Privatizing Collective Public Goods: A Case Study of Street Cleaning in Johannesburg, South Africa

Melanie Samson

Introduction Privatization has been traditionally understood as the transfer of activities from the state to private firms. Early feminist work notes that shifting the boundary between the public and the private sector also involves a transformation in the relationship between the public and the private sphere, with many activities offloaded onto women’s unpaid labour in the home and the community.¹ Scholarship focusing on the current round of privatization in advanced capitalist countries notes that this process has become even more nuanced and multifaceted, with increasing reliance on service delivery by the voluntary sector.² As Fudge and Cossman write, “[t]he current renegotiation of the public and private spheres requires attention beyond the relationship between the state, the market, and the family and a consideration of a fourth institutional sphere, the voluntary or charitable sector.”³ Privatization in Third World countries also increasingly relies on delivery by a “fourth institutional sphere.” In this instance, however, the work is performed not by charitable organizations or people volunteering their labour to assist others, but by individuals labouring either for free to provide their own services (what is often referred to as contributing their “social capital”)⁴ or working for low wages in development projects.

Drawing on geographical literature emphasizing that state restructuring is predicated on and effects scalar and spatial transformations,⁵ a growing number of studies explore the ways in which these different forms of privatization result in a “respatialization of social policy.”⁶ For example, Larner and Butler highlight how local partnerships with community and voluntary
associations in New Zealand are part of a broader trend in which the social is fractured and “reimagined as a set of contiguous, but physically discrete, communities spread out across the nation-state.” Ruiters observes a similar refracturing of the social resulting from a municipal privatization process in which water contracts in three South African towns were granted to a multinational company. Based on detailed analysis of the transfer of water from the public to private sector, Ruiters concludes that “commodifying water and sanitation has re-racialised, re-segregated and polarized South African society hindering the construction of integrated local communities and reinforcing racialised class geographies of exclusion.” Increasingly, feminist scholars alert us that these processes of scalar and spatial restructuring are gendered as well as raced and classed.

Taken together, this body of literature helps us to understand the implications of various forms of privatization. However, despite acknowledgement that “[p]rivatization strategies often overlap and…are mutually reinforcing,” surprisingly scant attention has been paid to why certain activities are displaced to the private sector in some geographic areas, but to the development or voluntary sectors in others. Questions about why privatization takes particular forms in distinct circumstances remain undertheorized, and the implications for social relations remain largely unexplored.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the emergence of various forms of street cleaning services in Johannesburg, South Africa, this article begins to theorize the forces driving activities to be displaced to different nonstate sectors. It also examines the implications, for both citizens and workers, of the transfer of service delivery to these various sectors. The article argues that the privatization of street cleaning has taken distinct forms in different geographical areas based on their perceived market potential.

The article argues that an understanding of these processes must consider the challenges of privatizing noncommodifiable public goods. As it was not possible to develop individualized pay-for-service alternatives to street cleaning, the only option was to develop new forms of collective provision that ensured that “consumers” received only the level of public goods for which their immediate geographical community could afford to pay through privatized taxation. In working class areas where residents could not afford
to pay an extra tax, the service was shifted to the development and voluntary sectors. The new, privatized forms of service delivery were therefore based on the creation of multiple publics determined by the class characteristics of particular geographic areas of the city. As class and race are so intimately intertwined in South Africa, privatization facilitated the production of new forms of racial inequalities.

The partial relocation of street cleaning to the private sector in business and bourgeois areas, and to voluntary and development initiatives in working-class areas, has therefore contributed to the refracturing of citizenship rights in post-apartheid South Africa. It has also contributed to the resegmentation of the labour market, as service delivery in the different sectors has been predicated upon different constructions of workers’ rights and status. This resegmentation has been deeply gendered because lower cost delivery in working-class townships exploits African women’s more vulnerable position in the labour market. Analyzing the differences between service provision by the private, voluntary, and development sectors therefore enriches our understanding of how state restructuring creates new divisions between both workers and citizens, and the ways in which these processes are interrelated.

The article begins with a brief overview of methodology. It then presents background information about the racially segregated nature of the apartheid city, formal desegregation in the post-apartheid era, and the iGoli 2002 plan to restructure Johannesburg. It proceeds to locate the pressure to marketize street cleaning within the context of the city’s privatized waste management system. The next section sketches the main features of three separate street cleaning initiatives in the private, voluntary, and development sectors, and demonstrates the ways in which they reinscribe class and race differentiation within the municipality. In conclusion, the article reflects on the way in which understanding the nuances and differences between different forms of privatization can help to illuminate the gender, race, and class-based nature and effects of current state restructuring.

