THE IDEA OF SOCIAL GRANTS
IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA:
A DECOLONIAL INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Xolisa Tania Mazibuko, hereby declare that this PhD thesis submission entitled "The Idea of Social Grants in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Decolonial Interpretive Analysis" is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no materials previously produced or published by another person except where all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification, or at any other higher education institution.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the meanings of a social grant in South Africa using a decolonial interpretive analysis. The main objective of the research is to decode possible meanings of the social grant programme in South Africa by examining its possible transformative role in poverty and inequality, using the lived experiences of the beneficiaries of this programme. The thesis deploys a qualitative case study design to examine the extent to which the idea of social grants in South Africa contributes or fails to contribute to meaningful change to the power structure that produces and perpetuates poverty and inequality. The thesis employs the theoretical framework of structure and agency to evaluate the agential role of the social grant programme in the power structure of modernity/coloniality – a power structure that is at the forefront of producing continuing poverty and inequality in South Africa. Thus, the decolonial epistemic paradigm is used to determine whether the social grant intervention in the South African development discourse produces a diachronic change or a synchronic continuity to the power structure of modernity/coloniality that continues to play a generative role in the poverty and inequality experienced by the peoples of South Africa. The fieldwork for this study was conducted among the poor communities of four communities in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, namely the townships of Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soshanguve and Winterveld (one participant resided in Hammanskraal but spent more time in Mamelodi). A central aspect of the data collection was constructing a profile of social grant beneficiaries in order to determine the transformative impact of the social grant programme by examining its potential to address the twin challenges of poverty and inequality. One key finding in the study is that the recipients were born in families that endured poverty; in their adult lives, they find themselves still trapped in the cycle of poverty. Participants differ in how they see social grants: some see it as a "helping hand", while others see it as "free money". It was clear that the social grants do provide some relief. Results show, however, that social grants are a

'repetition without change' as they are embedded in a prescriptive structure. Social grants reproduce the structure of coloniality of power that is hidden in development approaches. The key finding of the thesis is therefore that the idea of social grants in South Africa plays an "anti-politics" role which cushions rather than eradicates the extreme effects of poverty and inequality – a role that sustains rather than transforms the power structure of coloniality that produces these effects. It is therefore concluded that social grants cannot bring about the change that its recipients need in order to truly develop and break the cycle of poverty. Social grants provide a safety net, and this safety net deprives the recipient of an opportunity to begin thinking of another world, one of equality where there are systems in place to assist citizens to develop and to break the continuous cycle of poverty.

Keywords:

social grants, poverty, inequality, coloniality, South African development discourse.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
RDP	Reconstruction Development Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie
SASSA	South Africa Social Security Agency
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1   Background

The idea of social grants in South Africa is often associated with attempts to alleviate poverty and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. The distribution of social grants refers to a government programme that is meant to address a context of rampant poverty on the one hand and extreme affluence on the other. In a speech in 1998, Thabo Mbeki, who was to serve as South Africa's president from 1999 to 2008, described this situation of stark inequality as two nations in one country (Mbeki, 1998), raising the question of whether an intervention such as social grants can really make a significant contribution to poverty alleviation and actually reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.

There have been several reports on poverty in South Africa. These include Statistics South Africa's (StatsSA's) *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015*, which shows that poverty in South Africa is on the rise, and that more than 50% of the population still lived in poverty by 2015 (StatsSA, 2017), based on a poverty line of R992 (maximum) per person per month, in 2015 prices. The StatsSA (2017) report notes that many interventions have been designed to alleviate poverty, including social grant interventions, the first of which was introduced in 1913, in what was then the Union of South Africa. The system was comprehensively restructured in 1994 to meet the needs of black South Africans more fully. The report shows, however, that despite these interventions and some improvement from 1994, in real numbers, poverty continues to rise (StatsSA, 2017). Poverty and inequality remain one of the most problematic developmental challenges in South Africa and has probably been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the last decade, South Africa has managed to improve and expand its system of social grants. This development is similar to the improvements that are taking place globally with regard to publicly funded cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable. The South African government implemented social grants as a system to deal with the unequal levels of income; however, it is clear that this strategy has not fully addressed the issue. It was expected that the cash transfers would reduce poverty and inequality; however, it has not managed to do. Although social grants are a good initiative, the idea of these grants as an *agent of development* that brings fundamental changes to lives of the poor and not development that fits into the dominant modern development discourse is not clear. It may be argued that, as a poverty reduction strategy, social grants have the potential to promote social *transformation* at a minute scale, rather than only to reduce poverty and provide a safety net (Neves, Samson, Van Niekerk, Hlatshwayo & Du Toit, 2009:2). It has often been said that social grants have the potential to change the dynamics of the poor communities, but the question is whether these grants do in fact allow for such change at a visible and grand scale. Are they structured to change these dynamics, or have they been developed to serve only as a cushion for the poor?

Based on these general questions raised by the limited successes of social grants in South Africa, I decided to conduct this study to look at factors and reasons behind the continued increase of poverty and inequality in the country, despite the use of social grants as an intervention. The research problem is articulated clearly in the next section to provide a clear rationale for this study.

1.2   Research problem

Poverty is an issue that people face world-wide. The *Human development report* (UNDP, 2014) shows that more than three billion people (nearly half of the world's population) lived on less than $2.50 a day in 2014, revealing the tragic state of poverty worldwide. Another report in the

same year by UNICEF (2014), *Committing to child survival: A promise renewed*, points out that of those three billion, more than 1.3 billion people live in extreme poverty (on less than $1.25 a day), and of these, 1 billion are children who live in poverty, with 22 000 children dying each day due to poverty. This illustrates how important it is for governments to come up with continuous strategies that can assist in alleviating poverty and promoting income equality.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, by any measure, and inequality has remained high and persistent even after the 1994 democratic elections (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). The persistence of poverty more than two decades after 1994 is shocking, given that the government has implemented several initiatives, such as increased social grants, said to be aimed at reducing poverty and inequality. However, after initial gains, the opposite to a reduction in poverty is happening, which raises the question of whether these social grants are worth the continued increase in expenditure.

Social grants form a significant part of state expenditure in South Africa, as they need to provide social security, inter alia, for children, older persons, and people with disabilities (Patel, 2012:106). According to a report by the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA, 2013), the South African government provides the following social grants: the Old Age Grant, the War Veteran Grant, a Disability Grant, a Grant in Aid, the Child Support Grant, the Foster Child Grant and the Care Dependency Grant. More and more people are provided with grants each year, with a total of 17 453 451 people receiving grants in 2018, compared to 2016, when 16 973 724 people received grants (SASSA, 2018), out of a population of then just over 56 million citizens, based on the latest census. The above figures of the reach of social grants illustrates how important social grants are in South Africa, and also shows the role that they play in helping people to deal with poverty. This leads to the question of whether social grants in fact also play a role in the *increase* of inequality in South Africa, because each year more people require social grants, but there is no decrease in the levels of poverty and inequality. In

each financial year more funds are allocated towards these grants, and the question that must then arise is whether these grants are really achieving what they ought to achieve, namely poverty reduction and reducing income inequality. Given the figures, it appears that the social grants system in South Africa does not necessarily contribute towards long-term sustainable development in local communities, but rather tends to contribute to a system of continuous dependence on state support (IBSA 2012:3). In terms of sustainability and the well-being of South Africa's people, this poses a serious challenge.

An example of a social grant system which is used to promote sustainable development is the Bolsa Familia (Brazil Conditional Cash Transfer Programme). The main objective of this cash transfer programme is "to help reduce current poverty in the country through direct transfer of funds to low-income families; and break the cycle of poverty passing from one generation to the next, thus helping to reduce future poverty" (IBSA, 2012:3). This is done through providing a monthly allowance per child attending school, up to a maximum of five children, to all families with a per capita income below R1 147.20 ($83.81 US dollar equivalent) per month (this is the Brazil poverty line in Rand); in return, families must commit to keeping their children in school and to taking them for regular health checks (IBSA, 2012:3). In this case, the social grant is used to contribute towards long-term sustainable development, because it is used to encourage parents to take responsibility for working towards the goal that their children will not continue to depend on state grants as adults. Thus, these social grants are used to break the cycle of poverty and give families greater independence because of the level of responsibility and the roles played by both the recipients and government.

In South Africa, social grants are not used in the same manner, and as a result poverty continues to be one of the greatest problems that this country is faced with. In terms of race, gender and spatial dimensions, there is vast inequality regarding income and unemployment (Patel, 2012). As Patel (2012:107) explains, the overrepresentation of poor people in South Africa includes

Africans, Coloureds (people of mixed race), African women, children, and youth, even though the government has made many efforts to curb poverty, including the extension of social grants as an initiative.

Patel (2012:107) has also identified another pattern: there seems to be an increase in urban poverty (11%), as well as an increase in the extent of poverty, which is seen though low levels of poverty amongst poor households. This discovery is concerning, as it illustrates that poverty trends continue to increase, despite the grants paid out every year – the grants are provided to improve the lives of the poor, but people are worse off. Some people get free houses from government, as well as access to sanitation, but communities remain poor. This problem has escalated to the point where even university graduates in South Africa (9.3% of graduates) are unemployed (StatsSA, 2021:1). The poor remain poor, while those who are educated also experience unemployment and poverty. One would have expected to see those with tertiary education at a better position as compared to those without. However, in South Africa that is not the case. This issue of increased poverty suggests that the government needs to adjust its programmes, including social grants, to ensure that poverty and unemployment is reduced drastically in the country.

As already stated above, South Africa is one of the countries with the most unequal distribution of income, and it is also characterised by extremes of poverty and wealth (Simkins, 2005; Terreblanche, 2002; World Bank, 2006). One aim of social grants is supposedly to help reduce the high levels of income inequality, while also reducing poverty itself. The phenomenon of social grants in South Africa is thus an important topic in developmental discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. In spite of popular calls for such grants, the idea of social grants has also been a matter of contestation among scholars and policymakers, who question whether social grants contribute to real development in South Africa, and the impact of social grants on poverty reduction. The question of whether social grants contribute positively or negatively to

the development of South Africa is therefore important to understanding the role of social grants in development in general, but a serious shortcoming of the current discourses about the idea of social grants is that the debate does not engage sufficiently with the linkage between the *idea* of social grants and the broader environment that has enabled the emergence of this discourse in the first place.

The provision of social grants is very costly, and this expenditure is unsustainable for the country. More and more grants are distributed each year, while poverty and unequal distribution of income are on the rise. This leads to a question on how effective these grants are, and whether they are improving the lives of the impoverished, or whether they are structured in such a way that they will perpetuate recipients' current socio-economic status. This leads to the question of whether social grants can be designed to improve the development structure of a country, or if they only collude in maintaining the current structural order. It is these questions that motived me to research the idea of social grants in post-apartheid South Africa. In answering the above-mentioned questions, is important to start by understanding what social grants are in a country such as South Africa, given its unique history with colonialism and apartheid.

In this thesis, I thus explore the meaning of the idea of social grants, by articulating it from a point of departure that examines the generative structural order behind the idea of a social grant. This approach is meant to cater for the limits of "presentism" in the currently ahistorical debates about the developmental impact of social grants that have made it difficult to predict their future impact with precision.

1.3   Aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is to examine the potential and actual transformative role of the social grant programme in terms of poverty reduction and bridging the socio-economic gap

among the people of South Africa. I will use a decolonial epistemic lens. Thus, I seek to achieve this aim by addressing the following objectives:

- identifying the history and nature of the structure that underlies poverty and inequality in South Africa.

- examining the history and purpose of the social grant programme in South Africa; and

- evaluating the transformative potential of the social grant programme in terms of addressing the challenge of poverty and inequality in South Africa by analysing the actual experiences of social grant beneficiaries.

1.4   Research questions

This study focused on answering the following research questions:

- What is the history and nature of the structure that underlies poverty and inequality in South Africa?

- To what extent does the social grant programme play an agential role in transcending the structure behind poverty and inequality in South Africa?

- Who are the beneficiaries of the social grant programme in South Africa?

- In what ways have the beneficiaries of social grants in South Africa benefited from the programme?

The answers to the above questions provide a picture on the transformative potential of social grants in terms of poverty alleviation and equality among the people of South Africa, thereby revealing its agential role in transcending the power structures that create and perpetuate poverty and inequality.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was bounded in terms of time and space. In respect of time, the study focused on the transformative role of social grants during the post-apartheid era in South Africa. In terms of spatiality, the study was limited to the Gauteng province. The research focused on the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, more specifically the townships of Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Winterveld and Soshanguve.

1.6 Limitations of the study

From the beginning of the study, I acknowledged that there would be some limitations to the study. First, the research was conducted only in one province, the Gauteng province. I chose the Gauteng province because it is the province with the second largest population, with a high number of social grants recipients. I also live in this area, so that interviewing participants in this area was geographically and financially most viable.

Second, the sample size was limited to 20 social grant recipients. The research focused strongly on secondary data (literature), but interviews were added to the methodology to provide a profile of social grants recipients in the Gauteng province. I wanted to show the "face" behind the statistical numbers that are usually provided in the literature. I wanted to illustrate what kind of people these recipients are, their family backgrounds, and how they found themselves in this continuous cycle of poverty. These in-depth interviews were aimed at providing more context regarding the effect of social grants.

1.7 Importance of the study

There are various opinions on what social grants are achieving in South Africa, and this is illustrated in the lack of consensus in the large body of research that has been conducted on this topic. Despite the range of studies on the topic, none has focused specifically on

understanding what social grants are vis-à-vis the power structure that they seek to transform. Every year, more people receive the social grants, and the amount received is increased by a certain percentage each year. This has led to differing opinions around the usefulness, affordability and impact of social grants. On the one hand, there is a growing perception that social grants should not be increased, based on the argument that they induce dependency on government behaviour in communities. On the other hand, there is the view that the amount of money provided to recipients is too small and that it should be increased so that people can afford to meet their basic needs, and to ensure that the number of people living below the poverty line is lowered (Lekweza, 2011).

These opposite views inspired me to conduct this study as a way of investigating what social grants are, and whether they are structured in a way that encourages growth and development, or whether they only offer a cushion that prevents people from questioning the structural order that they are part of. The study is significant because not much work has been done so far that looks at the idea of social grants from a point of departure that examines the generative structural order underpinning the idea of social grants. This approach used in the study catered for the limits of "presentism" in the currently ahistorical debates about the developmental impacts of social grants that have made it difficult to predict their impact with any precision. The knowledge received from the study will add to the literature on social grants, poverty reduction and sustainable development. The study will also be accessible to policymakers and the findings will help inform their policymaking.

1.8 Outline of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This is the first chapter of the thesis. This chapter outlines the background of the study, general problem and specific problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study and the research

questions. The chapter also covers the research methodology used in the study, the scope and limitations, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study, which is the theory of structure and agency. In this chapter I discuss the history and debates around structure and agency and also look at the idea of agency in development practice and discourse.

Chapter 3: The history and structure of global modernity/coloniality

This chapter is a continuation from of the theoretical framework. Here, I present the history and architecture of the power structure of global modernity/coloniality that continues to produce poverty and inequality in the internal affairs of a country such as South Africa. I do this with the aim of unmasking its embeddedness and imperviousness to change when faced with anti-systemic interventions including that represented by the idea of a social grant.

Chapter 4: Decoloniality as a meta-method

In this chapter, I look at decoloniality to explain what I mean by a decolonial perspective or decolonial reading of the meaning of a social grant. I do this by projecting decoloniality as a meta-method of making sense of the idea of social grants during my deployment of the structure and agency theory.

Chapter 5: The Idea of Social Grants: An Analysis of Poverty and Social Grants in the South African Context

This is the literature review chapter of the thesis. The literature that I consider focuses on the structure of poverty in South Africa, including an analysis of social grants in pre-apartheid, apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. This literature shows that poverty emerged over

centuries and is still on the rise even after the coming of democracy in 1994. I articulate the causes of poverty and the role of social grants as one of the purported interventions aimed at reducing poverty by discussing the policy framework of social grants in the *Social Assistance Act, 59 of 1992* (RSA, 1992) and the subsequent *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), as well as the Social Assistance Amendment Act 6 of 2008 (RSA,2008) is mentioned.

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

In this chapter I discuss the methodology that was used in the study.

Chapter 7: The idea of social grants and the life experiences of beneficiaries

This chapter presents the results, and I discuss the research findings from the empirical data that were collected by means of in-depth interviews. I group the findings in terms of a set of themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

In the final chapter of the thesis, I recapitulate the salient findings in this study. The chapter provides the main conclusions, and I also reflect on how the objectives of the study were achieved, and how each research question was answered. At the end of this chapter, I present the recommendations of the study.

1.9   Summary and conclusion

In this first chapter of the thesis, I presented the background to the study, the research problem in broad terms, the specific problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study and the research questions. The main aim of this study is to examine the transformative role of the social grant programme in terms of poverty reduction and bridging the socio-economic gap among the people of South Africa using a decolonial epistemic lens. I also explained the scope

and limitations and outlined its importance. The research methodology was described: I conducted a qualitative comparative case study, combining a literature review with interviews to reflect the situation experienced by people who receive grants. I considered the data gathering, and its analysis, as well as ethical, validity and reliability issues, and provided an outline of the study as a whole.

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework that I used in the study, which is structure and agency.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework that I used in this study, namely the theory of structure and agency. This theory is relevant for this study because the phenomenon of social grants reflects an agential attempt by government to address the challenges of poverty and inequality that manifest within the structure of global coloniality. In this chapter, I therefore discuss the history of and debates around structure and agency by various scholars and explicate the relevance of these debates to our deeper understanding of the meaning of social grants when this phenomenon is read from a decolonial interpretive perspective. After describing the theory, I discuss the idea of agency in development practice and discourse, and how this idea influences our judgement on whether social grants play a transformative or reformative role on the structure of coloniality – a structure that has produced and still perpetuates poverty and inequality in South Africa, which is the area where my research was done. This is followed by reflection on how the structure and agency conundrum relates to this thesis, explaining in more detail why this theoretical framework was selected. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

2.2   The theory of structure and agency

In this study, I deployed the theoretical framework of structure and agency to examine the extent to which the social grant programme can play a transformative agential role within the power structure that has produced poverty and inequality among the people of South Africa before, during and after apartheid. This theory was helpful for achieving the objective of the study because the question of whether or not the social grant programme plays a transformative

role cannot be examined outside an understanding of the nature of the structure that led to and still reproduces poverty and inequality in South Africa, and also the role that developmental programmes such as the social grant programme play in either transcending or continuing to reproduce this structure.

The origins of the theory of structure and agency can be traced to the 1970s, but this theoretical approach to social phenomena did not appear out of the blue during that time. It arose out of a long-standing philosophical and academic debate on the relationship between human behaviour in the world in which humans live (Lacroix, 2012). The approach draws on how humans see the world, how they relate to the world, and what informs their thinking about that world. In the social sciences, structure and agency are crucial theoretical issues, because the answers to questions around these topics are central to what informs people's actions. Are people's actions informed by the structure that they find themselves in, or are their actions self-informed? In this study I deployed the theory of structure and agency to answer the question of what a social grant is – is it a development agent that brings about change, or do social grants merely reproduce the structure that leads to inequality in the first place?

Even though the theory of structure and agency can help enable us to determine the role of transformative programmes and projects in either transcending or reproducing an existing structure, this theory is not without complexity, complications and challenges. The first challenge that a researcher can encounter in using the conceptual tool of structure and agency theory for a study is the challenge of resolving the perceived binary opposition between structure and agency. In other words, a question that concerns scholars who deploy this theory is whether it is possible to treat the two constructs as separate entities in seeking to understand the making of a social phenomenon. This question is difficult to resolve, because there are instances where structure and agency reproduce one another in such a way that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two. This was a challenge that I too had to consider when

deploying this theoretical framework – I had to be cognizant of the fact that I might have some difficulty identifying the distinctions between the two in respect of social grants. For the purposes of this study, I looked at modernity/coloniality as a power structure, and I looked at social grants as a potential agent of development. In this way, I was able to make clear a distinction between the two, while acknowledging that there may be reciprocal influence.

There are some challenges with deploying structure and agency as a theoretical lens to examine the manifestation of social phenomena such as the impact of the developmental programme on the lives of a people, but some scholars have convincingly argued that it is possible to observe the influence of both structure and agency on a social phenomenon without contradiction (Sahlins, 1985; Ndlovu, 2015). To do this, I needed to begin by reconciling structure and agency, and by engaging in a process that can expose the false dichotomy between the two, as there are always situations where structure and agency reproduce each another either synchronically or diachronically, which implies that they are not mutually exclusive (Ndlovu, 2015).

According to Sahlins (1985: vii, also quoted by Ndlovu, 2015:240), "culture (structure) is historically ordered, and history (agency) is culturally ordered; hence there are no radical binary contrasts between structure and agency, as the two generally produce each other". Sahlins's (1985) use of the term "culture" as synonymous with structure, and "history" as synonymous with agency is important and is useful for my study, where I attempt to evaluate the transformative impact of a developmental intervention such as a social grant. It is useful mainly because the idea of culture as a structure speaks to a way of life that structurally reproduces poverty and inequality – a situation that a social grant programme is supposed to address through a history-making process that eliminates poverty and inequality (Ndlovu, 2015). This articulation of structure and agency as culture and history enables one to ask the following questions: Can the social grant programme really bring about an end to poverty and

inequality among the people of South Africa if it is implemented within a neoliberal capitalist economic system as a "culture" (structure)? To what extent does the social grant programme change the system that has produced the very ills of poverty and inequality that the programme is meant to address? Such questions enabled me to judge the potential of developmental intervention to play an agential role within an existing normative order and/or way of life.

The conundrum of structure and agency has been acknowledged by many scholars (e.g., Sahlins, 1985; Ndlovu, 2015). Even prior to Sahlins's (1985) discussion of the key terms, Abrams (1982: xii-xv) described the challenge of deploying the theoretical lens of structure and agency as follows:

> The problem of the agency is the problem of finding a way of accounting for human experience which recognizes simultaneously and in equal measure that history and society are made by constant and more or less purposeful individual action and that individual action, however purposeful, is made by history and society. How do we, as active subjects, make a world of objects which then, as it were, become subjects making us their objects? It is the problem of individual and society, consciousness and being, action and structure. […] People make their own history – but only under definite circumstances and conditions: we act through a world of rules which our action creates, breaks and renews – we are creatures of rules, the rules are our creations: we make our own world – the world confronts us as an implacable and autonomous system of social facts.

According to Ndlovu (2015), this articulation by Abrams (1982) suggests that observing structure and agency as separate agencies is difficult, because culture becomes history synchronically, and history becomes culture diachronically, in that way validating this view. Thus, where there are structure and agency, it is normal for transformation to co-exist with continuity. This is mainly because the structure (which is also a culture or pattern of conducting day-to-day business) calls for and enables continuity, while agency (which is also a history-making process) calls for and enables change. In the case of examining the transformative role of social grants within a pre-existing structure, one should thus not be surprised to encounter a reproduction and re-structuration of the same structure which co-exists with some changes.

According to Ndlovu (2015), the argument that there is no binary distinction concerning structure and agency when accounting for social phenomena led the early theorist Thompson (1978:280, quoted in Ndlovu, 2015:244) to note an ambivalence that he described as "the crucial ambivalence of our human presence in our history, part subjects, part objects, the voluntary agents of our own involuntary determinations". Thompson's point is similar to Sahlins's (1985: xiv) description of the synthesis between structure and agency as the "structure of the conjecture". By this Sahlins (1985: xiv) means that a transformative intervention – for example, the social grant programme in South Africa – can be meaningless if it is not understood within its context or the cultural order within which it became possible even to conceive of it. In such a context and/or cultural order, a developmental intervention such as a social grant can either *conform* to the existing cultural order within which it became possible to conceive it, or it can *transform* that order in such a way that it produces a "system-change" (Ndlovu, 2015). Abrams (1982:193) explains the process as follows: "[T]he adequate 'unpacking' of an event requires meticulous attention to both action and structure and, if the connection between them is to be seized, precludes a one-sided assertion of either."

To borrow a term from the liberation scholar W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), I needed to exercise some form of "double-consciousness" to account for both structure and agency in articulating the meaning of a social phenomenon such as the social grant programme in South Africa. This is important, because the above discussion of structure and agency in the literature indicates that it may be inadequate or reductionist to explain social phenomena by focusing only on one aspect, whether it be structure or agency.

Unquestionably, the point that structure and agency are largely inseparable has well been attended to by the researchers and theorists discussed above, but a missing link in the discussion is the effect of power in an account of whether a developmental intervention such as the social grant programme of South Africa actually transforms the status quo regarding poverty and

inequality, or merely reproduces it synchronically. Thus, even though the underlying motif in the discourse of structure and agency has always been that they reproduce one another synchronically and diachronically, the way in which this relationship unfolds can differ, depending on the description of the structure and that of the intervention, including the power dynamics between them. Some structures are less powerful and are therefore open to change, while others are very powerful and therefore closed in such a way that they constrain history-making interventions. In this regard, Sahlins (1985: xi-xii) makes a useful distinction between prescriptive and performative structures to demonstrate his thesis of closed and open structures: performative orders are those cultural orders that integrate themselves to contingent conditions and rigid orders, rather than integrate circumstances to themselves, thereby denying their rigid character. The above articulation of enables me to ask the critical question whether the structure within which the idea of social grant has been conceived and implemented in South Africa is a prescriptive structure or a performative one. In a prescriptive structure, one cannot expect the intervention of social grants to bring about change. Instead, it will sustain the status quo, in this case, one of poverty and inequality. This is the pattern to be expected in South Africa, because, as Ndlovu (2015) explains, although in performative structures, the social order is open to change, re-arrangement and reconstruction, in a prescriptive structure such as apartheid and even post-apartheid South Africa, the cultural order reproduces itself in a synchronic manner, thereby replicating the status quo to continue in perpetuity.

To make a clear decision about what supersedes what in the flow between continuity and change, it is thus necessary to determine the power dynamics between structure and agency. In a prescriptive structure, the power to determine the status quo is on the side of the structure. In a performative structure, the power lies on the side of the agency to tilt the scale towards a change. In other words, the choice of what to privilege between structure and agency when

examining a social phenomenon such as the impact of social grants on poverty and inequality in South Africa must be based on what leads – structure or agency – at a given point in time.

Anthony Giddens (1982) discusses the question of whether structure is more dominant than agency or vice versa in explaining social phenomena. According to Giddens (1982), there are situations and occurrences where structure determines social actions, but there are also situations and occurrences where the structure fails to do so. This then allows agents such as social grants to take the lead in making or determining the social phenomena. This then logically leads to the argument that it would be inaccurate to look only at the effect of structure on everything, without taking into consideration the effect of social agency. Structure, it has become clear, is not always a hindrance to game-changing interventions but can also facilitate action. The structure's dual position as either a constraint or an enabler of action does not imply that social agency is exclusively defined by it. Instead, through their "knowledgeability" and the ability to judge their behaviour in relation to institutional constraints, social actors can and do resist the structure's deciding force (Giddens, 1982). This means that agency (for the focus of my argument, social grants) is not merely a custodian of the structure, as there are also situations where agency possesses some degree of autonomy and advantage over the existing structural conditions (Althusser, 1979:180). Torfing (1999:147) argues that social agents are strategically thinking actors who are capable (but sometimes not capable) of resisting structural limitations and that they are neither victims nor absolute choosers of the structural system. Despite the epistemological capacities of social agents, they are capable of manoeuvring with certain effects within the limits set by the structure of the social system (Torfing, 1999:147). Therefore, people who exercise social interventions are capable of outmanoeuvring the traps of the structure when they design programmes that are meant to bring about transformation. In other words, a developmental intervention or programme such as the social grant system in South Africa reflects the thoughts of those who conceived it. The question then arises as to

what extent this programme side-steps the traps of the structure that produce the status quo of poverty and inequality.

In some cases, social agency may be determined by structure, so another way of understanding structure and agency is to look at the *structuration* process. Agents tend to reproduce the objective structure(s) that they are the product of, and because of their actions, the objective structures which produce agents are prolonged in the structures within which agents' function (Bourdieu, 1977:73). Individuals also replicate different structures (for example, the state, legal and administrative structures) through their practices, a process of reproduction which authors such as Whittington (2010:112) and King (2012:219) refer to as structuration. Whittington (2010:112) explains:

> The concept of structuration embodies this mutual dependence of structure and agency. The neologism adds to the static word 'structure' a sense of action over time: structuration implies an active historical process. Structuration happens as agents draw on the various rules and resources of their systems; as they do so, they either reproduce or amend the structural principles that organized their activities in the first place. Thus, structuration theory admits structural continuity while allowing for deliberate innovation and change. Structures typically work like language – at the core, sufficient stability to allow the effective storing of knowledge over time; at the margins, the creation of new words and usages to accommodate changing needs and circumstances. Managers, then, can be seen as constantly drawing on past arrangements as they repeat, tinker with, bend or challenge what worked for them before.

The process of structuration thus describes how a social structure, and its structural properties are created and replicated at the intersection where social actors use specific generative rules and resources in operating in an environment of unplanned state and consequences (Giddens, 1979:66). This implies that even structures are not pre-given but are created by the actions of social agency.

In trying to understand the meaning of the idea of social grants, it is important to examine what accounts for the transformative role of social grants among the structural determinants within which they are conceived and implemented and the social agency that acts on their conception

and implementation. There is, indeed, the likelihood that the social agency that imagines and implements the idea of social grants is coerced by the structural determinants beyond its power to conceive and implement them in a way that leaves the structure of development intact or reproduces it synchronically. This is another way of emphasizing the co-production of structure and agency.

The next question is how a radical break in the status quo can occur if structure and agency continually reproduce one another. In the context of my study, this question is crucial, because the aim of development interventions such as social grants is purported to be producing a radical break in the status quo of poverty and inequality. According to Torfing (1999:148), there are instances where the intervention of an agency can deprive and undermine the structure of its determining capacity. Laclau (1990) posits that this happens when a structure suffers *dislocation.* For Laclau (1990), this term refers to the appearance of an occurrence, or a set of events which cannot be represented, denoted, or in other ways domesticated by the structure, which therefore expose the structure to disruption. In other words, dislocation becomes a process that stops the full structuration of the structure, thereby making it suffer "chaos" and "crisis". In the case of social grants and their role in transforming the status quo of poverty and inequality in South Africa, one is bound to ask to what extent the advent of democracy in 1994 was able to produce a dislocation to the structure that has continually reproduced the status quo of poverty and inequality. If the change of regime did not succeed in producing a point of dislocation and chaos in the power structure that mediates the status quo of inequality and poverty, the implication is that we cannot expect even a revised social grant system to succeed in bringing about radical change.

2.3 Social grants as agents of development in the international, African and South African context

So far in this chapter, I have discussed the relationship between structure and agency. However, it is important to go back to the meaning of social grants as a possible agent of development. The tasks that agents do, or their ability to do things, is referred to as agency (Giddens, 1984:9). This thesis reports on research into the agency of social grants, in terms of what they do and what they were developed for.

The aim of social grants as an agent of development, according to the *Social Assistance Act, 59 of 1992* (RSA, 1992), the subsequent *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004) and the Social Assistance Amendment Act 6 of 2008 (RSA,2008). is discussed more fully in Chapter 5 of this thesis. The actual agency – what social grants are actually doing – is discussed in Chapter 5 (The idea of social grants: An historical background) and in Chapter 6, where the empirical data are reported. There is a distinction between agency and intentions, according to Giddens (1984:8), since actions often differ from what was planned. As a result, intentional actions can have unintended or unexpected effects (Giddens, 1984:8; Ritzer, 2012:523). It seems obvious that social grants, as a development agent, could make a significant difference in South Africa, but the concept of unintended effects is useful because it takes us from the level of the organization to the level of the social structure (Giddens, 1984:8). Before discussing the agency of local social grants, I would like to start by presenting an international perspective on the agency of development aid or grants.

Many scholars have criticised the role of international development aid, pointing out that it does not transform the recipient societies. For instance, Dambisa Moyo (2010) on her work on "dead aid" has argued that aid has left African countries worse off. Despite the common Western idea that "the rich should support the poor, and the form of this help should be aid",

the fact is that aid has made poor people poorer and had slowed development. Aid in its present form has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian tragedy for much of the developing world (Moyo, 2010). It is the illness for which it pretends to be the antidote, as Karl Kraus put it. Moyo (2010) shows that the most aid-dependent countries have experienced an average annual growth rate of minus 0.2% over the last 30 years. Between 1970 and 1998, when so-called assistance to Africa was at its highest, the poverty rate in Africa increased from 11% to a record 66%. This is because receiving concessional (non-emergency) loans and grants in Africa has a similar impact to owning a valuable natural resource but abusing it: it is a curse because it promotes corruption and violence while discouraging free enterprise.

Asia has a lot to teach Africa. The secret to China's economic miracle has been foreign direct investment and rapidly increasing exports, not assistance (Moyo, 2010). In Africa in particular, aid has colluded in making the poor poorer and slowing growth (Moyo, 2010). Support remains a cornerstone of today's development strategy and one of the most important concepts of our time, but the idea that aid can and has alleviated global poverty is a fallacy. Such "help" has made millions of Africans poorer today; suffering and poverty have not abated but have increased. For most parts of the developing world, aid has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian catastrophe. Aid advocates have, however, argued that aid would work, and has worked, when it is put in good policy settings, such as countries with sound fiscal, monetary, and trade policies (Moyo (2010). In other words, aid works best where a nation is already fundamentally in good working order (Burnside & Dollar, 2000).

Against this background, Moyo (2010) in *Dead aid – why aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa*, illustrates that aid is not helpful where it has failed to provide transformation for different states. Instead of eradicating poverty, many countries that have

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received aid are in poorer shape than they were prior to receiving the aid. This view can also relate to social grants, where they are not transformative from a state institution position. This implies that handouts are often not transformative, regardless of whether they are administered by state or non-state actors. It may then be argued that both state and non-state actors work for coloniality, even though they may appear to be at loggerheads. As Moyo (2010:47) notes: "The problem is that aid is not benign – it is malignant. No longer part of the potential solution, it's part of the problem – in fact, aid is the problem."

