Fragments of a coloured history: migration, governmentality and race in Cape Town

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Historical research in South Africa is rich and detailed. Few other countries on the African continent have inspired quite the same impressive number of historians, anthropologists, political and social scientists to engage in a sustained level of analysis. It is, in fact, possible to speak of a distinct 'South Africanist' tradition. A potential drawback from the sheer magnitude of research is the danger of exceptionalising the South African experience. In Africanist debates one often finds an explicit delimitation of 'Africa South of Sahara', as well as a more implicit 'and North of the Limpopo River'. One influential attempt to dent the notion of South African exception was Mahmoud Mamdani's powerful and controversial 'Citizen and Subject' (Mamdani 1996). Coming from an 'African' country he noted that apartheid and what came before was not an aberration in Africa but rather a radicalization of colonialism through the perfected system of indirect rule. Although Mamdani has been criticized for this approach (e.g. Chipkin Forthcoming), his intervention was welcome in that it brought South Africa in touch with the rest of the continent.

However, exceptionalism is still alive within South Africanist circles. The sheer number of people working on South Africa, and the detail of the analyses, is one reason. Another powerful reason might be that it has been politically expedient to do so. By positing apartheid, and white rule in South Africa, as exceptional(ly evil), the country, its struggles and the subsequent liberation also attain the allure of the exceptional. This has served South Africa well in terms of media visibility, Nobel prizes and in economic terms. However, in terms of historical research the exceptionalism has incurred costs in terms of certain oversights, of which Mamdani points to some.

In this regard, the historical research on coloureds in Cape Town seems to be a paradigmatic case. Most, if not all, research in Cape Town seems to stop not at the Limpopo River but in the Karoo desert that physically sets Cape Town and the Western Cape apart from the rest of the country and continent. The sheer distance has been the most powerful argument for positing the Western Cape and
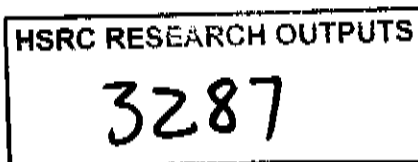
the study of the coloureds as a separate endeavour, but as we will argue, there have been also powerful implicit political arguments for doing so.

The danger of attempting to break the Capetonian exception, or any exception, is to suggest that everything is the same, or reducing it to some general principle. Hence, the purpose of this article is to revisit the history of coloureds in Cape Town without loosing sight of its evident specificity. We attempt to do so through the identification of three 'oversights'. By oversights we mean issues that for different reasons have been ignored or treated in a cursory manner by historical research on Cape Town. We have almost surely not identified them all and others might accuse us of similar oversights. However, the oversights we have identified appear to be of significant importance, as the identification of them, in our view, cast doubts on some taken for granted assumptions about the coloureds and their struggle to survive the mean streets of the metropolis and the poverty of the countryside.

The three oversights are, in quick succession, the almost reified position of the forced removals from inner-city Cape Town as explaining social ills on the Cape Flats, today one of the most violent cities on the planet (e.g. Pinnock 1984; Burman et al 1998). The Cape Flats were not only the product of forced removals but also of rural-urban migration that saw the erection of massive squatter camps all over the Cape Flats, which only disappeared in the late 1970s. Second, against the grain of understanding apartheid, which posits forced removals (Western 1996), disenfranchisement (Lewis 1987) and labour laws (Goldin 1989) as pivotal, we wish to point to the importance of the huge governmental system in place that de facto produced coloured subjects through welfare, education, housing and not least the system of incarceration. Third, scholarly understandings of coloured identity have evolved around its residuality – neither white nor black. This position has been rightly critiqued in recent years for positing authentic and objective identities (Erasmus 2001Erasmus, referring to her own upbringing, asserts that colouredness oscillated between the possibilities of shame and respectability (ibid: 13). We wish to radicalize this argument to say that colouredness – and many of the struggles of coloureds to assert themselves as moral beings - has been organized around highly negative racial stereotypes that associated bodies with lecherousness, alcoholism, criminality, irresponsibility and weakness. The identification and discussions of the three oversights do not amount to a complete analysis of coloureds in Cape Town. Rather, the discussion is meant to complement and challenge the already existing body of literature.

After the analyses of the three oversights we will reflect on the consequences of them for the understanding of coloureds, as well as consider the theme of Capetonian – and South African - historiographic exceptionalism.

1. Between forced removals and migration

In 1950 the new Nationalist government passed two pieces of legislation that would come to provide the legal frame for the forced removals of coloureds[1] from the Cape Town metropolis: the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act. The first demanded the classification of diverse and hybrid people into unambiguous racial groups. The second provided the basis for separating the groups spatially through the declaration of particular areas as white, coloured, African or Indian. Through a process riddled with resistance from coloureds and liberals, undermined by financial constraints and property owners' concerns of loosing income (Pinnock 1989), the Cape Town City Council finally accepted their mandate to implement the Group Areas Act. In the beginning the least controversial areas were declared but as the 1960s progressed, more and more areas where large concentrations of coloureds lived, were declared white (Western 1996). The biggest blow came when District Six, that in the mid-century was a largely coloured working class neighborhood (Africans had been forced out), was declared white in 1965. Over the next fifteen years people would either move out voluntarily, resign to what at the time appeared inevitable or be forced out.

