Narratives of Contradiction:

South African Youth and Post-Apartheid Governance

By

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Abstract

South Africa's heralded democratic transition digressed from its 1994 euphoric optimism to a current state of public discontent. This stems from rising unemployment, persistent structural inequality, and a disappointment in the African National Congress-led government's inability to bring true social and economic transformation to fruition. While some scholars attribute this socioeconomic and political predicament to the country's former regimes, others draw close correlations between the country's post-apartheid predicament, ANC leadership, and the country's official adoption of neoliberal economic policies in 1996.

Central to this post-euphoric moment is the country's Born-Free generation, particularly Black youth, coming of political age in an era of supposed political freedom, social equality, and economic opportunities. But recent student movements evidence young people's disillusionment with the country's democratic transition. Such disillusionment is not unfounded, considering the 35% youth unemployment rate and questionable standards in primary education. Compared to their urban peers, rural youth are at an even greater disadvantage, far removed from urban resources and opportunities.

Against this post-apartheid moment, my research investigates the political perceptions of rural South African youth. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in the rural Eastern Cape Province, I find youth's political perceptions embedded in themes of employment, dependence, and political performance. Youth use these concepts, not only to interpret the post-apartheid state and frame their government expectations, but also to make sense of their surrounding socioeconomic environments. Drawing from scholarship on neoliberal governmentality and considering the post-apartheid state's contradictory nature, I argue that young South Africans' interpretations of their immediate social realities draw from a deeper lying neoliberal logic. This

logic places economic and social responsibility upon individuals, celebrates independence from

the state, and applauds self-reliance, individualism, and autonomy. Additionally, when

considering the country's political context, youth view themes of self-reliance and individuality

as logical alternatives to politics. Arguably, the country's political landscape has allowed for a

deeper entrenchment of a neoliberal logic that downplays the importance of political

involvement and civil engagements.

engagement is far from over. Filled with passion, motivation, and commitment, these young people constitute our country's future. In them, I see hope.

While doing fieldwork I also had the support of local friends, mentors, and family, support that was emotional, intellectual and material in nature. For them, I am truly grateful. This includes unexpected sleepovers, endless streams of cake, and using family and friends' vehicles. My local family and friends were always just a phone call away, providing comfort throughout my fieldwork experience.

My gratitude also extends to individuals in the United States whose support was consistent during my fieldwork and dissertation writing stages. Such support ranged from my doctoral committee to my U.S. based friends and family.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

South Africa's democratic transition shifted from euphoric optimism in 1994 to a state of acute discontent more than two decades later. As evident from increased public protests (Brown 2015a; Beinart and Dawson 2010), such discontent stems not only from the country's predicament of socioeconomic inequality but also from corruption and nepotism in state and public institutions. Subsequently critics have labelled the country's current social and political predicament as "the post-apartheid crisis" (Hart 2014), "a short-changed transformation" (Bundy 2014) and the postponement of liberation's dreams (Malala 2012).

Central to this post-euphoric predicament is South Africa's Born-Free generation, in particular, young Black South Africans[1] - the first generation to come of political age in the country's post-apartheid era. But this cohort's passage into civil society comes with at least two socioeconomic challenges. First, they face the country's growing unemployment rate. According to Statistics South Africa's second quarter figures for 2016, 26.6% of people within the labor force and actively seeking employment remained without work. This figure is exceptionally high when compared to other emerging economies' labor markets (Oosthuizen and Cassim 2014). Of this number, nearly two thirds are between 18 and 35 years of age and constitute the country's 36% youth unemployment rate (Wilkinson 2016a).[2] Second, young people's social environments

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[1] Democratic South Africa still uses the racial classification of the apartheid regime, namely African, Coloured, Indian/ Asian, and White. Although I fully reject the classificatory actions that come with such terms, I also argue that not recognizing these categories borders on an ignorant disposition akin to "color blindness." Such a disposition too easily overlooks the historic hardship and socioeconomic inequalities that continue to persist through racial classifications. Throughout this dissertation, I follow the conventions of historic resistance practice and use the term Black to refer to all South Africans apartheid's racial laws discriminated against, including African, Coloured, and Indian/ Asian South Africans. Similarly, I place race in inverted commas throughout the document to continuously emphasize socially and culturally constructedness of race.

[2] This is based upon Statistics South Africa's 2014 unemployment figures. http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/P02114.2/P02114.22014.pdf. According to the World Bank's

reflect the country's Gini coefficient ranging between 0.66 and 0.69,[3] with 0 representing

complete equality and 1 the highest level of inequality. This figure has not only risen from 0.58

in 1993, suggesting that South Africa has become more unequal post-apartheid, but also places

South Africa among the most unequal societies globally.[4] This inequality refers to financial

insecurities and also reflects young people's limited access to proper healthcare and quality

education, components needed to bring youthful ambition to fruition. With these conditions in

mind, Honwana (2012) suggests that South African youth are locked in conditions of "waithood"

– a twilight zone between childhood and adulthood, where young people are expected to mature

socially, amidst inhospitable socioeconomic conditions.

Just as South Africa's young people are subjected to the country's socioeconomic reality,

they are also outspoken critics. This became increasingly obvious following the 2015 and 2016

#RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements. Resembling the 1976 student protests against

the apartheid state's discriminatory Bantu Education system (Hirson 1979; Marks 2001; Bundy

1987; Hyslop 1999), these more recent movements gave voice to young people's disillusionment

with the country's post-apartheid trajectory. This includes questioning racial inequality's

persistence on university campuses, interrogating skewed government expenditure, and

critiquing post-apartheid political leadership (Njovane 2015; Nyamnjoh 2016). Just like the 1976

cohort, contemporary youth's frustrations are aimed at the state, pointing to the post-apartheid

government and its leadership as primary antagonists. This surge of political discontent not only

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2013 youth unemployment figures, 53% of people age 15 to 24 are unemployed. This places South Africa
third worldwide, after Greece (58.4%) and Spain (57.3%). Contrary to these European countries, at the
time of the World Bank study, South Africa had experienced five successive years of positive economic
growth http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS
[3]http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2011&locations=ZA&start=2011&view=bar&year_high_desc=false
[4] https://theconversation.com/factcheck-is-south-africa-the-most-unequal-society-in-the-world-48334

contradicts commonly held myths that young people have no interest in politics but also

evidences some preconceived opinions among young people of the country's political landscape,

the African National Congress (ANC)-led post-apartheid state[5] and its accompanying political

actors. How do young people[6] perceive of politics and the state, considering their conditions of

"waithood" and the country's "short-changed transformation?' In turn, what do these perceptions

tell us about post-apartheid politics in particular, and postcolonial governance in general?

      This dissertation concerns the political perceptions of South Africa's Born-Free

generation. To use James Scott's (1998) words, I investigate how young people "see the state,"

conceptualize their predicament as young South Africans in a social and economically unequal

society, and talk about politicians and their public performances. I address these questions

drawing from ethnographic fieldwork done in the rural Eastern Cape Province. Existing studies

on the country's Born-Frees and their disposition toward politics draw primarily from urban

contexts (Zegeye 2004; Buur 2009; Bray 2010; Moiloa 2012; Dawson 2014; Chance 2015;

Mosavel et al. 2015). I focus instead on the perception of *rural* youth, and, in this case, young

people from the Eastern Cape's Senqu municipality. Like other municipalities in the province,

Senqu includes areas from the former Transkei and Ciskei Bantustans, the apartheid

government's infamous "system of tribalist social engineering and bureaucratic

authoritarianism" (Crais 2006, 271). Scholars and activists alike agree that people living in these

former Bantustan regions face socioeconomic conditions not dissimilar from the apartheid period

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[5] South Africa is a parliamentary republic and uses a Westminster and party-list proportional representation electoral system. In contrast to most parliamentary systems, however, South Africa's president acts as both head of state and head of government.
[6] Here I use the South African government's definition of youth as stipulated in its 2015 National Youth Policy, that is, people in the age group 15 – 35 (NYP 2015-2020, 2015).

(Bank and Minkley 2005; Westerway 2012; Crais 2011).[7] Young people are not excluded from these conditions. On the contrary, they are the immediate victims of these unjust socioeconomic conditions, being on the receiving end of the regions' subpar educational standards, limited access to health services, and household poverty. Young people are well aware of their predicament. They continuously work at making sense of it all, to understand their immediate social environment, and engage in alternative ways of thinking about their futures.

The remaining pages of this chapter situate the dissertation in scholarship on South Africa's post-apartheid trajectory. In the chapter's first section, I focus on scholarly approaches to South Africa's post-apartheid period, analyzing the majority party, the ANC, and its post-apartheid contradictions. In this section I also introduce scholarship that considers neoliberalism's reach beyond the market place, followed by a discussion on how post-apartheid contradictions can be theorized in the context of neoliberal economics, South Africa's democratic present, and the country's younger generation. These theoretical discussions are helpful in contextualizing South Africa's current economic and political landscape – the same landscape rural youth try to make sense of in the chapters to come.

The chapter's second section is methodological in nature. Drawing from the anthropology of youth, I argue that young people are more than just a life stage or demographic quadrant. Instead they act as "future projectors," with their worldviews representing local manifestations of broader socioeconomic and political processes. Their perceptions shed light on that which is yet to come, especially when considering that a society's future rides on the back of its youth (Jean and John Comaroff 2005). In this section I also introduce my fieldwork site, population, and data

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[7] Recent figures estimate that 18 of 51 million South Africans still live within the country's former homelands. This includes the former independent states of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda, and the former self-governing entities of KwaZulu, Lebowa, QwaQwa, KaNgwane, and KwaNdebele (Williams 2010).

collection strategies, and conclude with an outline of the dissertation's respective chapters and overarching arguments.

The Post-Apartheid Predicament: Derailed Liberation or Neoliberal Casualty?

The African National Congress (ANC) and its allies' struggle against apartheid was, by definition, a liberation movement. Henning Melber (2005, 306) succinctly captures this liberation struggle as "creating conditions for a better life after apartheid, not only in terms of political and human rights but also about the inextricably linked material dimensions to human well-being and a decent living of those previously marginalized and excluded from the benefits of the wealth created to a large extent by them." During apartheid, the marginalized people Melber references here were the country's majority Black population. Comprising more than three-quarters of the country's population, Black South Africans were subjected to "separate development," policed through stringent residential laws, and valued primarily as surplus labor (Cooper 2002; Crais 2011). These regulated conditions of marginality came to an official end in 1994, primarily because of the liberation movement spearheaded by the ANC and its allies, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the South African Communist Party (SACP).[8] Following the 1994 elections, which the ANC won in great numbers, the party and its coalition

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[8] This tripartite alliance was officially formed in 1990 upon the ANC and SACP's official unbanning. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was also a major force in the liberation movement, comprised of civic, church, student and workers' organizations. With the ANC's official unbanning in 1990, the UDF's need decreased, followed by the organization's official disbandment in 1991. Following this disbandment prominent UDF leaders joined the ANC and took prominent cabinet and leadership positions. These include, among others, Trevor Manual, minister of finance (1996-2009) and Frank Chikane, director general of the presidency (1999-2008) and consult to President Zuma. For a full historic overview of the UDM and its role in liberation, see Seekings (2000) and Van Kessel (2000).

partners moved from the liberation's frontlines to the seats of parliament and positions of governance.[9]

Fast forward two decades and the struggle's objectives of social and economic equality appear elusive, utopian at best (Freund 2010; Marais 2011; Bundy 2014; Southall 2014). In fact, scholars and activists argue that apartheid-era income inequality, unemployment, and poverty remained intact, if not worsened, after 1994 (Leibrandt et al. 2012; Tregenna and Tsela 2012; Westerway 2012; Pons-Vignon and Segatti 2013; Seekings and Nattrass 2015). Arguably, the internal dynamics of the country's leading political party should shed light on the country's post-apartheid predicament. Therefore, over the past two decades, scholars have asked why the ANC and its allies' almost blissful sentiments of social and economic redress systematically evaporated the further the country moved from its 1994 democratic turn. A common theme of ambiguity runs through these inquiries. This is especially evident when considering how the ANC's erstwhile liberation objectives contradict its post-apartheid actions and policy choices. Whereas liberation discourse purported sentiments of emancipation, unity, and equality, post-apartheid politics are characterized by individual enrichment, nepotism, and patrimonial politics. However, when explaining South Africa's current socioeconomic dilemma, we cannot disregard the social and economic impact of colonial and apartheid-era policies. These policies therefore require a brief mention.

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[9] In 1994, the ANC secured 252 of 400 available parliamentary seats. This increased to 266 in 1999 and 279 in 2004. This number has since declined to 264 in 2009 and 249 in 2004. Since the 1994 elections, the ANC has maintained a clear majority of parliamentary seats, successfully securing more than 60% of the votes in all five democratic elections (Schulz-Herzenberg 2014).

Poverty and Social Inequality as Historic Debris

One set of explanations for the country's present socioeconomic predicament resides in a history of colonial and apartheid discrimination. Radical historians, such as Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (1981), Colin Bundy (1979, 1987) and William Beinart (1987), have set the tone of such inquiry, explaining South Africa's economic disparities through a Marxian lens. They trace the political economy back to the colonial period, with the discovery of minerals and industrial expansion of the late 1800s and the industrialization of agriculture in the early 1900s. In both cases, the means of production and subsequent wealth accumulation rested in white capitalists' hands. Colonial and eventual apartheid policies were fundamental in aiding this exploitation, ranging from laws limiting Black land ownership to restricting Black South Africans' spatial mobility. These policies forced many Africans into wage labor, subsequently creating a Black proletariat used for mineral extraction, expanding the country's industrialized urban core, and subsequently contributing to the growing capital of those in control. These regulations benefited the country's white population beyond curtail, while engulfing generations of South Africa's Black majority in unprecedented levels of poverty and wealth inequality (Thompson 2000; Beinart 2001; Cooper 2002; Dubow 2014). This legacy of racially unjust wealth distribution remains part and parcel of the country's social fabric with Black families still lacking the social and financial capital necessary for upward class mobility.

When considering the current socioeconomic situation of the Black majority and focusing specifically on the Eastern Cape, Westerway (2012) acknowledges the impact of colonial and apartheid-era injustices. However, he also insists that we "look to the present as much as to the past for an explanatory framework" (212). Answers to the country's current crisis, he argues, therefore also reside with the post-apartheid state, its leadership, and approaches to governance.

Among scholars engaged with post-apartheid politics and the country's ensuing socioeconomic predicament, two perspectives are prominent: First, a focus on the ANC's internal structure, governing choices, and post-apartheid legitimacy, and, second, a concern with broader economic processes and the country's place within the global world order. However, whether looking inward to the ANC's party dynamics or outward to its relation with capitalist markets, a central point remains: the party's internal dynamics as well as its commitment toward neoliberal economics contradicts its erstwhile ideals of social and wealth equality (Southall 2013; Saul and Butler 2014; Seekings and Nattrass 2015). Moreover, this contradiction acts as a central theme throughout scholarship concerned with the governing ANC and the post-apartheid state.

Derailed Liberation

In his reflection on the ANC-led government, Adam Habib (2013, 11) points to the ANC's ambiguous actions: "The ANC, the political home of Nobel laureates Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela, has been seen for what it is increasingly becoming: A grubby instrument of enrichment that speaks the language of empowerment and democracy, while its leadership and cadres plunder the nation's resources and undermine both the judiciary and the media." The ANC elite have done well to construct and sustain this image of aggravated self-interest (Lodge 2014; Reddy 2015), from the notorious R7 billion arms deal scandal in the early 2000s (Gevisser 2009; Feinstein 2011; Bundy 2014) to local level government officials' misdealing and crooked tender processes (Atkinson 2013; Butler and Southall 2013). Moreover, the combination of self-interest and extended patronage networks increasingly work in tandem with the state's political institutions, blurring the line between private and public concerns (Beresford 2015). For Tom

Lodge (2014) this combination signifies nothing other than neopatrimonial politics. Whereas a Weberian patrimonialism involves a "political administration [becoming] a purely personal affair of the ruler and political power is considered part of this personal property" (Weber 1978, 1028-1029), neopatrimonialism expands upon self-interested political power by functioning within the realm of a legal-rational bureaucratic context. When considering the ANC's actions and decision processes, Lodge (2014, 2) recognizes neopatrimonialism in the following governing processes: the ANC's internal rivalry and factional struggles, stemming from "personal loyalty rather than ideological beliefs"; ANC leadership's efforts to establish moral legitimacy through ethnic and "traditional" allegiances rather than quality service delivery and governance; leading politicians' use of business interests to benefit themselves and their families; local office bearers' appropriation of tendering processes toward personal wealth accumulation; ANC leadership's use of security procedures to demonstrate its authority and power; and the ANC's increased use of patron-client relationships to mobilize and secure public support.

According to Lodge, three factors drive such neopatrimonial behavior. First, the ANC's history of patrimonial relations, with patronage-based relationships between families, friends and close allies, form the core of the ANC's leadership, especially during its underground years. Second, the ANC's neopatrimonial operations are linked to inconsistencies within the party's structure and between the party and outside allies. This includes the ANC's clandestine operations during the anti-apartheid struggle, its territorial expansion into the former Bantustans after 1994 and subsequent relationship with these areas' traditional leaders through clientelism, and, on a more local level, the perception that support for the ANC brings rewards in the form of social assistance, housing, and basic services (Lodge 2014, 17). Third, neopatrimonialism plays out within South Africa's post-apartheid political economy, with patron-client relations

representing a form of economic development. Knowing somebody with political and, thus

financial capital comes with the prospect of opportunity, and, in some cases, an escape from poor

social and economic conditions.

Although neopatrimonialism as an explanation carries analytical insight, it does resemble

a form of teleological fatalism (Beresford 2015; Everett 2016), perpetuating narratives of African

states' inevitable decay and failure (Pitcher et al. 2009; Butler and Southall 2013). Beresford

(2015, 3-4) concurs, proposing instead the concept of "gate-keeping" to explain the ANC's

patronage and patron-client relationships. He argues that in contrast to neopatrimonialism

denoting "an exotic African form of political aberration and breakdown and departure from

idealized notions of Western Capitalist democracy," gatekeeper politics represents a broader

spectrum of informal politics, integral to contemporary liberal capitalist democracy globally and

thus void of a fatalist African metanarrative.

In addition to Beresford's advocacy against fatalist metanarratives, his reasoning for the

ANC's gatekeeping politics further articulates the ANC's contradictory position vis-à-vis its

original liberation narratives. He attributes gatekeeper politics' spread to three factors: 1) the

state's weakness in keeping gatekeeper politics at bay. As mentioned earlier, when taking office

in 1994, the ANC lacked the institutional planning to counteract devious actions, allowing

instead for the emergence of dubious relationships and questionable political transactions; 2) a

moral shift in younger generations entering the organization who increasingly show an interest in

personal wealth rather than the ANC's ideological underpinnings; and 3) factional struggles

within the ANC, forcefully boiling to the surface during the 2007 Polekwane Convention.

Following this convention's open rivalry between the party's prominent leaders,[10] factions have become an increased concern among former ANC's leaders and loyalists. Evidence of factionalism not only highlights the organization's vulnerability toward personal rivalry, but also a tendency among ANC leadership, cadres, and followers to choose loyalty and accompanying patronage relations over ideological conviction (Gevisser 2009; Glaser 2010; Bundy 2014; Hart 2014; Southall 2014). And as Manson (2013) reminds us, such factionalism trickles down to the local level, especially where an immediate access to resources trumps original ideological goals.

When considering evidence of gatekeeper politics, how does the ANC maintain legitimacy and secure its parliamentary majority? ANC sympathizers quickly point to the ANC's post-apartheid accomplishments, in particular the country's expansive housing and social assistance programs. Among the most expansive in the developing world, and the ANC government's "single most effective anti-poverty tool" (Marais 2011; McEwen and Woolard 2012), the social grants program reaches more than 16 million, or 30% of the country's 51 million population—a percentile that might not have any financial alternative (Ferguson 2015). Similarly, since 1994, the ANC-led government's housing program has developed over 2.25 million housing units, rehousing approximately 10 million South Africans (Bundy 2014). For the country's poor majority, these material gains, although small, remain worthy of party loyalty. Taking a more cynical position, Saul (2007, 20) argues that the social contradictions facing many poor South Africans "just do not cut deeply enough in Southern Africa, are not deeply enough felt to be formative in terms of consciousness, especially in terms of class consciousness and its

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[10] The 2007 ANC Convention saw the rivalry between two camps: those supporting Thabo Mbeki, then president of both the party and the country, and supporters of Jacob Zuma. During this convention, Jacob Zuma was elected as new ANC President, placing Mbeki in the difficult position as country but not party president. Drawing from rising controversies against both Zuma and Mbeki, infighting between these two camps continued well after the 2007 convention, eventually resulting in President Mbeki resignation as national President in 2008. For more on the Polekwane Convention see Bundy (2014) and Hart (2014).

translating into effective class struggle." Arguably, the ANC-led government's post-apartheid social assistance programs contribute to such limited class struggles while effectively securing the party's post-apartheid legitimacy.

A second way of maintaining political legitimacy is the ANC's continuous reference to its apartheid legacy and accompanying themes of liberation, emancipation, and democracy. As productive election campaign material, these narratives were also present during the 2014 elections, with the ANC enthralling voters with its "liberation dividend" and role in the anti-apartheid struggle (Paret 2016, 440). As Chipkin (2007) reminds us, the ANC continues to capitalize on its role as post-apartheid unifier—the party that succeeded in bringing a racially and ethnically divided people together to form a unified nation in 1994. The events and subsequent narratives arising from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission[11] further contributed to this almost ecclesiastic language of rainbow nation, reconciliation, and *Ubuntu* (humanity). The ANC therefore represents a form of nation-building, so much so, that many South Africans might ask what would happen to the country if the party is no longer in charge (Chipkin 2016). And although they might be losing potency, considering the ANC's dwindling election numbers,[12] narratives of liberation, emancipation, and democracy remain persuasive enough to help secure the support of South Africa's majority.

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[11] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up in 1996 by the first Mandela led Government as restorative justice mechanism to deal with the injustices accompanying apartheid. For more on the TRC see Thompson (2014).
[12] During the 2014 national, and 2016 local election, the ANC saw its greatest election losses since 1994, losing three of the country's seven metropoles to the opposition. This includes the Johannesburg and Tshwane metropoles in Gauteng Province, the country's economic heartland (Paret 2016).

A Neoliberal Casualty

Whereas the abovementioned perspective concerns the ANC's internal dynamics, another

perspective takes a step back to consider the ANC-led government's "location within the global

world order" (Brown 2015a) and its adoption of neoliberal policies[13] (See Bond 2000; Hirsch

2005; Bhorat and Kanbur 2006). This is a popular approach to post-apartheid analysis, as

Ferguson (2015, 4) reminds us: "Narratives about neoliberalism have been central to most

critical understandings of the massive political and economic changes of the last few decades."

Seminal in this regard is Patrick Bond's (2014) *Elite Transition* and Neil Marias' (2001, 2011)

South Africa Pushed to the Limit, providing convincing evidence of the relation between

neoliberal restructuring, unemployment, persistent poverty, and wealth inequality.

The country's segue into neoliberal economics happened shortly after the transition

period (1990-1994). The first ANC government, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, tried to

address the inherited socioeconomic inequalities of the preceding apartheid state with its

Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP). Issued in February 1994 as a compromise

between trade unions and the ANC, and officially adopted into parliament following April

elections, the RDP set out to "meet the needs of the impoverished majority…through a people-

centered, people-driven development process" (Bond 2014, 286).[14] Bundy (2104, 37) reminds us,

of the RDP's hybrid and often ambiguous nature. While pro-poor in its broad sweep, he states,

"the plan was vague enough to allow for plenty of wiggle room." Arguably, this ambiguity and

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[13] Neoliberal economics entails a significant reduction in social spending, while promoting free market economics, the privatization, and in some cases, outsourcing of the industrial sector. Critics of neoliberalism emphasize that these conditions benefit the rich more than the poor, subsequently widening the inequality gap and engulfing more communities in extreme poverty. For an elaborate discussion of neoliberalism and its detrimental impact, see Harvey (2005).

[14] RDP Council, 'Rebuilding the MDM for a People-Driven RDP', *African Communist*, second quarter 1996.

vagueness contributed to its short shelf life, making way for the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Plan (GEAR) in 1996. Commonly associated with Thabo Mbeki[15] and his proceeding administration (1999 – 2008), GEAR signified the post-apartheid government's official allegiance to neoliberal economics, including fiscal austerity, trade liberalization, privatization of state-owned enterprises and labor market policy reforms, while bankrolling new investments through tax incentives (Marais 2011; Seekings and Nattrass 2015). As counterpoint, GEAR valued market mechanisms for job creation, asset redistribution, state institution reform, and poverty reduction (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002). GEAR instantaneously "lit up the faces of business leaders" (Marais 2011, 113) and envisioned corporate investment made promises of boundless employment opportunities seem plausible. Like other international contexts, the reality turned out much different. Even though new wealth was surely generated, especially among well-connected business leaders and ANC elites (Southall 2004, 2007; Freund 2007b; Tangri and Southall 2008), "inequality rose to levels exceeding even those seen under apartheid" (Ferguson 2015, 4). Similarly, employment growth remained a mere illusion, with the agriculture and mining sector shedding jobs because of outsourcing and wage restrictions (Ferguson 2015, 4). Subsequently, GEAR came to represent a major setback.

GEAR's detrimental effects on employment educed political pressure, especially from leftist academics and civil society (Seekings and Natrass 2015). As a result, the Mbeki administration soften its neoliberal edge, introducing frameworks such as the 2006 Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA). With job creation as its primary objective, this framework included an expanded infrastructure development, public works

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[15] Mbeki, together with senior ANC politicians, including then Finance Minister Trevor Manual, steered GEAR's formation and introduction (Seekings and Nattrass 2015).

program, and small and medium enterprise advancements (Marais 2011, 149). The Mbeki

government also continued to expand upon its social grants program, from an estimated 2.6

million recipients in 1994 to 12 million in 2007 (Marais 2011, 231).[16]

Yet, critics argue that programs such as AsgiSA were nothing more than variations on the

same neoliberal theme. Slight alterations to macroeconomic policies and increases in social

spending did not interfere with South Africa's neoliberal trajectory. On the contrary, as Segatti

and Pons-Vignon (2013) maintain, large spending on social programs has occurred in a fiscally

constrained environment, especially when considering health and education expenditure. This

includes the Mbeki government's shamelessly passive approach to the HIV/Aids epidemic

(Marais 2011). Additionally, this administration's increased support of industrial financing and

corporate investments, in combination with reduced trade tariffs and minimalized labor costs,

further signaled an entrenchment of neoliberalism (Marais 2011).

The same can be said of the subsequent Zuma administration.[17] Although his

administration made a concerted effort to publically distance itself from GEAR and, by

definition, neoliberalism, such distancing appears as nothing more than a red herring. While the

Zuma administration's new wave of economic policies, including its National Development Plan

(NDP), continues to facilitate more social protection programs and government spending, it also

works on developing an even more hospitable terrain for corporate capital expansion and

privatization (Marais 2011; Segetti and Pons-Vignon 2013; Bond 2015). In the process, as

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[16] Mbeki also incorporated notions of "first" and "second economies" into political discourse to differentiate between macroeconomic structures, otherwise known as formal economies, and economic practices that would occur on a more localized level, such as entrepreneurial small-scale businesses. For more on the introduction and political significance of this differentiation, see Du Toit and Neves (2007).
[17] In 2014, President Zuma resumed his second, and final term as South African president.

Koeble and LiPuma (2011, 5) state, neoliberalism has "impregnated the emergence of democracy in South Africa."

Not all post-apartheid analysts agree with such harsh neoliberal critique. Many recognize the ANC's economic policies as pragmatic efforts to alleviate the country's socioeconomic injustices. Other apologists maintain "There were no other alternative" (TINA) when considering the global economy's dominant hold over capitalist power (Butler and Saul 2014). Equally so, scholars such as James Ferguson (2009, 2015) warn against neoliberal critique as the politics of the "anti," with activists and scholars too eagerly critiquing without considering neoliberal projects' possible positive elements. In this regard, Ferguson recognizes the ANC-led government's social grants program as an appropriation of neoliberal policies toward wealth redistribution. In contrast to the traditional welfare state's paternalism, policing, and surveillance of the welfare recipient (Esping-Anderson 1990), the South African grants program entrusts the poor with a direct cash transfer, allowing them, in a characteristically neoliberal sense, the individual choice and autonomy to solve their own problems in the way they see best (Ferguson 2015). Although these positive components do exist, (I return to a more detailed discussion on Social Grants Program in Chapter 3), scholars provide convincing evidence on the correlation between South Africa's staggering social inequality and neoliberal restructuring (Marais 2011; Segetti and Pons-Vignon 2013; Bond 2014). Equally so, the ANC leadership's public discourse does not necessarily favor social assistance, branding it as unsustainable, too expansive, and no replacement for true wage labor (Barchiesi 2011; Ferguson 2007, 2015). In turn, this brings into question the party's true commitment to wealth redistribution through social assistance programs (Barchiesi 2011; Seekings and Nattrass 2015). The recent Dlamini-Social Grant scandal further sheds light on the ANC government's disposition toward social assistance and obligation toward

the country's poor majority. This involves the Department of Social Development's ill treatment

of the social grants program. In 2016, its minister, Bathabile Dlamini, appeared before the

Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts concerning her department's wasteful

expenditure of close to R1-billion ($80 million) (Thamm 2016a). The more recent controversy,

however, concerns the minister's limited oversight of the social grants program's administration.

Working under the ministry's guidance, the Social Security Agency (SASSA) and Cash

Paymaster Services (CPS) have been responsible for the social grants program's administration,

ranging from potential recipient registration to overseeing the monthly cash payments. In 2014,

however, the Constitutional Court found the contract between these institutions invalid, giving

the ministry until April 1st, 2017 to rectify this issue and devise a new and legally sound

alternative. But at the time of this writing, the grant payout process of a monthly R10 billion

($790 million) to 17 million recipients, remains in "legal limbo," with the Constitutional Court

having the expected final say. Throughout this controversial build-up and ensuing concerns over

the lot of the country's poor, the minister remained fleeting and unapologetic. She also blamed

the media for blowing the situation out of proportion (Munusamy 2017).

The minister's almost aloof response to the public's outcry and the possibility that many

South Africans might not have received their grant pay-outs come April 2017, evidences a

misalignment between the ANC's original antipoverty objectives and the country's current social

realities. The social grants controversy also underscores the prominence of patronage politics

within the ANC elite. As current president of the ANC Women's League, Dlamini has long been

an outspoken Zuma ally. Such support ranges from backing Zuma during the 2007 Mbeki-Zuma

power rivalry to more recent outrage against gender-based violence activists who reminded the

South African public of Zuma's 2006 rape trial (Nicholson 2016). These political moves, like

those I will mention in Chapter 4, depict the ANC elite as disengaged and self-serving, both sentiments my young participants used to describe South African politicians. In turn, such actions stand in direct contrast to the ANC's erstwhile liberation movement commitment to bring accountable governance and a politics of community service to all South Africans.

Neoliberal Rationality and Post-Apartheid Contradictions

For postcolonial theorists, focused on the postcolony's economic and cultural contexts, South Africa's post-apartheid trajectory and political contradictions align with Franz Fanon's pathology of the postcolonial state (see Pithouse 2003; Gibson 2011; Hart 2014; Saul and Bond 2014). Not only are patronage, corruption, and self-serving governance central characteristics of Fanon's postcolonial state but also the new bourgeoisie's postliberation character, emulating the colonizer's lifestyle, engaging in "scandalous enrichment" and "immoderate money making" (Fanon 1974). All this happens through renewed relations with Western capitalism. From this perspective, Fanon asserts, postcolonial states undergo neocolonialism rather than decolonization, with former revolutionaries, forming strong connections to Western capitalism or reconfirming existing capitalist ties established during colonial domination. Colonial era exploitation of local resources and people are thus still present in the postcolonial period; this time around, however, the political elite are in on the shares. This directly contradicts the goals of liberation struggles, that is, to free the oppressed from their oppressors. Another contradiction lies in the new bourgeoisie's continuous use of liberation-era rhetoric. Within the public sphere, the former revolutionaries' support for capitalism remains hidden. They rely instead on nationalistic and Africanist discourse to maintain their post-liberation legitimacy. The postcolony

is therefore rife with ambiguity. While showing continuous allegiance to capital forces, it reproduces public narratives of liberation and emancipation.

Drawing from Fanon, John Saul (2007, 1) labels the ANC's post-apartheid actions as part of the "strange death of liberated Southern Africa." Considering the ANC's self-enriching leadership, Saul maintains that this new bourgeoisie merely filled the hierarchical position of its former apartheid adversaries, making the post-apartheid context appear as nothing more than "false decolonization." Moreover, the ANC's embrace of capitalism, Saul (2001, 429) argues, signifies the ANC's abandonment of its liberation objectives, while "sacrificing [the country's poor majority] on the altar of the neoliberal logic of global capital." For Saul one of the biggest disappointments in South Africa's liberation is the limited extent to which racial consciousness, prominent in the fight against apartheid, translated into class consciousness (Saul 2007). Instead, "radical individualism – via the deep penetration of market-place values and consumerism" has become the new common sense (21). Recasting common sense in terms of the economy is therefore the secret to neoliberalism's successful entry into those social contexts that lie beyond the market place.

