

**Understanding the Livelihoods of Child-Grant Mothers in Sinathingi
in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Matsepo Nomathemba Motsetse

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Social Science

**Department of Sociology
Rhodes University**

January 2014

Supervisor: Professor K Helliker

ABSTRACT

The main focus of this thesis is the child support grant, as part of a broader social security system, in post-apartheid South Africa. Since the end of apartheid of 1994, the new South African government has sought to redress the racial imbalances and inequalities of the past by engaging in measures of redistribution. Central to this pursuit of redistribution has been a restructured system of social grants, of which the child support grant is the most significant. However, the post-apartheid government has adopted a largely neo-liberal macro-economic strategy such that social inequality and endemic poverty remain pervasive particularly amongst the African population, which includes the recipients of the child support grants. In adopting a sustainable livelihoods framework as the main theoretical perspective, the thesis seeks to understand the livelihoods of child support grant mothers in the face of conditions of extreme poverty. It does this through a localised study of twenty child grant mothers in Sinathingi Township in KwaZulu-Natal Province. In examining the livelihoods of these child-grant mothers, the thesis brings to the fore that mothers and their children do not exist as autonomous living units but are embedded in a broader set of social relations, including intra-household relations and relations with the fathers of the grant-children. It also demonstrates that child-grant mothers are not simply victims of structures of poverty in contemporary South Africa, but actively construct their livelihoods through a range of activities and strategies which show perseverance and ingenuity.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to both my dear parents. My father the late Mr J.E Motsetse and my mother Mrs T.R Motsetse, whom I have learnt from that love is a doing word.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The financial assistance from the National Research Fund Innovation (2013) Scholarship towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to Rhodes University or the donor.

I would like to thank the God Almighty for seeing me through the past two years. The past two years have been the most trying times of my academic career but nonetheless they have opened doors I never imagined I would set foot through.

This thesis would really not have been possible without my supervisor Professor Kirk Helliker who has diligently and patiently walked me through writing this thesis. He has shared his expertise that has not only helped my thesis but also helped to grow me as a young and aspiring researcher. A special thanks to the Rhodes University Sociology department staff and my colleagues for all the words of encouragement and support.

Last and not least I am humbled by the love from my friends who have been there throughout my journey praying for me, encouraging me and cheering me up when the going got tough. Words cannot even describe the love and support I received from my family, especially my dear mother and sister who have supported my dreams as long as I could remember. The sacrifices that my dear mother has made for me are too numerous to count and I will forever be grateful.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| ASGISA | Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa |
| ATM | Automated Teller Machine |
| BEE | Black Economic Empowerment |
| CDG | Care Dependency Grant |
| CSG | Child Support Grant |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions |
| DG | Disability Grant |
| DEIC | Dutch East Indian Company |
| FCG | Foster Child Grant |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEAR | Growth Employment and Redistribution |
| GIA | Grant in Aid |
| HIV /AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| HLS | Household Subsistence Level |
| MILL | Minimum Living Level |
| OAP | Old Age Pension |
| PAC | Pan-Africanist Congress |
| RDP | Reconstruction Development Programme |
| SASSA | South African Social Security Agency |
| SLF | Sustainable Livelihoods Framework |
| SRD | Social Relief of Distress |
| TB | Tuberculosis |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UIF | Unemployment Insurance Fund |
| WVG | War Veteran Grant |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Dedication | iii |
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Acronyms | v |
| List of Tables and Figures | viii |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Thesis Rationale and Significance | 1 |
| 1.3 Research Objective and Methods | 3 |
| 1.4 Thesis Outline..... | 6 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... | 8 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 8 |
| 2.2 Overview of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework..... | 8 |
| 2.2.1 SLF Components..... | 12 |
| 2.2.2 Critical Appraisal of SLF..... | 14 |
| 2.2.3 Sustainable Livelihoods: Urban Context | 16 |
| 2.3 Measuring Poverty..... | 19 |
| 2.4 Household Structures and Intra-Household Relations..... | 21 |
| 2.4.1 Women, Social Reproduction and Work..... | 24 |
| 2.5 Conclusion..... | 26 |
| | |
| CHAPTER THREE: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA..... | 28 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 28 |
| 3.1 From Segregation to Apartheid..... | 28 |
| 3.2 Post-Apartheid South African Political Economy..... | 31 |
| 3.3 Poverty in South Africa..... | 35 |
| 3.4 Household Level Poverty and Women..... | 37 |
| 3.5 Conclusion..... | 40 |
| | |
| CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL GRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA | 41 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 41 |
| 4.2. Pre-1994 Social Security..... | 41 |
| 4.2.1 Pre-Union..... | 41 |
| 4.2.2 Segregation..... | 42 |
| 4.2.3 Apartheid | 45 |
| 4.3 Post 1994 Social Welfare..... | 47 |
| 4.3.1 Overview of the new Social grants..... | 47 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 4.3.2 Reforming the welfare system and child support grants..... | 51 |
| 4.4 Child Support Grant..... | 54 |
| 4.5 Conclusion..... | 60 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: APPLICATION, PAYOUT AND SIGNIFICANCE..... | 62 |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 62 |
| 5.2 Profile of CSG Mothers..... | 62 |
| 5.3 CSG Application Process..... | 66 |
| 5.4 CSG Payout System..... | 69 |
| 5.5 Conclusion..... | 79 |
| CHAPTER SIX: CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: PURSUING LIVELIHOODS..... | 81 |
| 6.1 Introduction..... | 81 |
| 6.2 Prioritising CSG Expenditure..... | 81 |
| 6.3 Work, Education, Assets and Debt..... | 88 |
| 6.4 Savings..... | 92 |
| 6.5 Conclusion..... | 97 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN: CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: INTRA-HOUSEHOLD AND FATHER-MOTHER RELATIONS..... | 99 |
| 7.1 Introduction..... | 99 |
| 7.2 Household Composition and Income..... | 99 |
| 7.3 Intra-household Relations..... | 102 |
| 7.3.1 Managing household Income..... | 104 |
| 7.3.2 Intra-household Tensions..... | 106 |
| 7.3.2.1 Gender..... | 108 |
| 7.3.2.3 Age..... | 109 |
| 7.4 Fathers of Grant –Children..... | 112 |
| 7.5 Borrowing Money..... | 116 |
| 7.6 Three Mothers..... | 119 |
| 7.7 Conclusion..... | 121 |
| CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION..... | 122 |
| REFERENCES..... | 126 |
| APPENDIX: Interview Guidelines for CSG Mothers..... | 138 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 4.1 Welfare expenditure for the different population groups..... | 46 |
| Table 4.2 Grant recipients by type and region as of 31 st of March 2013..... | 49 |
| Table 5.1 Profile of study Recipients..... | 64 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 2.1 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework..... | 11 |
| Figure 4.1 Trend of social grants from September of 2012 to March of 2013..... | |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the years after the dawn of formal democracy in 1994, South Africa expanded its social welfare safety net (or social grant system) on a massive scale to cover all racial groupings. The system prior to 1994, during both the segregation and apartheid periods, was in large part racially-exclusive with the African population in particular being marginalized. Currently, the South African state spends a significant 3.5 percent of its Gross Domestic Product on social grants, with these grants comprising the following: old age pension, disability grant, foster care grant, care dependency grant and child support grant. The child support grant arrangement, in terms of sheer number of grants, is by far the largest in South Africa: there are close to 12 million child support grants currently and these make up about 70 percent of all grants. The grant though only amounts to R300 per month.

The thesis provides an analysis of the livelihoods of mothers on child support grants in Sinathingi Township which is located in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It does so in the context of the serious poverty challenges they experience and face because of post-apartheid restructuring, which has failed over the past twenty years to meaningfully address levels of social inequality and poverty. This opening chapter is divided into the three main sections. In the following section, I discuss the rationale and significance of this study. In the ensuing section (section three), I detail the main objective and research methods underpinning the thesis. And, in the last section, I provide an outline of the thesis chapters.

1.2 Thesis Rationale and Significance

Prior to the end of apartheid in 1994, the social welfare safety net in South Africa was racially-exclusive, as was the overall political and economic dispensation in the country. The post-apartheid state was faced with the massive task of addressing and undoing the racial injustices of the past, including broadening the social welfare system to make it more inclusive. In the case of child support, the new African National Congress (ANC) government phased-out the racially-based state maintenance grant that was mainly distributed to single white women in favour of the child support grant distributed to all regardless of race

(now officially called population groups). This restructuring of the grant system was to form part of a broader state initiative of redistribution to tackle both poverty and inequality. And it was consistent with the new post-apartheid South African constitution which places emphasis on the protection and realization of socio-economic rights for all, including rights to adequate health care, housing, food, water, education and social security. These redistributive measures though have taken place within the context of neo-liberal macro-economic policies and strategies pursued since the mid-1990s. Indeed, apartheid ended at the height of neo-liberalism globally, and the South Africa state has sought to grow the economy and transform the country on the basis of neo-liberal principles. Thus, redistribution broadly and social security specifically are in some ways in tension with a straightforward neo-liberal package.

In this light, the provision of social security (through for example the grant system) was not to be viewed as a mere “compensation” measure but rather as a “preventive measure to eradicate social exclusion” (Taylor Committee, 2002a:50). The main objectives of the child support grant specifically are to help with the “cost of raising children, redistribute income over the life cycle, influence the birth rate, provide a degree of equity in taxation, relieve child poverty and to enable parents to care for children independently of the labour market” (Triegaardt, 2005:251-252). Because of the fluid character of household structures, the grant is paid out to the caregivers of children (who do not necessarily have to be the biological parents of the child or children); thus the grant is attached to the child and not to the biological mother. Additionally, the child support grant (CSG) is a means-tested and non-contributory grant in order to universalize it as far as possible but, at the same time, to ultimately separate the deserving poor from the undeserving poor. Currently, the grant covers children up to the age of eighteen.

The existing literature on the CSG, as cited later in the thesis, shows that the grant significantly assists CSG mothers (and their children) in pursuing livelihoods, either on their own or as part of a broader household which regularly includes the biological family of the mother but rarely the father of the child. This significance exists despite the small amount of the monthly grant. At the same time, CSG mothers live under conditions of intense poverty and they seek ways and means to supplement income or to control costs. The mothers are not necessarily mere victims of their condition of existence (namely, poverty) but are active subjects engaging in livelihood activities drawing upon a range of resources.

This is not however the derogatory public image often constructed around CSG mothers, which is at times replicated in some of the literature. This image includes the following: the child support grant leads to perverse incentives in which some teenagers

deliberately fall pregnant to access the grant; that the grant itself has created a dependency syndrome especially for the unemployed, and that CSG mothers are in general exceedingly lazy and are milking the system (Lund 2011). This image is challenged in the thesis. But a more realistic claim, which is not directly explored in the thesis, is that the grant simply reinforces the private household roles of women in social reproduction and nurturing (van Driel 2009) and hence blocks for instance their involvement in the labour market and the public sphere more widely.

The existence of deep levels of poverty and unemployment within child grant recipient households, and at times the sharing of grant money amongst members within households, has in many instances placed considerable strain on intra-household relations (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011). This relationship between the child grant support (and grants overall) and intra-household dynamics though has not featured significantly in the existing literature. The thesis, in examining the livelihoods of CSG mothers in the face of poverty, adds further value to the existing literature because it focuses on these intra-household relations, as well as the relationship between the CSG mothers and the father of their children (no matter how tenuous that relationship may be). These two relationships, of which CSG mothers are a part, are marked by micro-level power relations that might advantage or disadvantage the mothers and their children.

The focus of this thesis, notably the relationship between the child support grant, urban livelihoods and intra-household and -family relations, is framed within the sustainable livelihoods framework. Livelihoods can be defined “as the means of gaining a living including livelihoods capabilities, tangible and intangible assets” including social grants (Brocklesby and Fisher, 2003:186). The livelihoods framework has the advantage of examining micro-level relations (including intra-household and –family relations) within a broader structural analysis – in this case, an understanding of the political economy of contemporary South Africa.

1.3 Research Objective and Methods

The main objective of the thesis is *to understand the livelihoods of child support grant mothers in Sinathingzi Township in KwaZulu-Natal Province.*

These livelihoods are characterized by conditions of poverty, intra-household relations and mother-father relations. Hence, the livelihoods of CSG mothers are not stand-alone livelihoods but are pursued as embedded in a broader set of social relations. In this regard, the grant may alter relations within households and the relations may – in turn – shape

grant usages. There is no attempt to establish any clear causal relationships between factors (or variables), for instance between the child support grant, livelihood activities, poverty reduction and intra-household relations. Rather, these different factors (such as intra-household relations) are each conceptualized as conditions of existence of each other which interact and shape each other in diverse and complex ways. Thus, insofar as any relationship of determination exists between such factors, this ‘determination’ must be understood as a soft (condition, influence or shape) and not hard (causal) determination.

In this context, some of the key subsidiary objectives include:

- a) To outline the structure and composition of households in which CSG mothers reside;
- b) To identify the ways in which the grant is used in pursuing livelihoods for the benefit of the child or children, including expenditures of various kinds;
- c) To consider the significance of the grant in reducing poverty amongst the CSG mothers and their children;
- d) To examine the ways in which the grant may be pooled for household expenditures such as food;
- e) To assess the character of intra-household relations, including tensions and strains, and the relationship between the CSG mothers and the fathers of the children;
- f) To consider the ways in which the grant may empower or burden the recipient in terms of for instance household responsibilities and duties; and
- g) To identify and unpack both commonalities and differences in the livelihoods of the CSG mothers.

The fieldwork for the thesis was conducted in Sinathingi Township in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal Province, amongst twenty CSG mothers.

The fieldwork used a qualitative research methodology and specifically made use of semi-structured interviews. The child support grant recipients were granted an empathetic platform to express their experiences and opinions about the grant money and how it affects their lives and intra-household relations. The empathy displayed by me facilitated entry into the private lives of the CGS mothers, without though jeopardizing a critical analysis of their livelihoods. This qualitative approach had an interpretive sociological edge to it, as it aimed to identify and understand the subjective meaning that the participants give to their social world (Neuman, 2000). I did admittedly seek to explain their livelihoods in a broader structural context but the main emphasis is on understanding how they live that context, make sense of it, manoeuvre their way through it, and reason and act accordingly. In this sense, the

thesis is not grounded in pure subjectivism as it tries to examine the lives of the CSG mothers at the intersection of structure and agency but giving priority to the latter.

Snowball sampling, as a non-probability and non-random sampling technique was used. This involved purposefully selecting individuals relevant to the study, namely, CSG recipients (Neuman, 2000:424). In this regard, a universe (or population) consisting of all CSG recipients in Sinathingí was not available, and hence random sampling was not possible (Lee, 1993:66-67). I attend church in the Sinathingí Township and this not only facilitated general entry into Sinathingí for research purposes but also allowed me to identify particular CSG mothers to initiate the snowball sampling process. The initial mothers identified then referred me to other possible interviewees, who felt comfortable with me because of the relationship of trust they have with the mothers who referred them to me. It must be emphasized that the snowball-sampling technique does not allow for generalizations to a wider population (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). In this respect, I make no claim that my study is representative. The research sample may not be statistically-representative of for instance all Sinathingí CSG mothers but, nevertheless, it does capture critical livelihood themes pertinent to CSG mothers more broadly speaking as well as showing considerable diversity between these livelihoods.

The research focus is a highly-sensitive topic for the CSG mothers, particularly when it came to investigating expenditure of the grant money, intra-household relations (and thus their relations with family members) and relationships with the fathers of the grant children. One key challenge arose, namely, the research participants were somewhat skeptical at first as they thought that the study was being conducted by officials from the South African Social Security Agency (the state agency responsible for child grants) to check if the grant money is being used for the children's needs. In this regard, the CSG mothers feared losing the grant money as the grant money provides for their livelihoods. I assured them this was not the case and they accepted this assurance. This of course relates to questions around ethics and, in this regard, I abided by all ethical standards relevant to my fieldwork, including voluntary consent and confidentiality. Therefore, all the residents that participated did so voluntarily and they signed a consent form indicating this. Their privacy and confidentiality also has been maintained (Babbie, 1992: 467). The thesis makes use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants as they disclose very sensitive and confidential information about their lives.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty CSG mothers in Sinathingí (see interview guide – Appendix 1). This allowed for open-ended questions to be presented in

a structured manner but in a way which allowed the participants some leeway to bring issues of significance to them to the fore for further investigation (Flick, 2006:156). The interview schedule also included a short questionnaire that was used in the main to gather the biographical details of the CSG mothers. These interviews were conducted in Zulu during the month of April 2013 by me using a recorder. Zulu is the mother tongue of the recipients and I am fluent in Zulu.

I used standard qualitative data analysis techniques, including the identification of themes as they arose from the interview guide and the interviews themselves. Evidence, as arising from the interviews, was slotted in – but in a flexible manner – according to the themes and at times I had to slightly alter and revise the themes particularly in the light of how the research participants themselves made sense of their lives and livelihoods. The final themes are expressed in the structure and format of the three fieldwork based chapters (chapters five, six and seven).

1.4 Thesis Outline

The following chapter (chapter two) theoretically frames the study with reference to the sustainable livelihoods framework, as this framework provides a basis for understanding the intricacies and complexities of the livelihoods of the child support grant mothers and how the grant money fits into their livelihood strategies as a particular resource or asset. In discussing the framework, the specific focus is on urban livelihoods, poverty and intra-household relations.

Chapter three discusses South Africa's political economy historically but with special emphasis on the post-apartheid political economy. The post-apartheid state has had the monumental task of redressing the racial injustices of the past through wealth distribution. But, as a whole, it has adopted a neo-liberal macro-economic strategy which focuses on growth rather than redistribution. Despite this, significant redistribution is taking place as exemplified by the social grant system. The chapter, in this context, goes on to examine urban poverty in contemporary South Africa and the position of poor African women in particular.

Chapter four outlines the emergence of the social safety net historically in South Africa which, up to 1994, was highly racialised. Since the end of apartheid, the state has introduced a substantial grant system including child support grants. The chapter details the roll-out of specifically the child support grant and particular dimensions of it, including the criteria used to access grants and the pay-out system. It then examines relevant South African

literature on the child support grant, including its significance in reducing poverty, as well as controversies pertaining to the very existence of the grant.

The next three chapters (chapters five, six and seven) discuss the Sinathingí child support grant mothers and their households. Chapter five profiles the twenty Sinathingí mothers, their experiences of the grant application process and the pay-out system, and the significance of the grant to their lives. Chapter six looks in considerable detail at the lives and livelihoods of the mothers and the ways in which they use the grant to support themselves and their children. In doing so, it examines questions pertaining to for example expenditure of the grant money, employment and informal trading, and savings and debts. Chapter seven examines the social relations in which the mothers of the grant children are located, including within the household where they reside (and the possible pooling of household resources), with fathers of their children, and with friends, neighbours and the broader community where applicable.

The last chapter, chapter seven, provides an overall synthesis of the thesis, and draws together theory and empirical evidence in doing so.

CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the study of the livelihoods of child support grant mothers and their children in Sinathing. The main theoretical approach adopted is the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. In this regard, I set out the framework and its various dimensions but also provide a critical appraisal of it. I go on to show its applicability to urban contexts, given that my specific study is urban-based. Further, because I focus on livelihoods in the face of poverty, I outline debates about poverty and measurements of it. I end off my considering the significance of intra-household relations in pursuing livelihoods with specific emphasis on gender and social reproduction at the household level.

2.2 Overview of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

The origins of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) can be traced back to the Brundtland Commission (or the World Commission on Environment and Development) in 1987, as the commission's report was the first to introduce and propagate sustainable development as a worldwide political agenda. In the words of the Commission, sustainable development would meet the needs

Of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. It contained within it two key concepts: the concept of "needs", in particular the essential needs of the world's poor to which the overriding priority should be given and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organizations on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987:43).

This report, and the arguments contained within it, soon strongly influenced ensuing international development policies and programmes, including the major United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (the Earth Summit) in 1992. Since then, the sustainable livelihoods discourse has been adopted by international and national non-governmental organisations to facilitate their poverty reduction programmes and to assess the effectiveness of these programmes (Sullivan et al., 2003:198).

The notion of sustainable development also simultaneously entered the academic literature, with the work of Robert Chambers becoming particularly important (such as in a co-authored paper in the mid-1990s titled ‘Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century’). The emerging Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, in drawing in part on previous thinking about development (Kadazo, 2009:39, Gilling et al., 2001:303) focuses on uplifting the world’s poor, bottom-up participatory and people-centred methodologies for development, the self-reliance of citizens in bolstering developmental initiatives, and the sustainable use of natural resources. In providing a working definition of sustainable livelihoods through “linking conservation to poverty alleviation” (Jawah, 2009:41, see also Solesbury, 2003:5), Chambers argued that a livelihood

Comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to their livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers and Conway 1991, 6).

The SLF emerged with reference to rural development but has subsequently been applied to urban areas. And, ultimately, the concept of sustainable livelihoods is underlined by the core elements of capabilities, livelihood strategies and outcomes, and sustainability (Chambers and Conway, 1991:3). In pursuing livelihoods, shocks and stresses invariably arise. In this regard, a livelihood is sustainable “when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base” (Rakodi, 2002:3).

The sustainable livelihoods argument sought to overcome the weaknesses of three predominant modes of thinking about poverty and livelihoods, namely, production thinking, employment thinking and poverty line thinking. Productionist claims posit that problems associated with famine, hunger, poverty and malnutrition are a result of inadequate food production. But an examination of production levels, at least nationally, does not consider distribution and supply dimensions and the capacity to access food at individual and household levels (Sen, 1981, Scoones, 1998, Chambers and Conway, 1991). The employment argument focuses on the formal economy and marginalisation of people from employment prospects and therefore, particularly for rural areas, fails to consider the multiplicity of livelihood strategies – beyond formal employment – pursued by households. And the poverty line thinking uses a poverty datum to define and measure poverty based primarily on income (as compared to expenditures). A focus on income, again specifically for rural livelihoods,

does not capture strategies of survival which do not necessarily generate income and, in fact, are extremely difficult to measure (Chamber and Conway, 1991:2-3).

Overall Chambers and Conway (1991:3) argue that these three paradigms have two key shortcomings. First of all, all three analyses originate from advanced capitalist countries and are in the main applicable to these countries only. Secondly, as intimated above, the modes of measurement deployed are exclusive in that they are mainly relevant to urban contexts with formal economic markets and standard forms of employment. Because of this, a framework more sensitive to rural spaces in nations within peripheral capitalism is necessary, a mode of analysis which will capture the complex and nuanced character of rural people and their multi-fold strategies to make a living (Jawah, 2009:43). The SLF seeks to do this and, as noted, has also been applied to urban contexts in peripheral nations.

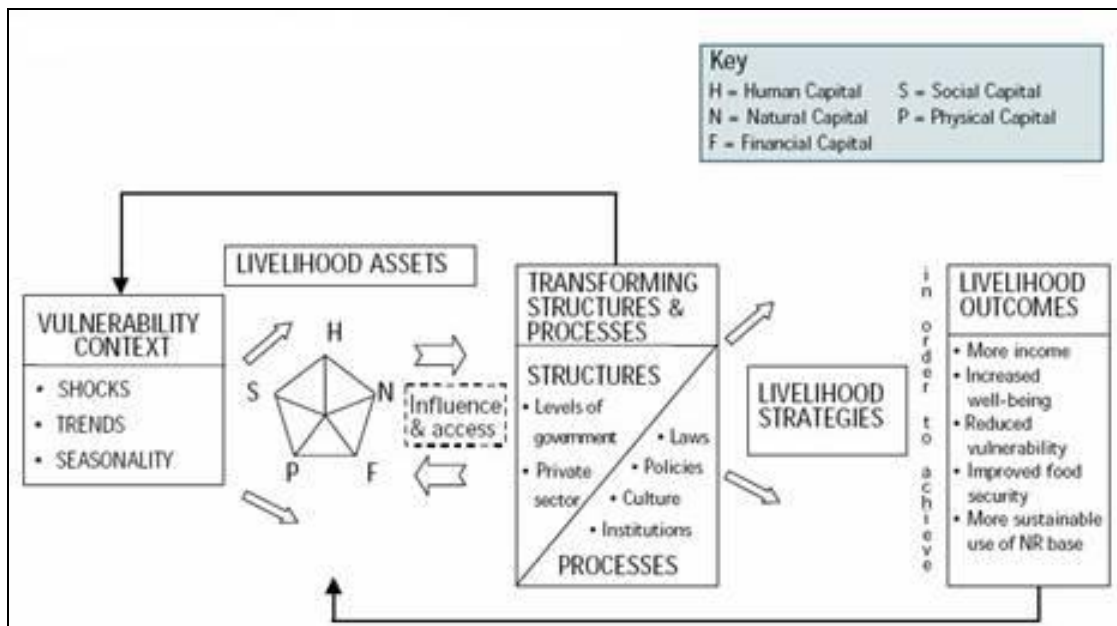
The sustainable livelihoods framework therefore is an analytical tool that is meant to investigate the intricacies of poverty and livelihoods in the day-to-day experiences of households (Farrington et al., 2002:8). It is typically applied at the household level, but it may also be used at other scalar levels, including the individual, the community and the nation. Seeking to examine intra-household relations (the individual level) and inter-household relations (notably the community level) is critical because households are internally-differentiated and there are numerous linkages between households including supportive relations. For example, different individuals in a particular household may have unequal bargaining power in influencing household decisions and accessing household resources. These power relations internal to households are often based on gender dynamics with male heads of households regularly ‘lording it’ over their female counterparts (Scoones, 1998:5, Chambers and Conway, 1991:6).

The notion of household itself is also contested and debated, with the terms household and family often used interchangeably; and households themselves are subject to significant variation across both time and space. A nuclear family consists of a married couple or single individual (with or without unmarried children) and an extended family consists of extended kinship-based members. But a particular household cannot necessarily be reduced to members of a family, whether nuclear or extended, as it may also include non-family members. Normally, a household is perceived as an institutional arrangement that is associated with child-bearing, social reproduction and economic production (Amoateng and Richter, 2007:15-16). Smeeding and Weinberg (2001:2) speak about household members residing in one dwelling and – at least formally – sharing common resources, which relates to the claim that a household consists of those ‘eating from the same pot’. But they go on to

note that a household may consist of family-related members or of both related and unrelated members. For purposes of this thesis, a household is a group of individuals that are related or unrelated who reside together and share resources to make a living, though it must be recognised that household composition is marked by fluidity over time.

Figure 2.1 depicts visually the SLF. Livelihood assets (sometimes labelled as resources or capitals) lie at the centre of the livelihoods analysis. Though different SLF writers distinguish the capitals differently, reference is regularly made to financial, physical, human, natural and social capitals as the main resource base that households draw upon to make a living. Assets may be seen as the building blocks for households' livelihood activities and strategies such as agricultural production and informal economic activities (Ellis, 2000:31). These assets are influenced by the vulnerability context (such as shocks and trends) and by institutional arrangements (transforming structures and processes) including state policies and programmes. Combined, these factors shape household livelihood strategies which then lead to livelihood outcomes, which themselves have a feedback effect on the overall livelihood status of the household (Oblak, 2008:42, Chambers, 1998:2).

Figure 2.1: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



Source: Ashley and Carney, 1999:47.

I detail these components of the SLF in the following discussion. It is critical to note though that livelihood strategies are simply conditioned and not directly caused by the other factors, such as assets and vulnerability. This means that the agency of households, or at least

of household members, mediates the process; and this also means that livelihood outcomes are contingent upon the kind of relationships (for instance, tension-riddled relations) which exist within households.

2.2.1 SLF Components

In this section I briefly discuss the various components of the livelihoods framework, as pictured in Figure 2.1, and I start with assets. As noted, five assets (or capitals) are normally identified as part of the framework,

Natural capital (or assets) refers to the environmental resources at the disposal of households in pursuing livelihoods, for example land, water and forests. Ellis (2000:32) argues that natural assets may be divided into two types, that is, renewable and non-renewable resources. The former refers to natural resources that “replenish overtime” such as trees, fish and water and the latter involves the extraction of certain resources (such as minerals and oils) that may lead to the total exhaustion of these resources. Natural assets and vulnerability are often intimately related, with shocks (including droughts and floods) sometimes arising which affect livelihood activities and outcomes (Kollmair and Juli, 2002:7).

Human capital mainly consists of skills, knowledge, experience and capacity to pursue livelihoods, and this relates to questions around for example educational background and health status (Krantz, 2001:9, Mosoetsa, 2011:127). In this respect, poorer households often do not have a strong human capital base, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic has had devastating consequences on households because of the loss of economically-active members and the extra expenses incurred in caring for HIV-infected members. Physical capital comprises mainly basic infrastructure and social services essential to support livelihoods and these include access to affordable transportation, shelter, water, sanitation and electricity (Ellis, 2000:33, Kollmair and Juli, 2002:7). Financial capital includes the financial resources that households have at their disposal which includes assets, salaries and wages, savings, suppliers of credit and government grants, including child support grants in the case of South Africa (Dalal-Clayton et al., 2003:16). Often these financial resources act as a safety net in times of economic difficulty (arising from stress and shocks), such as the selling-off of assets or the dipping into savings (Ellis, 2000:34).

Lastly, social capital refers to the networks that exist, often at community level, and which give important means of support for households (de Haan, 2006:5). At the same time, the notion of social capital – of all the livelihood capitals – is probably the most

controversial, in large part because a romanticised portrait of it is regularly provided in the literature. This portrait implies that social capital entails consensus, such that the terms ‘bonding’ (for instance within households or communities) and ‘bridging’ (across households or communities) are used to characterise social networks. Further, this capital is seen as invariably of benefit to households and communities more broadly in pursuing livelihoods, including in relation to accessing resources from the state. But more critical literature suggests that social networks are tension-riddled and power-laden and that social networks can act as a form of social exclusion and not necessarily inclusion (Bebbington, 1999:2037).

The sustainable livelihoods framework posits that households draw upon these different assets, in different combinations and in a fluid manner, in pursuing a living. Clearly there is considerable variation between households in available assets, which is often class-based, and the exact mix of assets has significant implications for the capacity to respond to vulnerabilities as these arise.

The transforming structures and processes are critical to household livelihoods because ultimately they may enable or disable individuals or households in accessing different types of assets and to action livelihood strategies (Kollmair and Juli, 2002:8). This particular dimension of the SLF admittedly tends to be a catch-all dimension and is inclusive of the following: the political system (state and political parties), the corporate world, civil society (incorporating non-government organisations), norms, laws, values, culture and tradition. In this regard, Chambers (1998:4) speaks about “[formal] membership organisations and the invisible, historical set of rules of the game that govern social, economic and political life”. These institutional arrangements are marked by a complex range of power relations, including along class, race and gender lines, and these both facilitate and constrain livelihood possibilities (Oblak, 2008:49, Rakodi, 2002:15). In most cases, to be poor means to be powerless, such that asset-deficient households encounter stumbling blocks in seeking to build up their asset base for the future prosperity of the household. In this way, the existing social hierarchy is reproduced and tends to be almost self-sustaining with poorer households being trapped within a vicious cycle of poverty stretching across generations (Ellis, 2000:38).

The vulnerability context is the surrounding dynamic environment within which households exist and which often entail phenomena beyond the control of households. The vulnerability context includes short-term shocks and longer-term stresses such as so-called natural disasters (which are increasingly human-made), wars and civil conflicts, economic and technological changes, disease (like HIV and AIDS), resource degradation and seasonal

changes (Meinzen-Dick and Adato, 2001:3). All these can undermine existing assets or put a severe strain on household assets. The vulnerability context is also linked to the institutional arrangements, as broader structures and processes (particularly of a supportive kind) can enhance or at least protect livelihoods especially in times of shock, or these arrangements – because of power relations embedded within them and restructuring processes – may induce shocks and stresses and undercut livelihoods (Kollmair and Juli, 2002:8).

Livelihood strategies emerge in and through the dynamic interplay between assets, vulnerability and institutional arrangements but – to emphasise – this interplay strongly conditions rather than strictly determines strategies. Because of this, households engage in decision-making processes to sustain their lives. These strategies are geared towards livelihood outcomes and involve productive activities (formal employment, informal economic activities and agricultural production) as well as more consumption-based strategies, such as cutting down on certain expenditures and even at times consuming less or at least less-nutritious food. It may be that different household members pursue different strategies and perhaps conflicts arise between members about the most appropriate strategies as each strategy invariably draws upon particular household resources (Meinzen-Dick and Adato, 2001:45, Chambers, 1998:2). Livelihood outcomes could be positive or negative. Positive outcomes might mean increased food security, an enhanced asset base or increased capacity on the part of the household to withstand future shocks. A negative livelihood outcome may result in the depletion of the household's asset base (Farrington et al., 2002:9, Carloni and Crowley, 2005:5).

In speaking about household agency and choices, it is important not to put forward the notion of an overly-rationalising household which the notion of strategy regrettably tends to imply. End-points or outcomes are not articulated necessarily in a clear and concise manner by household members and means (or strategies) are not always neatly linked to intended outcomes and shaped in a coherent manner. Certainly, though, and in borrowing from the thoughts of Pierre Bourdieu (1998), households (or, more correctly, individuals within them) act in a reasonable and rational manner though not always in an overtly reasoning and rationalising way. At times of shock and stress, however, a more conscious and reflexive pursuance of outcomes does take place.