**Methodology** This article is based on an in-depth case study, conducted during 2002 and 2003, of the Johannesburg waste management system. The municipality formally contracted the Pikitup waste management utility
to provide street cleaning and noncommercial waste collection services. Pikitup employed its own workers and subcontracted a range of other private companies to provide services. In addition, city improvement districts (CIDs), the Zivuseni poverty alleviation project, and volunteer initiatives provided street cleaning services in areas within the jurisdiction of some of the depots. The case study covered all types of service providers in the geographical areas assigned to five of Pikitup’s eleven depots. See Table 1 for further information on the five depots.

Table 1. Areas Covered by the Depots in the Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot</th>
<th>Description of Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selby</td>
<td>Central business district and inner city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwood</td>
<td>Wealthy, formerly white suburbs such as Houghton and Norwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zondi and Central Camp Satellite</td>
<td>African township of Soweto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avalon and Poortjie Satellite</td>
<td>African informal settlement of Orange Farm, coloured township of el Dorado Park, Indian township of Lenasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlboro</td>
<td>Wealthy, formerly white suburbs such as Sandton, African township of Alexandra</td>
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Field work included five focus groups with workers employed by CIDs and the Zivuseni poverty alleviation project, and 36 individual interviews with Pikitup management, management of relevant private companies subcontracted by Pikitup, councillors, municipal managers, management of the Zivuseni poverty alleviation project, and shop stewards from the two main municipal unions: the South African Municipal Workers’ Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union.

Restructuring Local Government — The Unification and Refragmentation of Johannesburg  Forging and maintaining racial segregation within the apartheid city was central to the apartheid project. As Swilling notes, “[t]he urban system… underpinned, and was a necessary precondition for, the formal disenfranchisement of the black majority of the nation-state.”

Mirroring racial exclusions at the national level, apartheid local government was divided on the basis of race. White South Africans were enfranchised
to participate in whites-only elected local government and received services comparable to those in the First World. Due to severe limitations on establishing businesses in the townships, Africans were forced to purchase goods in areas under the jurisdiction of white local authorities. This boosted profits and hence taxes paid by these businesses to the white local authorities. Perversely, African expenditure therefore subsidized the provision of Council services to white residents.

By contrast, coloured, Indian, and African South Africans received substandard services; Africans often received no services at all. For example in 1995 (one year after the first democratic elections), only 38 percent of African households had their refuse collected by the local authority and 20 percent of African households had no access to any system of refuse disposal, while 93 percent of white households, 94 percent of Indian households, and 82 percent of coloured households had their refuse collected by a local authority.

Coloureds, Indians, and Africans were each subjected to a succession of undemocratic, racially based local government structures. In the 1980s, protests and rent boycotts targeting the Black Local Authorities became a focal point for the anti-apartheid struggle. Emergent militant civic movements demanded an end to racially based local government, the introduction of “one city one tax base,” the upgrading of services, and the establishment of affordable service charges. Demands for equitable and affordable services were therefore central to the anti-apartheid struggle.

During apartheid’s final years, the area currently comprising the Johannesburg municipality was governed by 13 racially based local government authorities. The first steps towards uniting the city under one municipality came with the formation of the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber in 1990. In 1995, further integration occurred as the municipality was consolidated into the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (which later became the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC)). The Metropolitan Council comprised four metropolitan substructures, each of which retained significant powers and authorities. In this era, Johannesburg therefore remained a divided city. It was only in December 2000 that a “uni-city” was created and the demand of “one city one tax base” was finally achieved. This was, however, a shallow
victory as the Council moved swiftly to implement the controversial *iGoli 2002* plan to restructure the municipality.

The *iGoli 2002* plan was developed under the pretext of responding to a financial crisis within the municipality. The city did indeed face severe financial constraints and was unable to pay outstanding bills for bulk electricity supply. But the plan went far beyond simple financial reforms and effected a fundamental transformation of local government.\(^1\) *iGoli 2002* is overtly based on implanting market logic into the heart of the municipality. According to *iGoli 2002*, “[t]he challenge is to transform the current bureaucracy into a business approach because the city is a ‘big business.’”\(^2\) The plan repeatedly refers to citizens as customers and argues that there must be a stronger “customer focus” within the municipality.

*iGoli 2002* is firmly grounded within the contracting model of the local state.\(^3\) Only a minimal number of council functions were identified as being “core administration” and kept in-house. The core administration itself is divided into a central administration that plays the client role and eleven regional administrations that play the contractor role. A number of council departments, such as the gas works, were identified as being noncore and were sold to the private sector. The remainder of council’s activities were transformed into either utilities, agencies, or corporatized entities (UACs). The UACs are all private companies that have the city as the sole shareholder. They are differentiated from one another on the basis of their ability to generate profit, with utilities being those services deemed capable of being financially self-sufficient and generating a profit.\(^4\) Ironically, while *iGoli 2002* for the first time established a unified, single-tier metropolitan government encompassing all of Johannesburg, it simultaneously hollowed out the local state and reduced it to a minimalist core. As the detailed analysis below of *iGoli 2002*’s implications within the waste management sector demonstrates, by recasting the city as a business and embedding market logic at the heart of the unicity, *iGoli 2002* created the dynamics that would lead to the refragmentation of service delivery on the basis of class and race.