Neoliberal Rationality

Following Saul, post-apartheid neoliberal critique contains two dimensions. The first pertains to a macroeconomic doctrine, associated with a free-market economy, private enterprise valorization, and "the deployment of enterprise strategies that would allow the state to run like a business" (Ferguson 2009, 170). The second dimension involves consciousness, that is, a focus on a form of neoliberal rationality that is less concerned with macroeconomic policies and more with the creation of a neoliberal subject. Drawing from Foucault's understanding of

governmentality, scholarship on neoliberal rationality therefore considers the way broader economic policies infiltrate the subject and transform the psychosocial (see Lemke 2001; Ong 2006; Hall and O'Shea 2013; Hall, Massey, and Rustin 2013; Flew 2015). Otherwise stated, this scholarship focuses on neoliberalism's infiltration of our subjective, social, and political worlds. More specifically, this infiltration pertains to three closely related processes: 1) processes of subjectivity that epitomize individuality, autonomy, and self-reliance, regardless of social and economic environments; 2) the economization of our social worlds beyond the realm of the market, and 3) the eventual demise of the political as a collective mechanism to achieve and maintain the common good.

A first space of dominance is neoliberal logic's move from the market to the individual—accepting, reshaping, or dismissing the latter as a free-market subject. In his critique of neoliberalism and the regime's subsequent encroachment on people's social existence, cultural theorist Stuart Hall (2011) underscores the centrality of individual freedom in neoliberal proponents' support of this economic regime. This was especially the case made by neoliberal economics' major promoter, Margaret Thatcher, in her support of neoliberalism (See Duggan 2003; Peck 2008; Peck 2010) and echoed by Thabo Mbeki on South African soil[18] (Bond 2014). In their public support of neoliberal economics, these actors championed the free yet possessive individual, emphasized individual choice, and described financial success in purely individual terms. Moreover, one roadblock to such individual freedom, neoliberal advocates argue, is the state, in particular the welfare state, as its "do-gooding, utopian sentimentality enervated the nation's moral fiber, eroded personal responsibility and undermined the over-riding duty of the poor to work" (Hall 2011, 707). Additionally, the state's involvement in individuals' well-being

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[18] During GEAR's public launch, President Mbeki stated: "Just call me a Thatherite" (Bond 2014, 65).

erodes the necessity of competition, a fundamental mechanism of capitalism. In contrast to the welfare state, the neoliberal state's function is therefore to ensure conditions of profitability and competition. After all, true individual freedom stems from these conditions of profit, competition, and people's individual will and commitment to hard work. Principles central to neoliberal rationality therefore include *autonomy*, *individual choice*, and *self-reliance*. In turn, poverty, inequality, and dependence stem from people's wrong economic choices and their wavering belief in hard work and self-realization. The responsibility of economic and personal well-being therefore resides not with the state, but with the individual (Brown 2003, Shamir 2008).

A second noneconomic realm where scholars identify neoliberal logic at work is in the increased economization of people's social worlds. A central component of neoliberalism is the valorization of market principles, essential for economic growth. In fact, economic growth, at any cost, is a defining factor of global capitalist markets (Brown 2015b). Neoliberal principles of free-market and unregulated economics, private enterprise, and a commitment toward economic growth have subsequently become normalized, with individuals continuously being encouraged toward economic participation. Subsequently, as Wendy Brown (2015b, 33-34) reminds us, we see an increased commodification and economization of our social worlds: "We are everywhere *homo oeconomicus* and only *homo oeconomicus*…and our project is to self-invest in ways that enhance our value or to attract investors." Such investment means turning our human and social existence into capital and entrepreneurial ventures, which ranges from educational practices solely concerned with economic development (Giroux 2015) to the rise of "social entrepreneurship" where community engagement becomes an economic rather than moral endeavor (Larner and Graig 2005).

A third social realm subsumed by neoliberal rationality is the political (Duggan 2003; Brown 2003, 2015b). From a macroeconomic neoliberal view point, the state's function is to aid free trade, providing all the necessarily policies and structures that enable the market economy to function at its highest ability and profitability. But as Brown (2015b, 39) reminds us, if politics is rendered in economic terms and when only *homo oeconomicus* exists, little space remains for "citizenship concerned with public things and the common good." Instead, political discourse concerns the market, and "the state should think and behave like a market actor across all functions, including law" (Brown 2003). With the economy as guiding factor, the need for moral leadership no longer exists (Brown 2015b), and the body politic "ceases to be a body but rather a group of individual entrepreneurs and consumers" (Brown 2003).

Post-Apartheid Contradictions

To what extent can we identify a neoliberal logic in South Africa's post-apartheid context? Moreover, how has neoliberal rationality infiltrated the South African subject, its social world, and political landscape? Like other Southern Africanists critical of neoliberalism, South African geographer, Gillian Hart (2014) uses neoliberalism to interpret the post-apartheid "South African Crisis." And although she does not explicitly explain neoliberalism in terms of neoliberal rationality, she does recognize a theme of contradiction running throughout the post-apartheid state trajectory and its politicians' actions. This is especially when comparing the ANC-led government's patronage networks and close relation to global capitalism to its initial objectives of economic and political inclusivity. But for Hart, neoliberal economics and patronage alone do not sufficiently explain the post-apartheid political landscape and socioeconomic predicament. She also recognizes narratives of nationalization continuously at work in the country's public

sphere. Among others, these narratives are not only emerging from populist movements, such Julius Malema's rise to national politics, which I elaborate upon in chapter 5, but also in the ANC continuous use of struggle narratives to perpetuate its political legitimacy. Hart therefore identifies a continuous interplay between processes of *re-nationalization* and *de-nationalization*. Whereas *de-nationalization* "signals the simultaneously economic, political, and cultural practices and processes that are generating ongoing inequality and 'surplus' populations and the conflicts that surround them" (Hart 2014, 7), *re-nationalization* discourse includes concepts integral to the anti-apartheid struggle. This includes liberation from economic and racial oppression, revolution to obtain wealth equality, and the reestablishment of African unity, with strong undertones of African nationalism. These latter discursive practices, Hart (2014, 157) argues, remain evocative and "conjure up struggles against colonialism and imperialism, the indignities of violence of racial injustice and dispossession, the sacrifices and suffering embodied in movements for national liberation, and the visions of social and economic justice for which many fought and died." Even though the transition period ushered in a discourse of unification, traces of the liberation discourse remain prominent among ANC politicians, evoking loyalty and gratitude among voters. This discourse has also become prominent among the recent surge in populist politics, taking shape in the rhetoric of Julius Malema and the Economic Freedom Fighters. This means that the ANC's narratives of liberation, used to enable processes of *re-nationalization*, are now working against them, actively producing revolutionary rhetoric within the opposition.

Hart's emphasis on the contradictory processes of *de-nationalization* and *re-nationalization* and scholarship on neoliberal rationality provide a productive analytical space in which to conceptualize South African youth's understanding of the ambiguous nature of the

post-apartheid socioeconomic and political environments. Following Hart's position, I argue that we no longer can think about neoliberal economics in the South African contexts without considering its impact beyond the market. In turn, this neoliberal rationality works alongside powerful narratives of liberation, unity, and emancipation. The post-apartheid context is therefore rife with both deep-running neoliberal rationality and enduring liberation sentiment. These contradictions take shape in young people's disposition toward politics and the country's post-apartheid sociopolitical environments. Moreover, these contradictions do not remain within the governmental sphere and discursive practices of political leadership but, in fact, siphon through to youth, influencing the way they think and talk of governance, politics, and political actors.

Future Projectors: Youth as Analytic

Who are youth and why should we be interested in them? Commonly described as the period between childhood and adulthood, youth is a temporary life stage that depicts chronological or biological processes of maturation (Honwana 2012). Anthropologists of youth do not view this linear progression toward the future as homogenous, but rather as context specific, linked to locally derived meanings of adulthood. Youth is therefore a social construct (Bourdieu 1993), dependent on local meanings of maturity, rights, and responsibilities (Honwana and De Boeck 2005). Within the context of the nation-state and governance, the heterogeneity and localized meanings of youth carry less weight. Instead, youth are more often defined in terms of age. This age parameter does however reflect local socioeconomic conditions. Whereas countries in the global north, usually define youth between the ages of 15 and 24, countries in the

global south choose to extent the age limit to 35, keeping economic constraints and cultural differences in mind.

Regardless of local specificities, youth's transition, or denied access to adulthood, comes with profound psychological and economic consequences. After all, the nature of this transition directly influences youth's future trajectory and their prospective conditions in adulthood (Roberts 2007, 432). If, for example, youth's entry into adulthood occurs amidst precarious and inhospitable socioeconomic and political conditions, these conditions become entrenched, contributing to intergenerational poverty, underdevelopment, and political passivity (Richter and Panday 2007, 293). Studying youth, in particular their current realities, conditions, and mindsets therefore provides us with a lens into a society's future.

But equally so, young people's socioeconomic realities also reflect historical shifts, with their current predicament being a product of preceding socioeconomic conditions and continuous political processes. In the case of South Africa, this concerns the confluence of apartheid-era debris and the unrealized goals of the ANC government. Young South Africans' social environments are thus the product of both historic processes and the ANC's derailed liberation objectives, which have culminated in a marginal socioeconomic present. This include unprecedented conditions of unemployment, poor social infrastructure, and persistent poverty. And as De Boeck and Honwana (2005, 10) remind us, such "marginality place [youth] squarely in the centre and generates tremendous power."

Considering the prominent role youth play in social reproduction as well as the potential political power that comes with their marginalized predicament, we should look toward them with intense curiosity. We should theorize over how they digest historical occurrences, understand current realities, and create future visions. Youth as an analytic category therefore

becomes an alternative approach to exploring societal dynamics, and, in the case of this dissertation, a particular South African moment when the contradictions characteristic of the post-apartheid state collides with the ambitions of the country's first born-free generation.

The Fieldwork Site

I conducted my ethnographic research in the Senqu municipality in the northern Eastern Cape province, a triangular region, on the southern Lesotho border. Over the course of 12 months, including the summers of 2013 and 2014, and July to December 2015, I lived and worked in and around the Senqu municipality, namely the Sterkspruit region (which includes, among others, the villages of Sterkspruit, Palmietfontein, and Blikana) and the neighboring villages of Lady Grey, Aliwal North and Barkly East.

The predominant ethnic groups in Senqu are Hlubi, amaXhosa, and Sotho, and the commonly spoken languages are isiXhosa, English, Sotho, and Afrikaans. Since most of Senqu fell within the jurisdiction of the former Transkei, this former Bantustan region still carries a socioeconomic burden similar to the apartheid period. This includes some of the country's highest rates of illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment (Bank 2005; Bank and Minkly 2004; Crais 2011). Considering recent unemployment and poverty figures, Senqu and its former Bantustan districts are no exceptions. The municipality's unemployment rate currently stands at 65%, significantly higher than the district municipality (54%) and the Eastern Cape Province (48%). These figures explain why 37.4% of Senqu's population depends on government support compared to 31% on a provincial and 22.6% on a national level (Senqu municipal report, 2015).

The Sterkspruit region's current socioeconomic predicament contradicts its pre- and early colonial prosperity. Bundy's (1979) *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* illustrates,

by means of agrarian archival records, the region's positive response to the growing agricultural market that accompanied South Africa's nineteenth century mineral boom (Cooper 1981). The demand in agricultural products saw the rise of a productive peasantry, fully adaptive to the colonialists' capitalist economy and producing record levels of grain and maize exports toward the end of the 1800s and beginning 1900s. In the process, Sterkpruit became a primary site of late-nineteenth-century agricultural developments and an accompanying rising peasantry. This prosperity was however short lived, thanks to the colonial and later apartheid state's segregationist and apartheid policies restricting land ownership, subsequently forcing rural communities into the migrant labor market. These policies also replaced individual land tenure, with communally owned land, administered and controlled by government-appointed traditional leaders.

Building on Bundy's (1979) seminal work, historians have produced expansive analyses on the Sterkspruit region's exposure and response to colonial and early apartheid rule (Bundy 1979; Coopers 1981; Lewis 1984; Beinart and Bundy 1987; Bradford 2000). Literature on Sterkspruit's post-apartheid socioeconomic and political realities are however few and far apart, in comparison to post-apartheid scholarship on other former Transkei and Ciskei areas (Crais 2011; Switzer 1993; Westerway 2008, 2011). Even though existing historic studies by Bundy (1979), Bundy and Beinart (1987), and Bradford (2000) supply us with a firm analytical starting point, post-apartheid anthropologists have overlooked the district's post-apartheid predicament and youth population. This limited scholarly attention is unwarranted, considering recent civil uprisings against local government, the region's large population, and even bigger unemployed youth demographic.

Picture 1: Senqu's Rural Landscape

The Best-Laid Plans of Mice and [Wo]Men

Focusing solely on young people's understanding of the state, governance, and party politics was not my initial research goal. Instead, I set out to gauge what rural youth think about traditional leaders, especially those living in former Bantustans. Although young people's political perceptions were within my original research scope, it fell under a broader interest in traditional leadership.

It did not take me too long to realize that young people's interests lie elsewhere. Yes, they were aware of their region's traditional leaders, I heard during some of my first group discussions, but this was not what they wanted to talk about. Instead in an almost organic manner, they steered our conversations toward party politics and the government. I soon

recognized that if I truly want to give voice to my young rural participants, I must listen to what they wanted to share. In this case, the confluences of their immediate social worlds, the state, and national politics.

On Methodology

To develop a broader understanding of Senqu youth's view of the state, and its political actions, I used the classic ethnographic methods of semi-structured interviews and participant observation (Bernard 2002). I also conducted group conversations to recruit potential interviewees and elicit young people's personal narratives.

I conducted participant observation at both formal and informal youth spaces, which allowed for a deeper understanding of youth's daily lives and their social and institutional environments. To gauge youth's political perspectives, I listened for and participated in conversations regarding international, national, and local political events. This allowed me to interpret youth's understanding of concepts such as democracy, political authority, freedom, elections, and the state. I was also attentive to youth's frustrations regarding their socioeconomic predicament of "waithood" and observed how they negotiate and navigate around such frustrations. I also enjoyed access to additional ethnographic spaces, such as birthday parties, community meetings, and informal youth gatherings. Since I honored my acceptance into these spaces, I refrained from collecting data from these spaces. Access to people's inner social worlds did however illustrate communities' recognition and acceptance of me.

I did however focus my data collection to local high school and further education training campuses, youth development agencies and organizations, and additional youth spaces.

Ethnographic Space 1: School and College Campuses

Local educational institutions provided a firm starting point to establish and strengthen rapport with local youth. This included three high schools and one further education and training (FET) college. At the participating high schools, I engaged in voluntary school activities, such as supplementary lessons and tutoring sessions. These activities allowed me to gain the trust of both learners and educators, which eventually led to engaging conversations regarding local youth's social environments and political dynamics. I focused most of my attention on three of the Sterkspruit region's fifteen high schools. My choice of schools was based upon geographic location and demographic detail. I decided to choose a school in one of the region's more northern and remote villages and one in a semi-urban region and thus less secluded. Both these schools are state-run institutions. Whereas some South African schools rely on additional school fees from parents to afford additional teachers, and sustain and develop extracurricular programs, state-run schools' learners come from poor households. These schools therefore rely primarily on state funds. Teaching lessons at these schools soon opened friendships with the learners and educators. Although it was at first difficult to navigate relationships on both side of the learner-educator hierarchy, these eventually developed into friendships which provided access to a broader range of interlocutors and research participants. My third school of choice was a private institution, run independently from the state and its financial support. By choosing these schools, I gained access to learners from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

A local technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college was an additional formal youth space that produced engaging conversations. As one of two colleges in the region, this state-run college cater primarily for people who have not successfully completed high school, who seek to better the high school results, or want skill-based training. In contrast to high

school campuses, many young people in and around the TVET college had first-hand experience of the country's struggling labor market. In many cases my participants struggled to find work after high school and therefore decided to enroll in a college program, all in the hope that more education will open a door to employment. Equally so, many participants were products of poor high school educations. In this case TVET colleges must undo the damages of the state's poor basic education.

Ethnographic Space 2: Informal and Governmental Youth Spaces

Informal conversations with youth and staff at the selected educational institutions and youth development agencies brought me in contact with informal youth spaces. When considering that only 13% of the Senqu population has completed high school (Statistics South Africa 2011), these spaces represent the biggest population of youth in "waithood." I was particularly interested in those spaces youth create independently from other formal institutions—entrepreneurial groups, study groups and music groups. At these spaces, I engaged with youth that are neither in high school nor actively involved in formal development programs. Here I gauged an additional level of frustrations accompanying moments of merely sitting and waiting.

While participating in high schools activities and visiting the college campus, I also visited government offices concerned with youth development. These included provincial government agencies, including the Eastern Cape's Department of Social Development, as well the local Senqu municipality's branches of local economic development. Both these offices have desks assigned to the region's youth.

Having access to my own vehicle, a pick-up with a canopy, I could provide numerous rides between town, schools, and homes. In turn this gave me access to instant streams of local gossip, controversies, and tips on low-cost cosmetics. Equally advantageous was access to a local baker, who supplied me with a stream of cakes and sweet treats for staffroom gatherings, school meetings, local house calls. Additionally, my smartphone was not only one of the most efficient means for recording conversations and interviews, but allowed me access to the instant messaging service, WhatsApp. This app soon became my gateway to young people's inner sanctities, from sharing things with me in private, after our more formal group conversations, to inviting me to larger group conversations on WhatsApp. These WhatsApp connections have remained vital during my dissertation write-up, with the possibility of any following-up questions and conversations at my fingertips.

Group Conversations

I relied heavily on group conversations to engage with young people on issues relevant to their immediate social environments. This was especially helpful at local high schools, where young people immediately shied away from the thought of single interviews, regardless of their familiarity of me and my presence at their schools. I soon discovered, however, that these individuals blossomed during group discussions, not only animated by their fellow group members' conversations but also engaging in deep debates around politics and their social environments. On more than one occasion, these conversations became so organic that my recorder and I became a mere supplement to our venue's furniture. Group conversations on high school campuses, became rather popular, with youngsters often asking for new or further discussions. Group conversations lasted anywhere from an allotted hour (determined by room

availability) to interactions spread over several days. Through these conversations, I also gained valuable access to individuals whom I later asked for individual interviews.

I analyzed a total of 12 group discussions conducted on high school campuses, four at each of the three participating high schools. Participants ranged between 18 and 20 years of age, and groups were between four to eight learners in size. Of the total high school participants (N=58), 53% identified as female and 47% as male. All participants were Black South Africans.

In addition to high school group conversations, I also orchestrated three conversations on one of the region's TVET college campuses. These groups comprised of four to eight students per group, participants ranged between 20 and 25 years of age, and of the total student participants (N=17), 58% identified as female and 42% as male. Like the high school participants, all student participants were Black South Africans. Like the conversations on high school campuses, those at the TVET college allowed me to not only engage with students in an informal manner but also to recruit prospective interview participants.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to gather the personal narratives of youth and those individuals directly involved in youth issues. All but one interviewee—a government official—were Black South Africans. I conducted semi-structured interviews, ranging between 30 to 90 minutes in length, with the following youth populations: 1) High school learners (18 years and older[19]) in their school final year; 2) unemployed youth currently enrolled in some

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[19] To avoid collecting parental consent, I limited my high school population to students 18 years and older. Typically, students turn eighteen during their final year of high school. That said, many students often end up repeating some school years because of poor primary education standards. This increases many young South Africans' matriculation age.

form of tertiary education or training (age 18 – 34) ; 3) unemployed youth not engaged in tertiary education or training, nor with the future prospect of participating in any form of higher education or tertiary training (age 18 – 34) , and 4) adults working either directly with young people or on youth issues (age 35 and older).

I recruited potential interviewees using both purposive and chain-referral sampling. I also drew from my personal engagements with learners at the participating high schools to identify students interested in sharing their ideas about the country and its politics. Through interaction and conversations with high school students and personnel, and using chain-and-referral sampling, I also gained access to unemployed youth, who are either finished with high school, or who left prior to completing their final year. According to the 2011 census, only 34% of Senqu's population has some form of secondary education. To construct an inclusive analysis of youth's political perspectives, gathering the opinions of youth outside the parameters of high schools was of utmost importance.

To contextualize the narratives of local youth, I conducted semi-structured interviews with individuals directly involved in youth development. This included local government officials engaged in youth development initiatives, local NGOs workers devoted to the youth's recreational needs, and the youth workers of churches' youth assemblages. I asked these individuals to characterize rural youth's attitude toward politics, political activities, and community involvement. I also asked what forms of political agency and mobility these individuals recognized among rural youth. Similar to conversations with youth, this population also emphasized themes of employment and social assistance as central aspects of young people's lives.

Table 1.1: Interviews Conducted

Population		Interviewees		
		Female	Male	Total
Youth (Age 18-34)	- High School Students	5	2	7
	- Unemployed youth engaged in tertiary education or training	4	2	6
	- Unemployed youth neither in school nor engaged in tertiary training	5	6	11
Youth workers (Age 35 and older)	- High School Teachers	1	7	8
	- Local government official engaged in youth development	2	0	2
	- Religious and Community leaders	1	1	2
Total interviews:		**18**	**17**	**36**

With the permission of all participants, I digitally recorded the interviews and group conversations. On some occasions, where I noticed some reservations with regards to the recording device, I resorted to hand-written notes. This was also the case in venues where outside noise interfered with the recording quality. I incorporated all interviews into MAXQDI, an electronic program that assists in the management and systematic analysis of qualitative data. To analyze my data, I followed a three-step process of 1) open-coding, 2) creating a code book, and 3) recoding all the material with the developed code book. I then collapsed all codes into subcategories, and subcategories into overarching themes of employment yearning, narratives of dependence, and political talk. As my analyses and writing progressed, these themes eventually developed into three ethnographic chapters.

Shortcomings, Challenges, and Pitfalls

As a native South African, I had the immediate advantage of understanding the complexities of my country's unique ethnoscapes. Between 2000 and 2010, I worked for a

community development project, teaching music to urban and rural youth. During this period, I not only became aware of South African youth's acute awareness of and opinionated views on politics but also of their social inclinations, challenging social environments, and accompanying outlook on life. In addition to my familiarity with local contexts, my proficiency in Afrikaans was also beneficial to this research project, especially in negotiating access to government fieldwork sites and school campuses. Although I initially thought my working knowledge of isiXhosa would expand during my fieldwork, I overestimated my existing isiXhosa abilities and underestimated English's omnipresence in the region and among young people. Even though my isiXhosa developed somewhat during my extended six months' research period, it was not enough for in-depth one-on-one conversations. For this I relied on English and my fieldwork friends for translation, especially in the region's more secluded areas. Most of my interviews and group conversations were conducted in English.

Doing ethnography "at home," the anthropologist does run the risk of becoming entangled in her own subjectivities, biases, and existing social networks. Since I was doing fieldwork in areas not too far from where I was raised, I frequently ran into many of my predominantly white childhood acquaintances in Senqu's major business hubs. Not only did these conversations keep me alerted of my research objectives—having to recite my research questions and interests time and time again—but they also reminded me of the persistent impact of apartheid era boundaries more than two decades after 1994. My white acquaintances' responses ranged in scope. Some were confused why I would study something so trivial as young people and in areas so mundane as Sterkspruit—surely you will find more "real Xhosa culture" in Pondoland or other "deep Transkei" regions, I often heard. On the other hand, many shared their deep-rooted concerns over the danger of a white woman, such as myself, conducting

research in a predominantly Black region such as Sterkspruit. These conversations were not always easy to navigate.

My interactions with rural youth also came with a set of racial and gender dynamics, not always easy to navigate. More often than not, I was forced to reflect upon my Whiteness, the privileges that come with being born a White South African, and the difference between my childhood and adolescent experiences and those of the young people I interacted with throughout my fieldwork.

The Argument and Chapter Synopses

This dissertation uses the contradictions prominent within South Africa's political space as backdrop to young people's perceptions of politics and interpretations of the post-apartheid state. When considering my conversations with Senqu youth and people working with and among young people, three overarching themes emerged: employment yearning, conditions of dependency, and political talk. These themes are the primary focus of this dissertation's ethnographic chapters and correlate with three overarching arguments.

In Chapter 2, I consider young people's longing for employment. Throughout our conversations, Senqu youth spoke longingly about employment while knowing that they might easily become part of the country's unemployed. They nevertheless continue to look toward formal employment with great ambition, regarding formal wage labor as the only viable pathway toward a meaningful social and civil contribution. The opposite, being unemployed and ensuring conditions of "just sitting" and "waiting," turn into eventual social pathologies, tearing at the seam of their communities' already fragile social fabric. In this chapter, yearning for employment, in contrast with local realities of scarce employment and subsequent conditions of

"just sitting" and "waiting," represents a local manifestation of the ambiguous post-apartheid period. Young people's employment yearning stems from a historic valorization of formal wage labor, especially prominent during the ANC's liberation movement. The ANC continues to value wage labor over social assistance, regarding work as an integral pathway to citizenship. That said, neoliberal restructuring and the country's postindustrial economy have severally limited job opportunities, with unemployment figures continuously rising. I argue that young people's yearning for formal wage labor therefore captures the discrepancies between the ANC's liberation sentiments and post-apartheid realities. Additionally, politicians' continued emphasis on wage labor over social assistance further entrenches young people's longing for formal employment.

Chapter 3 considers young people's ambiguous disposition toward dependency. Throughout our conversations young people continuously moved between an outright resistance to any form of state dependency, to questioning the state's reluctance to provide employment and good education. With most of Senqu's population unemployed, state assistance in the form of monthly grants are central to many Senqu youth's households. That said, in typical neoliberal terms, many of my participants look critically upon those who rely on social grants. They argue that instead of practicing self-reliance, grant recipients are going down a slippery slope toward total dependency. Such dependence on the state is not good for communities' social identity, they would argue, as it leaves people with no desire to improve themselves nor their immediate social environments. Young mothers, relying on a child support grant as an invaluable additional household income, were especially criticized. In this case, young mothers were stigmatized as devious, since they use the government's social grants system toward their own individual and personal needs. Whereas such actions are in themselves neoliberal in nature—ambitiously

working toward individual autonomy—young mothers are not allowed to resemble such qualities. Instead they have to keep their sexuality intact, and work toward self-realization as defined by specific gender norms. Here two arguments are at work. First, I argue that young people engage in continuous negotiation between dependence on and independence from the state to make sense of their social and economic environments. In their justification for less social assistance from the state, young people draw from a deep lying neoliberal rationality that valorizes self-reliance and autonomy over state involvement. When young people do see the value of social assistance, such validation coincides with struggle narratives of social equality, wealth redistribution, and emancipation. Secondly, I argue that young people use concepts such as employment and social assistance to develop opinions of the state and politicians. These concepts therefore act as indirect ways of conceptualizing the state, both as far as disappointments in and expectations of the state are concerned.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I take a more direct approach to politics, focusing specifically on subthemes prominent in young people's political talk. Chapter 4 introduces the main political processes and controversies dominating post-Mandela politics. This chapter therefore sets the post-apartheid political stage, contextualizing young people's perceptions of politics, and themes such as corruption, untouchable politicians, and patronage politics. Additionally, I introduce Julius Malema as a prominent post-Mandela political figure.

Chapter 5 captures young people's conversations about politics and politicians. In this chapter, I list characteristics Senqu youth identified in the country's politics and politicians, many of which point toward young people's disgruntled relationship to politics. To move beyond this political impasse, young people recognized value in neoliberal principles such as individuality, autonomy, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, in contrast to the chaotic and

untrustworthy nature of politics, many young people regarded the business world as rational and secure. In this chapter I therefore argue that gate-keeper politics in combination with the contradictory nature of post-apartheid politics have allowed for the further entrenchment of neoliberal rationality. As a result, the political turmoil surrounding ANC politics in combination with the country's adoption of neoliberal economic restructuring have effectively decreased the relevance of *homo politicus*. Instead of enacting civil principles such as social engagement and enacting their rights toward political representation through voting, many youth turn toward business ventures to achieve their future ambitions.

As conclusion, Chapter 6 lists future research objectives including additional questions concerning the gendered aspect of social assistance, young people's alternative approaches to politics, and their appropriation of social entrepreneurship. An equally relevant element worthy of future research concerns a hypothetical rural-urban youth divide. Here I am particularly interested in how rural youth's political perceptions differ from, or align with, urban youngsters.

Chapter 2 – Yearning for Employment

I gave the girls at a local high school a short prompt: "Send me a photo that captures the essence of your community." The next day Mpho had two ready. The first was a panorama of her village, with houses dotted along the landscape, mountains in the background, and clouds with potential thunder completing the rural scenery. This is a depiction I have gotten used to during my stay in the region, driving between the different villages, visiting high schools, and making my acquaintances with local youth. Mpho's second photo captured an equally normal scene, a quick snap of young men lining the outside wall of the local tavern, sitting either on the ground, boxes, or camping chairs. One young man stared straight into Mpho's[20] smart phone camera, with some tilting their heads slightly to break the monotony of sitting upright.

"What I don't like is youth just sitting around," she explained.

"Just sitting around instead of getting educated and preventing poverty."

Mpho's findings are by no means extraordinary. People often sit in front of taverns and local hang-outs to share stories or catch up on community gossip. But Mpho's objective was not to capture the essence of tavern life, nor the socialites of her local village. Instead she wanted to emphasize the disconcerting permanence of "just sitting" as experienced by her generation of young South Africans.

Throughout my conversations with Senqu youth, sitting surfaced as a primary descriptor of rural life. Phrases such as "we are just sitting" or "they just sit" conveyed young people's frustrations with the limits of life in the country's rural hinterlands. And without me asking, young people instantaneously attributed these conditions of sitting to unemployment. Such sitting, they would argue, bleeds into social ills that range from young people's tendency toward

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[20] To protect the identity of local youth, I use pseudonyms throughout this dissertation.

substance abuse, merely because they have too much time on their hands, to the sobering realization and ensuing psychological burden, that without work, any future expectations appear as nothing but a pipedream. For many *employment* is therefore the sought-after solution for their generation's perpetual state of sitting, perceived social ills, and limited future possibilities. With little exception, my young participants yearned for employment. Where does such a longing for employment stem from and how does this align with the country's political and economic landscape?

In line with the dissertation's overarching emphasis on post-apartheid contradictions, this chapter focuses on Senqu youth's fixation on formal wage labor amidst the country's stagnant labor market. I interpret unemployment as a descriptive mechanism young people use to make sense of their immediate social and political environments. But young people's emphasis on formal wage labor also echoes broader political discourse, in this case the ANC's focus on employment rather than alternative forms of government support. As scholars and activists have argued extensively, broader social assistance programs such as a universal grant might go a long way in alleviating the growing pressures of unemployment. In fact, when considering the country's late apartheid and post-apartheid depressing labor trends, talk about job creation seems more like political meandering than a true possibility. But despite the country's jobless economic growth tendencies, the ANC-led government remains loyal to a job-creation narrative.

In this chapter's first section I trace employment yearning's historic roots. Following a Foucauldian-inspired archeology of employment and its embeddedness in the South African mind, I briefly uncover wage labor's development throughout the segregationist and apartheid periods. I then trace how these narratives crossed over into the post-apartheid neoliberal moment and have transpired into political and public discourse. In the chapter's second section, I return to

Senqu and investigate employment's embeddedness in young people's conversations and future

imaginaries. Three themes emerged capturing young people's descriptions of unemployment.

This includes *social malaise*, a certain *jobless-mentality*, and their identification of *unemployable*

youth. Using a local tutoring venture as case study, I then illustrate how some young people use

these themes to describe their peers' social worlds while recognizing unemployment's paralyzing

effect on themselves and others.

Wage Labor's Normative Origins

For many employment signifies modernity. This is why, as Simon Gikandi argues, so

many people on the edge of modernity risk the journeys to the global West, or even to cities

within the global South, to find work. Gikandi (2010, xi) further argues that the postcolonial

subject has become heavily invested "in the modern dictum that work liberates the self and raises

its horizons of expectations." But work's normative relation to modernity needs further

deconstruction. In the case of South Africa, we need to also consider capitalism's historic

trajectory and the subsequent entanglement of industrialization, modernization, and wage labor.

In comparison to the rest of colonial Africa, South Africa's industrial moment and accompanying

rise in wage labor were not only unique, but inserted work into South Africans' social worlds to

a far greater extent than the rest of colonial Africa (Mamdani 1996; Makhulu 2010).

Subsequently, formal employment became engrained in the South African mind, becoming the

centerpiece from which people derived their daily existence and economic practices.

The centrality of formal employment in South African society did not happen overnight

but resulted from broader economic and political processes. At the onset of the country's

colonial period, wage labor provided South Africa's Black peasantry with a supplemental

income. Such work was temporary and within the agriculture activities and domestic spaces of the country's small Black elite and White settler communities (Bundy 1979). But wage labor's supplementary role changed into something more permanent in the nineteenth century. This came with the 1870s-mineral discovery, the subsequent development of the country's mining sector, and the massive expansion of industrial production during the first half of the 1900s (Bundy 1979; Marks and Rathbone 1982; Beinart, Delius, and Trapido 1986; Beinart and Bundy 1987). The Black peasantry's shift toward formal wage labor was not completely voluntary. It stemmed from colonial policies and subsequent processes of social, cultural, and economic discrimination.[21] This includes forced removals, minimal access to land, mineral and state resources, restricted social and spatial mobility, and almost no political rights. These processes, stemming back to the 18th century and which intensified throughout the 19th and early 20th century, strong-armed many Black South Africans into the proverbial arms of wage labor (Wolpe 1972; Cooper 2002; Crais 2011; Ferguson 2015).

Some Black South African groups worked hard to oppose their entry into formal wage labor. The amaXhosa's "Red" faction, for example, argued that like Western education and Christianity, wage labor will corrupt local traditions and threaten their cultural independence (Peires 1982; Mostert 1992). This opposition was however difficult to uphold. As the 20th century progressed, segregationist policies increasingly limited Black people's mobility and their access to land. Many had no alternative but to move to already overcrowded native reserves or move to segregated urban townships. In turn, the densely populated native reserves could no

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[21] Several historic episodes contributed to such land dispossession and forced removal, including warfare, violence, and drought. As far as the Eastern Cape is concerned, this included the nine frontier wars between 1779 – 1879 between amaXhosa and colonial forces (Peires 1982; Mostert 1991). In the early 20th century, formal legislation further entrenched these processes of dispossession and displacement with the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 being most detrimental. For an in-depth discussion on these latter acts, see Claassen (2014), Walker (2014) and Beinart and Delius (2014).

longer sustain people's traditional subsistence practices and as a result, many Black South

Africans turned to the labor market as last resort (Price 2008: Crais 2011).

