remain appropriately silent, when speaking to sponsors. In conversations with sponsors residents fluently use language that is typical of "White Talk". Terms and phrases such as "reverse racism", "reverse apartheid", and "oppression" are much more common when residents speak to sponsors, who obviously hold these political sentiments, than when they speak amongst themselves. In doing this, residents and sponsors jointly create an image of post-apartheid whites that almost entirely negates the presence of any social category other than race. The absence of overt markers of classism does not mean, however, that it is not present. Rather, sponsors intentionally refrain from acknowledging class and classism in an attempt not to disrupt the politics of homogeneity between themselves and the residents.

Scholars like Sibanda (2012) have argued that poorer whites have been pushed to the margins of whiteness. She contends that poorer whites in the coastal city of East London, the focus of her study, faced complete exclusion from the broader white community. The stereotypes invoked by white poverty, she argues, are so severe that they lead to "social death". In the intersection between race and class it might be true that, within the framework of ideological whiteness, poorer whites are often stereotyped and excluded from the centre of whiteness. It

is important to acknowledge, however, that even if poorer whites do not find themselves at the centre of whiteness, they are still able to share in some of the benefits that whiteness offers, even if only peripherally. In a certain sense then, poorer whites occupy a liminal space in between ideologies of whiteness and non-whiteness. At times they are, to use Wray's (2006) phrase, "not quite white", but remain white enough not to be excluded from the scope of whiteness altogether. This idea is one that forms the basis of this project: that poorer whites still benefit from the privileges afforded to whites even if they are poor. Unlike poor black Africans — who constitute the "ordinary" poor — poorer whites are afforded the privilege of being made visible.

Disentangling race/class

Within the construct of poor whiteism, race and class are always necessarily present. At the present moment, race is privileged while the concept of class is scarcely acknowledged. This negation is an inevitable result of the neo-conservative argument which positions all whites as oppressed victims and in potential danger of losing economic, social, and, cultural capital. Despite the attempts by visitors and residents to shift attention to ethno-race, presuppositions of class and classism always linger nearby. In this final section I show how classism subtly emerges from sponsors.

During my first month of fieldwork I notice one morning that three cars enter the Park and park against the side of the narrow road that separates the entrance to the *stoep* from the crèche. While some of the passengers remain seated for a while, three men and a woman walk over to Ilana and briefly speak with her before turning back and signalling to the rest of the passengers to get out. The rest of the passengers unload camera equipment, boxes filled with groceries, and a large banner with the logo of a large politically conservative civil

organisation that aims to champion the civil and political rights of Afrikaans-speakers in South Africa.

I walk over and introduce myself. Coincidentally I knew two of the visitors: we attended the same high school. Now they are members of the youth wing of this civil rights organisation. Their visit to the Park coincides with the presence of a documentary film crew which is filming in the Park as part of an ongoing documentary series on white poverty in South Africa. The civil rights organisation, in turn, has driven about an hour from the historically Afrikaans University of Pretoria to visit King Edward Park and to be filmed while handing out groceries.

I wonder aloud to one of the students on their choice of King Edward Park when there were many instances of white poverty in Pretoria.[15] While unpacking tubes of toothpaste onto a small table outside the crèche's classroom, one of them answers that they came to the Park because it is more well-known. They and the production company that is accompanying them think that their story will attract more attention if they film it in a place with which people are already familiar. They want to film the handing over of the groceries, and interviews with one or two students about white poverty. This is to form part of a larger project where members of the organisation will be asked to collect groceries and other household goods that will be donated to the Park every few months.

While the students are being filmed taking bags of groceries from their cars and walking towards the entrance of the Park, I ask Sunette whether she has ever seen them before. She shakes her head. She does not know and does not really care, she says. There are always political organisations launching some or other project in the Park. In most cases they never

[15] According to Solidarity Helping Hand's report on Afrikaner poverty, which I discuss in chapter one, there are an estimated 80 white informal settlements in Pretoria and its surrounding areas (Solidarity Helping Hand, 2010).

see these groups again, she muses, unless it is election time or something similar and they are campaigning for support. But, she adds, they are grateful for the gifts that these groups bring with them because some of the residents desperately need them. Meisie who stands with us nods in agreement.

When the journalist conducting the interview returns, the young students stand around him with solemn expressions as they elaborate on their thoughts on white poverty. Would they say that the current conditions in South Africa are a form of reverse racism, the journalist asks them. All three nod furiously. Definitely, replies one. For him, he continues, it comes down to a simple system in which white South Africans find themselves marginalised and oppressed. It is because of this, he says and gestures at the nearby houses, that white people are forced to live in places like these and cannot find jobs.