**The Privatization of Waste Management in Johannesburg**  
Waste management was targeted for transformation into a utility, and on 1 January 2001,
the previously independent waste management units of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, the four substructures, and Midrand (which was incorporated into the unicity) were dissolved then merged to form Pikitup Pty Ltd. In converting its waste management departments into Pikitup, the Council created the largest private waste management company in Africa. A “Service Delivery Agreement” between Pikitup and the Central Administration contracts Pikitup to deliver all waste management services that fall within the constitutional and legislative ambit of local government responsibility.

As noted above, the iGoli 2002 model distinguishes utilities from agencies and corporatized entities by the ability to generate profit. Within the waste management sector, some services, such as collection, are provided to individual households and institutions that can be charged for the service provided. The utility identifies these services as “revenue generating activities.” But Pikitup is also bound to deliver collective public goods, such as street cleaning, for which individual fees cannot be charged. Within Pikitup business plans, these activities are referred to as “non-revenue generating.” See Table 2 for a description of revenue-generating and nonrevenue-generating activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue-Generating Activities</th>
<th>Nonrevenue-Generating Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Round collected refuse (RCR)</td>
<td>Street cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk services</td>
<td>Garden sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dailies</td>
<td>Illegal dumping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous waste and medical waste</td>
<td>Carcasses (street reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special waste</td>
<td>Waste minimization and recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carcasses (private dwellings)</td>
<td>Composting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>Lane flushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal</td>
<td>Community education and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incineration</td>
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To increase profitability, Pikitup adopted a sophisticated strategy to minimize expenditure on nonrevenue-generating activities and maximize
income and profits from revenue-generating activities. In order to boost income, Pikitup actively marketed new commercial waste management services and sought to regain lost market share in the provision of bulk business services, the highly lucrative business area in which it does not have a monopoly. With respect to minimizing expenditure on nonrevenue-generating activities, Pikitup focused on street cleaning, which was by far the largest budget item in this category. The utility employed two key strategies to cut costs in providing this service. First, it dramatically reduced its own staff complement in this section. Second, Pikitup subcontracted private companies to deliver services on its behalf. As these companies were not bound by minimum wage agreements in the municipal sector, they were able to deliver services at a substantially lower cost.

Although Pikitup managed to reduce expenditure in this nonrevenue-generating sector, it was still required to pay for these services. As street cleaning did not generate any revenue, it remained a drain on Pikitup’s resources. For Pikitup, the ideal scenario would therefore be to replace the provision of street cleaning as a collective public good with a commodified, fee-for-service alternative, or at the very least to find a way to ensure that the main beneficiaries of the collective public good directly financed its delivery. During the period under review, Pikitup did not proactively pursue this strategy. However, drastically reducing the level of service provision created the conditions for other parties concerned about the cleanliness of the city to undertake such initiatives. As will be argued below, Pikitup actively benefitted from these initiatives, and together with the municipality was seeking ways to foster and promote them.

These initiatives included service delivery in the private, development, and voluntary sectors. In order to understand why delivery was undertaken in these three distinct sectors, it is useful to explore the challenges in commodifying collective public goods.

**Commodification and Public Goods** A commodity is an object or service produced specifically for sale on the market. As Colin Leys notes, this means “producing it in such a way as to make it saleable. It has to be given a price that someone is willing to pay, and under capitalism that price must yield
a surplus over the cost of production or it will not be produced.” It is worth emphasizing that if a price cannot be allocated and charged for a service, then it is not commodifiable. Leys observes that:

Some non-market services like policing and public health are ‘public goods,’ i.e., ‘non-rivalrous’ and ‘non-excludable,’ and so by definition not commodifiable, because there is no way to charge for people’s use of them. Opening such services up to market forces involves getting people to devalue these public goods and place a higher value on what are presented as equivalent non-public goods (e.g., to overlook the shared benefits of policing and to wish only for individually purchased security services), and this may not always be easy.

Key to Leys’ conceptualization of commodification is that it must be possible to induce individuals to devalue the public good, and to charge individual users for the commodified alternative.

It is exceptionally hard to imagine a commodified alternative to street cleaning. Individuals could contract private companies to clean the sidewalk and street directly in front of their houses, and it is even conceivable that they could pay for someone/something to sweep the street in front of them as they walked or drove around the city. However, it would be impossible to prevent others from benefitting from this service (that is, it is non-excludable). Moreover, the individuals who paid for the commodified alternative would still be confronted by dirty street sections on either side of their path. Effectively, by definition, street cleaning is not commodifiable.

