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**Technologies for Knowing and Managing the
Poor in South Africa:
The Case of Johannesburg Post-Apartheid**

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Technologies for Knowing and Managing The Poor in South Africa: The Case of Johannesburg Post-Apartheid

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Introduction

Since 2004, in the context of high (and growing) levels of protest amongst the poor in South Africa, indigent management policies have been rolled out in municipalities across the country. While there are a number of differences in terms of approaches between municipalities, there is one central aim common to all, that is, the use of indigent management as a form of revenue control (in other words, as a means of enforcing the duty to pay for basic services amongst those identified as poor). To this end, indigent registers have been seen as means through which to identify and target those unable to provide for their own basic needs (the indigent) for receipt of certain allocations of free basic services, as well as for other targeted interventions. While City of Johannesburg (CoJ) literature speaks of such interventions as assisting the indigent to move out of poverty, this paper shows how much of the City's experimentation with indigent management policies has revolved around making those targeted accept the constraints of government in addressing poverty, and hence their unequal position in society, as well as the kinds of life 'opportunities' presented for the indigent by neoliberal capitalist society, 'opportunities' that in fact restrict the kinds of choices that the poor can make in relation to their lives.

In the CoJ's latest version of its indigent management policy, named *Siyasizana* ('We are helping each other'), a complex system of calculating need has been developed in order both to provide free basic services, but also to induce certain forms of behaviour from those it targets, and prescribe certain forms of life for the poor. This paper examines more closely what the CoJ has celebrated *Siyasizana* for – in particular, its features of "individual identity management" and encouraging "labour market attachment" and entrepreneurialism. In doing this, it will show how a complex set of technologies emerges in *Siyasizana* for knowing and managing the poor in the interests of an ever-changing capitalism.

Creating the ac(countable citizen)

In spite of the attempts made by government officials throughout the 1990s to emphasise their approach to service delivery as revolving around the building of partnerships between citizens and the state in various ways that demanded the cultivation of a range of individual and shared responsibilities, acceptance of the duty to pay for basic services (such as water and electricity) became one of the primary defining features of how 'the responsible citizen' was spoken about in campaigns, such as *Masakhane* ('We are building')¹. In Johannesburg, municipal policy quite quickly and easily

¹ In 1995, the National Department of Constitutional Development launched the *Masakhane* campaign as "part of a drive to normalise and improve relations of governance and to focus on rights and responsibilities of citizens and government" (Department of Constitutional Development, *Cabinet Memorandum No. 26*, 1996: 1). Central to this campaign was the encouragement of citizens to pay for their basic services. However, government attempted to make the campaign appear to be more than the issue of payment for services, encouraging the campaign to be viewed as reinforcing the theme of payment for services within a broader "vision of development of communities, transformation of government and promoting sound relations between government and the people" and being "about 'working together to get things done' and building partnerships around development issues", the consequences of which should include "improved service delivery and increased levels of payment" (ibid: 2-3).

slipped into the treatment of its residents as customers, as the delivery of basic services, in typical neoliberal fashion, became a site of revenue generation for the City, with various technologies being experimented with for ensuring that payment for consumption happened, and that people were not able to evade paying for services. Experimentation was necessary primarily because of growing resistance amongst the poor to attempts at preventing the decommodified access of people to water, and due to the low levels of uptake of the changing policies by those they targeted. In addition to the development of physical and infrastructural devices for the enforcement of payment (such as prepaid meters), the City had to find ways of enforcing the habit of payment for services, and conservation and restraint with regard to consumption in the interests of the former, as well as to induce acceptance of any new devices and infrastructures for delivery.

In Johannesburg, the characterisation (and treatment) of the citizen as customer has been evident in the City's turn to reshaping its indigent management policy in the interests of revenue management, and in the 'pro-poor' discourse that has proliferated to demonstrate the City's commitment to addressing the needs of its poor residents who increasingly, since the end of the 1990s, have come together in mass protest actions to demand decommodified access to basic services where they do not exist, and to prevent the commodification of existing service delivery. Since 2002, then, and the adoption of the Special Cases Policy, the City has focused on bringing together its different strategies for revenue collection in different forms of an indigent management policy, culminating in the present Extended Social Package or Siyasizana.