In the case of this study, social grants as a form of aid are discussed as agents as previously mentioned. In this section I have considered some critiques of the international intentions and effects of aid or grants, and below I discuss development agency with the aim of explaining the role that social grants play from the perspective of development agency. I wish to state in advance that I go into this discussion with the view that social grants are not transformative, but instead reproduce the structure that created them, implying that they collude with the very structure of coloniality that they are claiming to attempt to transform.

As with every theory, Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration has its benefits and drawbacks, and some think it is a valid theory, while others think it holds no water (Whittington, 2010:114). Margaret Archer, a social theorist, faults Giddens's structuration model for "conflating the individual and the social" (Sawyer, 2005:125). She advocates an emergentist paradigm in which individual behaviour and social meaning are analytically divided. As independent variables, she wants structure and autonomy. Archer (1982, 2010:228) favours morphogenesis as a mechanism in which the system is the end-product, while Giddens's social system is only seen as a "visible pattern". One of Giddens's harshest critics, Craib (1992), criticizes Giddens on a number of grounds (see also Ritzer, 2012:526). First, he claims that Giddens's work lacks "ontological complexity", since it focuses on social behaviours rather than the social systems that underpin the social environment (Craib, 1992). Second, Giddens's theoretical synthesis

does not fit well with the social world's complexity. To deal with this uncertainty, or messiness, we need a variety of theories, according to Craib (1992). Third, Giddens's work fails to provide an appropriate foundation for a critical study of contemporary society, because he himself does not have a foundation on which to work. Fourth, Giddens's theory seems fragmented, as he eclectically takes bits and pieces from theories that do not necessarily fit together (Craib, 1992). Finally, Craib points out that it is not always possible to understand Giddens's theory. Despite the discussed critique of Giddens's theory, for the purposes of this research, I support Giddens's theory of structuration, as it has led me to interrogate the agency of social grants.

Some of the questions I had in mind were these: Do social grants reproduce the structure of coloniality in South Africa? What fundamentally are social grants? The theoretical framework of structuration allowed me to ask these questions and even interrogate these questions themselves, and also to use structure and agency as a lens in attempting to answer such questions by looking at the literature and collecting empirical data.

Social grants are a type of habitus produced as a strategy to reduce the levels of inequality in South Africa, while also reducing poverty. Dowding (2008:28) defines a habitus as a set of dispositions, or long-term ways of looking at the world, that an agent develops in response to the objective circumstances in which the agent finds itself (the structure of the world around the agent). This implies that because the social grant strategy was produced within the structure of coloniality, it reproduced the objective structure that produced it. According to Dowding (2008:28), social grants must define their position within the development system and consider the relationships that role has within the system by internalizing a collection of standards and normative understandings of the role. Having a clear understanding of the role of social grants will provide a clear picture of what is expected and how such an initiative fits within the field of development over time (Dowding, 2008:28). The habitus-based approach is in line with my view that social grants reproduce the structure of coloniality because they only provide a

cushion for recipients but not lifelong solutions, which suggests that the structure continues to prevail as it is reproduced by its agents, in this case, the social grant strategy.

In this research project, social grants are regarded as an exercise of an agency of development by those who seek to transform a condition of poverty and inequality, but the agential potential of these social grants tends to be constrained and/or enabled by a pre-existing structure of modern coloniality. In other words, a phenomenon such as a social grant can be read as enabling poverty reduction within society, while at the same time reproducing the structural order of development that made the discourse of social grants possible in the first place.

In examining the meaning of a phenomenon such as social grants, it is important to determine whether the social actors who conceive and implement the idea of social grants are succeeding in outmanoeuvring the traps of the very structure of development that they seek to transform or they merely operate within its logic, the same logic that has caused the problems that they seek to address. Torfing (1999:147) argues that social actors are neither dupes nor total choosers, but strategically thinking actors, who, considering their epistemological capacities, are capable of manoeuvring with a certain efficiency within the limits imposed by the social system's framework. Another view is that social actors can also act in accordance with what they believe is expected of them, based on the specific rule of structures, keeping them trapped within a recurring system – Dowding (2008) uses the example of a woman who dresses modestly to conform with what she feels her family wants (which then reinforces their modesty norm). This would be interpreted by Bourdieu (1977) in terms of her family's symbolic power, which is the imposition of ways of thinking about the world and one's role in it (Dowding, 2008:29). Symbolic control appears to be a predicate of agents on one basis. Strength, on the other hand, can be viewed as a predicate of structure (Dowding, 2008:29). Thus, in this study, it was important to discover whether social grants are development agents or are reproducing the structure of coloniality and inequality.

Being an agent, according to Sewell (1992, cited in Bakewell, 2010:1694), entails the ability to exert some degree of influence over the social relations in which one is entangled, or the ability to transform the social relations in which one finds itself. Historical limitations on agency mean that agents can only conjure up past practices to their service and borrow from past ways of doing things (such as laws, actions, and names) to portray the current scene of world history, but agents such as social grants can over time overturn dominant structures (Block, 2015:13).

According to Marx ([1867] 1972:437):

> Men make their history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, slogans, and costumes to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.

Marx's ([1867] 1972) discussion about history refers to a broader notion of "circumstances" which could be interpreted as structure, a set of constructed "old traditions that weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living". The living struggling to make their own new history can be interpreted for the purposes of my study as those attempting to exercise agency. The structure, which in South Africa is coloniality, can be considered as an old tradition that is like a nightmare, the structure that continues to cause extreme poverty, inequality, and high rates of unemployment. Individuals (agents), on the other hand, according to Marx ([1867] 1972), have the potential for action and can overturn dominant institutions and historical constraints, which take the form of the "spirits of the past" that they "conjure … to their service" as they "borrow names, slogans, and costumes" from these structures in order to portray a "new scene of world history" (Block, 2015:13). The ability to make decisions, take control, self-regulate, and thus follow goals that can contribute to social change is referred to as "agency" in this case

(Block, 2015:14). Social grants as a potential development agent can take control and self-regulate, thereby leading to social transformation. Social grants should ideally achieve social transformation; however, this can only be achieved when the old traditions are overthrown. This study essentially looks at whether social grants are agents of change or if they reproduce the structure "old traditions" of poverty and inequality.

2.4 How does the theory regarding the structure/agency conundrum relate to the study?

The precise role of social grants in transforming the structure of poverty and inequality is the focus in this study. Using the lens of the structure/agency relationship enabled me to

- critique the history and nature of the structure behind poverty and inequality in South Africa.

- investigate the extent to which social grants play an agential role in transcending the structure underlying poverty and inequality.

- develop a profile of social grant beneficiaries; and

- identify ways in which the beneficiaries have benefited from the programme or did not benefit.

To be able to engage with these issues, I needed to be able to provide a picture that reveals the agential role of social grants in transcending the power structure behind poverty and inequality. The structure and agency theory provided a lens to identify the history of the relevant structure and discuss the different roles played by the agent, either constructive or obstructive. Using the structure and agency approach allowed me the opportunity to interrogate whether the changes taking place are informed by the structure, or if it influences the action of the agency through policy. This approach was a good choice as it allowed me to look at how people see and relate to the world, and to manage to identify their world of thinking.

When considering the structure and agency relationship, it is important to remember that agents respond to various institutional relationships using various techniques at their disposal, in other words, they respond strategically. Any institutional form can be exploited in some way, and, depending on the circumstances, some means of manipulation will work better than others, and different manipulation techniques will be used depending on the options available to both the powerful and the vulnerable (Goodin, 1980). As a result, social development as an institution is strategic in its implementation of social grants, but the question remains whether it deploys strategies in ways that facilitate change and whether it is affected by structure. Thus, the theory allowed me to look at social grants and also the potential role that is played by social development as an institution underlying this social welfare programme.

We should recognize that different systems have different effects on behaviour at this level of analysis (Dowding, 2008). Institutions such as the Department of Social Development and SASSA respond to expectations about ways of behaving, and about how they should react to societal needs. However, how they respond may depend more strongly on what is expected by the structure, than on the social context and needs of the community. This in turn leads to the reproduction of the structure of coloniality. These issues are discussed in more detail in the analysis chapter of the thesis, Chapter 6.

Expectations are shaped differently in different societies and cultures. It is worth noting that various organizations are more or less stable, and therefore more or less long-lasting, and that some systems are more long-lasting than others (Dowding, 2008). What makes an agent more or less stable depends on the power dynamics at play. Does the structure have more power over the agent, or does the agent have power over the structure? The greater the amount of "power over" required to hold a system in place, the less durable or stable it is, as it is more vulnerable to exogenous shocks, or to losing groups' banding together to alter the power structure (Dowding, 2008).

This theory allowed me to answer questions relating to power dynamics, the power of social grants as an agent of development, and also the power of coloniality as a structure of development. Where is the power vested? Is it in the structure or the agency, and how does this ultimately affect the structure of poverty in South Africa? Depending on where the power is situated, what then, fundamentally, is a social grant? An agent of change, or an agent of the structure? Besides the relationship of power between structure and agency, another side of this relationship exists, however, which is what makes this theory relevant for this study.

Structures, according to Dowding (2008), provide incentives for agents to act differently in response to some underlying set of preferences, but they also dive deeply into the agents themselves to establish certain underlying sets of preferences. Dowding (2008) refers to this as the "deep structure". The deep framework not only incentivizes agents to behave in certain ways, based on their goals, but it also creates certain goals for them (Dowding, 2008). A structure such as coloniality is such a deep structure for many in South Africa, even in democratic post-apartheid South Africa. In explaining this, Dowding (2008) uses an example that explains that individuals have not created their propositional attitudes towards the world, but those attitudes are created by the structures that they find themselves in:

> So, it is not that I believe x, desire y and given structure Z, I will do α to achieve y: the individualist agency story. Rather, structure Z creates in me my beliefs x and desires y. In this sense, the structure becomes the agency as it creates the neurological activities that lead biological human beings to act. The 'agents' have become mere transmission agents for the structure. (Dowding, 2008:27)

This what I wanted to find out, whether there is any form of deep structuralism that takes agency from the institution and gives it to the structure (of coloniality).

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has explained the theoretical framework of structure and agency used in this thesis as a lens for analysing and making sense of the data. The relationship between structure and

agency has been posited and criticised by several scholars and is relevant to the question explored in this study, namely whether social grants are agents of change or development, or agents for the maintenance of the structure of coloniality. The approach allows an assessment of the power dynamics in the structure and agency of development within the post-apartheid era, as well as of the experiences of the social grant recipients. The next chapter discusses the main structure that this study refers to: modernity/coloniality.

CHAPTER 3:

THE HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF GLOBAL

MODERNITY/COLONIALITY

3.1   Introduction

The question of whether a developmental intervention such as the social grant programme in South Africa transcends or reproduces the power structure of modernity/coloniality that generates poverty and inequality cannot be answered without a clear understanding of both the history and nature of global modernity/coloniality. This history allows us to understand why a certain section of the society became a subject of social grants and other members of the society are not dependent on them. Furthermore, the architecture of global modernity/coloniality, especially its vertical and hierarchical arrangement of identities, is an important indicator of whether an idea such as that of the social grant is strong enough to disrupt the synchronic articulation and movement of this power structure. This chapter therefore presents the history and architecture of the power structure of global modernity/coloniality that continues to produce poverty and inequality in the internal affairs of countries such as South Africa with a view to unmasking its embeddedness and imperviousness to change when faced of anti-systemic interventions including that represented by the idea of a social grant.

3.2   The history of global modernity/coloniality

The origins of global modernity/coloniality can be traced to southern Europe, particularly Spain, before it spread to other regions of the world, such as the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia. This is a history that cannot be accounted for outside what the decolonialist Ramon Grosfoguel (2007) describes as the four genocides/epistemicides of the "longue durée" of the 16th century. These are the genocides and epistemicides against people and their knowledge

that laid the foundation of the modern/colonial world which we live in today – a world that is highly hierarchized according to race, gender, class, sex, and ethnic lines, among others, subjecting some sections of society to salvationist programmes such as social grants and denying them the possibility of being independent beings who are capable of shaping their own destinies.

At this point, it is helpful to note already that there is a difference between the historical acts of colonization, the practice of colonialism, and the term coloniality, which I explain more fully in Section 3.5, after sketching the history that underlies the rise of the construct of coloniality, which is crucial for the purposes of this study.

Grosfoguel (2013) describes a genocide/epistemicide in southern Spain, committed by the Catholic monarchy from the northern part of Spain against the Jewish and Muslim population and their knowledge of the Iberian Peninsula of Al-Andalus, leading to the fall of the Sultanate of Granada. This genocide/epistemicide is important to understand because it marked the beginning of a linear process that enabled Europe to usurp world history in favour of Western civilization – a civilization within which the current programme of social grants is implemented in South Africa under a modern government structure whose history is traceable to the advent of modernity/coloniality in Africa. The events in Spain in the 15th century also marked the beginning of an essentialist grammar of "one state, one identity, one religion", since the multiple Islamic states, multiple identities, and multiple spiritualities of the Iberian Peninsula of Al-Andalus were re-articulated into a singular identity, religion, and state by the Catholic monarchy that conquered it.

The four genocides/epistemicides deserve to be discussed at length, not only because they laid the foundation of the present modern/colonial world, but also because they enable us to understand the genesis of the (Western) culture of racism and sexism, a trajectory that explains

why black women in South Africa today predominate in the population that receives social grants to remain trapped in poverty and dependence. For instance, the colonial conquest of Al-Andalus in southern Spain in the late 15th century can be seen as a foundational activity that eventually gave birth to the spirit of essentialism and racism, not only because it preceded all other genocides/epistemicides that laid the foundation of the modern world system, but also because the conquest took place under the slogan of "purity of blood" (Grosfoguel, 2013). This marked the beginning of racism as a culture that would affect human relations throughout the history of Western-centred modernity and the modern/colonial world system within which being human is imagined today. In other words, the war which was waged by the Catholic monarchy to destroy the Sultanate of Granada which remained as the last Muslim political stronghold in the Iberian Peninsula can be understood as the foundation of the practice of ethnic cleansing through physical and cultural genocide, since the Jews and Muslims that occupied the Andalusian territory were either killed or forcefully converted to the Christian religion. The cultural conversion, according to Grosfoguel (2013:78), took the form of "massive destruction of Islamic and Judaic spirituality and knowledge" by "turning Muslims into Moriscos (converted Muslims) and Jews into Marranos (Converted Jews)". However, although there was this destruction of the memory, knowledge, and spirituality of the Muslims and Jews of southern Spain by the Catholic monarchy through conquest, it is important to note that the "purity of blood" discourse at this stage did not yet question in a profound way the humanity of the victims. Hence it may be described as only a prototype of racism rather than as a fully-fledged one. Thus, as Grosfoguel (2013:78) puts it, it was purely a question of religious discrimination on the grounds of having the "wrong God" or the "wrong religion", although the conquest gave rise to the problematic ideas of "one state, one identity, one religion" that came to characterise the general Eurocentric imagination of social identities in the modern world up to the present.

What is, indeed, of great importance about the conquest of Al-Andalus in southern Spain by the Catholic monarchy is that the methods of colonization and domination that were used in this instance were extrapolated to achieve the conquest of the Americas and Africa. Thus, for instance, in both the conquest of the Americas and Africa in the 16th century, the genocide of the people went together with epistemicides that included not only the process of conversion to the Christian religion, but also the erasure of local memory and knowledge. However, even though there are similarities in the methods of colonization that were deployed to conquer Al-Andalus and the Americas and Africa, Grosfoguel (2013:81) notes that another dimension to the discourse of "people without religion" was added not in the context of having a "wrong God" or a "wrong religion" but in the context of lacking humanity, because not having a religion in the Christian imaginary of the time was equivalent to not having a soul. Thus, as Christopher Columbus stepped out of the ship in what is popularly known as the "voyages of discovery" on 12 October 1492 in the Americas, he did not visualize the indigenous people of the Americas as "atheists", but he saw them as lacking the qualities of being human. This brought about closure to the question of conversion, because once the humanity of the "Indians" whom Christopher Columbus claimed to have "discovered" was brought into doubt, the possibility of conversion became invalid, as animals could not be converted. The above development has serious implications for the modern practice of racial discrimination, as after the conquest of the Americas, the question ceased to be about the wrong theology due to the influence of the devil but became a question of wrong people who are not human enough, and therefore did not deserve land or power. In trying to understand the meaning of a social grant programme in South Africa, it is clear that this programme came into being as a result of the history of the dehumanising colonial system in South Africa that dispossessed the indigenous population of black people of their sources of livelihood, especially land.

In the propagation of notions of a "people without religion" and a "people without a soul" during the formation of the modern world system is that this notion came to justify the enslavement of the peoples of the non-Western world since it was not viewed as a sin in the eyes of God to use those who were perceived to be animals for labour purposes. In Africa, the idea of "people without a soul" led to the kidnapping, enslavement, and transportation of black people to the Americas to be used as slave labour in plantations. According to Grosfoguel (2013:84), "Africans were perceived at the time as Muslims and the racialization of Muslims in the 16th century Spain was extended to them". This constituted a major and significant historical event (Nimako & Willemsen, 2011), because millions of Africans were enslaved and during their enslavement were not allowed to think about or practise their cosmologies and knowledge. Even where Africans remained in Africa, the racist treatment of Africans as cheap labour and the denial of their knowledge is important to understand, not only because it explains why black Africans are poorest in South Africa and, therefore, subject to salvationist rhetoric and practices such as social grants, but also because it explains the presence of a Eurocentric discourse of philanthropy that gave rise to the social welfare policy of social grants.

The fourth genocide/epistemicide that laid the foundation of the modern world system is the subjugation of Indo-European women. The subjugation of Indo-European women in the 16th century contributed to the emergence and the development of what Grosfoguel (2013:85) describes as a "modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal" power structure. Thus, the attack against women who were burned alive between 1550 and 1650 (Federici, 2004) was undertaken not only to destroy the indigenous knowledge that they had mastered from ancient times but was also meant to consolidate Christian-centric patriarchy, which remains a dominant system in most of the world. The patriarchal system in countries such as South Africa today informs the domination of women by men, hence they are the main subject of social grants.

In general, the consequences of all four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century gave birth to what Grosfoguel (2007), in his description of the modern world-system, characterises as an entanglement of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation, where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all global power structures. This structure of the modern world system which emerged from the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century continues to inform the social, political, and economic hierarchies in South Africa that have placed people of a particular gender, race, and class at the bottom of the hierarchy, thereby relegating them to dependence on social grants.

3.3 The arrival of coloniality at the southern tip of Africa

This section provides background on the history of the arrival of modernity/coloniality in what became South Africa to suggest why South Africa is currently in the state that it is in. What took place? And how is it that through the colonial disposition and marginalisation, the majority of black people and especially women are poor?

Just as with the arrival of modernity/coloniality in the Americas, the arrival of modernity/coloniality in the southernmost tip of Africa came about as a result of the circumnavigation of the world by European sailors. According to Giliomee and Mbenga (2007:40), the Portuguese Bartholomew Diaz was the first sailor to sail around Africa's southernmost point in 1486, followed by Vasco Da Gama in 1497. When these sailors landed in what are now Mossel Bay (about 385 km east of what is now Cape Town) on 3 February 1488, and St Helena Bay (about 150 km north of what is now Cape Town) on 7 November 1497, respectively, they traded with the Khoikhoi people.

By the end of the 16th century, the Dutch became a major sea power (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:40). In 1584 Jan Huygen van Linschoten went by sea to India, and this was the beginning of trading that took place in India (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:40). Cornelis and Frederik de Houtman followed Jan Huygen van Linschoten in 1595 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:40). In 1602, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) was created (cf. Mitchell, 2007:49), with its headquarters in Amsterdam. The VOC had become the world's "largest trading enterprise" by the middle of the 17th century, and its most significant trading partners were what are now India, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:40). In 1619, the VOC formed a regular government in Jakarta (on the Indonesian island of Java, which the VOC seized and renamed Batavia), which became the capital of the VOC's Eastern Empire (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:40). The Dutch seizure of Java Island is an example of how colonialism came to Asia and is similar to its arrival in Africa. Coloniality came in the disguise of trading with non-European countries, especially in Asia and Africa. According to Giliomee and Mbenga (2007), the VOC did not pay its workers well, which led to employee theft and corruption. One example is Jan van Riebeeck, who worked in Japan and was recalled and penalized for "private trading" (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:41).

Many of the sailors on the VOC ships developed scurvy as a result of the long journey at sea with no fresh meat, fruits, or vegetables, necessitating the need for a halfway station, which would ideally be the southern part of the African continent. The directors of the VOC, the Heeren XVII, agreed to create a refreshment station for passing ships in Table Bay (named by Joris van Spilbergen in 1601) – then known as the Cape of Good Hope, and later known as Cape Town – in 1650 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:42). Whereas it appeared that the VOC's goal was only to build a halfway station at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck quickly realized that the land held enormous potential, and a year after their arrival, he released nine Company servants to begin full-time farming on the eastern side of Table Mountain. The halfway station became

a colony (cf. Pearson, 2012:99-138), marking the beginning of colonialism in Africa's southern regions. The colonizers carried with them not just seed and various skills, but also their Western culture(s) and "intellectual baggage" (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:42). These cultural and intellectual imports to southern Africa included Roman-Dutch Law, the Reformed Christian religion (Calvinist dogma was the foundation of the Reformed Church), and capitalism – concepts that were new to this part of the world. Slavery and the display of riches were copied from Batavia by the Dutch at the Cape (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:45). As a result, almost every wealthy individual had slaves or servants (cf. Viljoen, 2001:28–51). This is an illustration of how racialized poverty and inequality were displayed in southern Africa almost from the very beginning of the colonial era.

By 1795, the once-mighty VOC was on the verge of going bankrupt, due to the decline of the Dutch republic and its navy and was largely ousted by the British East India Company, founded in 1600, taking advantage of Britain's rise as a sea power. Britain took possession of the Cape as a halfway point to the East ahead of the French, with whom the British had been at war since 1793 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). Vice-Admiral Elphenstone's fleet arrived in Simon's Bay in June 1795, and with the assistance of the main British fleet, which arrived on 3 September 1795, they captured the Cape at the Battle of Muizenberg. After seizing the Cape from the VOC, the British returned the colony to the Dutch government in 1803 after the Treaty of Amiens brought a short-lived peace with the French. The British retook the Cape in 1806, at the start of the Napoleonic Wars, to defend the sea route to their Asian empire. The decisive battle was the Battle of Blaauwberg. From 1806 onwards, the Cape was a British colony. The Dutch dominance in the Cape had come to an end after about 150 years (interestingly, South Africa was the last African country colonized by the Dutch). This was the start of nearly a century and a half of English dominance, which ended in 1961, when South Africa became an

independent Republic, after being a Union under British dominion for half a century, starting in 1910.

Colonization in the interior occurred more slowly. The interior was colonized unofficially by refugees from the north and there were two large-scale official colonisations of the interior by Europeans from the south – the arrival of the British Settlers in 1820, and the migration known as the Great Trek, from 1838. This region was forced to face a fourth "internal" colonization before gaining its independence in 1994: from 1961 onwards, the Republic of South Africa was simply a continuation of the National Party's rule which had begun in 1948. This period of white Afrikaner rule without any black or mixed-race representation – this time independent of British supervision – was the country's next step of colonization, and it was perhaps the harshest of all. This period paved the way for coloniality and the current wealth disparities in South Africa. This colonization ended only in 1994, which was the beginning of rule by the African National Congress (ANC), led by the country's first black President, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. In 1994, there was great hope of a "rainbow nation", but this dream has been unmasked as an illusion, considering all the challenges faced by South Africa today. Even though what I refer to as governmental colonization ended in 1994, South Africa is still experiencing the legacy of colonization, which is especially evident in how unequal the country's economy is.

The history of the arrival of coloniality in southern Africa that has been presented in this section has helped me to arrive at an understanding of the trajectory that led certain people such as black people and women to become a subject of social grants today through a long process of colonial dispossession and marginalisation. The arrival of coloniality in southern Africa is linked to the arrival of racialized poverty and inequality, since the colonial system depended on exploitation, marginalisation and dispossession of the resources on which black people depended.

3.4 The structure of global modernity/coloniality and the South African "rainbow nation"

This section articulates and unmasks the dream and nation-building myth of a rainbow post-apartheid nation in South Africa. It argues that the post-apartheid South African nation remains divided along many fault-lines that include colour (racial) and gender lines. These fault-lines are enabled by the global power structure of modernity/coloniality within which South Africa as a nation-state was founded. In other words, the vertical global power structure of global modernity/coloniality protrudes into the South African nation-state, thereby making South African-ness a microcosm of the fault-lines along which global society is organized.

The term "rainbow nation" was bestowed on the country in 1994 by former activist and then Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Brits, 2012:550), and was quoted by President Nelson Mandela in his inauguration speech as President of South Africa:

> We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of millions of our people. We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world. (Mandela, 1994)

According to Baines (1998), Archbishop Tutu was possibly referring to the Old Testament flood myth, in which the rainbow symbolized God's vow that he would never punish humanity in this manner again. The symbolism of the rainbow in indigenous cultures in South Africa also resonates with the dream of this rainbow country. The Xhosa, for example, see the rainbow as a symbol of hope and the promise of a bright future. According to Baines (1998), the rainbow country metaphor "both informs and strengthens the vision of nation-building". He also sees the rainbow as a secondary symbol, in which the rainbow's variety of colours represents the multicultural world in which we live (South Africa). Nevitt (2015) agrees, arguing that the rainbow colours reflect the diversity of ethnicity, tribe, creed, language, and landscapes found

in South Africa. The aim of a rainbow country, according to Walker, is to "produce a new kind of South African" (Walker, 2006:141). The dream of a rainbow country, however, has not been realized. The new South Africa is still characterised by massive inequality and continuing poverty. The concept of a rainbow nation may offer hope, but it conceals the actual complexities of modernity/coloniality as a power system that predates and has survived apartheid's demise in 1994.

Giliomee and Mbenga (2007) consider the notion of a rainbow nation by examining its immediate effects: South Africans were to share a single nationality after the first free election in April 1994, implying common citizenship and a commitment to tackle the future together. This was supposed to happen after South Africa became a democratic nation in 1994. The preamble to the widely praised new constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996) urged people to note both the past's misery and new accomplishments. The national flag and anthem effectively combine historic icons and songs in a way that is unique to the region (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

South Africa is a diverse community made up of several peoples, each with its own distinct culture and language; in some cases, the only shared ground for citizenship is living in South Africa. Apartheid essentially established two distinct political cultures – one dominated by white people and the other by black people – coexisting in one nation (Posel, 2001:52ff). In reality, it would be nearly impossible to end all the hate and make a fresh start in this country, where almost every people have waged war against the others at some time – not only black peoples against white peoples, but also white peoples against white peoples, and black peoples against black peoples (Munck, 2002:53).

As Mbeki (1998) pointed out a mere four years after Mandela's (1994) speech, the supposed South African rainbow nation was actually two nations in one country. One "nation" is a mainly

"white nation" of whom many hold privileges and resources, and the other "nation" is the nation of black South Africans that are generally poor and underprivileged. What divides these two main nations in South Africa is primarily the colour line – a line that divides the zones of what Fanon describes as being and non-being.

This division illustrates what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007:3) refers to as abyssal lines that mark the "system of visible and invisible distinctions". The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line" (De Sousa Santos, 2007:5). Abyssal thinking is characterised by the impossibility of the coexistence on the two sides of the abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2007). The division of these two sides is such that "the other side of the line" vanishes as one reality becomes non-existent and is indeed produced as "non-existent" (De Sousa Santos, 2007). The non-existent side is radically excluded, at least, from the same conception of what the "other" itself is: in this sense, it is an otherness that deals with absence and not with dialectics (De Sousa Santos, 2007). The recipients of social grants in South Africa, in general, belong to the zone of non-being, a zone whose people are without agency to determine their own future due to their disempowerment by the global power structure of modernity/coloniality.

This current system of a racial divide in South Africa is based on the two categories of knowledge and law which are identified by De Sousa Santos as the maximum representation of Western abyssal thought. These two aspects together describe double abyssal cartography foundational to Eurocentrism, in which the abyssal line is the boundary of separation of the human (or of what is considered acceptable to be recognized as a human) and of the sub-human (what cannot be understood as existing). As will be explained later, the beneficiaries of the social grant programme are often treated as though they are subhuman. They live in squalid conditions that befit the category of sub-humanity.

In South Africa, there is a covert continuation of the structure of modernity/coloniality. This is evident through the continued existence of high levels of inequality between Whites, Blacks, Coloured, and Indians. Most of the rich elite of the country is still White, while a majority of the previously disadvantaged South Africans continues to live below the minimum living wage. The government has tried to develop programmes that are meant to uplift South Africans and lessen income inequality; however, these programmes are not achieving this aim. Income inequality and poverty continue to rise and remain linked to a colour divide in South Africa.

Even after 1994, the structure of modernity/coloniality is reproduced by the very agents that have been put in place to deal with the effects of coloniality and apartheid in South Africa. Modern understanding and modern law, according to Panico, Bartley, Kelly, McMunn and Sacker (2010), are the most accomplished embodiments of abysmal thought. They account for the two main global lines of modern times, which are mutually interdependent despite being separate and working in different ways. Each establishes a sub-system of visible and invisible distinctions, with the invisible distinctions serving as the basis for the visible ones. Whatever radical distinctions exist, and whatever drastic effects exist on either side of those distinctions, they all belong to this side of the spectrum, and they combine to make the abyssal line upon which they are grounded invisible. The invisibility of the distinction between this side of the line and the other side of the line underpins the intensely obvious distinctions structuring social reality on this side of the line. Instead of having a rainbow nation as was envisaged at the official demise of apartheid in 1994, we are faced with the continued legacy of coloniality and inequality in the country. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) point out, we are dealing with the country's invisible entanglement and entrapment within complex colonial matrices of influence. In the case of this study, the legacy of coloniality is the foundation of the current dispensation that we are living in now. Because we are operating within a structure of coloniality of power, even though we have visible initiatives such as social grants, they are

unable to yield any positive and lasting results. Instead, there continues to be a never-ending cycle of generational poverty. In Chapter 6, I illustrate a continued cycle of generational poverty after 1994.

3.5   What then is coloniality?

Having discussed the history and structure of modernity/coloniality, one can now turn to discuss coloniality in a succinct way that differentiates it from simple colonialism. The idea of coloniality is an idea that has been defined several times in in the literature, especially in recent years, when the limits of colonialism have been exposed by the continuing colonial forms of domination, even though classical colonialism has fallen. One of the most interesting discussions of coloniality as the constitutive element of modernity is provided by Maldonado-Torres (2007), who explains that coloniality stems from long-standing power patterns of colonial domination, patterns that continue to be exercised even in the absence of a colonial administration.

There is thus a distinction between colonialism and coloniality. According to Sithole (2014), coloniality mutates with the essence of the state, and oppression is now carried out covertly rather than openly, as it was in the early days of colonialism. Coloniality is not the same as colonialism; it is the epoch that follows colonialism (Mignolo, 2000, 2007; Escobar, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2008). Maldonado-Torres (2007) distinguishes coloniality from colonialism in the following way:

> Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as

modern subjects, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day. (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243)

Coloniality arose from a colonial encounter that articulated how things should function in the world and how resources should be distributed in order to (re)structure the world in the same way that colonialism did, allowing for the strengthening of subjection (Sithole, 2014). Although colonialism officially ended with independence, Walsh (2007:229) points out that coloniality is a power paradigm that continues. It is worth noting that coloniality carries the baggage of colonialism with it, and it reproduces colonialism by attempting to change itself by concealing its true nature. As a result, coloniality serves as an incubator, carrying colonialism and reproducing it in a new form. This is accomplished by naturalizing, normalizing, and institutionalizing subaltern injustices (Sithole, 2014).

The life that Africans are living now has been inherited from the structure that was produced by coloniality. The quality of life that they live comes from coloniality, and this subjection continues to maintain and reproduce the structure of coloniality. The sad reality is that the African subject cannot shape the structures that it did not create (Sithole, 2014). This is why it becomes difficult for the South African government to restructure the existing structure to support the quality of life it wants for the country because it emerged from the existential structure of being marginalised and excluded. This then leads to another question of how these structures can be fixed. Sithole (2014) makes two suggestions: the first is to destroy the old and create the new structures; the second is to adapt and transform these structures. With specific reference to the idea of social grants in South Africa, the question that becomes important is the question of whether this idea reproduces a new structure or simply re-structures coloniality in synchrony.

Another interesting distinction between colonialism and coloniality is made by Grosfoguel (2007:219), who argues as follows:

> Coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system. 'Coloniality of power' refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world system that articulates peripheral locations in the international labour division with the global racial/ethnic hierarchy and Third World migrants' inscription in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities. In this sense, there is a periphery outside and inside the core zones and there is a core inside and outside the peripheral regions.

All the above articulations of the term coloniality make it clear that the notion of social grants developed in a world that was not yet fully decolonized. As a result, it is very likely that the idea of social grants sustains rather than transforms the power structure in which it was born.

3.6   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the history and architecture of the power structure of global modernity/coloniality that continues to produce poverty and inequality in South Africa. The dream and mythology of the rainbow nation to produce a new kind of South Africa (Walker, 2006) has not been turned into a reality, because South Africa is still beleaguered by massive inequality and poverty. Post-apartheid South Africa continues to be divided. The discussion of the idea of coloniality suggests that social grants sustain the power structure which developed them. The next chapter discusses decoloniality to illustrate how I used a decolonial interpretive paradigm in this study.