Historians do warn against narratives explaining South Africa's colonial past and

perpetual conditions of social inequality and structural poverty solely in terms of capitalist

expansion. Clifton Crais (2011), for example, emphasizes the impact of other historic processes

on people's everyday lives and future trajectories. As far as the Eastern Cape is concerned, this

includes the detrimental effect of the nine frontier wars and the environmental impact of corn's

introduction on local communities. However, as Barchiesi's (2011) argues, just as labor seemed

strange during the 19th century, it systematically infiltrated the South African mind during the

20th century. And, unlike the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa eventually resembled a

society "in which incomes depend overwhelmingly on wage employment" (Seekings and

Nattrass 2005, 44). And as the country moved through its colonial and apartheid periods, this

wage labor dependence became, for many, the norm. Contributing to this normalization of work

were ideologies that demoralized any economic activities not necessarily connected to formal

wage labor. In turn, these ideologies drew extensively from first, colonial-era perceptions of

race, and second, aspirations for modernity.

20th Century Work Ideologies

During South Africa's segregation period (1910-1948) colonial forces also relied on

racialized work ideologies to justify the enforcement of wage labor. Drawing from social

evolutionary ideas, these ideologies valorized wage labor as an ideal means to "civilize" Black

South Africans. The objective here was to incorporate the colonial subject into the ranks of

colonial society, but without them necessarily benefiting from the fruits of their labor. Instead,

formalized work separated the "natives" who remained in the reserves from the "worker" in urban areas who through employment could become disciplined, righteous, and forward thinking. In true social engineering fashion, the segregationist state imagined Black South Africans would recognize wage labor as a promotion from "native" to "worker" (Barchiesi 2011, 32) where the latter is one step higher on the social hierarchy. Arguably, "citizenship" should be the next step in the state's evolutionary trajectory, but this was not necessarily the segregation nor apartheid state's objective. Instead, the racist state envisioned such citizenship and accompanying political rights in Black South Africans' respective native reserves (Mamdami 1996; Thompson 2014). It was in these Bantustans, where Black South Africans should participate politically. In the rest of the country, however, they remained mere guest workers, void of any political and economic rights or citizenship on par with White South Africans.

Another ideological approach prevalent during the colonial and subsequent apartheid periods related to modernity. In this case wage labor was presented as "the modern alternative to unwaged subsistence activities" (Barchiesi 2011, 32). Not only did these ideas depict work as the next step following subsistence living, but also described wage labor as the only viable solution for poverty. These perceptions therefore left little room for considering poverty's social and political underpinnings and instead romanticized modernity as the solution to any social and economic hardship. And in this case, modernity meant wage labor.

Policy makers were therefore quick to explain Black communities' persistent poverty in terms of subsistence activities and Black people's reluctance to engage in wage labor. These ideologies were especially prominent in the segregationist state's 1932 Native Economic Commission Report. Appointed to investigate the poor socioeconomic conditions within Black reserves, this commission promoted wage labor as an escape from the backwards, lazy, and

stagnating tendencies of African societies (Barchiesi 2011). But as the work of radical historians W.H MacMillan, C.W. de Kiewiet, and Sol Plaatje's illustrate, by 1932 Black reserves were impoverished regions, not because of Black South Africans avoidance of wage labor but rather because of overarching land ownership, segregation, and mobility restrictions (Bundy 1979). Moreover, by the time the Native Economic Commission conducted its study, migrant labor was nothing novel but already in full motion.

The segregationist and apartheid state also engrained the value of work into the minds of White South Africans, promoting wage labor as a means of nurturing discipline, self-respect, and independence. During the depression years of 1920-1930, the segregationist state overtly supported the social and economic development of White South Africans through a range of land, labor, and social policies (Thompson 2014). But despite such support the policy makers could not prevent the "Poor White Problem." The 1932 Carnegie Commission, assigned to investigate and provide solution to white poverty, rejected any strong welfare program in favor of "labor market participation, education, and training." These latter actions, the report maintained, will ensure "white people's self-preservation and prestige" (Barchiesi 2011, 35). Social welfare, on the other hand, will do nothing but contribute to the problem at hand, turning able bodies into dependent bodies. Instead of elaborate social welfare programs, the segregationist state therefore saw employment as the only solution to White poverty. Moreover, whereas work could potentially pull Blacks into the realm of "civilization," labor, will protect White people's honor, saving them from slipping into a state of incivility and disgrace—or in other words, into a social category not that different from Black South Africans. This latter predicament, the segregationist and Afrikaners Nationalists persisted, should be avoided at all cost (Willoughby-Herard 2007). Instead of providing welfare, the racial state therefore placed

poor Whites in elaborate state-funded employment programs. The state's disapproval of welfare crossed the racial divide, "presenting waged work as beneficial and civilizing, and social programs as detrimental and dehumanizing for Whites and Black alike" (Barchiesi 2011, 39). Employment therefore acted as the magic bullet, albeit subject to different racially determined objectives. Whereas employment can "uplift" Black South Africans from a "uncivilized" state of subsistence living, work can also "save" White South Africans from slipping into conditions associated with Blackness.

Wage Labor as Spatial Marker

With the apartheid state's official rise in 1948, policy makers replaced the preceding segregationist government's pseudocivilization and paternalistic disposition with a more rigorous system of racial and ethnic segregation. This included policies giving permanency to existing native reserves. The 1951 Black Authorities Act, for example, formally recognized tribal authorities which subsequently led to the establishment of the racially and ethnically defined Bantustan territories (Oomen 2005). This grounded what Mamdami (1996) calls the "bifurcated state," which not only separated people along "racial" lines but also differentiated between the "natives" and "subjects" in the rural Bantustans and "workers" and "citizens" in urban areas. The apartheid regime's stance toward Black labor therefore differed from the preceding segregationist state on both social and spatial spheres. Whereas the segregationist state valued work as force of progress that can elevate Blacks to a more civilized and modern African status, apartheid policy makers renounced such ideas. Instead, apartheid discourse interpreted Black South Africans as culturally and socially separate, and on this basis, on a different social and economic development trajectory. The apartheid state did however concede that some urban

Africans' might have "lost any material and emotional connections with rural areas" and thus constitute a "detribalized" Black group as opposed to migrant workers who are still tribal (Posel 1993, 414). "Tribal migrants," on the other hand, are merely doing temporary work in cities before returning to their respective rural homelands (Glaser 1993). The apartheid state therefore decided to allow these so-called detribalized Black South Africans a more permanent space within urban areas. Section 10 of the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act, made such provisioning, defining three different "detribalized categories" that allowed for more permanent residence. This included birth, employment, and dependency on those either living or native to urban areas (Posel 1993). Whether tribal or detribalized, Black South Africans nevertheless had to provide official documentation, or passes, to prove their residence status. Without such documentation, unemployed Blacks living within urban areas ran the risk of "deportation" to Bantustan (Thompson 2011). Labor therefore acted as a spatial marker, not only separating rural "natives" from urban workers but also legitimizing Black South Africans' living arrangements within townships. This included a growing population of Black youth who, as apartheid progressed, became a growing thorn in the apartheid regime's side.

Idle Youth

Protected through birth from deportation during the 1950s and 1960s, many urban Black youth made a conscious choice not to work. This choice against wage labor meant that urban youth were acting as "rational economic agents" (Seekings and Nattrass 2005, 171) actively objecting to state domination. As evident from official reports and documents, this surge in youth agency did not sit well with the apartheid state (Posel 1993). Policy makers labeled youth's economic inactiveness as *ledigheid* or idleness, arguing that "work-shy" Black youth are leading

a "parasitical existence in the cities not prepared to do manual labour" (Seekings and Nattrass 2005, 169). Not only were apartheid officials and policy makers frustrated with young Black youth's work avoidance, but they were equally concerned over the political agility that accompanies such resistance.

Black youth's rebellion against formal employment subsided during the 1960s, due to a combination of higher school enrollment and the apartheid state's stricter policing of township life and the unemployed. The 1964 Bantu Labour Act, for example, allowed for stricter policing of unemployed urban people, counteracting the leeway provided by the "Section 10" rights (Glaser 1993). Whereas deportation previously only applied to migrants living illegally in urban regions, these threats now also extended to urban-born unemployed Blacks. This meant that unemployed and "idle" youth, who were being picky and choosy about employment, were either put to work on farms or sent to their respective Bantustans (Barchiesi 2011).

Work as Liberation

During the segregationist and apartheid periods, wage labor was not only a central part of state politics, but also featured prominently in the narratives of anti-apartheid liberation movements. Whereas the apartheid state disregarded work as an avenue toward full national citizenship for Black South Africans, liberation politicians placed "wage work at the core of resistance and social redemption" (Barchiesi 2011, 45). For instance, during the 1950s the ANC championed wage labor as individual empowerment, including "the right and duty of all to work" under free and fair conditions in its 1955 Freedom Charter. The charter further states that "all who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers, and to make wage agreements with their employer" (ANC 1955). Naturally such backing of organized labor led to

the ANC's close allegiance with workers' unions and an eventual partnership with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). As the apartheid period proceeded, the labor unions, became "laboratories for activists and intellectuals to recast wage labor as a signifier of social emancipation" (Barchiesi 2011, 49).

Throughout the anti-apartheid struggle, the ANC and its allies therefore fought for fair integration into the country's modernization and industrialization trajectory. Considering that they have always constituted most of the country's labor force, Black South Africans were already part and parcel of the country's economy. Such inclusion, however, did not translate into political representation nor a fair socioeconomic standing vis-à-vis White South Africans. A primary focus of liberation was therefore to bring such political involvement and elevated socioeconomic status to fruition. Just as this involved a racial battle, it also translated into class struggle inseparable from the world of wage labor.

Post-Apartheid Sentiments: Work, Still the Best Thing to Do

Toward the end of apartheid, Barchiesi (2011) argues, the ANC and its allies had adopted a disposition toward work not that dissimilar from its segregation and apartheid adversaries. Whereas the apartheid state might not have been too successful in convincing young Black South Africans about the discipline and righteousness accompanying work, the ANC successfully redeemed wage labor from its apartheid shackles.

The ANC elite has used at least three factors to justify its continued support of wage labor. First, draped in the euphoria of liberation, the ANC publically embraces formal labor as a promoter of self-reliance, probity, and responsibility. Second, the post-apartheid government persistently promotes jobcreation rather than social welfare redistribution, regarding the latter as

a slippery slope toward people's dependency on the state. And third, the government continues to warn South Africans about the finite state of social assistance, arguing that people's dependency on social assistance is not sustainable. These factors were especially prevalent during negotiations for a Basic Income Grant (BIG) in the early 2000s. The greatest critics of such a universal social income came from within the ANC and its closest allies (Ferguson 2015). These critics wrote the BIG off as a hand-out, arguing instead for public works programs that will offer people temporary jobs, make them less dependent on the state, and subsequently nurture "pride and self-reliance" (ANC 2002).

Political actors further support employment as the only viable avenue toward self-realization. Contrarily, unemployment, as post-apartheid politicians argue, robs people of such dignity, leaving them with nothing more than a dependency on others and government handouts. In his 2003 State of the Nation Address, President Mbeki paid further lip service to work's ability to bring autonomy, stating that "People must again learn to work instead of living on handouts..." (Barchiesi 2011, 130). Through government funded programs, Mbeki maintained, he and his government will "reduce the number of those dependent on social grants…by engaging in gainful economic activity and exercising their right to human dignity."

This valorization of work over social assistance also remains prominent in the current Zuma administration. For example, in 2011 at a business meeting in Cape Town, President Zuma stated that South Africa cannot be "a welfare state" and that taxpayers should focus on developing the country rather than feeding the poor (City Press 2011). Similarly, in his 2015 State of the Nation Address Zuma promoted start-up businesses over social assistance (Grootes 2015):

The country cannot be a nation of social grants. Government can't generate money, only the private sector can. We all need to understand this, and live by this credo. It will be hard for some of us, but it must be done. This must become ingrained in how we live.

President Zuma's speech conveys the state's disposition toward social assistance. Here, the president describes social assistance in a skeptical manner, arguing that social assistance cannot become a defining factor of the country's social fabric nor a permanent fixture. In Chapter 3, I return to the varied positions local youth take on social welfare. What is relevant to this chapter's argument is the post-apartheid's emphasis on employment, not only as a human right, but in true neoliberal sense, as a factor in helping people gain dignity and self-respect.

The emphasis on work's contribution toward social and psychological wellbeing is especially prevalent within the recent National Youth Policy (2015-2020). Entitled "we don't want a hand-out, we want a hand-up," this policy replicates the political elite's outcry against hand-outs and emphasizes the importance of work for the betterment of South African society. Writ large, however, is the misalignment between these sentiments, the post-apartheid labor market and the quality of government-funded work projects.

Neoliberal Jobless Growth

Politicians' emphasis on job creation appears hopeless against the country's chosen economic restructuring plans, growth trajectory, and continued rising unemployment. In turn, scholars link post-apartheid South Africa's high unemployment levels to the country's underlying economic structure, which remains centered on minerals, energy, and capital-

intensive ventures (Bond 2014). Unemployment is not a post-apartheid phenomenon. As early as

the mid-1970s the country lapsed into its post-industrial moment, resulting in decades of

persistent employment cuts throughout the formal sector. Whereas the economy's labor-

absorption capacity stood at 90% in the 1960s, this figure fell to 22% in the 1980s and to a

further low of 7% toward the decade's end (Marais 2011, 87).

Post-apartheid neoliberal restructuring further contributed to the decrease in formal wage

labor. This comes from, among others, neoliberal tendencies to choose cheaper outsourcing

options over existing local labor markets. Post-apartheid labor regulations also contributed to a

decrease in permanent and sustainable employment, especially in agricultural sectors where

casual and contract workers have become employers' preferred cheaper option (Marais 2011,

118). Ironically, South Africa's troubling labor market does not necessarily reflect negative

economic growth. Despite slow-downs during the 2008 global recession and the 2015 political

turmoil, South Africa's economic growth has been on par with other emerging global economies.

The country's economic growth averaged 4.1% in 2000-2008, mostly thanks to the service

sectors. This includes a strong financial service sector that saw growth as high as 10% in 2007.

But the service sector is not necessarily a job creator, since it relies mostly on outsourcing and

subcontracting. Similarly, the manufacturing and mining sectors created limited job opportunities

due to not only technological advances within the industrial sector, requiring less manual labor,

but also a competing international labor market (Marais 2011,176). The country's capital

ventures also translated into "jobless economic growth." Because of less stringent investment

regulation post-apartheid, South Africa's capital investment market expanded "into a powerful

but parasitic sector" (Marais 2011, 181).

This trend of jobless growth is not uncommon among emerging markets in the Global

South, but has instead become characteristic of emerging democracies (Li 2014). Jobless growth

concerns geopolitical decisions, including trade agreements that move industries toward cheaper

labor markets. These decisions are far removed from youth, especially rural youth, eagerly

waiting to become part of their country's formal labor force. Subsequently, post-apartheid

jobless growth has moved the imagined opportunities of wage labor further away from those

yearning so desperately for employment.

Hopelessly Awaiting Employment

Regardless of the reality of jobless growth, job creation remains a common talking point

among political leaders, both within the ANC and its opposition's circles. It has also been part

and parcel of post-apartheid politicians' public narrative to gain greater approval and electoral

support. Regardless of such ulterior motives, the public has nevertheless latched onto the job-

creation discourse, eagerly looking toward the state to deliver on its employment promises.

The extent to which such job creation happens is a completely different matter. The 2015

National and Provincial Labour Market Report, focused specifically on youth places the

country's unemployment rate at 26.4%. Considering that 2008's unemployment figure was

23.2%, the country saw an increase of 3% in unemployment (StatsSA 2015, 5). These rates

reflect the narrow definition of unemployment, that is, those "able, willing, and actively seeking

work." The expanded definition of unemployment includes people who want employment but

have given up hope of finding work. When considering the latter definition, the 2015 Labor

Force Survey estimates South Africa's unemployment rate at 34.4%.

These figures reflect the country's broader working age population, or people 15—65 years of age. The unemployment rate for youth (15—34) places the country's shrinking job market into further perspective. Whereas the youth unemployment rate, narrowly defined, stood at 32.7% in 2008, this number increased to 36.9% in 2015. According to Statistics South Africa's 2016 Social Profile of Youth, this figure rises to an alarming 75% when considering the broader unemployment definition (StatsSA 2016a). This includes young people who are currently studying or doing unpaid work, such as taking care of family members. In his reflection on the stagnate labor market, current unemployment figures, and future employment prospects of post-apartheid youth, the Statistician General argued that "when parents are better equipped than their children, it's a sign of regression" (Merten 2016).

Government: Employment Agent

It would be unfair to say the South African government has done nothing about unemployment. Most significant is the Department of Public Works employment initiatives, the Expansive Public Works Programme (EPWP), which provides short-term work to semi- and unskilled South Africans. Increasingly the EPWP pays special attention to women and youth unemployment. The EPWP was rolled out in 2004 by the Mbeki government as a nationwide initiative. As of 11 January 2017, the EPWP's website summarizes its objective as "provid[ing] poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities." Additionally, the Department of Public Works argues that its EPWP initiatives provide unemployed South Africans with additional skills and experience. The program creates and oversees such part-time employment and skills development in four sectors, including infrastructure sectors, environment and cultural sectors, social sectors, and nonstate sectors such

as NGO and private companies. The diverse sectors require close collaboration between the EPWP and other state departments, particularly Social Development, Environmental Affairs, Transport, and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Table 2.1 provides a summary of EPWP sectors, outcomes, project types, and the government departments overseeing and assisting in projects' implementation.

Table 2.1: Summary of EPWP sectors

Employment sector	Collaborative State Departments	Focus and Primary Objectives
Infrastructure	*Lead:* Public Works *Collaborators*: Transport Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Water Affairs Mineral Recourses Energy	Predominantly labor-intensive projects with opportunities in the construction and maintenance of publicly funded infrastructure development
Non-State	*Lead*: Public Works *Collaborators:* Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs	Support Non-Profit Organization through wage subsidies, enabling them to take on more employees; The **Community Works Program (CWP)**, a community based program designed in collaboration with community members concerning their immediate communal needs
Environment and Culture	*Lead:* Environmental Affairs *Collaborators:* Water Affairs Tourism Mineral Resources Energy Arts and Culture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Municipalities with units corresponding to above-listed state departments.	Projects focused on natural resource management and cultural heritage. Projects providing part-time opportunities exist in the following areas: Sustainable rural development and urban renewal Land-based livelihoods strategies Community-based natural resource management; Natural resource development and cultural heritage Rehabilitation of natural resources Tourism

| Social | *Lead*: Social Development

Collaborators:
Basic Education
Health | Projects with on-the-job training to support existing social services, particularly in the realm of social development and community protection. Projects providing part-time employment exist within the following areas:

Early childhood development
Home Community Based Care projects
School nutrition programs
Community crime prevention
School mass participation through sports coaching, community development and social cohesion actions
Mass literacy campaigns |

Source: Department of Public Works, http://www.epwp.gov.za

Of the EPWP initiatives, the Community Works Programme (CWP) includes a specific focus on youth unemployment. Such development is especially promoted when launched in marginal economic areas where sustainable economic development and subsequent permanent employment opportunities are unlikely to arise any time soon.[22] Launched in 2007 the CWP falls under the EPWP's Non-State sector and takes "a community driven approach" to job creation (Philip 2013). As the CWP's official website[23] explains, the CWP "the state acts as the employer of last resort where markets cannot provide work to all who need it." Additionally, the CWP imitates the concept of continuous minimum employment, a development initiative adopted from the Indian government. In this case, minimum employment guarantees local youth with 100 working days per year, earning an average of R71 ($5,30) per day.[24] As the site further explains, the CWP's intent is therefore to act as a temporary safety net, providing young people with a

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[22] Although unemployed from any age group can participate in CWP projects, youth generally occupy the most positions (Oosthuizen and Cassim 2014).
[23] http://www.dta.gov.za/cwp/?page_id=31 as accessed on 31 March 2017.
[24] This is based on the exchange rate on 31 March 2017, of $1 = R13,42.

form of basic income. But since such work is part-time "there's a preference for referring to the CWP as providing 'work opportunities' rather than 'jobs'" (Masuku, Langa and Bruce 2016).

Although the Public Work Department's efforts might look good on paper and provide financial refuge to some unemployed, such relief is temporary, and by no means significant enough to count as long-term or reliable employment. In 2016, the Municipal Workers Union shed light on the precarious conditions of the EPWP and CWP work opportunities (Times Live 2016). The union called for an immediate abandonment of these initiatives, claiming that these programs' wages are far below the country's set R6,000 ($447) per month minimum wage. Instead, the union insisted that municipalities appoint workers on a more permanent basis. From a neoliberal perspective, the EPWP initiatives fit the profile of precarious and expendable work, side-stepping the expenses that come with former and long-term employment.

Additionally, scholars point to the EPWP's limited contribution toward work experience and skills development. Generally, as Oosthuizen and Cassim (2014) argue, the work experience young people gain from working in gardens, along road sides, and on construction sites rarely counts as experience when young people apply for formal-sector employment within urban centrums. EPWP and CWP associated work is also not popular among youth. These authors further hold that youth generally find these projects unattractive since they are not tailored to young people's aspirations nor are they bringing realization to youth's future expectations. This was also the case among Senqu youth, and I return to their impression of the CWP shortly.

When looked at through a dependency lens, public works programs are not that dissimilar from social grants (Taylor 2007). However, the political elite appears far more at ease with people's dependency on the state if such a dependency involves work. Despite the EPWP's miniscule impact on alleviating socioeconomic hardship and securing sustainable employment,

the ANC government maintains its work-before-hand-out mantra. As President Zuma again confirmed during his 2017 State of the Nation address: his government is committed to reach its target of six million EPWP work opportunities by March 2019.

Senqu Youth's Employment Yearning

Many of my young Senqu interviewees build their futures around promises of formal employment. When asked where they see themselves in 20 years, most of my conversation group attendees saw themselves employed, and enjoying the rewards that come from a paycheck. This ranges from Tsego's oceanview house with a collection of sports cars to Mpho's mansion with glass walls. She has a photo of her future house saved on her phone, and during one of our group sessions, she pulled it out to share with us. These expectations clearly align with the narratives of commodification and consumerism commonly identify among young South Africans (Peterson 2003; Nuttal 2004; Mhlambi 2004; Hurst 2009; Posel 2010, 2014). But a broader overarching issue always found its way back into my conversations with Senqu youth, placing a damper on future ambition—Talk about *unemployment* remained unavoidable. This was also prominent during my visit with Itumeleng, an unemployed 20-something mother of three. "What is the biggest struggle youth face?" I asked. Balancing the youngest on her knees, she carefully placed her teacup back on its saucer and looked straight at me.

> If we can only get jobs. I've been all over the place including Jo'burg, looking
> for jobs, but what I see here, people need proper jobs. We don't have proper
> jobs. If we have that everything else will fall in place. We are struggling. It's
> now at the end of the month and our grannies are worried about going out into

the streets because the youth are watching them, looking for them. The youth

will be robbing them, so if the government can just work together and find

something for youth to do, things will get better. That's the thing, the

government must help us. I'm not happy about all of this, I don't want to lie…

Senqu youth, like Itumeleng, frequently shared with me their unwavering longing for and belief

in employment. They branded work not only as a gateway toward their material ambitions, but

also as solution for their communities' perceived social issues, and a remedy for the hopelessness

that comes with unemployment, or the unemployment mentality. And not unlike Itumeleng,

many Senqu youth looked toward the state, sometimes out of sheer desperation, to make good on

its promises of job creation.

Unemployment and Social Issues

People who sit have too much time on their hand Thoko explained, and when this is the

case, "you don't think of good things." Like Thoko, Mains (2007, 2011) recognized young

Ethiopians' struggle with "too much time" because of limited employment opportunities.

Because of unemployment, Ethiopian youth struggle to achieve their future aspirations, and

despite an excess of time, they eventually run out of time to bring their future goals to fruition.

Mains (2011: 68) labels this excess in time as "unstructured time," void of benchmarks that

signify progress toward future goals. Too much time, Mains' participants argued, also leads to

introspective thinking, reminding them of the limited progress they have made toward reaching

their objectives. This reminder subsequently induces anxiety and stress, forcing young men to

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source out activities that will "help focus their minds away from their present conditions" (Mains 2007, 66).

This is no different to Senqu youth's unemployment struggles. Pontso confirmed this, sharing that "we don't have anything to do. We just sit around and drink which is not good for our health…we are losing our future because we have nothing to do." Frank added, "not having employment, [youth] just stay at home and then end up using drugs." A local teacher, Mr. Zamane, shared Frank and Pontso's concerns. He explained young people's behavior:

> You will see them on Monday and they are tired [from all the weekend
> drinking] and not in the mood for school. And then Fridays? What's the first
> thing on their minds? They can't wait for school to be over so they can go to
> the tavern. So, in their minds they really only attend school on Tuesdays,
> Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Eventually, those who sit because of unemployment start sharing the same mindset—a shared empathy with their and their contemporaries' unemployed disposition. Jeffrey and Young (2012: 639) recognized such shared feelings among unemployed Indian youth, sentiments that not only develop into new friendships, but also a "shared culture of disappointment" and "spirited mischief." Senqu youth frequently shared stories about local gangs and their negative actions and sentiments. During one focus group session, high schoolers said many of their peers who dropped out of school, or are unemployed, start doing petty crime, participate in housebreaks, and eventually start or join existing youth gangs. For instance, the local gang, the *Amahatamos*— meaning "they are hurting more"—is notorious, not only for criminal activities, but for providing

youngsters with an alternative to sitting. The focus group participants explained the *Amahatamos*' appeal as follows:

> Youth engage in gangs and then they are end up with no life, no future. They join gangs because of peer pressure. Some join because their friends are joining, maybe there's a bad situation at home, maybe parents aren't working, there's no food. Or when somebody is an orphan, the parents passed away and are now staying with the grandparents. But there also a lack of jobs, let's say I finished school, then I don't have money to go to varsity, then I might just join the dangerous gangs. Those gangs will not be in the region if things were different, but many of them are not working, so they need some form of income to make things happen for them. Some of them are still in school. Some do it for the fun, and to be respected, but some do it for the money.

The connection between unstructured time and gansterism is by no means new. Africanists focused on youth dynamics have written extensively on young people's involvement in violent and criminal activities, exemplifying such actions as agency and creativeness amidst socioeconomic hardship (De Boeck and Honwana 2005; Abbink and Kessel 2005). Zanele, a Senqu high schooler, does not necessarily see gangsters' actions as agency. In her opinion, young people from the region, choosing crime and gangs are essentially "neglecting their responsibilities."

But as other youth argued, criminal acts are just that—enacting a form of responsibility, especially when more acceptable means of income are not available. Criminal acts and petty

crime become necessary when there are no other options to sustain households' basic needs. Employment, as one of my conversation groups argued, will therefore not only bring an end to criminal actions associated with gangsterism, but also resolve those issues that lead many young people toward gangs in the first place.

Unemployment Mentality

Senqu people strongly believe employment will bring an end to many young people's negative mindset toward life and the future. Additionally, employment will bring social stability to their communities and pull many out of a current state of hopelessness. They echo government officials and political actors' narratives about the importance of work in establishing self-worth and dignity. But the origin of this negative mindset is unemployment itself and young people's disappointment in the job market. Thito, for example, waited patiently for work to come his way. This waiting eventually turned into a depression, reminding him of the limited future possibilities available to him and his contemporaries. He made a conscious choice not to "turn dark." After seven months of just sitting, he decided to do something, even if that meant doing unpaid work, just to escape his unemployed mindset.

Thito eventually won his fight against unemployment, landing an internship at a local government department from where he gained access to the private job market. He is one of the lucky few. The majority's misfortune, he explained, eventually turns into an insidious negativity that rubs off on others who have yet to experience the painstaking reality of an unsuccessful job hunt. These negative youngsters lure others into this negative mindset convincing those who are still in school that education is a worthless endeavor, and so is looking for work. Unemployment is inevitable, they argue, regardless of how hard you study or how persistent you are in your job

search or ambitions, the rural hinterlands are void of any opportunities. Even though some engage in negative actions such as gansterism, most remain sitting, hopelessly waiting for employment to come their way.

"No More Project Work!"

Like Itumeleng, mentioned earlier, many Senqu youth look toward the government for employment. In fact, they expect the ANC to make good on its job-creation responsibility. Government-run projects are present in Senqu, ranging from EPWP maintenance programs that include cutting roadside grass to small-scale construction projects such as road works or infrastructure development and maintenance. Project workers are chosen not on merit but on their position on the councilor's list of unemployed community members. Mostly, ward councilors will make sure that all in the community's unemployed get a chance at doing project work. This, in turn, depends on whether a project does make its way to some of the remote communities.

Although these opportunities provide local unemployed youth with an additional income, something they cannot refuse, they did not speak highly of the projects. Such skepticism over the EPWP came to the fore during my conversations with Siphokazi. One afternoon she shared, not only her frustrations with the public works projects, but also her longing for formal wage labor.

"I'm sad about the development in the Eastern Cape. People are given project
work. Three months it's my turn and then three months it's your turn. If you
used your chance, you go and sit at home."

She looked straight at me, before adding, "I strongly dislike—I'm not going to

say the H word—these projects given to the youth. We are given project work

and after a duration of time we have to stay at home again."

"So, what's the alternative?" I asked.

"[The government] give [the youth] a particular skill during the public works,

but now what do you expect them to do the rest of the eight months? It's

unfair. Why not train them and then permanently employ them? We are not say

give us money or food parcels, or hand-outs, no."

She fiddled with her bright green headscarf and continued.

"We want to work. Sweat. Earn our money. We are not lazy. And there are

very capable people here among us. There is no work in the cities so people

come back to the rural areas…because the city has failed them."

And as if delivering a last and final plea she repeated: "Don't give us project

work, give us skills so we can work all year round."

Not unlike interactions with other Senqu youth, I was struck by Siphokazi's commitment

to employment, even if that means hard labor. Equally so, Siphokazi made no secret of her

frustrations: the inevitability of sitting and waiting that comes with being young in Senqu.

Conditions of sitting and involuntary waiting are not specific to South Africa, neither to the

country's rural youth. On the contrary, ethnographers acknowledge conditions of sitting as an

inherent spatial limitation among youth in the global South. For example, in Northern India,

unemployed youth are just "passing time" (Jeffrey 2010), in urban Ethiopia young men are "just

sitting" (Mains 2011) and Zambian youth are "just sitting at home…doing nothing" (Hansen 2005:9).

As in the case of Siphokazi, sitting and waiting also denotes involuntary conditions that keep young people from realizing their future goals (Jeffrey and Young 2012). Not unlike Chakrabarty's (2000) *subaltern*, rural youth find themselves in a "waiting-room," anticipating their eventual incorporation into the realm of modernity, its networks of power, influence, and recognition. Such incorporation is by no means a certainty, with many people finding themselves locked in perpetual conditions of waiting. And as Bayart (2007) so eloquently argues, this marginal existence signifies nothing but a surplus population, a population in waiting. Not unlike Charkrabarty's waiting-room, the conditions of waithood (Honwana 2012) my rural participants described reduces many of them to nothing other than a population of surplus—people in the waiting. Arguably, conditions of sitting and waiting, the precarious labor offered by the state, and the misalignment between young people's yearning for employment and the country's rising unemployment scenario, exemplify the contradictory nature of the post-apartheid South Africa. While political elite continue remain to committed to their employment narratives, more and more young people become trapped in precarious "opportunity work" at best, conditions of perpetual sitting at worst.

Paralyzing Expectations: A Case of Local Employment Yearning

My interactions with Moeketsi and Thabo, founding members of an aspiring youth-led tutoring organization, and Alex, a local taxi driver, was especially significant for contextualizing young people's employment expectations. Additionally, these young men's narratives also contained the obstacles and frustrations facing those who ambitiously try to help their peers

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overcome unemployment. Arguably, expectations of formal employment bring about a type of stasis, paralyzing young people from doing anything other than sit and wait for a job to come along.

I met Moeketsi at a local high school. At our first meeting, Moeketsi looked rather "sharp," as the local youngsters would say, wearing black skinny jeans, a red slim-fitting checkered shirt, and a red baseball cap sitting high on his head. He glides when he moves, greeting the passing-by learners in a self-assured, yet friendly manner. Upon seeing me, he flashed a charming smile, hurried over, and firmly reciprocated my handshake. His upright posture, open face, and sparkling eyes immediately captivated me, and I could understand why the school's learners like him so much. His ambition seeps through his eyes, his walk, and his talk.

Moeketsi is local. He was born in a local village, attended a local school for most of his school career, and was raised by his grandmother. The latter is especially characteristic of local youth, with many mothers pursuing employment in urban areas, while fathers are often out of the picture. With his grandmother's passing in 2009, Moeketsi moved to Pretoria to live with his mother where he also graduated from high school in 2012. Moeketsi then pursued a diploma in electrical engineering, but because of financial constraints and curriculum complications his tertiary training was placed on hold. After a brief stay in Cape Town, Moeketsi returned to his rural Senqu village in early 2015. During his time in Cape Town Moeketsi and his childhood friend, Thabo, volunteered at a nonprofit tutoring organization while looking for permanent work. But their joint misfortune in the urban job market brought them both back to their childhood Senqu village where, as Moeketsi put it, "we started our own survival to see whether we can make it by ourselves."