He rattles off the alleged number of poorer whites present in South Africa: eighty squatter camps in Pretoria alone and more than four hundred across the country; more than 600 000 whites living in poverty; another couple of hundred thousand whites on the brink of losing their homes.[16] Organisations like theirs need to act quickly, another one adds, extend help to poorer whites, and alert the global community to the injustices that are taking place in South Africa, or else all white South Africans will soon be living in conditions similar to those in King Edward Park with nobody left to help them. People accuse organisations championing the rights of Afrikaners of over-emphasising race, but he states that the opposite is true. They want the South African government's obsession with race to be addressed so that all South Africans can have equal access to opportunities. Twenty years after apartheid the playing field has been levelled, the third adjoins, and black Africans can no longer claim that they continue to be disadvantaged by apartheid.

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[16] Once more, it seems that the figures cited by this group have been taken directly from Solidarity Helping Hand's 2010 report on Afrikaner poverty.

In order to clarify the young men's answers, the journalist conducting the interview asks the students whether they think black Africans who grew up in informal settlements have the same opportunities as they themselves have had. All three nod. It comes down to hard work, one says. He points to the residents who begin to queue at the distribution point for the donated groceries. Whites like these here in the Park are denied opportunities and have to live in appalling conditions, he concludes, because people (he is presumably referring to Africans) continue to use the past as an excuse.

After the groceries are distributed, I accompany the students back to their cars. The film crew has already left to film in other parts of the Park. The residents have all gone back to their homes. One of the women in the group asks the others to hurry up as she needs to use the bathroom. I offer to show her the Park's ablution block but she shakes her head furiously. She is scared it will be dirty and rather wants to the group to stop at a nearby petrol station.

While the group is still discussing their route home and where they will stop to find a bathroom, three of the resident teenage boys walk by. As every day, they are returning from collecting and chopping wood from the fallen trees nearby. Both are shirtless as they are carrying two stacks of wood. One of two, Dustin, has a large tattoo across his chest. I see a few of the students stare when the boys walk by without paying much attention to us. One of the students whispers softly and points at the bright pink neon shorts Dustin is wearing. When the boys are out of hearing distance, one student wonders where their shirts are. One of the men who had been interviewed laughs and waves his arm across the air. "In places like *these*", he says, "with people like *this*", and he nods to where the boys are walking down the road, "I don't think wearing a shirt is really required". The group around him laughs. "These

people are fucking different, hey", says another man. Shortly after this they get into the cars and leave.[17]

The differences in the students' body language and conversations when they are away from the Park's residents in contrast to when they are with them and being filmed are stark. The students were not only aware of a distinct class difference between themselves and the squatters, but their class assumptions were underpinned by stereotypes about poorer whites. Contrary to statements they made shortly before that aimed to emphasise the similarities between *all* whites, they now focussed on pointing out the differences between them.

The event I describe above is by no means an exception. In spite of the loud and public claims that any white South African can end up in a squatter camp at any time, sponsors often complain to me about residents' lifestyles and their disapproval of it. Over the course of the eleven months that I was in the field, sponsors speak to me at length about their ideas about poor whiteism and possible solutions for this "problem". The solutions they present to me in private are, however, a far cry from their public declarations that the only possible solution for post-apartheid white poverty is intervention into national economic and employment policies.

When we speak in private, visitors frequently mention about the need for intervening in the early education of the Park's children. Andrew, a business man from Johannesburg, has a detailed plan for such an intervention when I meet him on his first visit to the Park. The idea he proposes is to raise funds or find sponsors to be able to remove children from the Park almost entirely. He suggests sending them to boarding school from when they start primary school to the time they finish matric. He is willing to sponsor one child and has already found sponsorships amongst his friends for three more children. The rationale behind this idea, he

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[17] From my field notes, 12 September 2013.

explains, is to remove children from the environment of the Park and educate them in spaces where they are taught, from a young age, the habits, practices, and norms of the upper middle class. Although he is not explicit, it is clear that Andrew is referring to the white middle class.

Later the same day, while at a meeting with the broader Park management, Andrew speaks passionately about the horrors of post-apartheid white poverty. More affluent whites need to step in and help those living in spaces such as King Edward Park in attempts to secure a future for white South Africans. He speaks at length about his ideas for the Park, possible contributions, and white poverty in general. Never, however, does he mention anything that even remotely mirrors the moralist grammar of poor whiteism he used when he spoke to me privately.