The alternative pursued in Johannesburg was to shift provision of this public good outside of the public sector and to develop class-differentiated conceptions of multiple “publics” with the right to different levels and types of public service, based on ability to pay a privatized tax for the service. Racial discrimination is unconstitutional in post-apartheid South Africa. However, due to the intertwining of race and class, shifting service provision outside of the public sector refragmented service delivery along class lines and contributed to the process of forging new forms of racial and class-based inequalities, which has been documented by a range of scholars.

Research conducted in the geographic areas covered by the five Pikitup depots reveals that, in bourgeois and commercial areas, service delivery was
shifted to the private sector via the development of CIDs, yet in working-class areas privatized delivery was provided within the voluntary and development sectors. Starting with the city improvement districts, the key features of provision by each of these sectors is detailed below.

**City Improvement Districts — Paying for a Privately Provided Service**

CIDs represent the one successful initiative in Johannesburg for providing street cleaning based on a private tax. Since the 1990s, a number of CIDs have been established in the city. Modelled on similar initiatives in the United States, the CIDs aim to promote urban regeneration/preservation and security within particular urban geographical spaces. CIDs are intended to provide services that add to or enhance municipal services. In Johannesburg, the CIDs contract private companies to provide both security and street cleaning services on their behalf.

Under the Gauteng City Improvement District Act, a CID may be formed if supported by a majority of owners of the majority of rateable property in the area. Once a CID is formed, all businesses in the area are required to pay a levy to finance service provision. This levy is therefore equivalent to a special tariff for specific services traditionally provided by the municipality as nonrevenue-generating public goods.

In effect, rather than providing an individualized alternative to a municipally provided public good, the CIDs represent the private provision of a public good. Street cleaning has not been individualized, but businesses in a particular area each pay a portion to keep “their” streets clean. By contrast, when provided by the municipality, street cleaning is financed out of the general rates account. When citizens and businesses pay rates, they are not targeted to specific services in the area where they are located, but can be allocated to finance a range of municipal activities in any area of the city. The CIDs therefore represent a profoundly significant narrowing of the definition of the public, contrary to the concept of “one city, one tax base” and the supposed overthrow of apartheid segregation.

In 2003, there were CIDs in the areas covered by three depots included in the sample. Table 3 shows the details. They were all located in wealthy,
historically white suburbs and the central business district.

Table 3. City Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Sample Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot</th>
<th>CID</th>
<th>Number of Street Cleaning Workers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marlboro</td>
<td>Sandton City Management District</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwood</td>
<td>Rosebank Management District</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selby</td>
<td>Central Johannesburg Partnership CIDs</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on information provided by CID management

At the time this research was conducted, the CIDs were limited to commercial districts within the suburbs. However, Kagiso Urban Development, which had overseen the development of many CIDs in the city, reported that they had been approached by residents in a number of areas about the possibility of forming a residential equivalent. This would complement the widespread practice within the suburbs in which residents make monthly contributions for private security on residential streets. The initiatives often fail due to insufficient contributions from residents, hence the appeal of a residential CID where, if the majority voted for provision of the service, all would be required to contribute financially. Such residential CIDs have, in fact, already been established in Cape Town.

Previous requests by Johannesburg citizens to form residential CIDs had been rejected by the Council. But the Director in the Office of the City Manager identified numerous benefits from creating residential CIDs, and promoted this route in the medium term as the most effective means of charging residents for this service. The municipality could continue to provide a minimal public service via Pikitup, but residents concerned about the cleanliness of their neighbourhoods could pay for additional workers to supplement this service. In reality, given that Pikitup had minimized, or in some cases completely withdrawn, staff from areas being serviced by CIDs, this would likely result in Pikitup almost completely withdrawing from the provision of nonrevenue-generating street cleaning services in these areas. Africa’s largest private waste management company could then focus on what private companies do best: maximizing its profits from revenue-generating activities.
The Director argued that the replication of CIDs in residential areas “is possible in all suburbs.” He also conceded this would not be possible in black working-class townships and informal settlements due to the inability and/or lack of willingness among residents to pay an additional tariff. Different strategies would therefore be required in these areas to replace street cleaning with an alternative service that did not drain Pikitup’s resources. At the time of this research, several initiatives were underway in the townships to achieve this goal by transferring activity to the voluntary and development sectors.

**Doing it for Themselves: Street Cleaning by the Voluntary and Development Sector in the Townships** As noted above, there is a limited commercial base within the townships due to the historical evolution of the apartheid city. It is, therefore, not surprising that no CIDs had been formed there. Moreover, given exceptionally high unemployment, it would be difficult to get township residents to pay an additional levy for residential CIDs to clean the streets. Rather than replacing Pikitup’s street cleaning with a privately provided commercial service, there were at least two types of initiatives in the townships that effectively transferred some responsibility for street cleaning to the voluntary and development sectors. These included the provision of street cleaning in Soweto by a provincial poverty alleviation project called Zivuseni, and the promotion of long-term volunteerism.