Aware of the immense educational gap in rural areas, and with their tutoring experience in hand, Moeketsi and Thabo decided to try their hand at tutoring. After convincing local friends to join their venture, Moeketsi and Thabo approached local leadership for permission and teachers for support. Such support was not difficult to obtain, considering local teachers' overloaded work schedule, overpopulated classrooms, and the region's poor pass rates. With the necessary local permission and support in hand the group registered their organization with the Department of Social Development, making their organization and its commitment official.

The tutors embraced their commitment, and in early 2015, they introduced their plans to learners at a local high school learners signed-up, and the after school tutoring sessions started. Because of their different areas of expertise, they offered tutoring services for English, physical science, and mathematics. With this start came stumbling blocks, inherent to the local education context and reflective of youth's hopelessness. The first stumbling block was material in nature. As Moeketsi explained: "A big challenge we face is limited school supplies. For a while we used our own money to buy books for them to write in. They need to write so we can see whether they are improving or not." Thabo added that they "were not asking for money, but for materials, that's all." One would think the department of education would welcome the tutors' services and find ways to supply them with the necessary material, but the tutors' requests were unsuccessful.

Material shortcomings are not uncommon within rural schools, particularly in the Eastern Cape province. Despite hefty budgetary allocations from both national and provincial governments, the Eastern Cape's Education Department struggles to meet rural schools' immediate needs, ranging from furniture to enough teachers[25] (see John 2014). During my own

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[25] Between 2010 and 2016, the Department of Basic Education's allocated budget grew from R104bn in 2010 to R204b in 2016, the latter constituting the biggest part of the overall 2016 national budget, see Davies 2015c and Mkhize 2016).

school visits and conversations with learners and teachers, limiting school supplies, in particular textbooks frequently surfaced (De Vos 2015). Even during my own teaching sessions, three to four learners would crouch over one shared textbook. Taking books home for home study is also a shared endeavor, resulting in strives between those students who share a textbook. This all results in subsequent dismal grades. When I met the tutors toward the end of 2015 the government departments gave them nothing more than verbal recognition and a registration form. When I asked the department of social development's office about the tutors' initiatives, they were thankful for Moeketsi and friends' efforts but admitted that they can only offer the tutors moral support. The department's budget allows for nothing else. Furthermore, as they explained to the tutors, tutoring programs fall outside the scope of social development. With no luck at government departments, the tutors looked toward the private sector for funding. Again, to no avail.

Despite these material shortcomings, the tutors remained steadfast, arranged introductory sessions, illustrated by means of PowerPoint presentations what their plan was, and when sessions were scheduled, showed up, well prepared, and ready to help. Learners also showed up, at least in the beginning, but toward the middle of the year these numbers rapidly dwindled. This was not because of the tutors' inability to tutor but rather learners' dwindling interest. This surprised the tutors: "In the beginning of the academic year so many signed up, but then they ended up not coming anymore. Maybe it's because they feel they have something better to do with their time than stay behind at school, especially on Friday afternoons."

Moeketsi blamed this lack of motivation on the negative sentiments of unemployed youth who are either done with school or decided to drop out. He noted that "the influence from outside the schools is so negative. We have older brothers in the community who are doing nothing.

They negatively impact the youth." Mrs. Mdada, a teacher at a neighboring high school, confirmed Moeketsi's claims, arguing that learners who decide to quit school carry a negative mindset that can easily derail high schoolers' already thin future ambitions. Even though the dropouts initially quit school to look for work, they have enormous difficulty finding work and more often than not are unsuccessful. Mrs. Mdada added that "the effect on those that are still at school is tremendous. Those in school end up not seeing the value of education. Their argument would be, after all, why should I return, because so and so are still without work."

Blinded by older youth's inability to find work, high schoolers lapse into a negative mindset, not easy to change or to overcome. After all, evidence of unemployment comes from those returning from the cities after unsuccessful job searches, and stream from young people's bodies, standing roadside, midday, or sitting on tavern stoops, midweek. Successful employment stories are less common.

Employment Expectations: Education, Money, and Modernity

Youth have a clearly developed expectation of what a life beyond sitting entails: formal employment with a monthly pay slip. These expectations made it rather difficult for Moeketi to find additional tutors. He explained that "there are a lot of people who have finished grade 12 and who are just sitting. We feel they would also benefit from volunteering their time. But, with them, because they are sitting, they are expecting something because it's their time. Here they want compensation, which we can't do. They are just sitting around and doing nothing. They do not volunteer their time. The term 'sharing is caring' is not in use. If you look, some guys do want to come but they come for the wrong reasons. They ask will there be money, will there be food. It's hard for them to understand that we are just starting now." Here Moeketsi's frustrations

not only point toward young people's disinterest in volunteering, but more so, to the price tag they place on their abundance of unstructured time.

Moeketsi's frustration with his peers' unwillingness to work without compensation is not uncommon. On a different occasion Siphokazi also lamented young people's overt focus on money. But for her, this focus correlates with youth's eagerness "to be modern." She explained that "young people are concerned with the modern, they want money—money has become the power over the youth. Talk to youth about money and they'll listen to you, but tell them to come help me do hard labor, sheer the wool, it's a totally different story." She shared Moeketsi's frustrations, arguing that young people are more likely to sit than engage in alternative activities. But in this case, Siphokazi also made mention of young people's reluctance to engage in "old-fashioned and backwards" activities, that is, work they regard as the opposite of what it means to be modern. Alex, a temporary taxi driver, blamed this reluctance on the expectations young people place upon education. He argued that Senqu youth with high school qualification or any further qualifications are picky about work choices:

> [Young people] have too much expectations and there's not a lot of things happening. Many have matric and other qualifications, but they don't get the jobs. The problem is, we have become choosy when it comes to jobs. An educated person can't wash shoes or do laundry or something like that. And to think, we don't even have a Laundromat around here. You won't see a young boy or guy taking a spade and doing some gardening. You don't find that anymore, that's why I say, we are very choosy what type of jobs we do.

Wage labor, rather than other forms of subsistence, or even volunteer work, is therefore the norm for life after high school. A high school certificate signifies formal employment.

This correlation between education and employment is pervasive. As scholars have shown, education does evoke particular employment expectations. Youth with a high school diploma are more inclined to shop around for work that best aligns their individual expectations (Rankin and Roberts 2011; Yu 2013). Additionally, Mains (2011) reminds us that young people commonly associate education with economic success. Even though ethnographic studies have shown that this association is not clear-cut, education certainly has "a major impact on young people's aspirations and desires for the future" (67-68).

A recent Statistics South Africa report on the social profile of youth, confirms the close correlation between education and employment: 57% of unemployed youth did not complete high school. Those with a high school diploma constitute 38% of the unemployed (Merten 2016). Even though both these figures are equally grim, they do point toward the high school graduate's somewhat better employment prospects. Missing from these figures, however, is the question of quality. In fact, for many Senqu youth who finished high school the accompanying expectations of formal employment might be nothing more than an illusion. Many local youth take longer than the allotted time to finish high school, retake the final exam more than once, and if they do pass, obtain less than stellar grades. When considering the country's 2015 grade 12 examinations only 71% participants passed. In turn only 35% of these learners started in 2003 and thus completed school in the allotted 13 years. The remaining 36% either repeated some school years or took more than one shot at the matric examination (Wilkinson 2016b).

Socioeconomic conditions undoubtedly contribute to children's educational progress. But, educational scholars' recent quality assessment figures confirm that South Africa's basic

education should take significant blame for young South Africans' shattered employment expectations. Using measurements from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Spaull (2012) found that 71% of South African grade-six learners are functionally literate and 58.6% functionally numerate. In comparison to 15 other Southern and East African countries, these literacy and numeracy figures place South Africa tenth and eighth respectively (Wilkinson n.d). These literacy and mathematical standards may not only contribute to learners' poor pass rates during their primary and high school careers, but in some cases, they also cause them to give-up all together. These educational standards and pass rates are not homogeneous. to all White children and Black children from families that can afford semiprivate or private schools do far better (Spaull 2013). Learners from marginal communities with no other choice but to attend the closest public school face large classrooms, limited resources, and overworked teachers. This includes many of my Senqu interlocutors.

Just Hustling

My interaction with the tutors and conversations with Alex brought to the fore an additional factor contributing to wage labor's appeal: the daunting prospects of entrepreneurialism. Even though the tutors were still chasing their ambitions, Alex decided to break from his. He recognized dirty laundry as a lucrative business opportunity in the waiting and surely within reach of a business savvy young person. But achieving self-employment is a whole different story. The obstacles range from limited to hardly any access to start-up capital to the high economic and social costs accompanying an unsuccessful endeavor.

Financial support makes self-employment and locally organized initiatives a pipe dream. Nevertheless, the South African government's departments and development agencies continue

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to champion self-employment as a viable solution to the country's youth unemployment. One such agency is the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). Working alongside the Department of Social Development the NYDA focuses on enterprise and skill development, providing young people with financial assistance to transform their innovativeness and creativity into viable and independent business ventures. Financial assistance comes as grants finance in the form of microfinance for survivalist youth entrepreneurs, and co-operative grants for bigger ventures (NYDA 2016). Additionally, the NYDA assists entrepreneurial development through scholarships and training in entrepreneurial skills.

Gaining access to government funds, such as those provided through the NYDA, is easier said than done. The NYDA accomplished its first clean audit only in 2015, bringing to question how much funding really reaches its intended recipients. Senqu youth no longer get excited about the prospect of NYDA, or any equivalent government support. Like the tutors knocking on department doors, many young NYDA applicants are equally unsuccessful. As one focus group participant explained: "The government encourages people to do things, they want you to do things, but they leave the people hanging; they don't help them all the way. The youth knows this by now, so they are discouraged." Similarly, Pontso understands youth's reluctance to ask for government assistance. Furthermore, because of poor basic education, many young people in need of start-up capital lack the necessary skills to complete their application. She explained it as follows:

> They are negative because when you talk to them and tell them, "no guys let's
> start a new project, we will do this and this, come up with a business plan,"
> they immediately say, "where are you going to get funding for this? Who are

you going to approach? How are you going to get money?" They just think

negatively all the time, because the government institutions that are there, they

do not support our people. You go to the Department of Social Development,

they draw up a business plan for you, but when they do not have funding that's

where it stops. They just leave you at that, telling you that they do not have any

funding. There are other places to find funding, but how are you going to get to

those places as a person that stays in a rural community? We don't have

computers to e-mail the people and so on. We don't have Internet to search for

those places.

Additionally, young people also consider the social and psychological risks that come with self-

employment. What if your plan fails? Moeketsi told me that many of his peers, particularly the

sitting ones, are patiently waiting for his plans to capsize. It's much easier to note failures than

successes, Moeketsi noted. The challenges and risks associated with self-employment make

wage-labor a much safer choice. But if the latter is not available, sitting around doing nothing

remains an equally safe bet against the public humiliation of failure.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated Senqu youth's yearning for employment. With the scarcity of

formal employment in the region, many young people end up just sitting around. Subsequently

sitting acts as a discursive metaphor, not only explaining youth's frustrations with their

unemployed status, but also capturing their spatial and temporal immobility. Additionally,

unemployment, and correlating conditions of sitting, result in social and psychological ills,

ranging from gangsterism to a negative mindset, often resulting in depression and low self-esteem. Young people are well aware of these consequences of unemployment, which contribute to their desperate yearning for employment. Many local youth are specific when it comes to employment; they have particular employment expectations that keep them from doing anything other than wait.

This engrained employment expectation keeps them from considering other avenues of material well-being. This was especially prominent from my conversations and interactions with local quasi-entrepreneurs, eager to break not only their own conditions of sitting but also those around them. The biggest frustration for the young tutors were young people's reluctance to do anything other than wait for formal employment. Additionally, as other interlocutors explained, young people have specific employment expectations. If those are not met, they default into conditions of sitting.

This employment yearning is not a new phenomenon but deeply rooted in the South African imagination. Wage labor transformed the country's social fabric. Additionally, wage labor acted as a centrifuge, separating South Africans on the basis of place, "race," ethnicity, but also citizenship. Those with work became more likely to gain the status of citizenship than those without. It is especially this latter point that resonated with the African Nationalist movement, survived into the post-apartheid period, and kept formal employment ingrained in people's minds. The importance of formal employment featured prominently throughout my conversations with Senqu youth. In fact, they yearn for employment; It will break their boredom, fix social ills, and even more importantly bring them material gains. Similar to apartheid-era youth (Barchiesi 2011; Posel 1993; Seekings and Nattrass 2005), post-apartheid youth are picky about what their employment options. But unlike apartheid era youth who avoided wage labor as

a form of economic agency and political resistance, Senqu youth's pickiness is based upon

hopeless material expectation and a yearning for formal wage labor. For many young people the

employment expectations that come with education are shattered by the low quality and

standards of South Africa's basic education. A high school diploma hardly guarantees

employment.

Senqu youth's conversations over employment also alluded to specific political

sentiments, echoing the African Nationalists' narratives of rights, democratic freedom, and social

inclusion. Young people not only believe that formal employment more than anything else will

bring them material relief but also bring true democracy. Employment means inclusion, on both

political and economic spheres. Unemployment, on the other hand, means exclusion from

economic activities, and thus a distortion of one's democratic rights. However, for Senqu youth,

political actors' reference to work as a democratic right translates into something expected *from*

the state. In other words, the government should bring their ideological stance with regards to

employment to realization—and bring jobs to the people.

Chapter 3 – Narratives of Dependency

South Africa's social grants system provides financial support to 17 million South Africans, or about 30% of the country's population (SASSA 2016). This makes the South African cash transfer program the most extensive in Sub-Saharan Africa (Pauw and Mncube 2007; Garcia and Moore 2012; Ulriksen 2012; McEwen and Woolard 2012; Glassman and Temin 2016). Moreover, the Child Support Grant, the most expansive of the country's cash transfer initiatives, is the primary lifeline of close to 12 million recipients from the country's poorest households (Chitiga et al. 2012). In the Eastern Cape's poorer regions, Senqu being no exception, close to 70% of households receive at least one grant (StatsSA 2016b, 10). The region's young unemployed mothers depend on their monthly child support grant to see to their children's needs, and extended households find financial relief in grandmothers' older person grant. Social grants are therefore tightly woven into the region's social identity and, by no coincidence, take center stage in Senqu youth's conversations about their immediate social worlds.

Like unemployment, social grants lurked behind my young participants' descriptions of their socioeconomic environment. When they spoke about teenage pregnancies, grants came to the fore. When they shared their concerns over unemployment, grants were the justification for young people's unwillingness to "apply themselves." And when it came to work, grants were the scapegoat for youth's increased laziness, their reluctance to work in homestead gardens or tend to their family's cattle, and their subsequent relapse into perpetual states of "just sitting." Their contemporaries have become too dependent on social grants, many of my group conversationalists would argue. Others would add that, because of social assistance, many young people lack the motivation to become self-reliant and will therefore never become truly

independent individuals. Notions of dependence therefore surfaced throughout young people's

descriptions of social grants. Considering that social grants are directly linked to the South

African government, its policies, and politicians, conversations about social assistance and

dependency also extended to perceptions of governance and citizenship, or in other words, what

people *expect* from the state, and how the state should react to such requests.

This chapter concerns discursive practices linked to social assistance and notions of

dependency. I illustrate how Senqu youth's conversations and accompanying logic encapsulate

contradictory dispositions toward social grants, resembling a continuous negotiation between

dependence on and *independence from* the state. In turn these dispositions and accompanying

narratives resemble a neoliberal logic that transposes market principles into social terms. This

includes narratives championing self-reliance, smart personal choices and eventual independence

from the state. But these principles are only valorized in certain contexts. Whereas young people

encouraged their peers to be creative, innovative, and do something about their "perpetual state

of sitting," they looked critically upon those, especially young mothers, who use state funds to

enact personal choice, self-realization, and independence.

Young people's interpretations of social assistance are not necessarily cemented in binary

terms, nor manifested through clearly delineated positions either for or against a dependency on

the state. Instead, their understanding of grants is persistently ambiguous and exhibits continuous

processes of sense-making, of not only their immediate social environments, but also of what

they see in, and expect of, the state. This ambiguity also echoes a broader national discourse on

social assistance at work in politicians' public sentiments and government's youth development

efforts. These sentiments cypher through to local contexts and directly influence how young

people construct their rationalities on social development, governance, and citizenship.

In what follows, I first describe the country social grants system, providing a brief historic underpinning to the program and listing the different grant types and their demographic focus. I then introduce the notion of dependency as situated in broader discussions about social assistance and neoliberalism. Following this historical and theoretical background, I illustrate how notions of dependency take shape in young people's conversations about social grants. Here I differentiate between two sets of narratives. The first, *gendered dependency*, focuses specifically on the intersection of dependency, motherhood, and female sexuality. This includes narratives focused on grants' trustworthiness, those describing grants as a pregnancy incentive, and narratives urging the government to take a more disciplinary position by curtailing its social grants program. The second set of narratives, *moving beyond dependency*, is prescriptive in nature. Here young people analyze their peers' perceived dependency and then suggest how they can move beyond this perceived "dependency syndrome." This includes narratives encouraging personal agency over grant dependence, emphasizing self-reliance, and stressing greater individual responsibility. Like gendered narratives, this latter set of narratives correlates with not only politicians' sentiments as they play out in the public sphere, but also with the discursive practices of government institutions focused on youth development. The chapter ends with young people's distrust in the state and its social grants program, which they regard as nothing other than political manipulation. This emulates youth's distrust in politics and politicians, and thus anything closely related to the state. Social grants are no exception.

Post-Apartheid Social Assistance

Historic Trajectory and Current Operations

South Africa's current social welfare system is rooted in the segregationist and apartheid states' social welfare systems. For example, the old age pension, launched in 1928 (Garcia and Moore 2012), and the state maintenance grant, introduced during the 1930s (Glassman and Temin 2016), preceded the post-apartheid government's old persons grant and child support grant. The biggest change between the apartheid and post-apartheid grants is the latter's move beyond racial discrimination, age limitation, marital prescriptions, and specific sociocultural-specific recommendations of apartheid era welfare (Garcia and Moore 2012). One such change came in 1995, with the post-apartheid government's reevaluation of the state maintenance grant. This objective was passed onto the Lund Commission on Child and Family Support, looking toward a non-discriminatory and socially just child welfare system that successfully accommodates the country's post-apartheid democratic ideals.

Among others, the Lund Commission recommended a basic child support grant of R70[26] ($5,20) per month to children under the age of seven. In 1998, parliament agreed to the Lund Commission's recommendation and approved the child support grant, raising the monthly amount to R100 ($7.45) per month (DSD, SASSA and UNICEF 2012; Glassman and Temin 2016). Since its inception, parliament increased the child support grant's original age limit several times, eventually settling on the current age limit of 18 years and younger (McEwen and Woolard 2012). This contributed to a significant increase in beneficiaries, from 21 997 in 1998 (DSD, SASSA and UNICEF 2012) to an estimate of 11.9 million recipients in 2016, or 70.3% of all grant recipients (SASSA 2016). The child support grant also contributed to an increase in

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[26] This is based on the exchange rate on 31 March 2017, of $1 = R13,42.

households receiving social grants. According to the 2015 Household Survey 12.7% of South

Africans received grants in 2003 compared to the 2015 figure of 30.1%. Equally so, households

receiving at least one grant increased from 29.9% in 2003 to 45.5% in 2015 (StatsSA 2016c, 3).

Since 1994 the Department of Social Welfare and its successor, the Department of Social

Development, administered the country's social grant program, on both a national and provincial

level. In the absence of administrative uniformity between provinces, and considering the state-

sponsored Taylor Committee's independent inquiry into the country's social security system's

shortcomings,[27] the South African parliament considered alternative administrative options for its

social grants program (Reddy and Sokomani 2008). Therefore, in 2006, and in accordance with

the 2004 South African Social Assistance Act, parliament launched the South African Social

Security Agency (SASSA). As a section 3A public entity, SASSA currently oversees the

allocation and distribution of social grants, aligning itself with national rather than provincial

policies and mandates.

The Grants and Their Recipients

As of June 2016, the South African grants program consists of nine different grants, with

those aimed at children being the most expansive. This includes the Foster Child Care Grant, the

Care Dependency Grant, and the Child Support Grant. Additionally, the program also includes

financial assistance to people older than 60 (the Older Person Grant), people older than 60 and in

need of additional care and assistance (Grand-in-Aid), and people with disabilities (Disability

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[27] In 2000, the South African Cabinet established the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social
Security. Chaired by Professor Vivienne Taylor, this committee was charged with examining the
shortcomings of the country's existing social protection program (Woolard and Leibbrandt 2012, Davie
2015).

Grants). To qualify for a social grant, applicants must adhere to each grant's respective criteria and means tests. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below summarize these criteria and means tests as listed on both the Department of Social Development and SASSA websites.

Table 3.1 – Post-Apartheid Grants, as of April 2016

Grant Type	Total National recipients, as of 31 May 2016	Monthly Amount	To qualify* applicant must be a SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZEN, PERMANENT RESIDENT and REFUGEE and (be):
Older Person	3.2 million	R1510 ($112.50) ** R1530 ($114) for people older than 75	60 years and older - Adhere to income and asset threshold - Meet the requirements of the means test and asset threshold - Not be cared for in a State Institution
Disability	1 million	R1530 ($114)	- Between 18 and 59 - Submit a medical assessment to confirm disability - Not be cared for in a state institution - Meet the requirements of the means test
War Veteran	233	R1530 ($114)	- Disabled OR older than 60 - Older than 60 and served in World War II or Korean War - Meet the requirements of the means test - Not be cared for in a state institution
Foster Child	487,000	R890 ($66.30)	- Provide a birth certificate of the foster child - Placed under foster care by court of law (Income of foster parents are NOT taken into consideration)
Care Dependency	130,000	R1510 ($112.51)	Main caregiver of permanent disabled child younger than 18;

			• Submit medical assessment confirming child's severe disability • Meet the requirements of the means test
Child Support	11.9 million	R350 ($26) per child younger than 18	• Both child and parent must reside in South Africa • Child must be younger than 18 • Applicant must be child's primary care giver • The applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test
Grant-in-Aid	142,600	R350 ($26)	• Older person, or physically or mentally disabled, in receipt of an Old Age, Disability, or War Veteran Grant • Require full time care because of age and/or disabilities • Not be in a State Institution

Source: SASSA (2016)

Table 3.2: Means Testing and Threshold of Grants, as of April 2016

Grant type	Means Test **Annual Income and Asset* Threshold as of 1 April 2016**
Old Age, Disability, and War Veteran**	• Income: Single R69 000 ($4 7912); Married R138 000 ($9 584) • Assets: Single R990 000 ($68 750); Married R 1 980 000 ($137 500)
Care Dependency	• Single R180 000 ($12 500); Married R360 000 ($25 000)
Child Support	• Single R42 000 ($2 917); Married R84 000 ($5 833)

Source: SASSA (2016)
* Asset means test only applicable to old age, disability, and war veteran grants.
** The size of grants for older persons, war veterans, and people with disabilities are calculated on a sliding scale that decreases depending on the individual's private income.

The 2015 National Household Survey figures attest to social grants' central place within South Africans' lives and households (See Tables 3.3 and 3.4). The survey also illustrates the close relationship between salaries and grants. Nationally, 58% of households listed salaries,

wages, or commissions as their main income source, while 21.7% listed grants, 7.9% remittance and 9.6% other sources of income. These figures not only reflect South Africa's slow labor market but also households' dependency on social grants (StatsSAc 2015, 63). When considering that households can have more than one source of income, figures look slightly different, yet people still listed both salaries (65.5%) and grants (46.2%) as their households' sources of income (StatsSAc 2015, 62). These figures not only illustrate the centrality of social grants in the average South African household, but also reflect the country's slow labor market. Often work opportunities are either short-term or pay very little, making social grants an invaluable safety net. This is especially the case in the Eastern Cape, which has the country's highest population of grant recipients and households dependent solely on social grants (see Table 3.4). Without government supports the lives of many elderly, orphans, and young mothers in poor communities would look completely different. These high numbers of grant recipients reflect two interconnected themes: conditions of persistent poverty, and social grants' ability to alleviate such conditions, even if it is only slightly.

Table 3.3: Population, by Province, Receiving Social Grants, Relief Assistance, or Social Relief

	Grants recipients in thousands	Population in thousands	Percentage of Provincial Population receiving Social Grants	Percentage of National Population receiving Social Grants
Eastern Cape	2 698	6 697	40%	5%
Limpopo	2 162	5 654	38%	4%
KwaZulu Natal	3 928	10 688	37%	7.2%
Northern Cape	437	1 182	37%	0.8%
Mpumalanga	1 393	4 236	33%	2.5%
North West	1 219	3 703	33%	2.2%
Free State	856	2 763	31%	1.5%
Western Cape	1 373	6 246	22%	2.5%
Gauteng	2 315	13 268	17%	4.3%
South Africa	16 380	54 432	-	30%

Table 3.4: Number of households per Province Dependent on Social Grants

Eastern Cape	39.6%
Northern Cape	35.2%
Limpopo	34.1%
KwaZulu Natal	29.4%
Free State	26.6%
North West	26.4%
Mpumalanga	24.6%
Western Cape	16.6%
Gauteng	11.3%
South Africa	22.7%
ALL Metro Areas	13.8%

Social Grants, Neoliberalism, and Dependency

Marais (2011, 239) agrees that the country has "no better poverty-alleviating tool than its social transfer system." In fact, when considering the country's ever-rising unemployment figures, social grants appear to be the only state-sponsored poverty-alleviation mechanism. Similarly, access to an additional form of financial support brings relief to already exhaustive social and financial networks. Poor people no longer depend solely on family networks, which might already be pushed into a precarious position, but now have an alternative monetary source. In turn, this option might also restore dignity to those who usually depend on family members for financial assistance.

Two additional arguments can be made for direct cash transfer programs, both pertaining to people's immediate material worlds. First, social grant programs can represent a more inclusive citizenry, especially when interpreted as a form of wealth redistribution. After all, "the most basic citizenship right is not understood as the right to vote but as the right to partake in the wealth of the nation" (Ferguson 2015, 56). The social grants system can therefore be interpreted as a means of incorporating formerly excluded citizens into the country's economic sphere.

Second, the social grants program acts as an alternative solution to the country's already burdened labor market and accompanying unemployment crisis. Considering unemployment, financial handouts might become a viable alternative to employment and possibly a more permanent future fixture.

But James Ferguson (2009, 2015) argues we should also consider the country's post-apartheid approach to social assistance through a neoliberal lens. Such a consideration moves beyond the usual neoliberal critique, considering instead how neoliberal principles of "private enterprise" and "a suspicion of the state" translates into nonwestern contexts.[28] It also allows one to consider programs such as the South Africa's social grants program as "a key domain of policy innovation" (Ferguson 2015, 5).[29] Such innovation, Ferguson argues, resides in how one domain of governing techniques, in this case neoliberal economics, "migrated across strategic camps" and now works in a different domain of governance toward an alternative set of objectives (Ferguson 2009, 174). As in the case of the South African grants program, neoliberal principles of autonomy, individual choice, and market efficiency become possible because of the program's design, that is, direct cash transfers based on rather loose conditions. In other words, through this design of direct cash assistance, grant recipients now have the individual freedom to do with their grants as they see fit. They are allowed personal choice, autonomy, and agency.

Grant recipients become their own economic agent, relieved from the paternalistic prescriptions and surveillance typically associated with the welfare state. Moreover, in the latter

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[28] Throughout his writing, Ferguson asserts that he is not an advocate of neoliberal economic structuring, being well aware of the project's ensuing socio-economic harm. This is especially true for his ethnographic work in Lesotho (1990). In his most recent work, however, he advocates for a more nuanced appreciation of neoliberalism.

[29] In addition to South Africa, Namibia and Botswana have also adopted nationwide social welfare 's programs, and smaller projects exist in Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Recently Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe launched pilot programs. For a review of Southern Africa's welfare programs, see Garcia and Moore (2012).

form of governance, social assistance is structured around, not what individuals want, but rather what the state and its political actors regard as best practice. This eliminates any agency the poor might have, regarding them and their lives not worthy of any individual ownership. Alternatively, South Africa's social grants program places choice back in the hands of grant recipients, giving them the freedom to use their grants the way they see fit. Or as Ferguson (2009, 174) states, direct income support says to the poor that "you are now empowered to solve your own problems in the way you see best." Ultimately personal choice, freedom, and the subsequent perception that the state trust the recipient's individual judgment as best practice, translate into a form of *independence*. No longer are the poor regarded as unable bodies for who choices should be made but rather as capable beings entrusted with a form of financial autonomy to live their lives as they choose.

However, on a local level and particularly among my rural participants, social grants have myriad meanings, many far removed from Ferguson's socioprogressive interpretation. Instead, these meanings reflect a certain ambivalence ranging from overt gratitude toward the state for providing much needed financial assistance to a clear disapproval of grants as nothing more than manipulative political tokenism. In this regard, grants not only serve as means to enforce people's allegiance to the present state. they are also making communities dependent on the state and its graces. Rural youth's interpretations reflect an uneasiness with social grants and their connection to the state, pointing instead to self-reliance and independence from the state as salient alternative. But these latter principles, in turn, resemble a neoliberal rationality, that in contrast to Ferguson's argument, do not stem from the realm of social assistance but rather stigmatize the latter as dependence on the state. And as I illustrate in the next section, such stigmatization occurs along clearly defined gender lines.

Gendered Dependency

In framing their social environments in terms of social grants, young mothers, and the child support grant in particular, young people's conversations took different discursive routes. This ranged from narratives in support of grants to those chastising mothers for misusing the government's good heartedness. Here I differentiate between *dependable grants* narratives, *government-sponsored babies* narratives, and *no money, no babies* narratives. Elements of these latter two narratives are also present in the public sphere, as illustrated through narratives of public resistance. In this case, politicians make no secret of their disapproval of government assistance for young mothers, insisting that a more disciplined disposition toward young women might be necessarily.

Dependable Grants

The dry summer breeze tears up both our eyes, hers more than mine.
"Let's sit under the peach tree," Refiloe says, and I follow her through the tilted yet barren vegetable garden in front of her grandmother's house. Except for the tree's foliage, the garden is empty. There should be some vegetation in the garden, but it has been a dry winter, a dry spring, and the current November sky remains cloudlessly blue. The peach tree provides shade against the dry wind. Around us skinny chickens scratch tirelessly at the landscape, finding nothing more than bottle caps and pieces of plastic. Refiloe's toddler steals glimpses of me during our conversation, while he moves between his mother's lap and her feet. He is content being with his mother and me under the peach tree.

In addition to herself, her three-year-old boy, and her aging grandmother, Refiloe's household also include her deceased sister's three-year-old boy, her aunt's two-year-old toddler

and a distant family member's two orphaned boys, nine and five years old. The orphans' mother decided to quit her rural life, leaving her children to their own devises. After a week, Refiloe's grandmother got word, fetched the starving boys, and included them in her household. Refiloe's 19-year old sister, Mpho, who also lives with Refiloe and her grandmother, still attends the local high school, determined to finish high school within the next year.

"Are there no men in your household?" I ask.

"There is. My uncle, but he has another house. He's always sitting over there, just comes and sleeps here. But sometimes a week will go by without him even sleeping here."

"The government is helping us," she says, as if reading my mind. "In addition to my grandmother's pension, we receive two childcare grants, and three orphan grants. I don't know what we would have done without this."

"Are you free?" I asked.

"Yes, I am." She said after a short pause. Yet, the sun is hot here in the middle of the barren garden, and month-end still a couple of weeks away.

A couple of days after visiting Refiloe, I met 20-something Itumeleng in a neighboring village. Like Refiloe, she is also a single mother, raising her three boys on government grants. Even though Itumeleng's household might be smaller than Refiloe's, survival is by no means less burdensome. Whereas Refiloe can rely on her grandmother's old person's grant, Itumeleng relies on the good will of neighbors, extended family members, and the government's occasional contract work. This includes short stunts in the Senqu municipality's EPWP, but, as Itumeleng

explains, this work is unreliable and short term. Without grants, life will be extremely hard for some households.

When I asked Pontso, a trusty informant and single mother of two, about the centrality of social grants in the region, she agreed: "The grants reach more than only girls with children. There are married couples who are unemployed and they rely on the grants to keep alive. Not everybody is thinking that this is the only thing out there, and applying just for the sake of having it. Some people really depend on it because they have no other options."

But considering provincial and national trends, Refiloe's and Itumeleng's households are not exceptional. In fact, their households fit the bill of households typically dependent on social grants: larger than usual households, comprised mostly of unemployed household members, situated in rural areas, and overwhelmingly African and female (Delaney et al. 2008). Similarly, Refiloe and Itumeleng's households also align with provincial statistical trends. According to the 2015 South African Household survey, almost four in ten (37.6%) Eastern Cape households rely on social grants as primary income. Additionally, social grants' national distribution reflects a rural-urban divide, with an average of only 15% of households in the country's metro areas use social grants as their primary household income (See tables 3.3 and 3.4 above).

Children and elderly have benefited most from social grants, particularly in terms of improved living conditions, a decrease in childhood hunger, and better school attendance (Agüero, Carter and Woolard 2007; Samson et al. 2008; Chitiga et al. 2010). Additionally, Cluver et al. (2013) found a correlation between social grants and lower rates of HIV infection among adolescents. The child support grants also increased mothers' employment probability and labor force participation. Mothers might decide to use grant money to fund small-scale businesses or finance their job search (Eyal and Woolard 2011). Even though some see this as

misdirected use of grant money, many women have little to no alternative resources with which to either start their own business or find work. As Ferguson (2009) would argue, this use of social grant money evidences how neoliberal principles can potentially translate into social agency. However, regardless of child support grants' ability to bring some relief to poverty-stricken households or the possibility toward personal agency on the part of young mothers, their mere existence raises concerns of potential misuse and manipulation.

