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Power, identity and agency at work in the popular economies of Soweto and Black Johannesburg.

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Power, identity and agency at work in the popular economies of Soweto and Black Johannesburg

By

Paul Friedrich Detlev Krige

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Department of Anthropology
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Supervisor: Prof. André P. Czeglédy

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Power, identity and agency at work in the popular economies of Soweto and Black Johannesburg

Supervisor: Prof. André P. Czeglédy

Department: Anthropology

Degree For Which This Thesis Is Submitted: Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract: This thesis investigates a number of economic and financial practices, processes, relationships, actors and institutions prevalent in the residential areas that form part of Johannesburg that is known as Soweto, all of which have in common the exchange, hoarding, spending and risking of cash money. It describes actual flows of monies between actors and through popular economic institutions which are embedded in social relations of friendship and kinship, neighbourhood life and socially constructed identities. Building on the anthropological literature that seeks to show how money flows carry meaning as well as having function, it inquires into the meanings such flows of money - between popular institutions and social groups and across social classes - have for a range of differently situated participants in the popular economies. It explores the ways in which institutions and practices within the popular economies are deployed by actors and groups so as to direct flows of monies into certain social networks and relationships while redirecting it away from others, highlighting the agency of actors and groups in relation to their position in the local and larger political economy. Employing elements of practice theory, as well as perspectives from both political economy and cultural economy approaches to everyday life, the thesis offers arguments about power, identity, agency and state sovereignty in the context of the history of Black Johannesburg under apartheid and makes a contribution to our understanding of the material and symbolic structures of everyday life in contemporary Soweto and Johannesburg.

Key Words: Popular economies, finance, saving, money lending, gambling, consumption, everyday life, Soweto, Black Johannesburg, South Africa, power, identity, agency, urban anthropology.

DECLARATION

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

_____ _____

Detlev Krige Date

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The Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) at the University of the Witwatersrand was my intellectual home for four years, including for the duration of the two years of field work I resided in Soweto. Without the intellectual and financial support I received through WISER's four-year Doctoral Fellowship programme I would not have been able to commence this project. My time at Wiser was truly remarkable and I remember with fondness the stimulating environment Deborah Posel created on the 6th floor of the Richard Ward Building. I would also like to express my appreciation to Deborah for going beyond her duties in assisting me when my motor vehicle was stolen in the suburbs and I had to take 'a taxi to Soweto'.

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I am, of course, solely responsible for the arguments and conclusions presented here.

DEDICATION

In Memory Of

~ The Late Bra Ben ~

~ The Late Oom Bey ~

~ The Late Temba ~

~The Late Nathi Majozi ~

And Specially For

*** Nesta Amani ***

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
ABSA	Amalgamated Banks South Africa
AFP	Agence France-Presse
ANC	African National Congress
ATM	Automatic Teller Machine
APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum
BAD	Bantu Affairs Department
BCM	Black Consciouness Movement
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BER	Bureau For Economic Research (University of Stellenbosch)
BMF	Black Management Forum
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DTI	Department Of Trade And Industry
FSCC	Financial Sector Campaign Coalition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment And Redistribution Programme
ID	Identity Documents
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCC	Johannesburg City Council
LPM	Landless People's Movement
LSM	Living Standards Measure
MFRC	Micro Finance Regulatory Council
NAB	Native Advisory Board
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NCA	National Credit Act
NCF	National Consumer Forum
NEAD	Non-European Affairs Department (City Of Johannesburg)
NEPAD	New Partnership For Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
NRB	Native Resettlement Board
RDP	Reconstruction And Development Programme
ROSCA	Rotating Savings And Credit Association
SAARF	South African Advertising Research Foundation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAIRR	South African Institute for Race Relations
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAPS	South African Police Services
SCC	Soweto Community Council
SECC	Soweto Electricty Crisis Committee
SMME	Small Medium And Micro Enterprise
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
UBC	Urban Bantu Council
WB	World Bank

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix A
A photograph of the South Western Townships published in 1974 in the journal *Sechaba* Volume 8(4), p. 2.

Appendix B
A poem by Sipho Sepamla entitled 'Soweto', published in *Voices from within: Black poetry from southern Africa* (Introduced and edited by Michael Chapman and Achmat Dangor. Johannesburg: AD Donker, 1986, pp. 127-8).

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