The Special Cases Policy of 2002 sought "to enhance credit control measures by providing a safety net for the poorest of the poor and *identifying those using poverty to not pay for basic services*" (Palmer Development Group, 2004a: 11); my emphasis). An indigent register, here, would, it was imagined, provide the City with a proper list of residents unable to provide for their own basic needs, and thus requiring some form of assistance from the state, and enable it to properly identify those residents refusing to accept the duty to pay (and their status of customer) for those resources essential for life. It has, thus, been argued that the apparent re-turn to indigent management from 2002 on was driven, in the first instance, by the need to separate out 'the can't pays' from 'the won't pays' (Hart, Naidoo, Veriava).

Significantly, in Johannesburg, this central thrust came to include the aim of the "re-establishment of the compact between the customer and the city" (CoJ press release 2005), with City bureaucrats speaking today of Siyasizana as a central part of its drive to create "the accountable citizen" (Interview, Jak Koseff, Director of Community Development, CoJ, 15 June 2010).). By this, is meant the need for residents to come forward and acknowledge that they are in a relationship with the City that is based on the acceptance of the duty to pay for services, by, quite literally, opening up an account through which individual household consumption can be measured and recorded, as well as paid for. Not only, then, crafting and mobilising technologies to be able to separate 'the can't pays' from 'the won't pays', but also developing mechanisms for making the individual citizen take on the logics of commodification underlying the bringing together of different strategies in the design of an indigent management policy for the CoJ.

Perusing CoJ research and policy documents and press releases from 2004 onwards, it becomes clear that the very first step of getting residents to open up an account through which to pay for services, was one which the City struggled with for some time, largely due to what it defined as 'the culture of non-payment'. With the widespread boycott of payments for rates and services provided by black local authorities under apartheid in the 1980s and 1990s having produced a political imaginary of free basic services in a democratic dispensation, as well as a political practice of refusal of payment that operated both as a collective political strategy and as an individual and household "life strategy" (Veriava), generating acceptance of the duty to pay for services post-apartheid, was not going to be simple in black townships and informal settlements, especially as levels of unemployment and poverty also remained significantly high.

Following E. P. Thompson, it might be argued that the payment boycotts of the 1980s and 1990s produced a 'moral economy' amongst residents in black townships, that held up the right of citizens to

decommodified access to water as a resource essential for life against the state's insistence on the duty to pay. As the City and Johannesburg Water began to experiment with technology in the form of prepaid meters and the like (in the face of widespread organised resistance to physical disconnections from water as a retroactive punitive measure for non-payment), they also began to develop ways of selling an alternative moral economy in which cost recovery and payment for services were held up as the only 'rational' ways of imagining the responsibilities of government and the citizen respectively, and various forms of punishment and mechanisms for curtailing consumption argued to be necessary for inculcating practices amongst the poor that 'make good economic sense'. Central to this was the need to get residents who had previously boycotted payment for services, to open up accounts with the municipality in the first instance. For this, some kind of incentive was seen as necessary for residents who had not seen themselves as being in a relation of debt to the municipality.

From 2005 onwards, then, we observe a number of attempts at policy formulation towards this identified need to 're-establish the compact between the customer and the City', from the Municipal Services Subsidy Scheme (MSSS) in 2005 through Reathusa ('We are helping' in Tswana) in 2006, to Siyazizana ('We are helping each other' in Zulu) in 2008, each revised policy exhibiting attention to 'getting right' this relationship between the resident (as customer) and the City (as service provider). It is also in the evolution of the indigent management policy (from 2005 to today), that we observe the bringing together of different strategies and technologies that have been experimented with since 1998, in the attempt at defining this relationship as one through which accountability is understood as the submission of the individual to a process of being counted and monitored in exchange for receipt of certain amounts of free basic services, access to information about short-term jobs and opportunities for skills training, and acceptance of the individual duty to pay for services consumed over and above those provided by the state.

