Welfare, Religion and Gender in Post-apartheid South Africa

Constructing a South-North dialogue

EDITORS
Ignatius Swart
Amanda Gouws
Per Pettersson
Johannes Erasmus
Frouwien Bosman
Acknowledgement

This book is the product of a collaboration between the Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) at Stellenbosch University, the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at the University of South Africa and the research programme The Impact of Religion – Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy at Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS), Uppsala University.

The material is based upon a research project supported by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa under Grant number 2072792 and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the Swedish Research Council under Grant number 348-2005-6427. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors, and therefore the NRF and SIDA do not accept any liability in regard thereto.
Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 9
Ignatius Swart, Amanda Gouws, Per Pettersson, Johannes Erasmus & Frouwien Bosman

PART 1: Theoretical Perspectives

1. Towards a developmental approach to social welfare – Social welfare policy in post-apartheid South Africa ........................................................................................................... 27
   Sulina Green

2. Religious demographics in post-apartheid South Africa – Implications for social welfare ................................................................................................................................. 43
   Johannes Erasmus

3. Transforming social welfare? The religious discourse on social development in post-apartheid South Africa ........................................................................................................... 65
   Ignatius Swart

4. A gender perspective on social welfare in post-apartheid South Africa .............. 95
   Amanda Gouws

5. Ecofeminist theology, oikos, welfare and development in post-apartheid South Africa ................................................................................................................................. 117
   Annalet van Schalkwyk

PART 2: Denominational Perspectives

6. The Dutch Reformed Church and social welfare in post-apartheid South Africa ................................................................................................................................. 145
   Willie van der Merwe

7. The Anglican Church and social welfare in post-apartheid South Africa ............ 165
   Delene Mark, Ignatius Swart & Austen Jackson

8. The Roman Catholic Church and social welfare in post-apartheid South Africa ................................................................................................................................. 185
   Brian Gelant, Ignatius Swart & Frouwien Bosman

9. The African Independent Churches (AICs) and social welfare in post-apartheid South Africa ................................................................................................................... 205
   Hennie Pretorius
PART 3: Case Study Perspectives

10. Social welfare and the functioning of the local welfare system in Paarl – Views of service providers and beneficiaries ................................................................. 227
   Sulina Green

11. Double legacy – Perceptions of churches as welfare agents in the new South Africa ........................................................................................................ 241
   Johannes Erasmus

12. Theology and the social welfare practice of the church – Exploring the relationship in the Paarl context ........................................................................... 257
   Nadine Bowers du Toit

13. Social welfare and religion in Paarl through the lens of a feminist ethic of care .............................................................................................................. 269
   Amanda Gouws

14. Are the rising expectations realistic? Local churches and social welfare in South Africa and Paarl .................................................................................. 285
   Ignatius Swart

PART 4: Northern/European Perspectives

15. A European perspective on the churches’ role as social agents in South Africa .............................................................................................................. 307
   Per Pettersson & Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon

16. Welfare and religion in post-apartheid South Africa – A Swedish comparison from a theological perspective ...................................................... 321
   Thomas Ekstrand

17. Welfare and religion in post-apartheid South Africa – Swedish/European comparisons from a gender perspective ................................................. 333
   Ninna Edgardh

18. Welfare and religion in post-apartheid South Africa – European comparisons from a sociological perspective ..................................................... 345
   Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon, Anne Birgitta Pessi & Per Pettersson

19. Welfare at the intersection between theology and politics – A global perspective ...................................................................................................... 359
   Effie Fokas

Appendix 1 ........................................................................................................... 377
Appendix 2 ........................................................................................................... 395
The Editors and Authors .................................................................................. 399
Index .................................................................................................................. 403
Background to this book: the WRIGP project

This book is directly related to the research work in the subject field of religion and social development that researchers from the Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University undertook during a large part of the past decade. At the time when one of the major research undertakings by URDR researchers, the project on “Faith-based Organisations, Social Capital and Development” funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF), was already running, a planning grant award from the bilateral South Africa-Swedish Research Links Programme provided a unique opportunity for URDR researchers to establish contact with their counterparts from (as it was then still known) the Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies (DVI) at Uppsala University with a view to expanding the latter project work to an international level.

Against this backdrop we may look back on a hugely positive outcome whereby the initial exploratory visit to Uppsala by the URDR leadership in January 2005 laid the foundation for a successful 3-year joint research grant application under the project title, “Welfare and Religion in a Global Perspective: Theoretical and Methodological Exchange across the North-South Divide” (hereafter referred to as the WRIGP project). Conducted formally in the period 2006-2008 under this title, the successful proposal highlighted the intention of the project to “integrate in a comparative manner the research work and results” of the research projects that were at the time undertaken respectively by both

---

1 This was the short title of the project conducted formally during the period 2004-2006 under the full working title, “Developing a Praxis for Mobilising Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) for Social Capital and Development in the Western Cape”. Regarding the aim and scope of this project, see the introduction of the book, Religion and Social Development in Post-apartheid South Africa, which was recently published as the final outcome of the project (Swart et al. 2010:1-12).

2 The institute is known today as the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS). For further information, see the CRS’s website at http://www.crs.uu.se.