The experience of forced removals were traumatic to a great many people, African, Indian and coloureds alike (Western 1996). Sean Fields, in his edited volume of the forced removals, bring to light a number of these stories from different parts of Cape Town. However, no place carried the same symbolic value as District Six. In the demolition of the District the grossly injust nature of the Group Areas Act became apparent for all. In 1981 John Western wrote, "By removing the Coloureds from District Six, the Whites are [...] *destroying one of the symbols of whatever Coloured identity may exist, a space in parts at least seven generations deep and with associations with the emancipation of the slaves*" (Western 1996: 150, emphasis as in original). Ironically, Western's words never came true. The District became a nodal point around which the apartheid regime could always be challenged, and the most significant rallying point for the popularization of the opposition to the regime among coloureds. As the regime

[1] Africans had been removed since 1901 (Bickford Smith 1995; Fields 2002) and in the middle of the century almost all Africans had been forced out.

had reduced the District to a bare spot on the perimeters of the central city, thereby removing all the problems of the District – poverty, overcrowding, crime, lack of sanitation and divisions – its mythical dimensions could grow unhindered. The bare piece of land probably became more powerful as political rallying point than the District could have been had its buildings and people remained, as the injustices of the apartheid regime crystallized in the demolition of the District.

The destruction of the District became, in many ways, the quintessential story of what apartheid did to the coloureds; the quintessential story of Cape Town. The importance of the District translates into narratives on the Cape Flats. Many people talk about their own lives through the District, even if they never were there or did not come from there. Young activists also often explain their political involvement with the demolition of the District. And most important, many note that the reason why the Cape Flats, to where people were moved or moved, is so violent and socially disintegrated must be found in the forced removals. In one strong testimony, one woman laments, "Oo, don't talk to me about that, please don't talk about it to me. I will cry. I will cry all over again. There's when the trouble started. When they chuck us out like that, when they chuck us out of Cape Town. My whole life came changed. There was a change. Not just in me, in all the people. [...] The trust we had in those people, and they broke their trust! (Weeping) What did we do that they chuck us out like this? We wasn't murderers, we wasn't robbers, like today. They took our happiness away from us!"[2]

This narrative structure – that things went wrong due to the forced removals – is pervasive in popular and academic descriptions of Cape Town. In academia the best example of this is Don Pinnock's 1984 study of gangs on the Cape Flats. Pinnock argues that what held former working class communities together, or prevented them from disintegrating under the duress of racial domination and poverty, was an elaborate social web that sometimes included entire neighborhoods. It was these webs that broke down in relation to the forced removals to the Cape Flats (Pinnock 1984: 18-30). This again opened up for the production of the gang culture that has engulfed the Cape Flats. Clive Glaser, in his study of gangs in Soweto, criticizes Pinnock for suggesting that the forced removals produced gangs. He insists that it took almost ten years for the gangs in Cape Town as well as Johannesburg to resurface after the dislocation (Glaser

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[2] This excerpt is from a narrative captured by the Western Cape Oral History Project that collected stories from Cape Town with a specific focus on the forced removals. Interestingly this particular narrative has been reproduced in several different publications, including our own (e.g. Field 2002; Jensen (2001).

2000:???). Although we concur on discrepancy in temporal terms, there seems to be more at stake. Glaser does not contest or question the centrality of the forced removals. Rather it is a given that need not be questioned. Just how pervasive this assumption is we can gauge from Burman and van der Spuy's 1998-analysis of child care in Cape Town. They assert that the "coloured communities" experienced a "period of catastrophic upheaval" (ibid: 245) because of the proclamation of their residential areas as white. The direct consequence of the subsequent forced removals "Was an escalation in squatting throughout the Cape Peninsula and on vacant land on the outskirts of the Cape Town metropolitan area, to the extent that by the late 1970s approximately a quarter of the coloured population were squatters" (ibid.: 246). The mistake they make is to take for granted that all people living on the Cape Flats must have been removees. They were not. Western identifies several reasons for the existence of the coloured squatters: rapid natural increase in the coloured population, continued rural to urban migration, and the replacement of older decayed housing as well as removals from the areas declared white (Western 1996: 279).

The numbers of squatters were huge among coloureds. INSERT DATA FROM 1943 REPORT In 1975 the estimate was that some 200,000 coloureds lived in squatter camps in spite of significant drives to provide accommodation (Nash 1976). Elsies River, a large coloured area to the North-East of the city provides an illustration of the processes. Elsies River had been farm land but in the beginning of the twentieth century coloureds migrated in droves to the Cape area after having been thrown out of the Boer-republics. The second drive came in relation to the great depression that emptied the country-side – whites and coloureds (to which we will return in the next section) alike. The third drive came with the decreasing importance of agriculture that send thousands towards the cities, not only in Cape Town but everywhere, in the hope of employment (Carnegie Inquiry 1984). In Cape Town, especially women could find work in the textile industry that was developing at the time under the auspices of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, shielding coloured labourers from African competition. At its height Elsies River was the home to 9,000 informal structures. In a deeply troubled process, again emerged in political and financial struggles, the government decided to build formal housing for people in Elsies River. Hence Elsies River is arguably not only the result of the forced removals, although some people went to the squatter camps after having been chucked out of Cape Town.