It was, then, in the context of heightened struggle against cut offs from water and electricity in Johannesburg townships, as well as increased demands from organised groups of residents for their debts in relation to water and electricity consumption to be scrapped, that the MSSS was announced in 2005, both as a way of encouraging more residents to open up accounts with the City and acknowledge existing payment arrears, and determining those 'genuinely' in need of assistance from the state. In a press release at the time, the City noted the "considerable challenge" it faced with regard to arrears incurred by the poor in that "low-income people who, although not indigent, are unlikely to be able to afford to pay off the debt however effective credit control might be". It argued that:

In these cases there is a need to re-establish the compact between the customer and the City, with the emphasis on ensuring that all current amounts owing are promptly paid. *If the arrears can be used as an incentive to re-establish this compact, then that would also be positive.* (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 14 April 2005; my emphases).

The MSSS, then, was the first attempt at bringing together debt write-off schemes with prepaid mechanisms of delivery and indigent targeting and interventions. In May 2005, the MSSS was launched as "a major incentive to poor communities in Johannesburg to relieve the burden of debts but at the same time create a new culture of payment" (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 6 April 2006). Open only to certain categories of account holders² (whose total monthly household income was less than R1 100), the MSSS allowed qualifying residents to come forward to have any existing arrears written off in exchange for signing a binding agreement to pay for services in the future and to

² The MSSS was open for application to pensioners and unemployed, self-employed, or employed people with a total family income of less than R1 100 a month; account holders receiving disability grants with a total family income of less than R1 100 a month; an account holder whose partner also receives a government pension and has a total family income of less than R1 241 per month - the equivalent of two government pensions plus R1; and HIV positive/AIDS breadwinners and/or their orphans (*Joburg City, How It Works? Subsidies* - <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/724/131/> - accessed 10/11/2007).

install prepaid water and electricity meters for household 'budgeting' within twelve months of being accepted into the scheme.

The MSSS would also ensure the delivery of 6kl of free water and 50kW of free electricity to households on its register monthly, and would cover refuse removal and sanitation charges. In addition, there would be no charge for assessment rates for properties valued at less than R20 001 (City of Johannesburg, *Press Release*, 9 December 2005).

The obligation to sign onto the prepaid system as part of the MSSS was explained by the City as a necessary way of enforcing a culture of payment amongst those "unable to afford debt" (Bongani Nkosi, Legal Officer, Department of Revenue, City of Johannesburg, interview, 20 November 2006). In line with the mantra of individual responsibility being assumed for one's standard and quality of life, the prepaid meter was proposed as a practical way for the poor to budget efficiently and so to 'live within their means'. With 92 000 people registering for the scheme by January 2006 and R1.2 million in debt being written off (CoJ, *Press Release*, 9 December 2005), the City launched what it billed as "the second phase of its programme of poverty alleviation aimed at assisting the indigent and poor in the city to rehabilitate their municipal accounts and create a culture of payment amongst its account holders" (CoJ, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006).

With the name 'Reathusa' ('We Are Helping'), the scheme targeted municipal account holders with a gross monthly income of R6 500 or less to conclude "a formal repayment arrangement for half their debt as well as keeping their current account up to date" in exchange for which they would have the remaining half of their debt erased if they adhered to the agreement for a set period of time (CoJ, *Press Release*, 30 January 2006). As with the MSSS, successful applicants to the Reathusa scheme were expected to install prepaid water and electricity meters in their homes within twelve months of acceptance to the scheme, and so adopt the logic of consuming only what can be paid for over and above those allocations provided free by the state.

Although the MSSS and Reathusa managed to register some residents, a large number still remained unaccounted for by the time of their closing dates. Even so, the target of the MSSS of reaching 100 000 households fell far from the City's estimation of more than half its population earning less than R1 600 a month, highlighting the possibility that such approaches to indigent management, far from having as their primary aim the eradication or alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of the poor, foreground rather the goal of entrenching certain practices and the acceptance of certain rationalities and forms of life amongst that population group identified as the poor, through such policies. This becomes clearer as the City, in response to persistent struggles against the installation of prepaid water meters, in particular, further shapes its indigent management policy to make the indigent register the only means through which free basic services can be accessed at the level of individual households and other resources at the level of the individual, as well as a means through which certain prescriptions for the behaviour of those it targets may be enforced and monitored.