CHAPTER 4:

DECOLONIALITY AS A META-METHOD

4.1   Introduction

Having examined the history and structure of modernity/coloniality, I now move on to explain what I mean by a decolonial perspective or decolonial reading of the meaning of a social grant. I do this by projecting decoloniality as a meta-method of making sense of the idea of social grants in my deployment of the structure and agency theory. An important question in my examination of the meaning of social grants within a power structure that is colonial in nature is how one can determine whether the idea of social grants plays an agential role or structural role within this power structure. In this chapter of the thesis, I explain how I have strategically deployed the decolonial epistemic perspective to read the agential and/or structural roles of the social grants in terms of their ability to transform and/or sustain the power structure of modernity/coloniality.

4.2   Positioning my decolonial reading of the structural and agential role of a social grant programme

Determining whether a developmental intervention such as a social grant plays an agential (re-structuration) role within the power structure of coloniality can be a daunting task, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that, in practice, structure and agency can often be inseparable. This is a situation that requires a strategic approach to distinguish agency from structure; hence my choice of a decolonial epistemic perspective. The functioning of the modernity/colonial world relies on a hegemonic process that re-orients the identities of non-Western subjects into those of Western subjects through socialization projects such as Western education, so it is also evident that the "experiences of colonial modernity remain divided along

the lines of those who are on the dominant side of colonial difference and those who are on the dominated side" (Ndlovu, 2014:13). The experience of those on the dominant side of colonial difference can lead them to know the world in a different way from those on the dominant side. This implies that even the reading of a programme such as a social grant programme would differ, depending on the different locations of the subject that makes sense of such a programme. Moreover, the application of this lens depends not only on understanding the structure of the colonial world, but also on my own position as part of the colonized subject in that world.

In this thesis, I must therefore declare my position openly: because of my training and involvement in research, I interpret the agential and structural roles of social grants while positioned on the dominant side of the colonial power difference within the structure of the modern/colonial world-system. The de-colonial effect of my epistemic positioning is important in enabling me to make sense of the meaning of social grants, together *with* the people who receive them and *from* their perspective as oppressed, instead of writing *about* them and their feelings or writing *for* them as oppressed subjects (Grosfoguel 2007). Thus, through a decolonial epistemic perspective, standing with the oppressed subject during their experience of being social grants recipients, I become sympathetic to their situation and share their feelings. This does not take away the fact that I am marginally more privileged than they, because I am a researcher working for the HSRC, and am also pursuing a higher qualification (a Ph.D.) from a Westernized university institution. However, the fact that I hail from a black population group who attained this status at a great disadvantage compared to many members of the white community means that I have a different memory and understanding of the modernity/coloniality project. Thus, even though I participate in restructuring the system of modernity/coloniality by my actions, I am in a situation like that of the less empowered research participants within the spaces where I am conducting my research, since circumstances that we

did not create force us to do things that we would not do if we were free to make our own choices. In this context of modernity/coloniality, I am thus in a situation where I am an insider, but one who remains in the boundary, the border, because of my racial category. This racial exclusion enables me to exercise what Mignolo (2009) describes as border thinking. Border thinking implies disenchantment with modernity/coloniality – a form of disenchantment that allows one to read modernity/coloniality as though one is outside of it and is therefore capable of observing all its monstrosity.

I strongly identify with those who exist and subsist on the dominated side of the colonial differential, so it may be helpful to admit that I may have drawn myself to a marginal level of alienation as I sought to find a better place between a rock and a hard place by attaining Western education, which I have so far experienced mainly as indoctrination. This means that for me to reason from the position of those located on the dominated side of colonial difference in the global colonial system, it is not enough for me to rely only on my comprehension of the structure of the colonial system and its effect on the colonized. I also need to understand the importance of what Grosfoguel (2007:213) refers to as the "locus of enunciation", and what Gordon (2011:96) refers to as the "shifting of the geography of reason". This shifting of the geography of the reason is important in the case of the dominated modern subject in general because Western-centred modernity affects our everyday social experience, as well as our subjectivities. Thus, to understand what it is like to be on the dominated side of colonial difference, a researcher is required to shift his or her epistemic location and reason from the position of being an oppressed subject.

Scholars such as Haraway (1988), Mignolo (2000), and Grosfoguel (2007), among others, argue that knowledge is always situated, and hence, we always speak from a particular location in the existing power structures. This implies that "nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial/capitalist/

patriarchal world-system" (Grosfoguel, 2007:213). Therefore, researchers need to reveal their individual locations within the "geopolitics", "ego-politics", "body-politics", and "theo-politics of knowledge" when interpreting social phenomena, rather than hide their positions, as all knowledge is limited by its perspective, and therefore partial.

In Western philosophy and the natural sciences, it is common for the subject who speaks to pretend that he or she is un-situated. The un-situatedness of the speaker in Western knowledge serves as a "point zero" (Castro-Gomez, 2003) strategy that promotes illusions of objectivity and claims of universal truths that lead to a colonization of knowledge, including the knowledge of the non-Western subject. Thus, by concealing and erasing the subject that speaks by decoupling the speaking subject from his or her position, relating to issues such as the gender, racial, ethnic, and sexual epistemic locations of the speaking subject, Western philosophy and Western sciences have long been able to produce abstract universalisms that are a "god's-eye view", and points of view that represent themselves as being without any point of view (Grosfoguel, 2007). In this thesis, I do not seek to adopt such a pretence of objectivity, but to articulate the meaning of the idea of a social grant from a position of bias – a position that is sympathetic to the plight of those who exist on the subaltern side of "colonial differential" (Mignolo, 2005:381).

It is indeed my intention to articulate the meaning of social grant from the position of the oppressed, but I am also aware that "the fact that one is socially located on the oppressed side of power relations, does not automatically mean that [one] is epistemically thinking from a subaltern epistemic location" (Grosfoguel, 2007:213). The skewed relationship between the epistemic and social location of the subjects who speak is a common problem that also affected both me as a researcher, and the research participants. This is mainly because, in light of the current state of colonial knowledge production that affects consciousness and being, it is possible for subjects who are socially located on the oppressed side of colonial difference to

think and see the world as though they were on the dominant side of the colonial power difference. However, the fact that I am conscious of this problem is itself a step forward in developing awareness about my limits and limits of my research participants when it comes to thinking from their own social locations of being oppressed.

In the case of the beneficiaries of the social grant programmes in South Africa, it is possible for the research participants who are on the dominated side of colonial difference to see themselves through what Vallega (2011:208) refers to as the "Eurocentric image" or the image of those who are privileged in the current status quo of governance. My task as a researcher in the process of writing this thesis is not necessarily to raise awareness about the presence of an oppressive situation on the part of the social grant beneficiaries, but I feel morally bound to explain how and why the research participants can be said to participate in their oppression, especially those who hold a depoliticized view about social grants.

It is important to recognize that being must precede thinking, because, in contrast to Descartes's famous dictum, "*cogito, ergo sum*", which assumes that thinking (as an act) comes before being, it is the racially marked body in a geo-historically marked space that feels the urge or gets the call to speak (Mignolo, 2009:160). Thus, a shifting of the geography and biography of reason requires an answer to the problematic question of whose interests are served by a particular understanding of social phenomena, and by a particular approach to knowledge production. Finding an answer to this question addresses the problem of speaking against oneself in the research process, even in the case of subjects who have long suffered colonial indoctrination. In other words, the ability to shift the geography and biography of reason in a situation where the dominated subject is accustomed to thinking from the position of a dominant subject can open the door for what Mignolo (2009:159) refers to as "epistemic disobedience". This means being disobedient to dominant ways of knowing that serve the status quo of poverty and inequality by a person whose social location is on the dominated and

oppressed side of it. In the case of this thesis, where I see myself as part of the communities on the dominated side of colonial difference, revealing the hidden matrices of colonial power is more a moral duty than a simple academic endeavour.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that I am a black female South African who hails from an underprivileged background – a background that influences my understanding of my social identity and epistemic location and, therefore, my cognitive experience. As Mohanty (1993:8) puts it, "our identities are ways of making sense of our experiences". This implies that identities as theoretical constructions enable us to read the world in specific ways because our experience, if properly interpreted, "can yield reliable and genuine knowledge, just as it can point up instances and sources of real mystification" (Mohanty, 1993:2). We can understand from this articulation of identity and experience that experience can be true or false, depending on a subject's world. In this thesis, my claim to knowledge about what is true and false is based on being an insider to the experience of being black, poor, and/or feeling oppressed.

4.3   Colonialities and their influences on meanings of social grants

Although modernity/coloniality is a singular power structure, its matrices are multiple and varied. Apart from their multiplicity and diversity in their outlook, these matrices of power enable modernity/coloniality to thrive, using specific technologies that are useful in making sense of how the system sustains itself over a long period. To operate, modernity/coloniality uses three units of analysis that have influenced and controlled the meaning of an idea such as that of social grants. These units of analysis are the coloniality of power (or institutions), the coloniality of knowledge (epistemology), and the coloniality of being (subjectivity). The meanings of these units of analysis and how they influence the nature and meanings of social grants are explained below.

4.3.1 Coloniality of power

The coloniality of power is a type of coloniality that deploys institutions to affect the colonial project. In the case of social grants, the coloniality of power can be seen as firmly located in the governmental organizations and state institutions that control and administer social grants. We therefore have to ask how the institution of power has reproduced coloniality via the medium of social grants.

The concept of the coloniality of power has a long history. The term was coined by sociologist Anibál Quijano (2000), who identified the process of social and universal classification of the world's population based on the concept of "race" as one of the foundational elements of current global power trends. The phenomenon began with the constitution of the "Americas", European colonial expansion, and the development of capitalism as a social relations structure (Groglopo, 2012). According to Quijano (2000), the new global pattern of control has pervaded every aspect of social life since then, constituting the most profound and powerful mode of material and intersubjective social dominance to date. These spaces of social life are places of connectedness, built by material and intersubjective power relations that have historically been expressed around struggles for influence over the means of existence. Quijano (2000) has identified five spaces of struggle: first, labour and its products; second, depending on the products, "nature" and its resources of production; third, sex/gender, its products and the reproduction of the species; fourth, subjectivity and its products, both material and intersubjective, including knowledge; and finally, authority and its instruments, in particular instruments of coercion, to secure the reproduction of this pattern of social relations and regulate its transformations.

Coloniality of power allowed the beginning of power dominance, a form of power that symbolizes the ruling classes' foundation (Quijano, 2007). This power is constituted on the

basis of a global force that encompasses the entire globe (Quijano, 2007:168). Colonialism is an external imposition, and the colonial power system establishes powers of social dominance and oppression. "Coloniality of power operates through its snares, which makes it a matrix form of power" (Sithole, 2014:60). As a result, coloniality of power can be interpreted in terms of the current global order's logic, as well as of how coloniality of power borders on colonial conquest. Coloniality of power relies on the rationality of imperialist Euro-North American (Global North) logic.

The term "coloniality of power" refers to a power structure that continues to rule and a system that has replaced colonial administration. The coloniality of power, according to Walsh (2002:79), operates by manipulation, co-optation, division, and control strategies. The dominant apparatus's logic has been that of regulating and assuring that the power of coloniality will remain intact. According to Grosfoguel (2007), coloniality of power creates and maintains colonial circumstances. These are seen in the oppression or abuse of those who are subordinate on a cultural, political, sexual, and economic level. According to Walsh (2007), the political and social spheres are both the location of the African's existential condition. Since coloniality of power retains colonial circumstances, this affirms the fact that the current reality and the material conditions of South Africans cannot be viewed as a singular phenomenon (because it is a matter of multitudes of phenomena), but rather as a singularization created by a coloniality of power and nothing else. This insight has provided me with a basis for an analysis of the potentially transformative nature of social grants.

Dube (2002) suggests that such an analysis would be valuable, because he exposes the subtle facets of the imperialist othering process and demonstrates how the project of power forms and builds histories and imaginations by singularising them under the empire's guardianship and control. Coloniality is a type of power that is difficult to pinpoint because it hides behind its impact, which affects every aspect of social life and lived experience.

Since it is a model of power that is centred and shared around the notion of race as the organizing principle, coloniality of power has become a mental category of modernity (Quijano, 2008:182). The concept of race has a long and ongoing history, and it presupposes the presence of coloniality (Quijano, 2008:181). When people are organized and categorized by race, hierarchies and classifications are created, and a logic of inclusion and exclusion is established. Some people belong, and others are claimed not to, depending on their ethnicity, as some races are considered inferior to others, and are therefore relegated to a lower social class. People of lower social classes are often oppressed.

This relates to the discussion of the myth of a rainbow nation in South Africa (see Section 3.4), and the existence of the zones of being and non-being, as articulated by Fanon. The role of race in the coloniality of power needs to be understood – it was through the notion of race that capitalism entered the labour relationship space in the Americas (Quijano, 2000). It was then replaced by a racialized division of labour as the basic labour mode of control, which was focused on two processes: the concentration of capital and waged labour in Western Europe, and the concentration of a wage system among whites in the colonies (Quijano, 2000).

According to Quijano (2000:553), coloniality of power then

> …is one of the constitutive elements of the global pattern of capitalist power. It is found in the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the population of the world as a cornerstone of such patterns of power, and operates in each of the plans, areas, and dimensions, in materials and subjective daily lives, and the social ladder. It originates and globalises from America. With the establishment of (Latin) America at the same time and in the same historical movement, the emerging capitalist power becomes global, its hegemonic centres are located in areas on the Atlantic, which are then identified as Europe, and coloniality and modernity are also established as central to the new pattern of domination.

It is worth noting what Rosa Luxemburg already wrote about this topic in 1913: since capitalist development can only grow with total access to all territories and climes, it cannot limit itself to the natural resources and productive forces of the temperate zone (Europe and North

America) any more than it can manage with white labour alone (Luxemburg, [1913] 2003). Other races are needed by Western capitalism to exploit territory where white people are unable to function, in "intemperate" climates. It must be able to mobilize global labour power without constraint in order to use all of the world's productive forces, up to the limits imposed by a surplus-value-producing framework (Luxemburg, [1913] 2003).

This form of coloniality is often difficult to identify because it attempts to present a humane face. But it is revealed in all its rapacity by its consequences, which are barbaric, because its systems continue to subject people. Walter Mignolo (2000:17) makes the important point that coloniality of power refers to a dynamic pattern of power that is backed by two basic pillars: the first is epistemological (knowing) and hermeneutical (understanding or comprehending), and the second is aesthesis, which is the realm of emotions, senses, and sensations, on the other. The control of economics and politics, as well as the other five spaces of struggle listed above, is built on these two pillars. In other words, coloniality is a central pattern of power that emerges in the geopolitical cartography of (post)colonial history through global capitalism, and the historical social relationship of the concept of race designs, information creation, intersubjectivity, life experiences – and, as a result, the ontological development of "Being" (Groglopo, 2012). This pattern creates the lower classes, or, as Frantz Fanon ([1961] 2001) put it, the "wretched" of the earth.

Citizens are forced to abide by the demands identified and enforced by coloniality of power through the mechanisms that coloniality has developed. A structure such as coloniality is carried out and reproduced by its agents; through these agents, the citizens are brought to comply with the demands that have been imposed in the form of "policies". Coloniality of power operates in different ways, such as through modernity. According to De Sousa Santos (2007), coloniality of power is manifested by modernity, which is a Western model based on social regulation and emancipation tensions. In this context, emancipation refers to a gift of

freedom granted by the oppressor to the oppressed, not to liberate, but to give the appearance that the oppressed are free when they are not. An example of this could be social grants, which may be given as a "gift" to the poor as a way of "assisting" them to deal with their financial obligations, but this is not meant to liberate them in a genuine sense. The grants are not structured in a manner that improves the financial situations of the recipients; instead, it makes them dependent and creates a cycle of generational poverty, which then sustains the status quo created by colonialism in the first place. According to De Sousa Santos (2007), modernity expands worldwide, destroying all ways of life on the other side of the abyssal line. It is from this perspective that I was able to provide answers to the research question of articulating the role of social grants and using the structure and agency conundrum as a theoretical foundation of this study.

As history has shown, even after the colonial political order is broken, coloniality of power remains a mode of dominance (Quijano, 2007). Colonialism was open and clear in its political formation, life, and execution, but coloniality of power tries to mask its aims by selling the concept of a new world order that pretends to demonize colonialism while remaining attached to and complicit in it. Coloniality of power has proved to be longer-lasting than Euro-centred colonialism (Quijano, 2007:171).

The imposition of power by the powerful on the weak, with the Euro-centred empire as the centre of control and the ex-colonized on the periphery, informs the logic of coloniality of power. According to Kleinman and Fitz-Henry (2007), those on the periphery of the empire are affected by institutionalized control and structural violence. The power structure is intertwined, resulting in colonial power matrices that replicate what Grosfoguel (2007:215) describes as the social, economic, political, and historical conditions of possibility for a subject to assume the arrogance of being god-like. The argument I was able to articulate from this literature is that South Africans are still trapped in colonial matrices of power, even if initiatives

such as social grants have the potential to transform the status quo. However, since coloniality of power is an entangled mode of power that has proven to be resilient and stable in terms of its colonial character through its matrix form, coloniality of power is unable to realize its full potential (Saldivar 2007). Such a formation presupposes the element of coloniality that is hidden in everyday forms of life making subjection invisible, and as a result, legitimate.

4.3.2 Coloniality of knowledge

Coloniality of knowledge is another factor that plays a role in the nature and meaning of social grants and can be used as a unit of analysis to examine this initiative. This section discusses a key aspect of the colonial power matrix: coloniality of knowledge. This is an aspect that continues to reproduce the structure of coloniality. To resolve colonialism's legacy, it is also important to decolonize the intellectual environment of the country in question, and eventually, the minds of the formerly colonized. According to Mpofu (2013), colonialism was followed by colonial "knowledge" of Africa, which is now a highly contentious topic. Social grants were developed from the coloniality power matrix, which is imbedded in colonial knowledge, which therefore plays the role of oxygen to the fire, as it continues to reproduce the structure of coloniality and income inequality.

Afrocentric activists and academics have generated decolonial African awareness in defiance of colonialism (Mpofu, 2013). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:63) argues, "the worst form of colonisation … on the continent is the epistemological one [colonization of imagination and the mind] that is hidden in institutions and discourses that govern the modern globe". Any effort to imagine a future that is radically different from the present requires knowledge which is both foundational and fundamental (Ndlovu, 2018). At present, people are unable to carve out their own future because they lack their own means of learning. The desire to dominate the minds and ways of knowing of the "colonial subalterns" in order to perpetuate and prolong the

colonial project has always been the main goal of colonial dominance in knowledge development (Ndlovu, 2018).

According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:16), through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship, colonialism exerted its dominance over the collective development of wealth, but its most powerful domain of dominance remains the colonized's mental universe – influencing how people saw themselves and their connection to the world through culture. Without mental regulation, economic and political control will never be total or successful. The colonization of the mind (knowledge colonization) sought to destroy and undervalue indigenous peoples' social traditions in literature, faith, education, and history (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986:16). While this form of colonization was more damaging than the colonization of natural resources, it is necessary to look past colonialism to understand its consequences throughout history (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243).

According to Mpofu (2013:109), the colonizer not only distorts the colonized's history, but also slaughters their knowledge systems and depletes their heads of self-confidence and hearts of emotional stamina to live without colonial domination. Moreover, the colonizer fabricates accusations against the colonized, and invents various labels, including laziness, drunkenness, backwardness, a proclivity to violence, dirtiness, stupidity, ignorance, bad luck, and spiritual damnation – all of which require the colonizer to intervene and save the colonized from the abyss of many "lacks" and "deficits" that bedevil him and his lot (Mpofu, 2013:110). The coloniality of knowledge is related to the impact of colonization on various areas of knowledge production.

According to Grosfoguel (2013), Western and Eurocentric imagination and "knowledge" were promoted in Africa with the goal of erasing the colonized from mainstream existence and relegating them to the realm of otherness as "things". This is due to the fact that coloniality is

an invisible power structure that has an effect and a presence, and it has existed far longer than formal colonialism. As a result, it is capable of erasing colonized people's knowledge from the mainstream. The invisible power structure of coloniality is visible in initiatives such as social grants, which claim to reduce poverty; however, the structure of coloniality in South Africa still persists years later. Coloniality manifests itself in the realm of knowledge production through the "colonization of imagination", "colonization of the mind", and "colonization of knowledge and power" (Ndlovu, 2018). What makes the above invisible forms of colonization even more problematic is that their invisibility allows colonized subjects to participate in activities that sustain the very structure of coloniality within which they exist as victims (Ndlovu, 2018).

While various forms of decolonial activity by Africans on the African continent, and peoples of African descent elsewhere, have been directed at coloniality-at-large throughout history, there are now increasing efforts directed at decolonizing the Western education system in Africa (Ndlovu, 2018). The most difficult question remains whether the colonized, particularly the Western-educated African elite, can "unlearn" and "unthink" the education system that produced them (Ndlovu, 2018). This is due to the fact that knowledge is both fundamental and foundational to any attempt to imagine a future that is fundamentally different from the present (Ndlovu, 2018). For that reason, Ndlovu (2018) offers a decolonial view, because a people without its own knowledge does not have either a history or a future of its own. The very essence of colonial control in the production of knowledge has always been the desire to control minds and ways of knowing the "colonial subalterns" (Ndlovu, 2018). The decolonial perspective of Africa's creation of the future argues that another imagination of Africa's future cannot be achieved without first transcending the current political and intellectual system of the colonial knowledge production system (Ndlovu, 2018).

Eurocentric "knowledge" of Africa was a distortion and a denial of African humanity and history (Quijano, 2000).

Anibal Quijano (2000:556) observes that Eurocentric "intelligence" has a toxic impact on the colonized's mind and being. As we can see from Latin America's historical background, the Eurocentric perspective of understanding acts as a mirror, distorting what it represents (Quijano, 2000). As a result, the picture seen in the Eurocentric mirror is not only composite, but also inherently partial and distorted (Quijano, 2000). The irony is that the colonized have all been guided to see and embrace the picture as their own and belonging to them alone, whether they wanted it or not (Quijano, 2000). As a result, the colonized will never be able to recognize their true problems (much less solve them) but can only see them in a skewed and partial way (Quijano, 2000). Although Quijano's observations are based on the Latin American colonial experience and historical locus of enunciation, they also accurately represent the African colonial experience, in which African knowledges were distorted and Africans' self-understanding and self-knowledge were disfigured and displaced as European colonists sought to replace Africanity as a knowledge system with a Eurocentric one.

According to De Sousa Santos (2007:45), modern Western philosophy is "abysmal". It is made up of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, with the latter serving as the foundations for the former. According to De Sousa Santos, the other side of the line ceases to exist as a reality (2007:45). Non-existent refers to not occurring in any meaningful or comprehensive sense. Whatever is created as non-existent, as not-being (see Section 4.3.3), is radically removed because it exists outside of the agreed definition of inclusion's other domain (De Sousa Santos, 2007:45). As Mpofu (2013) notes, the colonizer distorts the colonized's past, invalidates the colonized's knowledge systems, and robs the colonized of self-confidence and emotional stamina, labelling, blaming and shaming the colonized. And then, adding insult to injury, in a curious twist and bizarre paradox, the colonized are supposed to be thankful for

colonialism. Since colonialism is often portrayed as civilization, modernization, progress, and even democratization, it strokes the ego of the colonizer. It is with this understanding that I was able to analyse aspects of how the social grant recipients who participated in this study viewed their life situation and the circumstances that led to their state of poverty. I used this lens to examine and analyse how their thinking was influenced by coloniality.

4.3.3 *Coloniality of being*

This section discusses the concept of coloniality which was first reflected in the writings of Walter Mignolo in 1995. According to Seroto (2018), after colonialist/decolonial scholars concluded that the colonial relations of power not only left unlimited and indelible marks in the areas of authorities, sexuality, knowledge and the economy, but also for the broad understanding of being, the term "coloniality of being" was coined. This construct thus responded to the need to address – and not only in the mind – the effects of coloniality in lived life (Mignolo, 2007:242).

Wynter (2003:257) defines coloniality of being as "the restoration of denied self-pride and sovereign subjectivity". Mignolo (2007:256) summarises the coloniality of being as follows:

> The coloniality of Being appears in historical projects and ideas of civilization which advance colonial projects of various kinds inspired or legitimized by the idea of race. The coloniality of Being is therefore coextensive with the production of the colour-line in its different expressions and dimensions. It becomes concrete in the appearance of liminal subjects, which mark, as it were, the limit of Being, that is, the point at which Being distorts meaning and evidence to the point of dehumanization. The coloniality of Being produces the ontological colonial difference, deploying a series of fundamental existential characteristics and symbolic realities.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), the construct of coloniality of being is significant because it helps to examine how indigenous people's humanity has been depicted, which contributed to their "objectification," "thingification," and "commodification". The coloniality of power, as we have seen, dehumanizes and over-determines the significance of the

racialization, as it relegates it to what Frantz Fanon in 1952 described as "the zone of non-being" (Gordon, 2005). Coloniality of being describes the existential state of colonized subjectivity, which is enmeshed in "the world of pure exteriority", which denies racial colonial subjects the possibility of inner existence while yielding racialized experience's paradoxes (Gordon, 2005). The most important of these paradoxes is that of person as a being who cannot mean Being, of living as a contingency rather than a universal, and thus of "failing to bridge the distance between subjective existence and the world" (Gordon, 2005). Colonialism is at its most (harmfully) effective when colonizers act as if they are not colonizers at all.

Maldonado-Torres and Fanon both encourage us to be sceptical. They challenge us to question our assumptions, our conceptions of ourselves, and our expectations of acceptable behaviour in public and private spaces. "There is only one destiny for the black man," writes Fanon (1968) – "[i]t's also white" (Fanon, 1968). Black being, according to Fanon (1968), is not as being-ful as white being in this colonial world. The black body is disposable in this imperialist world, the black spirit is irrelevant, and the weight of it is suffocating (Fanon, 1968). As Maldonado-Torres (2007) points out, understanding coloniality of being is crucial. The enigma of blackness tends to be a very radical starting point for thinking about coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Another way of understanding coloniality of being is to look at Frantz Fanon's views on the coloniality of being. In the colonial anti-black world prior to African independence, Frantz Fanon believed that the black person does not have ontological resistance or weight in the eyes of the white (Fanon, 1968:110). He also claims that when a black person speaks with whites, reason flees, and irrationality dictates the conversation (Fanon, 1968). The absence of ontological resistance is associated with a lack of rationality, and vice versa. The black person, according to Fanon, is neither a being nor simply nothingness, but is often referred to as something else (Fanon, 1968). The mystery of blackness seems to be a very progressive starting

point for thinking about Being's coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Although Heidegger's emphasis on Being necessitated elucidation of Dasein's comportment and existentially, reflection on the coloniality of Being necessitates elucidation of the black and colonized's fundamental existential traits. Any reflection on the coloniality of Being must begin with the black person, people of colour, and the colonized as radical points of departure (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

According to Fanon (1965:128),

> There is, first of all, the fact that the colonized person, who in this respect is like men in underdeveloped countries or the disinherited in all parts of the world, perceives life not as a flowering or a development of an essential productiveness, but as a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death. This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, a high death rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future. All this gnawing at the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death.

To be sure, the victims of such a scheme are predominantly black and indigenous peoples, as well as all those who are considered coloured. In other words, this system of symbolic representation, the material conditions that partly create and continue to legitimize it, and the existential processes that arise within it, which are both derivative and constitutive of such a context, are all part of a mechanism that naturalizes coloniality's war's non-ethics. Social grants, for example, tend to be an agent that tends to reproduce the current state of income inequality in South Africa. It is from this angle that I was able to examine the transformative nature of social grants, whether they improve the structure that created them, or if they merely reproduce that structure.

4.4 What then is a decolonial perspective?

Having explained coloniality of being, knowledge and power and how I used them in my analysis, in this section I move on to explain how I used *decoloniality* as a meta-method for analysing my data. In doing so, I start by explaining what I mean by a decolonial perspective

as a meta-method or a lens for analysing the idea of social grants. This section discusses what a decolonial perspective is and how this lens for analysis has been used in this study. By studying the works of Anibal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, I was able to apply decolonial theory. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni has also contributed to this theoretical trajectory, as I looked at how he articulated this viewpoint in a South African context.

To begin discussing this viewpoint, it should be noted that colonialism imprinted colonial mindsets on the minds of Africans, implying that they sought to reproduce *coloniality* as their future, even after direct legal *colonialism* was abolished (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986; Chinweizu, 1987). This implies that coloniality has enforced a mentality that resulted in coloniality's replication, or what Frantz Fanon (1968) calls "repetition without improvement", which is a product of consciousness's pitfalls. Since colonialism was more than just invasion, annexation, occupation, settlement, dominance, and exploitation, it was possible to replicate it. Colonialism, according to Fanon (1968), entailed "emptying the native's brain of both shape and material", in other words epistemicides which operate by distorting, disfiguring, and ultimately destroying the colonized's past.

As a result, one of the long-term effects of these forms of colonial interventions has been that some Africans have actually surrendered to the belief that the only thing they can do as part of making history is conform to a present and a future created for them by others, resulting in the replication of the colonial institutional order. As a result, some African scholars even argue that globalization and neoliberalism are realities to which Africans must adapt rather than ones which they must resist.

Mignolo (2007) uses the term "coloniality of power" (see Section 4.3.1) to describe the darker side of modernity that has culminated in Africa's underdevelopment. He reminds us that

coloniality is an unseen power system that maintains colonial relations of exploitation and dominance long after overt colonialism has ended, which is why decolonization is necessary (Mignolo 2007). Coloniality of power functions as a critical structuring mechanism within global imperial designs, ensuring the Global North's hegemony and the Global South's everlasting subalternity by colonial matrices of power (Mignolo, 2007).

Maldonado-Torres (2016) published a paper titled "Outline of Ten Theses", which outlines some of the responses to the colonization and decolonialization discourse. When people are asked what the essence and significance of colonialism and decolonization are, they have instinctive responses. His aim in discussing these answers is to devalue the questions, while also undermining the colonized's status as a questioner. In discussions of colonialism and decolonization, there are predictable *mala fide* answers, such as "[t]his occurred in the past and we need to move forward", "my ancestors were also colonized", "my parents were poor", "I am also othered", and so on (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). The claim that "all lives matter" is often included in the responses, as a reaction to those who argue that "Black lives matter" in a context where black people are disproportionately killed and incarcerated by the modern state's security forces and judicial system (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). These examples show how liberal abstract universalisms are often used against specific struggles for democracy, equality, and related political rights, rather than in favour of them. One common aim of these responses that should be noted in relation to this study, namely that they obscure the significance of colonialism and decolonization and try to avoid giving any sort of credibility to the colonized's protests and concerns (Maldonado-Torres, 2016).

People offer a wide variety of responses that function as defence mechanisms. A vital aspect of this form of war is that it tends to take place in classes, meetings, TV shows, and hallways, until any colonized rises in overt rebellion (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). The citizen-subject and some of the state's most convincing agents, usually academics and the media, wage this war in

order to censor the modes of inquiry that arise from the colonized's lived experience, artistic work, and information (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). It is clear that this war is ongoing, and its true goal is to prevent the colonized from emerging as a questioner or agent in this scenario. If appearing as black is considered inherently violent, appearing as the interrogator is interpreted as a declaration of war against the never-ending conflict (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Modernity/coloniality tries to conceal its warlike nature by refusing to name its status or acknowledge any challenge to its status by those who are subjected to its unrelenting aggression (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). One thing that stands out in Maldonado-Torres's text – and this is an essential factor – is the way defenders of modernity/coloniality rely on what they believe to be proven information to explain and conceal the problematic character of their bad faith, decadence, and phobias, even from themselves. While those in the structural role of colonizers may feel shielded by such hypocritical discourses, the impact of this body of work on the colonized subject is chilling and paralyzing.

Maldonado-Torres (2016) sums up decoloniality as follows: decoloniality refers to efforts to rehumanize the world, to breaking hierarchies of difference that dehumanize subjects and communities and destroy nature, and to the production of counter-discourses, counter-knowledges, and counter-creative acts. I wanted to investigate whether social grants are a transformative programme with the potential to eradicate inequality and poverty through a decolonial lens. I was able to see how the social grants have been developed in the global structure by looking at how they are structured (see Chapter 5). One of the arguments I make in my analysis chapter (Chapter 6) is that the decolonization of social grants can transcend the power structure of coloniality that created it and can be a vehicle for transformation. However, before that can happen, it is necessary to first understand what a social grant in South Africa is – only if one knows what it is can a recommendation be made on how they be used for transformation.

Another view of decolonization is offered by Grosfoguel (1996), who argues that we cannot think of decolonization only in terms of conquering power over the juridical-political boundaries of a state, that is, by achieving control over a single nation-state. Global coloniality is not reducible to the presence or absence of a colonial administration (Grosfoguel, 2002). Looking at South Africa, establishing democracy in terms of universal voting rights has been used as a strategy of dealing with coloniality, but this has not dealt with the effects of coloniality, nor does it stop the structure of development. One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century, according to Grosfoguel (2002), was the notion that the abolition of colonial administrations amounted to global decolonization. Initiatives such as a social grant cannot reach their full potential until the reproduction of coloniality has been dealt with effectively.

It is noteworthy that, despite the fact that "colonial administrations" have almost been eliminated and the majority of the periphery is politically organized into independent states, non-Europeans continue to live under crude European/Euro-American exploitation and dominance (Grosfoguel, 2007). The old colonial hierarchies of the Global North versus the Global South persist and are intertwined with the "international division of labour" and global capital accumulation (Quijano, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2007). These hierarchies are also still evident in post-apartheid South Africa, as the country continues to be profoundly divided along socio-economic lines, and the wealth/poverty divide continues to overlap with racial designations for most of the population, except for a small black elite. This divide persists despite the new administration that came into power from 1994.