Government-Sponsored Babies

Senqu youth spoke assertively about the government's compliance in the perceived dilemma of unintended pregnancies,[30] which they listed as one of their region's biggest concerns. Young people regularly argued that because of its child support grants, the government is not preventing, but rather fueling pregnancies. So much so that Tsego and her friend predict an unprecedented population explosion, all because of the government and its system of social grants. When I asked Tsego what South Africa will look like in 30 years time, she exclaimed: "A population that's through the roof! And why? Because of all these grants." Tsego faults the government for providing young women with the option of child support. During apartheid, she explained, "white people didn't have that thing that applauded you for having a child. You knew back then, if you had a child without making plans, you and the child will starve. But now, the people know that the government will assist them. Even our mothers clap hands when you get pregnant, because you are bringing in money. That's why you see many young girls not really looking for jobs, because they know that they will get money for their babies."

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[30] Participants used *teenage* and *unwanted* interchangeable when referring to pregnancies among girls younger than 18 years, or older than 18 years, but not in a steady relationship. I opted for *unintended* to capture both terms.

Like Tsego, Mr. Malalaki, a local teacher, immediately tied unintended pregnancies to child support grants. He argued that young mothers are wasteful, spending their child support grants on everything but their young children. In contrast to Tsego, Mr. Malalaki painted the government in a more sympathetic light. He told me that, "as much as the government wanted to help; well, there's this grant for the young parents. Now they compete against each other. The girls have more babies so they can get more money. The aim of that money is to look after the newly born, but their parents are misusing these funds. Buying dresses, going to the salon, so it doesn't serve the purpose." In Mr. Malalaki's opinion the government means well, but the young girls are misusing this good will, becoming pregnant purely for their own individual purposes. By becoming pregnant, young women are thus misusing the system, tending only to their personal needs.

Tsego and Mr. Malilaki's opinions regarding young women and social grants represent locally held perceptions on unintended pregnancies, in particular a correlation between fertility rates and social grants, and young women's irresponsible appropriation of these grants. But, scholars concerned with South African demographics, reproductive health, and gender dynamics, debunk such perceptions as unfounded waves of moral anxiety (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009). For one, demographic figures contradict claims that unintended pregnancies will eventually lead to a population boom. In fact, when considering birth numbers from the 1950s onwards, South Africa has seen its overall fertility rate decrease (Udjo 2003; Palamuleni, Kalule-Sabiti and Makiwane 2007). The same goes for teenage pregnancies. Mendendez et al.'s (2011) report a 7% decrease in teenage childbearing between 1984 and 2008. Whereas in 1984, 30% of women gave birth by the age of 20, this number decreased to 23% in 2008.

However, Senqu youth's concern over teenage pregnancies is not completely unfounded. In fact, with 30% of teenagers report to "ever having been pregnant," teen-age pregnancies remain a concern to policy makers and educators alike (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009; Willan 2013). This concern is mostly connected to lower rates of education, with teenagers reluctant to finish their education after giving birth (Naong 2011). Additionally, Mendendez et al. (2011) documented that teen-age pregnancies remain disproportionally high in rural areas when compared to the country's urban areas. Senqu youth blamed this disproportionate teenage pregnancy figure on the government's social grant program.

"Do girls get pregnant for the money?" I asked Pontso, who receives child support grants for her two children. A fashionable savvy young women herself, Pontso assured me that the availability of the child support grant does not influence her look, nor her life choices. She maintained that, "women thinking that they can get pregnant for the money are not considering the size of that grant. You cannot support a child with that stipend alone. If you do fall pregnant for the money, you are rather stupid." Research on the child support grant confirms Pontso's observation that child support grant does not incentivize pregnancy (Makiwane 2010; Naong 2011; Rosenberg et al. 2015). Teenage pregnancies explained in terms of social grants, do however, reflect a strong class bias. Youth critical of social grants are either from middle class backgrounds or belong to strong social networks, giving them access to remittances from urban family members and friends. On the contrary, youth and single mothers, particularly those from struggling households, like Refiloe, Itumeleng and Pontso, saw social grants' immediate value.

Equally so, young people explaining unintended pregnancies in terms of social grants blatantly ignore the complexity of women's immediate social environments. For one, most of my research participants failed to consider the social conditions under which many young girls fall

pregnant. These conditions reflect the power imbalances that arise from deeply embedded gender and age hierarchies. Young girls often find themselves in manipulative relationships, coerced into sex, and, in some cases, effectively negotiated out of contraceptive use (Jewkes et al. 2001; Mantell et al. 2006). Poor access to contraceptives derail some women's own preventative agency (Willan 2013), but cultural aversions to contraceptives also apply, especially when men expect women to illustrate their fertility through pregnancy (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009). Additionally, we cannot ignore pregnancies resulting from such abusive relationships. Research suggests that young mothers are unfamiliar with the law pertaining to age of consent and statuary rape (Davis 2015a). Nevertheless, abusive relationships mirror gender inequality, effectively diminishing women's right over their bodies and sexuality and "reducing their ability to influence the timing and circumstances of sex" (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009, 679).

A further complexity concerning unintended pregnancies pertains to women's forced compliance to locally held norms of fatherhood. Child conception is not a one-sided affair. However, my young participants rarely pointed to the responsibility of young men in unintended pregnancies. This is not to say that men do not value children. On the contrary, Morrell's (2006) work shows, many men seek opportunities to father a child to evidence a form of masculinity and patriarchal positioning. Paternity is thus important within South African contexts, with Senqu communities being no exception. As many Senqu youth explained, "a child should know his or her roots," and in patrilineal societies such as the amaXhosa and amaHlubi, such roots lie with the father. This also applies to children born out of wedlock. But paternity does not necessarily pertain to childcare responsibilities. A baby's maternal family does approach the paternal family to gain cultural acknowledgment for the new-born baby and in some cases also ask for financial compensation or "damages." But, when considering the current state of

unemployment, damage pay occurs less often than desired. Similarly, damage pay is a once off settlement, freeing the father and his family from any future financial obligations.

Legally, mothers can keep fathers accountable for financial support. South Africa's child maintenance legislation is written with single parenthood in mind, giving mothers' legal right to insist on financial maintenance from fathers, and, in the case of young men, such maintenance can come from their families. That said, in practice mothers rarely insist on their legal right to child maintenance (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009, 681). For example, Naledi, a single mother and dependent on social grants, explained that she expects nothing from their children's fathers:

"Do your children have contact with their father," I asked Naledi.

"Their father knows where they are, but never come around," she replied. "I actually prefer it that way. They might just come and take the children away and that is something that I do not want. Getting the father involved just complicates things."

Not all fathers disregard their parental responsibilities. Swartz and Bhana (2009) report on young fathers' sadness over their own fathers' absence from their upbringing. During my fieldwork, I witnessed Senqu men sharing childcare responsibilities with their children's mothers and looking after their children with the utmost care. These are men fortunate enough to have work or with sufficient social and capital networks. But other young men, eager to become involved in their children's lives, are subject to a slow local job market. This leaves them either unemployed, and thus unable to provide financially for their children's upbringing, or forces

them to find work in semi-urban and urban areas, taking them away from their rural households and their children.

The realities of gender-based violence are another convincing reason mothers look gratefully toward social grants to support their children and maintain their households. Many young mothers are victims of abusive relationships, and to avoid the trauma of reliving the violence, or in some cases, a repeat of such abuse, many mothers intentionally evade any confrontation with spouses or fathers regarding child support (Wood and Jewkes 1997, Gqola 2007). In such cases, the child support grant becomes a dependable lifeline, helping mothers move on from abusive lives and relations.

Because of social, cultural, and economic realities, the responsibility of raising children often lies predominantly with women. As Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009, 281) argue, "social space is created for men to father children without any long-term responsibility in terms of expectations of involvement in child care or long-term financial commitment."

Not all teenagers and young women's pregnancies are unintended or unwanted. For many young mothers, particularly those living in poor and emotionally draining conditions, children bring comfort. Motherhood confirms femininity, brings meaning, and provides alternatives to perpetual conditions of sitting and employment yearning. Additionally, it comes with future security. As Pontso explained:

A child is a gift from God. There are so many married childless people that long for a child…I often think to myself, if I can turn back the time, I wouldn't have any children. I would be free to go where I wanted to go. But I love my

children a lot. And I hope they will return everything that I'm doing for them

now. I'm hoping that they will remember me.

To social grants critics, young women's longing for motherhood is however not a relevant factor, nor the conditions under which young women become pregnant. Fertility is therefore a complex topic, closely linked to social environments, cultural norms, and young women's emotional needs. When looked at through a gender lens, one cannot avoid the impact existing gender hierarchies have on women's reproductive choices. However, during my conversations concerning social grants, young people conveniently ignored these hierarchies and accompanying norms. Arguably, looking over these norms and social structures attests to the deep embeddedness and perpetual nature of gender hierarchies in South African society.

No Money, No Babies

As the previous section illustrates, youth place the responsibility of unintended pregnancies solely on women's shoulders, who either cannot contain their sexual desires or who think only of the potential financial gains that come with pregnancy. In the process, men are let off the hook, with communities placing the blame of pregnancy solely on women (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009). This is contradictive, considering that South African women are many households' primary caregivers, a responsibility that is burdensome and never-ending. This contradiction was never brought into consideration, with my young participants looking toward the government to curtail women's irresponsible behavior and reduce unintended pregnancies. The actions they expected from the government did not necessarily involve expansive sex education or improved reproductive health care, but instead financial austerity.

Similar to the *government-sponsored babies* narratives, the *no money, no babies* narratives describe reproductive health care and the country's fertility rates in terms of the state. But whereas the *government-sponsored babies* narratives hold the government responsibility for unintended pregnancies, the *no money no babies* narratives go one step further and look toward the government to also fix this so-called problem. And how? By taking the grants away.

In many of my young participants' opinions, an enforced financial hardship will not only curb young women's sexual engagements but also force them to engage in the employment market, either through formal employment or informal entrepreneurship. This was especially evident from my conversation with Angie, a young dynamic woman in her mid-twenties who pinned unintended pregnancies on young women and their perceived irresponsibility. She sympathized with the South African government, who initially wanted to do good by the people.

What I hate most about these government grants, the ones given to children [is that] you grow up with one, and then after a while you are given a grant for your own baby. Who's child is that? Is that the government's child? What plans do you have with that child? Are you going to tell that child to sit down and not go to school because you don't have any money for it? As a parent you should have a plan. The government must maybe bring their 50 and the parent her 50. But we just sit back and say the government's going to supply, the government's going to supply. And then you end up saying the government's not doing anything. They can't, because they can only do so much. They don't have a bottomless pit from which they extract funds. And then the people are having babies with that mindset. Who's going to stop for

once and take responsibility? That needs to happen.…People continuously say,

the government should provide this and the government should provide that,

but where is this government? Where is it going to get all that money?

Angie further argued that people's grant dependency spirals into a perpetual life-long reliance on the state. Eventually this reliance becomes an expectation, something that is not necessary sustainable. To avoid such reliance, the current government should therefore discontinue its child support grants. The only people that should be getting grants, Angie maintained, are old people.

"But don't you think people will protest if they no longer have grants?" I

asked.

"No." She replied. "It will change their mindset. How can you protest for a

favor? You were given that money, not earning it. So why would you protest?

We need a decisive government up there that will say, no. Whether people are

protesting or not, they will eventually go along. Sometimes you have to save

people from themselves."

Dimpho agrees that government should cancel its child support grants. Without these grants, Dimpho argued: "people will know that if they have a child, they will have to raise that child out of their own pockets, even if that means you have to be a gardener! A child cannot eat if the parents stay at home. There will be more people working, because they will have an incentive to do something, anything." Likewise, young people are not even inclined to engage in any informal economic activities. "Now instead of taking R50 and buy[ing] a packet of sweets and

reselling it again, people just sit. Everybody is just sitting down, knowing that they will get some money." In Dimpho's view, the availability of social grants not only causes young people to act irresponsibly but also gives them no true motivation to work. Canceling the grants, however, will help women by forcing them to rethink their pregnancies and motivating them instead to look for work.

Like Angie, Dimpho drives a hard bargain. The government should discontinue its social grants for young mothers. By doing so, the government will not only curtail young women's sexuality and reckless sexual activities, but more so, force them to become more responsible, motivated, and self-reliant. The state will therefore take a more disciplinary position by curtailing young mothers' perceived recklessness and accompanying irresponsibility.

Public Resistance

Dimpho is not alone in her disapproval of young women's perceived irresponsible sexual behavior and subsequent misuse of the country's social grant system. On the contrary, her disapproval reflects broader political discourse, with political actors publically agreeing that young women need more disciplinary action. This discourse came to the fore during President Zuma's address at the opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders in 2015. During his speech, he stated that "[teenage girls with children] must be taken and be forced to go to school, far away…take them to Robben Island or any other island, sit there, study until they are qualified to come back and work to look after their kids" (Sonke Gender Justice 2015). President Zuma further complained that many girls use their grant money for salon visits, rather than childcare. The state will therefore benefit from shipping young mothers off to far away places, President Zuma continued, because these young women will be able to find work instead of depending on

the state's welfare system. In other words, "we make you take care of your kid so that we don't have to give a grant" (Mail and Guardian 2015).

President Zuma's statement evoked immense criticism. Activists critiqued the president's statement for ostracizing and disciplining only young women for unintended pregnancies. Fathers, on the other hand, are freed from any island living. President Zuma's remark also correlates with locally held perceptions regarding young girls' misuse of grant money. Making such accusations in the public sphere not only strengthen misperceptions surrounding unintended pregnancies but also depict poor mothers, dependent on the child support grant, as nothing more than manipulative, conniving, and thus subject to disciplinary action. Additionally, President Zuma's statement illustrates the misalignment between government policies on the one hand and political actors' public discourse on the other. In the case of the former, the Department of Social Development introduced the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework Strategy in 2015, which includes some of the most progressive gender equity and sexual health policies the post-apartheid government has yet approved (Thamm 2015). But President Zuma's outage communicates deeply embedded gender biases, not only reflecting his personal disposition toward gender equality but also that of his followers.

Similarly, government health workers often stigmatize young girls' use of contraceptives. Health workers not only question young girls for their choice to engage in sexual relations but also chastise those that do fall pregnant and seek out pregnancy termination options (Patel and Kooverjee 2009). Such judgment not only affects young women's contraceptive usage but also siphons into communities' narratives about sexuality (Holt et al 2012).

Moving Beyond Dependency

Not all my conversations with Senqu youth described social grants in terms of unintended pregnancies. Young people also used social grants more broadly to contextualize their frustrations with their contemporaries' dependency mindset. A central theme in these conversations concerned young people's inability to fend for themselves. The opposite of such a mindset, involves self-reliance, and making the most of what is available, regardless of the socioeconomic context.

Although expansive, my young participants' critique of social assistance was not only limited to young women and their use of the child support grant. They also spoke about grants' more general presence, drawing correlations between their contemporaries' world views and the state's provisioning of social grants. These narratives emphasized personal agency, including talk of *will power*, *self-realization* and *autonomy*. And like the previous set of genderized narratives, this set of narratives has a strong presence in politicians' and government officials' public discourse.

Individual Change and Personal Will Power: Vuk'uzenzele!

Many of my participants were quick to criticize their contemporaries' dependence on the state and its welfare system, seeing this as weak personal traits, void of self-discipline and motivation. They lamented over their contemporaries' tendency to merely sit around and do nothing. Instead they argued young people should apply themselves to better their immediate situation and craft a sustainable future trajectory. Siphokazi was especially frustrated when thinking about her contemporaries. Throughout our conversations, she continuously spoke about

how her contemporaries rely on government support rather than on themselves. They alone are to blame for their consistent state of sitting, she argued. Moreover, it is their mentality of merely wanting and receiving, and relying on the government, that will be their ultimate downfall. As she explained:

> If the youth were to stop having excuses for their actions and take action for change. An example of such actions would be to say that I'm not going to depend on my Granny's grant money anymore. Instead, I'm going to my neighbor and ask him if I can cut his grass so that at the end of the day I can bring one sack of 5kg mealiemeal[31] to the house. That can be food on the table.

Similarly, Sam sees a direct connection between laziness and government grants. "Our people want to depend on the government, rather than till the soil and grow vegetables. The grants are okay, but… I'm most worried about is that these grants have created laziness among our people."

Nineteen-year old Ofentse also used gardening to describe young people's perceived laziness, lack of self-motivation and thus dependency on grants. We had numerous conversations about what life is like for young people living in rural areas. On the day of our official interview, Ofentse was especially adamant in sharing her frustrations with her contemporaries. Sitting across from me in one of her high school's classrooms, she twisted a hair strand between her thumb and index finger while thinking about her and her contemporaries' fate.

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[31] Mealie is the South African term for corn and a staple in many households.

"You can't expect veggies to fall out of nowhere; you actually have to work for them. That's why I respect people that work in gardens so much. They are the ones that actually feed the country. We don't need money to feed to country. My grandmother always said: 'if you don't have a garden where do you expect to get food?' You have to do things yourself to improve yourself. You can't always wait for somebody to do things for you. *Vuk'uzenzele* - wake up and do it yourself!"

"*Vuk'uzenzele* – It's a catchy phrase," I said, imagining her working in her grandmother's garden.

"Yes," she replied. "It's actually a youth program the government started a couple of years ago."

After changing hair strands, she continued.

"I actually believe in that. Not every businessman went to university. They actually started at the bottom and did it for themselves. You can't always expect people to do things for you. You have to do somethings for yourself. You can't wait for the government to improve you. And then that will also help the government to focus on other things."

Vu'kuzenzele accurately captures Oftense's disposition toward youth and youth development. According to her, success resides primarily with the individual, and their determination to succeed, rather than dependent on someone or something else. Ofentse's almost intuitive use of *Vuk'uzenzele* also reflects government-sponsored rhetoric. I evidence such rhetoric during the Joe Gqabi district municipality's National Youth Services (NYS) training. Senqu, the region I

spent most of my fieldwork time in, falls within the Joe Gqabi district municipality. And since I already met some of the youth accepted into the 2015 training program, I enthusiastically accepted an invitation from the district's youth development officer to attend their spring training session. This was a weeklong retreat in one of the districts' bigger centrums filled with marathon seminars on community development, conversations about social engagement, and workshops on conducting community surveys and interacting with community members.

Independence through Self-Realization

The National Youth Services is a government-sponsored youth development initiative currently under the banner of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). The NYS program was initially launched in 2007 by the Department of Public Works and its Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) (See Chapter 2). The primary goals of the NYS include the provision of skill-based training to unemployed youth, especially those without any high school qualification, inculcate a culture of service through the promotion of constructive nation-building, and promote social cohesion, civic awareness, and patriotism. In the case of the Eastern Cape, and, by definition, the Senqu region, the NYS program is part of the Department of Social Development's administration. Youth interested in joining the NYS program formally apply and undergo an interview processes before receiving their acceptance into the program. A social development officer explained that this process weeds out the opportunists, who are less interested in the actual learning than in the stipend. At the time of my fieldwork, this monthly stipend was approximately R1000 ($70), but most NYS trainees I spoke with regarded this as far too little for the work expected from them. This includes working alongside social development officers, assisting in social grants administration, and doing any other office-related activities.

The biggest activity, however, is helping officers with household surveys and participatory rural appraisals (PRAs).

A primary component of the weeklong NYS training was therefore to teach the young participants the ins-and-outs of both household surveys and PRAs. But as the week progressed the training's underlying ideological goals emerged. NYS participants must become change agents in local communities, reminding people of what they are capable of, rekindling a sense of self-reliance. NYS participants should therefore work toward making independent self-reliant communities, no longer relying on the government for assistance but instead using their cultural, environmental, and social capital to their advantageous. To achieve such self-reliance, the trainer shared a slew of nifty community empowerment methods and their accompanying acronyms NYS participants can use while in the field. This ranged from the ABCD, or Asset Based Community Development, to the CCE, the departments go-to Community Capacity Enhancement methodologies. The latter holds that true change only happens when people realize their own inherent abilities and use such abilities toward their own development. NYS participants were also encouraged to help local households develop their own business plans, assessing what they have in human and social capital, what they get from the government in terms of grants, and how they can make all this work for the better.

"You have to remind people of themselves, of what they are capable of. You have to remind them that they can become independent again," the main trainer reminded us on an almost hourly basis. His presentations were filled with such convincing demeanor and energetic gestures that it did not take long before both the young trainees and I were at his service. He changed used all into a corps of community change-agents, ready to remind some of the country's poorest communities of their human and social capital. Ready to remind them that they

should seize the day, dig deep for their inner will power, and become responsible for their respective lives. *Vuk'uzenzele!*

To what extent does a discourse of self-reliance deflect questions about systemic inequality and poverty? Pontso, was one of the young NYS trainees. At the time of the training, our paths had already crossed several times, and during the training we scheduled some follow-up visits. During one of these visits, exactly two months after the NYS training, I asked her about her experiences as change-agent. Self-reliance is not always enough, she concurred. She witnessed this during the department of social development's home gardens initiatives. While she is frustrated with people's limited ambition to start their own gardens, she also recognizes their limited access to the necessarily resources:

> It's doable to remind people they must do things for themselves. People know they have themselves, but they end up thinking that, yes, I do have myself, but I don't have the resources to do what I want to do with what I have. It's challenging to remind people of their own abilities; they quickly remind you of how limited those are without the necessarily resources. Like the day when I was talking to people about the possibilities of gardening. I was so bored that day, because as soon as you mentioned that gardening, they will ask you: "where will I get the seeds? Where will I get the water?" I just left.

Thinking about the young change agents, their enthusiastic trainer, and the mounts of change they must enact, James Ferguson's (1990) "antipolitics" thesis comes to mind. He argues that development actors often translate social and economic issues into something technical. In the

process, however, deep-lying political issues, which often lie at the core of socioeconomic struggles, are veiled in technical terms and reroute the responsibility of perpetual poverty and hardship from political actors onto the poor. But as governmentality scholars would argue, these processes of responsibilization, where subjects come to take responsibility for tasks previously performed by government agency, have become part of an internal logic that increasingly infiltrates and shapes people's worldview (O'Malley 2009). In the process, the state becomes absolved of its responsibilities toward its people and any form of social assistance becomes problematized.

The Politics of Dependency

The abovementioned narratives, coming from both government officials and local youth, pinned conditions of dependency on people's reluctance to seek self-reliance. In this case, the government and its social grants program are not necessarily at fault, but rather people's reluctance to realize their future ambitions. Moreover, as was evident during the NYS training, official discourse promotes self-reliance and independence rather than social assistance. Such rhetoric is not new to government departments, nor among the ruling ANC's leaders. In fact, former President Mbeki made his disdain of nurtured dependency quite clear. In his 2004 State of the Nation address, for example, Mbeki spoke about "the need to create the conditions for us to reduce the numbers of our people dependent on social grants" (Davie 2015, 273). Throughout its tenure, the ANC maintained what Marias (2011, 252) calls a "stern moralizing disdain for nurturing so-called 'dependency.'" Instead, political rhetoric remains religiously loyal to the emancipatory value of employment, valuing wage labor as the only true avenue toward poverty eradication, social inclusion, and citizenship (Ferguson 2015; Barchiesi 2016). But when

considering the expansive social protection introduced under ANC rule, the party's disposition toward social grants is rather contradictory (Marais 2011, Bond 2014). Equally so, is political leaders' persistence on wage labor, when both the South African labor market and the government's job creation efforts have made no dent in the country ever rising unemployment rate.

Senqu youth, like Jack and Sam, question the ANC's ambivalent disposition toward social assistance. In fact, they move beyond narratives of self-reliance that place the responsibility of poverty reduction on people's shoulders or blame youth for their dependency mindsets. On the contrary, these young men blamed the government for intentionally cultivating a sense of dependency. They maintain that the government strategically infiltrate people's worldview, not only turning people into dependent beings, but manipulating them into believing that they are incapable of doing anything without the government's help. "They [the government] have us where they want us to be," Jack replied to my question about social grants. "The grants are part of the destruction; they [the grants] run and manage the population. If the youth were to realize that youth unemployment is part of a bigger game of manipulating us, they will stand up and do things for themselves. They are not doing things for themselves because they have government grants. Everything comes sort of easy." Jack sees grants as nothing more than hegemonic devices, manipulating young people into degenerative actions that affect them and their immediate social surroundings. Sam reiterated Jack's view: "The government gave people their dependency mindset."

"Why? Because they want our votes." Sam continued.

Some scholars would agree with Sam, recognizing the political traction of South Africa's social grants program. In this regard, social grants not only serve to legitimize the ANC's right to

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rule but attract unabiding support from the poor majority, the primary recipients of social grants (Leibbrandt et al. 2012; Davie 2015). Additionally, scholars have interpreted the grant system as "an outmoded, inappropriate social security mechanism used as make-shift poverty-reducing tools" (Marais 2011, 254), but also as "ideological conversions" (Segatti and Pons-Vignon 2013) raking in political mileage on both national and local levels. In these scholars' opinion, social grants suffice as nothing more than a smoke screen, hiding political actors' need for political power.

When considering my young participants' adamant critique of social assistance, an additional argument remains to be made. What if young people's urgent call for self-realization and independence stems from their disillusionment with South African politics and the South African state? Two scenarios come to mind. First, young people insist on an independence from the state to safe guard themselves and their peers from imagined future conditions where the state can no longer provide, due to either malfunctioning or fiscal constraints. Second, an emphasis on self-reliance and an independence from the state also resemble a form of protection against perceived political manipulation. I return to these concerns in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

This chapter emphasized young people's diverse understanding of social grants, not only as far as grants' centrality within local communities are concerned, but also how grants' availability influence young people's mindsets. Additionally, this chapter captured how young people perceive the state, using social grants as their point of reference. But equally important is how young people describe their social environment, in particular, its shortcomings and challenges in terms of social grants. Some young people saw social grants as an invaluable

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lifeline, providing some financial relief to already exhaustive households. Others recognized their fellow youth's limited motivation and subsequent dependence on state support. In this case, social grants are readily available providing youth with little incentive to do anything with their lives.

When considering Senqu youth's perceptions of social grants, two sets of narratives came to the fore. The first concerned the correlation between social grants and unintended pregnancies, and young mothers' irresponsible sexual behavior. I read this narrative set through a gender lens to illustrate Senqu youth's misguided and genderized interpretation of the child support grant. Young people critical of pregnant youth often ignore myriad social factors that contribute to that pregnancy. Equally so, men were let off the hook, placing the blame of unintended pregnancies on women alone. The state and its social grants featured prominently in these conversations, either blamed as providing young women with the financial incentive to fall pregnant, or seen as the potential disciplinary force, correcting young women's irresponsible sexual behavior. These narratives are however not exclusive to local youth, but mirror political actors' public discourse.

A second set of narratives focused on young people's frustrations with their contemporaries' limited ability to "make things work for themselves." Instead of relying on themselves, young people have become dependent on social grants, subsequently sitting around rather than applying themselves. Resembling a neoliberal rationality, this set of narratives promotes self-reliance and independence at all cost, while critiquing dependency. In turn, young people's critique of social assistance also mirror those of state departments and political leaders. But the ambivalence in maintaining such narratives is hard to miss, considering that the same government and political actors represent a government that carries Africa's most expansive social protection program.

I argued that both sets of narratives capture young people's ambiguous position toward notions of dependency. The first makes the state complicit to unintended pregnancies, arguing that the state provides young women with an incentive to become sexually active and thus give encourages them to become dependent. As noted, young people argued that the state could resolve such dependency by canceling the child support grant. In turn, the second set of narratives underscores the delicate relation between dependence on and independence from the state, with young people urging their contemporaries to separate themselves from the state and its manipulative "hand-outs" to become more independent.

But placed next to each other the chapter's two sets of narratives also represent a certain paradox as far as agency and individualism are concerned. Whereas the first set of narratives and their string of conversations chastised young women for focusing on their individual needs, practicing agency and thus working toward a form of independence, the second set of narratives blamed young people for not tending to their individual needs and criticizing them for their limited agency. These latter conversations described youth's failure to make something of themselves, therefore, their inability to realize individual needs and thus become independent. Arguably this paradox effectively captures Senqu youth's ambivalent disposition, not only toward notions of dependency but also toward the post-apartheid government and what they expect from the state.

Chapter 4 – Post-Mandela Politics

This chapter sets the scene for young people's political talk, contextualizing their perceptions by considering the country's politicians and their actions. As discussed in the introduction, a first front of influence, directly impacting young people's lives, concerns broader economic processes, in this case neoliberal economics. I argue that neoliberalism not only affects young people's daily lives in terms of unemployment, subpar education, and their ambivalent disposition toward social assistance, but also their subjective perceptions with regards to their and their contemporaries' place in the world.

In this chapter I elaborate on two additional influences that emerged during Senqu youth's conversations about South African politics. A first influence pertains to norms of political leadership and governance in the post-Mandela period, starting in 1999. This relates specifically to large-scale political scandals, political leaders' endurance amidst such scandals, and the subsequent rise of a post-apartheid "corruption culture." Jacob Zuma is central to these conversations, not only for his alleged complicity in such scandals, but also for his rise to the country's highest political office, despite of, or maybe because of, his involvement in corrupt political actions. A second influence concerns oppositional politics, and, in this case, the rise of Julius Malema and his *Economic Freedom Fighters*. For many South African youth, Malema has become the opposite side of the Zuma-ANC coin, not only reminding people of the liberation movement's unrealized promises but also shedding light on the underbelly of ANC politics, an underbelly he benefited from during his time as ANC Youth League President. As Mbembe (2012, 1) so eloquently states, "Malema is at once atypical and symptomatic of his time, embod[ying] both the passions and contradictions of post-struggle politics." This chapter consists

of two sections: the first looks at the ANC government, post-Mandela, the Zuma Presidency, and coinciding corruption scandals, and the second focuses on Julius Malema and his political career.

Corruption Culture

We are all equal, some just more equal than others – George Orwell

Addressing students at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2014, Thuli Mandonsela, South Africa's public protector from 2009 to 2016, used Orwell's *Animal Farm* to capture contemporary South African politics: "The animals that liberated most of the other animals were the pigs. After a period of time, the pigs started to feel that we liberated you, we deserve better, and after time the pigs started to eat more than the others….and the rules started changing, imperceptibly overnight…It used to say all animals are equal, then suddenly it said some are more equal than others" (Allison 2014). Here Madonsela, who throughout her tenure as public protector took a fierce and unwavering commitment to justice, decried the decay of the ANC's initial socioeconomic liberation objectives, and ultimately, the reputation of the country's democracy. Central to such decay are politicians who have granted themselves unlimited and unregulated access to the state's money trough.

In his ethnography of the Indian state, Gupta recognizes the entanglement of popular knowledge about the state and people's discourses of corruption. These two bodies of knowledge are "so closely intertwined as to be inseparable" (Gupta 2012, 76). During my conversation with Senqu youth, I too could hardly ignore the almost spontaneous correlations these young people drew between the South African state, the governing ANC, and corruption. The ANC has come to represent corruption. With President Zuma's tenure as the immediate reference point, young people see no return for the party or the state. A focus group at a local FET college came to this conclusion, joking cynically over the ANC's 2015 National General Council meeting in early

October. Corruption topped this meeting's agenda, with the council suggesting "a lifestyle audit of all government employees, regulate rotation of civil servants in key position, a vetting agency to discourage nepotism, and more power toward the party's integrity commission" (Enca 2015)[32]. However, as one focus group participant asked, "Where will they fight corruption? They can't fight it because they are the ones that are doing it. The ruling party rules under the word corruption." Another participant added, "You do know what the ANC stands for? Arrogance, Nepotism, and Corruption!" The others nodded, not only to agree with this version of the ANC acronym but also to confirm the party and its leaders now characteristic entanglement with corruption.

The Rise of Untouchable Politicians

The arms deal scandal, formally known as the Strategic Defence Package, was the first scandal to draw South Africans' attention to high-level post-apartheid corruption. Boiling to the surface during Thabo Mbeki's presidency in the early 2000s, the arms deal effectively "disgraced the country's top leaders, split Africa's oldest liberation movement, dragged key institutions into the muck and polluted the state" (Marais 2011, 361). The deal negotiated between 1996 and 1999 involved an eventual R70 billion procurement of military hardware, ranging from aircraft carriers to submarines. The jury is still out over whether the purchase was necessary to begin with, but as Gevisser (2007, 676) noted, nothing illustrates the South African "dream deferred" better than the ANC government's arms deal, spending billions on military equipment despite its alleged commitment to redistribution and "a better life for all."

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[32] https://www.enca.com/south-africa/corruption-crosshairs-ancngc

Of equal concern was the excessive bribes top European arms manufacturers paid South

African officials, parliamentary members, and ministers. Even though Thabo Mbeki chaired the

cabinet subcommittee that oversaw and approved the military hardware purchase during his term

as vice-president, no evidence suggests that he personally gained from the arms deal (citation).

This was not the case for the rest of the cabinet and their slew of consultants, including the then

minister of defense, Joe Modise, the South African Defense Force head of acquisition, Chippy

Shaik, and his brother, Schabir Shaik, financial advisor to Jacob Zuma. Allegedly, Modise

received close to R130 million bribes from German arms deal consortiums. In turn, the French

company Thales allegedly funneled bribes of equally large proportions to Jacob Zuma. It was,

however, the relationship between Shaik and Zuma and accompanying allegation of bribery that

eventually led Mbeki to discharge Zuma as vice-president on 14 June 2005.

Soon thereafter, on 29 June 2005, Zuma appeared in the Durban Magistrate's court to

face 16 counts of fraud, racketeering, corruption, and money laundering. But these charges, his

discharge from Mbeki's cabinet, and an ongoing rape trial[33] did not, as would be expected,

"torpedo Zuma's political career" (Marais 2011, 364). Instead, Zuma ingeniously turned these

allegations into opportunities, depicting himself as a victim of a Mbeki-led political conspiracy.