2.2.2 Critical Appraisal of SLF

As noted, the sustainable livelihoods framework has now gained general acceptance in the academic world as a basis for understanding the quest for livelihoods in the face of poverty,

and it has also been widely adopted programmatically by different aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and governments in trying to alleviate poverty. The key strength of the SLF as a middle-level theory is its sensitivity to the everyday experiences and struggles of particularly resource-deficient or poor households and its recognition of individuals in these households as not mere objects of the machinations of outside forces but as people capable of thinking and acting in the pursuance of livelihood outcomes in often creative and ingenious ways. This varies from other frameworks that automatically assume that the poor are just vulnerable victims that need to be lifted out of poverty (Krantz, 2001:22). At the same time, insofar as resource-deficient households remain trapped within a cycle of poverty, the SLF does not conclude that these households themselves are to blame, as broader power structures inhibit their livelihoods. In other words, the SLF is sensitive to both structure and agency in understanding the complexity of household livelihoods (Moser et al., 2001:7).

However, the framework – or at least certain versions of it – still possesses specific flaws, and these include the following:

- a) The framework has a tendency to assume that the household is a single and cohesive unit. I have already noted the importance of not treating it as such. In this respect, it is critical to reiterate that intra-household dynamics, power relations and inequalities for example along gender and age lines shape decision-making processes within a household (Phonepraseuth, 2012:48) .
- b) Though culture and cultural practices at are times considered by the framework, these do not receive the attention that they deserve. Past ways of doing things, when accepted as authoritative, influence household relations and the bases for household decisions. Particularly important are patriarchal systems, practices and discourses which may marginalise women in households. Failure to consider patriarchal traditions is part of a broader insensitivity to gender in the SLF (Meinzen-Dick and Adato, 2001:11). In a very real sense, the SLF in and of itself is gender-blind and needs a more feminist framing.
- c) The framework, though people-centred, tends to impose an economic conception on livelihoods and livelihood outcomes. In other words, livelihood conditions and outcomes are measured in purely material terms, thereby failing to recognise that households themselves ‘measure’ their lives in a multiplicity of ways, including ‘immaterial’ dimensions such as dignity (de Haan, 2006:6).
- d) Moser et al. (2001:7) argue that although the SLF claims to locate household livelihoods in a broader structural context, it does not offer an all-embracing

analytical framework and therefore downplays nation-wide (and even global) power relations that “produce and reproduce deprivation”. In this way, the focus on transforming structures and processes does not go far enough and the SLF needs to be strengthened by locating it within a broader political economy perspective. Without this, it is claimed, the framework will overstress agency and capabilities in household activities.

- e) Mosoetsa (2011:136) makes a similar point when referring specifically to the question of human and constitutional rights. As will become clearer later, the South African constitution speaks explicitly of the state’s responsibility to guarantee socio-economic rights. But, as Mosoetsa argues, constitutionally-guaranteed rights are often rights denied in practice and rights which resource-deficient households are unable to claim. To understand such processes of exclusion, again a more macro political economy framing of the SLF itself needs to be undertaken.

I recognise these as valid criticisms of the SLF though they do not undermine the validity of the framework itself. All theoretical frameworks are necessarily incomplete and need to be complemented by other frameworks and – in deploying the SLF in this thesis – I take these criticisms into consideration.

2.2.3 Sustainable Livelihoods: the Urban Context

Initially, the SLF emerged and was applied with reference to specifically rural areas. However, with the rapidly-expanding urban population on a global scale and the broad applicability of the framework across spaces, there is a growing body of literature on livelihoods in urban spaces (Elliot, 2006:190-191). At the same time, while all resource-deficient households face common day-to-day challenges, there is considerable variation between livelihoods in urban and rural areas in notably assets available and livelihood strategies (Meikle, 2002:38). My study is an urban-based one, as it seeks to understand the livelihoods of child support grant recipients living in Sinathing Township in KwaZulu-Natal and the intra-household relations of these Sinathing households. In this section, therefore, I focus on urban livelihoods in relation to the SLF.

What in fact constitutes an urban area is open to debate, such that what are called peri-urban spaces (where significant small-scale agriculture may take place) often have many characteristics of what are normally considered rural areas. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this thesis, urban areas are defined

By one or more of the following: administrative criteria or political boundaries (for example area within the jurisdiction of a municipality or town committee), a threshold population size (where the minimum for an urban settlement is typically in the region of 2000 people, although this varies globally between 200 and 50,000), population density, economic function (for example where a significant majority of the population is not primarily engaged in agriculture, or where there is surplus employment or the presence of urban characteristics of (for example paved streets, electric lighting, sewage) (UNICEF, 2012:10) .

This definition differs from country to country and can change over a period of time but, generally, Sinathingí falls within this general working definition.

Urban contexts are normally marked by the significance of financial capital because of the almost total dependence of urban households on the market economy. In a sense, urban households are forced to participate in the labour market by selling their labour power to those who own the means of production, and thereby earning an income in order to purchase basic commodities available only in and through the market economy (Beall, 2002:74). Hence, because of the almost total commodification of urban spaces, labour power becomes a critical asset (Moser, 1998:4) in becoming employed in either the formal or informal economy. Failure to be successfully incorporated into the labour market on an ongoing basis, which is increasingly common under contemporary neo-liberal conditions throughout peripheral capitalism, means that households have to rely on other financial resources. This regularly takes the form of involvement in the informal economy as small entrepreneurs including small-scale productive activities and petty trading (of goods and services). Again, income-generation through such activities is crucial for the purchase of basic items on the existing commodity markets. In the end, all urban households have to pay for food rather than producing their own food, despite the existence of perhaps small vegetable gardens; and they have to pay for shelter, water and electricity because of the commodified character of the urban economy.

The distinction between formal and informal economies and the relationship between them is widely debated, but these debates are not particularly crucial for my study. Overall, the formal part of the economy is characterized by “large scale firms” that are “capital intensive” (Transberg-Hansen and Vaa, 2004:10) and by “regulated economic units and protected workers” (Alterchen, 2005:15). The informal economy is said to be marked by the “self-employed, providing a livelihood for new entrants into the cities” (Transberg-Hansen and Vaa, 2004:10), and these small ventures may not be subjected to the same kind of regulations as formal businesses or may go unregulated. Informal enterprises often make use

of limited resources and skills are labour-intensive and are located in homes, small plots, streets and markets. Employees within the informal economy are often casual labourers paid below minimum wages. Often a household has feet in both the formal and informal economies simultaneously, or even a particular individual might be involved in both. For example, in Tanzania, it is not unusual for state employees who are struggling to make a living to become involved in the informal sector as small-scale entrepreneurs (Meikle, 2002:39). Of course, many economically-active urban dwellers remain unemployed and have no source of earnings and this situation may affect entire households. In this context, they may (or may not) have some direct government assistance in the form of grants (as in the case of South Africa) but such assistance is not common within peripheral capitalism.

For these ultra-poor households, but for poor households as a whole, the urban political context is also important, notably the role of the local state or municipality (this relates to the theme of institutional arrangements contained in the SLF). In other words, the local state is important particularly for making up for shortfalls in financial capital. The provision of essential state services becomes critical, including access to publicly-funded and subsidised health and education services and the availability of water and electricity. But, under conditions of neo-liberalism, many of these services have been privatised and partially-commodified through the introduction of user-fees, hence making it difficult for all poor households to access them (Moser, 1998:9-10). In addition, at times, local states (in conjunction with the national state) offer public work programmes involving causal labour which is a source of irregular earnings for urban households. These may be implemented along with a range of development strategies and poverty alleviation programmes. The existence of these, and the form and extent of incorporation of poor households into them, can positively or negatively affect the livelihoods of urban dwellers. The laws and policies that are implemented by city and town officials can also disrupt the lives of the urban poor, such as restrictions placed on street vendors on conducting business in certain parts of the city and the removal of shack dwellers from land that they have occupied illegally (and the breaking down of their housing structures in the process) (Meikle, 2002:42-43).

Besides financial capital, other capitals are of significance. Natural capital admittedly tends to be of less significance in the urban context (Slater and Twyman, 2003:3). However, there has been an important rise in urban agriculture in recent years and this is sometimes practiced on unoccupied state or private land on an illegal basis. Some urban dwellers even go as far as keeping large livestock although they face land constraints unless municipal commonage is available. Otherwise, they may keep rabbits or chickens where they live.

Large or small livestock are raised for the market or for own consumption; either way, they contribute to livelihood sustenance (Meikle, 2002:46-47).

More important though for urban livelihoods is social capital and the social networking and relations which prevail and act as a support system for households on a regular basis or in times of need. At household level, these social relations are evident when a household pools all its income (formal and informal economy earnings, grants and so forth) and prioritises and distributes expenditures as a way of maximizing the benefits for all household members (Beall, 2002:79, Moser, 1998:11). But community-wide networks are often more crucial, such as savings-clubs of various kinds to which households contribute on a regular basis and from which they can draw as a form of household insurance for shock-induced expenses such as deaths in the family. The inter-household networks though are not necessarily stable and they are sometimes subject to internal tension and conflicts over the distribution of savings, such that they tend to rise and fall over time (Beall, 2002:80).

2.3 Measuring Poverty

This thesis conceptually frames the study of the child support grant system in South Africa by reference to the SLF. The specific focus is on the child support grant and poverty reduction and the significance of intra-household relations in notably resource sharing. In the next section I discuss intra-household relations raising in particular the question of gender. In this section I focus on poverty and the measuring of poverty.

Trying to measure poverty is not a simple procedure but is extremely complex. There are indeed many definitions of poverty all of which in some way relate to the notion of a “lack or deficiency” (Wratten, 1995:12) of certain needs. What exactly constitutes a deficiency and a need is difficult to pinpoint with great precision, and empirical indicators of these are open to both spatial and historical variation. There are however four main approaches to poverty and poverty measurement: monetary, capability, social exclusion and the participatory. Debates around poverty relate back to the earlier point about the reduction of livelihoods to ‘the material’ and the possibility of developing a more inclusive understanding of livelihoods and by extension poverty. I discuss the four approaches briefly in turn.

The monetary approach is the most frequently used approach. This approach uses the income variable, in conjunction with expenditure and consumption normally, within a household as a measure of the wellbeing of a household. A household would be deemed to be living under the poverty line if it has basic consumption needs below the household’s income.

This essentially means all those households that cannot adequately meet their basic nutritional, clothing and rental needs live below the poverty line (Stewart, 2007:8-9, Ruggeri-Laderchi et al., 2003:248-249). The capability approach “rejects the monetary income” claim (Stewart, 2007:15) as it defines and measures poverty using the notion of deprivation. Thus poverty implies the incapacity to reach the optimal human potential of household members, and thus it has moral connotations. This potential does not emerge because basic human needs centring on human capital development are not met, and because certain key rights – including democratic rights – are not realised. The social exclusion approach argues that poverty-stricken individuals or households are those individuals or households that are excluded from important social-economic activities (Stewart, 2007:21), and this exclusion is involuntary. The participatory approach claims that there is no objective measurement of poverty which can simply be imposed on household livelihood patterns, and that the poor themselves need to define what it means to be poor based on their own personal experiences (Stewart, 2007:24, Ruggeri-Laderchi et al., 2003:260).

All four approaches have their own specific weaknesses. The monetary approach reduces poverty and wellbeing to an economic category and thus fails to embrace what it means to be human in all its complexities; the capability approach, in speaking about basic human potential and capacity, ends up identifying these from the moral perspective of the investigator and therefore the poverty measurement becomes quite arbitrary; the social exclusion measurement cannot in any way be universalised and therefore is open to considerable variation across time and space; and the participatory approach breaks free of all objective criteria for poverty as it is based on subjective impressions which may be inconsistent even between households within the same objective poverty category.

It may be that a complex combination of all four poverty notions needs to be pursued, in line with what is attempted under the Human Development Index (Deaton, 2001:125-126). In this regard, the *Report of the World Summit for Social Development* of 1995 defines poverty in the following manner:

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environment and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil social and cultural life (United Nations Human Development Report, 1997:41).

In examining child support grants and intra-household dynamics, the thesis adopts this particular understanding of poverty as it encompasses the multi-dimensional complexes of the nature of poverty and is consistent with the general thrust of the SLF. The framework therefore seeks to understand poverty, and struggles at making a living, not only by looking at one material capital or asset but a range of other assets. Households use a range of diversified strategies that stem from the different capitals that they have at their disposal (Rakodi, 2002:10-11). In examining these, the SLF does not necessarily seek to come to an exact measurement of poverty. In fact, at times, it speaks out against any simplistic and crude dichotomy between the poor and the non-poor and highlights the intricacies of poverty variations.

Two other points are necessary to make from the perspective of this study. First of all, what seems to be absent in many notions, measurements and discussions of poverty is the failure to disaggregate households themselves. As highlighted in the next section, households are internally differentiated on for instance gender and age lines, such that some household members may be poorer materially, less capacitated or more excluded than others (Rakodi, 2002:5-6). Secondly, as Deaton (2001:138-139) notes, one key problem sometimes associated with the use of household surveys for measuring poverty is coverage. This relates to the failure to incorporate all state-provided goods, services and benefits into the poverty measurement; or, more generally, examining the state's role in the social reproduction of households. This is particularly relevant currently because neo-liberal restructuring has compelled nation-states globally to cut their so-called unproductive public expenditure, and this has significant implications for livelihoods. And this relates to the South African state's current social grant system including the child support grant.

2.4 Household Structures and Intra-Household Relations

As indicated already, the definition for households used in the thesis is that of “a group of individuals who live together under one roof and share a common kitchen or cooking pots” (Burns and Keswell, 2006:2). Households may only include kinship relatives but at times they include others. For my study, the notion of a household as necessarily nuclear in form is insufficient, as most contemporary poor households involve diverse extended family structures that have multi-generational members as part of a one cooking pot household. In fact, as Moser (1993:16-17) argues, that household structure is commonly practiced as a strategy to sustain numerous individual livelihoods in difficult urban circumstances. Also increasingly common are households without a male head. In this respect, Bender (2009:493-

494) warns us of the stereotypical norms that society holds and notes that there is a reoccurring norm which considers households with no father figure as “unfortunate” and almost deviant. He also gives the example of polygamous families where the husband does not necessarily reside with any one of his families on a constant basis. In cases such as this, more than one household exists with different wives and their children living separately. Overall, then, there is considerable variation in household structures amongst notably resource-deficient urban households. The type of intra-household relations which exist depends in many ways on household composition.

Because this study considers the child support grant in urban South Africa not only in relation to poverty reduction but also with specific reference to intra-household relations, I now discuss what are called household bargaining models. These models complement the deficiencies regularly found in the SLF with regard to failing to deconstruct the household and examining intra-household dynamics.

Barrientos and Dejong (2006:541-542) speak of two kinds of family intra-household bargaining models, and this relates specifically to the main topic of my thesis. The first model is the unitary model where the

Household resources are assumed to be allocated independently of the identity of the source or the recipient. If resources are equally distributed within the household, cash transfers aimed at children, or any other member of the household for that matter will benefit all household members equally.

The second model, namely the collective model, is where “decision making is taken to be the outcome of the interaction of individual household members who have different interests, preferences and power”. Broadly speaking, the unitary model highlights consensus whereas the collective model raises the prospect of conflict. In terms of the collective model, household decisions are based on a negotiating process and the bargaining power of particular household members is regularly contingent on their respective contributions to household earnings. This essentially means that individuals who contribute more towards household expenditure will benefit the most or at least have a greater capacity to make decisions around expenditure. Women therefore who receive child support grants have a degree of bargaining power, and may decide to use the grant exclusively for the relevant child or children insofar as they retain absolute control over the grant.

The unitary model is also sometimes described as the benevolent model because it presumes that the household functions with one mind even though that is not necessarily or even commonly the case. Inequalities exist within households and the model fails to

recognise that, even when households pool their resources, there may still be an unequal distribution of resources between members as processes of resource allocation are marked by tension, conflict and compromise. Quite often, distribution is not based on individual contributions to household resources as other factors enter into the equation (this might entail a male household head lording it over other household members though his own contribution is minimal) or gender preferences by which expenditure on a boy-child is considered more important than on a girl-child. Alderman et al. (1995:3-4), in quoting from Folbre (1986: 251), state that

The suggestion that women and female children voluntarily relinquish leisure, education and food would be somewhat more persuasive if they were in a position to demand their fair share. It is the juxtaposition of women's lack of economic power within the unequal allocation of household resources that lends the [collective] bargaining approach much of its persuasive appeal.

Regardless of which model is used, it is clear that some household members are effectively more equal than others and therefore processes of exclusion commonly occur.

Kabeer (1997:263-264), in trying to find a middle-ground between the two models outlined, articulates a co-operative/conflict model to analyze the decision-making process within households. This model focuses not on intra-household dynamics alone but also external contextual factors that influence bargaining power in households and allocations for expenditure and consumption. In doing so, Kabeer refutes the notion that there is a direct correlation between the contributions made by individual household members, bargaining power and consequent income allocation, as the form of contribution for instance comes into play. Hence, "it is not the actual value of productive contributions which matters for bargaining power but its orientation (market exchange versus subsistence consumption): form (cash versus kind) and location (outside the household versus inside)" (Kabeer, 1997:263). This means that the significance of the contribution of women may be sidelined. Domestic labour by women is geared towards the social reproduction of household members and is generally labelled as unproductive labour. Because of this, women's in-kind contribution which is directly 'consumed' by household members – as unpaid labour – is difficult to quantify and is considered secondary compared to productive labour, undertaken by men, outside the home in the formal economy.

Additionally, some members of a household align their long-term interests through "subordinating their own personal wellbeing to that of others" (Kabeer, 1997:264). This is regardless of the fact that these individuals' interests may not be satisfied when resources are

allocated. Again, women regularly do this as a type of sacrifice, especially ensuring that the needs of children are catered for and foregoing even basic necessities for themselves. The model also highlights that household members whose contributions under normal circumstances are less valued for whatever reason are also the first to suffer when the overall wellbeing of the household is challenged by shocks and stresses. At these times, any cooperation-based pooling which existed within the household may breakdown and collapse, and the less-valued individuals will likely feel the shock most severely; possibly even being threatened with removal, at least temporarily, from the household for the sake of the household's survival.

2.4.1 Women, Social Reproduction and Work

In discussing these models, I have highlighted the often problematic location of women in the household. In fact, women and social reproduction play an important role when it comes to influencing intra-household relations. Traditional, patriarchal and cultural notions about the role of women often weaken women's bargaining power in households. Social reproduction, at least at the household level of analysis, mainly refers to the unpaid labour that women perform, including the bearing and nurturing of children (Fakier and Cock, 2009:354). In most cases, women accept their traditional roles, or at least comply with them, and hardly question the gender inequalities that exist. Furthermore, Mosoetsa (2011:41-42) argues that much of the conflict that arises in the household largely stems from the way in which income and resources are shared amongst the household members, but there are rarely any quarrels about how the household chores are divided because of taken-for-granted assumptions about the feminine role of women. As well, as intimated earlier, other forms of labouring are perceived as more important than the social reproduction labour; in fact, domestic labour is not considered as real work hence the claim that it is 'unproductive'.

Undermining the role and significance of unpaid labour does not only happen in the household sphere. It spills into the social policy sphere, where policy-makers design social policies that often deliberately undermine the value of unpaid labour. For example, in many states, the needs of women become synonymous with those of the private sphere of the family or household while the needs of men are separated from family needs as they have a solid foot in the public sphere. Women are also marginalised in the world of 'real work' (in the public sphere). Women often find themselves marginalised in the labour market, primarily in the less privileged, low-wage labour market segments which regularly become feminised. Employment in these segments (such as the garment industry) often entails skills

and tasks which are said to match the feminine qualities of women. At the same time, some states try to introduce minimum wage laws that afford some sort of social protection for women wage-earners (Agarwal, 1997:10-11, Fakier and Cock, 2009:356).

An intriguing study was conducted in Bangladesh about the participation of women in the labour market and whether this affects the bargaining power of women in the household. The participation of women of Bangladesh in the labour market in the past has been perceived as a desperate economic measure on their part as cultural practices in Bangladesh regard the male figure as the primary breadwinner with women being rightfully confined in the house to perform unpaid care labour (Kabeer, 1997:265). Even when women in Bangladesh do enter the labour market and earn wages (thereby contributing to household resources), their bargaining power has been shown not to change for the better. Women remain as mere house administrators who do not partake in household decision-making processes in any meaningful way. In the end, and this is relevant beyond Bangladesh, women's participation in the labour market "is thought of" as supplementing their husband's income, as it is a man's role to work and support his family (Kabeer, 1997:289). At the same time, men are entitled to spend their earnings lavishly on items such as cigarettes, cinemas and gambling while married women's earnings are subject to the control of the male household head.

In this light, women in Bangladesh have sought other avenues to protect their interests without necessarily directly challenging the strong patriarchal presence existing in their households. For instance, they have resorted to secretly saving money for purposes of their own economic freedom and to ensure proper care for their children (Kabeer, 1997:297). In some cases, though, women are faced with a challenge by using their wages to renegotiate the terms of their often abusive marital relationships. At times, they go so far as to walk away from their marriages and avoid becoming married again to ensure independent financial security.

In this regard, Van Heusden and Pointer (2006:110) argue that money is effectively a form of social relation and the distribution of money (and other resources by extension) within the household expresses intra-household relations including micro-level power struggles. Khunou (2012:4) reiterates this by claiming that money "defines social relations within the capitalist economy". Money, whether earned through employment or received via the state (in the form of grants for example), is regularly a source of intense conflict in serving household needs and individual members' specific needs. As mentioned earlier, this has emerged because of the pervasive commodification of urban life through for instance

wage-labour and the dominance of money transactions. In this regard, money serves as a form of mediation within relationships not only directly in the economy but, by implication, within the household as a critical site of social reproduction.

Besides intra-household dynamics along gender lines, other factors are currently impacting on internal household relations. For example, there has also been a significant rise in intergenerational conflict within households where the young generation often clashes with the older generation. At times, though, this has a gendered component to it, particularly when the head of the household is a woman – sometimes a mother but at other times a grandmother. A further factor is the HIV and AIDS pandemic, which is related to the above point. The prevalence of AIDS and AIDS-related deaths has led to the widespread emergence of orphans looked after by women guardians and caregivers such as grandmothers, aunts and sisters. As well, according to Desmond et al. (2009), there are three AIDS-related phases which households go through, namely, the illness phase, the period following immediately after death and the longer-term after death. In the case of all phases, households invariably experience a range of different stresses. Generally speaking, and irrespective of the phase, women often experience AIDS-related stress most dramatically. This is because of their traditional responsibility with regard to caring and social reproduction in the house, but also because they are effectively forced to enter the public sphere in search of employment and thereby become the main breadwinner to ensure the survival of the household. These AIDS-induced changes lead to changes in household composition. For example, relatives may move in to provide a caring function, children may be sent to stay with distant relatives, or the household head changes (including child-headed households). Children invariably suffer the consequences of any of these household changes.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, both its strengths and weaknesses. The Sinathingis mothers pursue livelihoods in an urban setting and, in this regard, both financial and social capital become critical in trying to make ends meet. As will be shown, these mothers live on the edge of or in poverty (by any measurement) such that their lives are full of shocks and stresses to which they must respond on an almost constant basis. But, in highlighting the importance of intra-household relations in this chapter, I pinpoint the necessity to go beyond the household level and to disaggregate households in order to unpack and examine intra-household relations. After all, all livelihoods (including the lives of the Sinathingis mothers) occur in a household setting. For women (including for child support

grant mothers), gender and their role as women in households (and specifically in caring and social reproduction) impact on their lives and the lives of their children in a multiplicity of ways, possibly adding extra burdens and strains or potentially facilitating a more stable and secure livelihood.

In the following two chapters, I focus on South Africa by first examining the political economy of South Africa and then discussing the child support grant system (and grants more broadly) in the country in considerable detail. These two chapters set the broader South African context for the ensuing chapters on child support mothers in Sinathingi.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the political economy of contemporary South Africa, but it does so in a historical context by reference to the previous segregation and apartheid periods before 1994. Post-1994 has been marked by significant political and economic restructuring, as the post-apartheid state seeks to address the racially-based historical injustices of the past but in a global context which is characterized by a neo-liberal agenda. In the end, macro-economics in present-day South Africa is profoundly neo-liberal; however there are trends and tendencies of a more redistributive kind (at times seemingly almost anti-neoliberal) including the large-scale grant system investigated in the following chapter. I discuss the consequences of South Africa's political economy for questions of inequality and poverty as well as the extent of poverty prevailing in particularly urban areas. I end off by looking specifically at the poverty of African urban women (like the women of Sinathing) and how poverty has greater repercussions for women in general and especially for women who are household heads.

3.1 From Segregation to Apartheid

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 1800s brought about enormous changes to the pre-union South African economy that had previously been dominated by agriculture (Magubane, 1979, Van der Merwe, 1997). It also led to heightened processes of state-building by the British resulting in the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the introduction of extensive racially-based policies (known as Segregation) which served to extend, reinforce and legitimize legally the racial colonialism developed over the previous two centuries. In the decades which followed, a highly-racialised form of capitalist economy prevailed in the country.

Legassick (1974:7) notes that the period of Segregation (which lasted until 1948)

Meant that the spheres of land and property ownership were racially separated, that the black spheres were insulated from the operation of the capitalist economy so far as possible, but yet that the black areas were insufficient to sustain a self-supporting peasantry and therefore extended as migrant workers.

A large number of notorious laws were enacted and implemented, such as the Natives Land Act in 1913 and Group Areas Act of 1923, which dispossessed, oppressed and segregated Africans thereby confining them to rural African reserves or urban townships. In either case, they were to be seen and treated as a source of cheap labour for the expanding capitalist economy through for instance the infamous migrant labour and pass law systems. This was facilitated also by taxation (such as hut tax) which forced rural Africans to enter into the urban economy or white farms as wage labourers (Satai, 1977:196, O'Meara, 1975:148-149). Any agricultural production possible in the ever-more crowded African reserves, and this was becoming increasingly difficult beyond subsistence level, was designed to subsidise wages of (normally male) Africans working within the white economy rather than acting as a viable source of rural livelihoods. The welfare-focused kinship system in the reserves was supposed to play a pivotal role in the ongoing social reproduction of cheap labour for the racial capitalist economy (Wolpe, 1972:436). Segregationist labour laws such as the Mines and Workers Act of 1911 were also introduced to reserve skilled jobs for white miners and this became known as the job colour bar (Terreblanche and Nattrass, 1990:8).

Clearly, then, the Union of South Africa was built through discrimination, oppression and exploitation of African labourers specifically and the African population more broadly. White wealth was flourishing through manufacturing, mining and agriculture in so-called white South Africa (that is, outside the African reserves), though white miners in the 1920s agitated through strikes for a greater slice of the white pie. In the meantime, Africans were living in poverty and squalor in urban townships, white farms (as tenants or labourers) and in the reserves. They had been stripped of any meaningful independent means of production to sustain themselves and became more and more dependent on the white-controlled market economy in terms of access to income-opportunities and basic commodities.

During the 1940s there was a slight relaxation in some of the Segregation period racial-based policies and practices. For instance, because of the war effort (World War II), certain segregationist laws were altered to enable Africans to work in the towns to boost the economy as many white labourers had left the country to fight in the war. In particular, this entailed the relaxation of the pass laws and the job colour bar to enable Africans to become more fully involved in the urban-based war economy. During this time, African trade unions engaged in large-scale strikes and were also able to negotiate for better wages for Africans (Van Nierkerk, 2007, Baines, 2004, Chazan et al., 1999). However, these reformist-type measures represented the interests primarily of the manufacturing industry and were subjected to criticism by both white farmers and mining companies; for example, commercial

farmers wanted to control influx into urban centres to maintain a source of cheap rural-based labour. The end result was the victory of the National Party in 1948 national elections (with strong backing from the white farming community) and the subsequent tightening of racial domination through the system of Apartheid (Terreblanche, 2002:313). Thus, any reformist tendencies were subverted with the introduction of apartheid.

Numerous and stricter oppressive laws were soon introduced such as the 1950 Group Areas Act and the pass law system was tightened up and extended to African women. The job colour bar was also reinforced to protect white workers from competition in the labour market and to integrate whites into the ever-expanding state bureaucracy focused on implementing the system of apartheid (Terreblanche and Natrass, 1990:13, Lipton and Simkins, 1993:6). The African reserve system became depicted as the future political home of the African population (under the notion of separate development) with the possibility of increasing levels of homeland or Bantustan state autonomy and eventually leading to political independence. Nation-wide opposition to the expanding apartheid regime became entrenched during the 1950s and led to the banning of African political parties in the early 1960s, including the African National Congress. At the same time, the 1960s is considered as the golden years for the South African economy because of consistently high rates of economic growth, though this of course did not lead to any significant wealth redistribution to the African population. In 1961, South Africa changed from a union to a republic.

By the 1970s, though, the South African economy was experiencing serious constraints and crises, and these were occurring along with sanctions against the South African state and foreign companies operating inside the country (Natrass and Ardington 1990, Lester et al., 2000). One of the key economic challenges, which existed because of racial domination, was a critical shortage of skilled labour (Wilson and Ramphela, 1989:226, Seekings, 2008:4-5). Linked to this was the influx control system, which inhibited the development of a permanent and stable urban African workforce, something which the manufacturing sector clearly wanted for economic growth. In addition, the 1970s witnessed the revitalization of the African trade union movement (initially in Durban) and the Soweto uprising which started in 1976 and continued on into 1977. On this basis, the apartheid state, at least the more reformist *verligte* component of it, began to initiate certain changes to address the economic constraints as well as to quell heightened protest against apartheid. This related to questions around influx control and labour restructuring as seen in the recommendations of the Riekert and Wiehahn commissions.

Terreblanche and Nattrass (1990:17) describe the 1980s as an “important turning point in South African history” in that the 1980s were the beginning of the end of apartheid. Besides outright repression of the burgeoning struggle against apartheid, a range of reformist programmes were undertaken such as the registration of African trade unions and the tri-cameral parliament, all in the main designed to quell the intensity of the struggles through processes of cooption and control. Oppositional organization and mobilization though continued unabated and manifested in the activities of the United Democratic Front (and its mainly community affiliates) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The apartheid government declared a number of national states of emergency to bring some order to the disorder, but this was ultimately to no avail. The National Party government, under F.W. de Klerk succumbed to the pressure and sought a negotiated settlement with the African National Congress, which was unbanned in 1990 (Butler, 2004, Chazan et al., 1999, Mutheir et al., 2000:23). Negotiation talks were started and the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was formed to facilitate the talks (Lester et al., 2000:215). The negotiations, which were protracted, involved reaching a census to establish a new democratic state and draw up a new democratic constitution that would recognize all citizens as equal before the law. This paved the way to South Africa’s first democratic election in 1994, the end of apartheid and a democratic South Africa (Chazan et al., 1991:478, Lester et al., 2000:15).

3.2 Post-Apartheid South African Political Economy

The South African government, since 1994, has sought to address the legacies of apartheid but has done so in the context of global neo-liberal restructuring. It has brought about a non-racial political dispensation with a constitution guaranteeing the rights of all, while also – on the socio-economic front – seeking the twin goals of growth and redistribution. This has led to a complex mix of policies and programmes which are underpinned by a neo-liberal macro-economic paradigm which prioritises growth as a basis for a strong economy and for supposedly ensuring ensuing redistribution. At the same time, there are policies which are more along the lines of redistribution and social protection, including labour legislation and – the topic of this thesis – the social grant system. In the discussion below, I discuss two key national programmes of reconstruction to highlight these points, namely, the Reconstruction and Development Programmes (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme. There are subsequent national programmes, such as the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) introduced in 2004, but these are in the

main consistent with GEAR. And the current talk about the South African state being a developmental state seems to be just that, talk, without any clear evidence of this existing in practice.

The RDP, which was adopted by the incoming ANC government, was meant to undo the social, economic and political legacies of apartheid. According to the relevant state documentation (RSA, 1994:7), the RDP

Seeks to mobilize all our people and country's resources towards the final eradication of apartheid. Its goal is to build a democratic, non-racial and non-sexiest future and it represents a vision for the fundamental transformation of South Africa by developing strong and stable democratic institutions, ensuring representivity and participation ensuring that our country becomes a fully democratic, non-racial and non-sexiest society creating sustainable and environmentally friendly growth and development path.

Amongst other things, the RDP was supposed to “meet the basic needs for the people such as the creation of jobs, provision of land, housing, water, electricity, telecommunications, transport, a clean environment, nutrition, health care and social welfare” (Lester et al., 2000:249). This would necessitate a massive programme of redistribution of wealth along racial lines to overcome the entrenched inequalities, as well as the de-racialisation of all state policies and programmes which in any way discriminated against Africans (Corder, 1997:186-187).