According to Mignolo (2007:459), decoloniality, then, entails working toward a vision of human life that does not depend on, and is not structured by, the forced imposition of one singular ideal of society over those who differ from that ideal, as modernity/coloniality does. This vision is where decolonization of the mind should begin. Decoloniality emphasizes that

any act or project of decolonization refers to the colonial power matrix, rather than any indeterminate domain of "reality": "decoloniality" is one component of the triad. Addressing the four spheres and many layers in which the colonial matrix operates thus requires decolonial doing and thinking (doing while thinking, thinking while doing) (Mignolo, 2007:459). Decoloniality thus entails both the analytical task of revealing the logic of coloniality and the prospective task of contributing to the construction of a world in which many worlds can coexist (Mignolo, 2007:459). As a result, the decolonial shift can be viewed as a project of de-linking, whereas postcolonial criticism and theory are projects of scholarly transformation within the narrower landscape of the academy. As a result, some scholars, such as Quijano, summarise the decolonial shift as beginning with a decolonization of knowledge.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012), a decolonial epistemic perspective does not claim universality, neutrality, or singular truthfulness. A decolonial perspective is decidedly and deliberately situated in epistemic sites such as Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, which have suffered the negative consequences of modernity and are currently facing development challenges. At the same time, this perspective openly admits its bias, recognizing that all knowledge is partial. The primary goal of the decolonial epistemic perspective is to expose epistemic silences hidden within Euro-American epistemology, as well as the deception and hypocrisy that have hidden epistemicides (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). It is for this reason that I used a decolonial lens, to unveil the silences hiding behind the apparent agency of social grants in South Africa. This viewpoint challenges what Aimé Césaire referred to as the "fundamental European lie", which portrayed colonization as a vehicle for civilization (quoted in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). This leads to the conclusion that a decolonial perspective is intended to change not only the content, but also the terms of intellectual and academic conversations on development in order to engage with the critical issues of epistemology, being, and power that underpin the current asymmetrical global relations. This perspective has

allowed me to engage critically with issues of the structure of development and the agency of government initiatives that claim to be aimed at poverty alleviation and bridging the gap of income inequality. Using this lens for the analysis of the empirical data, I was able to engage with the data and discover the critical issues that came out of the data, as well as the relationship between the prevailing structure and social grants.

The aim of using a decolonial meta-method was revealing what social grants meant and still mean in the context of coloniality and the structure of development in South Africa. The study looked at how social grants are defined in the literature, how they are defined by the recipients, and what their policy objectives are, as discussed in Chapter 5. In South Africa, development has largely included the dispossession of Africans, who were forced off their land and transformed into peasants, labourers, and domestic servants (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). It is important to remember that understanding the scope of African development problems requires a thorough understanding of the historical, discursive, and structural frameworks of modernity, imperialism, colonialism, decolonization, neo-colonialism, neoliberalism, and globalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). It is from this understanding that I used a decolonial lens for analysis, with the intention of grasping what, fundamentally, a social grant is, and what type of development it brings, if any. This is because development in South Africa cannot be understood outside of the history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa and their legacies.

A decolonial turn is aimed at ensuring that the global imperial designs that keep Africa in a disadvantageous position are dismantled, allowing for the creation of a new world of equality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). A decolonial perspective promotes the ability to shift away from fictions about a world naturalized by multinational imperialist designs. This entails pushing against the boundaries of the one-sided and unfinished political project of modernity, as well as the unfinished project of decolonization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Only then can actions

taken by and from the Global South as a primary epistemic site of struggle result in a world of equality, progress, and independence, as well as global democracy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Because of the variety of viewpoints on social grants and their utility, decoloniality was therefore a logical choice as a meta-method for analysis in this study.

4.5 Conclusion

Decoloniality theorists have issued a powerful challenge to break free from coloniality's intersectional disparities and embrace a new vision of human existence. Another takeaway from the literature is that decolonization shows the value of resisting the alluring rhetoric of change that comes with the discourse of modernity. In the case of social grants in South Africa, this means acknowledging that the current structures have institutional limits in terms of what they will do for all recipients – the structural power differentials that continue to produce the deep disparities are difficult to shift. Delinking requires understanding of the dynamic forms in which the intersectional inequalities of modernity/coloniality play out in South Africa. To summarise, decoloniality does not necessitate abandoning Western epistemology, but rather calls for an acknowledgment of its situatedness, as well as its exclusions and partialities. There is not always a call for a return to pre-colonial experience in its purest form. Rather, the challenge is to recognize that various information structures coexist in the modern world, without succumbing to simplistic relativism. Recognizing that the current framework of social grants is built on the basis of "pre-colonial policies" derived from Western epistemology, a crucial first step is to create room for critical reflection on how the system of social grants works to benefit certain citizens and disadvantage others, as is discussed in relation to the historical background of the idea of social grants in South Africa in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5:

THE IDEA OF SOCIAL GRANTS:

AN ANALYSIS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL GRANTS

IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

5.1   Introduction

This chapter examines the structure of poverty in South Africa by considering and analysing of the structure of poverty in South Africa, the history of social grants in pre-apartheid, apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. The aim and role of social grants prior to and since 1994 are considered in light of their history and purpose. The currently applicable policy framework of social grants, outlined in the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), is also presented. The Social Assistance Amendment Act 6 of 2008 (RSA,2008) is also mentioned.

The aim of the literature review in this chapter is to provide a detailed background for the research area, which is social grants in South Africa. Based on the literature, I thus outline how poverty has arisen from the structure and show that poverty is still on the rise more than a quarter of a century after 1994. I articulate the causes of poverty and the role of social grants as one of the interventions aimed at reducing poverty. As indicated in Chapter 1, this study aimed to look into the potentially transformative role of the social grants programme. This sets the scene for the discussion of the empirical data collected from the participants in Chapter 6.

5.2   Poverty in South Africa

The World Bank (2021) classifies South Africa is an upper middle-income country, based on the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (the dollar value of a country's final income in a

year, divided by its population). This classification based on an average is misleading, because in fact most of South African households experience outright poverty or are vulnerable to being poor. Moreover, "[t]he distribution of income and wealth in South Africa is among the most unequal in the world, and many households still have unsatisfactory access to clean water, energy, health care, and education" (May, 2001:2).

One definition of poverty is that it is a deprivation experienced by an individual, for example, regarding deprivation of work, housing, food, and clean water. Lekezwa (2011:42) explains that before Sen's (1967) critique, income was the only indicator that was used to identify the poor, but Sen (1976) questioned this one-sided view of poverty, which did not consider the complexities of poverty. Today it is widely recognized that income poverty alone can no longer be considered the only convention for representing the poor. According to Lekezwa (2011:42),

> this is not to disregard the role of income to quantify poverty; indeed, income measures summarise the number of the poor below a certain income level and therefore the amount of income needed by individuals to meet basic needs.

In South Africa, some of the complexities that relate to poverty can be traced back to the causes of poverty and inequality in South Africa. One of these is the policy of apartheid which, although it was present in some form from the first European colonial settlement in 1652, was most rigorously implemented by the Nationalist Party government between 1948 and 1994. The apartheid regime dispossessed black people of their assets (land), distorted the country's economic markets and social institutions through racial discrimination, and resorted to police violence and destabilization (May, 2001:4). Now, more two and a half decades later, after the official end of apartheid, with the election of a democratic government in 1994, the government of South Africa is still attempting to undo the injustice that was done by the apartheid regime. The complexities that arise from this legacy have shaped the nature of poverty in South Africa, and unless they are countered, they will perpetuate poverty even though the political economy is being transformed (May, 2001:4).

Poverty can be conceptualised as absolute poverty or as relative poverty. These perspectives bring alternative understandings of poverty. Absolute poverty refers to the minimum living standard, while relative poverty refers to income distribution (O'Boyle & O'Boyle, 2012): "minimal living standard addresses the question: 'how much does one need to live at a minimally acceptable level?', whereas the income-distribution standard addresses the question 'how much does one have relative to others?'" (O'Boyle & O'Boyle, 2012:10).

According to Bhorat, Poswell and Naidoo (2004:1), the best measure to determine poverty is absolute poverty, which measures aspects such as society's wellbeing and the welfare of the most vulnerable in society, the standard of living and the state of deprivation among people. In Sen's (1967) view (see also Lekezwa, 2011:43), there are two steps to follow in measuring poverty – first, identifying the poor, and second, aggregating (providing a profile of the poor in a particular society). These two steps of identifying the poor expose the multidimensionality of poverty. Multidimensional measures can measure poverty through several characteristics such as health, living conditions, access to clean water and sanitation, which allows for everyone to be represented when the poor are identified (Ravallion, 1992; Streeten, 1995).

Fourie (2007) suggests that many factors have influenced and contributed to the South Africa that we live in today. This includes the factors that contributed to the country's levels of absolute poverty and income inequality: historical factors, educational attainment, labour policies, environmental and demographic changes, language, culture and political development (Fourie, 2007:1275). It is important to take into consideration these shaping elements when policies or strategies are formulated to reduce poverty and income inequality.

To understand the spread of poverty and number of people affected by it, we need to start by looking at the population of the country. Table 1 presents the basic demographic data for 1991, 2001 and 2019, which illustrate the population growth over the years. The growth rate from

2001 to 2019 was 32.1% per annum. The population of Africans is steadily increasing, while that of the other population groups has been decreasing.

Table 5.1: South Africa's population

	1991	2001	2019
Total population (millions)	36.2	44.5	58.78
Population groups as % of total:			
African	70	79	80.7
White	16.5	9.5	7.9
Coloured	10.5	9	8.8
Indian	3	2.5	2.6

Source: Compiled by researcher from StatsSA (2002, 2003, 2019)

According to the World Bank (cited in Woolard, 2002), in the year 2000, around three million people, 7% of the population, were living on less than US $ 1 (ZAR 14) per day, and ten million people, 23% of the population, on less than US $ 2 (ZAR 28) per day, in the currency at the turn of the century. Bhorat (2003) has estimated that in 1999, 32% of households in South Africa were below a poverty line of US $ 251 (ZAR 3 558) per month per household (1995 prices), equivalent to US $ 81 (ZAR 1 148) per month per individual. Using the same poverty line, in 1999 the poverty gap in the country was at 13% (Bhorat, 2003).

It has now been more than two decades since the ANC took over the government. The South African government has been working towards addressing poverty and inequality with a wide range of initiatives, including the use of fiscal policy to support redistributive measures. Policies such as the *National Development Plan 2030: Our future – Make it work* (RSA, 2012) have been put in place to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. This document identifies the triple challenge of high poverty, inequality, and unemployment as a major challenge for the country. The persistence of these challenges calls for a comprehensive assessment of the extent and causes of poverty and inequality, with attention to trends, drivers, dynamics, policy,

impact, and monitoring (RSA, 2012). According to the *National Development Plan 2030* (RSA, 2012), almost half of the South African population is considered chronically poor living on a national poverty line of ZAR 992 per person per month. These families are characterised by high poverty persistence which is generational. An example of this is the participants' profiles, as presented in Section 1.9.7. The interviewees were born in extreme poverty, and have remained in this position, even after 1994.

The *National Development Plan 2030* has identified two more segments of the population that make up 27% of the South African population. People in the second segment have an above-average chance of falling into poverty and are referred to as the transient poor (RSA, 2012). The third segment of the population is defined as people who are not considered poor but are recognized as vulnerable: they face an above-average risk of slipping into poverty although their basic needs are being met or the moment (RSA, 2012).

If these three segments are combined, they already collectively constituted about 76% of the population in 2012, and poverty is a constant reality or threat in their daily lives (RSA, 2012). This discussion illustrates the seriousness of poverty in South Africa despite all interventions that the government continues to initiate and suggests that we are faced with a structural problem more than anything else. Even though we nominally live in a democratic country, many such structural problems still need to be exposed, uprooted, and dealt with. The social grant system is one of these initiatives that needs to be decolonized in order to serve the actual needs of recipients and provide opportunities for families to break out of the continuous cycle of poverty that they find themselves in.

5.2.1   *Poverty as a developmental problem in South Africa*

Poverty is a key development problem in social, economic, and political terms. In post-apartheid South Africa, fighting the legacy of poverty and underdevelopment has always been

a central theme of government. Hence, there is a strong demand for regular, high-quality poverty data to inform the government's planning and actions.

The impact of social protection programmes varies according to their objectives, design, and level of institutionalization, as well as the level of development of the countries where they are implemented (see Section 5.5.1 for a brief discussion of the international scene). There is strong evidence that social protection initiatives can significantly contribute to reducing the prevalence and severity of poverty (Barrientos & Nino-Zarazua, 2010; Tanga & Gutura, 2013), and in doing so ensure that those living in poverty enjoy at least minimum essential levels of some economic, social and cultural rights. For example, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2011), in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries levels of poverty and inequality are estimated to be approximately half of those that might be expected in the absence of social protection. However, even though it appears that poverty has declined, it still remains unacceptably high world-wide, and this is specifically a developmental problem (Gumede, 2010), making it a topic particularly relevant to South Africa, as a developing country.

In South Africa, the government has undertaken a number of initiatives in order to reduce headcount poverty, such as subsidising water and electricity, providing housing, and declaring a number of schools no-fee institutions. Despite these initiatives, the Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, was reported to be at 0.68 in 2015 (Mushongera, 2015). A Gini coefficient at 0 represents perfect equality, and one of 1 represents absolute inequality. The 0.68 coefficient shows that even though there are a number of initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, such as the social grants, the country still faces a high rate of income inequality. It is clear that initiatives that are put in place should not only reduce poverty but should also reduce income inequality. Social grants have not succeeded in doing this. In order to understand

why this is the case, one has to answer the question of why there is poverty and inequality in South Africa. The next section will provide context to this question.

5.2.2 *Why is there poverty and inequality in South Africa?*

According to Woolard (2002), the past policies of segregation and discrimination have left a legacy of inequality and poverty and, in more recent decades, low economic growth. This is because the apartheid system was deeply biased and provided more services such as health care, education and housing to the white minority (Phiri, Molotja, Makelane, Kupamupindi & Ndinda, 2015). The black population was the opportunity to accrue human and physical capital (Phiri *et al*., 2015). Labour market policies were aimed at safeguarding the position of white workers through a number of policies, and through these policies, the apartheid government was able to reduce competition from other race groups (Phiri *et al*., 2015). Woolard (2002) explains that resources were unequally distributed under apartheid (including land, mining rights and access to capital), thereby marginalising a large section of the population by restricting them to menial and poorly paid sectors of the labour market, if access was granted at all. The country has a long and infamous history of high inequality characterized by an overwhelming racial footprint.

The quest for inclusive innovation in South Africa needs to be considered in light of this aspect of the country's history. The current government inherited a highly unequal society in 1994 as a result of the political, social and economic policies that affected all South Africans, with detrimental consequences for the black population (Phiri *et al*., 2015). There is a need for inclusive growth and innovation, and this requires a transformative and innovative social policy approach that will improve our current social policy, thereby contributing to a reduction in poverty and inequality. Barriers to opportunities that were caused by apartheid created high

levels of inequality have also reduced growth in the country, thus creating poverty, which has become a developmental problem.

Leibbrandt, Woolard and Woolard (2007), commenting on issues of poverty and inequality dynamics in South Africa, see the emergence and persistence of inequality as the major unifying theme of the country's twentieth-century economic history. This is the key to understanding why the issue of inequality still dominates the post-apartheid landscape. Two indicators of the post-apartheid political economy have attracted special attention in this regard. The first is whether the evolving character of the post-apartheid economy and the policy efforts of the post-apartheid government have been able to begin to lower the very high aggregate levels of inequality. Then there is the related question of the composition of this inequality; specifically, whether the blunt racial footprint undergirding this inequality would start to blur and will be replaced by new social strata and more subtle socio-economic dynamics.

Sustained economic growth since the political transition has allowed more attention to be paid to poverty alleviation, with some success: social grants were successful in the period after 2000 in considerably reducing money-metric poverty (Van der Berg, 2010). Nevertheless, even though this is true, there has not been a significant change in the overall lives of the participants, as the data in Chapter 6 show: they still find themselves trapped in poverty, living below the poverty line, with few or no opportunities for them to break out of the cycle of poverty. Van der Berg (2010) posits that even though poverty can decline at times, inequality has in fact continued to grow, thus diluting any beneficial impacts of economic growth on poverty, even though a number of initiatives are in place. Van der Berg (2010) therefore maintains that racial inequality has softened but points out that income inequality remains extremely high. What has changed is the *nature* of inequality, given that the inter-racial (between-group) income distribution has improved considerably (Van der Berg, 2010). The labour market is at the heart of inequality, and central to labour market inequality is the quality of education. To achieve a

reduction of income inequality requires a substantially different wage pattern, based on better human capital for the bulk of the population. Prospects for this at present appear inauspicious.

5.3   Social grants in South Africa

A social grant is a government financial assistance initiative that provides a monthly financial income in a form of a grant (stipend) to disadvantaged individuals and poor households in order for them to meet their basic needs. A social grant provides a cushion from some of the worst economic and social threats and risks confronted by vulnerable groups, including food insecurity (Hanlon, Barrientos & Hulme, 2010:1).

South Africa's social grants have evolved over the years; they have various benefit levels and have covered different groups of beneficiaries over time (the historical picture is presented in Section 5.3.1). Starting from the *Social Assistance Act, 59 of 1992* (RSA, 1992), social grants in South Africa since 1994 were redeveloped in South Africa with the aim of alleviating poverty, as well as to reduce the income inequality in the country.

Today, South Africa has the following social grants: the Old Age Grant (pensions), the War Veteran Grant, the Disability Grant, the Grant in Aid, the Care Dependency Grant, the Foster Child Grant, and the Child Support Grant, and the Social Relief of Distress Grant. Table 5.2 shows the large number of social grant recipients by grant type from 2006/2007 to 2018/2019. (The Social Relief of Distress Grant, a temporary measure such as a food parcel or a voucher to buy food, or in some provinces, cash assistance, is not listed in Table 5.2.)

Table 5.2 illustrates that between April 2006 and March 2019, the total number of social grants recipients increased by 48%, from 12 015 059 to 17 811 745 (SASSA, 2019), which reflects annual growth of 1.72%. This increase was mainly driven by the Child Support Grant, the Old Age Grant and Grant in Aid, and changes in the policy that improved outreach (SASSA, 2019).

Table 5.2: Number of social grant types

Grant type	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Old Age	2,195,018	2,229,550	2,390,543	2,546,657	2,678,554	2,750,857
War Veteran	2,340	1,924	1,500	1,216	958	753
Disability	1,422,808	1,408,456	1,286,883	1,264,477	1,200,898	1,198,131
Grant in Aid	31,918	37,343	46,069	53,237	58,413	66,493
Care Dependency	98,631	102,292	107,065	110,731	112,185	114,993
Foster Child	400,503	454,199	474,759	510,760	512,874	536,747
Child Support	7,863,841	8,189,975	8,765,354	9,570,287	10,371,950	10,927,731
Total	12,015,059	12,423,739	13,072,173	14,057,365	14,935,832	15,595,705
Annual Growth		3.40%	5.22%	7.54%	6.25%	4.42%

Grant type	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Old Age	2,873,197	2,969,933	3,086,851	3,194,087	3,302,202	3,423,337	3,553,317
War Veteran	587	429	326	245	176	134	92
Disability	1,164,192	1,120,419	1,112,663	1,085,541	1,067,176	1,061,866	1,048,255
Grant in Aid	73,719	83,059	113,087	137,806	164,349	192,091	221,989
Care Dependency	120,268	120,632	126,777	131,040	144,952	147,467	150,001
Foster Child	532,159	512,055	499,774	470,015	440,295	416,016	386,019
Child Support	11,341,988	11,125,946	11,703,165	11,972,900	12,081,375	12,269,084	12 452,072
Total	16,106,110	15,932,473	16,642,643	16,991,634	17,200,525	17,509,995	17,811,745
Annual Growth	3.27%	-1.08%	4.46%	2.10%	1.23%	1.80%	1.72%

Source: SASSA (2019)

5.3.1   *The history of social grants in South Africa prior to 1994*

To understand the context of this study, it is vital to know the long history of welfare provision in South Africa. This discussion of social grants pre-1994 shows why I posit that the present social protection regime can trace its roots to the pre-democratic social policy era. Apartheid-era welfare was comprehensive in its ability to supply and fund social protection programmes for its beneficiaries – children, the aged, and other vulnerable groups, but mainly in the white population. Civil society had a transparent role as service suppliers of welfare services. A progressive taxation system additionally meant that grants could be funded. This method of providing for social grants, and many of the provision processes, have remained intact, even in the post-apartheid era. Finally, however, this section shows that the pre-apartheid and apartheid state created laws that excluded the majority of society, not only from voting, but also from full social protection, based on the construct of race. Redressing these injustices is at the centre of post-apartheid welfare policy. While it is tempting to provide a detailed illustration of apartheid-era social assistance, I only provide a general overview and highlight issues that may have influenced contemporary social assistance, especially social grants in post-apartheid South Africa, for this study.

Historically, social grants in South Africa were mainly directed at meeting the needs of the white minority (Samson, Van Niekerk & MacQuene, 2006:2). South Africa was first a Dutch, and then a British colony, and saw the rise of the two Boer Republics (the Orange Free State and the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) in the interior in the latter half of the 19th century. The late 19th-century discovery of gold and subsequent growth of capitalist agriculture contributed to large-scale migration of segments of the white population to urban areas and introduced a pattern of migrant black labour in the cities that continues to this day (SAHO, 2016). Many of these people came to the cities only to work in mines and factories for low wages. This

migration increased in the wake of the South African War of 1899 to 1902, which left many white families in the former Boer Republics, and their employees, impoverished (Fourie, 2007:1270-1271). The British colonial government recognized the rise in white unemployment and poverty and agreed to implement social services and job programmes to counter what they perceived to be systemic or structural poverty (Devereux, 2007:541). Many white farm tenants and by-owners were also evicted from their farms to make way for commercial farms. Many of these now-displaced white families, many of whom were unskilled, relocated to the cities in search of jobs and a better life.

State-financed social protection, as we know it today, dates back to the 1910s in South Africa, after the establishment of the Union of South Africa, as a self-governing dominion, but still within the British Empire. This protection provided benefits for workers, as well as social assistance for the elderly, infants, and the disabled. The *Children's Protection Act of 1913* (cited by Patel, 2007:13), was the first legislation that formally governed child maintenance grants, which were paid out to parents of children whom the state considered vulnerable. This child maintenance grant seldom reached African parents in urban areas or rural Africans.

Social welfare was divided into two categories: the first was contributory workers' social assistance, which was paid out to workers in times of need even after they chose to retire; the second was state-funded cash grants to white families who were unable to meet specific needs, including those of several veterans returning from the First World War (1914-1918) who found themselves jobless.

Many of the welfare reforms are thought to have been prompted by the 1922 Rand Revolt and the rising influence of unionized workers. The 1926 commission on Old Age Pensions created the right to a state-funded old-age pension for both white and coloured citizens 65 years and older (Samson *et al*., 2006). Social grants for the elderly began with the *Old Age Pensions Act*

of 1928 (Union of South Africa, 1928a), which, however, explicitly excluded most black South Africans (Samson *et al.*, 2006:2). The *Act* thus provided pensions for white and Coloured citizens, but not African and Asian people (Sagner, 2000). (Old-age pensions were, however, expanded to African and Indian citizens with more limited means in 1944.) Triegaardt (2006) notes that British colonial, early Union of South Africa, and Nationalist Party apartheid-era social policy was structured and enforced using a "residual model" of social welfare, with resources distributed based on race, class, and internal politics. The *National Insurance Act No. 22 of 1928* (Union of South Africa, 1928b) was also promulgated in the same year.

The Carnegie Commission of Inquiry was established in 1929 to look into the so-called "poor white problem". Many consider the Carnegie Commission to be one of the first attempts in South Africa to look at social issues in a more empirical and interdisciplinary way (Patel, 2007). According to the Commission, subdivisions of land, droughts, and cattle diseases were causing many Afrikaners to lose their land and small farmers to lose productivity (Patel, 2007:68). One of the Commission's main recommendations was that the state establish a welfare department to handle all state welfare issues. Subsequently, in 1937, in the wake of the global Great Depression (1929-1934), the state's first welfare department was established, signalling the start of a new age of welfare and the professionalization of social work. It is also worth noting that the Commission and other Afrikaners saw poverty as the product of social and economic underdevelopment, as well as the Afrikaner working class's failure to make changes in their lives (Samson *et al.*, 2006). The resulting poverty caused demoralization and a lack of self-respect. The new government of the Union agreed to rebuild white society in response to the Commission's recommendations by becoming more interested in poverty relief and by creating jobs for white people in the armed forces, railways, towns, and agricultural sector (Samson *et al.*, 2006). The establishment of a prosperous white community would also help to alleviate

conflicts between black and white workers who were vying for the same employment. Another significant development during this time period was the principle of collaboration between the state and various civil society organizations in the delivery of welfare services. Voluntary welfare organizations that were meant to provide and organize programmes were provided financial support from the government. (In the post-apartheid state, these types of alliances, in various forms, continue to play an important role in providing welfare.) The Disability Grant was introduced in 1937 and it was extended on the same racial basis. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the social grants system was extended more broadly, but with racially differentiated benefit levels (Samson *et al.*, 2006:2).

According to Seekings (2002), in 1938, the Chamber of Mines investigated two rural settlements in the Eastern Cape, Transkei and Ciskei, in order to find potential labour for the mines. Their results revealed that these areas were heavily overcrowded, resulting in an excess of land usage. People living in these rural areas were also heavily dependent on migrant labour, with more than two-thirds of the male population working in the mines. Urban poverty also posed a challenge, particularly within the black population, as many moved to overcrowded cities.

Various other investigations were done. The Beveridge report was published at the end of 1942 (Seekings, 2002:14). The Social Security Committee of 1943 issued a report on the rural economy's crisis, recommending that the government step in. Crop failure, inadequate land, and a general lack of opportunities for people living in rural areas contributed to poverty in rural South Africa. According to the Committee's report, the strain of poverty in the reserves and rural areas was such that adding the additional burden of helping dependent members from urban native communities would inevitably increase the acuity of the situation, to their physical and social disadvantage (Seekings, 2002:14). The rural native was often not in a financial position to fulfil such commitments.

The *1944 Pension Laws Amendment Act*, which expanded old age pensions to African and Indian men and women, was based on the Commission's recommendations. Despite the recommendations, black African and Indian citizens did not receive the same benefits. The reasoning for this was that Africans had lower living standards and charged lower taxes, so they could not receive the same benefits as white and Indian citizens (Devereux, 2007). While this pension extension was important, there were still many barriers to access for Indian and African citizens. These social pensions were also used by the government to control migration between urban and rural areas (Devereux, 2007:53). Only people who could show they had lived in an urban area for more than five years and did not own land in a rural area, for example, were eligible for such a grant. The claim that rural kinship provided for their own protection needs was used to justify the exclusion of Africans from state-funded social assistance in this and other cases. Van der Berg (1997:486) explains the state's reasoning as follows:

> Rural natives were excluded from old-age pensions mainly on the assumption that Native custom makes provision for maintaining dependent persons. Urban Natives were excluded in consequence, regardless of their needs, owing 'to the difficulty of applying any statutory distinction between them and other Natives' (Social Security Committee, 1944:19, as quoted by Kruger, 1992a:165).

Following the Second World War (1939-1945), the state's perception of what it wanted to do to provide a better life for its people shifted dramatically. The South African government formed a committee to investigate the condition of all its people's livelihoods and make recommendations for social policy reform in response to a change in the international climate (Seekings, 2002:14). The liberalization of social pensions resulted in an increase in beneficiaries, but it put strain on government finances. Nevertheless, by 1960, the social grant had been expanded to include all Africans in both urban and rural areas in order to reduce urbanization. The 1970s and 1980s were marked by political and social turmoil, as well as increasing resistance to the state's racial policies. Many people in rural South Africa had started to doubt and challenge the authority of homeland governments. The government began to close

the gap between African and white pensioners in response to these and other pressures. Increased grants to homelands were to aid in their funding and strengthen homeland governments' credibility (Van der Berg, 1997). As late as 1987, however, child support grants to black people remained a small fraction of the size awarded to whites (Samson *et al.*, 2006:2). Overall fiscal spending on social assistance increased steadily during this period, rising from 0.59% of the GDP in the 1970s to 1.82% in 1993 (Van der Berg, 1997).

I have already mentioned the rise of civil society organizations in the delivery of welfare services. They aided in the implementation of a variety of government programmes, including child and family care, mental health, disability, and senior citizen welfare. The position of welfare initiatives differed: some were independent, but others, including some Afrikaner Women's organizations, were supported by the state, and they were a main feature of the apartheid welfare system. As a result, the state's political and military goals and those of delivering social assistance formed a close relationship. Because of such government sponsorship, many of these organizations remain associated with the government's racial segregation policies. Nevertheless, in response to the government's neglect of the black population's basic needs and services, other alternative and independent community-sponsored social assistance organizations (NGOs, community organizations, and religious organizations) were created (Patel, 2007:73).

The narrative of apartheid-era social services represents a racial discrimination and injustice philosophy. The state's political and economic goals were often linked to racial segregation and grant access. As a result, while early social assistance programmes were largely racially exclusive, as time passed, and especially during apartheid's final years, social benefits and grants were extended to include other racial groups (Samson *et al.*, 2006).

Finally, based on the above discussion on social welfare under an apartheid-state, it is clear that the state was not particularly concerned with the welfare of the black majority. Most of the social welfare initiatives addressed issues experienced by white minorities, and improving their livelihoods, and were not a response to the basic needs of the black population. This historical context explains much of why so many black South Africans still find themselves vulnerable and stuck in poverty. The state did very little to address the issues of non-white ethnic groups' rising unemployment and poverty but created structures that in the long run have resulted in high income inequality between the racial groups, perpetuating extreme poverty. Racial targeting of grants only served to exacerbate inequity and violate social justice and human rights standards. This is the legacy that the post-apartheid state has inherited, compounded by a welfare system that was fragmented, bureaucratic, and expensive to enforce.

In the next section, I discuss how many of the apartheid era social welfare programmes were continued and amended to fit the emerging new democratic state, while still serving the purpose of the fragmented system that the new government inherited. I then assess the challenges that the state faces in extending welfare to all its citizens and the role that South Africa's constitution and new policies have played in redesigning the social grants of the past.

5.3.2   *Post-apartheid social welfare*

The aim of this section is to show how different periods of economic and development policy affected the evolution of social grants as a tool for addressing poverty and inequality in the period after the election of a democratic government in 1994, signalling the official demise of apartheid. This will allow us to comprehend the circumstances in which the state seeks to impose conditionalities or restrict access through a means test in order to favour smaller segments of the population. I also look at how some civil society organizations have campaigned for and discussed the need for universality in grants, as well as the key position of

the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 108 of 1996* (RSA, 1996) and its mandate for the state.

For the new government, the transition from apartheid to a democratic non-racial state presented a number of challenges. Not only did the new government have the task of redressing racial injustice and promoting economic growth, but it also had to meet the needs of all people, especially the poor. In 1994, South Africa's first democratically elected government inherited a fractured social security structure rooted in the apartheid regime's disregard for the majority of the country's interests.

The 1996 *Constitution* (RSA, 1996) is the first and most relevant text to consider when discussing social security and the position of the state in the new democratic South Africa. The right to social security is one of the socio-economic rights guaranteed by the *Constitution* to all people of South Africa. Section 27 (1)(c) states that everyone has the right to have access to "social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance". While this right, like the right to education and healthcare, is protected by the *Bill of Rights* in Chapter 2 of the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996), it is subject to an internal restriction in section 27(2), which states: "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, *within its available resources*, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights" (RSA, 1996; my emphasis). On the one hand, the *Constitution* ensures that everybody has access to social security, but it also allows the government to invoke insufficient resources as a reason for failing to fulfil its obligations. The problem with this, as seen in later discussions about the state's various macro-economic policy options, is that even where resources are available, they may be shifted to serve other priorities and thus indefinitely delayed for grant expansion. A Constitutional court case, *Government of the Republic of South Africa. & Ors v Grootboom & Ors 2000 (11) BCLR 1169. (CC))* (cited in Brockerhoff, 2013:12), is an example of where this constitutional restriction was recognized. The court noted

in this case that where the state lacks the resources to fully realize the right in question, the concept of progressive realization would require the state to take only modest steps to gradually increase accessibility and the number of people protected (Brockerhoff, 2013:12). Simply stated, while the government cannot deny citizens their right to social security, it is understandable that if it is dealing with limited money, a particular intervention might not be the most cost-effective programme. In this situation, Section 27(2) requires the state to take appropriate statutory measures to ensure the right to social security.

Thus, even though the new government's task was to give substance to the mandate contained in section 27 (1)(c) of the new *Constitution* (RSA, 1996), it was clear from the outset that the previous levels of benefits offered to those members of the white minority who qualified for social grants could not be sustained, and could also not be universalized in a fiscally sustainable manner: the state's financial resources were insufficient to offer universal benefits at these levels to all. The new system of social grants was therefore reformed in order to foster growth, minimize poverty, and control how benefits are distributed.

In the run-up to the 1994 elections, the African National Congress's (ANC's) 1992 *Ready to Govern* document (which laid out the party's policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa) stated unequivocally that it was committed to improving the material well-being of the poor and vulnerable (ANC, 1994:1,2). The *Social Assistance Act, 59 of 1992* (RSA, 1992), which repealed all unequal provisions of social assistance programmes, ahead of the elections, was one of the first pieces of legislation enacted to counter apartheid-era discrimination and restricted access to grants (ANC, 1994:1, 2). The implication of the *Act* was that all the grants designed to protect white South Africans would have to be extended to include all South Africans. As a result, the shape and scale of social aid would have to be drastically altered in order to suit the country's new requirements. The main focus on the democratic government would have to be to remove the visible racial segregation that was part and parcel of the social

grant system in the apartheid-era. (As I will argue in Section 5.5, one mistake of the new government was to focus only on the inclusion of all populations, instead of also taking into consideration how the social grant system was development and structured and seeing how it could be fundamentally reformed to meet the urgent needs of the vulnerable in society.)