Additionally, Zuma benefited from Mbeki's decrease in public approval. Toward the end of his

second term, Mbeki increasingly came under fire for his denial of the country's growing HIV-

Aids crisis, his neoliberal-flavored GEAR economic program, and his role in cultivating a

growing group of Black elites, mostly because of his presidency's Black Economic

Empowerment programs. Subsequently, Mbeki lost necessary support from within the ANC and

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[33] On 4 May 2006, the Johannesburg High Court acquitted Jacob Zuma, then deputy president, of his
pending rape charges. For a critical analysis of the Zuma rape case see Robins (2008) and Hassim (2014).

the party's tripartite alliance, which is composed of the ANC, the workers' union federation, The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), and the South African Communist Party. In turn, with support from rank and file ANC members, the tripartite alliance members, and both the ANC Women's League and ANC Youth League, Zuma ousted Mbeki at the ANC's five-year convention in December 2007, in the northern city, Polekwane. During this event, two years before Mbeki's second and final presidential term would come to an end, Zuma obtained the ANC's presidential position, despite, or maybe because of, the arms deal scandals.

As newly elected ANC president, Zuma still faced corruption charges associated with the arms deal. However, on 12 September 2008 Judge Nicholson, who presided over Zuma's corruption trial, ruled the case inconclusive due to too much political interference.[34] Immediately following, the ANC National Executive Commission held an emergency meeting and eventually called for Mbeki's resignation as the country's president (Hart 2014). Shortly after, on 21 September 2008, Mbeki resigned and in the next days more cabinet ministers followed suit, including Mbeki's deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. On 25 September Kgalema Motlanthe became interim president and in May 2009, following another overwhelming election win for the ANC, Jacob Zuma moved into the Presidency as the country's next president.

The arms deal scandal remained a thorn in Jacob Zuma's side, despite his rise to the presidency and accumulating political power. In November 2010, social activists[35] brought the arms deal to the Constitutional Court, requesting a renewed investigation into the alleged corrupt dealings, bribes, and cover-ups. In response, President Zuma appointed a three-member commission led by Judge Willie Seriti in September 2011 to investigate the arms deal and all

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[34] http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/09/12/safrica.zuma/index.html?eref=rss_world
[35] The activist Terry Crawford-Browne and organizations such as Corruption Watch were among those leading the charge. See, for example Alfreds (2014).

those allegedly involved. In April 2016, after a continuously interrupted investigation and several resignations from within the commission, the Seriti Commission exonerated all involved, including President Zuma and his close allies (Thamm 2016b). Opposition parties and civil society activists condemned the commission's findings, with the initial whistle-blower to the arms deal, Patricia De Lille, calling the report "an insult to the intelligence of South Africans" and "a whitewash aimed at protecting one man, Jacob Zuma" (Thamm 2016b). Meanwhile, activist Terry Crawford-Browne filed an application with the Constitutional Court to nullify the Seriti Commission's file, essentially leaving the final say to the country's highest court.

Considering the post-apartheid period and the ANC's approaches to statecraft and leadership, the arms deal scandal is significant for at least three reasons: 1) Corruption in the post-apartheid period involved not only prominent parliamentary figures but bribes and corrupt dealings well beyond six figure numbers. Additionally, through corrupt dealings, R 70 billion of tax payer money went toward mainly unused military equipment. At the same time, during the arms deal procurement and delivery process, close to half a million South Africans died avoidable deaths because the same government kept them from HIV-Aids treatment (Feinstein 2011).[36] According to activist Crawford-Browne, the arms deal "unleash[ed] a culture of corruption," by definition, void of any moral or ethical grounding (Chabalala 2016). 2) Extensive cover-ups continue to protect those behind the arms deal and its beneficiaries (Marais 2011, Bundy 2014). More than a decade after Patricia de Lille first blew the whistle on the arms deal trade, South Africans still do not know who and what lurks behind the arms deal (Munusamy

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[36] Andrew Feinstein, who at the time at the arms deal procurement was an ANC MP and member of the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee, writes that parliament was told by President Mbeki and his cabinet that government had insufficient funds to provide life-saving mediation to Aids patients. Yet, the President foresaw no trouble entering a R70 billion arms deal, even though the country was in no imminent danger (Feinstein 2011, 176).

2012; Thamm 2016). Instead, those in high positions are protected by others in equally high positions, often positions within the country's parliament and cabinet. This sweeping of the arms deal under the proverbial parliamentary rug has shaped a rather laissez-faire perception toward corruption, creating the expectation among many South Africans that politicians are untouchable and thus above the law. 3) The arms deal scandal created a rift within the ANC, essentially adding to a Zuma versus non-Zuma camp. This rift created the platform for a Zuma presidency initially, but it now continues to characterize the ANC's in-house struggles in its post-Mbeki period. Additionally, Gillian Hart warns against analyses that interpret the arms deal saga and ensuing Zuma-Mbeki clash as a "corrupt Zuma versus an anti-corruption Mbeki" portrayal. Such an interpretation, she argues, "conveniently ignores the 'clear symptoms of crony capitalism under Mbeki's stewardship, including the official quashing of investigations into the arms deal" (Hart 2014, 61). That said, the arms deal and its ensuing political plotting saw the rise of Jacob Zuma to a pinnacle of political power where he and his political allies would not only survive but ride the wave through continuous allegations of corruption, state-capture reports, and numerous no-confidence votes by both parliament and the ANC. One such moment that encapsulates the pinnacle of corruption culture came with the president's use of taxpayers' money on his private residence, Nkandla.

Nkandla: Fire Pools in Tin House Neighborhoods

While the arms deal set the stage for a political culture of corruption and cover-ups, the Nkandla controversy came to epitomize politicians' personal greed and selfishness. In this case, such greed involves a R246 million upgrade for President Zuma's private homestead, located in rural KwaZulu Natal. A focus group at a Senqu high school shared its disapproval of the

president's perceived greed, especially when considering the fate of the country's poor majority. As one participant said: "the president has a mansion and his neighbor a small tin house. That portrays a big picture of corruption, showing that we don't live in a democracy.…He has his own means, but still building Nkandla with tax money. In the meanwhile, his people are suffering." Arguably, for many South Africans, including Senqu youth, Nkandla symbolizes the liberation struggle's derailment, leaving many perplexed over the meaning of democracy.

The Nkandla saga, stemming back to 2009 and the beginning of President Zuma's first presidential term, involved excessive cycles of media probing, government cover-ups and meandering, and follow-up media fact checking. Public protector, Thuli Mandonsela's, official announcement in 2012 that her office was investigating Nkandla ploughed renewed energy in the already pulsing media cycle. The press-government to-and-fro now also included government spokespersons' attacks on the public protector and her follow-up responses. These attacks ranged from accusing her of being a CIA operative (Pillay 2014) to the ANC Youth League's allegations that she had been a mere puppet in the opposition parties' anti-Zuma vendetta (Gallens 2016).

On 4 December 2009, the *Mail and Guardian's* Mandy Roussouw reported on a R65 million expansion at Nkandla, including "a helicopter pad, large parking lot, clinic, a visitors' centre and a police command post" (Roussouw 2009). Whereas the initial responses from the presidency and the Department of Public Works ranged from silence to an eventual confirmation that construction was happening, albeit "no government funding will be used for construction

work," the Presidency insisted. Throughout the next three years Nkandla construction continued, veiled in a cloak of secrecy.[37]

On 29 September 2012, the *City Press* exposé *R200m Splurge on Zuma Homestead*[38] shed renewed light on Nkandla, reporting from leaked Public Works memorandums: 1) Nkandla's initial R65 million price tag had increased to R203 million; 2) Public Works approved the budget in March 2012 for security upgrades "in line with Cabinet regulations"; and 3) the president will only cover 5% of the total cost. Shortly after, Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi retaliated, commissioning the officially titled *Inter-Ministerial Task Team on the Security Installations at President Zuma's Nkandla Private Residence* to compile a report on the Nkandla dealings. However, following the *City Press* exposé and subsequent public outcry, the country's official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), asked the public protector to investigate the Nkandla development.

Throughout 2013, Nkandla inquiries were counteracted with unscrupulous denials and accompanying parliamentary cover-ups. For one, Public Works persistently kept its own Nkandla report from the public. Instead, the Department convinced the cabinet of the report's classified status and insisted that only the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI), which handles its matters in secrecy, should have access to the document. Public Works therefore assigned the JSCI, rather than the parliament itself, to make sense of their internally derived Nkandla report. The JSCI reported back to parliament only in November 2013, confirming Nkandla's rising costs, insisting upgrades were for security reasons, and maintaining the president was outside of any decision-making processes. Instead the blame shifted toward

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[37] For a complete timeline of events pertaining to Nkandla and the media's main forms of information resources, see https://africacheck.org/how-to-fact-check/factsheets-and-guides/a-compendium-of-nkandla-reports-court-papers/ and http://mg.co.za/data/2014-03-18-zumas-nkandla-a-timeline
[38] http://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/R200m-splurge-on-Zuma-homestead-20150430

contractors and low-ranking government officials. In the meanwhile, the public protector finalized her own report. This was despite Zuma sympathizers' ongoing critique and parliamentary clusters seeking an interdict to prevent the release of the public protector's report. Some of Mandonsela's preliminary data did reach the *Mail and Guardian's* offices, including that Nkandla will carries a R246 million price tag. When the newspaper went to press on 29 November 2013, the new information aroused renewed "public bewilderment and anger" (Munusamy 2013).

Mandonsela released her "Secure in Comfort" report on 19 March 2014, insisting that four of the five so-called security features are superfluous.[39] This included an animal kraal, a visitor centre, an amphitheater, and the swimming pool, which according Public Works and the Ministers of Police doubles as a "fire pool" and thus was essential for security reasons. Part of Mandonsela's proposed remedial action was that the president should pay a "reasonable percentage of the cost of the measures as determined with the assistance of the National Treasure" (Report 25 of 2013/2014, 422).

The president and his cadre did not abide by the public protector's demands. Instead, Mandonsela's report resulted in a two-year marathon of counter-attacks adamantly contesting Mandonsela's report and its findings. Attacks came from the presidency,[40] the ad hoc parliamentary committees, government reports, as well as public sectors, chastising the public protector and the media for invading the president's private life. These attacks happened despite the binding nature of the public protector's findings as stipulated in the South African Constitution. But President Zuma's sympathizers remained steadfast, producing report after

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[39] http://www.pprotect.org/library/investigation_report/2013-14/Final%20Report%2019%20March%202014%20.pdf
[40] For one such attack see www.thepresidency.**gov**.za/download/file/fid/111

report exonerating the President from paying back the Nkandla funds. One such example was the counter-report from Police Minister Nnkosinathi Nhleko in mid-2015, confirming that all Nkandla upgrades were for security reasons, including the infamous "fire pool" (De Wet 2015). In addition to absolving the president of repaying the Nkandla expenses, Nhleko's report sent a powerful message: cabinet members are following orders that are not necessarily in-line with the constitution nor democracy's supposed moral code.

In the meantime, Nkandla took center stage in parliamentary meetings, with oppositional parties using the controversy to challenge the president outright. On several occasions, including the president's 2015 and 2016 State of the Nation Addresses, Julius Malema and his EFF party disrupted parliamentary proceedings, asking questions about Nkandla and the president's involvement.[41] Malema's twitter handle, #paybackthemoney, gained traction throughout these proceedings, tirelessly overriding the president and fellow ANC MPs' speeches. On one occasion, the speaker forcefully retaliated, ordering the riot police to remove the EFF members from parliament (Munusamy 2014). Although less aggressive, the DA also demanded Nkandla justice, filing a case in the Cape Town High Court in August 2015 that questioned the validity of the police minister's report (Gqirana 2015). It was however the EFF and DA's approach of the Constitutional Court, also in August 2015, that eventually pushed the Nkandla ordeal to a boiling point. Both opposition parties maintained that the president acted unconstitutional by allowing the police minister and ad-hoc parliamentary committees to decide over Nkandla rather than respect the public protector's report (Davis 2015b). Subsequently, on 31 March 2016, a full bench of the Constitutional Court confirmed that the public protector's remedial actions are

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[41] For one such incident, see http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31448256

indeed binding.[42] Therefore, by not adhering to public prosecutor's report, the president and National Assembly violated the Constitution. The court further asserted that the National Treasury will, as Mandonsela determined, conclude how much President Zuma should pay back, and upon approval of the Constitutional Court, the president would have 45 days to pay back the outstanding money.

Untouchability, Continued

Since bursting onto people's touch screens, across their newspaper covers, and into their conversations, Nkandla became another noteworthy post-Mandela and Zuma-related political controversy. Like the arms deal, Nkandla's noteworthiness lies not only in how taxpayer money yet again went toward politicians' personal expenses, but also how government departments and high-ranking politicians went out of their way to protect the status quo. Characteristic in this regard were government departments' frequent "internal inquiries," investigating political leaders' expenditures. Through these inquiries and accompanying reports, the government not only wanted to deflect attention away from the president onto broader and arguably faceless government departments but also tirelessly worked to stay one-step-ahead of the media and the public protector. Regardless, investigative journalism and the public protector's inquiry kept Nkandla in the public's eye, eventually leading to the Constitutional Court's 2016 decision.

In addition to the interdepartmental cover-ups and the extensive tension between the media and the presidency, Nkandla captured South Africans' attention, including the youth I interviewed in Senqu. Their political talk was framed by four additional fronts: First, Nkandla became a tangible representation of political leaders' corrupt dealings. Arguably, the arms deal

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[42] http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZACC/2016/11.html

scandal is more abstract, with few people interested in the delicate strategies accompanying international bidding, legal formalities, and procurement processes. However, pictures of expansive living arrangements amidst the poverty of neighboring communities was something the public could latch onto with great ease. Considering their rural social environments, Senqu youth could relate to Zuma's rural neighbors whose perpetual poverty looked even more pronounced next to the president's mansion. It is from these associations that young people came to label the president and his actions as greedy and self-centered, focused on gaining more for his own pockets. Like Jack, a young Senqu artist, told me, "It's all about power. You are a president and then you build a home out of taxpayers' money. But then there are villages and shacks all around, whereby such money could have gone toward helping those people."

Second, compared to the previous decade, the traditional press outlets were now further empowered through social media platforms. The traditional press used social media to its advantage, making their headlines and pictures readily available for this form of pubic distribution. But independent from the traditional press, social media exploded with people's own interpretations of Nkandla, ranging from memes, humorously critiquing the Nkandla spending, to Twitter handles of which the #paybackthemoney became a common reference point. The Nkandla debacle also developed into a head-on collision between the press and the presidency. Equally so, Zuma sympathizers criticized the press for interfering in the president and his family's private lives, subsequently intimidating the public against the president and his actions. After a close analysis of *City Press* and *M&G's* Nkandla coverage, Prinsloo (2013) disputes such claims, pointing instead to the bravery of journalists in protecting the public good, dispute government officials' ongoing efforts to keep documents from the public eye.

Third, the ANC's pardon of President Zuma's Nkandla expenditure entrenched politicians' untouchable status in the public eye. Regardless of opposition parties' parliamentary efforts, and despite the public defender's laudable determination to expose corrupt dealings, the Nkandla scandal sent a message to the South African public that those in power remain in power. On 1 April 2016, following an ANC's national executive meeting to discussion the Constitutional Court's decision, President Zuma addressed the nation. South Africans anxiously awaited his apology, some even anticipated his resignation. Neither of these happened. Instead, President Zuma used this nationally televised appearance to strategically alter the discourse, placing the Nkandla saga on the shoulders of others. "He is untouchable," Sam, a young man from Senqu told me the following week during our weekly WhatsApp catch-up. "He and the rest of his people can do whatever they want, and nothing will happen to them."

Fourth, oppositional parties' parliamentary performances regarding Nkandla captured the public's attention. Arguably, Nkandla gave the Economic Freedom Fighters, and their leader Julius Malema, the concrete material to launch their public attacks and cement their presence in the post-apartheid political landscape. Exemplary in this case was Malema's twitter handle, #paybackthemoney, which found its way into parliamentary sessions. The EFF's outright defiance of the ANC's power in parliament attested to political showmanship that not only defied the political status quo but showcased the EFF's commitment to complicate the ANC's future trajectory. Reflecting upon Senqu youth's political talk, Malema's performances in and outside of parliament made a mark on young people's political perceptions.

Julius Malema: Bad Boy Revolutionary

"I like Malema because he talks the truth. He doesn't protect anybody or anything. When something is wrong, it's wrong in Malema's eyes," Gomotso told me. Her friend, Tsego concurred: "He tells the truth. For us Blacks the truth is very bitter, and that's why people avoid it. We sometimes say Malema is silly because he's doing the right thing at the wrong time, but people follow him because he doesn't care about what he says, whether it's going to hurt you or not. And many people are following him because of that."

Just like President Zuma and corruption were central to many of the conversations I had with Senqu's young people, so was Julius Malema. They were well aware of his political career, in particular, his defiance of the ANC and President Zuma. Therefore, just like associations made with the Zuma administration and corruption, Malema and his defiant political moves also influenced young people's interpretations of politics.

Climbing the Political Ranks

Although currently the commander-in-charge of the Economic Freedom Fighters, Julius Malema's political career started *within* the ANC, culminating in his election as the ANC Youth League's president in April 2008. This position catapulted him into a place of previously unknown power, a journey captured in Forde's biographic account, *An Inconvenient Youth: Julius Malema and the 'New' ANC* (Forde 2012). Malema is not the first to have gained political mileage from the party's youth wing. On the contrary, the ANCYL, launched in 1944, has acted as effective rite of passage and subsequent launch pad for many lucrative political careers, including ANC stalwarts Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Water Sisulu. This original cohort grounded the ANCYL in a sturdy anti-communist and African Nationalist sentiment, one that

emphasized "the struggle against white supremacy" (Posel 2014, 60). Such sentiments were embroiled with a rumbustious rebelliousness, committed to changing the status quo of racial and social inequality, even if such change called for militant actions. But these sentiments collided with the ANC establishment policies and ideological grounding, the organization's close alignment with the South African Communist Party, and resultant economically liberal and nonracial stance, as reflected in the 1955 ANC Freedom Charter (Glaser 2012).

During his tenure as ANCYL president, Malema and his lieutenants enthusiastically embraced the ANCYL's original nationalism mantra and "political persona of precocious provocateur" (Posel 2013, 60). This included their call for the nationalization of mines and the expropriation of land without compensation, and questions about race; in particular, the direct correlation between race and access to wealth, status, and economic power (Posel 2014, Hart 2014). Although such nationalist rhetoric and revolutionary demeanor secured his place within the country's public sphere (Posel 2014), they also led to his subsequent dismissal from the ANC in 2012. On paper, the latter resulted from his persistent defiance of party leadership and policies, including the party's approach to international diplomacy, economic development, and racial relations. But as Hart (2014) argued, Malema's political performances also gnawed at the party's hegemonic project, calling out the ANC's fading political legitimacy.

Among others, three clusters of political performances capture Malema's political character during his ANCYL years and subsequent rise to political significance. These performances are noteworthy, not only for how they signify Malema's political rebelliousness during his ANCYL presidency, but also for how they pushed the envelope with regards to race relations and perpetual economic inequality. These aspects—political defiance, race, and economic disparities—remain within Malema's political arsenal in his post-ANC years and

current EFF leadership, striking a sensitive post-apartheid cord that resonates with the country's poor majority. For one, Senqu youth's political talk reflected an awareness of Malema's historic and current defiance of the status quo and his position on race and economic dispensation. I return to these conversations in Chapter 5.

The first of these performances involved Malema's defiance of ANC policies, in this case the party's disposition toward international relations, economic redistribution, and race. In 2010 Malema and a cadre of ANCYL leadership visited Zimbabwe and openly endorsed President Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party's nationalization and land grab policies (Forde 2012; Hart 2014).[43] As ANCYL president, Malema's allegiance to the Zimbabwean president raised red flags at ANC headquarters, not only flying in the face of President Zuma's then sensitive peace talks between the Zanu-PF and opposition parties, but also negating the ANC's post-apartheid land redistribution policies. These latter policies follow legal restitution and willing-buyer willing-seller processes. In contrast, Zimbabwean land grab initiatives involved the appropriation of mostly white-owned land, without compensation or legal negotiations. So, in addition to contradicting South African land policies, the Malema-Mugabe relationship also ensued renewed racial tension on local soil. A second diplomatic exchange involved Botswana and the ANCYL's promise to help oppositional parties topple the country's "puppet regime." The league further stated that Botswana's government is "a foot stool of imperialism, a security threat to Africa and always under constant puppetry of the United States" (ANCYL 2011). Unlike the year before, ANC leadership could not pin the Botswana debacle solely on Malema's shoulders. That said, as the organization's president, the onus did fall on him.

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[43] Malema disrupted this allegiance in December 2016, calling upon the president to end his more than three-decade long rule, see http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/it-is-time-for-mugabe-to-step-down-malema-20161202.

A second political performance concerned Malema's public rhetoric, particularly his use of racial innuendos. Prominent was his "resurrection" of the old struggle song "Dubula iBhunu" or "Shoot the Boer" during an ANC celebration in early 2010 (Forde 2012). Seeing that Boer in this context refers to a White farmer, the White civil rights group Afriforum retaliated, taking Malema to court on hate speech charges. In this regard, Afriforum argued that Malema's use of "Dubula iBhuna" "adds to a climate of hostility" (Grootes 2011). Malema lost the court case in September 2011, but as Forde (2012) argues, he gained significant political clout in the process. In the eyes of the masses, Malema not only became "the custodian of ANC struggle songs, but a hero" (38-39). Like other ANC giants such as Mandela, Sisulu, and Kathrada, Malema now too had his day in court and subsequently earned his own "struggle credentials."

Not too long after the initial Dubula iBhuna saga hit the airwaves in 2010, Malema's disposition toward race boiled to the surface again. This time, during a press conference in April 2010 at the ANC headquarters. It involved White BBC reporter Noah Fischer. Fischer interrupted Malema three times, questioning his pro-poor populism while maintaining his lavish lifestyle and living in Sandton, one of Johannesburg's upscale suburbs (Glaser 2012). Malema sneered back: "Don't come here with that white tendency. Not here. You can do it somewhere else. Not here. If you've got a tendency of undermining Blacks, even where you work, you are in the wrong place." Malema added: "You can go out. Rubbish is what you have covered in that trousers (Smith 2010)." Even though Fischer's behavior toward Malema was disrespectful, especially his continuous interruptions, as Forde (2012) argues, Malema's outburst and racial slurs were equally distasteful. Not surprising, the Fischer-Malema moment stirred up renewed media responses, giving Malema more front-page coverage, both locally and internationally

(Glaser 2012). Equally so, ANC leadership did not look favorably upon Malema's treatment of Fischer, adding this to his growing list of political and anti-ANC felonies.

The Malema-Zuma relationship has not always been bitter. In fact, in 2007, Malema's support from within the ANCYL contributed significantly to Zuma's Polokwane win (Bundy 2014). A year later, and at a ANCYL gathering, Malema further showed his support for Zuma, proclaiming during a public speech that: "We [the ANCYL] will kill for Zuma."[44] These feelings were not one-sided. Zuma was grooming Malema for bigger things to come, introducing him on more than one occasion as "the next president of South Africa" (Du Preez 2014). But this friendship came to an abrupt public end in 2010 after Malema's defied ANC diplomacy in Zimbabwe, public sang "Dubula iBhuna", and chased Fisher from his press conference. During a snap press conference on 10 April 2010, President Zuma reprimanded Malema over his public actions, announcing that "leaders should think before they speak." He further stated that "the relevant structures in the ANC will look at what has happened….If the line has been crossed, there will be consequences" (M&G 2010). As Forde (2012) recalls, the president's utterances hit Malema where it hurt most: They humiliated him in public. Without hesitation Malema reacted, calling Zuma's presidential actions ill in comparison to former president Thabo Mbeki. This "blasphemous" act not only upset the ANC leadership considering the preceding Mbeki-Zuma power struggle, but it was also aimed at Zuma's leadership insecurities (Forde 2012). This led to Malema's eventual appearance in front of an ANC disciplinary committee, which threatened him with suspension if he reoffended within the next two years (M&G 2011).

By humiliating him in public, Zuma not only unraveled Malema but also his ANCYL allies. Subsequently, Malema and the ANCYL embarked on an outright dismissal of ANC

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[44] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7467306.stm

leadership and its economic policies, publically calling for the ousting of President Zuma and the ANC's secretary general, Gwede Mantashe (Glaser 2012) and insisting on "economic freedom" through the nationalization of mines and the redistribution of land. These dismissals took shape in different protests and marches, including one in late 2011 when the ANCYL organized a "March for Economic Freedom in our Lifetime." This march, which drew close to 8,000 people, set its sights on the country's economic heartland, questioning wealth inequality and the persistent grip of white capital on the country's economy. In response to this streak of outright defiance, the ANC kept its threat of suspension and eventually expelled Malema from the party in April 2012.

This did not relieve the ANC from their Malema headache. On the contrary, it merely fueled Malema's political flame. In 2013, he formed his own political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters, and in the 2014 election gained the support of 1.1 million voters, or 6% of the general vote. This not only secured Malema's seat in parliament but also his political party's place in the country's political landscape.

Typical of ANC leadership, Malema's political career also came with personal wealth and conspicuous consumption (Glaser 2012). Such wealth and fortune are enmeshed with questionable tenderpreneurships,[45] shady investment choices, dubious financial planning, and tax evasion. This resulted in investigations from four state organs, including the South African Revenue Services demanding an outstanding tax payment of R16 million (Thompson 2014). These charges did not necessarily make it to the top of the ANC's disciplinary committee's charges, not surprisingly, considering corruption's prominence within the party's highest ranks.

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[45] Tenderpreneurship is a South African phrase capturing politicians' and civil servants' abuse of political power to secure government tenders and contracts, either for their own individual enrichment or that of close allies (see http://www.news24.com/MyNews24/The-SA-version-of-entrepreneurship-20121112, accessed December 9, 2016).

That said, the allegations did contribute to the party's already fading public image. The media feasted on Malema's corruption charges and dubious public ventures, giving him numerous front pages and breaking news' statuses (Forde 2012). Corruption charges and tax evasion did not break Malema's political stride. Instead, he used his sacking from the ANC and pending corruption charges as his own Lazarus moment. Not unlike Zuma's reaction to charges against him associated with the arms deal saga, Malema described his own corruption charges as an ANC-backed conspiracy, with the country's high-profile leadership working effortlessly, but to no avail, to make him go away.

Rebellious Defiance; Revolutionary Talk

Malema's EFF is not the first, nor the biggest, opposition to defy the ANC. Since 2000, the DA, under the leadership of Helen Zille, and her 2015 successor, Mmusi Maimane, has steered oppositional politics in a determined manner, gaining increased support from the country's growing middle-class and urban populations. But in contrast to the DA's middle-class support, the EFF's primary backing comes from the country's poor, unemployed, and disgruntled, whom Mbembe (2012) calls the "superfluous population." Since 1994 these voters have helped clinch the ANC's election victories. Using populist tactics and tapping into quasitraditionalist rhetoric, Zuma also leaned on these voters for popular support, especially after the arms deal corruption scandal, his ominous 2006 rape trial, and the Nkandla scandal. But this broad base has also become the cultivating grounds for Malema's supporters.

It is Malema's ANC defiance and political performance that has turned him "into the most recognizable political face in South Africa" (Glaser 2012, 8). He continuously draw from his ANCYL years, particularly his tendency to "say things that old people are afraid to say" (Du

Preez and Roussouw 2009, 75). This discourse of outspokenness has come to represent not only his fearlessness toward ANC leadership but also a charisma that, true to a Weberian analysis of political authority, fuels his political legitimacy. Malema has always been well aware of the power of public discourse and thus, without avail, taps into this available resource to sustain and further his public image and following. For example, in a 2013 exclusive interview Malema told reporter Ranjeni Munusamy that at rallies and public meetings, "you have to agitate and get the message across in a short space of time. It is the language of moblisation and agitation." He added that he and his ANCYL cadre "are agitating for a revolution."[46] Malema continues to draw from this infamous lexicon of agitation, including populist themes of revolution, mobilization, and war. For example, in April 2016, he told Al Jazeera's Jonah Hull that the EFF will deal with the government's hostility toward protest "through the barrel of a gun."[47] These themes, have become Malema's go-to lexicon, not only evoking support from the disgruntled poor, but as Posel (2014, 49) notes, enabling him to "cut to the chase of lingering and uncomfortable political issues centered on the abiding concentration of wealth in White hands."

Malema's political discourse therefore draws from two intertwined post-apartheid concerns: unresolved wealth distribution and racial inequality. Through his public discourse and outright defiance of the political status quo, Malema has brought to the fore an unspoken yet commonly known tension surrounding racial and wealth and social inequality. The ANC's approach of labeling the post-apartheid era as non-racial deflected attention away from deeply seated racial tension inherited from the apartheid era, down playing racial inequality and perpetual White privilege. Malema has since punctured this illusion, bringing to the fore the

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[46] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-06-14-julius-malema-unplugged-talking-bout-a-revolution/#.WF7-prHMx7M
[47] http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/malema-remove-zuma-barrel-gun-160422185731596.html

persistence of racial inequality and its perseverance in the country's post-apartheid context, all of which resonates with the country's unemployed and poverty stricken masses.

But Malema's frankness toward White South Africans goes beyond musical prose. Throughout his political tenure, he has brought discussions of race to the forefront, questioning perpetual White privilege while the country's Black majority remain trapped in poverty. In this case, he remains focused on white capital and land ownership. In so doing, Malema continuous to push the race envelope, using populist rhetoric concerning wealth redistribution and equality. For example, in late 2016 Malema faced charges in the Newcastle Magistrate Court for encouraging people to occupy privately owned land and thereby contravening the 1956 Riotous Assemblies Act. Following the hearing he proclaimed: "[White people] have been swimming in a pool of privilege; they have been enjoying themselves because they always owned our land. We the rightful owners, our peace was disturbed by the white man's arrival here." He proceeded to accuse White people of Black genocide and added that "we are not calling for the slaughter of white people…at least for now" (Madia 2016).

Not surprisingly, this form of racial discourse immediately gained attention from White South Africans, especially considering Mugabe's land grab actions in neighboring Zimbabwe. Aware of such concerns, Malema has announced on several occasions that his fight for economic liberation is not necessarily against White South Africans, but rather against White privilege. In a more recent conversation, with journalist Verashni Pillay, Malema asserted that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." As a follow-up to his Newcastle comments, Malema further stated that, "whites have naturalised in this country. We cannot imagine South Africa without white people. There's no white person who is going to be driven into the sea." He further commented that white South Africans are too sensitive, too anxious to protect their White

privilege. "They are not scared that Malema is going to kill them. No! They are scared that Malema is going to tamper with their privilege. They are too sensitive. They are crybabies" (Pillay 2016). Here Malema grabs the public's attention, not only how he time and time again uses populist rhetoric to entice his audience, but also through the way he continuous to scratch at the persistence of race, White privilege, and accompanying wealth inequality.

One of my Senqu focus groups reflected upon Malema's racial disposition and accompanying rhetoric, conversing over his hatred toward White people. By definition I, as White South Africa, am also subject to such rage. It was a conversation thread from Siphiwe, my talkative history student and her focus group, that homed in on Malema's disposition toward race, and its inclusion in young people's political talk.

Siphiwe: I do think that if the EFF gets elected it will be a long and chaotic thing. (Overall agreement in the group). Because they say that South Africa is for the Black people alone. Malema keeps saying kill the Boers. Malema is corrupting the Blacks to not want White people. If we vote EFF, you (and she points are finger right at me), will never be able to come back to South Africa.

Siphiwe's group member 2: Malema is very naughty, but he's also very clever. He wants revenge. He is telling us that if we vote for him, he will do so and so and so…okay, yes we understand that, but what about the Whites? They are people too. And Mandela said that South Africa is for all. If we are not saying that South Africa is for all, we will not see the country progress.

Siphiwe's group member 3: If the EFF comes into power there will be some changes, even good ones, but there will also be some war against the Blacks and the Whites, because Malema is still holding an apartheid grudge.

Elene: What do you want White South Africans to do?

Siphiwe: Those who were born here, they should be accepted here. But I think Whites must also know their place. They must know where they come from. I think in my own way, I want Whites to understand that South Africa is not for them. It's only for Blacks. They can come under us, we must be at the top. They shouldn't now take top positions. We are the indigenous people of the continent.

Siphiwe's group member 3: But when Malema rules, apartheid will start again from fresh. It will be Black toward Whites; that will not be good.

Siphiwe's group member 4: But then, apartheid has not truly ended either. We are not really free. If you go to areas where white people live, you still see the apartheid thing going on. Here in Sterkspruit it might not be that obvious, because there's only Black people.

This passage not only captures Senqu youth's ambivalence toward Malema, both admiring him for his honesty as far as racial relations are concerned, but also weary of the true reality of his disposition toward race. Their conversations also reflect Malema's public rhetoric, ranging from his earlier struggle song, "Kill the Boer" to more recent references to occupying private land, of

which a great deal belong to White South Africans. But an even more profound reality arising from Siphiwe's group's conversation is the overarching existence of race and racial questions, at work in young people's minds and their political talk. In this regard, mention of Julius Malema struck a nerve.

Conclusion

Because of the South African media's persistence in keeping politicians and their actions within public view as well as the rising presence of social media within all walks of life, South African politicians remain subject to public scrutiny. Most of this chapter captured such scrutiny, eventually simmering down onto the screens of young South Africans' smartphones and into young people's conversations. This was also the case among Senqu youth, who are well aware of scandals and assumptions accompanying the post-apartheid state, the ANC-led government and its accompanying political leaders. Such scandals include the ANC-led government's association with corruption and accompanying Zuma-Presidency's indignities. As I illustrate in the following chapter, Senqu youth's political talk was not only filled with these scandals, but they have subsequently developed a jaded disposition toward politics, so much so that they no longer believe in the legitimacy of politics or political leaders.