Siyasizana – Helping Each Other Manage Poverty

In 2007, with the assistance of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) and the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, five residents of Phiri brought a class-action suit in the Johannesburg High Court against the installation of prepaid water meters in the township, demanding that the free allocation of water be increased from 6 kilolitres per household per month to 50 litres per person per day; that prepaid water meters be declared unconstitutional; and that normal credit meters be reinstalled in homes. On 30 April 2008, in a landmark ruling, Judge Tsoka declared that prepaid water meters were "unlawful" and "unconstitutional", ordered the municipality to begin providing 50 litres of water per person per day, and allowed all residents of Phiri access to water measured by a normal credit meter. While the Coalition seemed vindicated, the City appealed the ruling, and drew attention to changes it had begun making since 2007.

In July 2007, after prolonged struggles in Phiri and greater Soweto against prepaid meters, and in the run-up to the hearing of the case, the City announced its increase in the allocation of free basic water from 6kl to 10kl per household per month for all households registered as indigent with the City. In addition, it made available 4kl of emergency water to all households on the prepaid water system, and established the special-needs water application mechanism, by which residents could make special appeal to the municipality for additional water (CoJ, Mid-term Report, September 2008: 199).

When, on 14 May 2008 Mayor Amos Masondo announced that the City would be appealing the judgment, he claimed that “the judgment was distorted as the municipality was already providing 50 litres per day to households on the indigence register and who had fewer than seven people” (Business Day, 15.05.08). In justifying the appeal, Masondo argued that the City’s bringing together of prepaid technology, and a targeted system of free basic service provision, would enable the City to address the plight of poor residents by offering a targeted system of a social safety net as a first step towards realising the benefits of a full social package:

The amount of water that households get for free is not determined by prepayment meters. It is determined by the City’s package of free basic services. We call this our social package. Since 2001 and 2002 this social package has been gradually expanded over time. Residents of Phiri are in a better position than they were in June 2002. (Masondo, statement, 14/05/08)

He used the increase in the amount of free water provided as an example of how progress is being made in this regard. Later on he stated:

We want to conclude by reiterating that we believe that the introduction of prepayment meters, coupled with a dynamically expanding social package that gives poor households more and more water for free, is the best way to progressively realise the right of access to water on a sustainable basis in our context. We do not think that this approach is unreasonable and unlawful under the circumstances. (ibid).

In March 2009, the Supreme Court of Appeal granted the municipality two years in which to change city bylaws in order to make prepaid meters legal, and stipulated that an amount of 42 litres of water be provided free to each resident per day. The City argued that its indigent residents were already receiving an amount higher than this. Appealing to the Constitutional Court, residents of Phiri were disappointed by its setting aside of both the previous orders and its finding that the City of Johannesburg’s installation of prepaid water meters did not violate national policy or the Constitution with regard to the delivery of water. Rather, the final judgement argued that the City’s approach to the delivery of water fell within Section 27 of the Constitution’s allowance for the progressive realisation of the right to water. The Court also presented the finding that the quantifying of a sufficient amount of water was not within its jurisdiction, leaving it to government to make such a decision.

The careful crafting of an indigent management policy by the City and its representation as a means towards ensuring the progressive realisation of access to water beyond the bare minimum, was, it would seem, what after five years of litigation finally won it legitimacy in the eyes of the judges of the Constitutional Court. It is interesting that the Court chose to speak of the differential levels of access prescribed in this policy in terms of progressive realisation without acknowledging the further entrenchment of inequality through such an approach, but this is a subject for another paper³.

³ In the context of such high levels of unemployment, it is more likely that those provided with the very minimal levels of access to services will remain in their unequal and inferior positions rather than being able to build on and from these. The experience of Orange Farm where large numbers of residents live without flush toilets as a result of their inability to afford the cost of installation of a prepaid water meter (which is required for connection of toilets to the main water pipes), attests to this.

For this discussion, it is interesting to note that Siyasizana, crafted during the period of the court case, and implemented (with a lot less publicity than the MSSS and Reathusa) from July 2009 on, builds on the principles of targeting and minimal interventions based on need set out in earlier policies, and continues to argue for the assumption by the individual citizen of the responsibility for the securing of access to resources over and above those minimal amounts provided by the state. More importantly, however, is its attention to developing records of information about a particular section of the population, developing certain knowledges about this group in the interests of producing acceptance amongst individual members of this group of certain forms of life as designated for them, and so marking out their march in history.