The first of these reforms that was called for, according to Black Sash (2010:5), was to bring equity to a social assistance system that was unequal based on race and gender. For example, male and female eligibility for old age grants was equalized to the age of 60 after strong civil society campaigning. It was also evident that even in and after 1994, many black people had a harder time getting grants than white people in similar socioeconomic situations (Black Sash, 2010:5). Many black people, for example, struggled to access grants because they lacked identity papers or proof of residency as a result of apartheid legislation. Others lived in rural, unserviced areas, with no access to electricity or drinking water, let alone government social assistance (Black Sash, 2010). To increase access to social grants, the national infrastructure had been developed in historically neglected areas, such as implementing a robust population registry programme and other programmes that make other socio-economic rights more available. Second, if grants were to be distributed to the whole population, the scale of the grants needed to be re-evaluated. When the government realized it wanted to expand access to the apartheid-era child maintenance grant, for example, the grant had to be withdrawn due to the high cost to the state, and a much cheaper childcare grant was implemented in its place (Lund, 2008:16).

Another important obstacle for the new government was maintaining economic interests while still adhering to the *Constitution*'s mandate. South Africa continues to face a number of social and economic challenges, including high official and hidden unemployment (especially among unskilled workers), unequal regional growth, and broad income disparities between social groups (gender and race) and unequal education.

More recently, the economic crises of 2008 and 2009 wreaked havoc on jobs, family income, the capacity of NGOs in the social assistance sector to carry out their missions, and the national budget. In addition, the rising prevalence of HIV/AIDS has increased the demand for social assistance, whether in the form of more Disability, Care Dependency, or Foster Care Grants.

The *South African Social Security Act of 2004* (RSA, 2004) mandated the establishment of the South African Social Assistance Agency (SASSA), a statutory body charged by Parliament with administering social grants on behalf of the Ministry and the government. The Department of Social Development therefore founded SASSA to take charge of social grants in South Africa in April 2005. In terms of its statutory and legislative mandate, the Agency must ensure the provision of adequate social security programmes against insecurity and poverty (SASSA, 2016). SASSA is in charge of the submission, acceptance, and payment of social grants (SASSA, 2016). Many South Africans have been able to obtain social grants since the SASSA was created.

5.4   The current scope of social grants and social welfare policy in South Africa

This section discusses the policies that govern how social grants are administered in South Africa. The reason for this section is to provide an understanding of the aim of social grants, as set out in the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004) and SASSA policies.

According to Seekings (2002), the South African social security scheme is an outlier in the developing world. In a time when many states are cutting welfare spending, South Africa maintains a firm commitment to state-led redistribution. This is due in part to the 1996 *Constitution* (RSA, 1996), which established the right to social security through the *Bill of Rights*. This has been supported by the ruling party's and numerous civil society organizations' continued commitment to redistribution. In addition, the new state inherited a government with

a heavily redistributive budget. The progressive taxation scheme ensured that the wealthy were adequately taxed to ensure that funds were available to help the needy.

South African welfare can be divided into three groups, according to Seekings (2002): kin/private transfers, market/contributory programmes, and state/non-contributory social assistance. The first, kin or private transfer, takes into account community-based or family-based social assistance and is thus unregulated by statute. Remittances, cash, and in-kind donations from family and friends can be received by these households (Seekings, 2002). Contributory plans, which include people who are or have been working, are the second group. Most people who are officially employed will contribute money on a monthly basis to a pension, unemployment fund, or medical assistance scheme that will pay out if they ever need it (Seekings, 2002). The state-run non-contributory social assistance programmes are the third group (Seekings, 2002), and the subject of this study. I discuss these non-contributory grants in two categories: child grants and adult grants. The different circumstances and targeting mechanisms, as well as how they have been justified, are given special attention.

All people, including children, are guaranteed the right to social security under the South African *Constitution's* Bill of Rights if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents. The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, of which South Africa is a signatory, emphasizes children's rights to social security, basic nutrition, housing, basic health care facilities, and social services, and section 27 of the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996) reflects this. Despite all these commitments, many children continue to live in deplorable circumstances, unable to access what they require to meet their basic needs. In 2006, more than 68% of children under the age of 18 lived in households with a monthly income of less than R1 200, according to the Child Institute (Proudlock, Dutschke, Jamieson, Monson & Smith, 2008). Since one's ability to access nutrition, basic services, and healthcare is determined by one's income, low income has an effect on caregivers' ability to meet their children's basic

needs. Even in areas where many basic services, such as healthcare, are provided free of charge, a lack of funds can limit people's ability to travel to healthcare facilities or schools, particularly for those living in rural areas.

Under the auspices of the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), the government launched a variety of child grants to address the issue of insufficient access to services. Child Support Grants are payments made to a child's parent or primary caregiver to help meet the child's basic needs before the child turns 18. Social grants reached 12,992,589 children aged 14 to 17 years in March 2021 (SASSA, 2021). Additional laws can apply to different categories of grant recipients. The *Child Care Act, 74 of 1983* (RSA, 1983) and the *Children's Amendment Act, 41 of 2007* (RSA, 2007) are two foundational laws that must be considered when determining child grants.

The basic Child Support Grant is available to all children under the age of 18 who meet the criteria of the means-based evaluation, which determines the most vulnerable people based on their income levels. The means-based test mandates that in order to qualify for this grant, the child's primary caregiver may receive no more than R34 800 per year if the caregiver is single and no more than R 69 600 per year jointly if the caregiver is married, as of October 2013 (SASSA, 2014:1) This grant provides the child with a R445 monthly transfer (2020 prices before the special relief increase).

The Foster Child Grant, which is given to a foster parent who has been legally appointed by a court to care for a child who has been orphaned, abused, neglected, or is at risk of abuse, is the second form of grant. This account receives a monthly transfer of R 1080.

The Care Dependency Grant is the third and final form of child grant, and it is designed to help a parent, primary caregiver, or foster parent who does not have enough money to care for a child under the age of 18 who has serious disabilities and requires ongoing care and support.

Before the grant may be accepted, a state-appointed medical officer must examine the child. If a caregiver is single, the caregiver must not earn more than R151 200 per year, and if the caregiver is married, he/she and his/her spouse must not jointly earn more than R302 400 per year. The monthly sum transferred for this grant is R1860.

Adult non-contributory grants are the second type of non-contributory grant. These grants are intended to provide income to low-income families and neighbourhoods.

The first adult allowance is the Old Age Grant, also known as the "State Old Age Pension," which is provided to men and women when they reach the age of 60. This grant effectively acts as an old-age pension for people who are not or have not been working, and who do not receive more than R49 200 per year or have assets worth more than R831 600 if they are single. A maximum of R1860 per month will be given to recipients.

The second is the Disability Grant, which is designed for adults who are financially disadvantaged and disabled, making them unable to support themselves sufficiently. People with a permanent disability (one that lasts longer than 12 months) or others that are temporarily disabled, are eligible for the award (disability may last less than 12 months). The beneficiary of a permanent Disability Grant is not guaranteed to obtain transfers indefinitely. It will only be valid for as long as the impairment is officially recognized as such. Only men and women between the ages of 18 and 60 are eligible for this grant; after that, they must apply for the older person grant. This grant is also subject to a means test, and individuals are only eligible if they earn a maximum of R49 200 if they are single, and R98 840 jointly if they are married (SASSA, 2014:1). This grant provides recipients with R1860 per month.

The War Veterans' Grant is the third award. Adults 60 and older who are in need and participated in either World War or both World Wars, and the Korean War are eligible for a grant. If you are single, you may not earn more than R49 920 per year, and if you are married,

you must not earn more than R99 840 jointly per year. These individuals receive a monthly transfer of R1880.

The Grant-in-Aid is the fourth and final adult grant, and it is designed for people who need daily help from another individual due to a disability.

5.4.1 Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004

The *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004) and its Amendments are the main pieces of legislation that facilitate the introduction of social assistance, for example, the *Social Assistance Act, 6 of 2008* (RSA, 2008). The grants were initially distributed through the Department of Social Development's provincial offices (Black Sash, 2010:11). The *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), specifies how social grants should be distributed. The *Act* specifies numerous aspects of administering these grants, including allocating social grants, determining who qualifies for social assistance, describing various grants, administering social assistance, setting up a social assistance inspectorate, and a general overview. The purpose of the *Act* is

> to provide for the rendering of social assistance to persons; to provide for the mechanism for the rendering of such assistance; to provide for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

In line with section 27(1) of the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996), according to the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), all citizens have the right to social security. This implies that they have a right to adequate social assistance if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants. The state is therefore required to take effective "legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of both of these rights" (RSA, 2004), in line with section 27(2) of the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996). The *Act* acknowledges that social assistance can only be provided efficiently if there are "uniform norms and standards, standardised delivery mechanisms, and a national policy for the efficient, economic,

and effective use of the limited resources available for social assistance, and for the promotion of equitable access to government services" (RSA, 2004). The *Act* shows that the legislators are well aware that "a proliferation of rules, regulations, and methods for enforcing them" (RSA, 2004) could hinder potential social assistance beneficiaries from accessing such assistance. Conversely, it could affect the economic interests of the state or provincial fiscus. It calls for the provision of "efficient, open, accountable, and coherent governance in respect of social assistance for the Republic as a whole" (RSA, 2004), as shown below.

According to Chapter 1 of the *Act*,

> 3. The objects of this Act are to-
> (a) provide for the administration of social assistance and payment of social grants;
> (b) make provision for social assistance and to determine the qualification requirements in respect thereof;
> (c) ensure that minimum norms and standards are prescribed for the delivery of social assistance; and
> (d) provide for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance. (RSA, 2004)

The difference between the objectives of this *Act* and of Acts prior to 1994 is that according to the 2004 *Act*, every race is included in the provision of social grants. There is no racial or gender discrimination when it comes to the provision of social grants. If a person falls within the stipulated criteria of eligibility for a grant, then the person gets it, provided the individual meets all the requirements. But is this enough? This is part of the question probed by this study, as discussed in Chapter 6. The *Act* needs to go beyond just including everyone, to reach a point where it ensures a better impact of social grants than just providing "unearned" income to everyone. However, before discussing this point in detail, it is important to discuss what is outlined in the *Act*.

According to section 5 of the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004), *eligibility for social assistance* (a Child Support Grant, Care Dependency Grant, Foster Child Grant, Disability Grant, Older Person Grant, War Veteran Grant, Grant in Aid, or Social Relief of Distress) is determined as follows:

5. (1) A person is entitled to the appropriate social assistance if he or she -
   (a) is eligible in terms of section 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13;
   (b) subject to section 17, is resident in the Republic;
   (c) is a South African citizen or is a member of a group or category of persons prescribed by the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, by notice in the *Gazette*;
   (d) complies with any additional requirements or conditions prescribed in terms of subsection (2); and
   (e) applies for social assistance in accordance with section 14(1).
  (2) The Minister may prescribe additional requirements or conditions in respect of-
   (a) income thresholds;
   (b) means testing;
   (c) age limits, disabilities and care dependency;
   (d) proof of and measures to establish or verify identity, gender, age, citizenship, family relationships, care dependency, disabilities, foster child and war veterans' status;
   (e) forms, procedures and processes for applications and payments;
   (f) measures to prevent fraud and abuse.

In addition to the eligibility criteria outlined above, each social grant has its own set of requirements. For the purposes of this analysis, it is useful to describe the grant forms that were the focus of the study in the interviews with recipients), namely the Child Care Grant, Foster Child Grant, Disability Grant and the Older Person (Old Age) Grant. Below are the criteria for each of these grants as outlined in the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004).

Section 6 outlines when a person is eligible for the *Child Support Grant*:

> If an individual is the primary caregiver for a child, he or she is eligible for a child support grant, according to section 5 outlined above.

Section 8 outlines when a person is eligible for the *Foster Child Grant*:

> Subject to section 5, a foster parent is eligible for a foster child grant for a child for as long as that child requires such care if–
> (a) the foster child is in need of care; and
> (b) he or she meets the requirements of the Child Care Act, 1983. (Act No. 74 of 1983).

Section 9 outlines when a person is eligible for the *Disability Grant*:

> Subject to section 5, a person is eligible for a disability grant if he or she–
> (a) has reached the prescribed age; and
> (b) is unable to obtain the means required to provide for his or her own maintenance through any service, employment, or profession due to a physical or mental disability.

Section 10 outlines when a person is eligible for the *Older Persons (old age) Grant*:

Subject to section 5, a person is eligible for an older person's grant if–
(a) In the case of a woman, she has reached the age of 60; and
(b) in the case of a man, he has reached the age of 65.

This requirement for men is no longer the case. In 2008, a law was passed that men can also applying for the Old Age Grant when they reach the age of 60. Hence, the *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004) was amended to Social Assistance Amendment Act 6 of 2008 (RSA,2008).

The *Social Assistance Act, 13 of 2004* (RSA, 2004) also includes instructions on how to apply for the grants listed above. The application for social assistance is outlined in section 14 of the *Act* as follows:

> (1) Any person who wishes to apply for social assistance contemplated in sections 6 to 13 must do so in the prescribed manner.
> (2) In considering an application made in terms of subsection (l), the Agency may conduct an investigation and request additional information.
> (3) (a) If the applicant is eligible for social assistance under this Act, the Agency must provide the necessary assistance.
> (b) If the applicant does not meet the requirements for social assistance under this Act, the Agency must notify the applicant in writing at the address or other contact information provided in the application, inform the applicant–
> (i) that he or she does not qualify for social assistance in terms of this Act;
> (ii) the reasons why he or she does not qualify; and
> (iii) of his or her right of appeal contemplated in section 18 and of the mechanism.
> (4) No person may divulge any personal information of an applicant furnished in and procedure to invoke that right respect of an application except—
> (a) to a person who requires it in order to perform a function in terms of this Act;
> (b) when required to do so by law or by an order of court; or
> (c) with the consent of the applicant.
> (5) If any information supplied by a beneficiary to the Agency in an application for a grant materially changes after that beneficiary has submitted that application, he or she must as soon as is reasonably possible after that change occurs, inform the Agency thereof.

Following the guidelines for application for social grants, there is a section that provides guidelines for abuse of social grants. This is a helpful segment since there are many differing viewpoints about how social grant applicants use their benefits and whether they are exploiting them. As outlined in section 19, *Abuse of social grants* guidelines are as follows:

(1) Where the Agency has reasonable grounds to suspect that a beneficiary, parent, procurator, or a primary care giver is abusing the social grant, the Agency may appoint a person to investigate such suspected abuse.

(2) If such person finds on objective grounds that such abuse has taken place, the Agency must appoint a person to receive the social grant on behalf of the beneficiary and to use it for the benefit of that beneficiary subject to any prescribed conditions.

(3) The Agency may-

    (a) suspend payment of a child support grant, foster child grant or a care dependency grant to a parent, primary care giver, foster parent or procurator, where the parent, primary care giver, foster parent or procurator–

        (i) is convicted of abuse or neglect of the child in respect of whom he or she receives a grant; or

        (ii) is found by the Agency or the Inspectorate to be incapable of using a grant for the benefit of the child in respect of whom he or she received it; and

    (b) appoint a person to receive the grant in respect of such a beneficiary or child pending the substitution of such parent, primary care giver, foster parent or procurator as the case may be.

These guidelines lay out what the Agency can do if a recipient is found to have abused the grant the person has been given. The next question is where the guidelines indicating how this money should be spent can be found. Moreover, what constitutes misuse of social grants, and what procedures must be followed if a grant recipient is suspected of misusing the funds remains a complex issue. How long would an investigative procedure take? There are many items in this *Act* that are not protected. What are the goals of these social grants, for example? There seems to be no escape mechanism or initiative to help people break free from the cycle of receiving social grants.

SASSA has indeed had to deal with a number of issues, one of which was the occurrence of fraudulent applications, necessitating tighter regulations (SASSA, 2012:1). Hence, Bathabile Dlamini, the Minister of Social Development, launched a new biometric card scheme as a payment solution for social grants in February 2012. The new system was implemented to combat fraud and corruption in the social assistance system. To activate the new system, beneficiaries had to re-register and check their details in order to receive a passport. Many people believed they needed to reapply, but this was merely a fraud-prevention measure. Only cardholders are now able to use their incentives under the new scheme. People can use their

cards anywhere in South Africa thanks to the new system, which means that they obtain their money on time. The new scheme, according to SASSA (2012:4), ensures that all beneficiaries receive the right sums due to them.

5.4.2   *Where is post-apartheid social welfare policy now?*

The section refers back to some early 20th century, apartheid and post-apartheid social welfare policies in South Africa, with the aim of identifying similarities and differences of the policies prior to and from 1994, to provide an understanding of what fundamentally social grants are.

One of the most celebrated transformations in recent history is South Africa's transformation from a racist and apartheid society that denied basic human rights to the majority of its people to a completely democratic country (Sanders & Chopra, 2006). Following the 1994 democratic election, the South African government transitioned from apartheid to majority rule. One of the tasks of the new government was to establish a national social development policy. This mandate resulted in the publication of a *White Paper on Developmental Social Welfare* (RSA, 1997; see also Midgley, 2001). Given the shortcomings of the apartheid regime's welfare policy, the South African government held comprehensive consultations with various stakeholders at various levels and undertook reforms to comply with international standards established at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen. The *White Paper on Developmental Social Welfare* (RSA, 1997) was also compatible with a social development approach and aligned with people-centred principles (Midgley, 2001).

According to Van der Berg (1997) and Midgley (2001), apartheid created the trappings of a welfare state, but only for the white community. Van der Berg (1997) argues that the minority (white South Africans) were granted special immunity from poverty and vulnerability in the form of social pensions, while the majority (black South Africans) were denied their rights due to discrimination. For the white minority, social welfare policy was modelled after Western

European institutional social policies, but for the black majority, a residual system of social welfare existed (Patel, 2008). Institutional care, statutory social work programmes, and casework services were also part of the remedial social treatment strategy. The delivery of services was racially segregated and organized. The service delivery model was labour-intensive, expensive, fragmented, and had a restricted scope. Midgley (2001) concurs that apartheid offered comparatively generous social services and benefits to needy whites while neglecting the pressing needs of the black majority. But this changed by the end of the apartheid era: Vorster, Rossouw and Muller (2000:8) point out that the "drafting of the Social Assistance Act of 1992 made provision for the fair application of all social security programs to all South African residents".

Patel (2008) also mentions that the social welfare system in South Africa has been refashioned in a wide-ranging consultative process to fulfil the country's constitutional mandate to uphold social and economic justice, democracy, human dignity, and equality since the country's democratic transition in 1994. Patel (2008) argues that the apartheid-era welfare scheme was inequitable, unequal, and based on ineffective service delivery methods. The post-1994 government only focused on ensuring that the programme is fair and that every citizen who qualifies for it is given access to it. The problem is that the government did not focus on changing the structure in such a way that it encourages or supports the development of previously disadvantaged citizens and ultimately provides them with a way of breaking out of the cycle of poverty that they find themselves in.

The aim of developmental welfare, according to the *White Paper on Developmental Social Welfare* (RSA, 1997), is to create a caring community that upholds welfare rights, facilitates the meeting of basic human needs, releases people's creative energy, assists them in achieving their goals, builds human capacity and self-reliance, and allows them to engage fully in all aspects of social, economic, and political life. Midgley (2001) explains that the 1994

government implemented a developmental policy centred on meeting basic needs, eradicating poverty, and investing in human capacities. The government responded to its challenges by announcing the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which would serve as the foundation for the country's post-apartheid economic and social development (ANC, 1994), in line with what became section 26 of the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996). The RDP document demonstrates that the new South African government was dedicated to an integrated and long-term phase of social change based on a participatory and humanistic approach.

The *White Paper on Developmental Social Welfare* (RSA, 1997) was essentially a plan for combating poverty (Dutschke, 2006). The *White Paper* places a special focus on the promotion of the family, children, and youth, using a developmental approach to social welfare, in light of political and social changes. The ability of families to work successfully and efficiently is a major factor in children's well-being. This is because children are vulnerable and need a nurturing and safe environment in which they can thrive, grow, and participate in family and social life. Families are responsible for instilling ideals and life skills, as well as providing a sense of belonging to their members. All of these elements are essential for a family's and society's healthy growth. However, there are limits to the fiscus – government engagement and public spending for social growth continues to climb. According to the then Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, government spending on social grants in the 2010 budget year totalled R89 billion per year; the initiative reached over 13 million people in that year, and social grants accounted for more than half of the income of the poorest 20% of households, doubling in real terms over the previous ten years (Gordhan, 2010).

The *Child Care Act, 74 of 1983* (RSA, 1983) was introduced during the apartheid era and was widely regarded as inadequate in securing and fostering children's rights in South Africa. The ANC government enacted a new Act, the *Children's Act, 38 of 2005* (RSA, 2005), after detailing all of the necessary changes. This Act was in turn later amended by a new *Children's*

Amendment Act, 41 of 2007 (RSA, 2007). It is one of the most crucial pieces of legislation passed by South Africa's first democratic government. The *Act* advances the goal of providing a systematic and coordinated approach to addressing current social issues and ensuring a brighter future for South African children. The *Children's Amendment Act, 41 of 2007* (RSA, 2007) and its accompanying legislation went into effect on 1 April 2010 (Budlender & Proudlock, 2010). Approximately 83% of the expenses of administering the *Children's Act* are covered by provincial social welfare agencies.

5.5   The debate about social grants

The debate on social grants, their impact and contribution are presented here, looking at the international context and broader debate, and the South African situation and call for transformation, decolonization and development in this developing country, with its large inequalities, and widespread poverty.

5.5.1   *Social welfare policies in developed countries*

To enable some sense of welfare policies and their purposes in the international context, I provide some information on the international situation in this section.

According to the United Nations (2002) and the European Commission (2005), the economically active population of the European Union has decreased significantly, and longer-term forecasts show that this trend will continue. Changes in family dynamics, as well as rapid and drastic changes in Europe's demography, have ramifications for social welfare policies. Not only are overall numbers falling, but the population's age structure is shifting as well. According to the United Nations (2002), increased life expectancy could mean that many people in Europe may live past the age of 80 in the second half of the twenty-first century. The resulting improvement in the "support ratio" would have a direct effect on social policies. In

light of the current situation, the majority of European countries are revising their social policies and devising implementation strategies. The principle of social solidarity, for example, underpins the Council of Europe's approach to social welfare policy. According to their strategy, social cohesion is described as a society's ability to ensure the wellbeing of all of its citizens, while minimizing disparities (Sidorenko & Walker, 2004).

This approach emphasizes social stability over social inclusion or exclusion. This policy, according to the Council of Europe, promotes social cohesion and reduces social exclusion (Murray, 2004). The council argues that focusing solely on family support is insufficient, and that those developing policies to protect children's rights must consider what children themselves require and want (European Commission, 2005).

On the other hand, the American culture of conservatism (the free market economic model) has left private institutions to shoulder more of the social welfare burden. The United States of America itself does not have a unified welfare system (Karger & Stoesz, 2005). In comparison to other developed countries, the central government has had a limited role in social welfare provision. American culture is democratic and capitalistic; entrepreneurs are free to establish social welfare services in the private sector, both as non-profit agencies and also as for-profit corporations. The outcomes are mixed – Karger and Stoesz (2005) lament the inadequacy of social welfare policy provision in the context of the United States of America.

5.5.2   *Social grants and their impact on development in South Africa*

Social grants have proven to be an important mitigating factor against the poverty levels in our country, according to Minister of Social Development Bathabile Dlamini (2016). This demonstrates the department's belief in the social grant system; however, it does not solve all of the issues that recipients face. The South African social assistance scheme, according to

Budlender and Woolard (2012:48), is more mature than that of most middle-income countries. This is in accordance with the *Constitution* (RSA, 1996), as already discussed above.

Most social grants are designed to help people get out of poverty, and they provide a means test to ensure that only those with income and assets below a certain level receive assistance. Social grants, according to research, help to alleviate poverty and thus arguably contribute to South Africa's growth. According to one report, without the grants, South Africa's poverty rate would be six percentage points higher (Budlender & Woolard, 2012:48). While little research has been done on the effect of social grants on income inequality, the research that has been done so far shows that they do (Budlender & Woolard, 2012:48). These findings suggest the effectiveness of social grants in decreasing income inequality (Armstrong & Burger, 2009), but the opposite has been argued by Van der Berg (2010, see Section 5.2.2).

The importance of social assistance in alleviating poverty in South Africa has been emphasized by a number of scholars. Most of the earlier research on the effect of social grants (or social assistance or targeted transfers) on poverty focused on the effectiveness of the Old Age Grant (Case & Deaton, 1998; Jensen, 2004) and the value of this source of income for household welfare and household food security (Case & Deaton, 1998; Jensen, 2004). Ravallion (2003) emphasizes the critical position of targeted transfers in poverty alleviation, citing growing proof of some achievements that refute the widely held view that individuals other than the intended beneficiaries reap the benefits of targeted transfers or that their coverage is insufficient to make a significant difference. Devereux (2007), on the other hand, claims that social safety nets can help alleviate structural poverty by investing a portion of welfare transfers in income-generating operations, schooling, social networks, and the acquisition of productive assets. Nonetheless, research on social grants indicates that even if current grant take-up rates were 100%, a significant portion of the South African population (as much as half, according to one report) would remain impoverished (Woolard, 2003).

According to Samson, Van Niekerk & MacQuene (2006:1), social grants play a critical role in poverty reduction and social growth in South Africa. Regardless of which approach is used to calculate the impact measure or describe the poverty line, the authors argue that South Africa's social security system effectively reduces poverty. The importance of social grants in South Africa is highlighted in this study. According to Lekezwa (2011:88), income alleviates poverty in general, and all types of income reduce poverty, though some sources of income have a greater impact on poverty alleviation than others. A social grant is a form of stipend. Despite the fact that it is unearned money, it has a lower poverty rate than other forms of income. By moving people closer to the poverty line compared to their share of income, social grants are successful in reducing the intensity and depth of poverty (Lekezwa, 2011:89). To put it another way, a rand spent on social grants is six times more productive than a rand received on the job (Armstrong & Burger, 2009:11).

Historically, the provision of social assistance has been seen as a key aspect of the welfare system aimed at preventing hardship during South Africa's transition to multi-racial democracy. The current social assistance system mainly consists of social grants aimed at the disabled, the elderly, and children born on or after 31 December 1996, with over 16 million recipients (SASSA, 2013). In reality, when compared to other developing countries and even Western European countries, South Africa's social spending in terms of social grants is extremely high. As a result, it is clear that South Africa's social grants are substantial and impressive in relation to both developed and developing countries. In addition to South Africa's remarkable coverage of social assistance, the effect of social grants on household formation suggests that the impact of social grants reaches beyond those who apply to receive them (Armstrong & Burger, 2009; Tanga & Tangwe, 2014).

It is evident from the research done by the above-mentioned authors that social grants do play a role in poverty reduction and income inequality, therefore it can be concluded that they play

a role in the development of South Africa. This is even though it focuses only on the development of individuals (grant recipients), through receiving unearned income, rather than a major development in the broader economy of South Africa.

There are many strong sentiments around the grant system and much debate around the usefulness of these grants, and also what the way out of the poverty cycle is. This debate critiques the structure of which social grants are an agent – a form of development that does not take people out of the cycle of poverty but restricts them to a structure that keeps them within the same cycle.

Another thing to note is that the *Social Assistance Act, 6 of 2008* is not different from the pre-1994 Act. This then raises the question of whether these social grants are indeed agents of change or not. After the first fully democratic election in 1994, the government declared its intention to transform South Africa's social assistance system, which had been virtually crafted for the white racial group to give them special protection against poverty and vulnerability, which were comparatively minimal among the white population under the Nationalist Party apartheid government. Unemployment was low, given whites' preferential access to jobs and education, and specific measures were taken to absorb the unemployed into the labour market. Since 1994, social grants are not being used to prevent poverty, but they are claimed to be used to try to mitigate or to take people out of the cycle of poverty. In view of the fact that an Act virtually identical to that from the apartheid era is in force, it is ironic to hope that it will yield different results. Doing the same old thing to achieve new results makes the hope of change unachievable.

It needs to be noted that transformation initiatives since 1994 have involved the transformation of the provision of social assistance, the social security regime, welfare services and protection for the vulnerable, empowering individuals and communities, and perspectives on HIV/Aids

prevention and treatment programmes with the aim of alleviating poverty, promoting inclusion and equality, and creating a caring society, as noted by the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME, 2014). The pre-1994 social welfare services system, both in its design and in its implementation, it was primarily focused on the socio-economic privileges of the white population, so that it discriminated against other populations groups in South Africa, only changing slowly to address the needs of the majority by the early 1990s. According to the review by DPME (2014), the system was inefficient and ineffective, with fragmented and duplicated services that did not meet the human needs of vulnerable and poor citizens. The system did not display consistency in operating approaches and priorities, as there were 14 different departments in the area of social welfare (DPME, 2014). One of the flaws of the pre-1994 system is that health and welfare sectors were grouped under a single Department of Health and Welfare, and health issues usually took priority over welfare concerns when it came to tangibles such as budgetary allocations (DPME, 2014). Because the social assistance system was grounded on discrimination against other population groups, the white population could more easily access better funded, and, by extension, higher-quality services (Department of Social Development, 2013:6).

The government of the day adopted a traditional approach to social welfare services, namely a focus on rehabilitative and specialised interventions, which are necessary, but was not appropriate in all cases, as it did not allow for a holistic approach (DPME, 2014). This approach did not take into account and respond to the needs of the vulnerable citizens, as no attention was paid to empowering the poor and vulnerable, or communities, to ensure that they eventually became self-sufficient (DPME, 2014). This is a problem that we are still currently faced with as a country. Every financial year, the budget to provide social grants increases, and so does the number of recipients. However, these grants do not provide recipients with an opportunity to be self-sufficient and to break out of the cycle of poverty. This situation leads

to the dilemma that this study looks at, and the question of what social grants are – agents of change or interventions that merely reproduce the structure of development that exploits the poor. In order to answer this question, it is also important to look at the socio-economic status of South Africa since 1994 to illustrate or paint a picture of what has happened on the ground after the newer forms of social grant have been implemented.

5.6   Conclusion

South Africa is amongst the most unequal countries in the world when it comes to the distribution of income and wealth. South Africa's classification as an upper-middle-income country is unduly influenced by outliers at the upper income end, but the majority of households are either poor, or at risk of becoming poor. South Africa continues to struggle with very high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. The prevalence of these problems, more than two decades after apartheid has officially ended, is cause for concern.

The story of apartheid-era social welfare is one that reflects an ideology of racial segregation and inequality. During the apartheid era, resources were unequal distributed, thereby marginalising the larger part of the population. By 2015, nearly half of the South African population could still be considered chronically poor, indicating the persistence of poverty, despite continuous provision of social grants to the poor. The next chapter discusses the idea of social grants by narrating the life experiences of social grants recipients in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1   Introduction

This chapter sets out the research methodology that was used in the study. The discussion includes the research design, research paradigm, research approach and the data collection method. This chapter explains the process that was followed in collecting the qualitative data of this research. Data were collected from a sample from four areas in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, namely Mamelodi in the east, Atteridgeville in the south-west, Soshanguve and Winterveld in the north-west (see the map in Appendix A).

6.2   Research design

This study assumed a comparative case study design. According to Krehl and Weck (2020), comparative case studies are conducted when a researcher wants to understand and explain how structures or experiences within a context influence the success of a programme or policy initiatives. The information that is captured by means of a comparative case study is useful in developing interventions to assist in achieving intended outcomes (Krehl & Weck, 2020). Such case studies involve analysing and synthesising any patterns, similarities and differences across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal (Krehl & Weck, 2020).

This study adopted a comparative case study design because I wanted to understand the idea of social grants by investigating the lived experiences of social grant beneficiaries. An advantage of this research design is that one is able cover two or more cases in a way that produces more generalizable knowledge about causal questions – such as how and why particular programmes such as social grants work, or fail to work (Goodrick, 2014). Though a comparative case study, I was able to assess whether the experiences of social grants recipients

were similar, taking into account at their locations within the larger metropolitan municipality. This research design was suitable because the personal stories and reflections of the research participants were a key source of knowledge in this study. I was able to undertake the study using a decolonial paradigm, as discussed in the next section.

6.3   Research paradigm

In this study, I used a decolonial interpretive paradigm, with the intention of decrypting the deeper meaning of social grants using a decolonial epistemic lens. Using decoloniality as a research paradigm has allowed me to see beyond the limited vision of earlier analytical tools. Through the decolonial lens, I was able to decode the meaning of the responses from social grants recipients and understand the meaning of a social grant in South Africa.

I used this paradigm to interpret the data gathered from the literature and document analysis and was able to trace the social grant system back to its colonial roots in order to understand what social grants are. Through this paradigm I was able to question the role of social grants, as well as the policies that govern this initiative. Using a decolonial approach I was able to draw attention to the colonial history of social grants and poverty in South Africa. Using this lens, it was possible to discern and acknowledge the fact that social grants, even though they may be a good initiative, remain embedded in the structure of coloniality. The decolonial lens that I used in this study was discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Through field work, in the form of interviews, I was able to gather qualitative data and pay attention to the unique identities of the research participants, as well as their family backgrounds, in order to contextualize the impact of social grants in their lives. Through this lens I was able to see whether these identities played a role in the impact of the social grants

they received on them. I used this paradigm in four areas in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. My intention was not to generalize the experience of the participants, but to obtain a thick description of their experiences in order to understand the agency of social grants.

6.4 Research approach

The study adopted a literature review and a qualitative research design which focused on understanding some aspects of social life of social grant recipients, and this research design used words and themes from the interviews as data for analysis, as recommended by Bricki and Green (2007).

I began with a systematic review of literature around poverty in South Africa, the structure of social grants, and the role they play according to the research presented by other authors, as well as to have a look into the policy structure around social grants. The literature was useful in enabling me to develop the research paradigm and formulate the questions which would shape or be used in the qualitative data collection phase, and later for allowing comparison with the profiles, and qualitative data collected from the social grant recipients.