RDP, in terms of government discourse, was a people-driven programme and the ANC's formal alliance with the union federation (COSATU) would ensure that state programmes would be sensitive in particular to the needs and aspirations of working people (Agupusi, 2011). In this regard, it is sometimes claimed that the RDP was social democratic in orientation and thrust and that it was a manifestation of the demands formulated and recorded in the Freedom Charter dating back to the 1950s (Williams and Taylor, 2000:24). However, RDP documentation went through a number of drafts and redrafts, such that the final version of RDP was watered-down – for instance, the final version envisaged the state as setting the conditions for growth and redistribution while earlier versions spoke about a much more interventionist state. This represented a class compromise within the ruling alliance (which also included the South African Communist Party) such that “in the end the RDP reflected an uneasy compromise between the feasibility of combining a social welfare state in the developmental sphere with neo-liberalism in the economic sphere to grow the economy” (Bond, 2005:37). This more reformist position was also influenced by the significant role that multilateral financial institutions (notably the World Bank and

International Monetary Fund) played in the transition years in the early 1990s, including extensive consultation and direct shaping of policies (Bond, 2005:16).

In 1996, the RDP programme was effectively abandoned through the introduction of GEAR, a more straightforward neo-liberal package. At times, GEAR has been referred to as redistribution through growth restructuring (based on neo-liberal trickledown theory) and RDP as a more Keynesian growth through redistribution arrangement (Lesufi, 2002:287). But, as the discussion of RDP above intimates, it may be inappropriate to overlay the discontinuities between the two programmes. Additionally, there are some pronounced Keynesian-style measures being implemented even under GEAR (and subsequent neo-liberal macro-economic programmes), including social grants (though these have neo-liberal dimensions including means-testing).

A number of explanations have been put forward for why the RDP programme was discontinued, including reasons relating to inefficiencies of the RDP office, complicated relations between this office and the department of finance, and its overall inability and failure to deliver on targets regarding public service delivery such as housing (Blumenfeld, 1997:68). These more bureaucratic-based explanations may however be a simple smoke-screen for the fact, according to some (Agupusi (2011:37), that RDP was a mere election strategy that was never intended to be realized because the ANC had forgone its initial progressive sentiments in favour of more neo-liberal sentiments. In fact, prior to the introduction of GEAR, only the elites within the tripartite alliance were consulted and even they were not fully informed – with COSATU leaders apparently sidelined from the process of policy change entirely. In the end, GEAR was declared as “non-negotiable” (Marais, 2011:112) by the South African state.

GEAR focused on growth *per se* with redistribution supposedly following with time as a necessary effect and the state was to facilitate this growth rather than interfere unnecessarily in the almost magical workings of market forces in bringing about the levelling of inequalities. Public spending on social services, as per the neo-liberal mantra, was seen as unproductive investments which should be kept to a minimum and possibly subsidised by cost-recovery measures. These are the very same social services which were touted under RDP as critical to addressing the past racial inequalities of apartheid. A more vigorous neo-liberal agenda was also seen as critical to attracting more foreign investment into the South African and to integrating the economy more fully into the global political economy and to benefit accordingly from this (Seeking, 2005:349). Specific aspects of GEAR, as Marais (2011:113-114) sets out, include the following:

Reducing the deficit, limiting debt service obligations and countering inflation by restricting state expenditure; liberalizing financial controls and eventually removing all obstacles to the free flow of capital; privatizing ‘non-essential’ state enterprises and partially privatizing other state run utilities; liberalizing the trade regime by drastically reducing most tariffs and other forms of protection; keeping the exchange rate stable and at a ‘competitive’ level; adding infrastructure to address service deficiencies and backlogs; adding tax incentives to stimulate new investment in competitive and labour absorbing projects; and seeking wage restraint from organized workers and introducing ‘regulated flexibility’ into the labour markets.

The GEAR policy, and subsequent neo-liberal packages, has embodied in it all the standard neo-liberal dimensions, including privatisation, de-regulation and liberalisation. And, as a whole, neo-liberal restructuring has not lived up to expectations. For example, massive social inequalities continue to exist and have reportedly increased over the past twenty years, economic growth is marked by jobless growth and a rise in non-standard forms of employment and flexible forms of labour, and service delivery in African urban townships is vastly deficient compared to the actual demand for services. At the same time, more protectionist-type initiatives continue, including land redistribution (though market-driven), labour laws protecting the rights of workers (though often subverted in practice) and social grants (as discussed in the following chapter). In this regard, the South African state is a not a typical neo-liberal state as neo-liberalisation is embedded in – or exists in conjunction with – these more social protectionist measures (Seekings & Nattrass, 2002, Streak, 2004). Any redistributive measures though effectively take place within the confines of a broad neo-liberal trajectory (Pieterse and Van Donk, 2002:200).

It is necessary at this stage to digress slightly with regard to typologies of states and specifically welfare initiatives under different states, in order to more fully contextualise the question of redistributive measures and social grants specifically in South Africa. There are different kinds of social security systems across nation-states, with Gosta Esping-Adersen making a threefold distinction between liberal, corporatist and social democratic states (Deacon, 2007:5). I mention here the liberal and social democratic systems.

The liberal state, or neo-liberal state under contemporary conditions of capitalism (sometimes called the workfare state), is a minimalist state which embraces individualism and the primacy of the market. Entitlements for citizens are discouraged and state benefits – for the poor – are means-tested and generally relatively insignificant in value; this entails a highly commodified system of state welfare benefits. Family-based support is seen as critical to the social reproduction of households and, ultimately, the intention is to drive labour back

into the labour market (Art and Gelissen, 2002:141). Social-democratic states, or welfare states, pursue redistributive initiatives in a more interventionist manner and offer more comprehensive social security coverage for the poor. Equal state benefits are provided universally based on entitlement as a form of de-commodification. These benefits offer a relatively high level of security especially for those marginalized from the labour market over extended periods. Thus, whereas the liberal state privatizes the costs of social reproduction at household level, the social democratic state socializes family costs. (Art and Gelissen, 2002; 141-142).

Of course, these are simply typologies such that any particular nation-state may display a unique blend of welfare and workfare states. This, I have suggested, is the case in South Africa because of the complex mix of neo-liberal and more redistributive measures. Lund (2008:1) though argues that the present South African social policy (notably the grant system) depicts the existence of a liberal regime especially because the different grants available are means-tested. But, I would argue that the grant system in contemporary South Africa does not exhibit the full characteristics of a liberal workfare state, such as the need for grant recipients to prove on a regular basis that they remain unemployed as a condition of remaining within the system. The grant system in South Africa in fact is more universalistic than in typical workfare states and it is a critical component of the state's efforts at redistribution and poverty reduction – as becomes clearer in my more empirical chapters later in the thesis.

3.3 Poverty in South Africa

As indicated in the previous section, the political economy of post-apartheid South Africa remains marked by vast inequalities, which also signal the existence of extreme poverty. Like broader debates internationally, as discussed in chapter two, there are controversies in South Africa about the form and extent of poverty (including questions about measurement) and whether it is on the rise or being reduced because of programmes of redistribution (Alock, 1993:4, Magasela, 2006:48). In this respect, South Africa does not have an official definition of poverty as such. But there are certain state documents which deal with the phenomenon of poverty and the means to address it (Everrat, 2005).

Poverty measurements in South Africa in large part entailed in the past the use of two poverty datum lines, namely, the Minimum Living Level (MILL) and the Household Subsistence Level (HSL). The former is calculated as the “the lowest sum possible on which a specific size of household can live in our existing social set up”, including in relation to

“food, clothes, washing and cleansing, rent and transport” (Budlender, 1985:1). The latter is calculated as

The lowest retail cost of budget of necessities of adequate quality, comparison the total food, clothing, fuel, lighting and washing and cleansing materials required for each person, together with the fuel lighting and cleansing materials needed by the household as a whole, the cost of rent and worker’s transport (Potgieter,1982:4).

These two measurements were introduced in the 1970s with the rise of trade unions and debates about minimum wages (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989:16).

Attempts at standardizing the methods of measuring poverty levels in South Africa led to the refinement of these two poverty datum levels. The Supplemented Living Level (SLL) extended the MILL to include many more services and basic needs required by a household for survival such as burial funds, savings, contribution to pensions and unemployment insurance. The Household Effective Level (HEL) likewise made additions to the HSL by incorporating medical expenses, entertainment, household assets and incidental transport (Potgieter, 1982:5). The one-dollar-a-day-poverty line has also been used at times by various researchers (Budlender, 1985, Magasela, 2005).

All these poverty measures have been criticised. For instance, the-dollar-a-day measurement, at the current exchange rate, would mean that anyone earning more than R11 per day or about R330 a month would be considered as living above the poverty line. But, given the cost of living in South Africa today, these earnings would involve a daily struggle to make ends meet. The MILL and HLS (and later versions of them) have been criticised as well, in large part because they tend to cover household survival over the short-term, and thus make no attempt to understand the strategies by which households may need to make a living over the long-term, such as through the acquiring of household assets. They also fail to consider stresses and shocks and the effects of these on households, including the ways in which they may deepen poverty levels at times. Overall, it is argued that these various measures underestimate the income necessary to make a decent and respectable living (Saunders, 2004, Budlender, 1985).

Irrespective of the measurement of poverty adopted, the phenomenon of poverty in South Africa is clearly linked to crisis embedded in the economy, including high levels of structural unemployment amongst especially the African population (Finn et al., 2011, Altman, 2003). And these rates of unemployment, and the economy’s inability to absorb labour, stem from past apartheid policies as well as current neo-liberal restructuring. Related to this is the fact that the contemporary trajectory of the South Africa economy entails a high-

skills regime which limits the prospects of particularly poor and unskilled African workers of finding suitable employment. Many adult African work seekers are now discouraged work seekers because of the unlikelihood of ever accessing full-time and permanent work, and they rely quite often on more irregular, temporary and casual work. Black economic empowerment programmes have not made a significant dent in the rates of unemployment amongst poor workers and they have tended to benefit and at times enrich the African middle-class elite (Seekings, 2005:344-345).

Amongst other measures to address this, the South African state is to introduce a youth wage subsidy from 2014 to encourage employers to employ unemployed youth. This though is a far cry from the ongoing calls, including in the past by the Congress of South African Trade Unions, to introduce a basic income grant in the face of massive unemployment. The ANC government has constantly rejected such calls, though such a grant has been raised even in government-appointment commissions. The grant would be given to all citizens as an entitlement, that is, it would be universalized and without any means-test. According to the Taylor Committee, which I refer to in greater detail in the following chapter because of its relevance to social grants, the income grant would remove stigma from the recipients of the grant and make it non-discriminatory especially for those individuals living under the poverty line (Taylor Committee, 2002b:61).

The committee proposed a grant of R100 per person paid out on a monthly basis to all household members, and which would complement the other grants focusing on the aged, sick and children. In doing so, it would ensure a social security system in line with the South African constitution (Matisonn and Seeking, 2002:2-5). The basic income grant, it is argued, would contribute to breaking the poverty cycle in which millions of poor Africans find themselves. Though the South African government, as detailed in chapter four, has implemented a massive social security grant system, it has refrained and indeed rejected the notion of a basic income grant. Again, when all this is taken into consideration, it seems that the South African systems sits – and uncomfortably – between the liberal and social democratic welfare systems.

3.5 Household Level Poverty and Women

For the purposes of this thesis, is it important to consider poverty not just at the national level or even poverty *per se* but at the household level and with specific relation to women. In this regard, a distinction has been drawn by Sekhampu (2012:411) between two different kinds of households (*de jure* and *de facto*) in terms of headship of women. He thus notes that *de jure*

female-headed households exist “where the head of the household is an unmarried woman, divorced or may have been married before but are widowed with no husband in existence in the household”; while *de facto* female-headed households exist “when the head of the household in practice is a female due to the fact that the male head is absent throughout the year or for a longer period. Thus the wife has to make all decisions without her husband since they are away for long periods therefore they become the head of the household indefinitely” (Sekhampu, 2012:411).

As noted earlier in the chapter, the colonial, segregation and apartheid phases in South African history disrupted the structure and composition of African households in both rural and urban spaces. Men were coerced into the migrant labour system and often lived in single-sex hostels on the mines or as temporary sojourners in African townships, while women remained in the African reserves (later homelands and bantustans) as *de facto* household heads. The husband outside the reserve remained as the head of household but, in practice, the wife took over the household head responsibilities (Van Driel, 2011). In later years, more women began migrating to the cities and towns of ‘white’ South Africa, either to join their husbands or to start a life of their own. This led to the formation of *de jure* female-headed households in urban South Africa, with women integrated into the labour market or surviving through petty trading or other informal economic activities. Of course, death and divorce facilitated the formation of *de jure* female-headed households across the national landscape and, even in urban centres it is not unusual to come across households headed *de facto* by women because of the husband working elsewhere in the country. To this day, in both urban and rural areas, both kinds of female-headed households prevail with other more recent factors, such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic reinforcing these trends. In this respect, KwaZulu-Natal Province, the site of my study, has the largest number of female-headed households in the country compared to other provinces (Goebel et al., 2010, Posel, 2001).

This two-fold distinction is a useful one, but it does not necessarily capture the position of CSG mothers in South Africa in its entirety. CSG support mothers, insofar as they stay with the father of their child, would not be heads. But, quite often, the father of the child has no significant role in the life of the mother and two arrangements may exist. Either the mother stays alone with her child or children (such that she is a *de jure* head) or she stays with her family and relatives. In the latter case, she may or may not be the *de jure* head – depending on the composition of the household where she resides. But where she is not, for instance where her father or mother or elder sibling is present, her position as a CSG grant mother – and especially her responsibility for a grant child or children (and the money which comes

with it) may lead to a situation where she almost constitutes a mini-head under the *de facto* head. She may have a form and level of leeway which gives her head-like responsibilities and some autonomy from the household head.

Irrespective of this, there is considerable evidence which suggests that *de facto* and *de jure* household heads, and particularly the latter, are more prone to poverty than households headed by male counterparts (Posel and Rogan, 2011:26). A number of reasons can be put forward for this: the female head is usually the only person bringing in an income; by virtue of being women they face specific disadvantages in accessing the labour market, and regularly enter the lower-paying less-privileged labour market segment; and they also double-up as income earners and as managers of the household. Rogan (2012; 5) refers to this as the “triple burden”. Statistics seem to back this up. As noted by Woolard (2002:3), while male households have a twenty eight per cent chance of being poor, *de jure* female households have a forty eight per cent chance and *de facto* female households have a fifty three per cent chance.

Food security is also a specific concern for female-headed households. According to Rose and Charlton (2001:383) food security is a household’s “lack of access to amounts of food of the right quality to satisfy the dietary needs of all its members throughout the year”. It is said that more female-headed households are food deficient especially in the urban areas in South Africa (Future Directions International, 2012:7). Thirty five per cent of the population of South Africa is affected by food insecurities and this affects women and children in particular (Eglin, 2008). Food insecurity problems also force households to prioritize costs between basic needs such as school fees, health and transport and at times this compromises the livelihood of the affected households (Kehler, 2001). In addition, the HIV and AIDS epidemic has lowered the living standard of low income female-headed households, and women bear the brunt of the effects of the pandemic in relation to the social reproduction and caring functions traditionally assigned to women (Schatz et al., 2011, Hunter, 2007:692-293). This is the life of poor African women generally and hence the fact that “South Africa in 1999 was ranked the eighth in the world for representation of women in parliament” (Benjamin 2007, 198-199) is not of any consequence for these women and their daily and fragile pursuit of urban livelihoods.

Even women living in male-headed households tend to struggle more than their (non-head) male counterparts because of inequalities in access to employment, intra-household resource inequalities and differential bargaining power between men and women in these households. The urban-based study by Mosoetsa (2011:72-73) highlights the significance of

such intra-household relations along gender lines and how these relations are often marked by economic marginalization and emotional (and even physical) abuse of women. In this context, she traces a shift in household composition and dynamics. She indicates that “[w]omen are replacing men and the elderly are replacing the younger people as primary providers” (Mosoetsa, 2011:74-75) or as the main breadwinners. This leads to all kinds of gender-based and age-based tensions and conflicts, with men and their masculinity being threatened by their financial dependence on women, and young ones possibly directly challenging household decisions made by the elderly about income allocation within the household (Mosoetsa, 2011:76-77).

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the making of the current South African political economy dating back to segregation and apartheid. Neo-liberal restructuring tends to dominate macroeconomics in the country and this has clear implications for any state-driven attempt to bring about more redistributive change. It is notable that significant redistributive measures have taken place since 1994 though the form and extent of these occur within the broader neo-liberal context and indeed are constrained by this context. Massive inequality and poverty exists particularly amongst urban Africans. And it seems that women and female-headed households carry the burden of poverty and suffer tremendously in the face of broader socio-economic conditions which threaten their livelihoods on a day-to-day basis. In this context, the following chapter discusses grants in South Africa and specifically the child support grant. The grant system exists in the broader political economy of South Africa (as discussed in the current chapter) and the significance of the child support grants for women and their livelihoods will become clear as the various dimensions of the child grant is brought to the fore in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL GRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

In the context of the preceding chapter on the political economy of South Africa, this chapter examines the social grant system in the country. I provide an overview of the system historically up to the end of apartheid in 1994, highlighting its racial exclusiveness. I then focus on post-apartheid restructuring of the grant system in the face of neo-liberal pressures and the quest for historical redress along redistributive and racial lines (Pauw and Mncube, 2007). The rest of the chapter looks specifically at the child support grant, including its introduction, the conditionalities and prerequisites attached to accessing the grant, its relationship to the social reproduction role of women, its contribution to addressing poverty, and criticisms of the child grant.

4.2 Pre-1994 Social Security

In detailing the social security system historically in South Africa, I periodise it as follows: the pre-Union period before 1910, the Segregation period from 1910 to 1948, and the Apartheid period from 1948 to 1994.

4.2.1 Pre-Union

The evolution of social welfare policies in South Africa dates back to the pre-colonial era with the arrival of the Dutch, who were the first settlers in the Cape colony in the 1600s, and later the British. The church and family played an essential role in this welfare arrangement, as a means of poverty alleviation (Sagner, 2000:525). Under the authority of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC), an official fund was established in 1657 for the first group of people – known as the Free Burghers – that settled on the now colonial land. This poverty fund was financed through church collection money, boxes that were placed in some of the Free Burgher homes and the ships of the DEIC (Van der Merwe, 1997:78). The DEIC appointed ministers that oversaw the activities of the church and the church, as the pillar of the community, became responsible for the sick, aged, needy, widows and orphaned children amongst the Burgher population. It is important to note that these poverty fund transfers were at first given to all in need regardless of the emerging racial differences in the colony. But

this changed in 1705 as the fund became almost exclusively for the white colonial population, such that this year effectively marks the start of the racially-exclusive social welfare policies in what became known as South Africa (Van der Merwe, 1997:79).

Later on when the British seized control of the Cape colony in the 1820s, they adopted the 'English poor laws' which involved an emphasis on punishing the poor as a way of shunning the disease of poverty. Their relief programmes, again mainly catering for needy and poor whites, was purposely designed to stigmatize these people so that others would become discouraged in becoming solely dependent on the government relief programmes and hand-outs. In other words, it was meant to prevent the emergence of the supposed dependency syndrome by encouraging people to seek employment or self-employment (Sagner, 2000:525-526). In this regard, the British were greatly influenced by *laissez-faire* liberal notions that regarded state involvement in welfare initiatives as interference and as a last resort, only to be undertaken should the family and church fail to provide for the poor. They even opposed the DEIC's church-based programmes insofar as these entailed significant government backing and support. Such liberal notions have played an influential role in the making of the South African social security system, even subsequent to the end of apartheid in the form of means-tested rather than universal access to the state's social welfare system (Van der Merwe, 1997:82).

The Anglo-Boer War and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 marked the start of a more formal social welfare system. The war had left many families destitute and, thus, the colonial government felt the need to provide social security nets around pensions, disabilities and children specifically for the white settlers (Maqubela, 1997). In conjunction with this, the discovery of minerals such as gold led to the intensification of urban industrialization which brought about, besides economic growth, socio-economic dilemmas focusing on white poverty and squalor. All this took place with the formation of a 'post-colonial' national government (in 1910) which vigorously pursued a system of racial domination known as segregation. The segregationist policies denied Africans political representation in government institutions, subjected them to discriminatory legislation (including the influx control system) and confined their future to the 'Native reserves' (Worden, 2000).

4.2.2 Segregation

In the end, the pro-white welfare system emerging under the segregationist government countered the more *laissez-faire* British approach of the pre-1910 period which was

demeaning to needy whites. In this sense, though the post-1910 social security net was exclusively for whites, Goldblatt (2009:223) claims that it had more Keynesian principles embedded in it as it entailed more universal access (for whites); but access was not always without qualifications and restrictions. Nevertheless, the Union government emphasized the reintegration of needy whites who had previously been “dis-welfared” by the state (Goldblatt, 2009:443). But, as with pre-1910 arrangements, social welfare formed part of a racial order that protected and served white interests. This occurred to such an extent that the notions of the “deserving and undeserving poor” (Van der Berg, 1997:485) were used as code words to discriminate between the racial groups (whites and non-whites respectively) and thereby to maintain the welfare system as a white person’s privilege (Sagner 2000).

In relation to official state welfare programmes, three kinds of social grants were introduced: the old aged pension (to alleviate the rise of white elderly poverty), state maintenance grant and the disability grant. The old age grant and the state maintenance grant were the most prominent grants during this time (Visser, 2004:1). The state maintenance grant provided for the protection of children’s wellbeing and arose from the 1913 Children’s Protection Act. It covered children and their mothers or caretakers and was paid out on a monthly basis, but only the deserving poor were included. It hence was means-tested by focusing on widows and the divorced, and cases where the father of the child was absent due to being in prison or in a mental institute (Kruger, 1992:161-162). Van Niekerk (2007:270-271) goes further in claiming that in some instances (for example, in cases of divorce) the mother of children, in accessing the state grant, had to prove that they had first tried unsuccessfully to apply for some kind of private maintenance (from the child’s father) through the magistrates courts. The state maintenance grant was not completely reserved for whites, as coloureds could also at times access it. Coverage though was greater for whites. For instance, white women were allowed to have more than four children on the grant system but coloured women were limited to a maximum of four children. As well, the amount paid out monthly and the age cohorts that were covered differed along racial lines, with white children being covered until the age of twenty-one while eighteen years of age was the maximum for coloured children (Pollak, 1981:167-168).

The old age pension grant was seen as critical because of the hardships that were apparently experienced by white families through taking care of the elderly, particularly in the context of the ‘poor white problem’ existing under the Union government (Sagner, 2000:526). In this sense, it formed part of a broader strategy to address white poverty and consolidate racial difference along socio-economic lines (Seekings, 2007:385). Intriguingly,

in terms of the Roman-Dutch law existing in South Africa, the white elderly had the option to sue their children if they did not support them financially; though this was rarely if ever pursued. The old age pension was a non-contributory grant introduced in 1929 and (like the maintenance grant) it was racially exclusive for whites and coloured people only. It was also means-tested and given to women over the age of sixty and men at the age of sixty-five. Again, the grant amount varied between whites and coloureds; the latter received R36 per year while the former received R60 per year (Pollak, 1981:152).

Both Africans and Indians were excluded from the social welfare safety net. The exclusion of Africans was based on the state's conception of kinship norms and systems in rural African areas or reserves (Ayisi, 1972). It was assumed that rural African communities were effectively self-sufficient despite the emergence of a market economy and, as a result, Africans could and would somehow rely on their well-established kinship relations rooted in rural areas and that involved relatives caring for the welfare of the aged and children (Van der Berg, 1997:487). As Bhorat (1995:596) notes, the claim made was that the African way of life and associated traditions compelled members of extended families and beyond to take care of the old, young, poor and fragile. In addition, these rural areas served as a support system for African urban workers whose wages were subsidized by rural agricultural activities; and urban remittances when necessary topped-up the agricultural production of their rural-based relatives. No state-driven welfare system was required for either urban or rural Africans, and after all, Africans contributed insignificant revenue compared to their white counterparts in financing the welfare system.

Rural support systems did in fact exist to some extent in African reserves and these systems were duplicated or reformulated to suit an urban context. For instance, as Brown and Neku (2005:302) argue, the segregated social security system in urban spaces led disenfranchised African females living mainly in the urban areas of white South Africa to start up localised welfare systems, namely "self-help and voluntary associations", as a livelihood strategy for their families. There were two main kinds of associations: *stokvels* as membership-based associations to which women would contribute financially and from which they could on occasion draw money in times of financial distress; and burial societies, also involving contributions, which were designed specifically for funeral expenses. These self-help associations served, albeit to a minor extent, the welfare needs of Africans as the segregationist social policies excluded Africans from their ambit.

In urban South Africa, the existence of community networks (as forms of social capital) therefore can be seen with the rise of *stokvels* and burial societies. Lukhele (1990:1-

2) posits that *stokvels* and burial societies are saving schemes that play an important role in African communities that help with saving money and serve as insurance money for funerals. These societies are not always governed by proper agreements but run on a premise of integrity and loyalty. The premiums are paid on a monthly, weekly or fortnightly basis and membership is voluntary. However, with *stokvels*, the money can also be loaned out to members in time of crisis and need. As a result, *stokvel* savings can either be split annually or given out to different members at different periods during the course of the year.

4.2.3 Apartheid

During the Second World War years, the United Party government sought to design a more inclusive social policy arrangement as a way of addressing the deepening inequalities that were aggravated by the war years (Bromberger, 1982:172). In 1944, and for the first time ever, social welfare grants were extended to Africans and Indians though the benefits provided differed considerably along racial lines. The government argued that a social welfare system based on racial equity would put a strain on the South African economy, though this argument masked more directly racial considerations. In the end, then, a racially-determined social security net emerged which benefited primarily whites and Africans the least (Van Niekerk, 2007:129). The old age pension and the state maintenance grant were both extended to Africans but with stringent means-testing, such as a clear previous record of employment in the case of the old age grant (Goldblatt, 2005:240). The breakdown of the figures for social grants (of all grants) therefore reflected the racial hierarchy, as the

Whites who constituted 21 per cent of the population would derive 67 per cent of the total benefits compared to Africans, who constituted 69 per cent of the population but would receive only 20 per cent of the total benefits. Meanwhile Coloureds and Indians, who constituted 10 per cent of the population, received the remaining portion of 13 per cent of the benefits (Van Niekerk, 2007:133).

Social grants were also given out according to where one resided. For example, Africans in the city got £12, in the towns £9 and £6 for the rural areas. In comparison, whites received £60 in the cities, £54 for the towns and £48 for the rural areas (Van Niekerk, 2007:131).

This United Party initiative seemed to carry a glimmer of hope for Africans and the distribution of social welfare in South Africa, but this was short-lived because of the victory of the more conservative National Party in 1948 and the emergence and consolidation of the Apartheid era (Pollak, 1981:157). Shortly after the National Party came into power, they changed the existing social welfare policies in a regressive manner (Bromberger, 1982:175).

By 1950, the apartheid state had already shown signs of reducing grants to Africans and this decline continued unabated during the 1950s and particularly the 1960s with the policy and implementation of separate development for reserves-cum-homelands. In fact, all social services for the different official races were separated and the services for Africans were handed over to the-then Department of Bantu Administration in 1963. A separate Natives trust fund was put in place with funds to be allocated to Africans-in-need in the reserves, but this was being constantly under-spent. For instance, at the end of the 1963 financial year, the trust had only given out R109,354 although it had been allocated a total of R2,698,992 for the year (Pollak, 1981:159). Furthermore, Africans received their grant money only every two months while the other races received it on a monthly basis (Van der Merwe, 1997:98).

By the mid-1970s, though, the National Party showed signs of reforming apartheid, because of international pressure, heightened internal struggles and economic bottlenecks. For example, the 1970s was a period of economic decline and there was an increasing shortfall of skills which required a shift away from reliance on white labour alone. The significance of a skilled urban-based permanent African workforce was increasingly recognized by the state (and monopoly capital) such that African workers and the social reproduction of their families took on a greater significance. In this context, and particularly during the 1980s, moves toward some sort of de-racialization in the allocation of grants were afoot based on the legislation in place. This shift is apparent in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Welfare expenditure for the different population groups

| Population Group | 1950 | 1976 | 1990 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|
| Whites | 61 % | 56 % | 23% |
| Africans | 25% | 28% | 52% |
| Coloureds/Indians | 14% | 16% | 24% |

Source: Adapted from Hassim, 2005: 9.

This table shows the percentage in the distribution of social grants amongst the different races from the 1950s right up to 1990, with Africans still receiving considerably less than whites given their population sizes. The distribution of welfare social grants in South Africa, though becoming de-racialised in the later years of apartheid, remained inequitable along racial lines up until 1994 when South Africa became a democratic state (Hassim, 2005:9). At the same

time, the transformation and redistribution of welfare did not take place over night as it was a gradual and complicated process under post-apartheid conditions.

4.3 Post 1994 Social Welfare

In 1994 the new African National Congress (ANC) government inherited a racially-unjust social welfare system and it was faced with addressing the injustices of the past by democratizing and broadening the system. The ANC government phased out the racially-based state maintenance grant (that was mainly given to single women) in favour of a Child Support Grant which would be distributed to all citizens regardless of race (Lund, 2011:7). All grants are in fact racially-blind. Currently the South African state spends 3,5 percent of its gross domestic product on the distribution of non-contributory social grants and this is considered very hefty for an emerging economy and middle-income country. Indeed, the increasingly-expanding programme has become highly significant as source of income for hundreds of thousands of African families.

4.3.1 Overview of the new social grants

There are six main types of grants that are currently administered by the state agency responsible for the grant system (the South African Social Security Agency) and form part of the social welfare security net. They are the Old Age Pension (OAP), Disability Grant (DG), Foster Child Grant (FCG), Care Dependency Grant (CDG), War Veteran Grant (WVG) and – the subject of this thesis – Child Support Grant (CSG). All of these grants are means-tested and non-contributory (Marais, 2011:238-239; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011:5). Two other less significant grants are the Social Relief of Distress and the Grant-in-Aid (GIA).

The new post-apartheid South African Constitution places emphasis on the protection of socio-economic rights, as articulated in Sections 24 to 29 of the Bill of Rights. Included in socio-economic rights is the right to social security, which means that the government is expected to take action, within the realm of its capacity, necessary to ensure adequate health care, housing, food, water, education and general welfare for all citizens. The provision of specifically welfare security through the grant system is not viewed as a mere compensation measure for poor people but is seen as a preventative measure to eradicate social exclusion and address poverty in South African society. The 1997 *White Paper on Social Development* also stressed social security as a basis for combating poverty and contributing more broadly to national economic development through redistributing wealth and thereby building the home market for locally-produced commodities (Taylor Committee, 2002a:55; Saunders,

2013). In the following discussion, I provide an overview of the different grants with a particular focus on the child support grant.

The old age pension is a means-tested grant that is given to pensioners who are South African citizens and over the age of 60 years. The applicant must not be cared for in a state institution or be a recipient of any other grant for them to be eligible. The means-test varies between the single and married pensioners. A single pensioner may not earn more than R47,400 per annum or have assets that amount to more than R792,000, while for married pensioners the respective figures are R94,800 and R1,584,000. The OAP is currently R1,260 per month with the latest increase occurring in October 2013 (Pauw and Mncube, 2007:15; Saunders, 2013).

The disability grant, for South African citizens over 18 years, is also means-tested and the applicants have to produce a medical report for them to be eligible. The disability may be long-term or it may be a short-term disability such that the applicant is considered temporarily unfit to work. Suitable applicants must not be cared for in any state institution or be a recipient of any other grant. The means-test stipulates that single applicants may not earn more than R47,400 per annum or have assets that amount to more than R792,000; the respective figures for married applicants is R94,800 and R1,584,000. Like the old age pension, the DG was increased to R1,260 per month in October 2013 (Pauw and Mncube, 2007:17; Saunders, 2013; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011:6).

The foster child grant is not means-tested. It is given to foster parents who have obtained a legal court order to be the legal guardians of a particular child. The child must be a South African citizen under 18 years of age but the foster parent can be a South African, or have permanent residence or be a refugee. The FCG is currently R800 per month (Pauw and Mncube, 2007:19; Saunders, 2013; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011:8).

The care dependency grant is means-tested and is for children under the age of 18 years for which the applicant has submitted a report stating the character of the child's physical or mental disability. The child must not be cared for by a state institution. Applicants who are single may not earn over R144,000 per annum and married applicants may not earn more than R288,000 per annual. The monthly figure for the CDG is presently R1,200 per month (Pauw and Mncube, 2007:19; Saunders, 2013).

The war veteran's grant is for South African citizens over the age of 60 years who fought in the Korean War, World War 1 or World War 2 and the applicant must not be a recipient of any other grant. Again, the grant is means-tested and the maximum earnings and

assets necessary to access the grant are the same as for the old age pension. The WVG is currently set at R1,200 per month (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011:6; Saunders, 2013).

The child support grant – which I discuss more fully below – is means-tested and potentially given to all South African primary-care givers who are either biological parents or legal guardians of the child, but they must provide solid proof to confirm this. The child cannot be cared for in a state institution and the applicants are only allowed to apply for a maximum of six non-biological children. The grant covers children from birth to 18 years of age. Single applicants though may not earn more than R33,600 per annum and the respective amount for married applicants is R67,000 per annum. The CSG is currently R300 per month (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011:6; Saunders, 2013).

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 show the statistics on social grant distribution and the trends on the take-up of all the grants. Up until March 2013, the overall figure for grant recipients monthly has consistently topped 16 million (see Figure 4.1) which indicates that the grant system is a very large-scale programme. Table 4.2 shows that the child support grant, in terms of the sheer number of grants, is the most widely distributed grant in South Africa followed by the old age pension; and both of these grants play a role in reducing poverty but certainly not alleviating it. The statistics show that 11,34 million of the beneficiaries are children under the child support grant, out of 16,11 million grant beneficiaries. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), within which my study takes place, has the most number of grants including child support grants.