Siyasizana puts in place a three-tiered system for determining and addressing need on the part of the poor. Introducing a new 'poverty index', Siyasizana stipulates the criteria for determining 3 'bands of poverty' for all individuals earning a monthly income of below R3 366. Band 1 aims "at helping those on the borderline of poverty" and provides the lowest level of subsidy; Band 2 is aimed at "those who earn some formal income but whose earnings fall below the survival level defined by the poverty index", being granted a middle level of subsidy; and Band 3 is "the highest level of subsidy, aimed at those with no formal income living in the most deprived circumstances" (City of Johannesburg, *Social Package* - <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/3432/168/>, accessed 20/02/2009).

According to the new system of classification, each individual applicant is given a 'poverty score' out of 100, 70 of these points being allocated based on a person's individual socio-economic circumstances, and 30 based on the conditions of the geographical area in which the person resides. Since 1 July 2009, every adult individual resident earning below R3 366 per month has been expected to apply for indigent status, each person being classified according to one of the poverty bands described above. Every household is, thereafter, to be assessed according to the number of indigent individuals residing in it and allocation of benefits from the extended social package determined based on the level of need determined by the overall poverty status of the household, with the maximum allocation to any household being 15 kl of water and 150 kW of electricity⁴ (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010).

Two striking differences from earlier indigent management policies are the registration of individuals who are not account-holders i.e. who do not reside in a formal dwelling, and the provision of individual benefits over and above household benefits, such as rental and transport subsidies. In response, largely, to the difficulties related to tracking down informal dwellers, and in the interests of bringing such individuals into 'accountable relationships' with the City, Siyasizana has introduced the provision of subsidies for transport to those registered indigents who do not qualify for the subsidies related to owning or renting a property (water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal, and rates rebates).

In addition, Siyasizana has established an institute called 'The Job Pathways Centre', which provides contacts to those registered as indigent for accessing employment and/or becoming economically active, including Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) jobs and "new venture creation training" (Interview, Jak Koseff, Director of Community Development, CoJ, 15 June 2010). Siyasizana clearly states that all those coming forward for registration as indigents will be encouraged to join the centre and have access to a social worker to assist them in any special needs they might have with regard to accessing employment and/or becoming entrepreneurs. Social workers are also envisaged as playing the role of determining need amongst households for accessing 'emergency allocations' of water, provided for by the City more recently primarily for households in which HIV-positive people reside. In this way, incentives have been integrated to try to make it attractive for

⁴ According to Jak Koseff, households in Band 1 receive 10kl of free water and 50 KW of free electricity, those in Band 2 receive 12 kl and 100 KW, and those in Band 3, 15 kl and 150 KW.

those living informally to sign onto the indigent register, and in that way become (ac)countable to and by the City.

Based on experiences like the UK Job Centre Plus, the rationality of “welfare to workfare” (defining approaches adopted in the USA, UK, Australia, and parts of the developing world, such as Brazil, Argentina and India) characterises the Pathways programmes.

Acknowledging the very real differences between South Africa and the UK (primarily with regard to the experiences of the poor, and the kinds of resources that are available to the poor from the state), the policy that has emerged in Johannesburg has sought to find innovative ways of addressing the needs of “a population with very limited experience of the formal labour market, very poor understanding of how to access the labour market, often with skills deficits, and personal barriers that act against them in terms of accessing the job market” (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010). In addition, officials argue that residents in the poorer parts of the city have “a limited cultural experience of entrepreneurship”, having not “grown up as the sons and daughters of shopkeepers and small business owners” (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010).