According to Bricki and Green (2007), a qualitative study should gain insight into and through the qualitative data that has been collected, whereas a quantitative study aims to understand numerical (quantitative) data. Qualitative research is a study which is focused on answering questions, by systematically using a predefined set of measures to answer the questions (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2011:1). Qualitative research can be used effectively to gather information around the culture, behaviour, values, opinions and the social contexts of particular populations (Mack *et al*., 2011:1). Based on this rationale, I chose to conduct a qualitative study, because in this study I wanted to look at information supplied by the interviewed participants in their own context.

Kothari (2004:4) describes a qualitative research design as one that looks at and assesses the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of the participants. Qualitative research produces data that are not quantitative, and that are not analysed using rigorous quantitative analysis. Qualitative research uses data collection methods such as focus group interviews, projective techniques, and in-depth interviews (Kothari, 2004:4). In this case, I used interviews (see Section 6.5). As mentioned above, in this study a qualitative research methodology was suitable because I aimed to provide a profile of social grants recipients, with the aim of assessing the role these grants play(ed) in their lives. I wanted to answer questions, as suggested by Patton and Cochran (2002), about what, how and why of the phenomenon. The qualitative research design allowed me to answer the complex research questions of the study (see Section 1.5 in chapter 1).

The literature review was thus supplemented with additional data, so that I could compare existing information to the empirical qualitative data that I collected. In profiling the participants, the qualitative research design proved to be useful, and allowed me to gather and analyse the data discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis. The reasoning behind adopting this particular research design draws on Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2003:21) view that "research questions are more important than the method or the paradigm that lie beneath the method they go so far as to refer to this as the dictatorship of the research question". Therefore, I conducted this study acknowledging that the research questions I have articulated indeed determined the research design. In the concluding chapter of the thesis, I thus provide answers that I discovered from the research data.

6.5   Data collection methods

As indicated above, a literature review was conducted and this included document analysis, as is covered in the literature review chapter (Chapter 5). Policies, and reports on social grants were used as a method of data collection, which provided a more in-depth discussion on social grants and poverty specific to the South African situation. Through the literature review, I was able to reflect on what the literature was saying and could tie it back to what it meant for the study that I was undertaking.

Qualitative methods were used in this research; therefore, the data that were generated took the form of words, not numbers. According to Bricki and Green (2007), some of the most common data collection approaches in qualitative research are individual interviews (conducted with general or key informants) and focus group discussions. These data collection techniques are popular because they are very effective in giving a human face to research problems (Mack *et al*., 2011:29), which was one of the intentions with this study.

This research included face-to-face in-depth interviews as a tool to collect the required empirical data. The sample of 20 participants (see Section 6.7) who were interviewed were all social grant recipients. An interview guide was used when interviewing the participants. I used semi-structured interview questions to guide the conversations that I needed to cover when interviewing the participants. The topic and interview guide left room for any additional data that might come out from the interview between myself and the interviewee. A topic guide usually provides a list of the key questions that the researcher would like to cover in the interview, and also could include some prompts that can be used to encourage the interviewee to talk in more detail about specific issues (Bricki & Green, 2007).

According to Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins and Popjoy (1998:4), the two main data collection techniques used in a qualitative study are usually individual interviews and the observation of

participants in groups. In-depth interviews are an open-ended and guided discussion that involves conducting thorough individual interviews with a small number of respondents (UKEssays, 2013). The main objective is to discover their perspectives on a particular situation, idea or programme (Boyce, 2006). In-depth interviews were therefore used to explore and understand people's thoughts, ideas and behaviours. During the data collection process, I also made fieldwork notes from my observation of the areas where I collected the data. This information was useful, especially when I was writing the research analysis chapter, in which I was able to connect the themes in a manner that related to the context in which it was embedded.

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that the researcher can obtain comprehensive information from the participants than other data collection methods such as surveys (UKEssays, 2013). The secondary advantage of in-depth interviews is to allow interviewers to go deeper with the participant and gain more knowledge and insight than a focus group allows for (UKEssays, 2013). In-depth interviewing is a highly useful method for obtaining social research data, when done proficiently, it is a highly effective method for obtaining data for social research. The following are the disadvantages of in-depth interviews:

- The data obtained from interviews cannot be generalized to the population. Instead, the researcher can only suggest a definite pattern, if one is obtained from the interview data (Morris, 2015). This disadvantage was mitigated by the fact that I was looking into outlining a pattern from profiling the recipients to conclude the role of social grants, when looking at their profiled life stories, and I was not attempting to provide a blanket generalization regarding all social grant recipients. I was indeed able to discern a similar pattern between different social grant recipients, even though there were some cases where there were differences.

- Interviewing is potentially a time-consuming and expensive method, and, in some cases, securing interviewees may be difficult and involve much effort (Morris, 2015). I also experienced this challenge. Some individuals approached as potential participants did not want to be interviewed, as they did not acknowledge the importance of participating in the study. Other individuals invited to participate expected to be remunerated for their participation, which was not possible and would be unethical. When a potential participant declined participation, the researcher asked the person whether he/she knew some other people in the area who might be willing to participate and who were social grant recipients. This kind of snowballing proved to be very useful in securing interviews with the final 20 participants, even though the data collection process took longer than expected.

I conducted in-depth interviews with the participants by requesting an appointment and coming back at a time that suited them, instead of expecting to interview them on the spot. The disadvantage with this technique, however, was the extra cost of travelling to the same place twice. At the beginning of each session, I explained what the research was about, how the data would be collected, what it would be used for, and how it would be stored and the duration of storing the data after the thesis had been collated. I requested informed consent, including consent to audio record the interview, and once a person agreed to participate, he or she signed a consent form before I started the interview (see the discussion of the ethical aspects in Section 6.11 and Appendix C).

According to Mack *et al*. (2011: 30), interview data consist of tape recordings, typed transcripts of tape recordings, and the interviewer's notes. For purposes of this study, I recorded the interviews, with the participants' consent, so that I could capture the discussions. I also took

notes during the interviews. The interviews ranged in length from 20 to 45 minutes. Participants were encouraged to use their home language(s) to be able to express themselves better. I am fluent in five African languages, namely isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi, as well as in English, which made it simple for me to interview the participants and to transcribe and translate the recordings later.

6.6   The study population

A study population refers all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study (Burns & Grove, 2003:43). Polit and Hungler (1999:43) define a study population as all the subjects that meet a set of specifications, including the entire group of people that the research is interested in and to whom the research results can be generalized. Avwokeni (2006:92) describes the population of study as the "set of all participants that qualify for a study".

For the purposes of this study, the study population consisted of social grant recipients residing in City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in the Gauteng province. More specifically, the participants were selected from Mamelodi (including one participant who spent most of her time in Mamelodi, although she lived in Hammanskraal), Atteridgeville, Soshanguve, and Winterveld. All these areas are established townships in the larger City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (see map of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in Appendix A). All four areas are low-income neighbourhoods of the municipality and exhibit both urban and rural characteristics. These four areas display high levels of unemployment and a high number of households in informal settlements. There are many recipients of social grants in these areas (SASSA, 2013), and this formed the basis of their selection for purposes of this study.

6.7   Sampling techniques and sampling size

According to Awoniyi, Aderanti and Tayo (2011), a sample is any percentage or portion of a population selected for the study that is required in order to obtain data for the study. Samples in qualitative research are usually purposive. Furthermore, a sample of participants is selected because it is assumed that they can provide useful information for a particular study (Bricki & Green, 2007).

I used a maximum variation sample strategy to ensure that the study is credible and that the sample selected would represent the demographics in the study area. Maximum variation sampling is a sample that is chosen to ensure a wide variety of participants (World Health Organization, 2016:1). A maximum variation strategy selects key demographic variables that are likely to influence participants' view of the topic (Bricki & Green, 2007). For this study, I included participants who were social grants beneficiaries, as they could provide inside views with regard to social grants, compared to individuals who are not social grant recipients.

I had a fieldwork plan in place to decide how I was going to go around the target areas to recruit participants for this study. With the use of a maximum variation sample, I also already knew the profile of participants from whom I needed to collect data. There were five inclusion criteria. Participants had to

- receive one of the following grants: the Older Age Grant (pension), the Child Support Grant, the Foster Child Grant or the Disability Grant;
- be between the age of 20 and 75 (the aim was to have at least two participants from each age group: 20-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61-70; and 71-75);
- live in one of the initially selected study areas, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soshanguve, or Winterveld (the aim was to interview at least two participants from each of the four areas, but one participant lived in Hammanskraal, and spent most of her time in Mamelodi

because she worked as a health care worker at an old age home there, so she is included in the Mamelodi group); and

- have received a social grant for at least a year, to be able to assess the impact the grant has had on household income.

These inclusion criteria proved to be extremely useful when recruiting participants, as I knew exactly what kind of participants I needed to interview. These participants were selected randomly, even though there were strict selection criteria. The greatest challenge that I was faced with occurred when I was preparing to recruit the participants. At first, I was not sure where to start, and what reception I would get from the potential participants. In the communities, when I arrived, my first step was to ask people whether they knew anyone who earned a social grant and if they could show me where these people were located. Most people I spoke to would ask what the study is about, and after explaining the purpose for collecting data, I was usually referred to at least two people in the area. Once I had located the identified individuals, I would then apply the principles of snowball sampling.

Snowballing proved to be useful in cases where some potential participants did not want to be interviewed. Snowball sampling is applied when samples with the target characteristics are not easily accessible (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaei, 2017). It is called snowball sampling because (in theory) once you have the ball rolling, it picks up more "snow" along the way and becomes larger and larger. I would ask participants if they knew someone who matched the inclusion criteria, who would be willing to participate in the research. This made recruiting participants simpler because I would then go to an individual and request the person's participation in the study. Even though this meant that the data collection took longer than expected, I was sure that I interviewed participants that matched the inclusion criteria. I received a large number of

referrals, from these referrals I randomly selected people whom I would go to from the list of referrals. The principles of random selection selected were still observed. More information on the profile of each selected participant is discussed in Chapter 7.

According to Crossman (2019), a homogeneous purposive sample is one that is selected for having a shared characteristic or set of characteristics. I chose participants that had similar characteristics – for the purposes of this study, they were based in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and were social grant recipients. I wanted to have a fair representation of the different types of social grants, with the highest number of recipients being those who received Child Support Grants, and Old Age Grants. I also looked at the age groups of the participants, as I aimed to select a fair representation of participants in the age range of 20 to 70 years. The selected sample of 20 participants represents the social grants recipients that reside in City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, as different age groups are represented, both genders are represented, as well as four types of social grants, namely the Older Age Grant (pension), the Child Support Grant, the Foster Child Grant and the Disability Grant.

A question may arise as to why I chose 20 participants instead of having more or fewer. In qualitative research, several researchers indicate reaching data saturation between 20 and 50 interviews (Hill et al., 2014 & Jackson et al. 2000). However, other aspects also played a role in the choice of the number of participants. Saturation in qualitative research is often a complicated and hard notion to define. According to Bowen (2008), saturation has come to be understood as a point in a qualitative research project when there is enough data to ensure the research questions can be answered.

For purposes of this research, I was more focused on the quality of data from the interviews, instead of focusing only on the number of interviews. Profiling participants through an in-depth interview involves the process of getting rich data that is meaningful for the thematic analysis process. According to Burmeister and Aitken (2012), as with all aspects of qualitative research, the depth of the data is often more important than the numbers. A small number of rich interviews or sources can have the importance of dozens of shorter interviews. For Fusch and Ness (2015): the easiest way to differentiate between rich and thick data is to think of rich as quality and thick as quantity. Thick data is a lot of data; rich data is many-layered, intricate, detailed, nuanced, and more. One can have a lot of thick data that is not rich; conversely, one can have rich data but not a lot of it. The trick, if you will, is to have both.

In this study, the empirical data are used to confirm or provide a different view from what is presented in the theoretical framework and the literature review discussions. The data are used as evidence of the fundamental role of social grants, with a special look at the role grants play in the lives of its recipients. These roles have been analysed holistically, instead of just answering through a sentence provided in each interview. The profiles provided background on the socio-economic status of each participant, and also comparing it with the history of the participant's family. This allowed me to map whether these recipients are in a repetitive cycle of poverty or not. This has thus been used as a justification for the sample size.

6.8   The research participants

In this section, I briefly outline the sample that was interviewed for the study. Further analysis of the information gathered in the interviews is discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

In total, 20 social grant recipients were interviewed. They all reside in different townships in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, which is in Gauteng province. Gauteng is the province with second highest number of social grant recipients, according to SASSA's statistics for 2018/19 (SASSA, 2019), with 1 749 543 social grant recipients in those years.

Of the 20 participants, seven resided in the Winterveld or Soshanguve area, five in Atteridgeville, and seven in Mamelodi. One resided in Hammanskraal, but spent most of her time in Mamelodi, and is therefore grouped with the Mamelodi participants. I opted to interview participants that live in different areas around the municipality to which I had easiest geographical access, with the aim of getting a fair representation of everyone in the municipality. I interviewed men and women in the age range of 20 to 75 years. More demographic details about the exact profiles of the participants and their actual age are discussed in Chapter 7.

Of the 20 participants, only three were men, while the remaining 17 were women. One reason for this is that, according to StatsSA (2014), more women than men depend on social grants. In 2014, for example, only 10.1% of men depended on social grants. This applies in particular to Child Support Grants, since there were over 5 million female caregivers, but only about 100 000 male caregivers (Department of Social Development, 2010). I therefore decided to interview more women than men. A second reason is that of the male social grant recipients, most are Old Age Grant (pension) recipients; for this reason, I interviewed men who received this kind of grant.

Out of the 20 interviewed participants, ten were Old Age Grant recipients, 12 were Child Support Grant recipients, one was a Foster Child Grant recipient, and one was a Disability

Grant recipient. Note that some of the interviewed recipients received more than one type of social grant, hence the apparent discrepancy in the number of recipients.

6.9   Data analysis

According to Burns and Grove (2003:479), data analysis is a technique for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that can be interpreted by the researcher. The process of analysing data is a stimulating and creative process that requires the researcher to be immersed in the data gathered and have a good relationship with the participants (De Vos, 2002:339).

For the purposes of analysing the qualitative data that I gathered, I used thematic analysis as a way of clearly interpreting themes that emerged from the data. A thematic analysis looks at all the data to find the common issues that come across in the data and to identify the main themes that summarise all the views collected (Bricki & Green, 2007). I translated interviews that were conducted in a vernacular language to English to get all the raw data into the same language (participants were encouraged to use their home language(s) to be able to express themselves better). The interviews were translated so that I could code the interviews and develop themes based on the collected data.
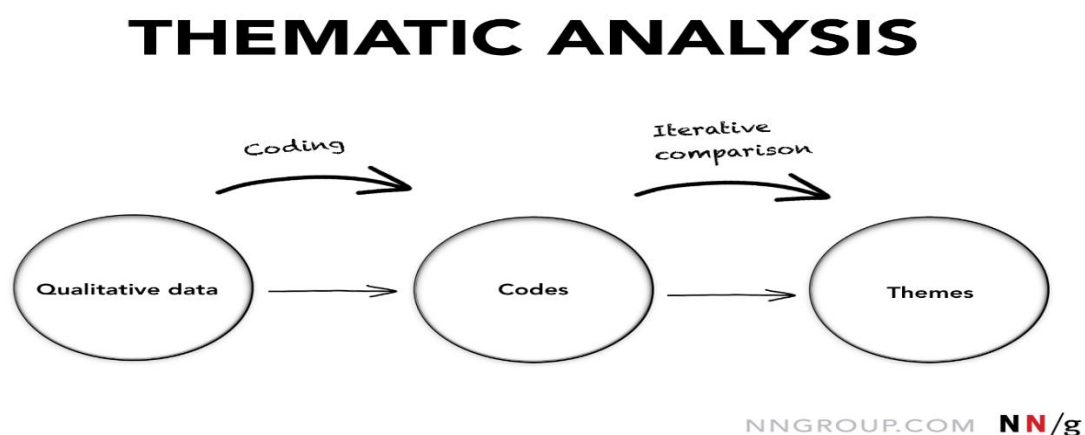
Figure 6.1: Thematic analysis process

Source: Rosola (2019)

The above illustration is an indication of the process followed when interpreting and analysing the data that were collected. According to Bricki and Green (2007), thematic analysis is the most common technique used in descriptive qualitative projects. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic technique that is used for classifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke 2006:79). This type of technique slightly organizes and describes data sets in (rich) detail. However, it does more than this, as it interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The key stages in a thematic analysis are as follows: to read and annotate transcripts, and then to identify themes (Bricki & Green 2007).

I followed the outline by Braun and Clarke (2006) when analysing the data. I went through the big chunks of data to identify similarities and relationships from the different interviews. I applied visual analysis of the data, through reading and highlighting each transcript, looking at the relationships that emerged in the data. These highlighted sections were then organized using descriptive labels, according to the findings that came out of the data. The categories of findings are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.10 Validity and reliability

The requirement for reliability and validity applies to qualitative research (just as it does to quantitative research), and this section of the study explains how the study instrument was validated. The users of the findings should be confident that the findings discussed in Chapter 7 reflect what the research set out to answer, rather than reflecting the bias of the researcher. In practical terms, this means that the techniques used in the research are reproducible, in other words, "someone else could use the same topic guide to generate similar information" (Noble

& Smith, 2015) and systematic, in other words, these techniques should ensure that the researcher does not simply pick out interviewees or data that "support the researcher's pre-existing ideas about the answers" (Noble & Smith, 2015). They should also be credible – this means that "the questions asked, for instance, and how they are asked will be reasonable ones for generating valid (or 'truthful') accounts of phenomena" (Noble & Smith, 2015). Finally, they should be transparent: "methods will be written up so that readers can see exactly how the data [were] collected and analysed" (Noble & Smith, 2015).

6.10.1 Validity

Validity of research implies that a measuring instrument measures what it is expected to measure (Golafshani, 2003). "Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring" (Uys & Basson, 1991:80). Validity means, for example, that a test conducted to measure the impact of food security on poverty reduction should measure only the impact of food security on poverty reduction, and the relevant questionnaire should be developed accordingly. Another definition is that validity in research looks at whether the scientific findings are accurate and truthful (Le Comple & Goetz, 1982:32). Similarly, Noble and Smith (2015) explain validity as the precision with which the findings accurately reflect the data. A valid study should validate what exists and a valid instrument or measure should measure what it is supposed to measure (Brink, 1993:35).

For the purposes of this study, I ensured that the interviews were conducted according to a schedule of semi-structured questions to measure or elicit answers on the issues that the study is about to ensure that the qualitative data provided findings in accordance with the research questions that I outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

6.10.2 *Reliability*

According to Polit and Hungler (1997:296), reliability refers to how *consistently* and *accurately* an instrument measures what it is designed to measure. What reliability means is that when a study and its results are reliable, then the same results can be obtained if the study is to be replicated by other researchers using the same method (Uys & Basson, 1991:75). Reliability is thus about ensuring consistency, stability, and repeatability of participant responses, as well as the reliability of the researcher to collect and record information accurately (Selltiz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1976:182). For instance, a respondent is expected to give the same answer when he or she is asked the same question repeatedly. If the responses change, then the reliability of the questions and their answers is lost.

In interviewing the respondents, I ensured the reliability of the responses from the participants by framing the questions in a way that provides consistency or reliability. I also had control questions that were used as prompts to ensure the reliability of the responses the participant gave. In cases where respondents' answers were different from what they said initially, I would verify the answer by returning to the participants' first response. I would further ask the respondent concerned which of the two answers was the correct or most accurate answer of the two. I did this to ensure that the most correct answers were recorded.

6.11 Ethical considerations

The main concern of research ethics is the interaction between the researcher and the people who are studied (Mack *et al.*, 2011:8). The researcher has an ethical responsibility always to keep in mind the rights of the participants who are requested to provide knowledge for the research (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003:314). One of the ethical considerations of this study was

to show respect to the participants by a commitment to ensure confidentiality regarding the personal information and identities of the research participants. According to Polit and Hungler (1999:143), confidentiality in research means that the researcher will not share the unique responses and personal or identifying information of the participant with anyone. The identity of a participant is protected by making sure that it is impossible to link aspects of data to a specific person or institution (Polit and Hungler, 1999:143).

The dignity and privacy of all research participants were respected in the study. The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Unisa Department of Developmental Studies, College of Human Science Ethics Committee, and the application was approved. The letter of informed consent, the consent form that was used when collecting data, as well as the ethical clearance certificate, are attached as Appendices C and D respectively. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, that the data would be treated with confidentiality and their informed consent would be obtained. They were also be informed that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. The right to withdraw was explained to the participants before the interview was conducted, as recommended by Holloway (2005:292). According to Mack *et al*. (2011:9), informed consent is an instrument used to guarantee that people understand what type of research study they are going to participate in, and it allows them to consciously decide whether they want to participate in the study. Informed consent is not only about asking participants to sign a paper that has been approved by an ethics committee – the researcher also has the responsibility of ensuring that the participants understand the purpose of the study before agreeing to take part in the study.

6.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided a background of the methodology that was used in this study. In this chapter I clearly outlined how the qualitative methodology was used as well as the sampling techniques that I used and there was also a discussion on the data analysis chapter. In chapter 7, I will be discussing in detail that results that were derived from the empirical data.

CHAPTER 7:

THE IDEA OF SOCIAL GRANTS AND

THE LIFE EXPERIENCES OF ITS BENEFICIARIES

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the research findings, including the empirical data collected through in-depth interviews (as outlined in Section 1.9) and the insights derived from the data. The findings are articulated through the themes that emerged from the analysis of what the participants said in their interviews. The themes that are discussed in this chapter were identified through thematic analysis of the field work data. The chapter provides a comparative description of the participants' characteristics, to unpack the role of social grants in the lives of the participants using a decolonial lens. In this chapter I outline the lived experiences of the people that this "development programme" is serving and illustrate the effects and legacies of apartheid by discussing the situations of poverty and inequality that led these participants to apply for a social grant. The discussion also furthers understanding of what, fundamentally, a social grant is.

7.2   Findings on the participants' individual situations

The participants that were interviewed reside in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, specifically in the following areas: Mamelodi (including one participant from Hammanskraal who lives mainly in Mamelodi), Atteridgeville, Soshanguve and Winterveld. These areas are in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in the Gauteng Province, South Africa, which also includes Pretoria, the administrative capital city of South Africa. The areas selected for the interviews are places that are classified as "townships" and "villages" in some parts. The City of Tshwane, like the metropolitan municipalities of Ekurhuleni and the

City of Johannesburg, is a Category A municipality. However, unlike the other two metros, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality comprises a significant amount of rural land, which must be managed in synergy with its urban responsibilities (City of Tshwane, 2006). Together, the three metropolitan municipalities constitute the economic powerhouse of South Africa, causing them to play a critical role in the future of the Gauteng province and the country (City of Tshwane, 2006).

The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality is a complex and dynamic area that faces a number of development challenges, balancing development and growth with upliftment and upgrading (City of Tshwane, 2006). The city's urban pattern, like that of most South African cities, was shaped by the apartheid policies of the past. In addition, market forces and prominent natural features, including the Magaliesberg mountain range, which intersects the area, and its valleys, even more than urban planning, structured the urban environment, with most of its manufacturing sector on the outskirts. In effect, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality is a dual city in which a formal, well developed core city co-exists with an extensive, low-income and poorly developed peripheral complex which depends on the core (City of Tshwane, 2006). In 2003 the municipality's Economically Active Population (EAP) amounted to 48% of the total population of the municipality, which was higher than the national average, but lower than the provincial average (City of Tshwane, 2006). While this was positive, employment opportunities lag behind population increases, which has led to a high level of unemployment, and many people have had to be absorbed in the informal market (City of Tshwane, 2006).

The participants' age, gender, and location, and the type(s) of social grant received are summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 7.1: Summary of interviewed participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Location	Type of social grant received
Participant 1	20	Female	Atteridgeville	Child Support Grant
Participant 2	40	Female	Atteridgeville	Child Support Grant
Participant 3	69	Female	Soshanguve	Old Age Grant
Participant 4	73	Male	Soshanguve	Old Age Grant
Participant 5	71	Female	Mamelodi	Old Age Grant
Participant 6	63	Female	Winterveld	Old Age Grant
Participant 7	73	Female	Winterveld	Old Age Grant
Participant 8	62	Female	Soshanguve	Old Age Grant, Child Support Grant, Disability Grant
Participant 9	36	Female	Mamelodi	Child Support Grant
Participant 10	40	Female	Atteridgeville	Child Support Grant
Participant 11	37	Female	Mamelodi	Child Support Grant
Participant 12	41	Female	Mamelodi	Child Support Grant
Participant 13	64	Female	Mamelodi	Old Age Grant, Child Support Grant
Participant 14	31	Female	Atteridgeville	Child Support Grant
Participant 15	77	Female	Atteridgeville	Old Age Grant, Child Support Grant
Participant 16	63	Male	Mamelodi	Child Support Grant
Participant 17	44	Female	Mamelodi	Child Support Grant
Participant 18	65	Male	Atteridgeville	Old Age Grant
Participant 19	42	Female	Winterveld	Child Support Grant
Participant 20	26	Female	Soshanguve	Child Support Grant

The individual profiles of the social grant recipients interviewed in the study are presented below. Participants are referred to merely by a number to protect the identity of the interviewed participants, in line with the ethical requirement of confidentiality.

7.2.1   Participant 1

Participant 1 was born in Atteridgeville in Pretoria West. She is currently 20 years old and is a single mother of two children: a boy and a girl, one aged four years, and the other 11 months.

She currently resides in Atteridgeville with her mother. She herself is a second of five children. Raised by a single mother, she describes her childhood as difficult and very challenging:

> *I was raised by a single mother who is unemployed, she works odd jobs as a domestic worker. She does not have a basic income.*

Her highest grade passed is Grade 11, as she stopped school when she fell pregnant with her first child. She is currently working as a contract employee at Shoprite. The type of grant that she receives is the Child Support Grant. She describes the situation that led to her applying for a social grant as follows:

> *I was unemployed and in high school. I did not know how we were going to look after the child, because my then boyfriend was also still at school. Because both of our parents could not afford to take care of our child, the best option was for me to apply for the Child Support Grant so that we can at least buy a few things for our child.*

She was born out of poverty, and she describes her family as one of the poorest of the poor. She finds herself going through the same cycle that her mother went through, that of being a single mother and not having a stable job to help take care of her family.

7.2.2 Participant 2

Participant 2 was born in Atteridgeville, where she grew up and went to school. She lived with her parents until she moved out and went to live in a shack. She stayed there for 12 years until she received an RDP house, where she has been staying for five years now. The 40-year-old is a single mother of five children and is mostly unemployed, although she looks for odd jobs as a domestic worker. Participant 2 is Participant 1's mother. She commented on her family background as follows:

> *I grew up in a very happy family with my mother and father. My parents did the very best they could to take care of us under those difficult circumstances.*

Participant 2 did not matriculate, because she stopped school when she fell pregnant with her first child at the age of 15. The circumstances that led to her applying for a social grant was the fact that when she was a mother of two children, she was unemployed, and her only hope was

the Child Support Grant. She has received a social grant for four of her five children, but currently she only receives a social grant for her last two children, now aged seven and ten. She spoke about her situation as follows:

> *So, you know in relationships as well as in raising your kids you get faced with challenges … sometimes I was not in a good space with the father of my kids as well as he was not working a good paying job, so he also did not have a basic income. Also, the relationship between me and the fathers of my kids did not go well. They do not maintain the kids. So, the struggle is left with me as the mother of my kids. I do not have a permanent job; I work odd part-time jobs. So, such circumstances are what led to me applying for social grants.*

She stated that she is very worried that her daughter (Participant 1) is going through the same thing that she went through. However, she believes that she still has time to change her situation and break the cycle of poverty by going back to school and empowering herself so she can live a better life and raise her children:

> *Our children are lazy; government has provided so many opportunities for our youth to study and have a better future. However, our children just depend on government to do everything for them. If I could turn back the time, I would go back to school and focus on creating a better future for myself. I just hope that [my daughter] will choose to go back to school and focus on leading a better future for herself.*

7.2.3 Participant 3

Participant 3 is 69 years old. She is married and lives in Soshanguve with her husband (Participant 4). She was born and raised in Mpumalanga and moved to Gauteng as a young adult in search for a job, which is where she met her husband. She is a mother of five children. She is unemployed and receives the Old Age Grant. She applied for the grant after she reached the age of 60 and she stated that she has been receiving the grant for eight years now. Before receiving the grant, she worked as a domestic worker until she felt that she could not work any longer, as she was experiencing health problems. She applied for the Old Age Grant at a time when she felt that she needed money, as she was no longer working, and her husband was also not working. About her family background, she said:

> *I was born in a time where life was really hard. My father was a farm worker and my mother a housewife. We did not live with our father he would come and visit us from time*

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to time. Life was really hard, but our mother ensured that we always had food to eat. We had a vegetable garden where we planted all our vegetables.

7.2.4   Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 73-year-old father of five children. He is married to Participant 3, and they live in Soshanguve in Pretoria. Participant 4 used to work in a factory in Pretoria West, until he developed problems with his eyes which eventually led to his being blind, so that he could not work anymore, and is now unemployed:

> *When I used to work, I did everything in my power to ensure that my children and wife are taken care of. However, when I was retrenched, the family took a huge knock, as the breadwinner was no longer working.*

His blindness affected his family, as it meant that there is a shift in terms of the finances in the family, placing more responsibility on his wife. Participant 4 was born and grew up in Soshanguve:

> *My father thought me the importance of working and providing for your family, and I learned to work from a young age after my father passed away. Because my mother was not working, me and my brothers had to take care of my mother and our sisters. Earning a social grant has helped me to contribute something in my family since I no longer work and because I am blind.*

He applied for a social grant when he was unemployed and had reached the age where he qualified for a social grant. It took him two months after applying to start receiving his Old Age Grant.

7.2.5   Participant 5

Participant 5 is a 71-year-old widow who has four children. She was born in Mamelodi and currently lives in Mamelodi. She said:

> *I grew up in a strict family, raised by my grandparents together with my mother. We were not rich, but we were able to survive.*

Her husband passed away when her children were still very young, and that made life difficult, as her husband was the breadwinner. She used to work as a cashier at various supermarkets as

a contract employee. She applied for a social grant when she reached 60 because she did not have retirement money saved up. So, the best thing was to apply for a social grant so that she would be able to take care of herself, because all her children are married and working:

> *I had to apply for 'Modende' [a social grant], because I did not have money saved up. And I also wanted to be independent and not depend on my children. Now they help me only when they have something, or when it is an emergency, because I earn 'Modende'.*

She has been receiving a social grant for ten years.

7.2.6 Participant 6

Participant 6 is 63 years old, married and has two children. She was born in Mpumalanga but was raised by family members in Winterveld. Her children live in Mpumalanga with their grandmother, but she lives in a shack with just her husband in Winterveld. Before applying for a social grant, she worked by looking after her neighbour's child and helping her with cleaning and laundry. She stopped helping them when she started experiencing problems with her hands:

> *The job that I have been doing is to help people with cleaning and looking after their children. Just recently, I was helping my neighbour with his children. I was looking after them when he was at work because his wife has passed away, so he needed help. However, I had to stop helping him when my hands started giving me problems.*

For most of her life she was unemployed, and her husband has been the breadwinner. She applied for an Old Age Grant because she was 60 years and qualified for a grant.

7.2.7 Participant 7

Participant 7 is a 73-year-old single mother of three children. She was born and grew up in Giyani in Limpopo. She moved to Garsfontein where her mother worked after her father died. She has been receiving the social grant for 13 years now. Before receiving the social grant, she worked as a domestic worker in Faerie Glen until she lost her job. After that, she was unemployed, and until she was given the grant, she survived through her children, who would give her money for food and toiletries:

I grew up like most people of my age, where you live with your grandparents while your parents work in Gauteng as domestic workers and contract workers. Life was hard, as our parents were not earning a lot, but my grandparents ensured that we have something to eat everyday no matter how little.

When she applied for the social grant, the process was simple, and she started receiving the grant in two months.

7.2.8 Participant 8

Participant 8 is a 62-year-old widow. She lives in Soshanguve with her surviving children and two grandchildren. She was born and raised in Limpopo and moved to Soshanguve with her husband after they got married. She is an Old Age Grant recipient, and she also receives a Child Support Grant for one grandchild, and a Disability Grant for the other, as their mother has passed away and they now live with her. When explaining the situation that led to her applying for a social grant, she said the following:

I had a spaza shop. And after my husband passed away, I stopped selling at the spaza as I was mourning my husband. I did not manage to reopen the spaza shop till today. So, then I applied for the Old Age Grant, and after that at least I had an income.

Soon after she lost her husband, her daughter also died, which led to her having to look after her grandchildren.

7.2.9 Participant 9

Participant 9 is a 36-year-old single mother who was born and raised in Hammanskraal. She lives in Mamelodi with her son. She currently works as a cleaner in a law firm. Before working as a cleaner, she was unemployed, and that is when she applied for a Child Support Grant, as she needed money to look after her baby. Currently she uses this money supplement her limited salary:

I use the grant money for my son's school things. He is 8 years old and is in primary school. I use this money for his school transport and his pocket money for tuckshop days at school. Before then I would use it to buy him a few baby essentials when he was little. Just to supplement the little money I was getting from his father, as he was not working a good paying job. But now I am a single mother.

Participant 9 was born in a poor family, and she believes in working hard and empowering herself beyond her family circumstances.