Another coloured area provides yet another illustration. In 1963, an application was made to the Department of Housing to begin the construction of 2,248 economic and 676 sub-economic housing units in the Heideveld Low Cost Scheme for coloureds. The year after, the housing estate was authorized by the National Housing Commission under the condition that fifty percent of the dwellings be set aside for removees in terms of the Group Areas Act (Cathkin History Society, date unknown: 7). The housing estate was almost fully developed in 1969 and by then, the home of approximately 17,000 people (City Engineer, Annual Reports 1963-69). In a survey conducted in 1968, just after the completion of Heideveld, by a DC. Mabin found that out of a sample of 105, 38 were removees or Group Area Families (notably from Observatory, Mowbray, Claremont, Wynberg, and Retreat), whereas thirty-one came from the squattercamps on the Cape Flats or the country-side. A disproportionate part of his survey sample came out of small areas like Mowbray, illustrating that the time of inception of the various townships matters for the people moving in, as it correlates with when certain areas were declared white. Mowbray was declared white in 1961 and people were given between three and five years to move out (Western 1996: 168). Thirty-six out of Western's 100 respondents were moved to either Bonteheuwel or Heideveld, established around the time of the declaration of Mowbray, Observatory and Claremont.

Is the ignoring of the squatters and the privileging of the forced removals from town important or is it only of academic interest? We submit that it is important not least in terms of political affiliation, and we will briefly consider two aspects. First, it is reasonable to believe that whether people came from a relatively secure place close to the inner-city and all its possibilities or from a decrepit shack on the Cape Flats with few if any amenities. For some people the relocation to the emerging townships proved traumatic and disastrous. Western attempts in his analysis of the forced removals from the inner city suburb of Mowbray, now a white middle class area, to map out the "geography of disadvantage" (Western 1996: 219-234), that is, the changes for the people of Mowbray in terms of distance to work, to health services, to places of worship, to best friends, to school, to shopping places, to movie theatres and to sporting events. In each case, he illustrates that life became more cumbersome, expensive and difficult. He then analyzes more intangible elements and finds that the overarching sense is loss of and fear for personal safety (ibid: 235-269). The disaster was worst for those moving to places like Heideveld and Bonteheuvel, to where most of his sample went. They had been renters in Mowbray and had no means to find

accommodation in the homeowner areas. He concludes, "The homeowners found this loss [of house in Mowbray] at least partially outweighed by the material advance; nearly all the council renters did not. The renters were the real losers" (Western 1996: 273). NEED SOME EXAMPLES And many homeowners did find the move advantageous, as did at least some of those moving from decrepit, unhealthy accommodation in District Six. In a telling conversation an older woman from District Six, where she lived with 5 children in a room and who moved voluntarily to Heideveld, asserted, to the apparent embarrasement of her children, " My children say we were oppressed. I wasn't oppressed. When I got a house, I was so happy that I jumped up and down. I don't know what they are talking about." In the statement we find the trace of the dominant discourse of the District in the childrens' embarrasement, as well as the assertion that life improved matterially after the move. This touches on notions of coloured privilege – and we will return to this in the next section - but it is important to take serious if one wants to understand coloured politics.

The second issue we would engage is the assumption that gangs were the result of the forced removals. As the gangs are among the worst elements of the Cape Flats, it is politically expedient to explain the phenomena in relation to the locus of evil: the apartheid regime. Furthermore, it turns the gangs of the Cape Flats into a unique South African phenomenon. However, experiences and analyses from elsewhere suggest that rural-urban migration is intimately linked to the production of gangs or other violent male sub-cultures. In his famous 1929 study, Fred Thrasher asserts that gangs emerge in the intestitial spaces of the city during great social upheavals where people migrate towards the city. Almost all his gangs were defined along ethnicity or race (Irish, Jewish, Italian and Black) and their marginalisation vis a vis the dominant classes informed the ways in which the performed (Thrasher 1929:???). In a more recent study, Bourgois (1996) argues a similar point when he analyses Puerto Rican drug dealers in New York EXPLICATE. Even in the most ardent proponent of the forced removals argument, Don Pinnock's work, we find references to the the rural element of gangs as he quotes SOMEBODY for asserting that it is most often the *plaas jappies* (that is, farm boys) that enter into the gangs as a way of entering a city that for racial, social, educational and cultural reasons marginalises and excludes him. He does not speak English but proloquial Afrikaans (*Kombuis Afrikaans*); he is un-educated and un-couth; he is poor and often violent. He is the epitome of the rural pumpkin – and of the *kaapse skollie* to whom we shall return to in the third section. Reading the gang like this posits gangs and violent sub-cultures

not as purely urban phenomena but something produced between the urban and the rural. To our knowledge, no research have been done in Cape Town on the link between the urban and the rural in the production of one of the most violent cities in the world but to ignore it seems to miss the point and it reproduces South African exceptionalism on the wrong basis.