While some sponsors revealed their classism by taking a moral position towards the Park residents, others revealed in reactions such as that by the student who refused to use the toilet. Shortly after I start my fieldwork, Charlene (the sponsor in charge of the crèche) feels compelled to have a discussion with me. She praises my efforts but reminds me that the people who live in the Park are "different". I cannot stay with the residents, she cautions, because their homes are dirty and filled with mites, lice, and other insects. Other sponsors refuse food that the residents offer them, only to explain afterwards that they are scared of becoming ill if they eat the food.

I am unsure whether the Park's sponsors know that the residents are very aware of the extent to which the sponsors frame the Park in classist terms that draw on stereotypical ideas of poor-whites. If they do know, they certainly choose to not disclose it. Rather, both residents and sponsors go about the Park, focussing on the politics of race and ethnicity, and keeping mum about other social categories like class. The silence of both residents and sponsors ensures that the collective narratives of whiteness that they have constructed are not

disrupted. Consequently, the network of sponsorships that the Park has established is kept more or less intact.

It is, however, a network that is fragile at best. None of the agreements between sponsors and residents are formalised or binding. Many sponsorships depend on the relationships Henry and Ilana have established with the sponsors. Unlike a century before, when poor-white interventions were led by the state, King Edward Park depends on the goodwill of persons or groups who can withdraw their support at a moment's notice. For the residents of the Park, thus, assistance is tied to two conditions: the upholding of the current conservative discourse that sees them as victims of a brutally racist state, and the ability of sympathetic whites to provide monetary interventions. Considering the potential collapse or shifting of either of these conditions opens a plethora of further lines of inquiry. It might be possible for residents to make a radical shift from primarily performing an identity crafted around whiteness to one crafted around being poor. This move, a shift from *poor-white* to *poor*, is likely to be politically potent and one, as many of the residents fear, that could strip them of the exceptionalism that whiteness has afforded them.

Conclusion

Within the contemporary moment the politics of poor whiteism is particularly interesting both for what it is in itself, and for its indications of broader forms of politically conservative whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Closely tied to ideas of a future imagined by conservative whites, poor whiteism is held up as a possible dystopic future. For the residents of King Edward Park this has benefits and drawbacks. The current state of whiteness and white politics is not guaranteed. It may, at any given time, change or shift. Opinions and understandings of class and race, most particularly, are contradictory and at times seem completely irreconcilable. Yet residents and visitors easily navigate their way through these

contradictions. Residents are able to agree with conservative whites at one moment that white South Africans are being oppressed and that the very existence of spaces like the Park is caused by detrimental economic policy and explain clearly in the next moment why such conservative politics are unlikely to benefit them in the long run and point me to the classism visitors tend to exhibit.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion



Figure 16: The newly erected sign at the entrance of King Edward Park

The green board at the entrance of King Edward Park has been replaced. In its place is a new sign. Thirteen years after the local municipality's name was first changed, the correct name is now finally displayed on the entrance board. The rest of the wording has stayed much the same. In Afrikaans and English, it still states what is forbidden in the Park: noise, littering, damage or removal of plants, fires except at braaing facilities, squatting, and damaging of property.

Once one drives deeper into the Park, towards the camping site, the rhythmic sound of hammers, knocking down walls of wood and iron, sound through the open space. In the narrow road in front of the *stoep* a strange mix of household items lie abandoned: an old hairdryer, the head and torso of a Barbie doll, a couple of non-matching socks, something that looks like it could have been the stuffing of a pillow, and several old t-shirts. Ouma, one of the Park's older residents, shouts at a small group of children who are rummaging through the abandoned items. On the *stoep* Ilana is in serious conversation with a few residents, waving her hands as she speaks.

It is December 2014. I finished my fieldwork and left the Park five months earlier. Three weeks after I left, I receive a text message from Sunette, simply stating: "We have to be out by 16 December". I immediately understand what the message means. After almost fifteen years of residing in the Park, including a legal battle that stretched over seven years, the poorer whites of King Edward Park finally have to leave.