7.2.10 Participant 10

Participant 10 is a 40-year-old born and raised in Limpopo. She comes from a family of four children, and she is the second child. She moved to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in 2007 in search of a job. She is a mother of two and lives in Atteridgeville:

> *I come from a poor family and by the time I was pregnant with my first born I was unemployed. Which is what led to me applying for a social grant.*

She lives with her boyfriend and is currently working as a cleaner at a university. She described her life before getting her current job as difficult, without a basic income. She used to depend on her boyfriend to help her out with what the children needed, but now that she has a salary, things are much better as she is able to pay for school fees and buy food for her children.

7.2.11 Participant 11

Participant 11 is a 37-year-old born and raised in Mamelodi. She grew up in a family of six children, and her father was the breadwinner. She now lives with her son in Atteridgeville:

> *I was single and pregnant, from a poor family background. At that time, I was not working. So, applying for the grant was my only option.*

Participant 11 works as a domestic worker and she uses the Child Support Grant to supplement her salary now that she is working. Before being employed she used the money for baby food. Her son was born in 2013 and has been receiving the Child Support Grant for six years. As a single mother, she does not have anyone to help her with her child and her only hope was the social grant and working odd jobs or part-time jobs.

7.2.12 Participant 12

Participant 12 is a 41-year-old single mother of two children. She was born and grew up in Hammanskraal. Her permanent residence is in Hammanskraal, but she works as a part-time health care worker at an old age home in Pretoria. While she is working at the home, she lives in Mamelodi instead of travelling to Hammanskraal every day. When asked about the circumstances that led to her applying for a social grant, she said the following:

> *At the time when I applied for social grant, I was unemployed, and I needed the social grant to help me with my household expenses and to buy food for my children I did not want to depend on my parents helping me out with baby stuff such as nappies.*

Participant 12 continues to depend on the social grant as she says that her employment as a health care worker is not permanent. She is currently receiving a social grant for her youngest child, who is 11 years old. She received a social grant for her eldest child until she was 18 years old. She has been receiving social grants for 13 years.

7.2.13 Participant 13

Participant 13 is 64 years old and is a mother of four children. She was born and raised in Bizana in the Eastern Cape. She came to live in Mamelodi when she moved to Pretoria in search of a job and has been working as a domestic worker and child minder ever since. She is currently working as a child minder in Mamelodi. She receives an Old Age Grant and a Child Support Grant for her grandchild, who lives with her. She lives with her son and grandchild, while her other three children are married and living in the Eastern Cape:

> *All my life I have been working as a domestic worker and also, looking after children. As you know domestic workers do not earn a lot. So, when I reached the age where I qualified for an Old Age Grant, I applied so it can assist me on top of my salary. Because I stay with my son, who is unemployed, and my grandchild. I am the breadwinner, and the Old Age Grant has helped me a lot because I am able to do more things in the house as compared to when I was just getting the Child Support Grant only.*

Participant 13 grew up in a poor family and going to Gauteng in search for a job was necessary as she needed to take care of her children, as a single mother.

7.2.14 Participant 14

Participant 14 is a 31-year-old woman who was born and raised in KwaZulu-Natal. She currently lives in Atteridgeville. She describes her background as follows:

> I am not from a rich family, but our parents did all they could to ensure that we have food on the table and that we are able to go to school.

Participant 14 is a mother of four children, for all of whom she gets a Child Support Grant. She also has a grandchild that is one year old and receives a Child Support Grant. At the time of the study, her children were aged 15, 9, 6, and 3 years. When asked about the situation that led to her applying for a social grant, she said the following:

> Unemployment is what led me to applying for a social grant. As well as considering the environment I come from. Poor family that lives in a small village in KZN.

Life was hard for Participant 14, especially when she had her first child, because she did not apply for the social grant immediately:

> I had to work part-time jobs from a young age in order to be able to look after my child as it was difficult for my family to assist me with looking after my first-born child. I had to stop going to school as I now needed to look after my child.

7.2.15 Participant 15

Participant 15 is a widowed woman aged 77 years who had three children. She lives in Soshanguve. She receives an Old Age Grant, and a Child Support Grant for her grandchild because after her daughter passed away, the child was left in her care. She applied for a social grant because she had reached the age where she qualified for one, she was unemployed and needed the money to be able to take care of herself. Regarding her current situation while receiving a social grant and being a widow, she said the following:

> It is just that we are struggling. The money is too little. I live with my children and grandchildren; food is expensive. I buy groceries for R1000 at the end of each month, but that grocery is too little, it does not last us for the entire month. I now gamble in an effort to make an extra income.

7.2.16 Participant 16

Participant 16 is 63 years old, and he lives in Mamelodi with his wife and two children. He is

an Old Age Grant recipient and started receiving it in 2016:

> *I had been working for years as a mine worker and got retrenched and then took my*
> *pension money. That was when I was 50 years old. The money did not sustain for long as*
> *we had debts, and all other things we had to. So, when I applied for the social grant, I had*
> *to [get] all the documents they needed to prove that I do not have any pension money saved*
> *up somewhere, and to show that I qualify for the social grant. After that everything was*
> *simple.*

Participant 16 was a mine worker, but unfortunate circumstances led to his being retrenched.

The retrenchment money was inadequate to sustain him and his family for long, so now he is

dependent on a social grant for survival.

7.2.17 Participant 17

Participant 17 is 44-year-old woman who lives in Mamelodi. She is the mother of two children,

but her children live with their grandmother in Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal, which is where

Participant 17 originally comes from. Talking about her upbringing, she explained that she was

raised by a widowed mother and that she was the third child of five:

> *Our father died when we least expected it, and that is what changed our life for the worst,*
> *as my mother was a housewife. When my father was still alive, we had food and clothes to*
> *wear. We were like any other kid in the village. But when my father died, we found*
> *ourselves in extreme poverty, as my mother would sell vegetables and sew clothes to make*
> *a living.*

When she applied for child support grant, she was unemployed, and the father of her elder

child, a daughter, had abandoned her:

> *Applying for the social grant was my only hope at the time, because I was unemployed and*
> *there was no one in my family who could assist me.*

Currently, she gets a social grant for both her children, and this is the money she sends to her

mother in order to look after the children and buy food.

7.2.18 Participant 18

Participant 18 is a 65-year-old man who lives in Atteridgeville. He is married and is the father of two now adult children. He defines himself as a hard worker who worked as a farm assistant for a number of years. He grew up in Limpopo, and when he reached the age to look for a job, he decided to come to Pretoria to live with his brother while searching for a job. For many years he worked on a farm in Brits:

> I applied for a grant because I retired when I was 58, because I could no longer work at the farm. So, when I turned 60, it made sense to apply for the Old Age Grant because I qualified for it. The process was not long. After my application I started receiving the money after just two months. I was surprised because I had thought that it might take long for it to be processed.

When he describes his up-bringing, he calls himself a village boy:

> I am a village boy; I grew up in a small village. And we were an extremely poor family, but our father worked very hard to ensure that we have something to eat.

7.2.19 Participant 19

Participant 19 a 42-year-old woman who lives in Winterveld but grew up in Mpumalanga. She came to Pretoria because she got a job as a contract worker in a factory, but the contract has ended. Participant 19 is a single mother, and she has two children. She grew up in a family of seven children, all living with their grandparents, while her mother and father were working away from home. She says her upbringing was hard, but she knows her parents worked hard to put food on the table, even though they had seven children. Currently, she lives with her son and her grandchild. Her other two children live with her parents. Participant 19 is unemployed and is receiving a social grant for her younger son:

> I applied for a social grant because when I had my older son, by then I was unemployed, and his father was not working. When I had my second son, I was working odd jobs, and I needed to social grant money to supplement my salary then. When I was receiving a social grant for both my children the money was better. But now it is hard because I receive a grant for only one child.

7.2.20 Participant 20

Participant 20 is a 26-year-old single mother who lives in Soshanguve with her daughter, aged ten years. Participant 20 was herself raised by a single mother, and she has two siblings. Her choices when she became pregnant were limited by her circumstances:

> I fell pregnant when I was still in high school. My boyfriend was also at school, and our only option was to apply for a social grant so it can help me with raising our daughter. Because of my family situation, I could no longer to back to school, I dropped out in grade 11.

Participant 20 is currently working at a supermarket, and she lives with her mother and siblings. She is from a poor background, and she worries that she will remain in the same cycle of poverty that she grew up in:

> I ensure that I use the money for my child, so that she can get an education and have a better future than mine. But even though this is what I wish for my daughter, it is hard because the money we get does not do much.

7.3   Analysis of the experiences of beneficiaries regarding social grants: Key themes

The demographic information on the interviewed participants has already been outlined in Section 1.9. This section comments on the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the empirical data that I collected.

When I asked the participants about their family backgrounds, it was clear that they were mostly from poor family backgrounds. Some were born and raised in townships, while others grew up villages in the rural areas around South Africa. These recipients were all disadvantaged from childhood and are still trapped in the cycle of poverty even now, in their adulthood and, in some cases, in their old age. This is an indication of the coloniality of being, which illustrates how people are structurally stuck in poverty from birth to death, with no hope of breaking out of this cycle of poverty. This is how Marx ([1867] 1972) describes a person's inability to write his or her own history because of the conditions in which he or she was born:

> Men make their history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, slogans, and costumes to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language. (Marx, [1867] 1972:437)

Marx ([1867] 1972:437) considers how people shape their destiny, and he is scathing about memories and patterns of the past, which he describes as "old traditions that weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living". For social grant recipients, poverty is indeed a nightmare that they face each and every day, a nightmare which was created by colonialism. As already mentioned in Chapter 5, almost half of the South African population is considered chronically poor (RSA, 2012). The interviewed participants fall within this statistic. Their families are characterised by high poverty persistence, which is generational. Given the political history of South Africa, there are two zones, namely a zone of being and a zone of non-being (Fanon, 1952, quoted in Gordon, 2005:3). The recipients of social grants in South Africa, in general, belong to the zone of non-being – a zone whose people are without agency to determine their own future, due to disempowerment by the structuration of the global power structure of modernity/coloniality.

As discussed in Section 5.2, some of the complexities that relate to poverty and the causes of poverty and inequality in South Africa can be traced back to apartheid. The stories of the recipients and their family background, and how they grew up in poverty, is a direct indication of the kinds of life experiences that social grants recipients go through that need to be acknowledged. The apartheid regime dispossessed black people of their assets, especially land, distorted the county's economic markets and social institutions through racial categorization and discriminatory labour practices, and enforced its powerbase through police violence and other forms of destabilization (May, 2001:4). Dispossessed and often dislocated by the

apartheid regime, black people ended up in a state of poverty, and must now resort to depending on the government to assist them to get out of the cycle of poverty. However, more than two and a half decades into democracy, the government is still attempting to undo the injustice that was perpetrated by the apartheid regime. The resulting complexities have shaped the nature of poverty in South Africa, and will probably perpetuate poverty even though the political economy is being transformed (May, 2001:4). The life experiences of the interviewees in this study indicate that despite changes in the political economy, they remain in a state of poverty.

It is against this background that the decolonial analysis was conducted. Three key themes emerged in the interviews about the experiences of the interviewed recipients: their experiences in dealing with SASSA, their struggling to get by, and the fact that several participants accessed more than one social grant.

7.3.1 *Experience with SASSA*

One common perception reported social grants is a generally favourable impression of participants' engagement with SASSA. Most reported that they did not many difficulties when it came to receiving social grants. These are some comments from the interviews:

> *I have not had any challenges when it comes to receiving my money. Every month I always get it on time, and it is always the same amount each month.* (Participant 20)

> *I get my money every month. My only problem is that I am not able to withdraw all my money. I was told that the bank charges me every month…. I get more money when I withdraw my money from a Shoprite till.* (Participant 3)

> *I have not had any challenges personally with SASSA. I get my money on time every month. However, I do know that there are people who have experienced challenges with SASSA. I think it depends on where you are located.* (Participant 11)

The participants were satisfied that the amount of money they received is consistent every month, and it is never late. Their access varies, depending on whether they withdraw money from an ATM or at Shoprite (outlets for SASSA collection include Pick n Pay, Boxer and the

Post Office). If they withdraw the money from an ATM, they do not get all the money as some if the money goes towards the bank charges and there is a minimum balance, but at Shoprite (or the South African Post Office or Pick n Pay and Boxer) a beneficiary can get the money in full. From participants' comments it was clear that they have confidence in the competence and performance of SASSA for delivering and administering their social grants. Considering some of the challenges that SASSA has been facing (such as the Constitutional Court's ruling that the Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) contract was unlawful, which led to 80% of cash pay points being closed in 2019), the Agency has managed to ensure that the registered social recipients get their money on time and in full.

Having changed to the SASSA card payment process that was administered by Comprehensive Social Protection (CSP), a number of recipients mentioned the accessibility of the new pay points, such as the Post Office, banks and shops. Social grant recipients in an area such as the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality have access to a number of pay points, compared to people in rural areas. Their responses corroborate the literature. In 2012, SASSA launched a biometric card scheme as a payment solution for social grants (SASSA, 2012). This system was implemented in order to combat fraud and corruption, and as a result beneficiaries had to re-register and check their details in order to receive a card. The new scheme, according to SASSA (2012:4), ensures that all beneficiaries receive the right sums due to them. Another system was introduced in 2018, which was also aimed at improving the manner in which SASSA provides support to its recipients. In 2018, SASSA included the Post Office as a new service provider, and issued the new SASSA card, which was issued via the Post Office (SASSA, 2018). Keeping up with the times, payments of social grants are done electronically as well (SASSA, 2018). Beneficiaries have a choice to choose to receive their social grants through their own bank accounts, or through the new gold SASSA card (SASSA, 2018), which can be used at the Post Office or at selected shops. From the efforts that have been made by

SASSA, it is clear from the responses of the interviewed participants that they are happy with the electronic payments, which are convenient for them.

Even though the responses from the participants were generally positive, that does not mean that SASSA does not face some challenges. A study conducted by Black Sash has identified a number of problems with regard to the new social grant recipients: "We want SASSA to think very carefully and to bring back the pay points, especially in rural areas. It is really difficult to see how people have to pay money to get to a pay point and then there's no money when they get there. They also need to pay for bank charges" (Regter, 2019:1). This illustrates the fact that people located in non-urban areas still experience challenges.

Of the interviewed participants, only two reported some challenges. Their problems were not getting their money paid in full or on time, but not being able to withdraw their money in full. This challenge relates to where they draw money – a bank ATM that charges withdrawal charges versus Shoprite or another store.

7.3.2   Struggling to get by

In the interviews it emerged that even though these social grant recipients experience extreme poverty, the social grant money makes a difference, as they are able to use this money to buy food or cover other household expenses such as school fees, electricity or school transport. However, the social grant does not empower them to break out of the cycle of poverty, which is why they find themselves in a generational cycle of poverty that is perpetuated by the agent of development, which is the social grant. These are individuals who are struggling to get by regarding their monthly expenses and family obligations. The social grants make life more bearable, and the social grants perform the role of a helping hand. Their lives have not changed drastically, but their lives have improved, because they are now able to do things for their families that they could not do without this form of income. This means that they are able to

meet some of their family obligations. It does not mean that they are out of the poverty trap, although the social grants provide a cushion for their lives to improve, as the following comments demonstrate:

> *Now that the money is R420 yes it makes a difference as compared to when it was R320. It makes a bit of a difference because you are able to do a few things here and there for your child. Like if they need something at school or there is something wrong with their uniform you are able to buy a few of those things for them. So, it also helps me to buy more things for my family as I had stated that I do odd jobs, so like now I am not working. So, this money is able to help me, and my family get by like now it has been two months without me working and I'm only now surviving with my social grant's money.* (Participant 2)

> *It helps us with a few things, but the money is not enough.* (Participant 3)

> *The idea of the social grant is a good one. Just that the money is too little to make a difference or improve one's quality of life. Maybe if they came up with programmes that will assist in improving the quality of life for poor South Africans. Then that would work better.* (Participant 16)

These interview responses relate to the issue of what social grants are, fundamentally. Social grants seem to be providing a cushion for poor South Africans to feel more comfortable in their situations and does not question the structure that has led to their being in this never-ending cycle of poverty.

If one looks at the current poverty lines, according to StatsSA (2019), the 2018 South African poverty lines were as follows (adjusted for 2020 prices):

- Food poverty line – R585 (in April 2020 prices) per person per month.

  This refers to the amount of money that an individual needs to afford the minimum required daily energy intake. This is also commonly referred to as the "extreme" poverty line.

- Lower-bound poverty line – R840 (in April 2020 prices) per person per month.

  This refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

- Upper-bound poverty line – R1 268 (in April 2020 prices) per person per month.

  This refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

The above poverty lines show that even though people may receive a social grant, they are still trapped in a continuous cycle of poverty. When the participants explained their family backgrounds, they stated that they grew up in poor families. This illustrates a continuous cycle of poverty. With a tool such as social grants, it is important to understand their fundamental role. Are they really agents of change, or just an unearned income that recreates the structure of coloniality through a continued cycle of poverty and inequality?

This cushion fails to improve matters by breaking the generational cycle of poverty. As stated in Chapter 5, the *National Development Plan 2030* (RSA, 2012) states that almost half of the South African population is considered chronically poor, living on the national poverty line. The data from the interviewed participants confirms that these families are characterised by high poverty persistence, which is also generational. The participants were born in extreme poverty and this feature of their lives has remained unchanged even after 1994. These recipients of social grants suffer due to the divide in South Africa, largely still racial, that is based on the two categories of knowledge and the law, which are identified by De Sousa Santos (2007) as the maximum representation of Western abyssal thought. These recipients of social grants live in the subhuman, squalid conditions of poverty, even though they get the benefit of grants. This shows that social grants, in their present form, have become part of the problem (Moyo, 2010): this kind of aid is malignant – it is no longer part of the potential solution, but part of the problem (Moyo, 2010:47).

7.3.3   *Multiple social grants*

One noticeable trend was that some individuals or households receive more than one type of grant, or, in some instances, a Child Support Grant for more than one child; this applies to nine of the 20 interviewed participants. This made me, as a researcher, wonder how to interpret this information. Does this mean dependence on social grants? Does it mean that there are problems

with how our economy works, considering the fact that some members of a family have to migrate and live far from their families in order to seek employment? Does this increase dependence on social grants for the people left behind in the family?

Some the participants are grandmothers living with their grandchildren, while their own children have migrated in search for a job, or the mothers of the children have died, leaving the responsibility of taking care of the children to the grandmother. The structure of families in South Africa have been fundamentally reshaped by the migrant labour system, both in terms of family life and the concept of "home", as is evident from the profiles of the participants that were interviewed in this research. The apartheid regime fragmented families and weakened communities (Amato, 2019:1): "Many of these obstacles to family life persist today – shortages of adequate family accommodation in urban areas; the under-resourcing of schools, health services and childcare facilities; and the lack of infrastructure and economic opportunity in rural areas." Hence, where "home" is, and where children live, may be a strategic decision made out of necessity. In some cases, parents work in cities while their children live with grandmothers in rural areas because childcare support in urban areas is hard to come by and expensive (Amato, 2019). There was some evidence of these arrangements among the participants:

> *I receive an Old Age Grant because I am an elderly person. I also live with my grandchildren because their mother died. My other grandchild is disabled, so for her it is a Disability Grant, and for the other child it is a normal grant for children.* (Participant 8)

> *I live with my son and grandchild. The grant I get is the grant for older persons and a Child Support Grant for my grandchild. Her mother is married, and because she had her before getting married, she had to leave her in my care. That is why I receive the social grant and not my daughter.* (Participant 13)

> *I receive a Child Support Grant for my grandchild. I also receive the Old Age Grant. My daughter died 2 years back, and I have been taking care of her child since then…* (Participant 15)

It seems that the norm is for people to get more than one social grant. However, is it important to unpack what this ultimately means: increased dependency on social grants, and evidence of

the widespread state of poverty and low-income levels. As a country, South Africa is still dealing with its invisible entanglement and entrapment within complex colonial matrices of influence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b). Given the state of poverty in our country, social grants have become the main source of income for many families, making them dependent on social grants. In order to break the cycle of dependence, it is important to decolonize the system of social grants. Decoloniality will help in the efforts to rehumanize the country through breaking hierarchies of difference that dehumanize subjects and communities (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Decolonization of social grants can transcend the power structure of coloniality that created it and make it a vehicle for transformation.

These above views are just some of the views that came out of the discussions with the participants. The meaning of these insights is unpacked in more detail in the next section and its subsections, which focus on data analysis, to provide a deeper understanding of what the empirical data reveal about social grants. I look at what fundamentally social grants are through a more analytical discussion of the data in relation to the literature and theoretical framework.

7.4   The meaning of social grants to beneficiaries

A number of insights came up when the participants indicated the meaning of social grants to them and what it assists them with. Social grants help beneficiaries here and there, but they are unable to assist beneficiaries fully, as the money is "*too little*", as the beneficiaries put it. This therefore took me back to the purpose of social grants as articulated by the Department of Social Development, namely that the aim of social grants is to help improve standards of living in society and that they are given to people who are vulnerable to poverty and in need of state support. Another aim is to bring relief to the poor. It is worth noting, then, that the social grant has not reduced poverty overall, but it plays a different role, which participants termed a "*helping hand*", offering a cushion for beneficiaries that makes life more bearable, but also

discourages beneficiaries from questioning the structural order in which they find themselves as a legacy from colonialism which has led to continued poverty ad inequality even after 1994. The aim of providing some form of relief has been achieved, but for how long will the social grant continue to provide relief? How long is it sustainable? When will it get to a point of breaking the cycle of poverty? Or rather the question should be, are social grants structured in a manner that will provide an *opportunity* to break out of the cycle of poverty?

In the interviews, the participants were asked what social grants meant to them and what they used the grant money for. There was a mixture of responses, particularly across different age groups. Participants aged between 20 and 40 were of the view that social grants provide a "*helping hand*" regarding some of their monthly family expenses. In other words, social grants help them to cover the income shortfall, and are used for paying for their children's school transport, or lunch box food for the children. They felt that the grant money was too little to make a significant difference in their lives, leaving them feeling that the grants just provide some form of helping hand. On the other hand, participants between the ages of 40 and 70 years saw the social grants as "*free money*", and that government is doing the best that it can. They too use the money as a "*helping hand*" to assist with some of their monthly expenses.

Old Age Grant recipients used this money to buy their monthly groceries and to also pay for stokvels and burial schemes. They too felt that the money is too little, but they made do with what they have. They said that the social grant money was not enough money to change their state of poverty, but it made their situation more bearable:

> *I do not know how I was going to survive without the money that I get from government. I am able to buy food and clothes, while also paying for my stokvels. Even though the money is little, I am able to survive because of it.* (Participant 7)

> *I am fortunate that I also get money from my kids, because the money I get from the social grants is not enough as the cost of living is extremely high. However, getting the social grants money makes life more bearable because I know that there is a little something that I get from government.* (Participant 5)

Before getting the grant, life was really hard. The social grant has helped me a lot. (Participant 10)

I used to depend only on the social grant, even though the money is not a lot, but I was able to buy things for my son. Now that I am working, I use the money for his school fees. (Participant 9)

Does this imply that social grants ensure that the wool is pulled over the eyes of beneficiaries, preventing them from seeing the structural order of development that they find themselves in? As seen in the profiles of the participants' perceptions, they all come from disadvantaged backgrounds of poverty and inequality, which is the very legacy of the structural order of coloniality, and this has led to an endless cycle of poverty within their families. It is therefore important that the meaning and purpose of social grants are clearly understood through the experiences of its beneficiaries, rather than only through policy and economic studies. Once this meaning is understood, then government will be able to deal with the structure of development in South Africa and then come up with policies that address the issue of poverty and inequality.

In the first chapter of the study, three objectives, aligned with the research questions, were outlined, namely, to determine the history and nature of the *structure* behind poverty and inequality in South Africa, to examine the *history* and *purpose* of the social grant programme in this country; and to evaluate the transformative *potential* of the social grant programme in terms of addressing the challenge of poverty and inequality in this country. To structure the deeper analysis of what the data collected reveals, I divide the findings into three broader themes that answer the fundamental questions of this thesis, using a decolonial analysis. These themes are social grants as an attempt at development agency, as repetition without change, and as a form of entrapment within a prescriptive structure.

7.4.1 Social grants as an attempt at development agency

In this study, social grants are regarded as an exercise in achieving agency in development by those who seek to transform a condition of poverty and inequality, but it is recognized that the agential capacity of social grants may be constrained and/or enabled by a pre-existing structure, in this case, the structure of modern coloniality. In other words, a phenomenon such as a social grant can be read as enabling poverty reduction in society, while at the same time reproducing the structural order of development that made the discourse of social grants possible in the first place.

The data collected showed that the interviewed participants view social grants as a "helping hand", in that grants are able to provide for some family needs, including food, electricity and children's school fees, even though not all needs are provided for. A number of other studies have reported that social grants reduce poverty, but, looking at the lifestyles of the interviewed participants, there was no significant change in their lives. This is because, although social grants provide for immediate needs such as food and shelter, these grants do not provide an opportunity for the recipients to break out of the system of poverty and there is no exit strategy for the recipients. For example, with the Child Support Grant, when a child turns 18, he or she simply stops getting a social grant, and there is no clearly outlined programme in place from the Department of Social Development to support the child or family beyond this age. One of the interviewed participants said the following:

> *You know that is a problem, especially once the child has matric. My grandson has matriculated, and he is unemployed. Even though he has matric, he does not get a job. He is just staying at home because we do not have money to help him further his studies. We are just praying that he should at least get a job even if it is a cleaning or security job. So that he can be able to help around the house with his income. That is all we are hoping for now, nothing else.* (Participant 8)

This shows that some people are simply surviving, and they have accepted their state of poverty with little if any hope of them breaking out of the cycle of poverty, continuing to live from hand to mouth.

After 1994, the social grant programme was developed on the foundations of a pre-existing structure. The democratic government inherited the system from the apartheid regime. When the first social grants were developed in the early 20th century (see Chapter 5), the aim was to meet the needs of the white minority (Samson *et al*., 2006:2). The social grants were then extended more broadly in the late 1930s and 1940s, but with racially differentiated benefit levels (Samson *et al*., 2006:2). From 1994, the new democratic government inherited a fragmented social security system rooted in a concern for the interests of the apartheid constituency. The declared aim of social grants was then changed to promoting development, reducing poverty, and regulating the ways in which the benefits are distributed. What was also new was that the system was to be inclusive for all South Africans and did not discriminate on the basis of colour or racial differences.

The state of development in South Africa, as I explained in Chapter 3 is entangled in the "coloniality of power", which highlights the darker side of modernity, which has resulted in the underdevelopment of Africa (Mignolo, 2007). Coloniality is an invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination long after the end of direct colonialism, which is why there is a need for *de*coloniality (Mignolo, 2007). Coloniality of power works as a crucial structuring process within global imperial designs, sustaining the superiority of the Global North and ensuring the perpetual subalternity of the Global South using colonial matrices of power (Mignolo, 2007). From the responses given by the participants, it is clear that despite the cushioning offered by social grants, which may mitigate the extreme state of poverty for a number of participants, these grants do not contribute to the development of the recipients:

Ever since I started receiving a social grant, I know that I can buy some food for my family. I buy the basics that we need each month. Anything else I do with the money I make when I get money from my piece jobs. (Participant 2)

I won't say my life has changed ever since I started getting a grant. But I can say it has improved. I am able to do this and that with the money. (Participant 20)

The child support grant is too little to expect it to have a significant change in people's lives. With the money, I am able to buy a few things at home. It gives me that assurance that I every month I have R420, and I can budget around it. (Participant 12)

The above quotations illustrate those initiatives such as these are not achieving the impact envisaged, namely, to lessen the levels of poverty and income inequality. Social grants have been touted as one of the redistributive mechanisms in the government budget, purposefully aimed at improving the lives of the poor and reducing their cost of living (World Bank, 2018:13), and to ameliorate the state of poverty within a country, but by and large, this kind of intervention has not lived up to this promise, in fact, in South Africa, poverty has increased in many senses. The personal characteristics and situations of the social grant recipients that were interviewed in the current study paint a stark picture of who the people that are receiving these grants are and their socio-economic status. The majority if not all of the participants grew up in a state of poverty (prior to and after 1994), and even today still find themselves trapped in the same cycle.

This finding is supported by results from the report *Overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa. An assessment of drivers, constraints and opportunities* (World Bank, 2018:13), Although interventions such as social grants have resulted in small gains in the overall poverty reduction since 1994, the country continues to face the realities of high poverty, high inequality and high unemployment. Due to the persistence of these challenges, there is a need for a more rigorous assessment of the drivers, constraints and opportunities for poverty and inequality reduction in South Africa (World Bank, 2018:13). The unpalatable question that needs an urgent answer is whether, in fact, these initiatives are exacerbating, rather than mitigating, the triple scourge of high poverty, high inequality, and high unemployment.

As long as social grants are an agent that replicates the same structure that developed it, it will do little more than provide a safety net for people in situations of poverty to be able to survive. It will not assist the recipients to break out of the cycle of poverty they are trapped in by offering opportunities to grow and develop. Part of the problem is that the economy is currently not generating enough jobs, and unemployment is on the rise. According to the World Bank (2018:14), the unemployment rate was 27.7% in the third quarter of 2017, and the youth unemployment rate was 38.6%. As a result of this, poverty rates have increased despite all the interventions by government. This experience illustrates to us that the country's socio-economic challenges are deep, structural and long-term ones, which is why the study was undertaken. The results of my thesis are therefore timely, as the government continues to grapple with these challenges and seek pathways to sustainable solutions, guided by the National Development Plan (NDP).

The government must ensure that it puts in place policies and programmes that offer citizens better life prospects. An example of such a policy is the current *National Development Plan: Vision 2030* (NDP) (RSA, 2012). According to the World Bank (2018:112), the NDP acknowledges that "no political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of [its] people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must be the first priority of a democratic government". For the much desired and hard-won South African democracy to survive, poverty in the country must be reduced and the social grant policies and programmes need to be one of the development agents. Raising the living standards of poor South Africans to the minimum required level will involve various mechanisms, such as increasing employment, incomes, productivity as well as through social protection (social grants) and quality public services (World Bank, 2018).

The study deployed a theoretical framework of structure and agency to examine the extent to which the social grant programme plays a transformative agential role within the power

structure that produces poverty and inequality among the people of South Africa during the post-apartheid era. The fieldwork data reveals that social grants do *not* play a transformative agential role at present, as the lives of the recipients have not been transformed. Instead, they find themselves more comfortable now within the broader power structure, as there is a little something they are getting from government in the form of social grants.

As a development agent, social grants should be providing agency for the development for those who seek to transform their condition of poverty and inequality. However, the agential capacity of these social grants tends to be constrained and/or enabled by a pre-existing structure of modern coloniality. In other words, a phenomenon such as a social grant can be read as enabling poverty reduction within society while at the same time reproducing the structural order of development that made the discourse of social grants to be possible in the first place.

7.4.2   *Social grants as repetition without change*

Every year, the government increases the amount of money paid to the social recipients, and this initiative is therefore one of the most hotly debated government interventions to curb poverty. Government expenditure increases every year as more people become social grant recipients. It is therefore crucial to address the actual impact these social grants have on our economy and if it is a worthwhile government expenditure.

What came out of the interviews with social grant recipients is that receiving a grant puts the recipients in a never-ending cycle of receiving social grants. Grants do not stop the distribution of poverty, nor does it curb the state of poverty in South Africa. An example of this can be found in the ongoing situations of Participants 1 and 2, who are related. Participant 2 is Participant 1's mother, and they are both social grant recipients. Participant 2 received Child Support Grants for all her children. Her eldest child (Participant 1) fell pregnant at the age of 15 and is now a mother of two, for each of whom she receives a Child Support Grant. This

scenario is an example of the reality of many South Africans. Another example is Participant 14, who receives an Old Age Grant herself, and a Child Support Grant for her granddaughter. These cases illustrate a continuous cycle of poverty and dependency on social grants, which was not the intended aim of social grants. These women are trapped in a cycle of generational poverty, dependency on social grants, with annual increases.

One can compare the participants' family backgrounds to where they are currently. It is clear that the participants were raised in poor backgrounds. Some grew up in rural areas chose to migrate to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in search of a job, and others were raised in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality by their parents, who had also migrated from rural areas in search for a job and decided to settle in the Gauteng province. In all cases, the participants were born in poverty and are still living in poverty even as adults. They remain trapped in the same cycle of poverty that they were born in. Despite being social grant beneficiaries, they do not see a way out of this never-ending cycle. Their children also have a high chance of staying trapped.

Since as many as 33% of South Africans now depend on social grants (Rossouw, 2017), this continuous cycle means that in the next 20 years, the country will still be in the same cycle of providing social grants to the poor and high levels of poverty and inequality. An alarming fact is that in 2017/18, there were 17 million social grant beneficiaries, of whom 11 million were beneficiaries younger than 18. This implies that most social grants in the country are Child Support Grants, and Foster Care Grants (Rossouw 2017). This illustrates that even since 1994, a number of children are born into families that are in extreme poverty, and with a programme that is not designed to provide a way out for its beneficiaries, only a small percentage of these children will be able to break out of the cycle of generational poverty. Even though the government continues to provide social grants to its beneficiaries, it is not providing sustainable relief from extreme poverty. The social grant net is the government's biggest poverty

alleviation and redistribution intervention. It is therefore important for it to have a significant impact.

Currently, social grants seem to be nothing more than a cycle of providing unearned income, creating a repetition without any long-term change. The current structure of inequality in South Africa has increased, creating a repetition of the status quo in South Africa that was in place prior to 1994. This is also linked to issues such as low levels of labour market participation. Due to these socio-economic issues, social grants have played an important role in supporting households to attain a minimum standard of living, but until when will the vulnerable continue to live in a state of poverty? Will the state of development in South Africa continue to be the way that it is, with high levels of inequality?