Just as talks over corruption are intertwined with young people's perception of the state and its actors, so are individual actors' performances, those that outright defy the status quo. In this case, Julius Malema has not only captured young people's political imagination but also gained recognition for questioning the ANC hegemony. As political journalist Max du Preez (2014) notes, "the reckless but very clever young populist redefined the public discourse and dragged the hitherto fairly decent political culture in the country to unknown depths. He let a

genie out of the bottle that we'll probably never get back in again." However, as discussed in the following chapter, Senqu youth shared mixed reactions to Malema's political performances. Even though most of my young focus group participants and interviewees admired Malema for his outspokenness and commitment "to speak the truth," they were equally weary of his public demeanor, calling it mean and "without manners." Moreover, as Siphiwe and her focus group's conversation above illustrate, Senqu youth also reflect critically upon Malema's disposition toward race. I elaborate on this in the following chapter, but in the meanwhile it is fitting to confirm that, like Zuma and the ANC-government's accompanying coat of corruption, Malema's national reputation has etched itself into South Africans' political minds.

Chapter 5 – Seeing Politicians, Talking Politics

Employment and social assistance were central concepts Senqu youth used to describe their immediate social environments as well as their ideas about the post-apartheid state and its forms of governance. In preceding chapters, I have argued that both of these concepts serve as productive analytical devices to capture young people's relations to the state, including employment expectations and ambivalent disposition toward the state's social assistance program. The antagonist is the post-apartheid state and its actions or, in some cases, inaction toward realizing young people's expectations. I have also argued that a neoliberal rationality underscores these interpretations. This rationality siphons through, first, in their yearning for formal employment, and, second, in their disapproval of social assistance, which they describe as a form of dependence that keeps people from reaching their true human potential. Considering neoliberal rationality's characteristic emphasis on self-reliance, self-worth, and hard work, regardless the work environment, young people's description of employment and social assistance evidenced neoliberal rationality's embeddedness in their perception of the state and governance. But, how do young people perceive of politicians and their actions? Moreover, how do these perceptions influence their disposition toward the South African state?

To use James Scott's (1998) words, I hold that young people "see the state" through politicians and their political actions. In turn, this process of seeing the state brings youth to reconsider the value and usefulness of not only politics and its actors, but also the state. Like unemployment and social assistance, young people's descriptions of politicians can serve as a productive and, in this case, third lens through which to capture perceptions on statehood and governance.

This chapter is comprised of two sections. The first elaborates upon young people's perceptions of statehood and governance. Here I list the themes emerging from our conversations, acting as the main characteristics young people recognize in politicians. In some cases, these characteristics contribute to young people's disappointment and ultimate dismissal of politics, concluding that politics and politicians are useless. This not only goes for politicians but also the democratic institutions that brought such politicians to power, in this case, voting. Arguably, these almost nihilistic themes, capturing young people's disgruntled relationship with politics and politicians, bring us to a stalemate as far as the country's political future is concerned.

The chapter's second section focuses on young people's suggestions for moving beyond such a stalemate, working toward realizing their future ambitions. This includes an appreciation of Julius Malema as an alternative to ANC politics and an acknowledgment of ground-up political movements, such as #feesmustfall, where the country's young people are taking to the streets to voice their political discontent. In contrast to those that support Malema, the latter form of political agency happens outside the realm of traditional party politics. These two suggestions are however not void of ambiguity. For example, just as some value Julius Malema's enthusiasm, they also ponder over his political demeanor and ethical shortcomings. Similarly, many Senqu youth applauded their urban counterparts for taking to the streets protesting rising university tuition. That said, rural youth also questioned the longevity of such agility and its applicability to them as rural youth. All that remains, then, is to focus on one's own well-being, and the only way to do so is through financial means. A third option for moving beyond the current political stalemate is therefore business or, more precisely, finding one's self-worth through entrepreneurial hustling. Although these narratives capture young people's efforts to

move beyond their own predicament and achieve their goals, they also evidence a deep-lying neoliberal rationality that not only frees the state from responsibility over many young people's dire socioeconomic realities, but also minimizes the importance of politics in the market economy. Moreover, the country's culture of corruption, political leaders' questionable leadership, and young people's subsequent limited faith in the state further opens the door for these neoliberal ideals to surface as the only viable options to secure a future better than the present. Arguably, South Africa's political landscape, 22 years after apartheid, therefore provides an adequate breeding ground for the neoliberal subject.

Seeing Politicians

Most of my young participants were cynical about politics. Senqu youth derive such cynicism directly from politicians' public discourse and their actions both in and out of the public sphere. When they spoke about politicians and their actions certain themes emerged. I interpret these themes as how young people come to see politicians. In turn, these perceptions influence youth's broader understanding of politics and the state. These themes include *"for themselves" politicians*, *greedy politicians*, *forgetful politicians*, *corrupted politicians*, and *comedic politicians*. My young participants' description of politicians and their political landscape also included conversations about voting. After all, in theory voting within a democratic context acts as a means of replacing politicians who are greedy, corrupt, and comedic. But in this regard, young people *see* no meaning in elections. In their opinion, the process of voting is so ideologically driven that it has become a hollowed-out process that merely maintains the status quo. Contributing to this predicament is the *loyalty voter*, the *easily*

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intimidated voter, and the *novelty voter*. In turn, these voters maintain the status quo and thus condone politicians' selfish, greedy, and corrupt actions.

"For Themselves" Politicians

Siphiwe is not impressed with her country's politicians. I soon recognized her in my history tutorial classes as a strong-minded young South African, and, as it turned out, she was also in one of her school's focus group. During our focus group, she replicated her classroom demeanor, not holding back on sharing her political opinions with the rest of us. For one, she was not too optimistic about the country's future, and she pinned it on politicians' tendency to merely think about themselves. "What will the country be like in 20 years?" she asked the rest of her focus group members. "I see a lot of fights, if we are still ruled by this ANC government," she answered her own question. "Even us, as youth are realizing now that our government is only doing things for themselves, not for the people. If we are ruled by this government? This government is digging a hole for South Africans because they are only doing things for their own good.…They are just feeding themselves, and their brothers and sisters."

Politicians, in Siphiwe's mind, disregard the needs of their constituencies, tending to their own and their families instead. They engage in selfish feasting, so to speak, while the rest of the country remains without the sustenance they not only desperately need but also deserve. Selfishness, in this regard, goes hand in hand with claims of conspicuous consumption, with young people using the latter to define and measure politicians' selfishness. Such consumption takes the shape of material wealth, such as cars and houses. Tsego and Gotatso brought this focus on politicians' material well-being to my attention. We sat in a blood red Wimpy booth, the two young ladies currently working toward completing their diplomas in hospitality from a local

technical vocational education and training (TVET) college. As a higher education institution, these colleges cater to students who are not interested in entering universities, did not secure the necessary admission grades, or cannot afford university tuition. Often the latter two reasons apply, considering the shameful quality of state-funded high schools and the expenses that come from attending universities. These reasons also explain Tshego and Gotatso's predicament.

"We vote for somebody that we think might be good," Tshego shared. She continued:

> But that person will be the first to say, fine the government is giving me, say
> R50 million to do this and that. But first let me buy myself a car, without
> considering the well-being of other people. When you look at the shortage of
> facilities in our communities, but, no, their house will be the first thing they
> develop. They do not plan logically, but instead only think of themselves.
> What their houses should look like, what their cars should look like, and what
> schools their children should go to. They send them to these multiracial
> schools. They move out of the location. They are not doing anything for us.

Tshego and Gototaso therefore interpreted politicians' attraction to material wealth and power as pure selfishness, something not associated with good political leadership, let alone in contexts where poverty is the order of the day. As far as material wealth is concerned, houses and extravagant cars are tangible examples of such selfishness, and, when compared to the living conditions of the country's majority, such extravagance is even more pronounced.

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Tshego and Gotatso's conversation also showed a sensitivity toward class mobility, understandably so, considering their own immediate rural surroundings and limited access to urban universities. The college ladies first recognized politicians' upward mobility in their children, who no longer go to the same schools as other rural children but instead attend multiracial schools. In comparison to the free public schools most rural and poor children attend, the so-called multiracial schools come with a school fee that only middle- and upper-class parents and guardians can afford. Additionally, Tshego and Gotatso recognize politicians class mobility in their departure from township living, thus leaving their people and socioeconomic background behind to live in more upscale suburbs, villages, or towns. They look upon this with discontent, arguing that politicians' selfishness also means leaving their people and socioeconomic backgrounds behind.

Forgetful Politicians

The fact that politicians are leaving their constituencies for suburban homes and enrolling their children in multiracial schools also reveals their tendency to forget, too easily and too quickly. In our red booth at Wimpy, the college ladies spoke about such forgetting, describing it as inevitable. Once politicians gain their longed-for positions of political power, the ladies argued, they will undoubtedly forget about those voters who helped secure such positions.

"Voters placed leaders in power, don't they?" I asked.

"We did," Gotatso replied, "We thought they will listen to us. They promised us stuff and never delivered."

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Tsego added: "Power changes people." If now I become the president of the

country I will say goodbye to you Elene."

"Why is that?" I asked, imagining President Tsego instructing her security

guards to remove me from our red booth. "When they are at the bottom they

say, 'if you vote for me, I do this and this and this,'"

Tshego replied. "Then you think, well this person can really make a change.

But once they are in power, they forget about those very people who took them

from the bottom."

Gotatso added: "And why do they forget? Money. They think they are

untouchable. They think they are superior, they think they are immortal."

For many Senqu youth, politics resemble processes of forgetting that concerns not only

politicians' tendency to forget what they promised their constituencies during their election

campaigns, or during political speeches, but also forgetting about the people who provided them

with the power in the first place.

Greedy Politicians

Corruption was an overarching topic in many conversations, with Senqu youth making

spontaneous links between the country's politics and corruption. This is not necessarily unique to

the South African context, with anthropologists tracing corruption's economic, legal, and social

dynamics on a global scale, ranging from Gupta (1995) and Smith's (2008) foci on India and

Nigeria respectively, to the Wenner Gren's 2016 Symposium, *The Anthropology of Corruption*.[48]

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[48] http://www.wennergren.org/events/anthropology-corruption

In South Africa, corruption has become common a phenomenon in the country's post-Mandela period, something Senqu youth were certainly not oblivious to. For example, young people made continuous reference to President Zuma and his elaborate Nkandla mansion and the almost normalized state of corruption, despite politicians' anti-corruption rhetoric. But from conversations with local youth, I came to realize that they perceive corruption to be far more than merely unlawful dealings in the rational-legal sense of the word. Similar to what Akhil Gupta found in India, Senqu youth also interpreted corruption in terms of the moral. In this case, as Gupta (2012, 80) argues, corruption serves as "a site for debates prompted by conflicting systems of moral and ethical behavior." Senqu youth like Oftenste and Mandisa described corruption in such moral terms, interpreting politicians' corrupt dealings as greedy and selfishness. My conversations with Ofentse and Mandisa, for example, captured these descriptions.

Ofentse had just completed another school year and was thus eager to visit with friends. During our conversations, she and her friends shared their average young-person concerns; boys, parties, and apparel, and not necessarily in that order. Judging by the lip gloss she kept toiling between her finger tips, personal care is also on the list of relevant things. But, like so many other Senqu youth, Ofentse's worldview extends beyond the school yard, boyfriends, and physical appearances. She also thinks about politics, the country's politicians, and their political performances. She is disappointed, disgusted even: "I don't like politics because of all the lies and the corruption. And I think most youth feel the same. It's the same thing over and over again: corruption, corruption, corruption. It's like they [the politicians] are provoked," she told me. "It's like once they are in power they get too much of it and they get greedy. They want things to be

done by them. They always want this and they always want that. It's like Animal Farm. That's how it's done."

"Here's the thing," she continued. "With some politicians, there's hope. But the biggest problem is, you see hope in them and then as soon as they get to that position, they become greedy, just like the ones that are already in the position. So, it's like people become greedy, the next leader also become greedy, it just continues."

For Ofentse, the country's political landscape is characterized by a disappointing excess of self-interest and greed. In this case, corruption captured her disappointment in the current state and acted as a collective label to describe politics and politicians' actions. But in her opinion, the greed associated with corruption becomes all consuming, taking control of politicians. In an almost demonic manner, politicians' greed forces them into corrupt dealings. Greed incites corruption. Once politicians go down that road, there is no return.

Like Ofentse, Mandisa also associated corrupt politicians with an uncontrollable sense of greed. But for Mandisa greed that eventually leads toward corrupt acts will eventually transgress into a societal norm. After all, if high-ranking politicians get away with it, why should others not? I asked her why politicians are corrupt: "Greed. If people weren't greedy, there would be no corruption," she explained. We were sitting at her grandmother's dinner table, waiting for the height of the summer heat to blow over. She twisted and pulled at a dreadlock and stared in all seriousness into my notepad, as if she wanted to make sure I recorded all her frustrations.

"You can't change people that are corrupt," she continued. "If they are greedy, and they don't see themselves as corrupt they won't change. Some people don't see the greed and corruption because they think it's the right thing – they argue that there's nothing wrong with [corruption]. Sometimes people don't have a choice but to be corrupt. I mean you work all your

life. The president earns a million, he supposedly works, you work. He can be greedy, so why can't you be greedy?"

The greed that leads to political corruption—or what Mandisa argues *is* corruption—is therefore nothing but a slippery slope, one that translates into unavoidable corruptness. For both Oftenste and Mandisa, corruption comes from politicians' inherent greed. As they argued, once in office, politicians cannot help but become greedy, which eventually leads them down a road of corrupt actions.

Corrupted, Patrimonial Politics

Because of its omnipresence, corruption has come to represent more than only politicians' actions. Corruption *is* politics, leading to favorable outcomes for those who become involved in politics. Such opportunism worried Mr. Malilaki, a local teacher who argued that young people consider politicians' corrupt demeanor as "the way of the world." He told me that "young people see [corruption], and they learn. They see what the president is doing through social media. They see that if you are corrupt, if there's any way of getting money, you can do it. You must go for it!" In Mr. Malilaki's opinion, young people merely follow the example set by politicians and subsequently go down a road of clientelism, tapping into existing networks of political patronage. The end goal is not social betterment, but personal enrichment.

Like Mr. Malilaki, Sylvia, a local government civil servant, lamented how well some young people navigate the political waters of patronage. Her position as rural economic development officer within the Senqu local municipality brings her into close contact with local development initiatives. As part of these initiatives' planning processes, Sylvia and her team increasingly include local youth, inviting them to public meetings and planning sessions, as well

as placing them within strategic managerial positions. This not only adheres to the country's

National Youth Development Policy's mandates, but also responds to the region's growing youth

unemployment rate. But those young people who do participate in these initiatives, are either

eventual no-shows or merely join for the immediate financial benefits. After they get what they

want, Sylvia told me, they leave.

Whereas some benefit by joining the political gravy train, so to speak, other Senqu youth

used politics' close alignment with corruption to explain their distain of and subsequent

withdrawal from, first, participating in government initiatives, and, second, party politics itself.

In fact, this latter theme of complete disassociation was more the norm among my interviewees

than the gravy train narrative. For the former group of youth, corruption has morphed into

something bigger than only politicians' corrupt actions. For them, politics and corruption are one

and the same thing. Because of this intertwined relationship, honest people turn into corrupt

individuals once they enter politics.

> "They become part of the system, and then the system changes them," Ofentse
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> explained.
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> Some of Ofentse's friends even wanted to become politicians, but, as she
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> explained, "They changed their minds. Even if you are a good politician, you
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> will get blamed for others' bad things. So the bad and corrupt politicians give a
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> bad name, not only to all other politicians, but also to the system of the
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> country. Look at how other countries reflect on us. Who wants to live with this
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> corruption? Who wants to do business with us if the country is this corrupt?
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> Nobody."

As young people like Ofentse see it, corruption is part and parcel of the current political context. By participating in politics, regardless of political party, you become subjected to corruption, either through the corrupt nature of others or the political system itself. Because of this close association between politics and corruption, many young people disassociate themselves from party politics, not because of their inability to participate in politics, nor their lack of concern over the country's future trajectory, but rather because of politics' corruptibility. Joining a political party is therefore no option. By doing so, you run the risk of sending one of two messages. You are now part of what is, at its core, corrupted and untrue, or you as an individual, have been corrupt from the start, only interested in money and power. The only solution, as some young people argued, is to stay clear of political parties, their leaders, and anything that might resemble the political.

Politics is therefore nothing but a system that lines politicians' pockets. Why should young people then be interested in politics? Like many of her contemporaries, this was Ofentse's thinking. She questioned politics' value, regarding political leaders as nothing more than figure heads void of any true practical value.

"I don't see politics working anymore," Ofentse told me. "It's there by name, just saying that we have a president, and that's all. It doesn't have that value it used to have. I cannot say the president is my role model. How can you look up to somebody that steels from you as a person?" Even though it might have had some worth during apartheid and the early years of democracy, politicians' worth has evaporated in the Zuma era. This devaluation not only stems from politicians' perceived lax attitude toward poverty eradication, job creation, and social assistance, but also the alleged corrupt dealings commonly associated with the presidency and his alliance.

Comedic Politicians

In their uselessness, politicians have become a source of entertainment, comedic escape even. Thus, if they are not useful for bringing about positive socioeconomic change, at least they bring comedic relief. To tap into this stream of comedic amusement, some youngsters go right to the source. Moeketsi, for example, explained that he frequently watches news and the parliamentary channel. He explained that he watches it "just to laugh. I don't listen to anything because nothing important happens. The EFF will come in wearing gumboots and overalls. Nothing serious is spoken there. It comedic. It's funny! It's out of this world. Like politicians and politics have lost their meaning."

The rise of South African comedian Trevor Noah has certainly contributed to young South Africans' appropriation of comedy to make sense of the country's political landscape. Noah's monologues on Zuma and Malema are especially popular among young people, with Senqu youth being no exception. During one focus group, the conversation derailed into a challenge of listing the most popular Noah interpretations and jokes. It was almost as if the group valued Noah's disposition toward politics more than that of the country's politicians. Arguably, South African politics has become nothing more than a source of entertainment and of comedic relief.

Meaningless Voting

A 2015 Afrobarometer Survey led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and using a national representative sample of 2,400 respondents, found that South Africans have become more skeptical over elections. 44% of respondents believe elections ensure the representations of voters' views, and 36% stated that elections do not effectively remove

inaffective leaders from power. The survey further found that if the 2014 elections were held in 2015, the ANC's majority would have shrunk by almost 15%, from 62% to 48% (Nkomo and Felton 2016). Senqu's youth's narratives about the elections and its uselessness reflect the skepticism of the Afrobarometer's respondents. Perceptions regarding politics and politicians as useless, therefore, also extends to democratic institutions, and in this case, elections. For 20-something aspiring artist Jack, elections have lost their appeal. Instead, elections now represent the corrupt, forgetful, and manipulative side of politics. Even though Jack could have voted in the past, he has not done so. As he explained, "I just see no use in voting because it's obvious…nothing happens. One thing that made me sick and made me decide never to vote is these people would come out and campaign for votes. After the votes, nothing. They are all hypocrites."

On a different occasion Finelwe, a young mother of three boys, shared Jack's opinion. "We are now going to vote for the municipality," she told me, with her youngest bobbing around on her lap. "The politicians are gonna come around, asking us to vote, but then afterward, there's going to be nothing happening. We give them what they want, but then afterward there's going to be nothing.…They ask us for our votes because they want to be in the high places, but after they are not going to look down. They are just concerned with their own pockets." Young people therefore questioned elections' ability to disrupt, let alone alter, the status quo. Instead, the election is nothing more than empty promises and deceitful persuasion, a means for the ANC to secure its political power or, as Finelwe posited, its hierarchical position in South African society.

Thito had trouble with the country's parliamentary system, arguing that presidential elections might be a better option. "Your vote is your voice," he agreed, "but it stops at a certain

level. It's inside the party where the true decisions happen." He argued that regardless of how much you believe in a political party's ideological platform, such as the ANCs, leaders such as Jacob Zuma can completely derail such intentions. Similarly, George told me he will remain an ANC supporter, not only because of the party's liberation past but because of it ideological platform. That said, since they have no commendable leaders, he will withhold his vote and wait for a change in leadership. To vote now, he argued, is "an utter waste of time."

But then who places the ANC in power, I wanted to know? After all, the ANC has remained victorious in the country's past elections. Although there has been a decline at the voting polls, the party's victories remain unquestionable. When considering the percentage of votes cast, the ANC's consecutive win looks as follows: 63% in 1994; 66% in 1999; 70% in 2004; 66% in 2009, and 62% in 2014. However, as Schulz-Herzenberg (2014) reminds us, when considering the voter allegeable population (VAP), the ANC's election victories look drastically different: 54% in 1994; 47% in 1999; 40% in 2004; 39% in 2009, and 35% in 2014. This illustrates a combination of two factors. First, a steady decline of general voter turn-out of both registered voters from 89% in 1999[49] to 73% in 2014, and an even bigger decline in turnout as a proportion of the voting age population, that is, from 72% in 1999 to 57% in 2014. Second, Bundy (2014) and Hart (2014) theorize that these figures also illustrate a steady decline in the ANC's hegemony and struggle legacy.

Senqu youth, however, pinned the ANC's election victories on three different types of voter. The first of these are the *loyalty voter*, that is, the person still seeing the ANC as the party of liberators and freedom fighters. Senqu youth also associated such loyalty to older generations,

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[49] Here 1999 rather than 1994 is used as benchmark, because no voter registration was required for the first democratic election.

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those who were around when the "real" ANC was still around, "the ANC of Mandela and Sisulu," as Tshego explained. Angie, clearly dismayed by such a continuous ANC allegiance, compared such loyalty to infidelity:

> With us Blacks we have this thing of loyalty. It's a good characteristic. But it's not always good. For example, being married to a guy who cheats on you. Why should you remain loyal to that guy? That is exactly what's going on with the elections. You see the people you voted for do not have your best interest at heart, but you decide to still be loyal to them. It's also the old people who are still the decision makers; what is the use of us getting involved because the loyalty of the old people….years back they chose the ANC, so it will always be the ANC. Until that generation is wiped out, nothing will change.

A second type is the *easily intimidated voter*. These voters, as my focus groups explained, are mostly uneducated, poor, and older generations. Allegedly, the ANC either bribes or threatens people with food and grants, all to secure their votes. Ncindi, single mother of one, explained that "they use the grandparents, telling them that if they don't vote they won't get their pension money. So those gogos[50] just keep voting for the ANC, without knowing who the president will be."

Siphiwe's focus group also made note of voter intimidation, arguing that the party clearly underestimates their intelligence during their campaigns. As one focus group member put it: "The ANC comes here to the rural areas, they push our cows around, give us a T-shirt, thinking

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[50] Gogos – local term for older women, including grandmothers.

that that will make us vote for them. They think that we are Black and a T-Shirt will change our minds, that we will think 'wow a T-shirt.'" Additionally, there is also the country's apartheid baggage to consider, as Mandisa on a different occasion explained. "It's like a blind patriotism: People argue that if the ANC doesn't win, we will go back to apartheid, we will go back to the past. So people vote for the ANC as if they don't have any choice."

Young people also spoke of a third kind of voter contributing to the ANC's election wins, the *novelty voter*. These are people who merely vote for the sake of voting without considering who and for what to vote. Moeketsi recognized this among some of his peers. "They are very happy to have their identity documents because now they can vote, but they don't know who and what to vote for, so that's why they end up voting like everybody else. That's where everything gets wrong. They blindly follow others and who those are voting for." Moeketsi, who at the time of our conversations was 24 and thus eligible to vote in both the 2011 local election and the 2014 national election, consciously decided not to.

"Why not?" I asked.

"There is just nobody worthy of my vote."

Unlike Moeketsi, however, the novelty voter does vote, acting on too little information and knowing too little about the political system, the different parties, and how the election process works. This was Mr. Mkizi's biggest concern, not only as far as the region's young voters are concerned but also the current ANC government. He argues that to maintain their current power, the ANC consciously keeps people in the dark about election cycles. As he explained:

If only the government could teach the children that a government is given a chance for five years. If the people are not satisfied they can vote out that particular party. But that's not clear in South Africa. The government is actually hiding these things from the people….if people understood politics better they will say, oh no, your five years will come to an end and then we will just vote you out….Instead they say I have voted four times and nothing has happened, so no more voting….The government has done that deliberately. They are taking advantage of these people that do not understand politics.

Because of these abovementioned voter types, who through their different convictions effectively maintain the ANC's political stranglehold, many of my young conversationists do not see the need for voting. It is as if they feel powerless against these voters who will—regardless of alternative parties, corruption's omni-presence, and the perpetual state of their villages' underdevelopment—still vote a certain way. Angie's solution to merely wait until "those generations are wiped out" not only brings the theme of waiting back into the spotlight (Chapter 2), but also captures a sense of disempowerment. Young people who are politically conscious feel that such consciousness is powerless against the loyalty, manipulated, and novelty voter.

In our red Wimpy booth, the college ladies also debated voting's usefulness. Also lamenting over "those voters" who sustain the status quo, the ladies consider election boycotts as an option, a strategic choice. Tsego argued that by turning their backs on voter booths, young people will send a strong message to leadership. As she argued, "the youth can make a difference by not voting at all. When they [the government] look at the records they will see that all the voters are 50 years and older. Then they will think something is not right. Only then will they

come to us, the youth." But Tshego's argument did not convince Angie. "Thinking youth must keep from voting because this will be the wake-up call for the ANC government….I don't think that will work," Angie replied. "The rest of the people will vote ANC, and then they will count all their votes, declare that they won, and return to office. With or without our votes; I tell you, it'll only change when the older generation is wiped out."

Considering the 2014 election results, Senqu youth's election narratives were not far off the mark: Not only is there a decline in overall voter turnout, but the country's youth are staying away from the voting booth. Schultz-Herzenberg's (2014) policy brief considers the impact of the country's youth bulge on the national election results, that is, the country's proportionally big youth population due to the country's rapid population growth. She found that although South Africans between the age of 18 and 29 years comprised 10.9 million, or 34% of the country's voting age population, only 6.4 million were registered. This means that even though young people made up a third of the country's voting population during the 2014 election, they only accounted for a fifth of all registered voters. This age group's voting registration levels of 59% were therefore among the lowest compared to older age groups. Shultz-Herzenberg (2014) identified a further discrepancy between urban and rural voters. In 2004, regions with the highest rural populations, particularly the Eastern Cape, saw the biggest voter turnout. In 2014, however, this dramatically changed, with those provinces with big urban populations, such as Gauteng and the Western Cape, determining the election outcome.

Voting trends, in combination with Senqu youth's negative disposition toward voting, support these young people's decreased belief in politics, political processes, and accompanying democratic institutions. Considering that elections merely sustain the status quo, it has become an tired system, void of any meaning.

Alternative Politics

If not the current politics, then what? Senqu youth's conversations about politics were without a doubt filled with cynicism and critique. But for some this was not where it ended. They recognized hope in alternatives to corrupt politicians and the ANC under Zuma's leadership. Senqu youth's conversations about politics were however not void of alternatives to current forms of politics. A first alternative, still being within mainstream politics, take the form of Julius Malema's radical populism. In this form of politics, they envision politicians who *tell the truth*, and within the current political landscape, that is Julius Malema. In this case of Malema such truth is representative of that which Zuma, and by definition the ANC, is not. And, as an outspoken anti-pole to the ANC, Malema represents such truth.

The second alternative falls outside the realm of party politics and within urban social movements, in this case the #FeesMustFall movement. But although rural youth recognize the potential of these movements, they see themselves removed from such movements, merely because of their rural existence. Protests happening on university campuses are therefore protests of the city.

A third and final alternative to politics resides within the economy. In this regard, young people's conversations evidenced a deep lying neoliberal logic, where market-related principles such as autonomy, self-reliance, and individual choice override politics. Moreover, as some argued, the business world makes more sense—it is a stable, rational alternative to the country's political landscape and the illogical behavior of politicians. Arguably the young people's cynicism over the country's politics, the amalgamation of politicians' corrupt, patrimonial, and nepotistic practices, and the contradiction between these practices and the ANC's erstwhile commitment to liberation, has allowed for a deepening of neoliberal economics.

Truth-Telling Politicians

In describing the country's political predicament, young people emphasized their appreciation of truth-telling, something that in their opinion is missing from the current political landscape. Pontso, a 20-something mother was especially articulate in correlating politics with truth-telling. As our chatter opened into an almost two-hour long conversation, she left no doubt that she and her contemporaries are concerned over the political. This ranged from political actors' ability to speak the truth to truth's absence from the political landscape. In fact, Pontso almost recited her opinions as if she has worked through them before in her mind and among her friends. She did not hold back on her disgust with political deceit, emphasizing the correlation between lies and politicians. The following segment captures not only Pontso's disposition toward politics, but also her close correlation between the Zuma presidency and deceit:

> I follow politics a little bit, but I don't like them. In politics you don't have to
> say the truth. You have to lie, always. You have to protect yourself and those
> people that you want to benefit. That is the idea that I have of politics. Always
> when I see politicians they are trying to protect the government. They would
> say, no President Zuma is clean; he is clean. Whereas we know there is
> corruption happening with Zuma. But you know they are protecting themselves
> and their families.

For Pontso, Zuma-era politics conjures nothing but feelings of dishonesty and betrayal. But with such betrayal also comes a dissociation with politics. This is however not the case for Angie. "I am going to work in parliament, That's where I see myself in 20 years," Angie told me.

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"I will be the future Thuli Mandonsela," she added, smiling with the utmost self-assurance.

As student of a local FVET college, Angie has already started her political career, successfully working her way into the college's Student Representative Council (SRC). Like Pontso, she also struggles with politicians' constant lying and is already committed to her position as future "truth-teller"—bringing truth to the South African people. In the meanwhile she recognizes these qualities in Julius Malema.

> "Why do you like Malema?" I asked Angie, after she hinted at her approval of
>
> his politics and political party.
>
> She replied: "A good leadership aspect he has is that he tells the truth. If you
>
> are good leader, you shouldn't mince your words. Don't go around and around
>
> the issue. You say it as it is. If it's green, it's green. If somebody feels different
>
> about the color, you're not going to suddenly change your mind. He calls a
>
> spade a spade; he sees when something is wrong and then he addresses it."

According to Angie, Malema not only disassociates himself from the existing trope of lies and deceit, but he does so with assertiveness. In some cases, such assertiveness does come over as abrasive and ill-mannered. The college ladies also recognized this. Gotatso told us that "there are many things Malema says that are right, but he says them in the wrong way. A lot of people are saying he's disrespectful, but you know why? Because he's telling the truth. If you are a human being and you tell people the truth, they will say you are disrespectful. The truth hurts."

> "Yes, Malema is rude," Tshego added, "sometimes he's out of order, but sometimes he's also correct. For me, he's alright, because he's putting pressure on the ANC guys so they can do their jobs."

Malema's attempts to bravely elucidate the country's political inconsistencies and his tireless poking at the ANC have captured young people's political mind. Following the college ladies' argument, such elucidations are needed in the country's current climate. The country needs brave and assertive politicians not scared of asking challenging questions and not weary of challenging the ANC. And for the college ladies, Malema embodies such qualities.

Truth-telling as political practice is not foreign to the post-apartheid period. As Gillian Hart (2014) and Ivor Chipkin (2007) argue, big political processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission inserted truth-telling into South Africans' political discourse and, in this case, such discourse has made its way into young people's political talk. People's reception of more recent events, such as Mandonsela's Nkandla and State Capture Reports, further emphasized truth's importance in the country's post-apartheid era. Acts of truth-telling therefore instill a sense of patriotism, a moral sign-post with a unifying objective. Truth is however subjective in nature, with the parameters and expectations of such truth-telling taking certain dimensions within young people's political talk. For one, truth-telling signified an opposition to corruption and scandal, something synonymous with the current ANC-led government. Second, truth-telling represents oppositional, and in this case confrontational, politics as embodied in Julius Malema's political maneuvering and public performances.

"But what about Malema's elaborate lifestyle?" I asked the college ladies, wondering whether they would have any reservations regarding Malema's corruption charges and how they might sit with their appraisal of Malema's truthfulness. But they had their answer ready, describing Malema's conspicuous consumption and wealth accumulation as essential to his political career. Since Malema currently stands in opposition to the ANC, such consumption is no longer tied to corruption or devious political toiling, but is instead tied to his fight for

economic freedom. As Posel (2014) argues, Malema has to demonstrate what eventual economic freedom will look like and provide his followers with the imagery of that which they have limited access to. This aligns with Tshego argument:

> The money, the glamor, the fancy suits; his followers believe he should have those things because when you are in the presidency you should get those things and you should look different from the others. He has to fit the status of a leader. If Malema were to ask his followers to buy him a fancy mansion, they will find a way to do so. And they will make this sacrifice because they think that he is taking them in the right direction; because he's fighting for their rights; unlike Zuma.

I asked Pontso, another supporter of Malema and his truth-telling commitment, about his unsavory financial record. "I like Malema, Elene," she replied. "I'm not going to lie. I'm even going to vote for him in the next election! Those charges are there, but the problem is the ANC government is manipulating [the law] just because Malema left the party. They are always going to make stories that are wrong about Malema, to give him a bad name." For Pontso, Malema's corruption charges are no deal-breaker. Instead these charges have always been part of an ANC-concocted conspiracy to brand Malema in a negative light. This is so much more a reason why Pontso will follow Malema and his EFF rather than the ANC.

Malema, Politically Unrefined

While young people such as Pontso and Angie spoke highly of Malema's political demeanor, they also added some reservation. This concerned Malema's abrasiveness with regards to public relations. As an outspoken Malema fan, Angie told me that "Malema has the right vision for the country, but the problem is his approach. He needs some guidance, someone who can groom him. He has anger issues, and he wants to channel those issues through politics. If only he can be more neutral on that front."