I thus return to the Park for one last day, two weeks before the official deadline on 16 December. Sheets of tin and corrugated iron are rolled up and loaded onto *bakkies* and trucks. Sponsors are driving in and out of the Park, assisting with the transport of furniture and building materials. Men and teenage boys sit on the roofs of the Wendy houses and shacks, taking apart housing structures piece by piece so that they can re-use them to building houses elsewhere. Women drag suitcases and black refuse bags filled with clothes and other

belongings to the trucks and *bakkies*. Some families have already left, leaving open spaces between the remaining housing structures. On the morning of 16 December, one man explains to me, the Red Ants[1] are scheduled to arrive to move the last remaining residents to the piece of land they have been provided with. Henry felt, the man continues, that they should try to move as many things possible to the new location before then. The Red Ants have been in and out of the Park since the end of November to assist those residents who are ready to move. An open piece of land, adjacent to the nearby township, has been made available to King Edward Park residents. He thinks, the man says with a slight sense of uncertainty, that they will stay there until their names reach the top of the waiting list to receive RDP houses.

As part of the settlement that Henry reached with the city council, all of the Park's residents will be given building materials to erect temporary housing structures. They can access water at taps on the edges of this new living space, much as it was in the Park. Temporary portable toilets will be provided by the city council; every two households will share one toilet. About two-hundred residents chose to move to this space with Henry and Ilana. Although she is scared of crime in the township, one woman says, she trusts that Henry has everything under control.

A few households, chiefly those without children, have already started moving to the new place. Instead of simply transporting these families' belongings, the Red Ants helped the residents to quickly erect very basic shacks — quite uncharacteristically and despite the order that the city council is under no obligation to assist with the construction of housing

[1] The Red Ant Security Relocation and Eviction Services, colloquially known as the "Red Ants", is a private security service which is often employed by South African municipalities to evict and relocate informal settlers (Wilson, 2011: 265). The Red Ants are often accused of showing little respect to the people they evict or relocate. Dempster (2001: 24) comments, with regard to one such removal, that the Red Ants "showed scant respect for personal belongings and ripped apart dwellings in the space of a few minutes, leaving the debris lying in pathetic piles on the bare ground".

structures. A sponsor who is assisting with the move shows me photos of the new structures. They have set up urgent meetings and asked local political parties to intervene, she says and points out the gaps between the corrugated walls and roofs. She hopes, she continues, that the Human Rights Commission will intervene and order the city council to provide housing that is more appropriate for human habitation. Thomas and Lilly, however, are happy to move. In this new space, Thomas explains, they won't have to walk as far to fetch water and visit the ablution blocks. Moreover, this new housing structure, while minimal, will be his and Henry won't have any power over his and his family's comings and goings.

A second group of residents plans to move to a different space, a small holding a few kilometres out of town. This space has been acquired by a non-profit organisation that wanted to provide the residents with an alternative option so that they don't have to move to the township. The organisation primarily consists of white women who refer to themselves as Boers[2]. They are, in some ways, rather similar to the historical *volksmoeders* that I described in chapter four, and are convinced that the future of an Afrikaner people is now in the hands of women like themselves. The idea, one resident who plans to move to this space explains to me, is to create a small but self-sustaining community where homes will be built for white families, and residents will be helped to develop small business ideas. Choosing to move to this space is subject to several conditions, however. The measures, rules, and conditions closely mimic those imposed on poor-white suburbs in the 1930s and 1940s. Only white residents' applications will be considered, regular drug testing will be done on all living there, and the organisation reserves the right to ask anyone to leave at any time. One couple which plans to move there explains that it will receive a house there, eventually, but that anyone who is lazy, drinks too much, or causes any trouble will be evicted immediately.

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[2] The choice to call themselves Boers and not Afrikaners (or any other form of ethnic identification) connotes an ultra-conservative political position.

At the end of this thesis, as the residents of King Edward Park ready themselves to move elsewhere, the choices they face with regard to their futures reintroduce many of the questions my study has posed. How does a white person live in a space that is not considered to be appropriately white? Under which conditions is whiteness challenged, reproduced, and shifted in post-apartheid South Africa? How do people, poor but white, make sense of their socio-economic position in relation to other poor South Africans as well as in relation to other white South Africans? And how does the way that whiteness always seems to linger, even in those spaces with which it is least associated, inform the day-to-day lives of South Africans who are poor but white?