This then leads back to the question of what social grants are. Are they a repetition without change? The answer based on the research data collected is, yes, social grants *are* a repetition without change. This repetition is caused by the structure of development which social grants are an agent of. Decoloniality provides a guide to delink from the intersectional inequalities of coloniality, while also questioning the enticing rhetoric of progress that accompanies modernity. It is important to question how social grants are structured, while taking into consideration the current limitations that they have. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012), development in the *colonial* context meant pushing Africans out of their modes of life and production and into the evolving capitalist one, this is the structure of development that was inherited by the post-apartheid government. It is this kind of development that also came with policies that were aimed at changing structure and the status quo in South Africa, but that failed to do so, and that have been inherited by the current government administration.

Therefore, these inherited policies are not providing the kind of development that South Africans needs in order to flourish and break out of the cycle of poverty. There is a need to

decolonize the very policies and programmes that are said to be aimed at providing development for the previously disadvantaged in South Africa, an example being social grants. This step involves looking into the policy and realigning it to what government wants to achieve. There cannot be real growth and reduced poverty if the structure of social grants is still the same as the structure of social grants during the apartheid regime. If the structure of this programme is not realigned and changed, then it *will* simply be an exercise of repetition without any sustainable results.

The concept of development should not merely be about catching up with the world, but it should take into consideration the unique history of the country, the current socio-economic characteristics of the country and be honest about how we got to be where we are as a country. And from that point, we can define development starting from this point, and work up to the policies that are meant to provide development and poverty reduction for South Africa. With a clear understanding of what development means for the country, we will be able to influence policy development to address these socio-economic issues in a manner that will bring about sustainable development for the country.

Looking at the history of South Africa, I define development as follows:

> Development in the context of South Africa would be a state of low levels of poverty and inequality. It means equal access to the resources and opportunities. It is having policies that are enablers of development, of growth and of breaking out of the cycle of poverty. It is the kind of development that works as a stepladder that allows its citizens to climb out of the vicious cycle of poverty that they are trapped in. It requires policy that does not benefit only the elite, providing growth only to the privileged few. It is development that provides EVERYONE with an opportunity for growth.

There is a need to stop repetition that fails to bring change. I concur with the conclusions of Maldonado-Torres (2016) with regard to decoloniality:

> If coloniality refers to a logic, metaphysics, ontology, and a matrix of power that can continue existing after formal independence and desegregation, decoloniality refers to efforts at rehumanizing the world, to breaking hierarchies of difference that dehumanize subjects and communities and that destroy nature, and to the production of counter-

discourses, counter-knowledges, counter-creative acts, and counter-practices that seek to
dismantle coloniality and open up multiple other forms of being in the world.

Social grants are a vehicle that supports many South Africans, so it needs to be restructured in a manner that will dismantle coloniality, the rising inequality and most importantly, the cycle of poverty.

7.4.3 *Social grants as a form of entrapment within a prescriptive structure*

As a context for my argument that social grants act as a form of entrapment in a prescriptive structure, it is important to start by looking in more detail at the life stories of the participants, in order to get more details in their experiences with social grants. As part of the interviews, the participants were asked how social grants have changed their lives, and whether their socio-economic status has changed. These was one response:

> *I was born in poverty, and as you can see, I am still poor. I was raised by a single mother,*
> *who is unemployed, and I on the other hand is working at a store. The social grant money*
> *is too little to take us out of poverty. It only helps with a few household expenses. I use the*
> *money for school fees and transport for my older child. But I still need to buy groceries*
> *and school stuff.* (Participant 1)

During the interview, Participant 1 and her mother described themselves as "*POP*" (poorest of the poor). Participant 1 finds herself going through the same cycle that her mother went through, that of being a single mother and not having a stable job to help take care of her family. However, to counter this, her mother (Participant 2) said the following:

> *Had she not fallen pregnant at a young age, she would have finished matric, and maybe*
> *that would have given her a chance to go to university or get a better job. I was intelligent,*
> *but during our time we did not have opportunities like NSFAS that pays for university fees.*

Both of them know that social grants have not taken them out of poverty, they have provided some relief, but this relief is not enough to take them out of the cycle of poverty. They acknowledge that they need to push themselves in order to get out of this cycle of poverty. They need to maximize every opportunity they get in order to gain a better future, for example, using a programme such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Participant

2 had hoped that her daughter would complete her Grade 12, and then apply for NSFAS in order to go to university, and then after completing her degree, get a job and help her family out of poverty. This is a dream that many families that are in poverty hold:

> *Social grants have not helped me out of poverty, it is even worse for my grandchild. He is 19 and stopped getting a social grant when he turned 18. He completed his matric but did not pass well. Now he is unemployed because we do not have any money. I had hoped that he would go to university and then have a good job in order to take care of us as a family.* (Participant 8)

The participant vested her hope of getting out of poverty in her grandson, and not on social grants, but her hope has failed her. The sentiments expressed by a number of pf participants were that social grants reduced poverty in a sense that they are able to buy food for the family, and in other cases pay for school fees, but that these social grants did not reduce income inequality, and they did not provide a steppingstone to get out of poverty. The poverty that so many South Africans are trapped in is the result of the coloniality of power underpinning the structure of development. This kind of development is heterogeneous and has seen multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years, and such structures did not evaporate with the juridical political decolonization of the periphery over the last 50 years (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). It is therefore important to note that the scale of the development challenges that the social grant recipients are faced with cannot be understood clearly outside of a clear understanding of the historical, discursive and structural contexts of colonialism and apartheid. It is important to have a clear understanding of this structure because social grants remain enmeshed in the prescriptive structure inbuilt in colonialism.

This means that social grants cannot bring about the change that its recipients need in order to truly develop and break the cycle of poverty. Instead of providing a platform to develop and empower the vulnerable, social grants provide them with a safety net, which ensures that they do not question the structures of coloniality. Instead, they end up accepting poverty as a way of life and want no more from government, except increased grants. This safety net deprives

the recipients of an opportunity to begin thinking of another world of equality, a world where there are systems in place to assist citizens to develop and to break the continuous cycle of poverty. A decolonial turn encourages a shift away from the misconceptions of a world naturalized by global imperial designs. It marks the decisive entry of Global South subjectivities into the realm of thinking and envisaging another world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). This involves pushing forward and outward the frontiers of the one-sided and incomplete democratic project of modernity, concurrently with the unfinished project of decolonization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

There is an urgent need to the decolonize policies that guide programmes such as social grants. It is important to have programmes that provide sustainable results and that offer a return on the government's investment. In the case of social grants, a return on the investment would be if the recipients could find ways to exit the programme, not because they have reached the upper age limit, or pass away, but because they are able to look after themselves and to earn an adequate income to look after their families.

What came out of the research is that the older participants were happy about and grateful for social grants, even though the grants did not have long-term sustainable results. There are two possible reasons for these older participants' perceptions. First, they get more money from the Old Age Grant (R1860) than from a Child Support Grant (R445), so they are able to do more with their money than other social grant recipients. Another reason could be that they are happy with the safety net the grant offers. Because of their perception, they see no need to question the structures of development, as the social grants have made them comfortable enough, even though they are in a state of poverty.

A number of recipients have accepted their state of poverty as a way of life. They believe that this is how they were meant live, in a state of poverty. Such thoughts make them comfortable

with the social grants, despite the flaws of the system, even though they complain that the money is too little. Several said that this money is better than nothing:

> *The money is little, but it is better than not getting anything. Our government is really trying to assist us. Every month, I know that I can buy a few basics for my family. And that relieves the pressure, and it is enough for me.* (Participant 14)

Social grants could do more for recipients, if grants were structured in the right way, but they are entrapped in a prescriptive structure that maintains the status quo of the coloniality of power. This power only benefits a few, creating increased inequality, especially in the case of South Africa. Despite all the poverty alleviation initiatives, there still is an increase in poverty, inequality and unemployment. This should ring alarm bells for the democratic government, and galvanize it to start questioning this continued cycle, and to move towards a project to decolonize these policies, while still working on developing the country and its citizens.

This study has looked at structure and agency in order to answer the question of what a social grant is – a development agent that brings about change, or something that reproduces the structure that led to inequality in the first place. The decoloniality framework is used as a theoretical framework to analyse the agential role of social grants. The research data revealed that social grants remain constrained by the prescriptive structure it was born in, implying that it reproduces the structure that it is entrapped in. According to Sahlins (1985: vii), culture (structure) is historically ordered, and history (agency) is culturally ordered; hence there are no radical binary contrasts between structure and agency, as the two generally produce each other. An agent such as social grants is ordered by the culture of doing things in South Africa, a culture that is capitalist and benefits only a few. This is mainly because the idea of culture as a structure speaks to a way of life that structurally reproduces poverty and inequality – a way of life that the social grant programme is supposed to address through a history-making process that eliminates it. Thus, this articulation of structure and agency as culture and history enables me to ask the following questions when analysing the literature and data: Can the social grant

programme really bring about an end to poverty and inequality among the people of South Africa while it is implemented in a neoliberal capitalist economic system? To what extent does the social grant programme alter the system that has produced the very ills of poverty and inequality that the programme is meant to address? Such questions were important in the analysis of the data and were harnessed to develop meaning-making themes from the data.

The conundrum of structure and agency is an aspect of development that has been acknowledged by many scholars. For example, apart from Sahlins (1985), scholars such as Abrams (1982) have described the challenge of deploying the theoretical lens of structure and agency in following terms: the problem of agency is the problem of finding a way of accounting for human experience which recognizes simultaneously, and in equal measure, that history and society are created by constant individual action, but also that individual action, however purposeful, is constituted by history and society (Abrams, 1982:xii-xv). This explains the agential role of social grants: however purposeful the policies and structures of social grants are, they are created by a prescriptive structure that is embedded in the history of South Africa.

7.5   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research findings, through providing information gathered on the participants and their perceptions of grants, and the themes in the data. It is clear that these participants come from families that faced poverty, and they now find themselves in the same cycle of poverty. Some pin their hopes of breaking out of the cycle on their children and grandchildren, hoping for a better future from them, and seeing them as the way out of poverty. Interestingly, many describe social grants as a helping hand, rather than as an initiative that could help them out of poverty. Instead, it is an intervention that makes their situation more bearable, because it acts as a cushion. Social grants offer only repetition without change, as the

recipients remain entrapped in a prescriptive structure. Social grants reproduce the structure of coloniality of power that in hidden in development.

The next chapter presents the conclusion of the research and some recommendations regarding avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 8:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1   Introduction

The study set out to discover whether social grants were designed to improve the development structure of the country, or whether they continue to enable the current structural order. The main aim was to decode the transformative impact and/or meaning of the South African social grant programme using a decolonial epistemic lens. The study attempted to determine this impact by examining the potential of social grants in addressing the twin challenge of poverty and inequality among the people of South Africa.

In this final chapter of the thesis, the salient points covered in this study are summarised in order to present the final conclusions regarding the research questions based on the data collected though the literature review and the empirical data analysis. The remainder of the chapter consists of five more parts. First, I reflect on how well the main aim of the study and its objectives have been reached and the research questions have been answered. Then the contribution of the study to the literature is considered. Next, the limitations of the study, and the opportunities for further research arising from these limitations are set out, before concluding the study with some recommendations and final remarks.

8.2   Achievement of the aim and objectives

The main aim of this study was to decode the transformative impact (potential and actual) and meaning of the South African social grant programme using a decolonial epistemic lens. Social grants are, in theory, interventions designed to reduce poverty and inequality, but they are, in reality, only truly transformative if they can make a real difference on the ground in addressing

this dual challenge. In order to achieve this main aim, the objectives that had to be reached were

- identifying the history and nature of the structure that underlies poverty and inequality in South Africa.

- examining the history and purpose of the social grant programme in South Africa; and

- evaluating the transformative potential of the social grant programme in terms of addressing the challenge of poverty and inequality in South Africa by analysing the actual experiences of social grant beneficiaries.

All three of these objectives were achieved, as can be seen from the way the research questions were answered. The findings regarding the research questions (as set out in the preceding chapters and summarized below) provide a picture of the transformative impact (if any) of social grants in terms of poverty alleviation and equality among South Africans, thereby revealing whether the intervention does indeed play an agential role in transcending the power structure behind poverty and inequality. The literature does not suggest only the expected transformative impact or nature of social grants, but that instead of being an initiative that brings transformation, social grants often merely reproduce the structure that created them and the very problems that grants purport to address. The empirical data confirmed this contention. The findings are summarised according to the research question answered.

8.2.1 What is the history and nature of the structure that underlies poverty and inequality in South Africa?

The study looked at the history and nature behind the structure of poverty and inequality in South Africa. This review was achieved in Chapters 2, 3, and 5 of this thesis, which give an account of the history that forms the background to the nature of the unequal society in South Africa and the resulting scourge of poverty. Poverty and inequality in South Africa are both

embedded in colonialism and its legacy, which is recognized in the coloniality of power. This research question was answered by means of an in-depth literature review.

In Chapter 2, I discussed a theoretical framework regarding the structure and agency conundrum. The chapter looked at the role of structure (coloniality) in relation to the agency in question in this study, namely social grants. According to Sahlins (1985), an underlying motif in the discourse of structure and agency has always been that they reproduce one another synchronically and diachronically; the manner in which this relationship unfolds can vary depending on the nature of the structure, and that of the intervention, including the power dynamics between them. It was concluded that there are two types of structure: some structures are open to change, while others are closed in such a way that they constrain history-making interventions. Sahlins (1985: xi-xii) distinguishes between prescriptive and performative structures to explain his proposition of closed and open structures. Performative structures are those cultural orders that assimilate themselves to contingent circumstances, whereas prescriptive structures rather assimilate circumstances to themselves, thereby denying their contingent character (Sahlins 1985). The articulation of the different structures is important for my research, as these insights allowed me to ask the critical question of whether the structure within which the idea of social grant has been conceived and implemented in South Africa is a prescriptive structure, or a performative one.

Chapter 3 unpacked the structure of coloniality and its order, and Chapter 4, which presents coloniality as a meta-method, discussed decoloniality as the chosen lens for analysis in the study. There is a difference between coloniality and colonialism. According to Sithole (2014:vi), coloniality "mutates itself with the nature of the regime and it is now exercising oppression covertly as opposed to overtly as in the advent of colonialism". Coloniality should not be seen as colonialism, but rather the epoch that survives colonialism (Mignolo, 2000, 2007; Escobar, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2008). Coloniality still has the baggage of

colonialism, and it reproduces colonialism by seeking to modify itself by hiding what it is. It is a vessel that carries colonialism and reproduces it in a different form. Its mechanisms include normalizing and institutionalizing injustices to the subaltern (Sithole, 2014). Another concept that covered in Chapter 4 is the coloniality of power. According to Grosfoguel (2007), coloniality of power is the continuity of colonial power structures and it is a form of a system of domination in the absence of the colonial administration. For Walsh (2002:79), coloniality of power operates "through strategies of manipulation, co-optation, division, and control". Coloniality of power refers to a structure that is still dominant, such as the legacy of apartheid, and is the cause of continued poverty and inequality even in the democratic administration after 1994. It is for this reason that even though there are programmes such as social grants, we see that inequality and poverty are increasing, rather than declining.

Chapter 5 presented a literature review regarding poverty, as well as the history and structure of social grants South Africa, and the current debate. According to May (2001:2), South Africa is an upper-middle-income country but points out that this average-based classification is misleading, because the majority of households in fact experience outright poverty or are vulnerable to being poor. A number of factors have contributed to the history and structure of poverty and inequality. These include "historical factors, educational attainment, labour policies, environmental and demographic changes, language, culture and political development all served as factors that shaped a society that, though experiencing an increase in absolute poverty, experienced an even sharper increase in inequality levels" (Fourie, 2007:1275).

Based on the contributions of the above-mentioned chapters, it is therefore concluded that there are several factors that contributed to the history and nature of the structure behind poverty and inequality in South Africa. The main contributing factor is the history of colonialism in South Africa, which persists in the structure of coloniality of power. It is the prescriptive structure of coloniality that causes social grants to reproduce coloniality in a synchronic manner through

increased levels of poverty and inequality in South Africa to maintain the status quo of the structure.

8.2.2 *To what extent does the social grant programme play an agential role in transcending the structure behind poverty and inequality in South Africa?*

This second research question of the study was answered, but the answer is not a comfortable one: it was discovered the agential role of social grants reproduces the structure behind poverty and inequality in South Africa. This finding is drawn from the empirical data, which demonstrates that social grants are entrapped in a prescriptive structure, where the power to determine the status quo is on the side of the structure, and not on that of the agency of government initiatives. Chapter 6 of the thesis presents and analyses the empirical data. The data were collected from 20 social grants recipients in City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. All the recipients were disadvantaged from childhood and are still trapped in the cycle of poverty even in their adulthood and in old age. They find themselves enmeshed in a continuous cycle of poverty, because social grants are unable to play an agential role to assist them to get out of this incessant cycle.

The interviews reveal that, even though the social grant recipients experience extreme poverty, the social grant money makes some difference, as they are able to use this money to buy food or cover other household expenses such as school fees, electricity or school transport. However, it was also clear that the social grant has not empowered them to break out of the cycle of poverty. The social grants make life more bearable and fulfil the role of a "*helping hand*". Their lives have not changed drastically, but have improved somewhat, because they are now able to do things for their families that they could not do without this income. This means that they are able to meet some of their family obligations. While some saw social grants as a "*helping hand*"

on some of their monthly family expenses, other viewed them as "*free money*" and believed that the government is doing the best that it can to assist those in poverty.

Three themes that explain clearly what social grants are emerged from a critical analysis of these data, using decoloniality as a meta-method:

- social grants largely fail as an attempt at development agency.
- social grants in South Africa are in fact repetition without change; and
- social grants result in entrapment within a prescriptive structure.

These themes are discussed in detail in Chapter 6. It is therefore concluded that social grants may make a limited short-term difference, but at the cost of providing a cushion to its recipients to make their situation more bearable, without challenging and transforming the underlying structure to allow the recipients to escape the poverty cycle. Social grants are a repetition without change, as the grants and the recipients are entrapped in within a prescriptive structure. The intervention is an attempt to constitute a development agent, but due to the prescriptive structure from which grants arise and in which they are paid, they can only reduce poverty in the short run, and remain unable to transform the state of poverty and inequality in South Africa in the longer term.

8.2.3   *Who are the beneficiaries of the social grant programme in South Africa?*

The third question of the study asked about the beneficiaries of the social grants. This question explores whom the social grants serve, the childhood background of beneficiaries, and how they found themselves in this situation. This question is covered at the beginning of Chapter 6, where aspects of the life stories of all the participants are discussed.

The participants that were interviewed reside in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, specifically in the following areas: Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soshanguve and

Winterveld. Regarding family backgrounds, it was found that they were all from poor family backgrounds; some were born and raised in townships, while others grew up villages in rural areas around South Africa. These recipients were disadvantaged from childhood and are still poor, as young adults, middle aged people and even in old age. Some have placed their hope of breaking out of the cycle on their children and grandchildren, as they hope for a better future from them, and they see them as their key out of poverty, but the prospects remain slim.

Social grants provide for vulnerable people in South Africa, who find themselves in a cycle of poverty, due to the history of the country. It was concluded that the meaning and purpose of social grants should be clearly understood through the experiences of beneficiaries rather than only through policy and economic studies. Once the reality on the ground is understood, the government may be more able to deal with the structure of development in South Africa and come up with policies that address the issue of poverty and inequality.

8.2.4   *In what ways have the beneficiaries of social grants in South Africa benefited from the programme?*

The final question touches on the real benefits of social grants for beneficiaries. This question was answered in Chapter 6. When the participants explained their experiences of social grants, they stated that the grants help them. Something their responses had in common was that the beneficiaries were able to cover the basics – monthly expenses, food, transport, school requirements – for their children and households because of the social grants. They were of the view that the grant money is too little to make a significant long-run difference in their lives but see it as a month-to-month helping hand. It was the older participants, between the ages of 40 and 70, who saw grants as "*free money*", and were grateful that the government is doing the best that it can. They too use the money as a "*helping hand*" to assist with some of their monthly expenses. Old Age Grant recipients use this money to buy monthly groceries and to also pay

for their stokvels and their burial schemes. They too lamented that the money is too little, but they make do with what they have. They said that the social grant money is not enough to change their state of poverty but makes their situation more bearable.

The purpose of social grants, according to the Department of Social Development, is to help improve standards of living in society. Grants are given to people who are vulnerable to poverty and in need of state support. Another aim is to bring relief to the poor. This relief was indeed reported by the participants, but in the bigger picture, the social grants have not reduced poverty – it can at most offer a "*helping hand*", a cushion that makes life more bearable. The problem with such a cushion is that it discourages beneficiaries from questioning the structural order in which they find themselves as a legacy from colonialism which has led to continued poverty and inequality even after 1994. The aim of providing some form of relief has been achieved, but the state's revenue flow has limits, and relief in the short-term does not equate to the capacity to exit the programme in the long run.

8.3   Contribution

These findings in this study will contribute greatly to the broader body of literature on social grants in different ways. Although there is some literature on social grants in South Africa, no prior research has looked at what fundamentally social grants are in this context, as was the focus of this study. This study looked at social grants, not from the view of whether social grants contribute positively or negatively to the development of South Africa (even though this is important to our understanding of the role of social grants in development in general), but at the main shortcoming of the current discourses about the idea of a social grant. This shortcoming is that prior research has not yet appreciated the linkage between the idea of social grants and the broader environment that has enabled the emergence of its discourse in the first place. In this thesis, the meaning of the idea of social grants has been articulated from a point

of departure that examines the generative structural order behind the idea of a social grant. This approach is meant to cater for the limits of "presentism" in the currently ahistorical debates about the developmental impacts of social grants that have made it difficult to predict their larger impact with precision.

The results obtained in this study are robust and add significantly to an understanding of what social grants are, in order to comprehend how they are positive, and how they can be improved. Several contributions are made both to theory and empirical literature. The way in which the findings are presented provides a comprehensive analysis of the profiles of social grant recipients, and also answers the question of what fundamentally a social grant is. Lastly, the recommendations presented in the thesis provide suggestions on how to strengthen the current social security policies that are in place in South Africa.

8.4   Limitations faced in the study

Fund limitations prevented the researcher from interviewing a larger sample to include other areas in the Gauteng province, as well as in other provinces. It would have been interesting to cover the Gauteng province, or to compare the responses from the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality with responses from another province.

Because Pretoria is the administrative capital city of South Africa, and the challenges faced in the area with regard to receiving social grants are unlikely to be identical with challenges faced by people living in rural areas. Hence it would have been a good idea to have a comparative study between two provinces.

8.5   Opportunities for further research

Further research could include a comparative study across two or more provinces, to look at the meaning of social grants through the experiences of its beneficiaries. Such a study could

specifically include both urban and rural areas. This study could be including a time series analysis of social grants to compare different interventions by SASSA in providing social grants, for example, comparing the Eastern Cape and the Gauteng Province.

There is a need for research to develop structural reforms that will provide an intra-governmental exit strategy for the beneficiaries, in an effort of breaking the continuous cycle poverty and inequality.

There could be further research that looks into how social grants could be an effective means towards sustainable community development in disadvantaged areas in South Africa.

It is recommended that the Department of Social Development undertake a consultative review of the *White Paper on Developmental Social Welfare* (RSA, 1997), so that the agential role of social grants can be reviewed to encourage sustainable development of beneficiaries.

8.6   Final remarks

This study investigated the idea of social grants in post-apartheid South Africa, using a decolonial interpretive analysis. According to the World Bank's (2018) report, by any measure, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018); inequality is high, persistent, and has increased since 1994 (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). This is deeply concerning, given that the government has implemented a number of initiatives such as social grants which are said to be aimed at reducing poverty and inequality. The primary objective was to decode the transformative impact and/or meaning of the South African social grant programme using a decolonial epistemic lens. Therefore, the profiling of social grants recipients in the four sampled locations was essential to obtain a profile of social grant beneficiaries in order to determine the transformative impact of the social grant programme by examining its potential in addressing the twin challenges of poverty and inequality.

Central to the study findings is the fact that the recipients were born in families facing poverty, and in their adult lives, they find themselves still trapped in a cycle of poverty. Participants differ in how they see social grants, as a "*helping hand*", or as "*free money*", but the grants do provide limited relief, enabling participants to buy essentials for their families.

Among other things, results show that in terms of their longer-term implications and sustainability, social grants are a repetition without change, as both the grant system and the beneficiaries are entrapped within a prescriptive structure. Social grants thus reproduce the structure of coloniality of power that is hidden in development. A symptom that reveals the underlying festering wound is the government's response to the dire need of beneficiaries in the COVID-19 pandemic: the government has increased the amount of all social grant money given to citizens, adding an unemployment grant of R350. The Child Support Grant was increased by an additional R500 on top of the original grant of R440. Other social grants were supplemented with an additional R250 per month. These increases illustrated how insufficient the original amount that the beneficiaries were receiving was. This also shows that the amount that they were getting was too little to make a significant impact in reducing income inequality and poverty levels in South Africa. Instead, it exposes the structure of coloniality in which the previously disadvantaged continue to be faced with extreme cases of poverty, despite all the programmes that have been put in place.

It must therefore conclude that social grants cannot bring about the change that its recipients need in order truly to develop and break the cycle of poverty. Instead of providing a platform to develop and empower the vulnerable, social grants provide them with a safety net, which ensures that they do not question the structures of coloniality, and instead end up accepting poverty as a way of life and not wanting more from the government. This safety net deprives recipients with an opportunity to begin thinking of another world – one of equality, one where governments have systems in place to assist citizens to develop and to break the continuous

cycle of poverty. A decolonial turn encourages a shift away from the misconceptions of a world naturalized by global imperial designs, and there is an urgent need also to consider this for social grants.

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APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A: Map of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality
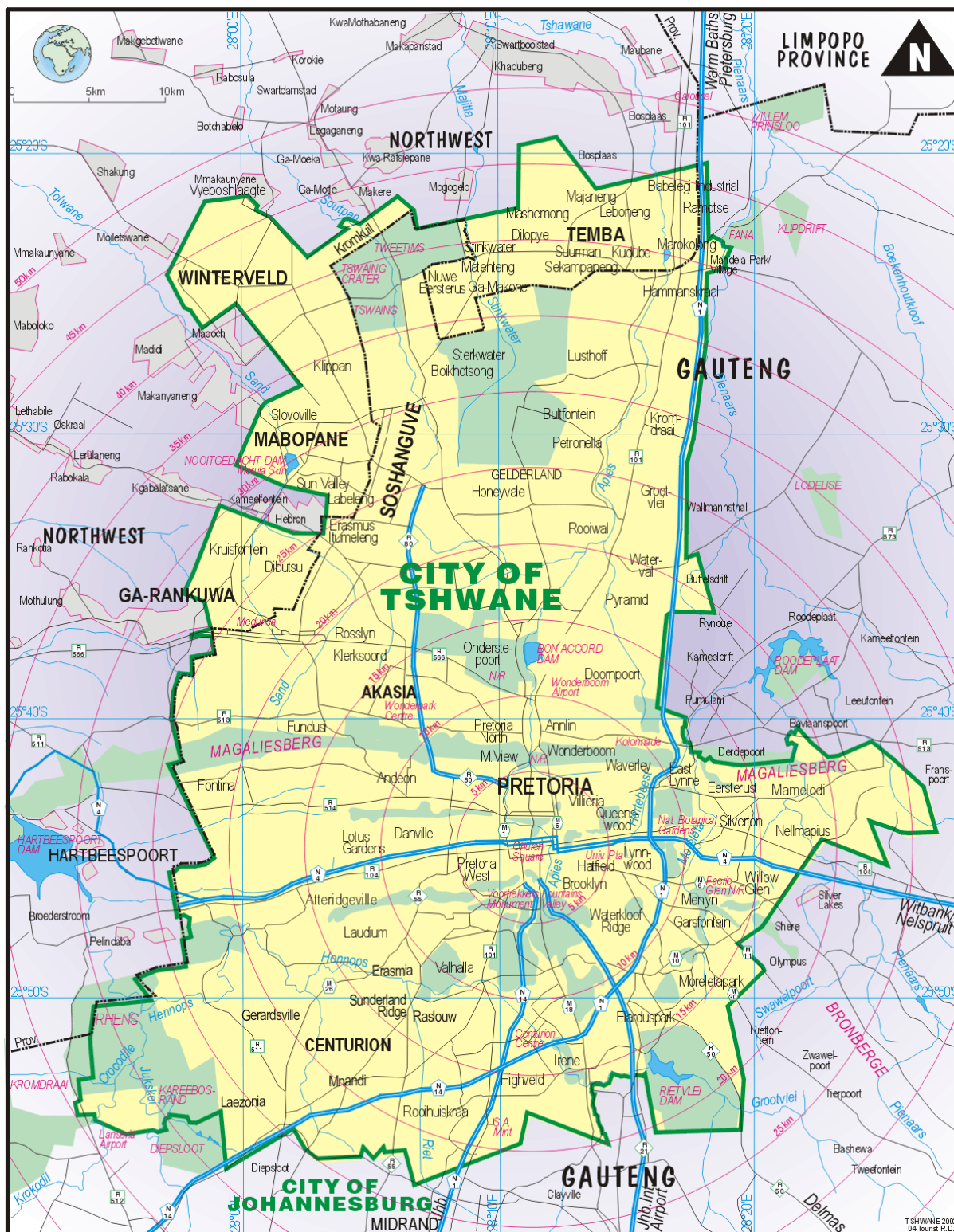
10.2 Appendix B: Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Question 1

Tell me more about yourself?

Prompts:

Who are you, where did you grow up, what were your family living conditions?

Question 2

What type of social grant(s) do you receive and for how long have you received the grant(s)?

Prompts:

To find out the circumstances that led the participant to apply for the grant.

Question 3

How has your life changed ever since you started receiving the grant?

Prompts:

Ask for practical examples (e.g., how did you cope before getting the grant?)

Question 4

What would you say you use the social grant for? (Monthly activities)

Question 5

How have you benefited from the grant?

Question 6

Has it changed your socio-economic status? If so, how? If not, why?

Prompts:

Ask for practical examples.

10.3 Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: 2019-CHS-Depart-51916193

Research permission reference number (if applicable): Rec-240816-052

23 July 2019

Title: The Idea of Social Grants in Post-Apartheid South Africa: An Interpretive Analysis

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Xolisa Mazibuko, and I am doing research with Prof. Morgan Ndlovu, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Development Studies, towards a Doctoral Degree (PhD) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "The Idea of Social Grants in Post-Apartheid South Africa: An Interpretive Analysis".

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to examine the generative structural order behind the idea of a social grant in order to articulate the meaning of social grants. The study is going to look at whether social grants are structured in a way that encourages growth and development, or if it is just a cushion that makes people not question the structural order that it is a part of.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

We are asking you whether you will allow us to conduct an interview with you about your views and opinions regarding the social grants initiative, and whether or not it has improved your life.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves using an audio recorder in order to capture our discussions, and we will use an interview guide to assist in our discussion. The types of questions that will be asked will focus on your family background, when you started receiving a social grant, and the type of social grants you are receiving. We will then further discuss you views on whether your life has changed since receiving the social, and examples for your answers. If you agree, we will ask you to participate in one interview for approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Please understand that your participation is voluntary, and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate or not is yours alone. If you choose not to take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time and tell me that you don't want to continue. If you do this, there will be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way.

If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a written consent form.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be helpful to us in that we hope it will promote an understanding of how social grants are structured. And whether social grants are structured in a way that encourages growth and development, or if it is just a cushion that makes people not question the structural order that it is a part of. This will also contribute to academic literature in the field of social grants.

If you would like to receive feedback on our study, we will record your phone number and e-mail address on a separate sheet of paper and can send you the results of the study when it is completed by the end of 2020.

ARE THEIR ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

At the present time, we do not see any risk of harm from your participation. The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Explain the extent, if necessary, to which confidentiality of information will be maintained.

Confidentiality

All identifying information will be kept in a password-protected file and will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study (Ms Magawana-Mazibuko and Prof Ndlovu), unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide and will be used for transcription and analysis purposes only. Your name will not be recorded on the transcripts. Instead, a code name or number will be used to ensure anonymization. We will only use the code name or number in any research outputs produced. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you do not wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

The data received from this research will be used for the research thesis, journal articles, and conference proceedings, however, the data as mentioned above will be anonymous and your name will not be mentioned anywhere.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in Pretoria, at the researcher's office at home for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No, there is not incentives in participating in the study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the *CREC,* Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Xolisa Mazibuko on 0649012684 or email: xolisa@rocketmail.com. The findings will be accessible at the end of 2020. Please do not use home telephone numbers. Departmental and/or mobile phone numbers are acceptable.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Xolisa Mazibuko on 064 901 2684, or email:
 xolisa@rocketmail.com.

Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. Morgan Ndlovu on 012 429 2130, or email: ndlovm@unisa.ac.za. Contact the department ethics chair representative Dr A. Khan, Tel: (012) 429- 6173, email: khana@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Xolisa Mazibuko

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications, and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the audio recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname……………………………………… (please print)

Participant Signature…………………………………………..Date…………………

Researcher's Name & Surname……………………………………(please print)

Researcher's signature…………………………………………..Date…………………

10.4 Appendix D: Ethical Clearance

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

11 August 2019

Dear Xolisa Tania, Mazibuko

| NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052 |
| CREC Reference # : 2019-CHS-Depart-51916193 |

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 23 July 2019 to 23 July 2022

_____

Researcher(s): Xolisa Tania Mazibuko
Supervisor(s): Prof. M Ndlovu
 ndlovm@unisa.ac.za
The Idea of Social Grants in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Decolonial Interpretive Analysis
Qualifications Applied: PhD in Development Studies
_____

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of Developmental Studies, College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The *low-risk application was reviewed and* **expedited** by the Department of Development Studies College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on 30 May 2019 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:
1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Development Studies Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (23 July 2022). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:
The reference number **2019-CHS-Depart-51916193** should *be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature:
Dr A Khan   Dr. S. Chetty
Department Ethics Chair: Development Studies   Ethics Chair: CREC
E-mail: khana@unisa.ac.za   Email: chetts@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429- 6173   Tel: (012) 429-6267