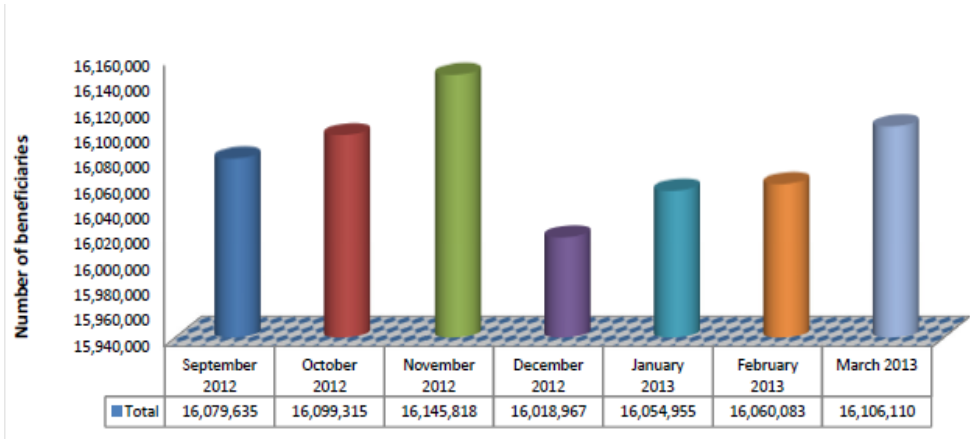
Table 4.2 : Grant recipients by type and region as of 31st of March 2013

| Region | Grant type | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | OAG | WVG | DG | GIA | CDG | FCG | CSG | |
| EC | 509,612 | 76 | 185,541 | 9,545 | 18,429 | 117,231 | 1,843,684 | 2,684,118 |
| FS | 172,103 | 8 | 86,310 | 1,199 | 5,864 | 41,317 | 637,075 | 943,876 |
| GP | 424,892 | 147 | 123,247 | 1,655 | 15,783 | 58,722 | 1,581,756 | 2,206,202 |
| KZN | 590,959 | 86 | 311,402 | 29,190 | 36,012 | 135,442 | 2,746,888 | 3,849,979 |
| LP | 395,264 | 47 | 89,155 | 11,321 | 11,913 | 58,953 | 1,588,489 | 2,155,142 |
| MP | 227,239 | 27 | 80,824 | 2,883 | 8,652 | 35,359 | 1,051,626 | 1,406,610 |
| NW | 217,274 | 19 | 85,867 | 4,092 | 8,339 | 42,215 | 751,195 | 1,109,001 |
| NC | 74,919 | 17 | 50,012 | 4,214 | 4,485 | 14,342 | 277,835 | 425,824 |
| WC | 260,935 | 160 | 151,834 | 9,620 | 10,791 | 28,578 | 863,440 | 1,325,358 |
| Total | 2,873,197 | 587 | 1,164,192 | 73,719 | 120,268 | 532,159 | 11,341,988 | 16,106,110 |

Source: SASSA, March 2013.

In early 2012, the Minister of Social Development (Bathabile Dlamini) announced the introduction of a new biometric-based payment system that commenced in late 2013, and this meant that all existing grant recipients would have to reregister in order to get cards which would be necessary to access monthly payments. This, it was hoped, would enable the South Africa Social Security Agency to verify the identities of grant recipients and confirm eligibility, thereby addressing a problem which has plagued the grant system on an ongoing basis, namely, payments to non-existent ('ghost') grant recipients. The minister also reiterated that the introduction of the new pay-out system underlies the ANC's election promise to fight the battle against endemic fraud and corruption within state agencies. The Department of Social Development, under which SASSA falls, has committed itself to using public funds appropriately and the department slogan portrays this commitment: "paying the right social grant to the right person at the right time and place. Njalo! [all the time]" (SASSA, 2013).

Figure 4.1: Trend of social grants from September of 2012 to March of 2013



Source: SASSA, March 2013.

Under the new system, SASSA had registered 18.6 million grant recipients by April 2013, and this was after the minister extended the deadline for reregistration from end of February to end of April 2013 with the elderly requiring home visits being given until the end of May. With the new cards in place, the grant recipients are able to collect their grants from bank ATMs and designated payment vendors. The new payment system brings numerous advantages, such as: introducing beneficiaries who have not used banking facilities before to the national payment system and incorporating them into it; and the beneficiaries can now collect their grant on any day within the first seven days of the month instead of waiting in

long queues to collect their grant. As well, the reregistration process gave SASSA the opportunity to have beneficiaries complete financial disclosure forms to allow SASSA to detect any other sources of income. The reregistration process has led to the identification of a number of fraudulent grant claims, such that “to date 77734 cases have been reported of which the majority have been investigated with 3643 cases still outstanding. The monetary values involved is close to R60 million of which R1,19 million has been recovered. A total of 52 people [SASSA employees] have been suspended, 25 of whom have been dismissed” (*Mail & Guardian*, April 5-11, 2013 :4). It seems that the child support and disability grants are most susceptible to fraudulent claims.

4.3.2 Reforming the welfare system and child support grants

The progressive character of the new democratic constitution in post-apartheid South Africa seems to be consistent with the redistributive thrust contained in the early policy document of the ANC discussed in the previous chapter, namely, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP policy framework provided a strong basis for a socio-economic programme that would address and tackle the vast social inequalities (notably along racial grounds) left by the legacy of apartheid. The RDP, as a transformative programme, was to be carried out through “increased social spending” that would be used to confront the social ills created and reproduced by the earlier racially-based regimes (Triegaardt, 2005:250). The RDP was in fact soon followed by the *White Paper for Social Welfare* as a launch pad for reforming the national social security system.

The White Paper placed emphasis on two important programmes:

The social welfare services for specific target groups such as children, youth, women and families, older persons, people with disabilities and those affected by chronic illnesses. ..[And].. social security, which included social assistance, private savings and social insurance (Patel, 2011:366).

The delivery of other state-funded social services, such as free education, health care, housing and public works, was to be deliberately designed to support the comprehensive distribution of social security. However, in 1996 the South African government abandoned RDP for GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), with the latter – as indicated previously – involving a redistribution-through-growth macro-economic strategy (with redistribution following economic growth by means of the trickledown effect). This strategy entailed market-driven growth with minimal state interference. GEAR (and indeed subsequent macro-economic policies) made use of standard neo-liberal instruments and

mechanisms that would restrict state expenditure on the provision of social services such as grants (Lesufi, 2002:287; Goldblatt, 2005:241). Because of this, deep concerns and controversies emerged around this neo-liberal thrust, notably about the state's willingness to pursue and achieve a generous and comprehensive social welfare security net as seemingly implied by the South African Constitution. In other words, the question focused on the extent of neo-liberal transformation and the ways in which this may undermine redistribution measures like the grant system.

This is the backdrop for the formation of the Lund Committee (for children and family) which was established by the state in 1996 and tasked with investigating the introduction of a child support grant in a new, least costly and non-racial manner to replace the state maintenance grant for children living in poverty (Triegaardt, 2005:251). The Lund Committee was the first committee that undertook research and made recommendations on the child support grant and a few years later, in 2000, the Taylor Committee on Health and Social Security was established and mandated with exploring a comprehensive social security system (beyond simply child support) to overhaul the current system. In the end, the Taylor Committee reinforced the findings of the Lund Committee with specific reference to child support (Woolard et al., 2010:9).

According to Kola et al. (2000:9), the Lund Committee had five main objectives to fulfill, namely;

To undertake a critical appraisal of the existing system of state support in all government departments to children and families.

To investigate the possibility of increasing parental financial support through the private maintenance system.

To explore alternate policy options in relation to social security for children and families as well as other anti-poverty, economic empowerment and capacity building strategies.

To develop approaches for effective targeting of programmes for children and families.

As mentioned earlier, the State Maintenance Grant, in catering for both the mother and child, was distributed under previous racial regimes to mainly white women who did not have a live-in spouse or spouse at all due to numerous reasons such as divorce, death of the husband, their single status or their spouse being confined to a state institution such as a prison (Lund, 2008:7). This grant was taken from a British-inspired social policy model that assumed the existence of a particular family structure, specifically the nuclear family consisting of a wife, husband and children. This model also assumed the husband was the sole breadwinner for the family and, as such, it was designed to cover a nuclear family when

the husband (breadwinner) was no longer there to support his family due to the reasons noted above (Lund, 2008:51).

The findings of the Lund Committee argued that the then-existing State Maintenance Grant (SMG) could not continue and it laid out the basis for this. First of all, there were financial constraints arising from neo-liberal restructuring which would inhibit state expenditure on the provision of social services and, secondly, the SMG was no longer relevant given the current family structures of most households in the new South Africa (Lund, 2008:51). In relation to the latter reason, the sheer brunt of socio-economic problems (such as poverty and the HIV and AIDS epidemic) has altered the composition of particularly African households. Three-generation households involving extended families, and not nuclear families, had become particularly prevalent (Lombard and Kruger, 2009:123). At the same time, the colonial system and subsequent racial systems under Segregation and Apartheid, particularly the migrant labour system, had disrupted and even torn asunder traditional structures of African households and families. With restrictions and prohibitions on the urban presence and residence of families of migrant labourers (for example, on the mines), many African children grew up in the reserves not even knowing their fathers (Lund, 2008:2).

The phasing out of the state maintenance grant was not uncontroversial, particularly amongst critics of the ANC government's swing to neo-liberalism. These critics claimed that, ultimately, cost-cutting was the main incentive for shifting away from the SMG and neo-liberal restructuring was the rationale. Feminist organizations expressed discontent with the proposed Child Support Grant because of the reduced monthly amount emanating from the fact that the CSG would provide for children only and not their mothers or care givers. This essentially meant that women's unpaid reproductive labour would be ignored, unappreciated and uncompensated. Unpaid reproductive labour is critical to the reproduction of households. According to Moser (1993:29), the reproductive role comprises

The child bearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks undertaken by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (husband and children) and the future workforce (infants and school going children).

Productive work, at least as understood as gearing towards production for the market, is also often undertaken by the women, but reproductive labour – because of systems and practices of patriarchy – is normally assigned to women. Although the government had committed itself to gender equality and gender restructuring under the new constitution, the child support

grant – it was argued – effectively reproduced the unpaid reproductive role of women as the grant was to cover direct child expenses only. The gendered dimension to reproductive labour was also consistent with the neo-liberal trajectory becoming embedded in the South African political economy (Goldblatt, 2005:241). However, it must be pointed out that the very existence of a massive grant system in South Africa, including the CSG, does go contrary to standard neo-liberal strategies elsewhere.

The Lund Committee, in seeking to provide recommendations for a possible new child grant, ran into many obstacles as external entities wormed their way into influencing the form of the new grant during the committee process. Of particular significance is the World Bank, which played a key role in the formulation of post-apartheid state policies more broadly as well as social policy more specifically. The World Bank managed to cajole the Department of Social Development (known as the Department of Welfare and Population Development at the time) to attach certain prerequisites for accessing a child support grant once the system was in place including stringent means-testing for targeting purposes. When the grant was first introduced, there were two such prerequisites: that all children from a Child Support Grant recipient household would need immunization coverage and that caregivers must have had participated in a community development project. The Lund Committee itself was against such requirements (Lund, 2011:9).

4.4 Child Support Grant

Child support grants are the main focus of this thesis. The Constitution of South Africa has an extensive section (Section 28) that deals with the rights of children and, as with all rights enshrined in the constitution, “right of access to the rights [as children] is subject to progressive realization by the state within its available resources” (Taylor Committee (a), 2002:55-56). Anyone under the age of eighteen years is still regarded as a child, and section 28 grants the following child rights:

Family care or parental care or ... appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environments, basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services, be protected from maltreatment, neglect abuse or degradation, be protected from exploitative labour practices (Taylor Committee, 2002a:55).

This is inclusive of the right to social security even if the child’s parents or legal guardians cannot provide for themselves and their dependent children; in such circumstances, the state is obliged to step in and offer support. Besides the constitutional obligation, the South African state has also signed international treaties and covenants that reinforce and guard the

protection of children's rights (Guthrie, 2008:125), which includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights for Children (Taylor Committee, 2002a:56). In this context, and in the light of the Lund Committee report, the CSG was introduced in April 1998.

According to Manicom and Pillay (2011:95), the introduction of the Child Support Grant entailed four main objectives, namely

Ensuring greater access for poor children to an integrated and sustainable security system in the country, providing a child benefit on an equitable basis to those in need regardless of family structure, tradition or race, preventing children from unnecessarily entering or remaining in statutory substitute care and keeping children off the streets and out of juvenile detention centres.

Initially, the monthly child support grant amounted to R100 per child for children from birth to the age of seven (Leatt, 2006:5). Because of the fluid and complex character of particularly African families and households, as noted earlier, the Lund Committee argued that the grant should be paid out to caregivers of children. The caregivers do not necessarily have to be the biological parents of the children, such that the grant was designed to follow the child so to speak, regardless of who is taking care of the child (Goldblatt, 2009:455).

The grant also involved the need to develop a means-test that would separate the deserving poor from the undeserving poor. Indeed, the government had made it clear from the start that it did not have the funds to accommodate all citizens such that the grant could not cover all children. The Lund Committee had in fact argued for the inclusion of children of all ages (up to the age of 18), but the government used a budget constraints argument as a shield to limit the grant to children up to the age of seven. The Lund Committee had warned the government that not including all children to the age of 18 would be unconstitutional (Taylor Committee, 2002a:67-68). In response, the government said that it would gradually increase the age to eighteen by 2012, which in fact it has done. The grant also increases annually and currently the grant stands at R300 (Saunders, 2013).

All applicants of the Child Support Grant have to pass the means-test and this differs according to urban and rural areas. The means-test for urban households (when the grant was first introduced) was a maximum income of R800 per month and for rural households the maximum income per household was R1,100 per month (Kola et al., 2000:10). The Committee decided on this urban-rural differentiation to give people from the rural areas an advantage since they usually are more marginalised when it comes to accessing employment opportunities and social services (Patel, 2011:372). Besides the means-test, other requirements included producing the following documentation: an identity document, child's

birth certificate and child's immunization card. There also had to be some proof on the part of care-giving applicants that they had participated in a community development project, that they had looked for employment without success, and that they had sought but failed to obtain private maintenance for the child for whom they are applying (Kola et al., 2000:10).

The grant might be open to all those who meet these (and the latter reduced) requirements, but applying for the grant is not always a smooth procedure. In fact, changes in the conditionalities and prerequisites for the grant caused considerable confusion. For example, the two conditionalities imposed by the World Bank (immunization and community development participation) were later dropped. The community development conditionality for caregivers was particularly problematic and disadvantaged rural applicants because of the dearth of development projects in many rural areas (Lund, 2011:9). The means-test was also changed in 1999. The original means-test was based on household income with variation between urban and rural areas. This kind of means-test, based on household income, was soon seen as impossible to apply because household members do not always pool their income equally amongst individual household members (Mirugi-Mukundi, 2009:22). Therefore, a new means-test was introduced that

Ensured that the calculation for income threshold keeps pace with inflation. The formula introduced for calculating income threshold is set at 10 times the amount of the grant. Therefore, the 2009 income threshold is R2400 per month for a single caregiver (and R4800 per month for the joint income of the caregiver and married spouse) (Mirugi-Mukundi, 2009:23).

Earning slightly more than the stipulated amount would forfeit access to the grant and this had the possibility of stopping people from trying to earn more in order to protect their eligibility to access the grants.

While the government was dropping some conditionalities, new conditionalities were being added and adopted for Child Support Grant recipients. In 2010, the government introduced a new requirement that grant caregiver recipients produce proof of school attendance for the child or children of school-going age for whom they are applying or receiving the grant. The proof must be provided every six months to SASSA. If the child has not been attending school or not attending regularly, then "the Agency must suspend the Child Support Grant and request the primary caregiver to provide reasons for non-compliance" (Lund, 2011:10). In the event that non-compliance is due to uncontrollable circumstances such as "hospitalization, sickness or any other reasonable explanation" (Lund, 2011:10), then the grant can be reinstated. This conditionality came solely from the

government without broader consultation, and civil society groups in the country called for broader debate around it (Lund, 2011).

This increases the burden of administering the grant system (Patel, 2011:377), as schools have to supply records of proof to caregivers. But this new conditionality also has other consequences. Lund (2011) for instance argues that the requirements would disadvantage many households financially especially in the event of the child falling sick or being hospitalized. Under such circumstances, the grant would be suspended yet it is during such times that a household is under increased financial stress in caring for the child and hence needs the child support grant. It is also claimed that the school requirement makes no sense given that South Africa already has a high school enrolment rate (of about eighty-six percent). In any case, what often affects children's regular school attendance and performance at school is not absenteeism for reasons given above, but the poor quality of schools which is particularly prevalent in poor rural communities (Patel, 2011).

The basic requirements for the grant and the constant change in requirements to lodge the Child Support Grant applications, besides causing confusion, have decreased the take-up rate of the grant. Various barriers inhibit especially applicants from poverty-stricken families. Caregivers need the required documentation before lodging the application with the Department of Social Welfare. But caregivers sometimes do not have the money to travel to the different state departments (such as the Department of Home Affairs) to obtain birth certificates and other supporting documents required for the application process. Inadequate transport also serves as a barrier to some caregivers who live in remote areas and often have to travel long distances to the nearest towns to access the various departments (Manicom and Pillay, 2011). The backlogs in processing requests in the various departments also disadvantage some applicants due to the number of times they need to go back and forth before obtaining the necessary documentation.

As well, inconsistently exists within the different social development departments in various parts of the country in terms of the required supporting documentation for child support grant applications. For example, at one time, the North West province was continuing to give out wrong information with regard to the age eligibility, such that even after the age for eligibility increased it was turning away applicants whose children were now legally allowed to access the child support grant. In particular, when the age was increased to eight years, applications for children of eight years were being declined. But even children who were a few months shy of nine years were eligible for those few months, and the caregiver was to be given a lump sum of money for that short period (Leatte, 2003).

Such difficulties, involving seemingly disorganization and malfunctioning of the social development department nationally and at lower tiers of government, have led to calls by for example the Children's Institute for the child support grant to be universalized and applicable to all children (Mirugi-Mukundi, 2009:23). In this regard, it is argued that the means-test, which restricts the inclusiveness of the grant by targeting individuals for inclusion, at the same time stigmatizes these same individuals (Adesina, 2009:4). Yet one of the core aims of social service provision is to prevent stigmatization in the first place. Adesina (2009:48) also questions the rationale behind using this method in countries like South Africa where 50 to 70 percent of the population is poverty-stricken. This has the potential of forcing people to resort to illegal and corrupt activities in order to qualify for the child grants. This might even result in the deserving poor being left out and the undeserving poor benefiting through unscrupulous means. The huge administrative cost involved in the means-test process also raises doubts about this targeting system.

Claims also abound that the Child Support Grant leads to perverse incentives, including the notion that some teenagers deliberately fall pregnant to access the grant. Additionally, and related to this, the grant itself is said to have created a dependency syndrome especially for the unemployed (Lund, 2011). Such arguments normally arise from a mainstream neo-liberal viewpoint, including the opposition party the Democratic Alliance, but this is not exclusively the case. Nevertheless, research conducted by Makiwane and Udjo (2006) counters the argument of increased teenage pregnancy due to the Child Support Grant including the simple view that "teenage fertility predates the introduction of the Child Support Grant" (Makiwane and Udjo, 2006:14). Their research also reveals that a lower number of teenagers, proportionally, have actually applied for the grant in comparison to older women over the age of thirty-five (whose fertility rate has decreased). The fertility rates of all teenagers amongst all population groups in South Africa are on the rise even for those teenagers who would not be eligible for the means-tested CSG. Hence, Goldblatt (2005:252) argues that there are likely other reasons for the increased teenage pregnancy in South Africa such as "coercive sex, poverty and lack of sex education and other opportunities".

The possible relationship between child grants and women's role in social reproduction has also been noted. As mentioned, because the grant is for the child only, this might reinforce the home-based caring function of women and hinder women's chances of looking for employment (van Driel, 2009:137-138). Some research suggests though that child grants, at least in some instances, have facilitated entry into informal business ventures such as street vending and tuck shops by caregivers (Patel, 2008). Moreover, in other instances, the

grant has helped caregivers to look for formal employment. Searching for either informal or formal employment is critical given the small monthly grant provided, as grants are sometimes the only source of income in a household and are used for basic needs such as food, rent and healthcare services. This though often results in the pooling of the grant or grants for meeting the household's needs (which may include other dependents in an extended family). This pooling strategy helps the household to make ends meet but it may also lead to the children's needs being abandoned for the greater survival of the household (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011:230). Research on the old age pension in South Africa shows that, when received by a female as compared to a male recipient, there is a greater likelihood that the grant money will be used for the good of the household and particularly the more vulnerable household members; men are more likely to squander the grant money on personal items for themselves (Woolard et al., 2010:20-22). The significance of this is explored in relation to the child support grant in my study in KwaZulu-Natal.

Despite the limited child support grant, it does appear to significantly assist households which are struggling to afford basic material needs and, in this sense, it contributes positively to the livelihoods of many children and their caregivers. Thus the grant does play a role, no matter how insignificant, in decreasing poverty levels amongst specifically poor African households (Marais, 2011:206), which is one of the key objectives of the social security system in South Africa. Existing studies also show that children who receive the grant are more likely to attend school on a regular basis in comparison to children who do not receive the grant (Case et al., 2005:468). The capacity of the child support grant system to bring about meaningful wealth redistribution is more questionable, particularly when one considers that all evidence suggests the deepening of socio-economic inequality since the end of apartheid in 1994 (Taylor Committee, 2002a:15-16). In this light, it is doubtful if the child support grant, or the grant system more broadly, has made inroads into the cycle of poverty that continues across generations in post-apartheid South Africa (Finn et al., 2011).

The HIV and AIDS pandemic also aggravates poverty and inequality in the country, as it often affects the most economically productive members of households receiving child support grants and limits the capacity of these households to pay for basic services and goods (Lund Committee, 1996:22). It also often redirects the household's already-limited resources towards medical care for those who are HIV-infected (Nattrass, 2004:2). According to Mirugi-Mukundi (2009:6), HIV and AIDS directly affect "the realization of children's rights" in a negative way. Children, who themselves may be infected or are members of an affected household (a household with at least one infected member), are at jeopardy of missing school

because they are sick or because they have to either take care of other family members or start working to earn money to sustain their households. The AIDS pandemic has also significantly increased the number of orphaned children and of child headed-households, and this disadvantages children's wellbeing and livelihood chances.

The AIDS phenomenon has ramifications for a large proportion of the workforce even forcing some workers to take early retirement due to their health status that no longer allows them to work. At the same time, the Disability Grant has been extended to cases of tuberculosis, and HIV and AIDS, on a temporary basis if the worker is unable to work to provide for his or family (Whitworth and Noble 2008:24-25). Nevertheless, the health consequences of AIDS pressurize employers to hire on contractual terms to avoid the AIDS-related costs of early retirement or even prolonged sick leave. This situation affects the more vulnerable households that rely on only one breadwinner, who in the event of being infected and falling sick from HIV and AIDS could suffer loss of employment. In cases such as these, and because no social insurance scheme for the unemployment is in place, the existence of a child support grant takes on a greater relevance and may even become the very bedrock of household survival (Natrass, 2004:4-5). In this way, the grant does not complement other sources of household income but acts as a substitute and only income source.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the grant system in South Africa and more directly the child support grant. As a redistributive measure, it seems clear that the grant system is highly significant in the face of neo-liberal restructuring as the latter regularly impacts most negatively on the poor. Millions of poor mothers amongst the African population seem to rely quite extensively on the monthly grant, despite its limited amount. At the same time, the grant system more broadly and child grants more specifically have been subjected to extensive criticism as for instance creating a dependency syndrome amongst grant-children mothers. This is a matter which will be addressed in the following chapters.

In this and the two preceding chapters, I have outlined the context for my specific study of child support grant mothers in Sinathingi. The objective of my thesis is to understand the livelihoods of these mothers and hence the theoretical framing in chapter two, including an emphasis on intra-household relations, was necessary. The child support grant, in this regard, can be understood as a financial asset which is drawn upon in pursuing livelihoods. Chapter two (and this chapter) examined, respectively, the broader political economy of South Africa and the development and consolidation of an extensive child support grant

system in the country. These two chapters are critical to my study, as the post-apartheid political economy has dire consequences for the Sinathingis mothers and leads to all kinds of day-to-day livelihood challenges for them, which they seek to address and confront in often remarkable ways in and through the monthly grants.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: APPLICATION, PAYOUT AND SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter, and the following two chapters, discuss the Sinathingí child support grant mothers and their households. Chapter six examines household livelihoods and particularly the efforts of the CSG mothers themselves in making a living under very difficult socio-economic circumstances. Chapter seven focuses more specifically on intra-household and intra-family relations of the CSG women, including relations in the household in which they reside as well as relations with the fathers of their grant-children. This chapter contextualises the following two chapters. It does so first of all by providing a profile of the twenty Sinathingí mothers studied for the thesis. It then goes on to discuss the processes undertaken by the Sinathingí mothers in accessing and receiving the grant or grants in the first place and the new and current payout system for CSG recipients. The chapter ends by demonstrating the deep significance of the CSG for the Sinathingí mothers.

5.2 Profile of CSG Mothers

The research for the thesis was conducted in the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal, namely, Pietermaritzburg and more specifically within Sinathingí Township. Sinathingí is situated on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg under ward eleven in the Msunduzi Municipality. The formation of African townships in general in South Africa was a deliberate strategy to separate different racial groups into different residential areas, with many townships being positioned far from city centres (like Sinathingí, which is twenty kilometres away) as almost dormitory towns for Africans working in the white-controlled economy (Msunduzi, 2013:69).

Table 5.1 below presents the profile of the twenty Sinathingí child support grant recipients that participated in the research. The table shows that sixteen (or 80%) of these women are CSG recipients as biological mothers only, while 3 (or 15%) are both biological mothers and caregivers (looking after children of others, namely, family members) and one (5%) is a caregiver only. Further, except for one mother, all (19 or 20, or 95%) of these women are single in the sense that they do live with the father of their child or children. They in fact live with their maternal family in the main. In this regard, the number of members in

the households where they reside ranges considerably, from two members to twelve members; in some cases, the mother lives only with her child or children. Because of the household composition, the child-grant mothers are not normally the sole or primary breadwinner in the household – in fact, only 5 (or 25%) are the sole or only breadwinner while one (5%) is the primary breadwinner. Thus, 70% are secondary breadwinners in the sense that they do not make the most significant contribution to the household income in terms of total household income. Apart from the child support grant, very few of mothers have additional sources of income. A few have either full-time or casual employment, or operate informal trading business, but in the main they are unemployed. This is despite the fact that they are relatively well educated, with 90% of the CSG recipients having a secondary education. The ages of the mothers range from 22 to 53, with the earliest grant received dating back to 1998. The number of grant children per mother ranges from one to four, and some mothers have other children with whom they reside who are now past the maximum age limit of eighteen for the CSG. Thus there are many similarities amongst the mothers (notably in terms of their marital status and status of employment) but many differences as well (for instance, in relation to household composition). This chapter, and the two chapters which follow, capture in a nuanced fashion, the similarities between – and variation across – the Sinathingzi mothers.

Table 5.1: Profile of Study Recipients

| Name of Participant | Biological mother/ Caregiver | Age | Marital status | Highest level of education | Employment status | Number of children | Number of children that receive the CSG | The kind of school they attend | Number of years they have been collecting the grant | Financial position within household |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Nomsa Ndaba | Both | 42 | Married | Secondary | Unemployed | 5 | 3 | Public | 1998 | Only bread winner |
| Zadwa Bomela | Caregiver | 33 | single | Secondary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 10 | Secondary bread winner |
| Mbali Jozela | Biological mother | 24 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 5 | Secondary Bread winner |
| Ntsiki Mzamela | Biological mother | 32 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 2 | 2 | Public | 10 | Secondary Bread winner |
| Phaphama Brown | Both | 36 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 3 | 3 | Public | 19 months for her one child/ not sure for her sisters children | Only bread winner |
| Nomathamsanqa Kwela | Biological mother | 37 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 4 | Primary bread winner |
| Nobuhle Zungu | Biological mother | 31 | Single | Secondary | Fully employed | 2 | 2 | Private | 13 | Secondary bread winner |
| Nandi Zwane | Biological mother | 31 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 3 | 2 | Public | 6 | Secondary bread winner |
| Khethiwe Phungula | Biological mother | 39 | Single | Secondary | Part time employee | 1 | 1 | Public | 14 | Secondary bread winner |
| Zola Kunene | Biological mother | 33 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 4 | 4 | Public | 13 | Only bread winner |
| Bazamile Mabizela | Biological mother | 24 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 5 | Secondary Bread winner |
| Pinky Mbhele | Both | 35 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 3 | 3 | Public | 13 | Only bread winner |
| Mangaliso Shangase | Biological mother | 24 | Single | Secondary | Fully Employed | 1 | 1 | Private | 3 | Secondary bread winner |
| Mandisi Xulu | Biological mother | 27 | Single | Secondary | Part time employee | 1 | 1 | Public | 7 | Secondary bread winner |
| Zethu Bhengu | Biological mother | 33 | Single | Tertiary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 10 | Secondary bread winner |
| Zandile Zondi | Biological mother | 23 | Single | Secondary | Part time employee | 1 | 1 | Public | 4 | Only Bread winner |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----|--------|-----------|----------------|---|---|------------------|------|------------------------|
| Phumzile Sibiya | Biological mother | 53 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 5 | 1 | Public | 2005 | Only bread winner |
| Bongi Ngema | Biological mother | 35 | Single | Secondary | Unemployed | 1 | 1 | Public | 11 | Secondary bread winner |
| Qondi Khanyile | Biological mother | 30 | Single | Secondary | Fully employed | 2 | 2 | Public / private | 2002 | Secondary breadwinner |
| Nande Sokhulu | Biological mother | 22 | Single | Tertiary | Student | 1 | 1 | N/A | 2 | Secondary bread winner |

5.3 CSG Application Process

The application procedure for the Child Support Grant may seem simple from the perspective of the state but it is not straightforward for the eligible beneficiaries that have to apply. From the time the grant was first introduced, as indicated earlier in chapter four, the conditionalities have kept changing and this, along with the practicalities of applying for the grant, have had various implications for the Sinathingi applicants (including the incurring of unnecessary extra costs).

In terms of initially finding out about the existence of the CSG, the radio was an important source of information. As the recipients indicated:

I heard through the radio (Phaphama Brown).

The radio, through the radio it's very informative these days (Nandi Zwane).

And Zethu Bhengu actually named the radio station that she heard it from:

I heard about it on Ukhozi fm radio.

Another important electronic media source was the television. A handful reported becoming informed about the grant via the television although it did not give them all the details pertaining to the application process, as noted by Managaliso Shangase:

I first heard about the grant on television then heard on the radio where they gave more details about the grant and how one could apply for it.

As much as the media played a pivotal role, members of the immediate family, relatives and the community-at-large also served as another reference point for some CSG recipients. As Mbali Jozela noted:

My grandmother told me about the child support grant and I also heard from my school mate.

Bazamile Mabizela reports being informed by her sister who at the time was very upset about her (Bazamile's) pregnancy. Likely her sister was worried about how Bazamile would be able to provide for the baby as she was unemployed, and thus she told her about the grant as a possible solution for providing for her then-unborn baby:

Well my sister told me about the child support grant whilst I was pregnant as she was upset about the whole thing.

Nobuhle Zungu points out that she has always known about the grant as it was spoken about quite frequently whilst growing up:

Well when I was growing up this grant was spoken about a lot.... So that is how I know about it.

Of course, in the end, many recipients obtained details about the CSG from a range of sources:

I heard through the television and my community also knows a lot about the grant even my sister helped with the information (Nande Sokhulu).

The CSG recipients experienced serious problems in trying to apply and access the grant. This was highlighted in particular by those who applied when the grant was originally introduced because of backlogs and a seemingly meandering (one step forward, two steps backward) application process. One recipient, Zola Kunene (now with all four of her children on grants), seemed to have a horrific experience in this respect:

I went to the offices so many times back and forth, because when I started receiving it, the grant child support grant had just been introduced in the new South Africa. Therefore it was a bit unclear what documentation one needed; that is why I had to go back and forth and at one point we were told to go back home because it was too full and they would not be able to help us. Bribes helped to quicken one's application at the time and if you did not have the money like me, you were sent back and forth. Luckily, the father of my child helped me with the money for transport to go back and forth. The officials who helped us were ruthless and rude but what could one do because we needed the grant money and could not survive without it.

Zola Kunene has been collecting the grant since 1998. Her painful experience of being unable to pay a bribe to expedite the application process saw her going back and forth to try and lodge her application. She also raises an important point about the transport money required and, if it were not for the father of the child she was applying for, she would have possibly been left stranded. Unemployed applicants, without any support from others, found it exceedingly difficult for transport reasons to collect all the necessary support documentation and to eventually lodge the application. Zola even expresses her desperate need for the grant money, and she was prepared to tolerate the mistreatment from state officials in her desperate bid to sustain herself.