These are questions that not only speak directly to the scope and aim of this study, but are also relevant in the theorisation of postcolonial conditions, in the formation of citizenship in the global South and elsewhere, and for understandings of identity politics and notions of belonging. In the twentieth century, Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 95) argue, many nation states were forced to move away from the "fiction of cultural homogeneity" that had been founded by Euro-nations in the preceding century. In the twenty-first century, many states are now confronting ideas of a much more heterodox form of nationhood and its implications. For this reason, Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 95-96) suggest, there has been a growing scholarly concern with "citizenship, sovereignty, multiculturalism, minority rights, and the limits of liberalism". Across the global South, specifically, the relationship between the post-colonial state, its citizens, and the struggle to topple structures of colonial power reflect the issues that Comaroff and Comaroff have set out (see, for example, Foweraker, 2001; Miraftab, 2009; Parnell & Robinson, 2012). In line with the themes that I have listed above there are, for example, the work of Nyamnjoh (2010) and Werbner (2002, 2010) on the negotiation of traditional forms of power and democratic citizenship in post-independent Botswana. In his book *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in*

Brazil, James Holston (2008) examines how, on the edges of São Paulo, Brazil, insurgent forms of democratic citizenship are entangled with violence and inequality.

This thesis shows how, indeed, many of these questions are of integral relevance to post-apartheid South Africa. The case of King Edward Park and those whites who live there, together with the telling absence of black Africans in this "white squatter camp", highlights the complicated interplay between power and disempowerment, of the lingering presence of apartheid ideologies, and of the relationship between class stratification and ethno-racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. My study demonstrates how poorer whites in the post-apartheid period challenge conventional understandings of citizenship and poverty by turning to notions of minority rights and marginalisation while, at the same time, calling on the rights afforded to them, as squatters, by post-apartheid legislation. In this way poorer whites, with the help of their supporters, gain access to a wide range of resources.

Poor and/but white

My thesis argues that, when thinking about post-apartheid white poverty, the specific socio-political conditions that surround poorer whites and, more broadly, white South Africans ought to be considered seriously. The post-apartheid moment calls, consequently, for a radical break with the idea that older theoretical understandings of poor whiteism can merely be applied to current-day poorer whites and the spaces in which they live. Historical ideas of poor whiteism and the theories that underpinned these ideas, as set out by Teppo (2004) and exemplified in the report of the Carnegie Commission, imagined poor-whites as an obstacle along the path to constructing the Afrikaners as a powerful political and economic force. During the mid-twentieth century, poor-whites, as my thesis has shown, were seen as morally lacking anomalies who needed to be rehabilitated in order to enter the white upper classes.

This thesis shows how there has been a critical shift in the way, specifically, more politically conservative whites make sense of white poverty after apartheid. This, in turn, has allowed for poorer whites themselves to engage in a politics that is rather different from that which surrounded poor-whites during the 1930s and 1940s.

In order to gain insight both into the everyday lives of poorer whites and into the production and reproduction of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, we have to carefully think through the way poorer whites make lives and the extent to which these lives are enabled by white capital. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to take into account the historiography of poor whiteism and how certain elements of poor-white rehabilitation have continued to be relevant to poorer whites themselves. The ways in which the residents have constructed the King Edward Park as a white squatter camp, for example, and apply and police good whiteness in it are telling of the continued relevance of older practices of poor-white rehabilitation. While it is impossible to consider the presence of post-apartheid spaces of poor whiteism within the exact same paradigm as the spaces in which poor-whites lived during the former half of the twentieth century, the day-to-day lives of the Park's residents show how the practices and principles that surrounded a "solution" to the poor-white problem are still used as a means to display the whiteness of the Park's residents. Through organising homes in particular ways, choosing to approach work in a certain manner, and aspiring to structure family life in ways that mimic nuclear families, the residents of the Park display to outsiders how they, to their own minds at least, are different to other squatters.

Such a radical rethinking necessarily entails a critical evaluation of whiteness and of being white in post-apartheid South Africa. In a fiercely critical evaluation of Africanist anthropology and the ethnographic study of whites, Nyamnjoh (2012:3) notes a "dearth of studies on white South Africans". He remarks that the little anthropological research that does deal with whiteness and white South Africans is mostly unpublished, and focusses on either

non-English speaking whites or poor-whites. Among the responses to his critique, Teppo's seems specifically relevant to this study and the contextualisation thereof in the field of anthropology as well of whiteness studies in South Africa. In a piece entitled "'Poor Whites' do Matter" (2013), Teppo argues that it is not only untrue that studies of South African whites are limited to unpublished ethnographies of white Afrikaans-speakers and poor-whites, but also a mistake to describe poor-whites as of marginal importance. Teppo lists several reasons[3] for this, the most important for this thesis being that, historically, the issue of "poor-whites" has evoked questions of "class fragmentation, identity politics, and political mobilisation" (Teppo, 2013: 124).