**From Masakhane to Letsema: Pay Up or Sweep Up** The growing emphasis on volunteerism is rooted in the failure of ANC initiatives to increase payment for services in working-class communities. When the first ANC government was elected in 1994, it faced the key challenge of “restoring respect for the commodity” and payment for services after years of protracted rent boycotts in the townships. In February 1995, it launched Operation *Masakhane* (“let’s build together”), which sought to build confidence in local government and educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Central to this was the exhortation to communities to pay for their services. Pape and McDonald clearly locate *Masakhane* within the shift to cost recovery.
While Masakhane may have had a broad developmental focus, by 1997 even leading ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) stalwart Jeremy Cronin admitted that its message had simply become one of ‘black communities must pay up.’ Whether this was a misinterpretation or not, Masakhane became the first step in trying to impose a regime of cost recovery on impoverished residents.\textsuperscript{40}

Despite the efforts of Masakhane, the rate of nonpayment by township residents remained high. Government has repeatedly attacked the so-called “culture of non-payment.” However, in 2003, nearly one third of the working-age population was not economically active, and less than 40 percent was employed\textsuperscript{41}; a significant percentage of the population simply could not afford to pay for services. Indeed, research conducted in Johannesburg has found that households with an annual income of ZAR4,800 are required to spend the equivalent of 117.47\% of household income on municipal services.\textsuperscript{42}

The failure of Masakhane led the national government to pursue a second strategy. A number of municipalities began to call upon poor residents who could not afford to pay the full cost of services to minimize service delivery costs by volunteering free labour.\textsuperscript{43} The ANC formalized and adopted this approach in 2002 when, in honour of its ninetieth anniversary, it declared 2002 “the year of the volunteer” and launched the Letsema initiative. This strategy is clearly in line with broader international trends promoted by the World Bank and development theorists such as Peter Evans,\textsuperscript{44} which argue that the poor should contribute social capital to facilitate delivery of their own services. In South Africa, this policy has been framed in revolutionary as opposed to social capital discourse. Branding 2002 “the year of the volunteer” subtly linked volunteerism to the ANC’s years in exile, during which it branded years with different themes linked to the struggle (such as “year of the cadre”). Even more explicitly, the National Executive of the party motivated support for Letsema by arguing that apartheid was defeated by legions of “volunteers.” It called on South Africans to volunteer and “become their own liberators” by promoting transformation and helping to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.\textsuperscript{45} Although Letsema was an ANC initiative, it became intertwined with government policy and was specifically
Volunteerism in the waste management sector has been reported in cities and towns across the country and has become a relatively well-established practice in Johannesburg. Aside from one historical example of volunteerism in collection services in the Central Camp Satellite of Zondi Depot, all reported volunteer initiatives have involved street cleaning activities.

These initiatives fell into three categories. First, together with Council, Pikitup had conducted several high profile, short-term, volunteer clean-up campaigns in which politicians and citizens from around the city volunteered for one or two days to pick up litter and clean the streets. Second, ward committees, residents’ groups, and schools in both wealthy and working-class areas organized smaller scale, short-term clean-up initiatives. Pikitup collected the waste and sometimes provided volunteers with bags, caps, and t-shirts. These campaigns were generally perceived to be a drain on resources because they often cleaned areas, such as rivers and parks, that were not the responsibility of Pikitup. The Acting Director of Operations argued that it would be more useful for volunteers to do work normally performed by Pikitup. This was precisely the third kind of volunteer work, conducted exclusively in the working-class townships. Managers and workers reported that long-term volunteers provided street cleaning and litter-picking services in parts of Alexandra, Orange Farm, Soweto, and Ennerdale. Most were reportedly coordinated by ward councillors as part of the ward environmental committees.

As councillors were not required to report information on these activities, it was not possible to gather detailed information on volunteer street cleaning initiatives in all townships associated with the depots in this case study. However, information on the Orange Farm township is likely indicative. At the time this research was conducted, there were long-term volunteers in all four wards in Orange Farm, ranging from 40 volunteers in one ward to 114 volunteers in another. All were coordinated by the appropriate ward councillor. The volunteers cleaned the street and illegal dumping sites, worked five days a week for no pay, and received no protective clothing or equipment. Some had been volunteering for several years.
In 2002/2003, Pikitup developed the concept of “Eco-munities” to help formalize and systematize the use of volunteers. Eco-munities were intended to “drive waste minimization and environmental management programmes within communities.” The long-term goal was to establish eco-munities in each ward linked to the ward committees. Eco-munities would be charged with systematically cleaning the environment. Pikitup would assist the Eco-munities in forming nonprofit companies so they could raise funds to finance their activities. Residents could then continue to volunteer their services for free or, if they raised sufficient funds, could pay themselves to perform these duties as part of a community-managed development project.