To this end, the strategies unfolding in Johannesburg have turned towards finding ways of changing *attitudes* to work, and “providing *the psychology* (sic) of the entrepreneur, as well as the basic tools for managing your own business” (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010). In a context in which full time employment is not the norm anymore, policy makers and officials speak now of inculcating “labour force attachment as opposed to human capital development” (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010), through the provision of short-term contract jobs, usually in the service sector, through which individuals can gain experience and learn the discipline of a work routine that can be sold to potential employers. In this way, those unable to find employment on a sustained basis are able to be kept committed to looking for work through being offered ‘opportunities’ to practice at working in low-end service sector work like packing of shelves, stock-taking, data-capturing, and the like. Rather than creating spaces, then, for the development of human capital for the kinds of jobs that are not being created, the logic goes, ‘opportunities’ are sought out through which individuals’ attachment to becoming part of the full time labour force (albeit declining) is maintained. To this end, Siyasizana’s Job Pathways Centre has also established a “preferred candidates pool” of contact numbers of those registered as indigent who qualify for such short-term contract jobs. In trying to avoid the situation of “train and dump” (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010) that often results from a failure to align skills programmes with job creation, the City has contracted the services of “a really tooth and claw capitalist entity, a labour broker” called the Workforce Group (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010) to try to ensure that its Jobs Pathways Programme is successful in meeting the needs of the capitalist market.

Through the requirement for indigents to live within their allocations of free basic services (often through further prescription that prepaid meters be installed), and their automatic registration for the Jobs Pathways Centre’s ‘opportunities’, the CoJ seems to want to encourage particular forms of life for those identified as indigent, forms of life that require subjects attuned to the rationalities of neoliberal government and its requirements in everyday life.

Siyasizana, represents, then, for the City the culmination of a long process through which it has attempted to develop a “single-view” or “single window” approach to poverty, in which “individual identity management” has become the fulcrum (Interview, Koseff, 15 June 2010). With the priority of producing individual paying, and economically active citizens, Siyasizana aims to produce a proper administration of the poor through the elaboration of complex and highly technical systems to know and manage the poor. Explaining that the CoJ chose to adopt such a complex system of indigent management in spite of complaints from municipal administrators that it would increase their administrative burden, Jak Koseff stated that “the cruder your measure, the more distortions it creates because it creates a world in which people will try to avoid its consequences”. “So, if you set things at a certain level, people may not be honest about their economic circumstances because they’re

trying to avoid coming in above that level, for example, or people might not take on things that would marginally improve their situation because they don't want to cross a bridge and suddenly be left facing the full cost of their lifestyle because they then void access to benefits, etc, etc." A clear reflection, once again, of the policy priority of enforcing certain practices and behaviours, certain forms of life, amongst (and for) those identified as indigent.

In Siyasizana, the City has a centralised, paperless, digital system that allows for all information about an individual to be traced from a single point through an identity number (and fingerprint), that aims to connect all systems at municipal, provincial and national levels. With indigents required to renew their applications on a six monthly basis, updating of the municipality's knowledge of its poor through Siyasizana, is, at least in theory, supposed to happen on a continuous basis.

The Siyasizana database is already connected to the South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) database, which contains all data related to individual social grant recipients, and is linked to the National Integrated Social Information System (NISIS), for which it is the national pilot. In this way, the individual data of Siyasizana registrants is verified against Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) data, the grants database held by SASSA, the Home Affairs databases and the housing subsidy system, giving the City "a fair understanding of any formal income people are earning". However, City officials continue to bemoan how difficult it is to "catch and sway" individuals operating outside of the formal economy, with approximately 250 cases of fraud related to individuals whose UIF records indicate that they were claiming benefits while earning salaries, being investigated by the City in 2010 (Interview, Jak Koseff, 15 June 2010). Nevertheless, they are satisfied that Siyasizana is a good first attempt at the kind of "identity management" necessary to be able to manage that population group designated the status of indigent, so that its members accept the underlying rationalities of neoliberal practice, such as acceptance of the duty to pay for services, taking on (at the level of the individual) certain key responsibilities for the provision of the resources necessary for life previously the responsibilities of the state, and the challenges associated with the greater flexibilisation of labour and growing absence of decent work.

Conclusion

While some of the features of Siyasizana might appear at first glance as marking a re-turn to welfarist (away from more neoliberal) models of delivery and development, it is hoped that the discussion above has illustrated how a range of strategies, including the targeted provision of de-commodified delivery of services as well as the encouragement of individual forms of responsibility for the meeting of basic needs and the duty to pay for basic services, come together in a very new set of technologies for governing the poor, that population group in society identified historically as 'a social threat' needing to be contained in the interests of a developing capitalist society.