This thesis argues that the politics of poorer whites are, indeed, of much more than marginal importance. To consider poorer whites as only marginally important while upper class whites are those who are truly worth studying suggests a presupposition of the social as fragmented. Contrary to such a fragmented reading of whiteness and of the broader social, this study displays how different forms of whiteness and various socio-political and economic positions intersect, guide, and inform one another. I argue that the whiteness of poorer whites cannot and ought not be seen as marginal to the whiteness of upper classes, nor should it be considered a less authentic manifestation of whiteness.

While it might be true, as Nyamnjoh (2012) suggests, that few Africanist scholars have "studied up" to focus on the lives of upper class whites, studies of poorer whites (and other groups who are considered as marginal) nonetheless provide valuable social, political and historical insights. Ethnographic encounters I have described throughout the previous five chapters, the different forms of whiteness inform and supplement one another. The ways in which the residents of King Edward Park and their sponsors collectively imagine the position

[3] I do not elaborate extensively on all of Teppo's counterarguments as my thesis has presented similar arguments.

of whites in South Africa, the particular relationships that have been formed as a result of this imagined shared position, and the way white capital continues to uphold the exceptionalism of white poverty are all telling indications of the entangled nature of different social positionalities.

This thesis demonstrates how the lives of poorer whites are anything but marginal to the forms of whiteness that are produced by whites of higher classes. These different understanding of whiteness, and the meanings of *being* white in different contexts, inform one another and display how ideological devices, like whiteness, may at times appear to have little in common. However, as I have argued, these different ways of being white and of inhabiting and expressing whiteness still provide forms of capital to whites that others cannot access.

Life in King Edward Park is embedded within complex sets of socio-political, economic and historical structures. While, one the one hand, residents access the same forms of state social assistance as all other South African citizens, their poverty is, on the other hand, contextualised within a very conservative politics of post-apartheid whiteness. Twenty-two years after the official end of apartheid, spaces like King Edward Park serve as testimony to the extent to which apartheid and colonial structures have remained firmly in place. To the minds of both the residents and their sponsors, whites simply cannot be "ordinary" squatters. The firm belief that there are primordial differences between people of different racial groups, an idea that informs notions of white superiority, consequently guides many aspects of life in the Park. It is a life that is embedded within whiteness and white privilege, and that has created a space that is highly dependent on the continued reproduction thereof as, fundamentally, considered by others as white.

For many of the residents of King Edward Park there is no doubt, however, that they are squatters. This is further complicated by the idea, held by both residents and many outsiders,

that squatters are necessarily black. This then sets up the question that, for most residents, is a central part of their life in the Park: how can one be white and a squatter? The answer to this question, chapter two argues, is to produce a space that is, simultaneously, white and a squatter camp. The white squatter camp thus serves to emphasis residents' inability to afford formal housing, while still stressing their commitment to living white. My thesis shows how this idea, of the Park as a white squatter camp, is one that is carefully constructed by the residents. Such a space leaves open the possibility of accessing state social assistance, like housing, but seeks to assure the residents themselves as well as other whites that the Park remains fundamentally different to other squatter camps. In order to produce a space that is a white squatter camp, residents draw on older ideas of the ways poor-whites ought to live. These ideas aim to not only to aid the production of a white squatter camp, but to also to underline residents' commitment to living appropriately white.

The residents' commitment to display the Park as a *white* space is, in part, aimed at the gaze of other whites, but is deeply entangled with the residents' own understandings of how a white person ought to live. To be poor and white brings forth, for many of the Park's residents, knowledge of the ways in which poor-whites have, historically, been stigmatised. In the case of South Africans whites, the so-called "poor-white problem" of the 1920s and 1930s is particularly relevant. The ideas that poor-whites can be rehabilitated and that one can visibly display one's dedication to being a good white remain relevant in the every-day lives of the Park's residents. Together, chapters two and three demonstrate the lengths to which those who live in King Edward Park go in order to reproduce, in their Park homes, the good whiteness that was historically expected of poor-white South Africans. To establish oneself, and one's family, as examples of good whites is understood to display knowledge of what it means to be white, and the morality attached to this whiteness. Some residents, like Joan, have intimate memories of the processes that were involved with the upliftment of

poor-whites. In the case of other, younger residents, some reflect on the stories that their parents or grandparents tell them about their lives in poor-white suburbs.