But here, Angie was not necessarily referring to Malema's harsh responses to journalists or his rudeness in parliament. She referred to his disposition toward race and his corresponding racial pronouncements. Well aware of Malema's public track record as far as racial remarks are concerned, Angie continued: "If he becomes the leader, *you* White people will be the first one he sends out of the country. He hates White people. He needs to solve those anger issues first."

Angie was not alone in interpreting Malema's racial utterances in terms of anger, nor in warning me about my future as a White South African if Malema does become president. The college girls were also alert to Malema's racial utterances, reflecting an ambivalence toward his political narratives and political leadership. As Gotatso explained, "My problem with Malema is that sometimes I like him, but then other times he scares me. When Malema becomes president he's going to banish all the White people, because he's got so much hatred toward them. And then, as president, Malema will also use all the money." Similar to Gotatso, Jack was also weary of Malema's gravitation toward conspicuous consumption, sharing that "before Malema became ANCYL president he had this idea of economic freedom, but he got amazed by the fancy lifestyle; the ANC gave him all those fancy things."

Despite some young people's recognition of Malema and his political party, they remain ambivalent toward showing full fledged support for him and his party and the election booth. This was reflected in the region's election result, both as far as the 2014 national election and 2016 municipal elections were concerned. During the 2014 elections, Senqu saw 40,492 votes cast. Whereas 33,412, or 84%, went to the ANC, only 1,843, or 5.5%, went to the EFF. Both parties lost even more ground during the 2016 municipal elections, with the ANC winning 68% of votes versus the EFF's 3.4%. This was due to the rise of a local civil society organization, the Civics who won 23% of the municipal vote. These election results attest to both to the ANC's stranglehold over older voters and younger voters disinterest in politics.

Picture 2: Rural Landscape in Senqu District

If politics is such a useless system, one young people consciously want to steer away from, then what is the alternative? Toward the end of my fieldwork in 2015, the #FeesMustFall movement took hold of the South African public sphere. Predominantly steered by young people and building on the groundbreaking actions of the #RhodesMustFall movement earlier the same year, the #FeesMustFall movement illustrated young people's discontent with the country's post-apartheid predicament and accompanying political landscape.

The protests and accompanying movement vehemently objected to proposed university tuition increases, which not only limit predominantly Black youth's access to higher education but eventually constraint the success in the country's already limited job market. Young people's nationwide dissent sent tremors throughout the country's public arena, reminding South Africans and the government alike of youth's potential political power. Moreover, these student protests embodied critique that extended beyond the country's university campuses, making visible the covert perpetuation of racial discrimination and unambiguous class differentiation prominent within the post-apartheid period. These elements' presence in the South Africa's contemporary democracy stand in stark contrast to erstwhile objectives of social justice. Additionally, #FeesMustFall activists consciously steered away from any party affiliation, sending a message that aligns with many Senqu youth: they have no faith in political parties, nor their leadership.

That said, #FeesMustFall only resonated with Senqu youth who plan on attending urban universities or who have relatives in urban centrums. As a member of her college's student representative council, Angie was among the few Senqu youth who, at the time of my fieldwork, spontaneously spoke about her urban counterparts' movement. On one occasion, toward the end of October, Angie told me:

Based on #FeesMustFall you actually believe that there's hope. Youth are

doing it for themselves. We should not wait for the people out there to make

things happen; we must have things happen for ourselves. The best part of the

campaign was that for the first time in a very long time, the youth made a

decision that was not influenced by anybody else; no political influence, just

the youth talking and stating that this is their future and their education. They

forced government to do something and even though the fees are still there, at

least there will be no increase. That is something that shook the country, but in

a positive way. If the government fails on its part, you will see more of these

things happening.

At the time, both Angie and I did not anticipate the breadth of the 2016 #FeesMustFall

movement. Angie did, however, sense the movement's stamina and correctly envisioned the

urban youth's commitment should the government's Department of Higher Education and

Training not meet their demands in 2016.

Others sneered at it, either by showing limited interest in the movement or by asserting

they are economically and socially too far removed from the issue. When we briefly met again in

2016, Angie placed rural youth's disposition toward the #FeesMustFall campaign into

perspective. Those youth in rural higher education institutions, such as her own college, have

shown support for their urban counterparts. Such support has not necessarily through public

marches or protests, but rather discursively via social media. In comparison to students on

university campuses, their rural disposition and financial backgrounds give them access to

government-sponsored bursaries. This is all part of the government's National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) program, and its efforts to help young people gain further vocational training so they can effectively engage in the labor market. Because of such financial support, Angie argued, rural youth enrolled in TVET colleges have little grounds to either join the #FeesMustFall movement or start their own separate movement.

Mandisa was less convinced by the 2015 #FeesMustFall movement or its momentum, arguing that young people might just be wasting their time. At the end of the day, as Mandisa argued, politicians will just do enough to calm people down. Nothing more, nothing less. "The fees thing?" she asked. "People complain, but it's actually a waste of time. Nothing will get done. We complain and then politicians just hope it will die off. We complain about unemployment, and they just hope it's going to die."

The #FeesMustFall protests were significant for at least three reasons. First, these initial protests convinced, not only higher education institutions, but also the South African public to reconsider how thoroughly the country has dealt with its colonial and apartheid pasts. The ensuing backlash from predominantly White South Africans against the students' aversion to symbols of racial and colonial oppression ensued renewed discussion on White privilege, forms of covert racism, and subsequently highlighted the limits of post-apartheid social and racial transformation. Second, these protests reminded the South African public and politicians alike of young people's political agility, social nimbleness, and persistence to show their concerns. Characteristic in this regard were students' organizational efforts, predominantly on social media platforms, to mobilize, enact awareness, and gain support. Third, the protests shed light on post-apartheid governance, with students questioning the ANC-led government's efforts to enact its liberation-era objectives of emancipation and social equality. Through their protests students

showed their disillusionment with the post-apartheid period, as evident in the persistence of racial and colonial forms of power inequality.

A Future Paved in Business

For other Senqu youth, political actions—occurring either within or outside the traditional structure of party politics—are also not a solution to the country's political climate or their own region's socioeconomic predicament. Andiswa, for example, is not interested in politics, at least not in South African party politics. After running into her a couple of times at school, Andiswa insisted I come for an afternoon cooldrink at her grandfather's house so we could talk some more politics. She assured me that many other young people share her frustration with the country's politics, as she explained:

> I see politics and politicians as utterly useless. I do not see what they do, and I don't see the politicians bringing any change. In this area, people believe that *ixoxo nxoxo liyazi xhumela* [A frog must fend for itself]. It means everyone for herself and for himself. You have to hustle to survive. I don't even know the minsters. I don't even want to be involved in politics when I'm older. And another thing. We watch these politicians and just see a bunch of uneducated people who have a lot of authority. The politics thing is totally pointless. To bring changes, young people should maybe get involved in politics. But the thing is, it's not attractive at the moment. In general, we are just ignorant to politics and decide not to get involved and then just worry about ourselves and

our survival. We argue, let's just think of ourselves. You don't have the luxury

in some cases, to worry about politics. You just think about surviving.

For Andiswa the country's politics is unattractive. It carries no appeal because, as she argued, politicians are uneducated, ignorant, and selfish. Politics is therefore useless with no true value for the country's future generations. As an alternative she nudged at self-reliance, a form of survival that brings young people to move beyond the country's political turmoil, turning instead to themselves and their own individual skills. Through such self-reliance young people not only disassociate themselves from the country's politicians and their political maneuvering but secure futures where they will not need politics, nor politicians. Many young people have no other choice but to rely on themselves and, as Andiswa shared, thinking of politics is for many young people a mere luxury.

Andiswa was not alone in her frustrations or her emphasis on self-reliance. A week after meeting her, I again heard such an emphasis from Thito, in his critical perception of the country's politics and insistence that youth must bring their futures to fruition through entrepreneurial efforts. I met Thito at a local government-run development agency. I scheduled an interview with his supervisor and, after having our conversation about local youth development dynamics, she asked whether I had a couple of extra minutes to spare. "It's just that I think you will also enjoy talking with Thito, my apprentice," she explained. "I told him about your interest in the region's youth and he is excited to meet with you. I think he will do some great things for the region and its communities."

"Politics? Politicians? What I think of them?" He shook his head, thinking of a way to formulate a succinct yet brief responds. At first, I thought Thito's reluctance to talk politics was

because of his government-based apprenticeship, but as our friendship developed and he moved

on to a different position, I realized that Thito essentially sees no need for political talk. This

does not signify an obliviousness toward the country's political landscape or its politicians, but

instead a mere movement beyond politics. Like Andiswa, he too, regards self-reliance as the only

viable pathway to realize future ambitions. Spending time and energy on political issues is not

only wasteful but also unproductive.

"I think politicians are not only our country, but the whole continent's biggest obstacle,"

he said during a different visit. "They do not know how to lead selflessly," he continued. "And

then they are not educated; those placed in leadership positions are the 'dom' ones."

During yet another conversation, Thito told me that many youth have become "immune"

to politics. Instead they live their lives regardless of politics, moving beyond all the noise

politicians make and positioning themselves in places far removed from political turmoil. He

added: "Because the country's politics is such a mess, my friends and I have decided to look

elsewhere; there where politics will not affect us. We look at the private sector. We look to

business, because that's where the future lies. That's where our successes lie."

Since our first meeting in October 2015, Thito has remained true to his business

commitment. In January 2016, he and a dozen local acquaintances came together to create their

own organization with the primary objective to help local youth, in particular young

entrepreneurs, build and further develop their businesses. Consciously independent from any

political party or government department, and committed to their business development goal, the

group of youngsters have weekly WhatsApp meetings, with conversation threads easily

stretching over three hours long. Over the course of 2016, these meetings focused mainly on

ironing out the finer details of the organization, such as leadership, executive positions, and who

prospective board members might be. With some of the members' living in urban areas, mostly attending colleges or universities, many conversations also focused on potential weekend get-togethers in Sterkspruit, or reports from those living in Senqu, on village news and happenings.

Even though the final kinks still need to be finalized, one organizational focus is clear: The organization will essentially act as an overarching umbrella organization, providing young entrepreneurs access to advice and possible investors. All of this will happen within a broader frame of profit making, not only for local entrepreneurs but also for Thito's organization. But in addition to these small-scale and potentially lucrative business ventures, Thito's organization also sees itself as a community of social entrepreneurs, because, as he explained at one point, "there's also money to be made, even in social endeavors." To adhere to such social commitments, the organization will also tend to gaps within Senqu's social landscape, in this case, providing mentorship programs for high schoolers that range from career guidance to tutoring.

In her analysis of the neoliberal state and the subsequent downfall of democracy, Brown (2015b, 33) warns against neoliberalism's "economization" of noneconomic spheres and activities, leading to the rise of concepts such as social entrepreneurship. She reminds us of a modern-day neoliberal *Homo Oeconomicus*, focused not only on entrepreneurialism, but also geared toward financialization and its project to "self-invest in ways that enhance its value…and to do this across every sphere of its existence." Included in these spheres are the political, essential to the realization of true citizenship and democratic life. But Thito and his organization's undivided faith in business and entrepreneurial ventures, which in a free-market and neoliberal sense of the word are above government regulation and political hindrance, overwrites conversations about the state and political life. Then again, the post-Mandela-era and

its accompanying lists of corruption scandals, populist notions, and perpetual inequality has provided young people like Thito and his organization ground to prefer business as a sane and stable alternative for their community's social and economic betterment. In this regard, young people's gravitation toward a neoliberal rationality that promotes self-reliance rather than a dependency on the state (Gill and Scharff 2011, Peck 2008), and encourages business transactions rather than political engagement (Brown 2015b), does make sense. After all, as my earlier conversation with Andiswa brought to the fore, self-reliance resonates better with young people than useless and unattractive politics.

Conclusion

Senqu's older generations, teachers, and youth workers frequently lamented young people's disinterest in politics. During our conversation, Mr. Busi, a retired teacher, moaned about the born-free generation and their political innocence. "Rural youth are not interested in politics because they don't see anything impressive today. It's different to when we were young and everybody knew about the struggle. The Born-Frees, however, they are not interested. Those in the cities maybe, but these in the rural areas, no."

Although Mr. Busi's claim of young people's political naivety and passivity might hold true for some youth, others reflected a far more complex disposition toward politics: a conscious political passivity rooted in disappointment and distrust. Many Senqu youth shared an articulate political awareness, filled with themes that revealed their disappointment in the country's existing political parties and accompanying politicians. These themes captured a jaded disposition toward politics, labeling it as greedy, useless, and thus irrelevant. This jadedness also extended to concepts commonly associated with the post-apartheid period, particularly the

democratic process of voting. In many young people's minds, democratic processes have essentially lost their meaning, not only because of politicians' actions, but also their communities' unchanged social and economic predicament.

Rather than engage in political processes, young people choose to stay clear of politics, finding solace in something beyond party politics, something that in their eyes constitutes the apolitical. Contrary to what progressive readers might hope, such an apolitical stance does not necessarily involve a resurgence of democratic norms and values, but rather coincides with a neoliberal rationality that minimizes civil engagement, democracy, and the state. In this case, young people turn toward entrepreneurship, seeing financial actions as something immune to political turmoil and thus the only way toward realizing their future ambitions. In this case, the mishandling of state power and politicians' corruption have allowed neoliberal rationality to emerge as an antithesis to politics, eventually restoring some form of equilibrium to the country's erratic social and political landscape.

Chapter 6 – Post-Apartheid Contradictions and Neoliberal Rationality

Drawing from 12 months of fieldwork between 2014 and 2016, interviews, group discussions, and continued on-line conversations, this dissertation captures young people's views of the post-apartheid state and its political actors. First, I suggest that unemployment and social assistance act as empirical bases from which youth formulate their disposition to, and expectations of, the state. Additionally, young people also see politicians and their actions as reflections of the state and governance. In this case, politicians' actions become reference points for young people's understanding of politics. Second, I suggest that the contradictory nature of the post-apartheid state, in combination with a neoliberal rationality that extends beyond the market place, is essential to understanding how young people interpret their socioeconomic environments, conceptualize their relationship to politics, and envision a life beyond politics.

Making Sense of it All

Many Senqu youth draw a close correlation between unemployment and their communities' perceived social problems (Chapter 2). In turn they appreciate employment as an effective way to lessen their communities' perceived social ills, ranging from general boredom and "sitting around" to alcohol and drug abuse. In this case, wage labor is not only valued as a monetary ticket out of "waithood," but also as a disciplinary tool that can keep them and their peers out of mischief while steering them toward a more structured and responsible future. Additionally, Senqu youth interpret work as a prerequisite to individual fulfillment, and they draw broader correlations between work and citizenship.

Like unemployment, social assistance is also central to young people's descriptions of their immediate social environments. Themes that emerged from these conversations were the

primary focus of Chapter 3. With most Senqu households receiving some form of social grants, the centrality of social assistance in young people's lives should come as no surprise. However, young people's opinions of social grants are far from unanimous, ranging from cautious skepticism to outright disapproval. While young and unemployed mothers appreciate state assistance, other youth define mothers' reliance on grants as an intentional misuse of state funds. An additional stream of critique describes social grants as the government's way of inducing dependence on a population, which will eventually be unable to fend for itself. For some young people, such dependence borders on political manipulation.

Conversations with Senqu youth often wandered into elaborate examinations of the country's politics and politicians. Directly influencing such examinations is the country's active media and growing social media platforms, giving young people instant access to the controversies surrounding post-Mandela politics. As I illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, these controversies range from the Mbeki-Zuma power struggle to the Nkandla ordeal. The last decade also saw the rise of Julius Malema and accompanying populist discourse, which has caught the attention of all South Africans, regardless of age, race, or ethnic background. Malema's public performances in and out of parliament—regardless on which side of the political spectrum you reside—have been especially effective in shedding a light on the ANC's governing efforts and internal political struggles. Not surprisingly, allegations of corruption, nepotism, and patronage contribute to young people's almost nihilistic outlook on politics, with many seeing politicians as inadequate and politics as superfluous. Young people's disillusionment with the post-apartheid political context, in combination with a constant stream of political scandals emerging onto the country's political landscape, stand in direct contrast to the ANC's erstwhile intentions of transparent governance and people-centered politics.

Contradictions are inherent to contemporary South Africa. According to Reddy (2015, 33) politicians' actions exemplify such contradictions, moving between a "politics of community service and values associated with popular struggle and self-sacrifice, to self-seeking special interests." Achille Mbembe (2015) also recognizes this contradictory predicament, arguing that the country currently faces its "negative moment"—A moment when old and more recent unresolved crises come together and "contradictory forces, inchoate, fracture, fragmented," coalesce. We cannot predict what will come of this confluence, Mbembe asserts, but we can be certain that "the age of innocence and complacency is over." Contradictions are thus central to the post-apartheid public and political spheres, especially when comparing the ANC's erstwhile liberation objectives with the country's current persistent state of poverty and social inequality. These contradictions are also lived realities, where the ANC's commitments toward pro-poor development and wealth redistribution have either not materialized, or made way for neoliberal alternatives.

Contradictions Abound

Contradictions in the public sphere syphon through to local realities, impacting not only the lives of young people but also their perceptions of the post-apartheid state. This is evident when considering the reality of rising youth unemployment. As I described in Chapter 2, an emphasis on wage labor, accompanied with good working conditions and a decent living wage, was central to the ANC's liberation movement. This emphasis stemmed from the discriminatory working conditions of Black South Africans during apartheid and the close relation between the

then banned ANC and workers' unions.[51] A call for decent living wages coupled with proper

employment benefits was therefore central to the liberation movement and a subsequent

objective to be realized after apartheid. Additionally, decent employment signified a form of

wealth redistribution and acknowledgment of economic participation. While Black South

Africans surely participated in the country's economy during apartheid, such participation was

without proper recognition or well-structured benefits. Work, both during and after the liberation

movement, therefore represents both civil and economic inclusion, something closely linked to

the liberation movement's emancipation objective.

However, after 1994 the promise of wage labor became increasingly illusory due to the

country's post-industrial nature, and the ANC's adoption of neoliberal restructuring. And the

further the country moves from its democratic turn and its accompanying promises of decent

employment, the greater the rise in unemployment.[52] The youth have been most affected by this

rise in unemployment, amidst promises of employment.

Senqu youth have latched onto the ANC's commitment to work, anxiously waiting for

the government's promised employment opportunities. Their yearning for employment is

however against the stark reality of unemployment and the country's jobless economic

trajectory. As some of my participants note, waiting for work can easily override alternative

forms of social and communal engagement such as volunteering. The political elite has remained

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[51] This relationship developed further following the Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Formed shortly after the unbanning of the ANC and SACP in 1990, this alliance has increasingly come under pressure. Such pressure has come from Cosatu, arguing that the ANC and SACP has not allowed the workers unions enough political leverage. For a discussion on the politics of South African workers' unions (see Southall and Wood 1999, Buhlungu and Psoulis 1999, Pillay 2011, Barchiesi 2011, and Beresford 2012).
[52] This was again evident from the 2016 fourth quarter unemployment figures of 27% nationally for people actively seeking work. The figure for unemployed South Africans who have given up on looking for work stood at 36.1%. This has been the highest unemployment rate since 2003 (see Speckman 2016).

loyal to its work mantra, not only valorizing the importance of wage labor but also incessantly committing itself to job creation. This emphasis on work clashes with the reality of the country's labor market, pointing to the disconnect between political rhetoric and local realities.

One way to alleviate the burden of unemployment is through social assistance. And as I explained in Chapter 3, the post-apartheid government has increasingly relied on its expansive social grants program to ease the country's poverty burden. This program currently provides monetary relief to more than a third of the country's population. It is not a universal program, but instead geared toward specific target populations, with guardians of children being the biggest recipient population.

Arguably, the social grants program resembles pro-poor and distributive politics. However, while expansive in nature and providing monetary relief to 17 out of 51 million South Africans, politicians describe the social grants program as a temporary solution, one South Africans should not get too comfortable with. From a policy standpoint, the program provides temporary momentary relief while politicians and policy makers work toward more sustainable and primarily labor-market orientated alternatives.

Politicians' reserved view on social grants as a permanent fixture is especially evident in their disapproval of a universal basic income grant. In 2000, the ANC-led government commissioned an inquiry into the fiscal viability and impact of such a grant. And although the commission, in addition to prominent economists and workers' unions, supported the implementation of a universal grant, the proposal was rejected by the ANC's top leadership (Ferguson 2007). They instead continue to emphasize employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development as their government's ultimate solution for social development. In turn political discourse evidences critique against social assistance, sending subtle messages to the

South African public that they should not become too reliant on social grants. This has remained the dominant narrative. That said, the government's overall spending on social assistance has increased extensively since the end of apartheid, evidencing an ambivalence in the state's disposition toward social assistance.

A skepticism toward social assistance was also embedded in Senqu youngsters' constant reference to grants. As mentioned in Chapter 3, young people often argued that the government should take a tougher stance toward South Africans' dependence on social grants. They asserted that instead of relying on government handouts young people should learn to become self-reliant and independent, concepts that not only resemble the objectives of neoliberal economics, but inadvertently alleviate the state of its responsibility toward social development.

A further contradiction resides in politicians' actions. Certain political moves, like those mentioned in Chapter 4, depict the ANC elite as disengaged and self-serving, both sentiments Senqu youth used to describe South African politicians. In turn, such actions stand in direct contrast to the ANC's commitment to bring accountable governance and a politics of community service to all South Africans. For Senqu youth, politicians' self-interest has not only become a defining factor of the country's post-apartheid political landscape, but for politics in general. They see no use in politicians or politics.

But as I argue in Chapters 4 and 5, the ANC elites' political actions have not only furthered young South Africans' distrust in politics, but allowed for the deepening of neoliberal sentiments. Increasingly youth question the state's ability to provide services, and the recent Social Grants controversy further exacerbated such sentiments. If youth can no longer rely on the state, they argue, they can now only look toward themselves, rely on their own creativity and innovation, and separate themselves from any association with the corrupt state. Therefore Senqu

youth increasingly consider apolitical alternatives. For those with some social and financial capital, the business world seems increasingly like a sound and safe bet.

Scholarly Contribution

This dissertation contributes to three bodies of scholarship: the anthropology of youth; the anthropology of post-apartheid South Africa; and the anthropology of the post-colonial state.

The anthropology of youth has seen a steady increase since the late 1990s, with an increased focus on youth as something more than a life stage but rather as their own agents with their own social and cultural capacities. This includes an emphasis on youth as political agents, stressing youth's capacity to question and alter existing polities. The anthropology of youth therefore concerns ethnographic inquiries into young people's immediate social lives. These scholars argue that an understanding of how young people describe and interpret their immediate communities provides a looking glass into the future, after all, a society's future rides on the back of its youth. It is they who carry the burden of the past and who must face the new and the unknown. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2005, 20) argue, youth, as a concept, denotes "many things at once: For the terrors of the present, the errors of the past, the prospect of the future."

By focusing on the political perception of South African youth, this dissertation contributes to an anthropology of youth. I also suggest that a productive approach to young people's political interpretations is to investigate not necessarily how they define politics, but rather how they construct an understanding of politics by looking at their immediate environment. By focusing on rural youth, this dissertation also provides fertile ground for future comparative work, looking at the differences and similarities between rural and urban youth cultures, and how their social worlds differ or correlate.

A second scholarly contribution concerns research on the post-apartheid trajectory. This includes scholars' efforts to describe and capture the ebb and flows of the country's transitions and transformations—or lack thereof—since 1994. Although scholars have approached this from an expansive multidisciplinary vantage point, the younger generations' view remain less explored. This is not necessarily because of scholarly oversight or a disinterest in young people's opinions, but rather allowing time for the Born-Free generation to come of age and subsequently develop their opinion of the state and the country's political landscape. More than two decades after apartheid, it is time to capture this generation's understanding of its predicament as Born-Free's and how they construct such an understanding. In this regard, young people's opinions act as an evaluation mechanism, testing the post-apartheid trajectory and its democratic emergence. This dissertation therefore contributes to post-apartheid scholarship, by including the opinions and voices of the country's younger generation.

An interest in post-apartheid politics overlaps with post-colonial studies. This concerns not only the dynamics associated with liberation struggles' eventual rise to national power, but also asks to what extent such a transition signifies a form of neocolonialism where the former suppressed remain overshadowed by capitalist and elite forces. Among others, postcolonial scholars have focused on postcolonial states and their approaches to governance, illustrating how such governance emulates or differs from preceding regimes of power. This dissertation contributes to such an emphasis showing how the post-apartheid state have come to represent the derailed liberation objectives often associated with the postcolonial state. Moreover, I illustrate how we can identify such derailment through young people's discursive practices. Such disillusionment is not only present in their discussions about the state, but equally so, in their lived experiences, their dismal employment opportunities and questionable education standards.

Future Research

When reflecting on rural youth and their interpretation of work, social assistance, and politics four additional factors emerged as crucially relevant. This includes the gendered nature of rural life; the racial and class dynamics that continue to shape South African society; a hypothetical rural-urban divide that separates rural youth's political interests and participation from those in urban contexts, and lastly, the necessity to move beyond a deterministic neoliberal critique. Although I touched upon these factors throughout the dissertation, these call for follow-up research and analysis.

Gendered Work and Social Assistance

Unemployment's ensuing conditions of sitting and waiting contain embedded social and cultural narratives (Mains 2011). But from a gender perspective, who does the sitting? Moreover, what social practices emerge from these moments of sitting and waiting and how do these structure certain contemporary gender identities? At first blush I associated sitting with young men, who, without the domestic commitments typically associated with women, have more time to sit. But frequently WhatsApp conversations with young female participants also alluded to frustrated moments of waiting and sitting. For example, Susan, who finished high school during my fieldwork, often shared via WhatsApp that "she's just lying on her bed," or "I've done all my chores, so now I'm just sitting." Young women like Susan trump common assumptions that young women are caught up in culturally determined domestic and child rearing responsibilities. In this case, I would argue that young women, who are connected to small households with less

domestic chores, and who have no child rearing responsibilities, are even more frustrated with conditions of sitting than men. Young men have more social freedom to move around and engage socially. In contrast, young women's mobility is restricted, with concerns over gender-based violence keeping young women away from public spaces and political platforms. While anthropologists have looked at conditions of waiting and sitting among young men, questions still remain about unemployed young women. Furthermore, to what extent to they engage in political discussions and activities?

Closely related to these questions are interests in gender identities and perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Ferguson (2015) alludes to the precarious social predicament of young men, arguably the most excluded population as far as South Africa's social welfare system is concerned. In contrast to young mothers who do have access to social assistance, albeit small, unemployed men have no direct access to such support. I argue that such marginality is questionable, considering the persistent patriarchal structure of South African society and despite the availability of social grants, young Black women are still the most unemployed population and remains economically marginalized. That said, young men's frustration with regards to unemployment and social mobility do translate into social practices distinct from those of young women and older generations. Further research should therefore investigate the formation of gender identities that arise from unemployment and subsequent conditions of sitting and waiting.

Another set of questions concerns the intersection of work and gender, in particular, what young people consider as reputable work. Here I am specifically interested in the gendered nature of unemployment, and how work in and around domestic spaces are perceived. More specifically, how are young mothers' responsibilities perceived in and around domestic spaces, if not seen as work?

Gender dynamics also feature prominently in young people's perceptions of social assistance. As I have illustrated in Chapter 3, Senqu youth frequently correlated social assistance with preconceived notions of sexuality and motherhood. This includes how women should behave sexually, their responsibilities as far as child rearing are concerned, and more generally, how they lack stamina, are not self-reliant, and thus prone toward dependency. In the process, the social environments in which many young rural women and mothers survive are often overlooked, or perceived as merely circumstantial. These conditions range from limited resources to high rates of domestic violence and abuse. Equally so, the role young mothers play within societies burdened with poverty and social inequality is not considered in terms of endurance but rather as precarious, irregular, and indecent. What is at the core of this critical understanding of young mothers' and how does this play out in perceptions on social assistance? Moreover, how do notions of masculinity influence critique against women and their dependence on social assistance?

The Rural-Urban Divide

Young people made frequent mention of the city, what it has to offer, and the life it can bring. These conversations had a comparative side to them, with rural youth often describing their lives and social environments as inferior to those of urban youth. As Pontso explained:

> The cities have the schools, the education, the sport. There's nothing for the youth
>
> in the rural areas. [The government] just prioritize the bigger places, the cities.
>
> They have everything. You must sometimes wish to fly and just be there to take
>
> the opportunities of urban youth. We so dearly want those opportunities but we

can't reach them. Living here you have to go to Sterkspruit Town to get stuff.

How are you going to get there? What are you going to leave with? If you go

there to school, where are you going to stay? So, it is very difficult for us here in

the rural areas.

Life in the cities is not necessarily easier, nor is it filled with opportunity. Increased rural-urban migration patterns, together with already saturated urban spaces and overexpanded urban infrastructure, leave many aspiring rural job seekers in dire straits (Davis 2006; Freund 2007a; Myers 2011). Having no luck, some rural migrants return home. However, those who are lucky remain in the city, visiting the rural only for funerals and weddings. What constitute these rural-urban migration routes? How do rural youth find their way to the city, and how to they navigate these new contexts? Furthermore, how do their immediate experiences differ from their preconceived imaginaries of the city?

Differences between rural and urban contexts also extend to politics. With the recent #fallist movement happening primarily on urban university campuses, rural youth remain hypothetically excluded from these conversations, considering their rural context and limited access to higher education. We need to ask how, if at all, rural youth's understanding of politics differ from those of their urban counterparts. Such comparative analyses will enrich our understanding of South African youth, illustrating the nuanced nature of youth politics. Such work will also adhere to youth scholar Joshka Philips' (2014) call that the anthropology of youth move beyond mere description. Through comparative analyses, Philips argues, we can better underscore youth's heterogeneity.

With postsecondary education comes greater employment opportunities. In some South African cases, postsecondary education is the only way to secure work. But for many Senqu youth access to university or other higher education institutions is out of reach. As I have alluded to in Chapter 2, three factors contribute to this. The first concerns the standard with which they completed their final high school year—if they complete it at all. Often, their high school grades cannot secure a place in higher education. Second, students' access to social and financial capital will determine whether they make their way to urban centrums and onto university campuses. Without such additional resources, further education will remain out of reach for many rural youth. Third, access to universities and further training institutions depends on institutional capacity; that is, whether institutions have sufficient openings. In this regard, higher high school grades will help secure space.

These factors apply more to Black youth from poor households than those from middle and higher income households whose parents or guardians work in government, own businesses, or work in urban areas. In contrast, youngsters from the latter socioeconomic demographic can attend former middle-C schools, or what many young people refer to as "White schools." These schools, in contrast to public schools, come with a price tag. Whereas public schools are free, the former middle-C schools charge fees, and if far from home, require either boarding school fees, or other housing arrangements. Some Senqu youth from high-income households also have the option to attend private schools. Although these households are still subjected to economic hardship and often adhere to the needs of extended family members, youngsters do have a better opportunity to enter and complete higher education training. This is because their start in either former Middle-C and private schools exposes them to smaller classroom sizes, better interaction

between students and teachers, and subsequently, better learning opportunities. In turn, these conditions help them obtain better grades and probably better changes for university acceptance. In the process, however, a definite class structure among youth has emerged, completely shaped by school attendance. How do rural youth's school identities reflect post-apartheid class differences? Moreover, how does such enrolment influence their political perceptions? The relations between students attending local schools and those from former middle-C schools and private schools, therefore calls for further inquiry. This would contribute to scholarship on class dynamics on the ground – in this case, I am not calling for a reapplication and reassertion of class analysis to the anthropology of youth. Instead, in line with South African historian Van Zyl-Hermann I interpret class as a perpetual project in the making through a dialectic of discursive labor and actually existing forms of relations" (Eley and Nield 2000, 18).

In contrast to Senqu's rural public schools, the region's middle-C and private schools are multiracia. This refers to both teacher and student demographics. Race remains a burning point within South African society, with repeated cases of both overt and covert racism bursting onto the public space. That said, scholars have yet to delve deeper into the racial dynamics on the country's high schools. What role does race play on high school campuses? Moreover, how do multiracial schools in rural contexts approach incidents of overt racism and, in the process, deal with institutionalized racism? Arguably, school campuses are important educational spaces to enact and promote open and frank conversations about race. These spaces are unfortunately also where racial stereotypes and ideologies become engrained.

Lastly, one needs to be cautious in taking a too deterministic stance on rural youth from poor households, their learning environments, and the public schools they attend. Although the Eastern Cape Province has the country's worst matriculation pass rate, there are pockets of

success, committed teachers, and students who succeed beyond expectations. To avoid metanarratives of poverty and dread, we therefore need to engage in future research that ethnographically explore education settings of these public schools and students.

Neoliberalism is All Around—What's New?

Throughout this dissertation, I draw from a neoliberal critique that identifies neoliberalism's infiltration of our political and social worlds. Such infiltration pertains to the working of market principles in spaces not directly associated with the market place. I used this critique to explain young people's yearning for employment, difficult relationship to social assistance, and their disassociation from politics. But, such an approach can also be interpreted as deterministic. Moreover, how do I know that young people, many of whom are not necessarily interested in the economic arguments against and philosophic dispositions surrounding neoliberal restructuring, are drawing from such frameworks? To what extent am I merely supplanting my ideological position regarding neoliberalism on their worldviews? Although some scholars might interpret my usage of neoliberalism as deterministic, I see it merely as a first step toward further theorization. Moreover, we cannot ignore neoliberalism's imposing position in our current world order. By ignoring its presents for the sake of not being deterministic, might be perceived as an ignorant or even naïve gesture. By first acknowledging neoliberalism's presence in everyday South Africa and in the worldviews of rural youth, (step 1) and then moving toward a more nuanced theorization of such worldviews (step 2) is in my opinion the most systematic approach to take. Such nuanced theorization should reflect upon the limitations of neoliberalism as governmentality, while proposing alternative theoretical discussions. This dissertation includes the first step. The second step is what comes after this dissertation.

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