**Zivuseni Poverty Alleviation Project** The Zivuseni poverty alleviation project is an example of an initiative that had already shifted street cleaning to the development sector. Zivuseni was established by the Gauteng provincial government in April 2002 with the stated aims of alleviating poverty by providing short-term work opportunities for the poor and unemployed, promoting self reliance, and “breaking the poverty cycle” by building local capacity through skills development. Zivuseni was also intended to have long-term community benefits by focusing on projects that renew community assets and infrastructure, and as such it is categorized as a special public works programme (SPWP).

One of the Zivuseni projects focused on the provision of street cleaning services in the African township of Soweto, where community members were contracted for three-month periods to pick litter and clean illegal dumping sites. When the field work was conducted, 258 people were working on this project. When their contracts finished, they were replaced by successive rounds of other workers. All workers were drawn from the local community, were unemployed, and came from households without any stable income.

**Relationship to Pikitup** Pikitup had not directly initiated any of these efforts to develop private, development, and voluntary sector alternatives to the local state’s provision of street cleaning. As noted above, however,
the leadership of both the company and the municipality were contemplating how to expand these initiatives to achieve the strategic vision of Pikitup as a profit-generating private company.

Moreover, Pikitup benefitted from these initiatives and actively engaged with them to varying degrees. *Zivuseni* was extensively integrated into the work of the Pikitup depot in Soweto. Pikitup had prioritized Soweto as the site for the project; the workers reported to work at the depot and were supervised by Pikitup workers, and depot management decided where to deploy them. At times, the *Zivuseni* workers worked side by side with Pikitup employees.\(^\text{57}\)

Pikitup had no formal influence over where the CIDs or volunteer initiatives were formed. However, the private company subcontracted by Pikitup to deliver services in a number of sections of Orange Farm frequently requested that the councillor deploy volunteers to areas requiring special attention.\(^\text{58}\) Although CID management unilaterally decided where to deploy its workers, Pikitup subsequently withdrew its street cleaning services from these areas and reallocated its workers to other streets within the depot’s area of coverage.\(^\text{59}\)

The CID workers, *Zivuseni* workers, and volunteers were all acutely aware of the fact that they were doing Pikitup’s work. In focus groups, they repeatedly argued that Pikitup should offer them permanent jobs, given that Pikitup workers had higher incomes, better benefits, and greater employment security. As noted above, however, Pikitup was keenly interested in minimizing relatively well-paid jobs within its street cleaning section and in dramatically curtailing its provision of this nonrevenue-generating activity. Hence, both the company and its shareholder (the Council) supported the expansion of initiatives providing street cleaning in the voluntary, private, and development sectors. What the workers had clearly identified was that this relocation of service delivery to the private, voluntary, and development sectors contributed not only to the refragmentation of service delivery and citizenship, but also to a resegmentation of the labour market.

**Resegmenting the Labour Market**  Shifting street cleaning activities to the private, development, and voluntary sectors resegmented the waste
management labour market based on the sector within which the workers were employed. Before Pikitup was formed, the workers employed by the municipal waste management departments were covered by the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC), which negotiates agreements on minimum wages and benefits for workers employed by municipalities. As Pikitup is a private company, it was not automatically bound by these agreements. During the iGoli 2002 negotiations, however, Council agreed that the UACs would abide by collective agreements in the municipal sector. As a result, the workers employed by Pikitup continued to benefit from the SALGBC agreements. They were relatively well paid for unskilled general workers — permanent men in the five depots surveyed earned an average of ZAR2,598/month and permanent women earned ZAR2,162/month.

By contrast, there is no bargaining council in South Africa that covers nonmunicipally employed street cleaning workers. As a result, workers employed by CIDs (as well as workers employed by private companies subcontracted by Pikitup to provide street cleaning services) did not enjoy the protection of any agreements determining minimum wages or benefits. CID workers interviewed earned ZAR1,200 per month.

Although the CID workers received far lower wages and benefits than their counterparts in Pikitup, at least they were deemed to be part of the formal sector of the economy and benefitted from the floor of rights established in South Africa’s new labour laws for this sector. This was not the case for the workers in the development and voluntary sectors. As Zivuseni workers were employed on a poverty alleviation public works project, they did not benefit from the full protection of labour laws afforded to other workers. Instead, their terms and conditions of employment were determined by the Ministerial Determination for Special Public Works Programmes issued in 2002 in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA)60 and the Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for Special Public Works Programmes.61

Workers governed by the Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Conduct have extremely limited job security and significantly weaker rights and benefits than workers covered by the BCEA. For example, workers
under the Determination and Code are not covered by unemployment insurance, are precluded from working more than 24 months, and generally receive shorter rest and break periods.