The making of good whites and the display of good whiteness extends, my thesis shows, further than overt references to ethno-race and historical upliftment projects. Traces of the ideological underpinnings of Afrikaner nationalism and the poor-white upliftment projects are noticeable in other structures around the Park as well. As chapter four demonstrates, different interpretations of the familial are particularly relevant to upholding good whiteness in the Park. The familial, however, also structures relations of power within the Park itself. Ilana, for example, has set out to establish herself as a post-apartheid manifestation of the historical figure of the *volksmoeder*. By positioning herself as such Ilana creates an image of herself as a selfless matriarch who has sacrificed her own comfort in order to manage the Park and care for its residents. The way Ilana has constructed her role in the Park – as a stoic and selfless mother figure – is complicated by the presence of her extended biological family in the Park. The tensions and contradictions in both the way Ilana narrates her own presents in the Park and the way other residents represent her role there, Ilana becomes a figure through which we can recognise many of the complexities and ambiguities that is brought about by the idea that one is a poor-white. The manner in which Ilana presents herself to outsiders points to the discomfort with which she experiences her position as a woman who is both poor and white. This despite the broader contemporary narrative in which poorer whites like herself are seen as victims of the post-apartheid government who are not unlike any other white South Africans. The tension between them grants insight into the class stigmas that surround poor whiteism and how Ilana wishes to portray herself to the Park's sponsors.

Ilana's family is once more complicated by the idea that, through her position in the Park, Ilana's "real" family members have access to more donations than other residents who are considered her "fictive" family. While these two understandings often lead to tension, for the

most part residents allow both manifestations to co-exist in the Park. In this way, those who are not directly related to Ilana or Henry are able to access donations and other forms of capital that Ilana and Henry secure. By reaffirming the idea that *all* residents are like a family, residents thus gain access to the social capital that more powerful residents like Henry and Ilana have access to.

The social, cultural, and economic capital that residents access through the image of the Park-as-family enables residents to display and reproduce forms of good whiteness. The idea that a certain kind of family is central to a life as a good white is not limited to the larger Park-as-family only. It is an idea, as the final section of chapter four argues, that is also noticeable within smaller nuclear families and households. Here residents seek to display ideas of the familial, gender, and respectability that speak to older understandings of good whiteness. Through an analysis of gender and the aspirations tied to the nuclear family, my thesis illuminates how the same ideologies that provide residents with the forms of capital mentioned above also keep them bound to particular power structures. This point is important as it influences various aspects of life in the Park.

Throughout, my thesis makes reference to different forms of capital. In some ways, the question of how to best attract, manage, and redistribute capital is one of the most central in the lives of those living in King Edward Park. These questions of capital are often entangled with ideological questions that see residents engage in practices that secure the continued support of politically conservative but wealthy whites. As chapter five shows, however, a large part of residents' individual income is derived from state social assistance in the form of cash transfers. While this might appear, at first, to be quite removed from ideologies of good whiteness and the moralities that the first three chapters of my thesis address, chapter five argued that, in fact, most forms of economic capital are also influenced by understandings of the Park's social world. Similarly, other sources of cash income, like piecework and informal

businesses, tend to be structured by existing power structures in the Park and ideas about how whites ought to live, earn, spend money. Examples of the ways residents access, use, and think about cash also show the importance of thinking beyond binaries and of embedding these concepts in a "human economy".

In conclusion, the final chapter of my thesis contextualises King Edward Park and its residents within the broader politics of post-apartheid whiteness. I argue that, for some politically conservative whites, white poverty in the post-apartheid period has become a symbolic representation of the perceived marginalisation of white South Africans. In spite of the Park's residents' assertions that they do not want to be involved with any political organisations or agenda, the capital support the Park receives from these whites makes up a large percentage of many of the residents' monthly income. Without this support, these residents' lives would look significantly different. For the moment, however, it seems likely that conservative whites will continue to support poorer whites around South Africa.

Whiteness as voice and visibility

The few black Africans who also live in the Park have been noticeably absent from my discussion and arguments. This is a telling absence. Unlike the other, *white,* residents, black Africans in the Park are not intimately part of the community that is King Edward Park. They do not have the same friendships with other residents, have not established any relationships with sponsors, and do not form part of the everyday life of the Park as the white residents do. Black African residents live in the Park, but have never truly become part of the family that other residents describe the Park to be. They are not poor and white; they are simply poor. Sponsors make no efforts to establish relationships with residents who are not white, and do not consider their socio-economic position with the same sympathy as they do that of white residents. When incidents of crime are reported, white residents tend to blame black African

residents first. The poverty of the Park's black African residents remains, in short, unexceptional.