Some recipients went so far as to pay the requested bribe to expedite the application process. Nomsa Ndaba, who also has been collecting the grant since the year 1998 and has three children on grants, recounted:

The very first time going to the grant offices to apply for the grant was in itself a long procedure that took weeks at end. I was sent up and down because they did not give us the all the relevant information at first as they would give us incomplete information. The queues were very long so one would have to spend the whole day waiting, actually things got bad that I had to bribe the clerks to fasten my application

process. However, over the years, things have changed because even the way we are received at the grant offices is much friendlier than before when we were treated as a nobody.

Zodwa Bomela (with one grant-child), who has been collecting the grant since the year 2003, reported a similar experience:

I will never forget this application process it was the longest process ever... it dragged and as a result I lost so much money. I even had to bribe to fasten the application process. I was there for weeks on end; one day you told that you do not have all the necessary documents and the next you told another story.

Thus, during the early years at least, there were backlog challenges (that forced certain applicants to resort to bribery of corrupt officials), uncertainty about the required documentation emanating from the state department issuing grants, and general inefficiencies and negligence amongst state bureaucrats. Many applicants, for different reasons, went to and fro but persevered nevertheless. As Phumzile Sibiyi, who received a grant in 2005, frustratingly recollects:

I went five times before my application was successful at the end but I was not being told all the information; they kept on telling me that oops you need that document so that is why I had to go back and forth.

Commentary by Qondi Khanyile, who is an early recipient dating back to 2002 and has two grant-children, encapsulates many of the early challenges but she suggests that the process has improved in recent years:

Well for my first child I was going back and forth for about a week because they never told us what documents one would need at once, and they would kind of tell you one thing each day so one needed to be very patient. Luckily, my father helped me with transport money. But when I went to apply for my last born things were faster and I was helped in a day and the process went well.

It seems that more recent applicants, without experiences of earlier times, still however find the application process and procedure daunting. Bazamile Mabizela, who has been collecting her one grant from only 2009, describes the grant application experience as unfair:

The first time I went to the offices I was told that I came too late and mind you I went there at 8am as they said they do not take any applicants after 8 am which is ridiculous. I mean just because we are in need, they treat us like dirt. Therefore, I had to go back the next day, what if I did not have a family to pay for my bus fare. I really feel like that rule if it is a rule for real, it is unfair.

In this regard, Mbali Jozela exclaimed that ‘*YOU MUST WAKE UP EARLY*’.

The problems in the application process therefore may be more systemic and long-term, though there is evidence as well from the Sinathingzi recipients suggesting that application experiences are situational and contingent with some applicants speaking relatively positively about the entire process. Thus, one applicant receiving the grant from the early years (1999) argued:

I had to make two trips to lodge my application but it went well and I was treated well (Khethiwe Phungula).

Some of the Sinathingzi child support grant holders also sought to apply for the foster care grant, to look after orphaned children of relatives, and this is an even more complicated process. As Phaphama Brown notes:

I am in the process of getting the foster care grant for one of my late sister's children, well for the one whose father is also late. Although the process is dragging out a bit because of the procedures that I need to take as I have to legally adopt the child so that is why the process is taking forever.

Only one recipient has successfully received a foster child grant for a child of relatives, which is conditional on both parents of the child being dead (in other words, what is referred to as a double orphan).

5.4 CSG Payout System

The government has recently (in 2013) introduced the new card payout system that enables CSG recipients to collect their money via any bank-automated machines (ATM) and various supermarkets. This new system, as indicated earlier, saw the government reregistering all CSG recipients as the government hoped in this way to combat all existing corruption and fraud including recipients who are undeservingly receiving the grant although they do not meet the means-test criteria. The system was also meant to stop overcrowding and long queues at payout points and to enable the CSG recipients to collect their grant money from the first day of every month and any time thereafter at their own convenience (previously, they were restricted to collecting their money on specific days). However, because of the deep dependence of CSG recipients on the child support grant as a source of household income, there is a tendency for recipients to queue on the first day of the month under the new system. As Phumzile Sibiyana notes:

For me things are the same... regardless of the card because there will always be a queues at banks and supermarkets on the day we get paid since everyone goes to collect it on the same day.

Receiving the card for payment under the new system has at times been problematic, as it was also under the old system. Mandisi Xulu, with a grant from 2006, had a smooth application for the grant but then struggled to obtain the card needed to access the monthly payments:

Well I finished the application in one day but the one thing that had me going back and forth is the card one needs in order to collect the money and usually what happens after the application process you are told when to come back to collect it..... but with my case they seemed to have mixed up the dates because each time I went I was told a different story and told to come back the following week or month.

Under the new system, there have been communication breakdowns between CSG recipients and the Social African Social Security Agency (SASSA) concerning the introduction of the new card and the process for applying for the card and getting the pin for the card. Some recipients were still not using the new system because they did not have the card pin. As Bazamile Mabizela explains:

Well I cannot comment on the new card system as I do not have the pin and do not really know where to get it. But according to my cousin, one can get the pin from Social African Social Security Agency offices in town. So until I go to the Social African Social Security Agency offices in town I will continue collecting the grant money at the town hall. As I usually get my TB grant at the town hall, so after when I fell pregnant I was automatically assigned the same pay point for the child support grant. I usually go in the afternoon as it's usually not full.

Zodwa Bomela, who is unemployed and has a grant for the child of a family member, knew where to obtain the pin but expressed concern about the transport costs (namely, bus fare) entailed in going to the relevant state office to collect the pin:

I have the new card but still do not have the pin and that on its own needs money for me to go to the SASSA offices in town. But I think this new card system will be faster and simpler than the way I'm currently collecting the grant money through the supermarkets because at times we are told they do not have enough cash and so on.

Clearly, SASSA cannot be blamed for all the problems experienced by recipients in accessing the card and card pin as, at times, the recipients have not sought to obtain the required process details and to follow the necessary instructions.

Below, I focus on the experience of the CSG recipients with the payout system after receipt of the card and pin. Overall, the CSG recipients were very positive about the new system in terms of convenience, compared to the old system where long snaking queues were the norm. Ntsiki Mzamela, with two grant-children, noted this:

The new pay out system is way better than the old system..... we do not have to wait in queues for a long time like before.

Thirty-year old Qondi Khanyile shared the same sentiments:

The new card system is way better because one does not have to stand in long queues almost the whole day and now we can collect the grant money anywhere from banks to shops. Overall I am very happy with the card and it has made a big difference in our lives.

And Zola Kunene claimed:

I truly adore the new pay out system because we will never ever have to stand in long queues to collect the grant money. I use to collect the grant money from the post office and this took up the whole day because there are many of us that collect the child support grant at the post office.

Being able to access the money through ATMs, involving a simple swipe of the card, rather than the old-style fingerprint system to confirm one's identity, was noted time and time again.

Also, under the old system, some CSG recipients reported having to miss work or school to collect the grant money. As Nande Sokhulu (a 22-year old student with a grant for only two years) highlighted:

I often missed school to go collect the grant because it was a whole day process.

Mangaliso Shangase, a 24-year old who is employed full-time, made a similar point:

One does not have to request a day off from work to go get the grant money since one can even get it at the ATM.

A further advantage highlighted by some Sinathingzi recipients was the heightened safety that the new system offered, as the previous pay points were sites of petty crime and theft. Thirty-three year old and unemployed Zodwa Bhengu stressed that

The card is much safer than before ...I mean waiting in long queues the whole day, ...as one was also at the risk of being mugged as everyone knows that on a certain day we collect the grant money.

Furthermore, Mandisi Xulu (a 27-year old part-time employee) argued that the new card system would help protect CSG recipients from being scammed by loan sharks: as the new card requires a pin for one to be able to collect the grant money. Under the old system, loan sharks took advantage of the existence of the card which did not have a pin. In loaning money to grant recipients, the loan sharks took the card as assurance that the mother would come back to make repayment of the loan. In fact, the loan shark would accompany the mother to the pay-point with her card to ensure repayment. Or the loan shark may even try to access the grant with the card:

Well the new card system is better and faster because even if the loan sharks took it they would not be able to use it [because of a pin number now] and I believe it was designed deliberately to protect us from such problems.

Only three CSG recipients collected the grant money through the bank before the new card system was introduced as recipients could opt if they wished to collect their money via the bank. However this arrangement was granted under certain circumstances only, such as health when the recipients could not physically manage to stand in long queues. As a result, they did not suffer having to wait for hours on end in long queues to collect the grant money; and thus they see no difference at all with the new payout system. As Nobuhle Zungu (with two grant-children) expressed it:

Well I cannot comment about the new system as I get paid via the bank so things have always been okay.

Bongi Ngema (a 35-year old single mother) made a similar point:

Well to be honest I see no difference because I used to get the grant money from the bank and thus having the card and pin is no different.

However, twenty-four year old Mbali Jozela saw the bigger picture in that the new card payout system was going to help all CSG recipients in receiving the grant money in a simpler and easier way. As she explained:

The system has improved a lot from what I have heard from fellow CSG grant recipients even though I have not suffered the same pain of having to wait in long queues because I get paid from the bank. So, from what I have heard, I think things will be easier from now onwards for not only the people who are paid via the bank but for all the CSG recipients.

Certain problems have been experienced by CSG recipients from Sinathingi when receiving payments under the new system. Nomathamsanqa Kwela, in noting the significance of a loss of only R20, outlined the following:

The new pay system is not safe from my personal experience since I had a problem last month when I went to get the cash from Pick'n Pay and I was told that I have to leave a bit of money behind so they only gave me R270 and left R20 behind. So the next day I went to get the other R20 and I was told I have no money left in my SASSA card. I have not reported this incidence but I am still hurting because R20 is a lot of money for me to lose just like that.

Zandile Zondi also had a bad experience with the new card pay system, and endured extra transport costs because of it:

The new card system is great at preventing fraud but this new card also gave me problems because the first time I used it at the ATM whilst trying to withdraw I was told I have insufficient funds and went inside the bank and they double checked and told me that unfortunately I do not have any funds..... Therefore, I had to go to the Social African Social Security Agency offices to sort it out.

These problems were temporary aberrations which happened in one month only and, after Zandile approached the SASSA office, the matter was speedily resolved. But, in both cases, the recipients incurred extra expenses in the form of transport charges. Nomathamsanqa's failure to report the problem to SASSA is indicative of a mind-set that is sometimes evidenced amongst the Sinathingzi CSG recipients. There is a sense of dependence (not to be confused with dependency) on the state amongst the recipients and an unwillingness to challenge the system in any significant manner.

In fact, at times, the dependence appears more like a burden. And this burden implies that the right to complain does not exist; after all, the very livelihoods of the recipients (and perhaps particularly for those who are the sole breadwinner in their household) is dependent upon the good-will of a benevolent state. Pinky Mbhele is unemployed and the only breadwinner; she has three grant-children and is not the biological mother of all three. She indicates:

The new system seems promising because one can get the money from a supermarket or ATM unlike the old system where I would have to wake up early in the morning to get at the pay point early so I could leave by midday. But I still do not have a pin for my card as they have not given us the pin and the sad part is that they have not communicated anything to us. Sometimes I feel being at the mercy of the state is demeaning because one cannot always ask for too many questions keeping in mind that the grant money is just a gift from the government. Even when I first went to apply for the grant I was given the run around and had to remain patient because I'm at the receiving end.

Pinky Mbhele feels like she has lost her human dignity because of her dependence on the state, and this sense of emptiness is reinforced by the fact that she is unemployed and hence, from the perspective of society, unproductive. She does not want to take any action to jeopardize her only source of income in terms of providing not only for her own children but for her nephew as well (as her brother who is the father of her nephew is also unemployed). The sheer dependence of the Sinathingzi recipients on the CSG, and the overall significance of the grant as a source of income (as a form of financial capital) for the livelihoods of the mothers and their children, is explored in the following section.

5.5 Importance of CSG for Livelihoods

The significance of the child support grant as a source of financial capital varies across households, depending upon for instance the composition and size of the household and other sources of income. As noted in section 5.3, all the CSG recipients (who number twenty) except one are single but the married recipient and her household rely exclusively on the grant. Fourteen of the twenty recipients (or 70%) were unemployed at the time of the study (including one student) while the other six were employed on either a full-time or part-time (mainly casual or temporary) basis. For six households (30%), the CSG recipient was the only breadwinner. In thirteen households (65%) they were the secondary breadwinner and in only one household (5%) they were the primary breadwinner. Thus, 35% of the households depended exclusively or primarily on the CSG. The primary breadwinner in the thirteen households was not the father of the child or children, because these women were living as single mothers with in the main their biological family of origin. Additionally, there was considerable variation in the number of children on grants within a household, from one to four, and in the number of total children in the households (from one to five). Based on these basic statistics, some CSG recipients may value the grant more than others. The overall evidence from the study, as a point of departure for now, clearly shows though that – for all households – the grant (or grants) were simply insufficient given the needs of the mother and her child or children.

The study recipients were therefore explicitly asked if they felt that the amount of the grant money given by the state was sufficient, with the recipient implicitly setting the criteria for what was meant by ‘sufficient’. Phumzile Sibiyi, at 53, is the eldest recipient in the study. She is unemployed and is the only breadwinner (i.e. the grant), with one child on a grant but with four other children. She argued:

The money is not sufficient maybe R2000 would be better.

Zola Kunene notes that

The money is not sufficient in my opinion; R500 would be enough per child.

The claim that R500 per child would be enough seems unrealistic, certainly compared to the recommendation by Phumzile and given that Zola is unemployed and is the only breadwinner with four grant-children. Nande Sokhulu, the youngest recipient at 22 with one grant-child, is a student and secondary breadwinner who also suggested R500 per month. From her perspective,

The grant money is not sufficient because we cannot cover all the expenses but then again it helps to a certain extent; if only we got R500 a month now that would really help us.

Nande Sokhulu, in pointing out that the grant is insufficient, also acknowledges the important role the grant plays in her life. However, Phumuzile Sibiyi (with four children not on grants because they are now over the age of eighteen) seems to be totally unimpressed with the amount of money given to the CSG recipients and she argues that R2000 would be more reasonable.

In this regard, Qondi Khanyile is currently employed full-time and has two grant-children (and thus two grants) but she remains the secondary breadwinner in the household. She warns that the grant needs to be supplemented by another income otherwise one is bound to struggle to make ends meet:

Well the money is sufficient obviously when one has another income but when one does not have an income then they have a serious problem... because they will struggle to make ends meet and believe me I have been there and I know what struggle I'm talking about.

Previously, Qondi was unemployed and relied on the child support grant as the only means of income. She was able to complete her secondary school under (and because of) these dire circumstances and, on this basis, was able to find employment. Bonggi Ngema is unemployed with only one grant-child and she struggles financially such that her mother (with whom she lives) steps in to help her financially with the needs of her child:

The grant money is not enough, I hardly make ends meet and have to be helped by my mother to cover all the needs for the child, maybe if we got R500 a month things would be better.

Fortunately, for Bonggi, her mother works and hence she is not the primary or only breadwinner.

Nomsa Ndaba is unemployed and is the only breadwinner, as her husband is also unemployed. She has three children on CSGs but also has a foster care grant (the only recipient with such a grant) as the caregiver for one orphaned children (her niece). She complained that the amount of the foster care grant is insufficient because they as caregivers are expected to provide everything for the child and the R800 per month does not cover all the costs. She felt that both the CSG and the foster grant should amount to R1,000.

The money for the child support grant is not sufficient; if only we got R1,000 per child. You know this would also be better for the foster care grant for us to get

R1,000 rather than R800 because these children do not have anybody we are expected to make ends meet with R800 as I collect the foster care grant for my niece.

At this point it should be noted that, culturally, orphaned children amongst Sinathingi households are automatically, or by default, taken care of by the maternal or paternal family members. Hence someone like Phaphama Brown (who I noted earlier is applying for a foster grant – for two children of her late sister) has effectively already ‘adopted’ the children in a cultural sense as part of her extended family; indeed, she has been taking care of the children since the death of the parents, though she is unemployed and the sole breadwinner. She has child support grants for these two children but the foster care grant is highly desirable. A number of Sinathingi CSG grant recipients have applied for foster grants because the value of the grant is nearly three times the CSG. But they have been unsuccessful as a result of the fact that the child being applied for is not a double orphan (with both parents dead), but only a single orphan with one parent deceased. The foster grant, if accessed, may even subsidise the expenses of the CSG recipient’s child or children. Despite not receiving the care grant, CSG recipients still provide financial assistance to (one-parent) orphans, thereby further burdening the recipients.

The importance of alternative sources of household income (such as a foster grant) to supplement the grant money came out consistently in the interviewees. For instance, Nobuhle Zungu is fully-employed with two grant-children and is the secondary breadwinner, and she sympathises with households without anyone gainfully employed:

Well the money is not enough because it does not cover all the needs of the child especially for the unemployed maybe R1,000 would be better.

But the relationship between employment and the CSG takes on different forms. The child support grant may for example serve as financial security should the recipient, if employed at the time of accessing the grant, subsequently become unemployed thereby suffering a loss of total household income. At other times, the loss of work may in fact lead to the possibility of then becoming eligible for the CSG based on the means-test. In the case of Nomathamsanqa Kwela, she was not eligible during the period of her employment. She lost her employment in 2010 and then became eligible and applied for a grant:

At first I was told that I do not meet the means-test financial requirements because I earned enough money to support my child. So I went back a couple of years backin the year of 2010 when I lost my job due to my health and it was only then that I met the requirements of the means-test..

For Nomathamsanqa, then, the CSG was a response to the financial stress she experienced after losing her job for health reasons. Irrespective of the exact relationship between the CSG and other sources of income, it is clear that the grant – though insufficient in the eyes of recipients – is critical to their sustenance and livelihoods particularly when combined with other sources.

At times, though, the grant may supplement other sources of income. Mandisi Xulu, with one grant-child, works part-time as she is the secondary breadwinner. She sometimes has to allocate her grant money to broader household needs unrelated directly to her child, despite the existence of a primary breadwinner in the household. In some months, financial crises threaten the well-being of the greater household. She argues that normally

The money is enough because if the government did not give it to us where would I get such money for myself and most importantly my child. ...Sometimes things really get rough in our household that I have to help out with the grant money as well because each month has its own problems.

Later on, in chapter six, I look more specifically at the use of grant money in Sinathingi households and the pooling of household resources.

The CSG recipients deeply appreciate the child support grant money regardless of its value and its inadequacy. And, again, there appears the presence of a mind-set that the grant is a privilege from the government and not a right. As a result, coming from the goodness of the government's heart, its monthly value should not be directly and explicitly questioned. Mbali Jozela therefore claims that

I'm very content and grateful for the grant money especially because its free money I did not earn it.

And Nandi Zwane also expressed her gratitude:

Yes I am very content with the grant money. Where would one get such money if the government did not give it to us?

The government is viewed as doing its optimum best to provide for poor mothers with children. Bazamile Mabizela, in this light, said:

I'm very happy with the grant because it's free money and I would not ask for more from our government... It's the best they can do.

Zethu Bhengu and Zandile Zondi, as single mothers both with one grant-child, emphasize that they 'were not sent by the government to fall pregnant' and they must accept the consequences of their actions. As a result, they are grateful for what they receive through the grant system. Zethu said:

The grant money is sufficient because the government did not ask us to fall pregnant therefore we can never expect them to give us more than what they give us.....anyway, there are so many people who get this grant so the government has to provide for many children not just my child.

Zandile likewise claims that

The money is sufficient for me... because the government did not send us to fall pregnant. But nonetheless I'm excited about the increment of the grant that is yet to come in October [2013].

It does not appear then that there is a sense of entitlement on the part of the Sinathingí CSG recipients and that they are trying to 'milk' the state's coffers by falling pregnant. Falling pregnant was their choice and they do not have the right to agitate against the state to demand a greater monthly amount. In this respect, as my fieldwork for this study took place before the upcoming October 2013 increase, they were 'excited' about the coming increase despite the seemingly small increment. Even Pinky Mbhele – with three grant-children – expressed that

R290 is okay because it's free money that I did not work for.

In other words, in the normal course of events, incoming income should be based on effort expended. The image of lazy no-good single moms after a fast buck does not fit the profile of the Sinathingí single mothers by a long shot.

Overall, the CSG recipients were grateful for the grant though it is was inadequate. But at least one recipient claimed that the grant was in fact more than enough. Mangaliso Shangase argues that even R200 would be enough:

The money we get is more than enough.... I am happy about the child support grant shame, R200 would be enough but the government is generous because the money increases every year.

Mangaliso Shangase though is fully employed and she is the secondary breadwinner. She seems able to take care of her child's needs independently of the grant money. This again highlights the fact that not all grant recipients find themselves 'in the same boat' (so to speak), as the significance of the grant is contingent on a range of factors, including employment status of the recipient and other sources of household income.

For most of the Sinathingí mothers interviewed, imagining their lives (and the lives of their children) without the child support grant is a frightening and indeed terrifying experience. For most of them, life without the grant or grants would be no life at all. This is especially the case for the unemployed, the part-time or casual workers, and those who are

either the primary or sole breadwinner. In their cases, at least the CSG – though limited – is a regular, steady and secure monthly income. Nomsa Ndaba, with both her and husband unemployed, highlighted:

Life would simply not happen because there is no other income in this house besides the grant money as both I and my husband are unemployed.

A couple of the CSG recipients pointed out that maybe their children would not receive an education if they did not receive the grant money. As Bongi Ngema said:

Well maybe my child would be out of school and I would not be able to help out in the house with some groceries.

Mandisi Xulu expressed a similar point:

If I did not get the grant money maybe my child would go hungry or not have lunch.

Without the grant money, life would be absolute misery, as expressed in the following ways:

Without the grant I would be living in poverty at its best (Phumzile Sibiyi).

I would basically be lifeless (Zandile Zondi).

We would simply not have a life (Zola Kunene).

I would not have a life because I would not have an income (Nandi Zwane).

Life would be awful without the grant and we would not have anything and our lives would be completely still (Zodwa Bomela).

One relatively well-off recipient, Nobuhle Zungu (employed full-time and a secondary breadwinner in the household) does not see life without the grants (for her two children) as being particularly problematic. She is neither as desperate nor dependent on the grant money as many other CSG recipients, notably the unemployed ones. Regardless of this, she realizes that the grant money helps her to a certain extent as she explained that:

Life would not be that bad because the money we get is not too much even though it helps us to a certain extent.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the lives and livelihoods of the Sinathingi mothers and their children, starting with accessing the grants in the first place and the complexities of the new payout system. I have demonstrated that, though there are significant variations between the mothers, all of them deeply appreciate the child support grant system and realise that the grant (or grants) play an absolutely critical role in ensuring that at least the basic necessities for them and their children are possible. Without the grant, as one mother said, ‘our lives would be completely still’. The following chapter, chapter six,

examines in greater detail the significance of the child support grants in the pursuance of livelihoods by the Sinathingí grant recipients.

CHAPTER SIX

CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: PURSUING LIVELIHOODS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the pursuance of livelihoods by the Sinathingí CSG mothers, mainly from the perspective of financial capital. I discuss the grant as the critical source of income for the mothers but also other income streams for them directly, and how the mothers seek to minimise and prioritise expenditure to fit within what is financially possible. The Sinathingí mothers need to make important financial decisions which they see as ultimately for the benefit of their children, including questions about savings and debt. In examining savings, I refer to their involvement in community-wide savings clubs (such as *stokvels*) as a form of social capital. Further complications arise in the livelihoods of the mothers when it comes to relations within the households where they reside and with the father of their children, but I leave this for chapter seven.

6.2 Prioritising CSG Expenditure

Undoubtedly, the Sinathingí CSG recipients are struggling financially, though the extent of this varies across recipients. Given the small value of the CSG (now R300 per month per child), it is necessary for the recipients to be frugal in their expenditure and to prioritise only necessary and basic expenditures. At times, they may encounter unexpected shocks which result in scrambling for extra income, by turning to others, to weather the storm. But, overall, their lives are a constant battle to survive such that they do not enter into temporary crises; rather, they live their lives in an ongoing state of crisis.

The Sinathingí mothers control and prioritise costs and budget extremely wisely. But the budget planning they undertake does not involve a well-thought out and explicit systematic plan over an extended period. In fact, only one recipient spoke about budget planning in this way. Zodwa Bomela is unemployed with one grant-child and she has received the CSG for ten years. She is quite unique amongst the twenty recipients in that she is a care-giver and not the biological mother of the grant-child. There are two others who also are care-givers but in addition they have children of their own with CSGs. Perhaps the fact

that Zodwa is responsible for her nephew gives her the added impetus to plan her income and expenditure in such a systematic manner, as described below:

I'm a well-organized person who likes budgeting and planning for things in life, therefore I buy in bulk so that the child does not suffer and run out of things frequently. To make things worse I'm also unemployed so should I run out of money and have no food for my nephew I would be in deep trouble. I also start earlier in the year to buy Christmas clothes so by the time it's Christmas season I would have long finished buying his clothes and thus not have to worry about such.

Zodwa Bomela is clearly very passionate about looking after her nephew and stretches the grant to the absolute maximum to ensure that she and the child live within their means. This does not mean that all other recipients are somehow irresponsible and fail to budget properly. Rather, they do so implicitly and in a way which seeks to minimise debt and maximise savings while also prioritising the basic needs of their child or children.

In the discussion below, I examine the CSG mothers in Sinathingi with specific reference to prioritising expenditure of the monthly grant. Pooling of income resources and decisions pertaining to expenditure, which relate to intra-household relations, are covered in the following chapter. Given the general conclusion reached in chapter five that the grant money is inadequate, it becomes important to look at how recipients prioritise their expenditure given that expenditure needs are greater than grant income.

I sought to identify the monthly expenditure by the grant recipients, though realising that there would be some variation throughout the year, notably a spike in expenditure on schooling prior to the start of the school year. In other words, given the monthly value of the grant and the number of grant-children per recipient, what were the expenditure patterns of the CSG? This proved more difficult than expected, as many Sinathingi recipients were simply unwilling to provide such details and others, when detailing expenditures, were obviously including other sources of income into their calculations (either their own income or income from others). Phaphama Brown was among the few who were willing to share their expenditure breakdown and her typical expenditures are as follows:

I pay R150 for crèche, R100 funeral cover, R350 stokvel and groceries R500 because we are not a big family. I also have a traditional beer brewing business that helps to supplement the grant money.

It is worthwhile noting that Phaphama collects the grant money for three children, amounting to near R900 per month, plus has a liquor business. Mbali Jozela, with one grant-child, spends the grant money as follows:

I pay for transport R110, school fees R50 and the rest goes towards my child's lunch food and money.

Mangaliso Shangase has one grant-child, is employed full-time and runs a small cosmetics business:

I spend R160 on transport, R60 for crèche fees and spend R60 weekly [R240 monthly] to buy his lunch food.

Clearly, some recipients with supplementary income (as employees and/or as informal traders), such as Mangaliso Shangase, are able to supplement the grant money received and therefore have expenditures beyond the value of the grant or grants. In this regard, Mangaliso Shangase argues that, because she is employed full-time, she supplements the grant money monthly:

Fortunately I have a job so I'm able to supplement the grant money every month when the grant money finishes.

Zodwa Bomela and Zethu Bhengu, both with one grant-child and without any other direct source of income, gave vague monthly expenditure breakdowns, respectively:

R150 roughly on everything else and the rest goes towards clothing lay-by.

I spend R150 and besides they do not pay school fees because it's a government school.

The rest of the CSG recipients gave only a grand total of their monthly expenditure as they were reluctant to give a full breakdown:

All together I spend R1300 every month (Nomsa Ndaba, with three grant-children but also with a foster care grant).

All in all I spend R450 (Ntsiki Mzamela, with two grant-children and who sells perfume as an informal trader).

R300 altogether (Nomathamsanqa Kwela, with one grant-child).

I spend R260 (Khethiwe Phungula, also with one child).

I spend R1000 (Zola Kunene, with four grant-children).

I spend R400 (Bongi Ngema, one grant-child).

I spend R2000 (Qondi Khanyile, two grant-children but employed full-time).

I spend R 800 (Nande Sokhulu, one grant-child).

Some of the recipients are spending less than the monthly amount (for example, Zola Kunene), which may indicate simply an inaccuracy on their part in providing their monthly expenditures, or an indication that they are saving on a monthly basis. This underestimation is true of those who rely exclusively on the grant and those with additional direct income (as

employees or informal traders). There may be other quite unique arrangements which explain this, such as the case of Nobuhle Zungu (with two grant-children), who indicated:

I spend between R320 to R400 because one of my children lives with his paternal family and they take care of the child's needs.

It is also clear that a number of CSG recipients (including those with one grant-child and without any other direct source of income – again, as employees or informal traders, such as Nande Sokhulu) spend more than the monthly grant amount. Unless they are overestimating their monthly expenditures, they must be receiving money from other sources – either the father of their child or children, or family members with whom they are staying. In this regard, it is significant that twelve of the twenty Sinathinggi recipients define themselves as the secondary breadwinner in their household. Though not necessarily the case, the primary breadwinner may be subsidising the upkeep of the CSG mother and her child or children.

Generally, it is clear from the studied households that the grant is first and foremost used on basic household necessities (mainly for the grant-child or –children and the mother) and, quite often, the full monthly sum of the grant is used immediately after accessing it. Indeed, as indicated in chapter five, recipients tend to continue to access the grant on the first day of the month even though it can now be accessed throughout the month, and this highlights the desperate financial state in which Sinathinggi grant mothers find themselves. At the same time, there is some variation in expenditures, depending on whether the mother also works, and whether – and this is discussed fully in chapter seven – the household in which the recipient resides has other sources of income and whether the single mother receives financial support from the father of the child.

Recipients prioritise the basic necessities of their child or children. Zodwa Bomela, who relies almost exclusively on the grant, explained that she buys

Food, meat, clothes for the child (warm winter clothes as winter is approaching) school uniform, school fees, stationery, and bus fare money to go to the clinic although he is not a sickly child.

Another recipient, Pinky Mbhele, had some financial support from the father and was able to spend some money on her own needs as well:

Lunch food, a bit of groceries for the house, pocket money and cosmetics [for herself] because their father buys them [a school] uniform.

This support from the father was critical as she is unemployed and is the only breadwinner in the household. Nobuhle Zungu also receives support from the father but works herself. With her grant money, she prioritises

Bus fare for the transport service that takes the child to school, pocket money and funeral cover but the father of the child buys them clothing.

Qondi Khanyile is also employed and explained that

I pay for the educational plan policy, stokvel, food, bus fare (for the transport service that takes the child to school) and clothes.

This recipient, because of her employment, is able to allocate funds from the grant into an investment or savings account ('educational plan policy') for at least one child but the general trend is for the grant to be spent on more immediate and short-term needs (I discuss savings later). These needs tend to relate directly and specifically to the grant-children (and mother) but sometimes they incorporate more general household requirements. Insofar as the recipient receives support from the father, works or is the secondary breadwinner, the grant is more easily and readily focused on the child while other income sources benefit the household more broadly. Recipients more dependent on the grant alone, who find themselves in a tighter financial squeeze, need to simultaneously juggle (so to speak) the interests of the child, herself and the broader household.

Critical to the priorities of all recipients is the education of their children, as some of the above quotations already show. For example, Mangaliso Shangase spoke about

Bus fare for transport service that takes the child to preschool, school fees and lunch food for the child.

The fact that fees for government schools are negligible provides some relief for the CSG recipients, as noted by Ntsiki Mzamela:

I pay for crèche, buy lunch food, lay-by clothing for the children and I do not pay fees for my eldest child.

The CSG recipients expressed concern about the quality of education at government schools and at times dreamt about sending their children to better schools, but overall they realised that this was far beyond their reach. In the words of Zodwa Bomela (who is an unemployed 33-year old caregiver),

I would even like to take my nephew to a private school but as a result of money I cannot, even though my nephew is a bright child.

It is worthwhile noting that, when talking about private schools, this CSG recipient was not referring to private schools as such, but to better public schools located outside the squalor of Sinathing Township. These are semi-public schools which are only partially subsidised by the state such that the school fees are quite considerable. However, Qondi Khanyile (the single mother with the educational plan policy), reported that her one daughter attends a

semi-public school (Alexandra High School) although her other child attends a public school. Her earnings from employment allows for attendance of her daughter at Alexandra High School as the father of her children makes no contribution to the financial upkeep of her children:

No the father of my children does not help..... I have to fend for my own children; you know how they [men] run after you fall pregnant.

But Nobuhle Zungu, mentioned earlier, reported that her children were going to a private school (St Nicholas School), presumably by drawing upon income from her employment as well as the support provided by the father. There is an enormous sense of pride when a mother can afford to send her child to a private or town school (outside of the township) as both Nobuhle Zungu and Qondi Khanyile were quick to stress in interviews that their children do not go to a township school (one child in the case of Qondi) and to repeatedly identify the school attended by their child by name (for example, St Nicholas).

The health of their children is of deep concern to CSG recipients and the grant money becomes important in this regard. Some even try to put money aside in the eventuality that their child falls sick or needs to go for clinic visits. Again, where possible, the recipient may also rely on the father of the child to help “*with medical care*” during such extreme times of stress (Mbali Jozela a 24-year old unemployed mother). Nande Sokhulu, the youngest CSG recipient in the study, refers to these emergency cases and at the same time speaks about the inadequacies of the public health system:

You never know especially with children they fall sick very easily and, in that case, I would need money to take them to the doctor because the clinic does not offer the best services in any case.