While the Determination and Code do not establish minimum wages, the Code stipulates that the rate of pay should not be higher than the average local rate so as not to recruit people away from other jobs with longer-term prospects. Zivuseni workers were paid ZAR40 per day. They were conscious of the fact that, although they were doing exactly the same work as the Pikitup workers, they earned significantly less. Most of the workers interviewed had been retrenched from permanent employment a number of years before, and within the context of exceptionally high unemployment levels had little hope of securing well-paid, permanent jobs. As a result, despite believing it unfair that they were paid so much less than Pikitup workers, one worker noted that “we said we will accept it because we are suffering.”

The voluntary sector afforded the least protection and benefits. Although working five days a week and performing similar activities to workers employed in the public, private, and development sectors, volunteers received no pay whatsoever, nor any protective clothing or equipment. All informants agreed that volunteers were primarily motivated by the hope of securing employment, a finding confirmed in research conducted in other parts of the country. Ironically, by volunteering they undercut the need for Pikitup and the private companies to hire more workers, making it very unlikely that volunteering would lead to permanent employment — a reality borne out by the fact that many of the volunteers had been labouring for free for years on end.

**Gender and the Resegmentation of the Labour Market** This resegmentation of the municipal waste management labour market was strongly gendered. Historically, the waste management workforce had been exclusively comprised of African males. When African women entered the sector in the mid-1980s, they were given jobs exclusively in street cleaning because they were thought to have developed the necessary skills from their domestic duties. They were hired as casual workers and had lower wages, benefits, and employment security than their male counterparts.
At the time this fieldwork was conducted, the workforce composition was still deeply racialized and gendered. Ninety-nine percent of workers were African, and women were still ghettoized within street cleaning. Ninety-three percent of women employed by Pikitup worked in this section, as did 100 percent of the women employed by the companies subcontracted by Pikitup. Although a significant number of men worked in street cleaning, the majority were employed in collection.

Somewhat curiously, the gender division of labour in street cleaning was reversed in the CIDs. All but two of the 83 street cleaning workers employed by the CIDs were men because CID management had “strongly encouraged” the subcontracted street cleaning companies to hire men. This was likely due to CID management’s belief that male workers provided a greater sense of security, and indeed street cleaning workers were required to assist with security work.

By contrast, Zivuseni prioritized hiring women and had a target of 50 percent female employment. However, a relatively large number of men withdrew from the Soweto waste management project. Women workers attributed this to their unwillingness to do such dirty, “female” work for low wages. As a result, 69 percent of the 258 workers were female.

Both men and women volunteered in Orange Farm, but according to informants and personal observation, the vast majority of volunteers were young women under 40. The provision of regular street cleaning services by primarily female volunteers in the townships where they live has been recorded in South African municipalities as diverse as Sol Plaatje in the Northern Cape and Cape Town in the Western Cape. Although Letsema does not specifically call on women to take primary responsibility for defeating poverty and liberating their own communities, due to their role within the private sphere it was women who were more likely to take up this struggle. That some men volunteered to perform what was seen as a female task was evidence of their desperation to secure proper employment.

It is therefore clear that the transfer of street cleaning from the public into the private, development, and voluntary sectors is creating new forms of segmentation in the labour market. Whereas research in other sectors of the economy has documented resegmentation based on the contract status...
of the worker, in this case the key factor is the sector within which the worker is employed. Although post-apartheid labour laws grant all workers the same rights regardless of race, the sectorally based, centralized collective bargaining system has not expanded to cover workers in the formal sector performing types of work that have no historical private sector equivalent, and the development and voluntary sectors are either partially or completely excluded from coverage by labour laws. The process of resegmentation is deepening preexisting racial and gender inequalities. Collecting society’s rubbish remains the responsibility of Africans, and African women continue to occupy the worst paid and most precarious positions within the sector. African men monopolize the relatively well-paid jobs in the CID's that fall within the ambit of labour law, while the women predominate in the development and voluntary sectors where they are denied the rights and protections of workers in the public and private sectors. The fact that quotas and targets for the employment of women were in place only in the poorly paid Zivuseni project indicates the lack of commitment to transformation of gender-based segmentation in the labour market.