The work of Teppo (2004, 2005, 2009) and Teppo and Guillaume (2002, 2003) on poor-whites in former poor-white suburbs remain the largest body of work on poor-whites in post-apartheid. Teppo concludes very clearly that she views poorer whites as continuing to occupy positions of very low social standing. Not only are poorer whites looked down upon by all South Africans, Teppo (2009) argues, but "today's white, middle class South Africans are [also] still embarrassed by their existence" (Teppo, 2004: 246). Other studies have drawn similar conclusions. Sibanda (2012: 89) posits that the poorer whites in the West Bank of East London are subjected to a social death and are treated as "some form of cancer that resists treatment". Bottomley (2012: 186), who remarks that white poverty ought not to be treated as exceptional, also argues that poorer white South Africans are invisible in the broader context of poverty in post-apartheid. Poorer whites are, he concludes, ignored and forgotten by the ruling classes.

This study shows that poorer whites are not excluded from the social worlds of the white upper classes, nor have they been ignored and stigmatised by people of all racial groups. In fact, I have demonstrated how poorer whites are of integral importance to the ideas that politically conservative (and possible less conservative) whites hold of a post-apartheid South Africa and the space that whites occupy within it. Contending that poorer whites are completely disempowered and have been "forgotten" by other whites means that one necessarily has to ignore the politics, as I outlined in chapter six, that surround white poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. Over the last decade it has become quite clear that poorer whites have thoroughly grabbed the attention of many whites, in South Africa and elsewhere, who imagine poorer whites as forgotten by the South African government rather than by other whites. Contrary to Teppo (2009) and Sibanda (2012), the Park's sponsors often work

to counter stigmatisation and urge other whites to be embarrassed by the state's reaction to white poverty rather than by poorer whites themselves.

The social, political, and economic lives of the King Edward Park residents can only be understood by carefully and critically considering post-apartheid white poverty in relation to whiteness. Among other things, whiteness provides to whites the privilege of being invisible (Dyer, 1997; Patterson, 1998; Young, 2004). Others are raced, while whites are just humans (Dyer, 2016). Within ideologies of whiteness, to be white is to be normal, and the privileges of whites are seen as unremarkable, as though there exists a primordial relationship between being white and enjoying a position of power (see Dyer, 1997; Steyn, 2005). In the instance of poorer whites in post-apartheid South Africa, whiteness functions as the inverse of whiteness-as-invisibility. To those South Africans who are poor *and* white, whiteness affords the privilege of *not* being invisible. Unlike poor black Africans, poorer whites are seen as exceptional. Through the lens of whiteness, whites in squatter camps or other spaces of poverty are marked as unnatural and out of place.

In South Africa today, however, poor black African citizens in spaces of informal settlements are not uncommon sights at all (Brown, 2015; Makhulu, 2015). The ongoing crisis of housing provision, service delivery, and the exclusion of poor citizens from formal politics has led, Brown (2015) argues, to the rise of an emergent "insurgent citizenship". This form of citizenship is marked by protests and other forms of dissent. The most visible insurgent citizens, Brown (2015: 148) posits, are those who make up poor communities, engaging in acts that seek to affirm their political agency.

It is perhaps in this context — of the ways in which poor citizens who cannot turn to the privileges of whiteness give voice to their political agency — that the whiteness of poorer whites becomes clearest. In lieu of the emergence of an insurgent citizenship, poorer whites, like those in King Edward Park, have turned to a politics of racial homogeneity. As this thesis

has shown, there has until now been no need for residents to exert agency in the same ways as poor black Africans. They have never needed, for example, to engage in any politics of disruption as they have always had sponsors who intervene and supplement the sources provided to the Park and its residents by the government. Rather, the residents have emphasised their perceived racial affiliation, and in this way have allowed, and even urged, politically conservative whites to intervene, donate, and support the Park's residents. Thus, whiteness is reproduced through the redistribution of white capital and the privileging of poorer whites that simultaneously allows poorer whites to construct forms of citizenship different from the insurgent citizenship of black African poor, and that provides poorer whites with the means to better display and reproduce their own good whiteness. The result is a cyclical process in which poorer whites secure conservative white capital by displaying good whiteness; and are able to display this good whiteness because they have access to conservative white capital.

When whiteness and white poverty are read together as inextricably related, it reveals that poorer whites are not excluded from whiteness, nor marginalised by other whites, but as made exceptional by the ideologies that underpin whiteness. While the privileges afforded to poorer South Africans of European descent differ from those afforded to white upper classes, it is undeniably true that poorer whites are given opportunities and forms of capital that other poor citizens do not have access to. Poorer whites find themselves, perhaps, on the margins of South Africa's white communities and not as economically and socially privileged as many other whites. But even on the margins of whiteness, they remain, still, white.

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