In this section we have argued that privileging the removals does an injustice to the lived experience of people on the Cape Flats. We suggested that the rural-urban migration – to which, by the way, the segregation and all the various acts were responding to as well – impacted on the production of the Cape Flats as social and political space. We asserted that the political choices of coloureds cannot be adequately understood without taking into consideration that some of them experienced significant material gain during the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, the explanation for the emergence of gang cultures in Cape Town is misinformed if the impact of rural migrants is not taken into consideration. These points should be seen as complimentary to the existing analyses privileging forced removals. The forced removals provide the local specificities to a global process. And so, by analysing the two in conjunction it is possible to attain an analysis that does not exceptionalise the Cape Town experience nor compromise specificity in historical research.

Incarceration, its links to governmentalit, and the racial stereotypes around which much of coloured identification evolved
The second identified oversight relates to the welfare provisions extended to coloureds, especially from the 1940s and onwards. For various reasons, especially because it could be construed as arguing in favour of apartheid, critical academics did not want to engage with it, or analysed it as a part of a divide and rule strategy. Scholars have rather predominantly engaged with the repressive sides of apartheid: the disenfranschisement (Lewis 1987); the forced removals and the coloured labour preference policy which was most repressive towards Africans (Goldin 1989; Humphrey 1989). There is of course little doubt that the apartheid regime was repressive; it deprived people of democratic rights; it forcibly removed and repressed them, and the ideology of 'separate but equal' was a simply a smokescreen for the preservation of white privilege. However, there is a need to talk about welfare reform without it becoming simply whether apartheid was good or bad and the functional role of welfare reforms in the determination of that analysis.

In this section our focus on welfare reforms for coloureds after the 1940s is not to suggest that coloureds were somehow treated better than for example Africans, but rather to unpack the link between welfare provision and the nature of the state and society in the period after the 1940s. In that respect, we suggest that the issue is not whether coloureds were treated better than Africans after the 1940s but rather that they were treated differently and that particular historical forces impacted on this. We argue that this difference of treatment had substantial effects on coloured subjectivity and livelihood. It in fact created a system in which poor women ultimately landed on welfare while their husbands and sons lingered in jail. To see this we need to begin with the 'poor white problem' that would impact significantly on how the apartheid regime dealt with coloureds a few decades later.

Social welfare as a form of relief has a long history in South Africa, initially conceived as charity and gradually evolving into organised ways of providing a 'nominal standard of living' for members of various communities. From being 'an act of giving' by the rich who felt they had a duty (social contract with) to the poor, social welfare provision evolved into a system of programs, benefits and services that directly responded to the human needs of communities, especially when traditional forms of family and community support were seen to be failing individuals (Zald 1965; Macarov 1995; Ostrower 1995). In South Africa this emergence of formal welfare provision was especially notable for interventions that sought to alter the socio-economic status of welfare recipients at times of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. In that respect, the discovery of gold and diamonds in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 and the subsequent economic depression, rapid migration to the cities at times of war, famine and depression, and the secondary industry boom of the 1940s are just a few examples of such transformative moments. For our story the response to the 'poor white' problem in the early 1900s has particular resonance since it developed a particular kind of state solution to social dilemmas in urban areas.

Going back to the marches/demonstration of Johannesburg's 'white' unemployed in August 1897 various forms of 'state' in South Africa thereafter looked to the provision of social relief policies for the 'indigent'[3] as particular forms of response to the dispossession and dislocation of people from rural to urban areas (Van

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[3] In the case of the above march, the Kruger government set up special schemes to provide training to 'afrikaner' youths and thereby improve their employability and ability to withstand the harshness of urbanising environments

Onselen 1982). In the early 1900s in the above instance, various structural changes in the economy and society in general brought into view a new class of impoverished 'whites' and urbanised 'non-whites' to whom vagrancy, begging and criminal activity represented a shared fate (Parsons 1993). This created particular dilemmas/challenges with regard not only to notions of white civilisation and poverty at the time, but also how religious notions of social upliftment meshed with the political drive to 'uplift impoverished whites' in the development of a modernising state. In this respect, the concern with 'white welfare' informed the ways in which the state modernised after 1910, shaped the inception and formalisation of social welfare provision in South Africa on a scale comparable to many western countries, and served to delineate subsequent welfare provision policy for 'non-whites'.

Indeed, the poor white issue raised a particularly interesting dualism for policy makers and politicians at the time, in that it questioned the racial hierachy of South Africa on the one hand and called for interventions that protected some form of that hierachy on the other. In responding to this dualism politicians and social planners started off from the premise that welfare was a necessary part of the salvation of the better off and a 'noble exercise' and then added the concept of eligibility (namely, the widow, orphan and stranger deserved every assistance but not the lazy, immoral and hypocritical) and legitimacy. Simply put, they formulated policy based on the notion that 'if God didn't want poverty to exist then people would not have been allowed to become poor and dependent' (Zald 1965). This approach not only naturalised the gap between rich and poor, but meant that welfare provision could serve to differentiate both white from non-white (in terms of access to provision) and white from poor white.