Nomathamsanqa Kwela (who is unemployed and the primary breadwinner) tries to ensure that her child goes to a private doctor but this is enabled by the fact that the father of her child pays for doctor visitations (as well as other expenses):

I pay for transport for my child, school excursions and the father of my child pays for his lunch food, pocket money, clothes and takes care of any other expenses such as taking him to the doctor.

Other CSG recipients, for instance Ntsiki Mzamela, did not keep any money aside for medical expenses in large part because they claimed that their children were not prone to illness and sickness.

Despite differences between the CSG recipients in terms of financial resources, with some relying on child grants alone and others having additional resources, all Sinathing

recipients sought at times (when and where possible) to extend the expenditure of the grant beyond the immediate needs of the children, without though ignoring these needs. For instance, two of the older child-grant caregivers were able to use the grant money towards the construction or renovation of their houses. Phumzile Sibiya, the oldest participant to be interviewed at the age of 53 and a well-established Sinathingzi resident, indicated that

I used the money towards building this house we live in.

And Khethiwe Phungula (a 39-year old and part-time employee) spoke about using the grant money

To fix the house as our house is falling apart.

Overall, and particularly for those mothers and caregivers who relied almost exclusively on their child grants, the grant was fundamental to their very existence (as noted in chapter five). This point needs to be reiterated in the light of the expenditure patterns of the CSG mothers. As one recipient emphasised:

The grant money plays such an important role in our lives.... It's the most important source of income (Nandi Zwane).

And Zola Kunene (as the only breadwinner and unemployed) spoke even more emphatically about this:

There would be no life without the grant because without the child support grant we would go hungry; the grant contributes immensely towards our wellbeing.

Thus, without the grant, the many kinds of expenditures discussed above would not be possible. A 33-year old mother who is unemployed and is the secondary breadwinner (Zethu Bhengu) expressed similar thoughts to Zola Kunene though less dependent on the grant than Zola:

The grant helps my child immeasurably because now I do not have an excuse that I cannot afford to buy him the necessities that he needs especially with school needs and basics. Within the household I can buy bread and a bit of groceries with the money that is left over.

CSG recipients clearly note and argue that the child grant makes a positive contribution to the lives of their children and themselves, and even has critical significance in this regard. Without the grant, their children might even be out of school and the possibility of going to bed on empty stomachs would exist. This was noted by Ntsiki Mzamela, who pointed out that

The grant money helps me a lot ... it makes a world of difference, if I did not have it, I would not have any thing especially because I'm not working.

Mbali Jozela shared the same sentiments:

The grant money helps me a lot because without the grant money my child would not be a scholar; he would not have money for transport and you know how unreliable the father of my child is. .. He will only contribute towards his own child's wellbeing when it suits him otherwise I have to constantly nag to get money from him.

Zandile Zondi (a 23-year old engaged mother) reiterates this:

I do not have immediate family so life would be impossible since I stay by myself. I go to bed on a full stomach. I cannot always depend on extended family to feed me because they also have their own social problems.

Even the CSG recipients that are fully employed, such as Nobuhle Zungu, acknowledge and appreciate the role of the grant in their lives:

Shame I won't lie, the money helps quite a bit.

However, to emphasise, this is not to deny the inadequacy of the grant for household livelihoods. The grant money alone is insufficient to cover all basic expenses such that supplementary income becomes critical where possible. But accessing such income, through for example formal employment, is almost near impossible:

Well the grant does not help that much when one does not have a job... You need to supplement the grant money. It's either one has to be a working mother or at least some of your children are working already to help supplement it. Times are hard it's really difficult to find jobs these days (Phumzile Sibiyi).

Some of these income sources are discussed immediately below.

6.3 Work, Education, Assets and Debt

Some of the existing literature on CSG grants in South Africa indicates that, at times, CSG recipients are able to use their grant money to start and support small, informal business ventures, or to further their education (and therefore build their human capital) to facilitate entry into the South African labour market. If they did, or were able to do so, then the informal business or ensuing employment would supplement the grant money. At the same time, grant recipients also try to build up their asset base or physical capital and whilst doing so they may have to enter into some sort of relationship of debt to survive difficult times.

Most Sinathingzi mothers have never used the grant money for education and informal business purposes, as it is insufficient to do so. They focus on the immediate needs of their child or children, and this is all they are able to do financially. Three CSG recipients admitted to using the grant money to further their educational skills, as argued by Phaphama Brown

I funded my own education and went back to school to finish grade 12.

Despite now completing her secondary school and obtaining a matriculation pass, Phaphama remains unemployed because of the tight and saturated labour market. Mangaliso Shangase, who is now employed, notes:

I used the money to start studying this computer skills and administration short course that helped me to get the job I have currently; even though it does not pay much and I sell these other cosmetics and this helps me to get a bit of money.

Mangaliso is employed in the less-privileged labour market segment with low wages and few benefits, and she therefore engages in cosmetics trading informally to help supplement her income further. Qondi Khanyile is also now working full-time, and indicates:

Yes I funded my matric and also did a couple of short courses such as counselling and computer skills. I must say the grant money made this possible especially because after I fell pregnant my family was not impressed so things would have been hard for me because how would I ask for things for my child let alone myself.

It is noteworthy that Qondi almost felt compelled to study and become employed in recognition that her family would unlikely assist her financially because of her pregnancy (she is now 30 and has been receiving the grant since 2002).

A few recipients used their grant money for starting a small informal trading enterprise. Ntsiki Mzamela for instance was able to use her grant money to start a small business selling perfumes and now supplements her grant with his. To quote her

I used the grant to start a perfume business.... And the business is doing well and it has been running for a good year now. To be honest no one would have helped me otherwise if it was not for the grant money.

Ntsiki (with two grant-children) started the informal trading venture long after she received her first grant in 2003 in the knowledge that she needed to be more self-reliant.

There are four recipients involved in informal economic activities, two with cosmetic businesses (Ntsiki, and Mangaliso Shangase) and one running a tuck-shop (Pinky Mbhele) and the other a liquor business (Phaphama Brown). Generally, they do not consider themselves as employed as such or even as working (as they are not employed); they see themselves as unemployed though they are effectively self-employed. Perhaps the unemployed status they give themselves also depends on the fact that their businesses are not particularly lucrative and profitable, such that the grant money remains more important as a source of income.

Six of the CSG mothers have some form of employment, though not all of them entered employment after receiving a grant. Two of these women are full-time employees but

with low-paying work, and the other four refer to their work as part-time but it is effectively casual or temporary work and therefore an insecure and unstable source of income. It may be in fact that accessing a CSG might inhibit women from looking for employment or engaging in informal economic activities. A few CSG recipients explicitly indicated that if they were not in receipt of a grant then they would be forced to look for work. Thus Mbali Jozela claimed that

I would have to try look for employment because my child would suffer as a result.

The fact that such women (and others) are not looking for work when on the grant is not necessarily a sign of laziness arising from dependency, as it in part reflects the discouragement of work seekers in South Africa because of the high levels of structural unemployment in the country.

In terms of building up their physical capital (notably household assets), the possibilities of this are also quite limited for the Sinathingi mothers, again because of the focus on the immediate needs of the grant-children. For many Sinathingi recipients, purchasing any assets is simply not possible. Those with other direct income sources, such as employment, were more likely to do so. For instance, full-time employee Qondi Khanyile bought a microwave with the grant money. But other CSG recipients, even those unemployed or without any informal trading business, have also bought various kinds of assets. These are often women who had a grant or grants for extended periods:

Yes I have bought a bed, wardrobe and washing machine so the child support grant has helped me a lot (Nomsa Ndaba, who received her first CSG way back in 1998).

I have bought furniture (Nandi Zwane).

I used it to buy a bed and DVD player (Zola Kunene, with her first grant dating back to the year 2000, a 33 year-old single mother).

Yes I bought a television set (Zethu Bhengu, back to 2003).

Yes I bought a DVD player (Zandile Zondi).

Others, when asked about assets, spoke of minor items like mink blankets, pots, clothes, iron, kettle and hairdryer (which often benefit themselves directly and not the child or children specifically). The minimal level of assets purchased by the Sinathingi CSG mothers is indicative of the deep level of poverty they experience over an extended period, as they are not able to build up a strong asset base with the grant money.

Debt is a way of managing expenditures for resource-deficient households, although of course debt is not unique to these households and they may find it more difficult to access debt compared to other well-off households. In the end, any debt accumulated by the

Sinathingi households needs to paid off through the grant, particularly if the grant is the sole source of income for the recipient. There is in fact debt amongst some of the households, and these are mostly clothing account debts. Five recipients with such accounts, all without any other direct source of income, use the grant money to repay the debt.

I have a jet store account and I use the grant money to pay the debt (Nomisa Ndaba).

I have one [clothing] account that I pay for using the grant money (Nandi Zwane).

Yes I have two clothing accounts and I pay R200 and R300 per month for both accounts (Zola Kunene)

Yes I have one account that I use to buy my child clothes with (Bazamile Mabizela).

I have a clothing account and I use the grant money to pay off the debt (Phumzile Sibiya).

Another two CSG recipients noted that they have debts but they do not use the grant money to pay them off but rather use their wages since they are employed. Ss Mangaliso Shangase explained:

No I do not use the grant money for my debts... I use my wages to pay off my clothing accounts.

Qondi Khanyile made a similar point:

No I do not use the grant money to pay for my debts I use my salary to pay them off.

Other CSG mothers either pay for clothes on a cash basis or at times use a lay-by arrangement whereby they have to pay in full before obtaining the clothing items:

I do not have debts because I lay-by clothes over a certain period of time to avoid debt (Zodwa Bomela).

No it's hard to get credit when one is unemployed accept with loan sharks where they require one to leave their grant card and I am not willing to risk the only source of income, so I usually lay-by clothing for my child or myself (Zethu Bhengu).

It seems, then, that debt for many recipients is to be avoided at all costs. In the case of the mother who is a student (Nande Sokhulu), she noted:

No I do not have any debts as yetbecause I think I'm too young to have debts.

Those who relied exclusively on the grant expressed such concerns, because of the problems that accumulated debt may bring about if left unpaid. But even one recipient with employment on a casual or irregular basis (Zandile Zondi) expressed similar concerns because she did not have full-time employment and a steady employment-based income:

No it's not ideal to get into debt when you do not have a stable income as I am employed part-time.

In addition, there were some more fortunate recipients whose purchase of child clothing was subsidised by the father of their child or children. This was the case with Nomathamsanqa Kwela (with one grant-child):

No I do not have any debts since the father of my child buys clothes for our child.

6.4 Savings

Saving schemes such as *stokvels*, as noted in chapter four, have historically played a crucial role for African households in South Africa as a form of social capital, and these schemes were normally started by African women. These arose because the racial regimes of the past implemented social security policies and arrangements which discriminated against Africans. These kinds of self-help societies therefore provided African households with financial help in times of stress (such as illness and death), for money during the festive season, and as more general financial arrangements for loans and savings. I sought to investigate if such saving schemes were of any significance under more contemporary conditions with specific reference to the Sinathingí CSG households; and to investigate the question of savings (for instance, in banks) by recipients more broadly.

If the Sinathingí women are not able to purchase basic assets in any meaningful manner, then the capacity to save money would seem to be quite limited for CSG recipients given the value of the grant, particularly if the grant was the sole source of household income. Six of the twenty Sinathingí recipients were in fact the sole breadwinner in the household, with one of these employed on a part-time basis and the rest unemployed. Out of twenty CSG recipients, only nine admitted to saving money for their children with *stokvel* societies and others with the bank (and they had different reasons as to why they were saving the money). Surprisingly, Nomsa Ndaba (who is married, unemployed and the sole breadwinner with three grant-children), pointed out that she saved money, and this was because she was encouraged to do so by social workers:

Yes I save for my children through the bank... the reason why I save money is because the social workers encouraged me to do so.

A least four of the nine recipients engaged in saving money did so with specific relation to the education of the child or children, and this sometimes involved taking out education plan policies for their children. Mangaliso Shangase now had the financial capacity to do so because she was employed and was the secondary breadwinner:

Yes I save a bit of money for his education at the bank although I only started last year [2012] because when I fell pregnant I was unemployed so I needed all the grant money to cover all the expenses.

Bazamile Mabizela, again also a secondary breadwinner, pointed out that she only started saving in 2013 because her one child would be starting school in 2014. Mangaliso initially had a financial constraint (unemployment) inhibiting her from educational savings but Bazamile (though unemployed) had no such constraint. Rather she started now, and not previously, because her child was soon to enter school:

Yes I am saving for his education because through the bank. I have actually only started saving for his education this year [2013] because he will be starting grade one next year.

Nandi Zwane and Qondi Khanyile, both secondary breadwinners, also saved:

Yes I save money for my child... I have an educational policy plan.

Yes I have an educational plan for my children and also have yearly savings with the stokvel society.

Qondi, unlike Nandi, is seemingly able to save both through an educational plan and the *stokvel* society because she is employed full-time.

Pinky Mbhele, with three grant-children, is exceptional because she manages to save for both education and emergencies that may arise due to unforeseen circumstances, although she is unemployed and the only breadwinner. She pointed out that

Yes I save money through the bank for education and emergency situations that may arise but I have to give notice for me to get the money for emergency situations.

Pinky raises the point that she has to give notice to the bank in order to access the money for emergency situations. This has both advantages and disadvantages. It is an advantage in that she cannot misuse the funds through spur-of-the-moment decisions on unnecessary items, but it is a disadvantage in that any delay in accessing the money may have dire consequences for her children in the case of a real emergency like sickness. Like Nomsa above, Pinky is able to save though unemployed and the sole breadwinner. It is not clear if having more than one grant-child (in both their cases, three children) cuts down on costs-per-child in a kind of economies of scale circumstance (for example, hand-me-down clothing), therefore facilitating the possibility of savings. Nobuhle Zungu (a full-time employee) seems to be particularly fortunate because the father of her two children is the one saving money for their children's education. Nonetheless, she still saves money for crises and for her children's future:

Yes I save money at the bank just in case there's an emergency although the father of my children is saving for their education.

With regard specifically to *stokvels* and savings, more than half of the interviewed recipients disclosed being a member of a *stokvel*-type scheme. These CSG recipients spoke about how they contribute a monthly fee to the society and divide the money between *stokvel* members at the end of the year. These kinds of *stokvels* enable these women to pay for school-related needs and to buy furniture and other assets that they may not be able to afford otherwise. As argued by Nomathamsanqa Kwela:

Yes I am part of a stokvel society and I contribute monthly R100 and we divide the money at the end of the year.

Zandile Zondi, who like Nomathamsanqa is the primary breadwinner, is also a member of a *stokvel* and explained

I pay R50 a week and this is of great help to me at the end of the year when I get the money and can manage to buy things I was not able to buy during the year even ... so at least once a year I can afford the luxurious things to spoil myself and daughter.

Zandile talks of being able to buy 'luxurious' goods once a year and to her these are the benefits of being a member of a *stokvel* society. The employment status of the CSG mothers does not seem to affect their status as a *stokvel* member; in other words, though they may join for different reasons, even CSG mothers employed full-time join *stokvels*. Qondi Khanyile is one such employed mother, who uses the *stokvel* money for school costs and Christmas expenses including leisure activities:

I make monthly contributions. It helps us a lot since I can afford to buy the children Christmas clothes, uniform and stationary and it also pays for outings just for fun in December.

The saving culture through *stokvel* societies also seems to be common amongst both young and other mothers, as even the youngest recipient (Nande Sokhulu) engages in this arrangement:

I contribute a monthly fee of R100. We get the money at the end of the year. This helps me with buying Christmas clothes for my child.

Buying children clothes during Christmas season, and being able to celebrate Christmas with some sense of dignity and worth, is very important to CSG recipients in Sinathingi and *stokvels*, at least for a good share of the recipients, facilitates these festive activities. The 'splurging' during this time of the year can be understood in this light.

Mandisi Xulu, a part-time employee, saves with the *stokvel* society because it provides a high rate of interest:

I do but I save with a stokvel because we get more interest than one would get from a bank. We contribute monthly and get money at the end of the year.

Phaphama Brown also uses *stokvels* for savings, though she is the only breadwinner and is unemployed. Again, it remains unclear whether the existence of three grant-children in her case facilitates the prospects for savings. She saves for instance for Christmas clothes and eating. And though without an educational savings plan, she does save for school-related expenses:

Yes I use some of the grant money to pay for stokvel monthly contributions... so in that way I am saving and we get the money at the end of the year. And I use the money for December expenses such as buying Christmas clothes, uniform, stationary, school fees and food.

Some CSG recipients are part of a food *stokvel* where they contribute a monthly fee of money and then receive food in bulk at the end of the year. Nomsa Ndaba explained that this kind of society is very helpful especially for the festive season and it also doubles up as a reliable source to borrow money in times of financial need:

The stokvel helps a lot with saving for the festive season. The one I'm part of is a food one which is very nice because one does not have to think about such in December. The society also helps us in times of need should I need money, I can borrow from the society and this comes in handy especially when one has exhausted all the other avenues for help.

Phaphama Brown (besides being part of a general *stokvel*) also uttered the importance of being part of a food *stokvel* and how this enables her to buy her children Christmas clothes with the grant money:

It helps me immensely because I get all the food in bulk from the society and thus I can use all the grant money to buy Christmas clothes for the children.

Stokvel societies seem to be a common way of saving money or getting food in bulk at the end of the year for both the unemployed and employed CSG recipients.

Other CSG recipients belong to a burial society instead of, or in combination with, a *stokvel*. Bongsi Ngema mentioned that she is a member of both a food *stokvel* and burial society and she claims that they both help her household through the difficult times especially in the event of a death:

I'm part of a stokvel and burial society and they both help me and my family especially with the stokvel that gives us food at the end of the year, that helps my family a lot because only two people work full time in this household. So without such societies we would have a hard time especially when someone dies and we did not

have the money.... How would we afford a burial? And it is not nice being a charity case in the neighbourhood.

It appears that burial societies allow households to give their loved ones a dignified send off without being humiliated to ask for financial help or to receive handouts from the community. Nobuhle Zungu explains that African funerals are very expensive and that is why she is part of a burial society:

I'm part of a funeral society and that helps a lot should I lose a loved one... because you know the expenses of a funeral especially an African funeral.

Not all Sinathingi CSG mothers though belong to either a *stokvel* or burial society. They are unable to do so because they do not have the money to make regular contributions to these societies and are struggling to make ends meet. Zodwa Bomela (who looks after her nephew on a child grant) emphasised that

No as I explained earlier that there is nothing to save ... because the money is not enough.

Mbali Jozela reiterated the same point:

No as I said earlier that there is nothing to save.

But it appears that most prefer to use the banking system, even if the interest rates are lower. Nande Zwane, though unemployed but a secondary breadwinner, is able to save for medical emergencies to take her children to a doctor because the public clinics are not always equipped with the necessary medication, and she uses the bank for this:

Yes I save money in the bank every month just in case there is an emergency. You never know especially with children they fall sick very easily and in that case I would need money to take them to the doctor because the clinic sometimes does not have the medication and does not offer the best services in any case.

Clearly, in terms of savings, education is very important to the recipients. But the education savings taking place are not geared for future long-term education; it is accumulated throughout the year for expenses in the new school year. Generally the recipients, because of their precarious socio-economic livelihoods, are not able to look forward beyond the next year, except perhaps in the few cases where educational plans are in place. The capacity of these households to generate human capital for future incorporation and integration into the South African labour market are quite slim. And some Sinathingi CSG recipients cannot save at all for education, even on an annual basis. As noted by Bongsi Ngema (who is unemployed with one grant-child):

No I cannot save for my child because I am unemployed so I really cannot afford to save for my child.

Zethu Bhengu, who is in exactly the same situation, likewise cannot save:

No I do not save any money for my child because I struggle to make ends meet myself and I am unemployed.

Even the casual employees (those who work part-time or on call) struggle to make ends meet and thus do not save, as noted by Khethiwe Phungula:

Unfortunately I do not save any money for my child... I have too many things that I have to take care of financially and secondly I only work when I am called in at my workplace.

And Zandile Zondi, who is engaged to be married but also works part-time, indicated:

No I do not save any money for my child because I am the only breadwinner since my parents died. Therefore, it is very hard for my child and me because I am the only one who can provide for us.

Zandile Zondi is herself an orphan and the only breadwinner in the household and she does **not** have any immediate family in the area to assist her. It is not clear the ways in which her soon-to-be husband assists in this regard. Effectively, what these women are saying is that saving is out of the question because of the sheer inadequacy of the value of the grant and they therefore live month-by-month under conditions of severe insecurity and presumably trauma. Zodwa Bomela made this point in arguing that

No I do not save because the grant money is not enough for me to raise, support and save for the child.

Mbali Jozela made this argument more emphatically:

No I do not save for my child because the grant money is too little ... one cannot look out for the child's needs and save... it's just impossible.

Some of these women hoped somehow, in the future, to be able to save but this will likely be extremely difficult. As Phumzile Sibiyi said:

I do not save any money for my child because I have too many things to take care of as the mother of the house and life is very difficult as a single parent but I plan to start saving this year the little that I have.

The fact that any of the Sinathingzi women save at all is testimony to perseverance, fortitude and ingenuity to pursuing a livelihood for them and their child or children.

6.5 Conclusion

Whether the CSG mothers have been able to start a business, find work, pursue their education, build assets or accumulate savings, it is clear that all of them are diligent and persevere despite their difficult financial circumstances. In fact, one can only marvel at the

sheer determination of CSG mothers in trying to make ends meet and in pushing the grant money to its limits in caring for their child or children. This is a far cry from the public image of CSG mothers (as propagated regularly from a neo-liberal perspective) that portrays these women as lazy and using the grant money irresponsibly. Of course, one must wonder what will happen to the vast number of unemployed CSG recipients (and their children) when their child or children reach the age of eighteen and they are no longer eligible for the grant money. In being unemployed for extended periods while on a grant and without alternative sources of income once out of the grant system, the future of these women and their children look bleak. In the meantime, they vigorously pursue their livelihoods. But this pursuit is not done alone, as they live in households (as single mothers) with other family members, and they also have some sort of relationship – no matter how distant or fractured – with the father of their child or children. These relationships complicate their lives (and the lives of their children) or they may lessen the burden of making ends meet. In chapter seven, I examine these relationships in the context of the livelihoods of the Sinathingì mothers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHILD SUPPORT GRANTS IN SINATHINGI: INTRA-HOUSEHOLD AND FATHER-MOTHER RELATIONS

7.1. Introduction

In seeking to pursue a livelihood for themselves and their children, the CSG mothers engage in relations with both other members of the household in which they reside and quite often with the father or fathers of the child or children. This chapter discusses these two sets of relationships. It first sets out the composition of the households in which the women reside and the sources of income for these households beyond what the mothers themselves contribute. It then considers intra-household relations and the pooling or otherwise of household income, including tensions which might exist within households and possibly along lines of gender. The chapter then examines the relationship between the grant-children mothers of Sinathingí and the fathers of their child or children. The fathers do not stay with the mothers of their children and a diverse set of relations exist between mother and father, sometimes cordial and supportive but other times more acrimonious. The final section of the chapter discusses different ways that the mothers may borrow money either within or beyond the household.

7.2 Household Composition and Income

The bearing of children out of wedlock, which is the general circumstances of the CSG mothers in Sinathingí, has contributed significantly to changes in household structure and composition. These women, since they are not married (except for one), are to be cared for by their own biological families because traditionally female children only left their parents' home (or household) when they became married. Hence, culturally, the children of these CSG women are the responsibility of the women's family. In fact, in Zulu culture (the dominant culture in Sinathingí), the children would belong to the maternal family even more so if the father of the child has not paid for damages for impregnating the mother of his child out of wedlock. This cultural practice is still very much alive in KwaZulu-Natal province as a whole, and it is deemed to be a way of cleansing the shameful act of falling pregnant outside of marriage. The payment of damages also shows that the father of the child acknowledges the child as his own and, additionally, it shows his respect to the mother of his child's family.

The large number of absentee fathers amongst the Sinathingí CSG mothers is due to a combination of a general lack of responsibility felt by them for the mother and child and their inability to abide by the cultural practice due to financial constraints of their own.

In this light, the households in which CSG mothers and their children live tend to be primarily multi-generational ones. The CSG mothers interviewed in Sinathingí live in two-, three- and even -four generational households. Ntsiki Mzamela, who is a secondary breadwinner within the household she lives, is one of eleven members of her three-generational household. Besides herself, there is

My father, my siblings, my two children and niece and nephew.

Nomsa Ndaba, who is the only mother married in the study, lives with her spouse and is the only breadwinner, noted:

Ten family members live in this household; it's my husband, me, our five children [of which three are grant-children], two grandchildren and my niece who I took in after her parents died.

Unlike Ntiski, who forms part of the second generation in her house, Nomsa is part of the first generation of her three-generational household. Mangaliso Shangase, who is employed full-time and is the secondary breadwinner, is an example of a four-generational household:

Seven people, my grandmother, mother, aunt, brother, my niece, my child and me.

Phaphama Brown, as the only breadwinner, lives in a two-generational household consisting of

Myself, my child and two of my late sister's children.

She has a child-grant for all three children. Other recipients, like Zola Kunene (as sole breadwinner), also simply live with their grant-children and no other family members. Because of this, there would be no intra-family squabbles within the household, though tensions may arise between the recipient and her family residing in other households. Zodwa Bomela, as the secondary breadwinner, spoke likewise of a two-generational composition but a more complex one:

Seven people live in this household, me, four siblings, my nephew and niece.

It is of interest to note that her aunt's children's house is next door (within the same plot) and that the two households buy groceries as a unit and divide these amongst the two households. This is an example of cross-household pooling of resources (as an extended family divided into two so to speak) as a livelihood strategy rather than intra-household pooling, though this may also take place in her case. Pinky Mbhele, as the only breadwinner, also is two-generational:

There are five people in my household; me, two nephews and my two children.

Pinky receives three child-support grants, two for her own children and one for one of her nephews. In cases such as hers, it is not a question of household members possibly subsidising the expenses of CSG recipients, but the recipient herself caring for household members beyond that which the grant or grants are intended to cover. In fact, this situation exists in any case where the CSG recipient lives with anyone beyond herself and her grant-children as either the sole or primary breadwinner. Admittedly, at least in my study, this is rare.

In terms of income generated in the households of CSG mothers, this generally extends beyond the mother's income (whether the grant itself or informal trading and work). Of course, some of the recipient households, particularly those which consist only of the recipient and her grant child or children (such as Zola Kunene) rely exclusively on the grant or grants. Where there is informal trading or sporadic employment in the case of mothers (for instance, Zandile Zondi), the grant is considered as the main source of income if only because it involves a steady and not sporadic income. Pinky Mbhele thus maintains that

There is no regular income... I have a little tuck-shop where I sell little things such as sweets and cigarettes and this does not bring in much. Therefore, the child support grants are the main source of income.

In some of these households, there is very haphazard income coming in from other household members, but this is negligible. For instance, Nomsa Ndaba noted that

My daughter sometimes has piece jobs and she helps me out financially from time to time.

The other households (which is the majority) include CSG recipients who are either the primary breadwinner or the secondary breadwinner – in either case, someone else in the household is generating income, beyond the CSGs (though, in a couple of cases, this includes other household members with CSGs – such as Khethiew Phungula). Zodwa Bomela indicates that:

The main source of income in this household is ... the child support grant in particular and this is supplemented by my sister's income.

In another household, that of Qondi Khanyile (who is employed full-time), the pension of her father (who is a retired civil servant) is a further source of income and in fact it seems to be the main source. Phumzile Sibiyi speaks of the significance of the wage-earnings of others, notably

From my two daughters that work part-time.

In a similar vein, Mandisi Xulu's household depends on wages:

The main source of income comes from the three working household members.

Bongi Ngema likewise highlights wages:

My mother's and sister's wages [are important] because one cannot rely on the grant money because it has to provide for the child's needs.

Bongi raises a very important point, namely, that the child support grant was specifically designed for the needs of the child only and not even for the needs of the child's mother; and hence the significance of extra sources of income.

Finally, the grant does allow at times for a degree of financial independence of the CSG mother from the family members in the household. Nande Sokhulu, as a student, relies significantly on the grant and she tries to budget the grant money meticulously so as to work within it, and thereby only rely on her family now and then. Without the grant, she says that

Life would be hard ... and I would suffer as a young mother because I would have to ask for everything from my family more than what I already ask for now. Although it's still a lot but at least I know I'm guaranteed a bit of money every month therefore I can plan with the little that I have.

7.3 Intra-Household Relations

Generally, the female grant recipients are left alone to spend the grant money as they deem fit, without any interference from others with whom they live. One young mother (who is the secondary breadwinner) reported that no one at her house interferes because they know that she is unemployed and has no other means to provide for her child:

No one feels entitled to my child's grant because they know I do not have any other source of income and thus only rely on the grant money (Nande Sokhulu).

In this sense, household members regularly take a hands-off approach and respect the right of the recipient to determine the allocation of the grant. But, as a 24-year old single mother indicated,

They expect me to provide for the child with the grant money (Mangaliso Shangase).

In this sense, the recipient is watched from a distance in case she errs in judgement in grant expenditures.

At times, though, direct requests are made to the grant caregivers by household members for specific purchases, including by the children themselves. These demands often arise from a sense of entitlement on the part of these members. In the case of Nomsa Ndaba

(a 42- year old married mother and caregiver), her son feels very entitled to the grant money received by her on his behalf

[she laughs] ...*Oh one of my children has actually started demanding for things since he knows that I get the grant money but more often I have to explain that we cannot always buy what they want because we are working with a tight budget.*

In other instances, household members are more intrusive and may closely monitor the spending of the grant by the recipient to ensure that the grant is used responsibly. Thus Bazamile Mabizela (a 24-year-old single mother) reported that her family (her mother and older siblings that provide for the household and with whom she lives) literally polices her to see if she actually spends the grant money on necessities for her child:

No instead I am monitored that I spend the money on the child's needs...my family is really strict.

This is particularly prevalent amongst the younger mothers. For instance, a 22-year old mother indicated that her family treats her like a child (Nande Sokhulu) in the household, because she is effectively a child-with-a-child. And Mbali Jozela mentioned that her family would never allow her to buy anything that is not related to her child's needs as her family controls how she uses the grant money:

No I would not dare [to buy assets] even if I wanted to..... My family is strict about how I spend the money; they want me to only look out for the child's needs.

CSG recipients generally consider themselves to have the right and responsibility to administer the grant money and argue that any sense of entitlement on the part of others would effectively be unthinkable from their perspective. They would stand their ground in defending this right. As one recipient asserted:

Certainly not. Even if they wanted it they would not get it (Nomathamsanqa Kwela).

And

We sometimes live with my nephew but he can never have the audacity to do such a thing let alone to even think about it (Phumzile Sibiya).

When they have their own independent source of income, household members are less likely to try to draw from the child grant. Mandisi Xulu notes this with respect to her employed brother:

No my brother would never do that, shame he has a job even.

Of significance is that no household member has undercut his or her own income base (for instance, resigned from work) in order to rely on the child grant or grants coming into the

household. Indeed, the CSG recipients claimed that any such action would be not only distasteful but irreprehensible. In the words of Qondi Khanyile,

No how can anybody do something so silly, the grant money is not sufficient as it is for a person who has a child. So how can they stop working in the name of the grant, it does not make sense.

More generally, the CSG is not a magnet which draws family members to the recipient like a sponge or shark, with these members seeking to soak up some of the grant money.

7.3.1 Managing Household Income

The grant money, other income generated by mothers (work and trading) and income acquired by other household members are managed in a variety of ways in the Sinathingi households, depending for example on household composition and the specific mix of income sources. For those CSG recipients who are the sole breadwinner, management of income and expenditure is normally simply the prerogative of the recipient. For other households, the evidence suggests that pooling of money as a household is a survival strategy in trying to streamline the monetary resources and to cover monthly expenses for the household and its members. Other households though engage not in common pooling but in a system of member contributions to household expenses (such as groceries) on an almost voluntary and *ad hoc* basis.

This was the case for the households of Nobuhle Zungu, Nandi Zwane and Bazamile Mabizela. These three recipients explained that they do not pool the money as such as individual household members have the right to choose what they would like their contribution to be in a particular month. As a result, no set arrangement exists. They indicated, respectively:

No we do not pool our income as everyone buys what they can afford in that particular month. As for myself I help out where I can even although I am not expected to buy any groceries

Everyone does their own thing at the end of the day we manage to buy groceries although everyone manages their own finances

We do not pool the money; each person buys whatever they can afford to buy for the household.

All three of these recipients considered themselves as secondary breadwinners, though Nobuhle was employed full-time.

The households which pooled their resources did so **on** a monthly basis, but the person responsible for the management of the pooled resources varied across households. In some households, the father of the recipient managed the funds as was the case in Ntsiki Mzamela's household:

My father and sister pool the money then my father as the head of household makes the decisions.

Likewise, Nomathamsanqa Kwela explained that

We pool the money and then take care of monthly expenses and my father manages the finances as the head of household.