In the context of growing unemployment and precarity, it could be argued that Siyasizana represents an attempt at the production of a new terrain of subjectification (Foucault), outside that of the discipline of the factory and the wage, in which the emphasis on acceptance of the duty to pay for basic services, and acceptance of the duty to be in a job and/or conducting some kind of entrepreneurial activity to 'make a better life for oneself', produces a set of technologies through which poor people are administered to and managed. Trying to understand technologies of power, Foucault outlines, that in addition to disciplinary and sovereign power, we find from the eighteenth century on, a "technology which is centred not upon the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events...or at least to compensate for their effects." (Foucault, 1976, in *Society Must Be Defended*, 2003: 249).

Naming this form of power 'governmentality', Foucault explains that it functions by shaping "a milieu" (such as the terrain of engagement around poverty) so as to produce "a field of intervention",

which does not affect “individuals as a set of legal subjects capable of voluntary actions” (as would be the case of sovereignty) nor does it affect them “as a multiplicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances, and of required performances” (as in the case of discipline), but “tries to affect, precisely, a population”, by trying to reach “precisely the conjunction of a series of events produced by these individuals, populations, and groups, and quasi natural events which occur around them” (Foucault 2007: 21). Siyasizana, then, could be understood as a complex set of mechanisms through which it is possible to collect information about that population group identified as the poor in society, in order to know it, and be able to predict the forms of life designated by capitalism to its members, so as to intervene in their lives in ways that encourage their acceptance and adherence to the practices and values attendant to these forms. While it makes provision for the delivery of certain amounts of decommodified services according to level of indigency, access to these is dependent on the fulfilment of certain prescriptions, such as signing onto prepaid meters, in this way marking out a field of intervention through which certain governmental intentions are enforced.

By the City’s own admission, registration for Siyasizana has been extremely slow⁵. But, there are no plans to move away from it. Rather, it would seem that the City is committed to ensuring that more time is given to making Siyasizana work, looking towards other sources through which to identify potential candidates for Siyasizana, such as the social grants rolls. It would seem, then, that the City has found, in Siyasizana, a set of technologies that allows it to address the concerns raised by the poor and their movements that inability to pay for services should not prevent the poor from accessing those resources necessary for life, by providing amounts of free basic services to indigent households calculated on the basis of minimum household need, while at the same time bringing individuals into systems of delivery that entrench commodification in other aspects of the same system and engender approaches to life in which the individual accepts the duty to pay for services over and above those provided free by the state, and to adopt certain forms of behaviour and practice in relation to consumption of basic services and the generation of income, including self-restraint and conservation, and entrepreneurialism. As free basic services and other benefits become accessible only through Siyasizana, it might be the case that the number of individuals who register for it increases in the near future. What remains to be seen is whether Siyasizana has its desired effect on resistance⁶.

⁵ By September 2010, the CoJ had recorded the official registration of just 732 individuals on the Siyasizana programme (e-mail communication with Farida Taaka, Social Assistance Directorate, Department of Community Development, CoJ; 7 September 2010). And, by June 2011, newspaper reports were quoting city officials as claiming that only 10% of those residents who are eligible for registration as indigents, have signed up for Siyasizana. With slightly more than 100 000 people having applied for registration, the City turned to finding potential applicants via other databases, such as the social grants rolls, and registering them for benefits (Koseff, quoted in *Business Day*, 20.06.2011).

⁶ While struggles for decommodified access to water and electricity continue, those organised in the name of formations like the APF have entered into protracted processes of decline since around 2006. In the course of the evolution of Johannesburg’s indigent management policy and struggles led by the APF against its inclusion of prepaid technology as compulsory for those deemed indigent, struggles in places like Orange Farm and Soweto experienced serious challenges as a result of some of the changes that had been ushered in in response to resistance. One of these has been what activists call ‘the individualisation of resistance’. As the state had clamped down on illegal connections to water and electricity and prepaid technology demanded that residents commit to payment, it has become the practice for residents to try to hide the fact that they are illegally connected, often giving the impression that they are buying water or electricity in the public realm while being illegally connected at home. This has made collective acts of reconnection increasingly difficult for organisations like the SECC, and thus the politicisation of this illegal act much more challenging than at the beginning of the 2000s. But this is something for another paper.