Responses to the poor white problem thereafter found expression in the provision of institutions and structures that sought to prevent 'racial mixing' and joint participation in a range of illicit activities between white and non-white in urban centres. It also focused on organising the supportive and allied classes (white working class from whence poor whites supposedly emerged) that the emerging state needed to maintain its dominance in ways that uplifted them materially and 'morally' (Davies 1979).[4]

The social agenda of welfare provision for 'poor whites focused essentially on protecting whites from the "evil and insidious influences of a diseased society,

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[4] Such responses thus included initiatives that sought to resolve the plight of 'poor whites' in rural areas in that period

from unnatural and vicious homes, and the temptations of the streets" through a host of provisions ranging from childrens homes, old age homes, orphanages, child guidance clinics and welfare grants, to industrial schools, reformatories and work hostels. The focus was not only on sheltering poor whites, nurturing them physically, morally, intellectually, and as far as possible vocationally, and equipping them as men and women to fulfil their duties intelligently and honourably as citizens, but also on 'developing them' to become builders of comfortable and happy homes (Union Education Department 1918). In that respect, alongside the provision of housing, schooling and welfare relief, work training was regarded as a particularly important way of stabilising the white working classes at the time. The provision of state mechanisms by the Union Government after 1910 to protect and provide for poor whites was also regarded as an important step in the natural progression from the barbarism of pre- and early industrialisation to the humane and responsible practices of a modernising state.

We would argue that this approach to social change (particularly in urban areas) later shaped the ways in which the Wilcocks Commission of 1937 addressed the needs of the coloured population, which in turn provided the basis for the establishment of the Department of Coloured Affairs in the 1960s.

The Wilcocks Commission was set up to understand the impact of rapid coloured migration into urban areas and the various processes associated with urbanisation, as well as the potential claims of different groups to access rights in an urban context (Jensen 2001). In that respect, the commission noted that the decline of coloured employment in the period 1924 to 1934 in the face of job reservation for whites in urban areas like Cape Town had a huge impact on the social conditions under which all coloureds lived. It also asserted that increased african migration into urban areas like Cape Town would further threaten these 'decaying social conditions'. Importantly, the percentage of coloured people in urban and peri-urban areas was deemed to have increased from about 45.8% in 1921 to 53.9% in 1936.

The Commission further argued that 'deleterious home influences, delinquency, intemperance and miscegenation with Africans among a class of Cape Coloured' (the submerged class) were impacting upon the overall commitment and moral fibre of the coloured population, evoking an image of the coloured problem family urgently in need of state attention (Badroodien 2001, Jensen 2001). Here the

Wilcocks Commission drew off the previous institutional experiences of 'poor whites' in calling for the provision of similar kinds of welfare provision for those coloureds that were 'struggling'. Notwithstanding the fact that the commission was calling for a form of de facto segegation at the time, it believed that the only way to resolve the majority of social problems facing the coloured population was through specialised and targeted welfare provision (as provided for whites at the time). This call for increased welfare provision was endorsed at the time by local municipalities and urban communities that were increasingly concerned with the social impact that migration to cities was having. Hellman (1949) has noted in this regard that while the townward migration of whites in the 1920s had put tremendous pressure on the services of municipalities of various cities (leading to the development of better organised forms of social delivery), similar migrations of coloured, indian and african communities in the late 1930s completely strained the municipal services available and led to a complete re-evaluation of social welfare aid to non-whites.

This of course does not automatically mean that the social welfare needs of 'non-white' communities were actually addressed in the period after 1937. Rather, the recognition of the deleterious conditions under which 'non-white' communities lived in urban centres from the 1930s and the potential for 'social chaos' with which 'white' voters were thus threatened, led to the gradual inclusion of 'non-whites' within the ambit of social welfare policy. Also, the emphasis on the supposed pernicious social circumstances of urban 'non-whites' came to define the type of support provided for 'non-whites'. From the 1940s the welfare support provided for 'non-white' communities overwhelmingly focused on the 'anti-social' elements in communities deemed to be 'dysfunctional'. This approach was derived from a complex meshing of the impact of 'scientific intervention', issues related to what was deemed to be racial 'inferiority', and a particular religious interpretation of 'spiritual degeneration'.

Thus, while the Wilcocks Commission Report highlighted how badly coloureds were faring in the Union in the 1930s[5], this did not necessarily translate into social provision that empowered coloureds. For this paper, perhaps the biggest 'contribution' of the Wilcocks Commission was not so much paving the way for greater governmental intervention with regard to welfare and institutional provision for coloureds, but in producing particular forms of governmental

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knowledge about coloureds. Given the growth of 'scientific investigation' in the period after 1935, the focus on the particular needs of coloureds led to virtually every aspect of urban coloured life (be it economic, health, housing, education, legal or political) being investigated in the period 1940 to 1958.

This ties in closely with the third oversight in the literature about colouredness, namely the ways in which colouredness has been organised in the literature around very negative racial stereotypes that associate coloured bodies with lecherousness, alcoholism, criminality, irresponsibility and weakness. In that regard, we try to unpack below the links between governmental knowledge about coloureds and the racial stereotypes around which much coloured identification evolved.