In other households, the member of the household who earns the most and therefore contributes the greatest income to the household takes on the responsibility of managing the funds, thus almost by default. This occurred in the household of Khethiwe Phungula who indicated:

Yes we pool the money and my sister manages the finances as she earns more thus contributes the most for groceries in the house.

Phumzile Sibiya's case seems to fit into this arrangement as well, though at times she described herself as the main or even sole breadwinner (if only because her grant money is regular while other household income, from her children is more irregular). She has five children but only one still left on a child support grant and, even though she may be the main breadwinner, she allows her children working part-time to manage the household resources:

Yes we pool the income and my children that work part-time manage the money,

In other cases, such as Mandisi Xulu's household, everyone who contributes money for groceries has a say in the decision-making process about household income. Household members who do not contribute are excluded from the decision-making process although these members do not necessarily care about how the money is spent. She argued that:

Yes we pool the money but everyone who contributed has a say what is bought. Therefore, when I do not pool money I cannot have a say because I did not contribute any money. However, my brother would never go to buy groceries [as he does not work] and hardly says anything about what groceries were bought.

In Bongsi Ngema's household, she (and other CSG mothers living in the household) also has to contribute some money to household expenses although her mother and sister are the ones **who** manage the money because they work:

Yes my mother and sister pool their income to provide for the family and the rest of the grant recipients also chip in a bit of money but the money is managed by my mother and sister.

There were four households where the CSG recipient was the head of household thus they did not have to pool any money with anyone and they used the grant money (and any other minor income) as they deemed it. But the case of Nomsa Ndaba's household differs because she is married and living with her husband. Like Phumzile Sibiyi, Nomsa considers herself as the sole breadwinner though there is erratic income coming in from one of the daughters. Both she and her husband are unemployed, and they jointly make decisions about grant spending. She said:

I sit down to plan with my husband to make decisions about how the money will be spent and my daughter helps me out whenever she wants to as we do not pool the grant money and her wages.

As indicated elsewhere, Zodwa Bomela's household has a unique arrangement, at least amongst the CSG mothers studied. Her household pool resources with relatives living as a separate household on the same plot and under a separate roof. They do this with specific regard to groceries in trying to bulk-buy. However, should the food run out at Zodwa's household before the end of the month, then her household on its own has to top up with more groceries. This she argues results however in tensions between herself and household members because she would have already spent her grant money by that time. She notes:

Yes we all contribute money towards groceries as a homestead that includes my household and my aunt's children household. Then anything that finishes before the month ends within the household, then that household has to make a plan and this is not as rosy as it seemsbecause certain household members will take it upon themselves to ask me or others to buy food even if we do not have money.

7.3.2 Intra-Household Tensions

At times tensions existed between the CSG mother and other members of her household, and with specific relation to the grant money and household expenditure. In trying to link any tensions directly to accessing and receiving a CSG, I sought to determine if relationships within the household, and particularly relations between the CSG mother and others, altered subsequent to receipt of the grant. Specifically, I wanted to find out if the experience of receiving the grant was an empowering one for the CSG mothers with regard to household relations and responsibilities, or more of a burden. Most CSG recipients attested that no significant changes had occurred post the grant, but even in these cases tensions sometimes arose.

For example, Mbali Jozela (at the age of 24) said:

Nothing has changed; I'm still treated as a child in the household even though they are not proud of my deeds of falling pregnant earlier in life. They are willing to take care of my needs but not the child's needs.

It is as if Mbali's household had disowned her child arising out of her teenage out of wedlock pregnancy, and for whom she has been receiving a grant for five years now. As Mbali herself is treated as a child, this in effect rules out – in the minds of her household – the presence of any other child on-site. Mbali though is able, under these circumstances, to use her grant money exclusively for her child. Nande Sokhulu also spoke of no difference, but in a positive light:

No there's no difference. I'm still treated the same as before.... actually my family has been supportive during my pregnancy and after and they help me with so much.

Nande Sokhulu is fortunate that her family has supported both she and her child, seemingly through thick and thin. Bazamile Mabizela explained that things have changed and, in this respect, she has had the exact opposite experience from that of Mbali Jozela. Her household members now ignore her needs and focus on the needs of the grant-child:

Well things have changed after I fell pregnant because I could no longer ask for certain things just because I have a child. I was told that now the child comes first... so in other words they would rather buy the child clothes than me. I guess this comes with falling pregnant whilst one is still young.

In the case of both Mbali and Bazamile, it seems that their parents are demonstrating tough love though in different ways.

Other CSG recipients reported changes in roles, relationship and responsibilities vis-à-vis other household members, and of vary diverse kinds. This led to tensions and arguments quite often around the grant money and contributions by CSG to household expenditures. Khethiwe Phungula for instance argues that

Yes things have changed because I'm expected to contribute money to buy groceries and I think that is unfair because the money is meant for my child.

Khethiwe has been given new financial responsibilities since accessing the grant money, although she sees this as an unfair responsibility as the grant money is designed for the child's needs alone. Zola Kunene likewise attested that her household now places demands on her of a financial kind:

Yes things do change to a certain extent as other family could treat you differently because they know you collect the CSG money and thus ask for favours or borrow money.

Zodwa Bomela has a different dilemma. She is a care-giver and thus is not the biological mother of her grant-child. She has taken on a huge responsibility, and has done so now for ten years, yet household members are disinclined to financially assist her such that she feels burdened:

Well there is a bit of animosity within the household especially when I ask for financial help at times I'm asked why am I asking when I get the grant money.

She also speaks about indirect arguments with household members which resulted from shortfalls in food:

No it has never been direct because they will ask me to buy food in the household when it runs out, even though they know I do not have a job. So in that way we might have an argument.

Earlier, I discussed the theme of decision-making around income and expenditure within households. For a number of CSG mothers, receiving the grant money has seemingly empowered them in terms of having a greater say in household decision-making though the evidence suggests that this is by no means inevitable and is rather quite household-specific. Zethu Bhengu spoke most vividly about this:

Yes I'm treated differently as I'm now involved in big decision making that pertain to finances unlike before when I did not have a sturdy source of income. So having a source of income has enabled me to have some sort of bargaining power that is below my mother's power.

This is an example of empowerment involving increased bargaining power and respect within the household, arising from her status as both an income-earner and a mother. Other CSG mothers, such as Khethiwe Phungula, appear to be more burdened because of their status as a CSG mother and the money that comes with it (and the ensuing household demands placed on them). Money and relations go together in very complex ways, as evidenced by the sheer diversity of household relations amongst CSG households in Sinathingi. As noted, this sometimes leads to strained intra-household relations.

7.3.2.1 Gender

Patriarchy within South African society broadly speaking and with specific reference to household dynamics is a critical issue for women of all walks of life. It forms an important component of intra-household relations and dynamics and can lead to specific roles undertaken by women in households and to the marginalisation of women for example in decision-making processes. This is despite the fact that the public sphere outside of the home

is largely a male domain and the private sphere of the household is possibly a domain where women can more easily assert their rights and interests.

This possibility though did not apply to eight of the Sinathingzi women because their households did not have any male members besides boy-children on grants. Another four CSG recipients reported that all household members' interests were equally accommodated:

No we all equal in this household (Nomathamsanqa Kwela).

No everyone's needs are catered for but then again we prioritize with certain decisions over others and this has nothing to do with gender bias (Nstiki Mzamela).

No we try to accommodate everyone's needs even though some needs are more urgent than others (Bazamile Mabizela)

No my father believes in providing for everyone (Qondile Khanyile).

Other mothers, such as Nobuhle Zungu, noticed some degree of gender bias:

We get an equal share even though there's a strong presence of favouring the male figure over females.

Nomsa Ndaba is in a unique situation compared to the other mothers because she lives with the father of her child in a more traditional set-up and has to contend with her child's father on a daily basis. She attested that her spouse often tries to get his way or needs catered for over other household members without success. And she often has to talk him about these selfish thoughts:

Yes you know how much men can be like sometimes but I tell him off and tell him off [again] and tell him that unfortunately he will not have things his way.

Other women like Mbali Jozela and Managaliso Shangase in fact maintain that female's interests are catered for more in their households. Mbali claimed:

Yes females benefit more and have more control because they take care of everyone unlike men who are too into their alcohol matters.

In this sense, Mbali uses her assigned domestic and caring responsibilities to assert her dominance over the men in the household. Mangaliso made a similar point:

My brother is the only male in this household and if anything women's needs are catered for the most as my brother is outnumbered by the women in this household. In any case my brother is a very simple guy as long as there is food in the household he is happy and not bothered which brand of soap is bought unlike women that pick fights over simple things.

Although their relations are subject to tension at times, the women in her household exhibit a degree of solidarity to ensure that the men's preferences, including frivolous expenditure, are not pursued.

Sinathingi women are trapped within their domestic private roles as nurturers but they use this space, sometimes existing even further because of the negligence in responsibilities on the part of men, to ensure that the basic livelihood of the household is prioritised first and foremost. They use this space to bargain for the good of the household and this bargaining power at times is backed up by the fact that they make a financial contribution to the household no matter how limited this might be in certain instances. The stand that they take in this regard is also exemplified by their willingness if need be to reject any demands placed upon them by the father of their child or children. Indeed, their placement in a household (which in general is caring and supportive) allows them to exercise a significant degree of independence from the father. In doing so, they seek to serve the interests primarily of their child or children.

7.3.2.3 Age

The presence of age hierarchy in the Sinathingi households in terms of allocating financial resources is also at times of some significance. There are very diverse views on the presence of age hierarchies amongst the Sinathingi mothers and the legitimacy of such hierarchies. In the end, though, none of the mothers would support a situation in which the interests of the older members are pursued at the sacrifice of the needs of the grant-children.

Four CSG recipients maintained that no age hierarchy of any sort exists within their household. As Bazamile Mabizela argued:

No.... it goes according to what needs are more important than others.

This was reiterated by two other mothers:

Not that we do not respect the elders in the house or anything but everyone is equal (Nstiki Mzamela).

Everyone is the same in this household; no one gets special attention by themselves (Phumzile Sibiya).

But others spoke about the relevance of age and implications. Zodwa Bomela did so with some passion:

Yes there is age hierarchy especially when it comes to making decisions with buying groceries and this hurts me because I cannot unfortunately change the situation. And to make things worse I'm constantly being critiqued for leaving my job to take proper care of my nephew and this is sometimes used against me... as if I am lazy, although they were not helping me out with my nephew when I was at work as I work longer hours.

Zodwa was in the past employed but, in accessing a child support grant for her nephew, decided in the best interests of the child to quit her work and look after the child on a full-time basis. In doing so, she was criticised by other older household members as acting irresponsibly. This saddens her because, when she did work, no other household member made any significant attempt to care for the child. The criticisms seem to arise from the fact that the loss of employment meant less household income for the household members.

Others also argue that age hierarchy is alive and well in their households. But some, like Nandi Zwane, see nothing wrong with such a situation as it is consistent with long-term cultural arrangements:

Yes we do have age hierarchy in the household and I have no problem with it as our culture supports it.

Mandisi Xulu and Zethu Bhengu likewise argue that older ones should come first, as they maintain respectively:

Yes adults come first at my house and this is normal because everything starts from adults and trickles all the way down ... well that is how I see it anyway.

Yes there is age hierarchy in the household... thou shall respect their elders and they come first.

Mangaliso Shangase justified the age hierarchy on a slightly different basis, arguing that the older ones in her household have greater responsibilities to ensure that other household members are cared for properly:

Well if you old in this house you have more responsibilities than the younger people in terms of taking care of everyone else.

Nobuhle Zungu though is concerned that the younger ones are silenced and suppressed in such situations:

We have age hierarchy and there is nothing wrong with that as long as the others are not overpowered and that unfortunately happens from time to time at my house at the younger ones are sidelined.

Meanwhile five recipients argued explicitly that children came first in their household. Others no doubt would have a similar view about their households but, in addressing the issue, they spoke more to the relationship between older and younger adults.

Qondi Khanyile was one of the five CSG mothers:

The children are catered for first before the adults because children have more needs than the adults and they are the most vulnerable.

This though does not necessarily imply that all household decisions are geared towards fulfilling the needs of grant-children, particularly for household members who have their own

sources of income through for example employment. Bongi Ngema thus claimed that such members are not being selfish as they are entitled to spend money on themselves:

All the working people buy whatever they see the household needs to be but they get to make their own decisions because they work and have earned their money. So sometimes they look out for their needs first.

Overall, it does not seem that age is a particularly controversial matter in the Sinathing household as it justified for a variety of reasons by the CSG mothers. Insofar as the age hierarchy is seen problematic, it does not appear that the hierarchy in any way in itself leads to ignoring the immediate and basic needs of the grant-children.

7.4 Fathers of Grant-Children

Prior to South African democracy, mothers could apply for the state maintenance grant though this excluded Africans. The mothers were required to prove that they had tried to apply officially for private maintenance from the father of the child through the court system. It was only after this option had failed that they could be considered for the state maintenance grant. In post-apartheid South Africa, the CSG was introduced including for Africans. In applying for the CSG, mothers do not have to prove that they tried to apply for private maintenance from the father of the child. In terms of the regulations governing the CSG, mothers are at times entitled to seek private maintenance from the father but this rarely occurs because of the father's unlikely capacity to make payment because of being unemployed or having an erratic source of income. Bazamile Mabizela is the only mother who speaks about having private maintenance but she notes that she has had to take the father to court to make sure that he makes his regular payments:

I had to take the father of my child to court because he sometimes did not pay maintenance... this the most irritating process. I mean one would imagine that the father of the child would man up and pay maintenance for the child but not the father of my child and I had to chase around after him.

The relationship between the CSG recipient and the fathers of their child or children therefore is often problematic.

All except one of the studied recipients is married and the rest are in the end single mothers caring for their child or children alone (without the father present) and mainly in the household of their biological family **with** close relatives. Sometimes there are strained relations with fathers and tensions within the household at the same time, or sometimes the existence of the grant prevents such tensions and strains from arising in the first place.

Bazamile Mabizela, referred to immediately above, notes the latter scenario. Without the grant, life would be exceedingly challenging as she would have to rely on the private maintenance from the father of her child and assistance from her family (who happens to be still upset about her early pregnancy):

I would have to rely on the private maintenance money and help from family so life would be a challenge [without a grant] especially as my family is still upset about me falling pregnant.

Bazamile happens to be very fortunate compared to other recipients, because she has not only the child support grant money but also the child maintenance from the father of her child through the court system. This is unlike for example, Zethu Bhengu, who has to beg for child maintenance money from her father of her child:

I would be living in utter poverty with nothing [if no grant was unavailable] because I cannot rely on the father of my child even for the little things such as cosmetics. I mean he is in the picture but I usually have to beg him to give me a bit of money because he will never give me the money willingly... If not that, I have to supposedly remind him about his own responsibility having a child changes everything in a relationship...it's like you do not even know the father of your child. I have learned this the hard way believe me.

Though one has private maintenance and other does not, both women have broken-down relationships with the father of their one child. Nomathamsanqa Kwela brings to the fore the tenuous character of relying – at least voluntarily – on the goodwill of their child's father (who is the father of children with other women):

Life would be hard [without the grant] because I and my child would be dependent on the father of my child... who happens to have other children and needs of his own.

The child support grant ostensibly enables mothers to be independent and not to have to solely rely on what are often unreliable fathers of their children. Qondi Khanyile, who is now employed full-time, notes the greater difficulty she experienced when unemployed given the uncooperative father of her children:

Well it would have been bitter if I did not receive the grant money especially because the grant money plays a critical role on its own especially when I was still unemployed and the father of my children does not pay maintenance.

The request placed on the grant recipient may at times be the father of the child, whether the father split with the mother acrimoniously or not. For example, one caregiver looks after the child of her brother (her nephew) as the brother's wife (the biological mother of the child)

died some time ago. He sometimes asks her to buy items for him, notably cosmetics, but she uses her discretion in his respect:

My brother occasionally asks for cosmetics but this is at my grace (Zodwa Bomela).

The child's father (her brother) though is not insistent on drawing money from the grant but respectfully asks on an infrequent basis.

Compared to relations with household members, the relationship between CSG mothers and the fathers of grant-children is considerably more problematic. Serious problems existed at times between the recipient and the father of the grant-child. At times the tensions between them in fact actually boiled over into outright arguments and abuse, as indicated by two mothers. Zandile Zondi highlighted that

After he [the father of my child] heard that I applied for the child support grant he came over and demanded that I give him some of the money and caused a scene and I ran into the house and told him that I will get him arrested because he is not helping me out with the child.

Zandile went on to note that the father of her child does not talk to her anymore after the argument they had over the grant money:

Ever since we had the whole confrontation we had when he wanted my child's grant money incidence he does not talk to me and pretends like I do not exist.

Mandisi Xulu had a similar experience:

He [the father] was busy telling me that he deserves a share [of the grant] because he is the father and I told him to go find a job rather. I told him that he will not get a cent! It is not my fault that he does not work... No he thinks I can give him my child's money just like that?

Clearly, these two CSG recipients had a confrontation with the father of their children over the grant money, with both recipients refusing to budge.

In fact, only eleven of the CSG recipients attested that the fathers of their children make any financial contribution to the upkeep of the grant child or children, with the others seemingly unable (because of being unemployed) or unwilling to do so. In fact, as indicated, some of the fathers place demands for grant money on the mothers, though unsuccessfully. Nomsa Ndaba does not receive any assistance from the father, but this is an amicable relationship. Nomsa lives with her husband who is unemployed and unable to contribute financially, but is very supportive of Nomsa:

My husband is unemployed but he is around to support us in every other way.

Zodwa Bomela, who looks after her nephew, also has a solid relationship with the father of the child (her brother) despite the fact that he cannot make any contribution:

No because my brother is unemployed so the grant money is the only thing that helps us to survive.

Mandisi Xulu also recognises the difficulty that the father of her child has in assisting her and she is not seemingly bitter about his failings in this regard:

No the father of my child would like to help but he is unemployed.

Another three CSG recipients, also without any assistance, noted that the father of their child or children had died. In at least one of these cases, the father prior to death did make a contribution though:

The father of my child died but before he died he would help me out with the expenses and this made a difference in our lives.

Others expressed their unwillingness to beg the father of their child or children to help out because this would undermine their own sense of dignity and self-reliance. Mangaliso Shangase argued, in disciplining the father of her child for his wayward ways, that

No he does not help me with anything from the day I told him I was pregnant he disappeared. To be honest I'm too proud to beg him to support his child and until he pays up he will not see his child.

For those who do receive contributions from the father, it is not necessarily done a regular and systematic basis and, for those with children from more than one father, one father may contribute more than the other (or one may not contribute at all). Zola Kunene maintained that

My children have different fathers but they all help out when they can and you know how men are like and how they do not want to be nagged about anything. Besides I have my pride so I never beg for anything but the father of my first two children only comes through whenever he wants to and gives whatever money he feels like giving. However, the father of my last two children is a frequent provider for his children.

Nstiki Mzamela has a similar experience:

The father of my first child does not really care and does not help out with the child's needs but the father of my youngest child helps out with the child's needs and also supports us.

Pinky Mbhele looks after her own grant-child as well as two children of her late sister. She appears to have good fortune in the case of both fathers, though the father of her own child is less supportive:

The father of my sister's children buys groceries every month and the father of my child gives me money whenever it suits him.... Therefore his ... money is not guaranteed.

The rest of the CSG mothers were the more fortunate ones in receiving more consistent support from the father or fathers. To quote Mbali Jozela as an illustration:

The father of my child helps me out with school related needs and medical care or any other things the child may need.

I must add that probing into this particular matter with the CSG mothers (that of support from the father) was difficult as it appeared to be a highly sensitive topic for the mothers. Some of the mothers were somewhat embarrassed or even hesitant to share their experiences on this topic, but the rest were more willing to divulge their relationship with the father of their child or children.

7.5 Borrowing Money

Quite often, the Sinathinghi recipients turn to others to financially assist them – this may be for basic monthly expenditures on a regular basis or because of unexpected shocks which result in the need to scramble for alternative income. A handful of the CSG recipients explained that they borrow money from their family, friends and neighbours; and in large part to avoid the interest which would accrue from obtaining a loan from local *stokvel* societies (at times, *stokvels* engage in short-term money lending to non-members in the community and charge interest to increase the *stockvel* funds for members which are regularly dispersed in December). Money from family, friends and neighbours would be interest-free. Nomsa Ndaba, as the only breadwinner in her household and with three grant-children, indicates:

I ask my neighbours for help because they will lend me the money with no interest, so that is my first option before I get a loan from the stokvel societies since the money borrowed from the society is returned with hectic interest.

Likewise, Khethiwe Phungula says:

My neighbour helps me out at least I do not have to pay interest if one borrows money from them like with stokvel societies that charge interest if one gets a loan from them.

And Zola Kunene has a similar arrangement:

The grant money rarely lasts the whole month therefore I borrow money from my neighbours and they give it to me interest free.

These borrowing arrangements speak to the importance of community-wide social capital in Sinathinghi township at least with regard to a number of CSG recipients. This assistance given by neighbours may not always be in the form of cash, as it may involve in-kind assistance. Phaphama Brown notes:

I go to neighbours to ask for food since I cannot afford to borrow money from the stokvel because their money is returned with interest.

Sometimes relying on neighbours is less problematic than borrowing from close family members, because dependence on the latter can be complicated and lead to strained relationships if repayment is not made or not made in time. Because of this, friends – as with neighbours – often becomes before any attempt to rely on family members. Pinky Mbhele borrows money from friends without interest:

I borrow money from my close friends and its interest free.

Mbali Jozela clearly indicates that she does not wish to rely on family members and mainly because of the ridicule heaped on her for becoming pregnant at an early age (now aged 24, she has been receiving the grant since 2008). After trying in the past to obtain money from family, she now relies on her friends:

I borrow money from friends because you know how family can get... they will pass all sorts of remarks that they never sent you to fall pregnant and now you keep on running to them for help.

For Mandisi Xulu, a similar situation arises with her family and therefore she tends to rely at times on *stokvels* instead. She reveals that tensions exist within her household between herself and siblings. Her siblings, according to her, keep tabs of how many times she has not helped the household overall, since they are all eating from one pot. She does not directly ask her siblings for help regarding her child's needs and would rather ask her mother for financial help. But she claims that she does assist the household:

The [stokvel] money helps me to buy food and other things the household might need such as appliances or utensils, uniform, stationary, Christmas clothes and to save a bit of money for my child's education. I mean my other siblings buy most of the things the household needs during the year because I only work part time therefore in December it is my turn to buy other things so the stokvel helps me a lot in this regard. Because as much as my family will not say much about one not helping financially ...they are actually counting the number of times you have helped out . At least I do not have to rely on them to buy my child the necessities on a day to day basis at least before the money runs out hence I ask my mother instead of my siblings for help.

Not all CSG mothers go through the same experience, as Nande Sokhulu can rely on her sister to help her out:

My sister helps me out the most especially when I run out of supplies for my child. I really do not know what I would do without my sister.

She went on to add how fortunate she was, despite her early pregnancy:

I have been very fortunate that my family helps me out with my needs regardless that I fell pregnant before time.

Bazamile Mabizela also relies on her sister and pays the money back without interest:

Well my sister helps me out and lends me the money and I pay it back with zero interest.

It must be recognised that, in assisting the CSG mother, these family members are often doing so at great sacrifice to themselves, as noted by Mandisi Xulu who borrows from her mother:

My mother helps me out although she has many mouths to feed but she helps me out with the little that she has.

In some cases, in obtaining money from family members, the family member does not consider the money given as a loan but as a gift and this, of course, greatly benefits the CSG mother:

My great aunt helps me in times of financial difficulty and she does not expect me to pay her back....As much as she's willing to help me I cannot abuse my lifeline all the time (Zandile Zondi).

As Zandile implies, ongoing reliance on her great aunt may eventually lead to tension and conflict.

Besides neighbours, family and friends, a small number of CSG recipients claim that they were helped out by the father of their child or children:

The father of my child bails me out (Nandi Zwane).

The father of my child helps me out through and through (Nomathamsanqa Kwela).

The father of my youngest child helps me (Ntsiki Mzamela).

Ntsiki has two grant-children and the help she receives is specifically for the younger of the two children, though she may allocate this money more broadly to incorporate her older child. In these three cases, it seems that the father of the child provides assistance on a voluntary and willing basis without any significant prodding by the CSG mother. In other cases, it is the exact opposite. Zethu Bhengu thus argues that the father of her child helps but only after almost forcing him to do so:

The father of my child only helps me after much begging and convincing him that his child might go to bed hungry.

Zethu is unemployed so any assistance from the father of the child is sometimes critical for the lives of her and her one child. Others who receive funding from the father of the child are not so desperate because of other direct sources of income, such as employment in the case of Nobuhle Zungu:

I am employed and the father of my children is employed as well so if all fails he would help me in times of need.

For someone who is employed, like Nobuhle, a helping hand from the father is the cherry on the top so to speak as it may allow for some kind of discretionary spending. Interestingly, one recipient, who is 53 years old, has children who are also grant recipients and they help her out at times:

My children help me out with their grant money as well (Phumzile Sibiyi).

7.6 Three Mothers

The overview of the child-grant mothers in Sinathingi, as provided in this and the two preceding chapters, details their lives and livelihoods in terms of a range of themes, as well as indicating a degree of diversity between them. This last section provides a brief overview of three Sinathingi mothers, in order to give a combined picture of specific mothers with regard to the range of themes covered and also to further show this diversity.

Nomsa Ndaba is a 42-year old married CSG recipient living with her husband, five children and three grandchildren. Her household relies on the two CSG grants she receives for her two children that qualify for grants and one Foster Care Grant that she collects for her niece whose parents are deceased. Both Nomsa and her husband are unemployed and every now and then their eldest daughter may have a day or two of casual work and thus makes a contribution to the household income, though her earnings are unreliable and minimal. Even though Nomsa's husband is unemployed he still supports his family in any way he can. The household spends the grant money frugally mainly on food, electricity, school-related costs, a burial society and a *stokvel* (for food). Nomsa argues that they have debts mostly for clothing and they use the grant money to pay off the debt. In times of severe financial stress, the household borrows money from its neighbours to avoid the interest which comes from borrowing money from a *stokvel* society. The Ndaba household notes though that being part of a food *stokvel* is very beneficial as it provides them with food for the festive season and also serves as a safety net in times of financial need should they exhaust all other avenues. The Ndaba household usually sits down to plan their budget every month but Nomsa claims that she has all the bargaining power as she is the woman of the house (although her husband from time to time tries to get his way on how the money is spent). However, one of the Ndaba children (for whom Nomsa receives a CSG) has started to make demands that all the grant money should be given to him as he is approaching 18 years of age. The Ndaba household feels that there would simply be no life without the grant money as the grant

money mostly serves as the only source of income. Nomsa has in fact used the grant money to buy a bed, wardrobe and washing machine.

Nobuhle Zungu is a 31 year old single employed CSG recipient living in her family home with her parents, grandmother, sibling and her children. Nobuhle collects the CSG for two of her children. The Zungu household relies mainly on wages as two members bring in a regular income. The household does not pool their resources as each individual helps out with the monthly expenses. But Nobuhle is not in any way obliged or expected to pay for any bills or buy groceries. Nobuhle claims that the father of her children (who is employed) helps her quite substantially at times of great need and provides for their children. The father of her children even lives with one of their children at his family home. As a result, Nobuhle can afford to send her children to a private school. Nobuhle is also able to save for any emergencies that may erupt as the father of her children saves for their children's education. As a result, she spends the grant money exclusively on her children's needs such as transport money, lunch money and clothing. She also belongs to a funeral society, which she considers very important as it enables her to provide a dignified send off for her loved ones. Nobuhle claims that she remains treated as a child by her parents, and she suggests that this reflects the priority given to male-children culturally. Despite being employed, Nobuhle emphasises the significance of the grant money as a source of income, in part because her work is not high-paying. But the importance of the grant to her livelihood is diminished by the fact that she is employed.

Zodwa Bomela is a 33 year old single CSG caregiver living with her four siblings and their children in their family home. She is unemployed. Zodwa collects the grant money for her nephew as the mother of her nephew passed away. The Bomela household relies on the CSG money and Zodwa's sister's wage. It pools money with relatives (who reside in the same yard with them but in different households) to buy groceries as a collective. Zodwa maintains that this arrangement does not always work out as they are restricted as to what foods to buy, as they have to accommodate all the different parties involved. Within her own household, there are sometimes tensions as some household members demand that other members buy food when the food bought as a collective runs out (even when they know that the other household member does not have money). The father of the child who happens to be Zodwa's brother is unemployed and thus unable to support his child financially. He also from time to time asks Zodwa to buy him cosmetics. Besides providing for her nephew and sometimes her brother, Zodwa has used the money to buy mink blankets. But the grant money is mainly spent on child-related expenses such as food, school uniform and stationery,

and clothing. As well, Zodwa saves money for bus fare for clinic visits should the child fall sick. Zodwa avoids any sort of debt, and thus she regularly uses lay-bys for her nephew's clothes and budgets well. For instance, she buys basic goods in bulk every month to avoid running out of money during the month. Other household members do not help her in this regard, but rather ask questions as to why she is asking for money from them at times when she receives grant money. To make things worse, Zodwa stopped working to care properly for her nephew as she previously worked long hours. This decision is often used against her by other household members and she is sometimes even labelled as a lazy person. Zodwa is unable to save money because she lives from hand-to-mouth and sometimes she wishes she had the privilege to send her nephew to a private school. For Zodwa, life without the CSG money would be virtually impossible for her and her nephew.

7.7 Conclusion

Sinathingi mothers do **not** pursue livelihoods for themselves and their children as an isolated grouping but do so regularly within households involving family relations; in addition, they in some way have a relationship with the father of their children no matter how distant that relationship may be. And the specific form that these relationships take clearly impact on the condition and character of their livelihoods. As this chapter indicates, though, there is considerable diversity between Sinathingi mothers with regard to intra-household relations and relationships with the fathers of their children. Some mothers live on their own with their children, while others – as part of larger households – interact in diverse ways, sometimes pooling resources and sometimes not, and sometimes without tension and sometimes with considerable tension. At times, the broader household draws upon the grant as a household income, yet in other cases the mother is able to be subsidised by the wider household income. And some fathers seem to be highly supportive and go out of their way to make some sort of financial contribution to the upkeep of the mother and child (or children) while other fathers remain aloof and refrain from engaging in any meaningful way with the mother of their child. The image of CSG mothers as simply sitting back and accessing the grant without any sense of moral responsibility is far from the truth. Rather, these women actively engage in pursuing their livelihoods and, in doing so, enter into all kinds of relationships on a regular basis – with household members, fathers of their children, friends and neighbours, and the community at large.

CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSION

At the dawn of democracy, the ANC government had the enormous task of democratising South Africa to address the socio-economic ills arising from successive past racial regimes. In doing so, the government vowed to undercut social inequality and poverty levels through employment and other livelihood opportunities for previously racially-oppressed groups, notably Africans. This broad initiative was legally-grounded in a progressive constitution which speaks to the realisation of socio-economic rights including in and through social security systems such as the child grant. At the same time, the government has fore-grounded neo-liberal restructuring and integration of the national economy into the global economy which, while seemingly creating the conditions for a stable economy, have not allowed for any meaningful tackling of structural poverty. This inhibits the effectiveness of the grant system in reducing urban and rural poverty. Nevertheless, the thesis demonstrates the ongoing significance of the child support grant in relation to the livelihoods of grant mothers and their children. In this concluding chapter, I offer a synthetic overview of key arguments contained in the thesis.

It has been fifteen years since the child support grant (CSG) was first introduced in post-apartheid South Africa and it is by far the most important grant in terms of the sheer number of recipients. However, the CSG pays the least amount of money when compared to other grants, such as the old age pension, provided by the state. Since its introduction in 1998, the monthly child grant has increased from R100 per child to R300 per child and it is now applicable to all children up to and including the age of eighteen (as long as certain qualification requirements are met). This amount falls well below any even conservative measurement of poverty.

This massive roll-out of the child grant has been subjected to a range of criticisms, including that it would lead to perverse incentives (such as deliberate and increased teenage pregnancy in order to access the grant) and widespread dependency and complacency amongst the unemployed. Neither of these criticisms bears significant weight in relation to the mothers studied in Sinathing Township. Certainly, insofar as these problems do exist, they are massively outweighed by the likely significance of the CSG to the lives and

livelihoods of millions of mothers and grant children in South Africa, if my study of mothers in Sinathingí reflects broader trends in the country.

The main objective of the thesis was to understand the livelihoods of child support grant mothers in South Africa, and I pursued this through a specific focus on a small group of mothers in Sinathingí. Also, in identifying, examining and understanding these livelihoods, I made use of the sustainable livelihoods framework. But this was complemented by the recognition of the significance of intra-household and intra-family relationships in the livelihoods by the Sinathingí mothers. In effect, and this is the *first* crucial argument from the thesis, mothers and their grant-children regularly constitute ‘sub-households’ within broader households, having a degree of autonomy from the wider household but also interacting with and within it in a variety of ways. These household and sub-household livelihoods are conditioned by the political economy of contemporary South Africa, in which the prospects of alternative sources of income for child-grant mothers are exceedingly limited and other household members are also not fully integrated into the formal economy if integrated at all.

