



# Social Security and Social Solidarity

Colloquium 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014

David Neves (PLAAS, UWC)



# Introduction

- Relationship between (state) social security and 'traditional social support'?
- CSG as manifestation of 'social solidarity' & dignity enhancing?
- Paradox: also stigma, and dignity detracting
- Relationship social security, 'social solidarity' and dignity?
- Data: in-depth interviews & SASAS

# Formal social security and practices of social support

- Impoverished: Systems of social reciprocity & mutual support
- ‘Traditional social security’
- ‘Social Capital’, ‘Informal Social Protection’ (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2006)
- Ubuntu (a person is a person through other people)

# FG interviews:

*‘Social security is ubuntu, it’s an expression of ubuntu. Where were we going to get the money otherwise?’ (Dimbaza, FG17).*

*Respondent 1: I think it is ubuntu because things would be much worse. At least one can buy nappies and milk from the R270. It’s true it’s not enough, but it’s something.*

*Respondent 2: It’s half-ubuntu.*

*Respondent 3: It’s ubuntu all the way, where would one get the milk and the nappies?*

# State cash transfers: flexible & fungible

- Resource social networks: cash & goods-in-kind, favours, unpaid labour etc
- Resources for carework, household pooling etc
- Grants (re)targeted from below
- Enables vulnerable to 'transact' socially
- Investments in 'human capital', and often calibrated to circumstances

*DN How do you make sure that he is not misspending the money?*

**Informant: I know, because I usually go there.**  
*You usually go there?*

**And my kids will call me, I even want to see the [receipt] slip.**

*Really! You go there... want to see the slips?*

**Yes because I'm not doing it for him. I'm doing it for the kids.**

*Oh ja, do you tell him he has to keep the slips?*

**He knows.**

*...How often you go there, they come here for holidays, but how frequently you do go there?*

**I go there once In two months. ..If there is a meeting in their school or anything, I go.**

*Alright. How would you describe your relationship with your ex-husband. It sounds good, and there is some co-operation?*

**Ja it's because of his kids, he loves his kids very much even though he doesn't like me. Our relationship was a very abusive relationship, it was not right. We couldn't stand each other. But with his kids... [the relationship is good]**

*Okay, so there was conflict between the two of you but you both... able to work together because of the kids.*

**Because of the kids, ja.**

*Ja...*

**You know what the reason that they [the kids] are not staying here, it's because they were used to going to English [an English medium school] school. There are no English school here, and it's very expensive here for you to have a transport to town or wherever. I tried that and it did not work out I decided to send them to P.E [Port Elizabeth]. There you can a bus for them for R320, here you have to pay [a school transport] contract of R500 each.**



# SASAS 2012 module,

*‘The provision of social grants is an example of society providing support for poor people’ (Q6).*

84% respondents agree or strongly agree

*‘The provision of social grants is consistent with the principles of Ubuntu’*

71% of adults agree or strongly agree

*‘Poor people should be supported by their community rather than rely on social grants’ (Q5),*

19% agree or strongly agree

67% disagree or strongly disagree

‘It is better to receive social grants to avoid extreme poverty than to have to borrow from family and friends’ (Q3)

82% agree or strongly agree

8% disagree in any way

# The paradox of stigma

- CSG as dignity enhancing vs. detracting
- Considering stigma:
  - (In relation to) what?
  - Stigma from whom?
  - Stigma why?

# Stigma from whom?

*“From: the rich or the poor, the employed ‘taxpayers’ and impoverished recipients themselves, amongst people in other villages, from proximate neighbours, from men and from women, from women of all ages or specifically middle-aged women, from children, from those embittered CSG recipients indebted to moneylenders, and from nobody at all” (p.190)*

# Why stigma?

## ***1. Gender, sexuality, reproductive decision making***

- Social anxiety over unregulated female sexuality and social reproduction,
- Esp in the absence of matrimony or co-resident male partners.

## ***2. Work & 'dependency'***

- Full social citizenship linked to individual's status as a worker.
- SA welfare system predicated on adult employment
- Dependency? On whom & what terms? (Meth 2004)

### ***3. Household formation, matrimony and masculinity***

- Wage labour = full adult social membership
- Male wage labour → bridewealth, matrimony and household formation.
- Masculinities

## 4. *Traditional social support and ubuntu*

- Communitarian values of social solidarity, mutuality and care, can also lead to opprobrium and stigma.
- Double-edged sword: support dignity, and alternatively diminish it. Can entail disadvantage and cost.
- Sometimes integral part of *ubuntu*
- Coercion, violence, social conservatism, jealousy, witchcraft etc

# CSG & dignity:

*Differences between:*

- *grant receipt*
- *grant use*
- *experiences of (categorically) 'being' a grant recipient.*