Very briefly, in its various deliberations the Wilcocks Commission provided particular understandings of coloureds that pervaded policy texts long after 1938. For example, its definition of what constituted a coloured was very close to the official delineation used under apartheid (Wilcocks Commission 1937)[6]. It also provided class categories that remain in use in the contemporary era (already significantly more differentiated), namely:
  - ➢ The undesirable class comprising skollies[7], the habitual convict, drunkards, and habitual loafers
  - ➢ Farm and unskilled labourers, factory workers and household servants in both rural and urban areas
  - ➢ The relatively well-off and educated coloured people

The commission also contributed significantly to the development of a number of coloured stereotypes. It asserted in 1937 that the majority of coloureds were 'intensely emotional and often acted on the spur of the moment'; they were "overly joviable and sociable, fond of pleasure and humour" (meaning that they were irresponsible, irrational, unstable and an easy prey to temptation); they spent freely and generously (thus needing to supplement paltry earnings by resorting to stealing); and generally demonstrated traits that "if wrongly influenced could bring out the criminal tendencies in him and turn him into a skolly" (Wilcocks commission 1937). All these characteristic stereotypes were

[6] Coloureds were defined as a residual group that included "all persons not of unmixed European descent, or of unmixed bantu descent, or of unmixed Asian descent unless ordinarily accepted as Coloured people".
[7] The geneology of this term is particularly interesting. A Union education Department memo of 1954 posits that the term is derived from the afrikaans term 'skol' and was used by coloured fishermen to describe birds that preyed (skolled) over their boats when they were cleaning fish and throwing the fish intestines into the water. This term 'skollie' later came to describe "all 'won't works', juvenile delinquents, 'loafers' and other anti-social elements of the 'coloured and 'malay' communities."

lodged into the body of the coloured and came to shape the way in which welfare provision addressed their needs after 1940.

Importantly, the institutionalisation of knowledge about coloureds was neither consistent nor fully intended in the period after 1940. Once a series of institutions for coloureds came into being after the 1940s, and over time became inhabited by various categories of coloured classes, this governmental knowledge about coloureds became constantly shaped and reshaped within official texts and by practitioners themselves.

We argue that the subsequent establishment of the Department of Coloured Affairs in the 1960s became a further vehicle not only for the production of coloured citizens but also for the institutionalisation of knowledge about them. In that regard, it is evident after 1960 that as the Department of Coloured Affairs (DCA) (with PW Botha as minister in charge) expanded its authority and took over more and more welfare and educational obligations, the social and political development of the coloured population was increasingly seen to primarily lie in the separate development of social and labour services (overseen by the DCA). Thus, concerns about 'competition from africans, abuse of alcohol, unproductivity, housing needs, and concerns about intemperate family structures' came to be primarily addressed through separate residential areas, job reservation, separate and increased welfare programs, and separate education provision. In that respect, the Department of Coloured Affairs, as the main vehicle for the advancement of coloureds, over time took on the seemingly apolitical role of being the technical arm of provisioning. In its practices however, by treating issues of marginalisation and poverty as essentially welfare issues, it increasingly de-politicised governmental knowledge about coloureds.

Indeed, the technicalisation of social provisioning was a particularly important development after 1960 since it 'naturalised' (as with the poor whites) the gap between rich and poor, legitimised the role of coloured elites (with the assistance of white technocrats) in overseeing and uplifting the coloured submerged classes, and contributed to a political and social discourse about colouredness that invariably did not contest or analyse the ways in which welfare provision evolved in South Africa. Moreover, the professional and qualified staff that came with the rapid expansion of professional (psychological, dental, child guidance) services further produced and confirmed the existence of three categories of coloureds: the middle class, poor men and poor women (Jensen 2001). The latter two

groupings were particular variations of the submerged class and unskilled labourer categories outlined in the Wilcocks Commission Report of 1937. By the 1960s the category of submerged working classes was predominated by an image of physically weakened coloured men, lazy, lecherous, indulged in alcohol consumption, and always on the brink of falling into crime. The category of unskilled labourer on the other hand was characterised by the struggling home-making woman, forced to pick through the social consequences of their irresponsible, entrapped, criminally-tainted, and socially deficient coloured men.

With regard to the middle class coloured category, the discourse of 'salvation of the coloured population' and being in control of their 'own affairs' meant that middle class coloureds were largely expected to play an active role in 'pulling the submerged classes up by their bootstraps'. While there were certainly quite divergent groups with different agendas within this coloured middle class, the Department of Coloured Affairs played a key role in co-ordinating and reproducing a steady stream of nurses, teachers and social workers (through targeted bursary schemes) to ensure that stereotypical coloured lechery, thievery and irresponsibility was constantly being attended to.

The main point we make here is that the expanded provision of education and welfare after 1960 through the DCA served to conjoin the efforts of the coloured working and middle classes in addressing both 'salvation issues' and better job opportunity possibilities. In these processes the key discourse was how to protect and save the coloured family from the vicious cycle of poverty, crime and 'cultural deprivation' and provide them with the educational, cultural and social tools to succeed (within certain structural limitations of course).

To emphasise this point, we return to the 1940s to unpack how notions of coloured delinquency and aimlessness came to be imbricated within the discourse of what it meant to be coloured, and led to the incarceration of a large number of coloured males in a variety of institutions.