But, as a *second* key argument or conclusion, it is important to appreciate that the Sinathingí mothers actively engage in constructing their own livelihoods; in other words, their livelihoods are not simply structured or conditioned by broader forces. In drawing upon the thoughts of E P Thompson (1968), it might be appropriate then to speak about ‘the making’ of Sinathingí household livelihoods. As Thompson (1968:ii) argues with regard to the English working class and its making: “*Making*, because it is a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning”. To highlight the agency of the Sinathingí mothers is not to make a mere moral assertion in order to restore the dignity of these women, because ‘making’ has an important analytical dimension which is central to sociological reasoning about human practices.

The sustainable livelihoods framework posits that livelihoods are pursued using five main capitals or resources, namely, financial, physical, human, natural and social. The five capitals are the building blocks of livelihoods as households draw upon their different resources to develop and maintain livelihood patterns. Based on an understanding of the interplay of these resources in urban settings, this study was able to examine and understand the complex livelihood strategies and activities constructed by the CSG mothers. Of particular importance to the Sinathingí mothers are financial and social capital. Financial capital, in the form of the child grant itself, is critical to the lives of the mothers as it is the difference between living in poverty and living in extreme poverty for most of them. Though grant expenditure focuses on the most basic of commodities and services (and particularly

centred on the needs of the child or children) the mothers also try – normally not particularly successfully – to build up their physical asset base and human capital (through education) and to put money away as savings for extreme emergencies. Social capital is also crucial as exemplified in the involvement of the mothers in community-based groupings notably *stokvels* and funeral societies.

The livelihoods of the mothers are clearly conditioned by broader structures and processes. In this regard, the state's policies and practices have contradictory effects of their livelihoods: both enabling and disabling. On the one hand, the child support grant – as provided by the state – is the very life-blood of their livelihoods and thus provides a source of continuity and security in their lives. On the other hand, because the grant system (as part of redistributive measures) is in the end subordinated to neo-liberal restructuring, what the state gives with one hand it takes with the other and, ultimately, it likely takes more than it gives. Though the grant system, as this thesis clearly demonstrates, does not lead to dependency, it does lead to dependence on a system which exists in the first place because of serious structural faults in the political economy of South Africa. This means that the Sinathingis mothers live on the edge of an abyss, constantly struggling to make ends meet without any hope of alternative income streams. The lives and livelihoods of the mothers are in a constant state of vulnerability. In this regard, as a *third* conclusion, the stresses and shocks highlighted in the sustainable livelihoods framework perhaps need to be reformulated in appreciation of the fact that livelihoods of resource-poor households are in a constant and perpetual state of crisis. In other words, at least for these households, vulnerability and crisis are not events or short-term happenings but may be the very and constant condition of existence.

Social capital is of particular importance to the Sinathingis mothers but, like the state, social capital has contradictory effects. Certainly, social capital in the form of *stokvel* societies is prevalent amongst the mothers and, despite any problems which arise in *stokvels* (such as misuse of funds accumulated), it seems that this bridging form of social capital plays a positive role in the lives of the mothers (in terms of both saving schemes and short-term loans). Some mothers in Sinathingis also are involved in specifically food *stokvels*. It was also noted that the Sinathingis mothers 'work their' social networks (including involving friends and neighbours) in seeking to borrow money at times of very deep vulnerability. This borrowing was at times preferable to short-term loans from *stokvels* because of the absence of interest charged, and sometimes the borrowing took the form of food and not money because this was less likely to create strain or tension in these relationships existing beyond the household and family.

But of more significance to the mother and children (as sub-households) is their condition of being embedded in broader household relations and in relationships with fathers. As bonding forms of social capital, these relationships mediate the relationship between mothers and children on the one hand and their livelihood activities on the other. These relationships though are not inherently positive, as they can either facilitate the livelihoods of the Sinathingis mothers or undermine them, or do both simultaneously. In fact, the diversity in livelihoods between the Sinathingis mothers is in large part contingent on the character of these mediating relationships. In certain cases, the broader household pulls together and supports the mother and in other cases it seems to place unnecessary demands on the mother. In certain cases, the father of the children voluntarily engages with the mother and offers active support, while in other cases the relationship between father and mother is acrimonious. For this reason, and as a *fourth* important argument arising from this thesis, to understand the livelihoods of child-grant mothers is to understand the character of these so-called bonding relationships, including any changes which take place over time.

As a *fifth* overriding argument emerging from the thesis, it is necessary to reflect upon the notion of strategy as used in the livelihoods framework. While the notion does highlight the significance of the second key conclusion (that is, the importance of agency and the construction of livelihoods), it implies an over-rationalised conception of human agency. The Sinathingis mothers do plan and act accordingly but, particularly in a constant state of crisis and vulnerability, this should not lead to arguments about the systematic and coherent pursuit of livelihoods as if in a straight and unhindered line of activity. Often this pursuit is more meandering than straight, and is marked by twists-and-turns as the mothers constantly address the unexpected and the unknown.

Finally my study, along with the existing literature on child support grants, provides significant understanding of the lives and livelihoods of child-grant mothers but more in-depth local accounts (like the one provided in this thesis) are clearly needed to establish both commonalities and diversity amongst child-grant mothers. In addition, a critical gap in the existing literature remains the lives of former child-grant mothers. In other words, critical questions need to be addressed about the livelihoods of mothers whose children no longer receive grants (that is, the livelihoods of post-grant mothers), particularly if they have no alternative income sources. It is therefore hoped that my Sinathingis-based study also provides a basis for future studies which trace changes in the lives of child-grant mothers subsequent to their lives with grants.

References

- Adesina, J.2009. "Social policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: a glance in the rear- view mirror"
International Journal of Social welfare.Vol.8 (1) pp.37-51.
- Agarwal, B.1997. "Bargaining and gender relations: within and beyond the household".
Feminist Economics .Vol.3 (1).pp.1-51.
- Agupusi, P.2011. " Trajectories of power relations in post-Apartheid South
Africa" The open Areas Studies Journal.Vol4 pp.32-40.
- Alderman,H., Chiappori,P.,Haddad,L.,Hoddinott,J & Kanbur,R. 1995. "Unitary versus
Alock, P.1993.Understanding poverty.London: The Macmillan Press LTD.
- Alterchen,M.2005." Rethinking the informal economy: Linkages with the formal economy
and the formal regulatory environment" .Research paper: United Nations University
- Alterman, M.2003. "The state of employment and unemployment in South
Africa" In Daniel,J.,Habib,A & Southall,R.(ed) State of the nation
South Africa.
- Amoateng,A & Richter,L.2007. "Social and economic context of families and households in
South Africa". In Amoateng,A & Heaton ,T.(ed). Families and households in post
Aparthied South Africa socio-demographic. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Arts, W& Gelissen,J.2002." Three words of welfare capitalism or more? A state of the art
Report"Journal of European social policy.pp.137-158.
- Ashely,C & Carney, D.1999." Sustainable livelihoods: lessons from early experience" DFID
London :UK.
- Atkinson,R & Flint,J.2001. "Accessing Hidden and hard-to -reach populations: Snowball
Research strategies" Social Research update:Issue 33.
- Ayisi, E.1972.*An Introduction to the study of African culture*. Nairobi: East African
Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Babbie,E.1992. *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Baines,G.2003." Revisiting urban African policy and the reforms of Smuts
Government 1939-1948" Paper presented at workshop on South Africa in
In the 1940's South African Research, centre Kingston Canada.
- Barrientos, A & Dejong, J.2006." Reducing child poverty with cash transfer: A sure thing?".
Development policy review.Vol.24(5).pp.537-552.

- Beall, J.2002. "Living in the present, investing in the future-Household security among the urban poor". In Rakodi, C.(ed). *Urban Livelihoods: A people centred approach to reducing poverty*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- Bebbington,A.1999." Capitals and capabilities: A framework for analyzing peasant viability, rural livelihoods and poverty". *World development*. Vol.27(12).pp.2012-2044.
- Bender,D.2009." A refinement of the concept of households: families, co-residence and domestic functions". *American Anthropologists*. Vol.69(5).pp.493-506.
- Benjamin, S.2007. " The feminization of poverty in post-Apartheid South Africa: A story told by the women of bayview, Chatsworth". *Journal of developing societies*. Vol.23(1-2) PP.175-206.
- Bhorat, H.1995." The South African social safety net: past present and future" *Development Bank of Southern Africa*.Vol.12 (4)pp.595-604.
- Blumenfeld, J.1997." From Icon to scapegoat: The experience of South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme" *Development Policy Review*.Vol.15 pp.65-91.
- Bond, P.2005.*Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neo-liberalism in South Africa* .Scottsville South Africa:UKZN Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1998. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brocklesby, M & Fisher, E.2003. "Community development in sustainable livelihoods approaches- an introduction". *Community Development Journal*.Vol.38 (3) pp.185-198.
- Bromberger,N.1982." Government policies affecting the distribution of income,1940-1980" In Schrire,R (ed)*South Africa public policy perspectives*.Cape Town:Juta and Company Limited.
- Brown ,M & Neku,R.J.2005. " A historical review of the South African social welfare system and social work practitioners views on its current state" *International Social Work*.Vol48(3)pp.301-312.
- Budlender,D.1985."A critique of poverty datum lines". Southern Africa and Labour and Development Research Unit. Working paper No.63.
- Butler,A.2004. *Contemporary South Africa*. London: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Burns, J., Keswell, M., & Leibbrandt, M.2005. "Social assistance, gender and the aged in South Africa". *Feminist Economics*.Vol.11 (2) pp.103-115.

- Burns & Keswell, M. 2006. "Intra-household decision making and resource allocation ,social networks and social cohesion" .An input document in preparation of the national income dynamics study.
- Carloni ,A & Crowley , C.2005. "Rapid guide for missions: analysing local institutions and livelihoods". Institute for Rural Development.
- Case, A., Hoosegood, V., & Lund, F. 2005. "The reach and impact of Child Support Grants: evidence from Kwazulu Natal". *Development Southern Africa*. Vol.22 (4) pp.468-482.
- Chambers, R. 1998. "Gender and sustainable livelihoods framework".
- Chamber, R & Conway, G. 1991. " Sustainable rural livelihoods. Practical concepts for the 21st Century". Institute of development studies DP 296.
- Chanzan, N., Lewis, P., Mortimer, R., Rothchild, D & Stedman, S. J. (ed) 1999. *Politics and society in contemporary Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Corder, C. 1997. " The Reconstruction and Development Programme: Success or Failure" *Social indicator research* . Vol.41 pp.183-203.
- Dalal-Clayton, B., Dent, D. & Dubois, O. 2003. *Rural planning in developing countries: supporting natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods*. London: Earthscan.
- Deacon, B. 2007. *Global social policy and governance*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Deaton, A. 2001. " Counting the world's poor: Problems and possible solutions". *The World Bank research observer* . Vol.16(2). pp.125-147.
- de Haan, L. 2006. " The livelihood approach and African livelihoods" African studies centre Leiden.
- Desmond, C., Michael. & Glow, J. 2000. " The hidden battle : HIV/AIDS in the household and community". *South African Journal of International Affairs*. Vol.7(2). pp.39-58.
- Doxey, G. V. 1991. " The origin of racial discrimination in the South African Labour market". In Konczacki, Z., Parpart, J. & Shaw, T. (ed). *Studies in the economic history of Southern Africa vol 2 South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland*. London: Frank Cass.
- Eglin, R. 2008. Urban food security: an emerging crisis. June –July 2008 Afesis-corporation. <http://www.afesis.org.za>.
- Elliot, J. 2006. *An introduction to sustainable development: perspectives on development*. London: Routledge.
- Ellis, F. 2000. *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Everrat ,D.2005.“ The politics of poverty”. Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology .Vol.2(1)pp.16-31.
- Fakier,K & Cock,J.2009.“ A gendered analysis of the crisis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa”. International feminist Journal of politics.
- Farrington,J., Ramasut,T.& Walker,J.2002.“Sustainable livelihood approaches in urban areas: general lessons with illustrations from Indian cases”. ODC Working paper 162.
- Finn,A., Leibbrandt, M & Wegner,E.2011. “ Review : Policies for reducing Income inequality and poverty in South Africa”. Transformation Audit: From inequality to inclusive growth.
- Flick,U.(ed)2006. *An introduction to qualitative research*. London :Sage
- Future Directions International,2012. Strategic analysis paper : Food and water security in South Africa: Present and future.
<http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publicationsfood-andwatercrises/423-food-security-insouthafrica-present-and-future.html>.
- Gilling, J., Jones,S & Duncan ,A.2001.“ Sector Approaches Sustainable livelihoods & rural poverty reduction” . Development policy review.Vol.19.(3).pp.303-219.
- Goebel,A., Donson,B & Hill,T.2010. “ Urban advantage or urban penalty? A case study of Female –headed households in a South African city” Health and Place. Vol 16 pp.573-580.
- Goldblatt,B.2005.“ Gender and social assistance in the first decade of democracy: A study of South Africa’s Child Support Grant”. Politikon.Vol.32(2) pp.239-257.
- Goldblatt,B.2009.“ The right to social Security Addressing Women’s poverty and advantage”. South African Journal on Human Rights. Vol.25(3) pp.442-466.
- Guelke,L.1991“ The beginnings of modern South African society: The meeting of Two worlds” In Konczacki,Z.,Parpart,J.& Shaw,T.(ed). Studies in the economic history of Southern Africa vol 2 South Africa,Lesotho & Swaziland. London: Frank Cass.
- Guthrie,T.2008.“ Family social security benefits in South Africa”. Social Dynamics: A Journal of African studies.Vol.28(2)pp.122-145.
- Hagen-Zanker , J.,Morgan,J. & Meth,C.2011.“ South Africa’s cash social security grants: Progress in increasing coverage”.Overseas Development Institute.
- Hassim, S.2005.“ Gender welfare and the developmenta state in South Africa”United Nation Research Institute for Social Development.
- Hunter,M.2007.“ The changing political economy of sex in South Africa: The significance of

- Unemployment and inequalities to the scale of the AIDS pandemic” *Social Science and Medicine*. Vol 64 pp.689-700.
- Jowah, E.2009.“ Rural livelihoods and food security in the aftermath of the fast track land reform in Zimbabwe” MA Thesis. Rhodes University.
- Kabeer,N. 1997. “ Women ,wages and intra-household power relations in urban Bangladesh” *Development and Change*.Vol.3(1).pp.261-302.
- Kadoza,N.2009. “ Sustainable livelihoods approaches: the future for income generating projects in urban areas? An evaluation of five income generating projects in Tembisa” MA Thesis.UNISA.
- Kehler,J.2001.“ Women and poverty : the South African experience” *Journal of International Women’s Studies*. Vol3 (1) pp41-53.
- Khunou,G.2012.“ Money and gender relations in the South African maintenance system” *South African review of Sociology*.Vol.43(1).pp.4-22.
- Kola,S.,Braehmer,S.,Kanyane,M.et al . 2000.“ Phasing in the Child Support Grant: a social impact study”. The Department of Welfare.
- Kollmair,M& Juli,S.2002.“ The sustainable livelihoods approach: Input paper for the integrated training course of NCCR North-South Aeschiried, Switzerland (9-20 .September 2002).
- Krantz,L.2001.“The sustainable livelihood approach on poverty reduction: An introduction”. Prepared for SIDA Urbanisation, Vol.10(1).pp.147-165.
- Kruger,J.1992.“State Provision of social security: some theoretical, comparative and Historical perspectives with reference to South Africa”. Master Thesis. Stellenbosch:Stellenbosch University.
- KwaZulu Natal SASSA,2012 <http://www.sassa.gov.za/statisticalreports>
- Leatt,A.2003.“ Reaching out to the Children: An analysis of the first six months of the Children’s Institute Extension of the child support Grant in South Africa”. *A working paper by the Childrens’s Institute*.
- Leatt,A.2006. “ *Grants for children: A brief look at the eligibility and take-up of the Child Support Grant and other cash grants*”. *A Children’s Institute working paper number 5*.
- Lee,R.1993. *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London : Sage.
- Legassick,M.1974.“Legislation ,ideology and economy in post-1948 South Africa”. *Journal Of Southern African Studies*.Vol.1(1)pp.5-35.
- Lester, A., Nel ,E & Binn, T.2000. *South Africa , past ,present and future: Gold at the end of*

- the Rainbow?*. London: Pearson Educational Limited.
- Lipton ,M & Simkins, C.(ed) 1993. *State and Market in post-Apartheid South Africa*. Colorado :Westview Press Inc.
- Lombard, A.& Kruger,E.2009.“ Older persons : the case of South Africa” *Ageing Int*. Vol.34pp.119-135.
- Lukhele,A.1990. *Stokvels in South Africa: Informal savings schemes by Blacks for the Black community*. Johannesburg: The Natal Witness Printing and Publishing company (Pty)Ltd.
- Lusufi,I.2002.“ Six years of neoliberal socioeconomic policies in South Africa”. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*.Vol.37(5)pp.286-296.
- Lund Committee (1996) Report of the Lund Committee.
<http://www.infor.gov.za/otherdocs/1995/lund.htm> .
- Lund,F.2008. *Changing Social Policy: The Child Support Grant in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Lund, F.2011. “A step in the wrong direction: linking the South African Child Support Grant to school attendance”. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*.Vol.19(1)pp.5-14.
- Mail and Guardian, South Africa,5-11 April 2013:1-4.
- Magasela,W.2006. “ Towards a constitution-based definition of poverty in post –apartheid South” . In Buhlungu,S., Daniel, R., Southhall,R & Lutchman , J.(ed). *State of the nation: South Africa 2005-2006*. South Africa: HSRC Press.
- Magubane, B.M.1979. *The political economy of race and class in South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Makiwane ,M.& Udjo ,E.2006.“ Is the Child Support Grant associated with an increase in teenage fertility in South Africa? Evidence from national surveys and administrative data” *Child, Youth, Family and Social Development: Human Sciences Research Council*.
- Manicom,D.&Pillay,R.2011.“ Limitations of the Child Support Grant for women and children: a case study of Northdale”*Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity*.
- Maqubela,N.1997.“ The administration of social welfare in South Africa: a study of its origins , development and rationalization” *University of the Western Cape*.
- Matisonn, H & Seekings, J.2002.“ Welfare in wonderland? The politics of the basic income grant in South Africa”. Discussion paper basic income European network, 2002 South Africa.In special Edition of social dynamics. Vol 28(2) *Welfare reform Cape Town*, UCT.<http://www.policylibrary.com/redistribution/bibliography.htm>

- Marais, H.2011. *South Africa pushed to the limits: The political economy of change*. Cape Town:UCT Press.
- Meikle, S., Ramasut, T. & Walker, J. 2001. “Sustainable Urban Livelihoods: Concepts and Implications for policy”. Working paper No.112.
- Meikle, S.2002.“ The urban context and poor people”. In Rakodi,C.(ed) . *Urban livelihoods: A people centred approach to reducing poverty*. London: Earthscan.
- Meinzen-Dick,R& Adato,M.2001.“ Applying sustainable livelihoods framework to impact assessment in integrated natural resources management”. International food policy research institute. Cali: Colombia.
- Mirugi-Mukundi,G.2009.“Realising the Social Security Rights of Children in South Africa, with particular reference to the Child Support Grant” Research report written for the Socio-Economic Rights Project of the Community Law Centre.
- Moser,C.1993. *Gender planning and development theory ,practice and training*.London : Routledge.
- Moser, C.1998.“The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies ” .*World Development*.Vol 26(1).pp.1-19.
- Moser,C.,Norton,A.,Conway ,T., Ferguson ,C& Vizard,P.2001.“ To claim our rights: Livelihood security, human rights and sustainable development”. Overseas Development Institute.
- Mosoetsa,S.2011. *Eating from one pot: The dynamics of survival in poor South African households*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Muthien,Y ,Khosa,M & Mangubane,B.(ed) 2000. *Democracy and governance review: Mandela’s legacy 1994-1999*.Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Nattrass ,N & Ardington, E.1990. *The political economy of South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Nattrass, N. 2004.“Trading –off Income and Health: AIDS and the Disability Grant in South Africa” Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) working paper No99, Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Neuman, W.(ed)2000.*Social research methods qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston:Allyn Bacon.
- Oblak,S.2008.“ Livelihoods dilemma in Mekong development: A study of upper Mekong navigation project-Will the development on the Mekong bring sustainable livelihoods for the poor?” Master Science in development and International relations, Aalborg University.

- O'Meara, D.1975. "The 1946 African mines worker's strike and the political economy of South Africa" *Journal of Common Wealth and comparative politics* . Vol .13(2).
- Patel, L.2008. "Getting it right and wrong: An overview of a decade of post-Apartheid Social Welfare" *Practice: Social Work in action*.Vol.20 (2) pp.72-81.
- Patel, L.2011. "South Africa: Child Support Grants". *Sharing innovative experiences Global South-South Development Academy*. Vol.18.
- Patel, L.& Hochfeld,T.2011." It buys food but does it change gender relations? Child Support Grants in Soweto, South Africa" *Gender & Development*. Vol.19(2) pp.229-240.
- Pauw,K .& Mncube, L.2007."Explaining the social security net in South Africa: Opportunities, Challenges and constraints". *Development Policy Research Unit*.
- Phonepraseuth,V.2012." From resettlement to sustainable livelihood development: The potential of resettlement and livelihood sustainability: A case study of resettled communities on the Nakai Plateau Nam Theun 2 Hydropower projects in lao PDR" *Master of Philosophy Development Studies ,Massey University*.
- Pieterse, E & Van Donk, M. 2002. " Incomplete ruptures: The political economy of realizing socio-economic rights in South Afric". *Journal of the Faculty of Law*. Vol .6 (2) pp. 193-229.
- Posel,D.2001. " Who are the head of household , what do they do , and is the concept of Headship useful? An analysis of headship in South Africa" *Development Southern Africa*. Vol.18 (5) pp.651-670.
- Posel, D & Rogan, M.2009." Women, income and poverty : gendered access to resources in post -Apartheid South Africa" *Agenda: empowering women for gender equity*. Vol.23 (18) pp 25-34.
- Pollak ,H.1981 " State Social Pensions, Grants and Social Welfare".In *Van der Horst,S.& Reid,J (ed). Race Discrimination in South Africa: A review*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Potgieter, J.1982. "The cost of basic needs of the migrant worker and his family in the national States of Bophuthatswana, KwaZulu, Transkei and Ciskei as calculated by means of the Household subsistence level survey technique". *Institute for planning research University of Port Elizabeth. Research Report No.24*.
- Rakodi,C." A livelihoods approach conceptual issues and definitions" In *Rakodi,C.(ed). Urban livelihoods: A people centred approach to reduce poverty*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

- Rogan, M. 2012. "Poverty and headship in post-apartheid South Africa, 1997-2008"
- Rose, D & Chalton, K. 2001. "Prevalence of household food poverty in South Africa: Results from a large, nationally representative survey". Public Health Nutrition. Vol.5(3) pp383-389 ERSA working paper 288.
- RSA Government Gazette, 1994. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa White Paper on Reconstruction and Development. Cape Town vol.353 (16085).
- Ruggeri-Landerchi, C, Saith, R & Stewart, F. 2003. "Does it matter that we do not agree on the Definition of poverty? A comparison of four approaches" Oxford Development Studies. Vol.31(3), pp.244-274.
- Sagner, A. 2000. "Ageing and social policy in South Africa: Historical perspectives with particular reference to the Eastern Cape". Journal of Southern African Studies. Vol.26 (3) pp.523-553.
- SASSA, 2012. Official Newsletter Update. "Let us keep you up to date". Studies. Vol.26 (3) pp.523-553.
- SASSA, 2013. Fact Sheet, Issue no 3 of 2013. A statistics summary of social grants in South Africa.
<http://www.sassa.gov.za/portals/1/documents/905e880-bef-42ae-b17f84c682f.pdf>.
- SASSA. Promotion of Access to Information ACT MANUAL.
- Satterthwaite, D. 1997. "Urban poverty reconsidering its scale and nature". IDS Bulletin Vol.20(2), pp.10-23.
- Saunders, P. 2004. "Towards a credible poverty framework: from income poverty to deprivation" Social Policy Research Centre Discussion Paper no.131.
- Saunders, I. 2013. South Africa: Everything you need to know about Social Grants.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201303061147.html>.
- Schatz, E., Madhavan, S & Williams, J. 2011. "Female-headed households contending with AIDS-related hardship in rural South Africa". Health and Place. Vol.17 pp598 – 605.
- Scoones, I. 1998. "Sustainable Rural livelihoods: A framework for analysis". Institute of Development Studies IDS Working Paper 72.
- Seekings, J. & Nattrass, N. 2002. "Class, distribution and redistribution in post-apartheid South Africa" Transformation. <http://transformation.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/transformation/article/view>
- Seekings, J. 2005. Class, race and inequality in South Africa. New Haven: Yale University.

- Seekings, J.2007. “Not a single white person should be allowed to go under: Swartgevaar a and the origins of South Africa’s welfare state 1924-1929” *Journal of African History*.Vol.48pp.357-394.
- Seekings , J.2008.“ The continuing salience of race: discriminations and diversity in South Africa” . *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. Vol 26 (1) pp.1-25.
- Setai,B.1977.*The political economy of South Africa the making of poverty*. University Press Of America.
- Sekhampu,T.J.2012,“ Socio-economic determinants of poverty amongst female headed Households in a South African township” . *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies*.Vol4(1) pp409-418.
- Sen,A.1981.*poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation* .Oxford : Clarendon Press.
- Slater ,R& Twyman,C.2003.“ Hidden livelihoods? Natural resources-dependent livelihoods and urban development policy” . Working Paper 225. Overseas Development Institute: London.
- Smeeding ,T & Weinberg,D.2001. “Towards a uniform definition of household income”. *Review of income and wealth*.Vol.147(1).pp.1-24.
- Solesbury , W.2003.“ Sustainable livelihoods: A case study of the evolution of DFID policy” London: UK.
- Stewart,F.2007. *Defining poverty in developing world*. England: Basingstoke.
- Streak, C.J.2004. “ The Gear legacy: did Gear fail or move South Africa forward in Development” . *Development Southern Africa*.Vol.21(2) pp .272-288.
- Sullivan,C.et al.2003. “The water poverty index: development and application at the Community scale”. *Natural resource forum*.Vol.27.pp.189-199.
- Taylor Committee 2002a.“ Transforming the present, protection the future: Consolidating report” *Committee of inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System, 2002*. Pretoria: Department of Welfare.
- Taylor Committee 2002b.“ Committee Reports of the Taylor Committee into a social security system for South Africa”. *Committee Report No8: Poverty, Social Assistance and the Basic Income Grant*.
- Terreblanche , S & Nattrass , N.1990 .“ A periodization of the political economy from 1910” In Nattrass , N & Ardington ,E (ed) *The political economy of South Africa*. Cape Town :Oxford University Press.
- Terreblanche, S.2002. *A history of inequality in South Africa , 1652-2002*. Pietermaritzburg:

- University of Natal Press.
- Thompson, E P. 1968. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Transberg -Hansen , K & Vaa , M.2004. *Reconsidering informality : perspectives from Urban Africa*.Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikanstitutet.
- Triegaardt, J.2005. “The Child Support Grant in South Africa: a social policy for poverty alleviation?” *International Journal of Social Welfare*.Vol.14pp.249-255.
- UNICEF,2012. The state of the world’s children 2012: Child in an urban world”
<http://www.unicef.org//sowc2012/pdf/s/-2012-definition.pdf>.
- United Nations Human Development Report 1997. Poverty in the human development perspective: concept and measurement”
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1997/chapter/>
- Van der Berg,S.1997. “ South African Social Security under apartheid and beyond”
Development Southern Africa. Vol.14(4)pp.481-503.
- Ven der Merwe, T.1997. “ Events , views and ideologies which shaped social security in South Africa” *South African Journal of Economic History*. Vol.12(2) pp.77-102.
- Van Driel,M.2009. “ The social grants and black women in South Africa: A case study of Bophelong Township in Gauteng” *Journal of International Women’s studies*.Vol.10(4)pp.127-143.
- Van Driel,M.2011. “ Chapter 3 Woman –headed families in South Africa”
<http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/...110%20ch%203%dec11.pdf?>
- Van Heusden, P&Pointer, R.2006. “ Subjectivity, politics and neo liberalism in post – apartheid Cape Town. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol.41.(1).pp.229-240.
- Van Niekerk, R.2007. “ Social policy and citizenship in South Africa: the development of inclusive de-racialised social policies in the periods 1939-1961 and 1989- 1998”.
Thesis. Oxford University.
- Visser,W.2004. “ Shifting RDP into GEAR: The ANC Government’s dilemma in providing an equitable system of social security for the new South Africa”. University of Stellenbosch.
- William , P & Taylor,I. 2000. “ Neoliberalism and political economy of the new South Africa” *New Political economy*. Vol 5 (1) pp.21-40.
- Wilson , F & Ramphela,M.1989. *Uprooting poverty: The South African challenge*.
Cape Town : David Philip.
- Wolpe,H.1972. “ Capitalism and cheap labour –power in South Africa: from Segregation to Apartheid” *Economy and Society*. Vol 1(4) pp.426-455.

- Woolard , I.2002.“ An overview of poverty and inequality in South Africa”. Working paper
Prepared for DFID (SA).
- Woolard,I.,Harttgen,K.& Klasen,S.2010.“ The evolution and impact of social security in
South Africa”. Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit, University
of Cape Town.
- Whitworth, A. &Noble, M.2008.“A safety Net without holes: An argument for a
comprehensive Income Security for South Africa” Journal of Human Development
and Capabilities A multi –Disciplinary Journal for people –Centered Development
.Vol. 9(2) pp.247-263.
- Worden,N.2000. *The making of modern South Africa*. United Kingdom: Blackwell
Publishing.
- Wratten, E.1995. “Conceptualizing urban poverty” Environment and Urbanization.
Vol.7 (1).pp.11-27.
- World Commission on Environmental and development .1987, Our common future
(Brundtland report). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix:
Interview Guidelines for CSG Mothers

Participant's name _____ Date of interview _____

| | | |
|--|---------------------|--|
| 1. How old are you? | | |
| 2. What is your marital status? | Single | |
| | Married | |
| | Separated | |
| | Divorced | |
| | Windowed | |
| | Living with partner | |
| 3. Where do you live? | | |
| 4. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? | Primary | |
| | Secondary | |
| | Tertiary | |
| 5. What is your employment status? | Full employment | |
| | Part time | |
| | Unemployed | |
| | Self employed | |
| | Pensioner | |
| | Student | |
| 6. How many children do you have? | | |
| 7. What are the ages of your children/child? | | |

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| 8. How many of your children receive the child support grant? | |
| 9. What kind of school do your children attend? | Public |
| | Private |
| 10. For how long have you been collecting the grant? | |
| 11. Which of these best describes your position in the household? | Only bread winner |
| | Primary bread winner |
| | Secondary bread winner |

SECTION A

1. Are you the child's natural mother or their primary caregiver? (Please explain the relation to the child if you are a primary care giver?)
2. Does the father of the child pay/ contribute maintenance for the child's needs?
3. Do you save money for the child? If no please provide reasons / if yes please explain how you saving the money (using formal or informal schemes).
4. Have you used the grant money to fund a little business for yourself or used it to further your studies or other household members?
5. Please list and explain how the grant money is spent on mainly (food, rent, clothing, school fees, Dstv, electricity, health care, burial or stokvel) .
6. So how much do you spend roughly a month on groceries and services mentioned above from question 5.
7. To what extent do you feel the grant has contributed towards ; food, clothing transport, education and other household members wellbeing?
8. Please , describe the possible household conditions without the Child Support grant?
9. Do you have any debts and does the grant money usually assist you in repaying?
10. In times of financial, distress who assists you? (does the grant money last the whole month)
11. Are you part of any stokvel societies? (If yes how have they assisted you or the household? In addition, do you benefit from being part of that society) .

SECTION B

12. How many people live in your household ? (Please explain how they are related to you , is it one or more generations in one household).
13. How many people in your household bring in an income regularly?
14. What is the main source of the household income? (is it money earned by you, your partner , money from other household members earning , or grant money?)
15. Do you pool income in the household (if yes who manages the income and how do they decide to spend it? or does everyone spend their own money the way they please?

- 16.** Have you ever gotten into an argument or physical fight with other household members because they wanted some of the grant money received for your child?
- 17.** Ever since you started receiving the grant, do you feel that you are treated differently in the household in terms of the relations and decision making or has the grant money changed the relations you have with the household members?
- 18.** Are there any male household members that feel entitled to the grant money?
- 19.** Is there a difference between male and female household members when it comes to income allocation and bargaining power within the household?
- 20.** Has anyone stopped working as a result of the grant, or have any household members given you more financial responsibilities as the result of the grant money you receive?
- 21.** Has the grant money assisted in buying assets such as TV, radio, building material or furniture? (Please list all the material assets acquired using the child support grant?)
- 22.** Do you feel male household members interests are catered for the most at the expense of female household members?
- 23.** Is there age hierarchy in the household in terms of the allocation of financial resources?

Section C

- 24.** How did you find out about the child support grant?
- 25.** Please explain the grant application process? (Briefly how many trips you made to the official office, how did the officials treat you, what kind of obstacles did you encounter if any at all?).
- 26.** Do you feel the amount of money given for the grant is sufficient ?
- 27.** How do you feel about the new payout system for the grant money? Or do you prefer the old pay out system?