**Conclusion: Refragmenting Citizenship, Resegmenting the Labour Force** The ability of residents and businesses to pay an additional private tax for street cleaning was the primary factor influencing whether publicly provided street cleaning was supplemented and/or replaced by a commercially provided alternative or by initiatives in the development and voluntary sectors. The pursuit of these different options in different class-based areas of the municipality contributed to what Ruiters refers to as the “freezing in” of apartheid inequalities and the creation of “own class-based mini-bantustans.” Citizens in bourgeois areas were transformed into market citizens capable of purchasing the market rights to what were formerly publicly provided public goods. By contrast, citizens in impoverished townships were transmogrified into “beneficiaries,” paid poverty wages to deliver their own services, or, in a perverse manifestation of the notion of active citizenship, into self-reliant patriots. Although class was the primary determinant of this process, it should be noted that, due to persistent structural inequalities in the South African economy, such class-based divisions
are still intricately interwoven with race. Whilst Johannesburg may have been formally desegregated, racially differentiated forms of service provision are reemerging and the goal of “one city, one tax base” is being actively undermined by attempts to marketize and privatize collective public goods. This article demonstrates that such developments have important implications for workers as well as citizens. The displacement of street cleaning to the private, development, and voluntary sectors created a new hierarchy of workers’ rights and status that reentrenched the gendered and racialized nature of the waste management labour market. As street cleaning is a labour intensive activity, it is not surprising that the lower-cost voluntary and development sector alternatives depend on undercutting workers’ wages and benefits. Refracturing citizenship on the basis of class and race has created new types of divisions within the African working class based on the sectors where the worker is employed, and also the class and race composition of the area being served. Gender inequalities in the waste management labour market have been reentrenched by these new developments.

By focusing on transfers of responsibility for service delivery from local government to not only the private sector but also the voluntary and development sectors, it has been possible to see the refragmenting of citizenship and the resegmentation of the labour market as a result of the drive to develop nonmunicipal forms of service delivery. This article demonstrates that it is of critical importance to include these sectors in scholarly work analyzing the form and nature of local government restructuring. It is also of equal importance that this be done within an approach focused on the political economy that governs transfers to each distinct sector and teases out the gendered and racialized social relations underpinning service delivery in each sector. Such an approach will help develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which state restructuring is rooted in, replicates, and transforms existing gender, race, and class-based inequalities.
Notes
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7. Ibid.


11. As discussed in the following section, the apartheid city was racially segregated. Although racial segregation is no longer legally enforced, due to the deeply racialized construction of class in South Africa, racial segregation persists in the current era. While a privileged minority of wealthy Africans, Indians, and coloureds have moved into formerly white areas, these wealthy suburbs are still predominantly white and the townships retain virtually the same demographic profile as in the apartheid era.


13. Ibid., p. xviii.


23. <www.pikitup.co.za>.

24. Commercial waste management services, such as the disposal of medical waste and collection of bulk waste, are not the responsibility of local government and so are open to competition with the private sector.

25. Even charging individual households for removal and disposal services is more complex than charging for water and electricity. While metering makes it possible to charge consumers per unit of water and electricity consumed, it is impractical to charge households per kilogram of waste produced, collected, and disposed of. As a result, Pikitup's tariffs are based on property size as opposed to volumes of waste produced. In addition, due to the health hazards associated with the noncollection of waste, it is not possible for Pikitup to stop collecting waste from households that are in arrears. From a cost-recovery perspective, this increases the importance of minimizing the costs of providing collection services in areas with high default rates (R. de Beer, “The waste management challenge for the city of Johannesburg,” unpublished document produced for Pikitup, undated).


28. In terms of the Agreement of Sale, Pikitup was precluded from retrenching any workers for the first three years, but maintained a hiring freeze implemented by the GJMC. Excessively high rates of natural attrition, widely attributed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, resulted in significant workforce shortages. In order to maintain the level of provision of revenue-generating activities, Pikitup transferred men from the street cleaning section to collection. As a result, the street cleaning workforce was depleted.


30. Ibid., p. 84.


33. Ibid.

34. H. Peens, Manager, Kagiso Urban Management, telephonic interview (20 May 2004).


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37. Ibid.
44. P. Evans, “Government Action.”
45. ANC NEC, “Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the Occasion of Year 90 of the ANC” (8 January 2002).
46. NEDLAC, Growth and Development Summit Agreement (Johannesburg: Nedlac, 7 June 2003).
47. Miraftab, “Neoliberalism and Casualisation”; Samson, Dumping on Women.
49. C. Venter, Acting Operations Director, Pikitup (Johannesburg: 5 November 2002).
50. L. Venter, General Manager, Environmental Management, Pikitup (Johannesburg: 11 February 2003).
53. L. Venter, General Manager, Environmental Management, Pikitup (Johannesburg: 11 February 2003).
60. Focus Group, Men on Zivuseni Project (Johannesburg: 6 November 2002).
63. J. Palesa, Owner, Gauteng Cleaners, Johannesburg (30 November 2002).
64. Mthobeni, Zivuseni Progress Report, p. 3.
65. Focus Group, Women on Zivuseni Project (Johannesburg: 6 November 2002).

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