Crucially, expanded social welfare provision from the 1940s in South Africa emphasised links between education and work, and between work training and social order in urban areas. This emphasis on making education more work-related and social welfare provision more context-based was informed by international debates at the time on the links between poverty and 'social chaos'. In this regard particular attention was given to coloured children in danger of

becoming 'uncontrollable' and young unemployed youths who, it was thought, needed to be provided with disciplined and controlled environments where they could be imbued with work ethics and social discipline that would also ensure the health and growth of their associated family structures. Given that the churches and state departments shared administrative and financial responsibility for the provision of social institutions in this period, complex links were subsequently formulated between education focused on individual discipline and morality, and education that focused on the links between work and social order. In that regard, we note the limited availability of social institutions, residential facilities and supporting policies like compulsory education for coloureds at that time. Welfare and education officials thus increasingly focused on providing education and work training at discipline-based sites where participants were provided with learning opportunities to re-integrate into society as useful and employable citizens. These sites invariably included the army, training camps like COTT, work hostels, reformatories, schools of industries and prison. Where such sites were not available they were readily set up. In the period 1945 to 1970 at least 10 schools of industries and reformatories were established in the Western Cape. Importantly, these were places where the lives of participants were vigorously regulated and where disciplinary and moral training formed the cornerstone of social and education provision. Committal to such institutions hinged on the extent to which coloured children and youths were deemed to possibly degenerate into work-shy and socially inept skollies and delinquents.

The establishment of the Ottery School of Industries in Cape Town in the late 1940s is an illustration of one such institutional site for coloured boys, whose provisions were framed by the belief that the coloured parental home was not coping with the social needs of coloured indigent children and that weak familial links and 'undesirable' coloured neighbourhoods was encouraging juvenile delinquency (Badroodien 2001). The provision of this large state institution, focused on 'moral' and 'disciplinary' training, emphasised the importance given to the notion of social chaos encouraged by rampant poverty among communities with weak family structures. Never mind the fact that the majority of boys committed to the institution until the late 1960s were indigent, orphaned or simply plucked from 'unfavourable homes', the institution was said to have 'successfully' weeded out the 'bad elements' and subjected them to rigorous and targeted training.

This construction of the coloured male was also perpetuated in adult environments where perhaps the most spectacular illustration is that of prison statistics. In 1970 for instance 791 out of every 100,000 coloureds were in jail (bearing in mind that corresponding numbers were 425 africans, 86 whites and 80 indians per 100,000 of their respective populations). In that respect, under apartheid coloureds were incarcerated to the tune of four times as often as Africans. The fact that this ratio has declined to 1:2 since 1993 reinforces our point that state attention to notions of social chaos impacts significantly on the kinds of state institutions provided for those deemed to 'err on the side of caution'. We suggest in that regard that the state has begun looking at africans in the same ways as it did coloureds in the post-1940 period.

Another feature of the imprisonment of coloured males was that they tended to stay longer in prison than other groups, primarily because they were deemed easily influenced and thus in need of further concentrated surveillance. Whether coloured males are in fact more criminal is of little consequence to the discussion here. Rather, we point to the ways in which state agencies approached the social needs of coloureds and how this influenced the types of welfare and social provision afforded them. Furthermore, we highlight how concrete welfare and educational practices served to confirm and reproduce racial, gendered and objectified images of coloured males as potential skollies, and dispersed such images into everyday coloured life. With every removal of a child to a state institution and every sentence meted out to coloured males in the courts, this indisputable knowledge of what constituted colouredness was reproduced. Within this discourse coloured women then became the state's most prominent ally in the intervention against the decay of the lower classes, and served as the main point of support for most actions directed towards the reformulation of the family. The state thus sought to assist mothers by providing classes on 'good home making', classes on how to establish good, moral and healthy environments for their children to grow up in, and financial assistance to those whose husbands were unable or unwilling to do so. In that regard the DCA played a prominent part after 1965 in providing dressmaking and handwork classes and homemaking skills and reinforcing particular images of male and female colouredness.

In this section we have tried to show how governmentalised knowledge about coloureds in general and coloured males in particular was brought to bear on welfare and education provision and on practices of separate development after 1948. Given the access of coloureds to state provision in urban areas, the

apartheid state penetrated deep into the everyday and structured lives of the coloured population through social welfare provisioning and prison sentencings and shaped our knowledge and language of coloureds in ways that are not easily acknowledged.

The heart of the matter

I am busy writing the conclusion and will have it for you (Clive) tomorrow morning

The Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER)

invites you to a Symposium on

Townships Now

6th Floor Richard Ward Building
June 9 to June 11, 2004

June 9

16:00 – 19:00   **Township Enchantments: Scripts, Signs, Memories**

A series of round table discussions

on

Cultural Creativity and Emerging Trends: Radio, Television, Advertising, Fashion, Music, Architecture, Sexuality, Cuisine & Literature

With the participation of

Sanza da Fanatik *(Yfm's Harambee Station)*; **Bongani Madondo** *(Sunday Times)*, **Teboho Mahlati** *(Yizo Yizo)*, **Angus Gibson** *(Yizo Yizo)*, **Fanuel Motsepe** *(Noa Architecture)*, **Phaswane Mpe** (author of *Welcome To Our Hillbrow*), **Nthabiseng Motsemme** *(University of South Africa)*, **Jeremy Rose** *(Rose & Mashabane)*, **Mtutazeli Matshoba** (author of *Call Me Not a Man)*, **Teddy Matera** *(Film)*, **Dumisane Ntshangase** *(Kwa-Thabeng Restaurant)*, **Sabata Mokae** *(Khaya FM)*, **Jono Hall** *(Music Magazine)*, **Mduduzi Mndebele** *(Poet)*, **Andile Gaelesiwe** *(Disclosure Foundation)*, and many others.

Facilitator: John Matshikiza *(The Mail & Guardian)*

Panelists: Grace Khunou, Rehana Vally, Tom Odhiambo, David Coplan, Lindsay Bremner, Sarah Nuttall.

19:00 – 21:30   **Cocktail**

June 10

9.00-10.30   Comparative Perspectives

The 'Township' as a Space of Exception
Achille Mbembe *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Chair & Commentator: Isabel Hofmeyr *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

10:30-10:45   Coffee/Tea

10.45-12.45   History

Township Historiography: From the 1970s to the Present
Sello Mathabatha, Noor Nieftagodien and Phil Bonner *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

A History of Soweto Through the Baragwanath Hospital
Simone Horwitz *(St Anthony's College, Oxford University)*

Fragments of a Coloured History: Migration, Governmentality and Race in Cape Town
Azeem Badroodien *(Human Sciences Research Council)*

Soweto 1976
Sifiso Ndlovu *(South African Democracy Education Trust)*

Chair & Commentator: Clive Glaser *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

12.45-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.30   Politics

Kwazakele Then and Now: Resistance and Democratic Consolidation in Kwazakele Township
from 1984 to 2004
Lars Buur *(Nordiska Afrika Institute)* and Janet Cherry *(Human Sciences Research Council)*

New Brighton
Gary Baines *(Rhodes University)*

Pictoresque Township, Grotesque Living: A Candid Interpretation of Township Life
Lungile Madwabe *(Independent Writer)*

Mamelodi Township Then and Now
Moses Ralinala *(Africa Institute of South Africa)*

Chair & Commentator: David Coplan *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

15:30-15:45   Coffee/Tea

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15:45-17.45:   Property

Artists Impression: Public Participation Processes and Imagining the Future Township
Anna Cowen *(University of Cape Town)*

Spatial Re-imaginings: Contesting Post-apartheid Township 'Development'
Noeleen Murray (University of Cape Town)

Property Ownership in Alexandra Township
Abueng Matlapeng (University of the Witwatersrand)

Chair & Commentator: Jon Hyslop *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

18:00-21:00   Book Launch

Belinda Bozzoli, *Theaters of Struggle & The End of Apartheid*

June 11

8.30-10.30   Styles

Domesticating Urban Informality: Imagining Change in South Africa's Townships
Matthew Barac *(London School of Economics)*

Township Identities and Multiple Modes of Cultural Production: The Case of Soweto Youth
Denise Newfield *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

What's In a Coconut? Preliminary Notes on Mobility and Cultural Identity Among High School
Township Students
Prudence Carter *(Harvard University)*

Inside The City: Reassembling the Township in Yvonne Vera's Fiction
Sarah Nuttall *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Chair & Commentator: Aurelia Wa-Kabwe *(French Institute of South Africa)*

10.30-10.45   Coffee/Tea

10.45-12.45   Life

3

City and Nation: Manenberg Revisited
Ivor Chipkin *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Family in Manenberg
Elaine Salo *(University of the Western Cape)*

Beyond Macro-Economics: Queuing for Child Maintenance in Diepkloof
Grace Khunou *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Struggles for a New Life in Alexandra: Regulation of Illness and Individual Tactics
Frederic Le Marcis *(University of the Witwatersrand/University of Bordeaux)*

Chair & Commentator: Tina Sideris *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

12.45-13.30   Lunch

13.30-15.30   Forms

Representations of the "Formal" and the "Informal"
Anne-Maria Makhulu *(Princeton University)*

Rockville? It's Like a Suburb *mos!*" Images of and Stories About Everyday Life in Soweto and
Between the Suburbs
Detlev Krige *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

A Snapshot of Phoenix Township, Durban
Raidoo Merkershnie *(University of Kwazulu Natal)*

Street: the Nexus of Township, Prison and CBD
Kelly Gillespie *(University of Chicago)*

Chair & Commentator: Lindsay Bremner *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

15.30-15.45 Coffee/Tea

15.45-16.45   Religion

Township Spaces, Religion and the Violence of the 'Other Side'
Steffen Jensen *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Religion in Kwa-Zulu Natal
Nsizwa Dlamini *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

Township Residential Property Markets

4

Kecia Rust *(FinMark Trust)*

Chair & Commentator: Eric Worby *(Yale University)*

17.00-18.30   Futures

A Roundtable on

Planning, Intervention and Representations

Facilitator: Alan Mabin *(University of the Witwatersrand)*

With the participation of **Themba Maluleke** *(Maluleke Luthuli Consulting)*, **John Appollis** *(Anti-Privatization Forum)*, **Yondela Silimela** *(Department of Provincial and Local Government)*, **Carien Engelbrecht** *(Cities Alliance)*