3 Swart & Bäckström 2005:3.
partners: the above-mentioned NRF-funded project and the DVI-led project, “Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective: A Comparative Study of the Role of the Churches as Agents of Welfare within the Social Economy” (hereafter referred to as the WREP project).

The initial proposal document makes clear that the WRIGP project proceeded from a twofold thesis that a new international or global scholarly debate on the role of religious agencies in the field of social welfare could clearly be identified, but that this new scholarly interest was still very much characterised by an existing divide and resultant lack of exchange between scholars from the so-called global South and global North. As such, while the initial proposal upheld the above-mentioned projects of the two prospective partners as likewise reflecting this divide, it was exactly in terms of this hypothesis that the proposal projected that the WRIGP project would make its contribution. “By engaging in a mutual exchange of each other’s theories and methodologies”, it would be the first scholarly effort to contribute towards overcoming the existing divide and in doing so “contribute to the development of an appropriate global perspective on the new challenges of social welfare and the corresponding religious responses to those challenges”.

The initial proposal thus adopted a specifically global perspective to motivate the significance of the WRIGP project. According to this argument, the need to move beyond the current “isolation of different discourses” in the worldwide welfare and religion debate and engage in collective scholarly reflection was more than anything else necessitated by the new global reality of poverty and its increasingly similar effects across the world. Drawing on a particular theoretical corpus which argued that this reality was essentially a feature of the so-called new post-industrial social epoch, the proposal similarly argued:

[T]he prospective project, by bridging the North-South divide, will be an adequate and much needed response in the field of theology/religious studies/diactical studies to the new global realities of poverty and social exclusion in contemporary society. As today argued in a growing corpus of social science literature, the contemporary phenomena of poverty and exclusion should be understood in the context of a new post-industrial epoch ... Being shaped fundamentally by the forces of global capitalism, it is argued in the literature that the outstanding feature of the contemporary problem of poverty may well be regarded as the manner in which it has made obsolete the old familiar North-South or core-periphery dichotomies ... that characterised the industrial era. Thus, in the post-industrial era the structural problems of poverty are no longer confined predominantly to the so-called developing countries, but they have become a growing feature of the old industrial countries as well ... This new state of affairs, moreover, is not without an

---

4 Swart & Bäckström 2005:3-4.
5 Whereas the WREP project with its focus on the connections between welfare and religion in eight European countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden, England, Germany, France, Italy and Greece) was upheld in the initial WRIGP project proposal as a prominent example of this new debate, a broader recognition of other examples in the debate is given in a number of chapters in this book. This includes references to studies and publications from the United States in particular.
6 Swart & Bäckström 2005:3-5.
7 Swart & Bäckström 2005:3.
8 Swart & Bäckström 2005:5.
interesting paradox if it is compared to the dynamics that characterised the industrial era. In post-industrial society “pockets” or territories have emerged in the South that are more capable of responding to the demands of the new global economy than many regions or areas in the North ... And, in the latter societies the old welfare state also appears incapable of stemming the tide. Under the new economic conditions of market liberalism rather than national social regulation, this kind of state can no longer provide full employment and social security as before ... The result, consequently, is a process by which more and more people in Northern societies are also excluded from the production and consumption processes of society as they, like their counterparts in the South, are found wanting in terms of the demands and skills required by the new global economy...

Based on this perception of an increasingly shared experience of poverty and social change, as well as a similar recognition of the potential of religious actors as “normative role players” in the social welfare sphere, the project participants on both sides consequently set out on a mode of collaboration in which they would use the methodologies and theories of their respective projects (the NRF project and WREP) as a basis “to learn from each other, develop a greater sensitivity for each other’s contexts and approaches, and ultimately develop theoretical and strategic perspectives ... relevant to the contexts of both groups”. At the same time, an important qualification to the agreement on this mode of collaboration was the decision that the project could be most constructively executed through an arrangement in which the current South African research (i.e. the above-mentioned NRF project) would be “updated” in terms of the WREP project’s methodology and thematic focus. In effect this did not only mean that the focus of reflection would fall on the South African welfare and religion context and that the participants from the North would rely on their experiences and insights from the WREP project to contribute towards this end, but that the WRIGP project would also in a number of very pertinent ways relate to the WREP research. These would be:

1. The WRIGP project’s similar integration of an emphasis or perspective on gender into its development of the welfare and religion theme in the South African context, both from a theological/religious and broader social theoretical point of view;

2. The WRIGP project’s similar focus – in terms of religious agency – on so-called “majority churches” or major church traditions as providers of social welfare,

10 Swart & Bäckström 2005:3.
11 See footnote 1.
12 Swart & Bäckström 2005:5.
16 In the WREP project this notion referred to those churches or church traditions that represent a majority of the population in a particular country (Edgardh Beckman 2004b:8; Project Description n.d.:8; Yeung, Edgardh Beckman & Pettersson 2006c:3-4; see also Chapter 15 by Per Pettersson and Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon in this book). As such, those churches or church traditions have historically been important institutional role players both in their dealings with the state systems/public authorities of their countries and their influence as “theologically-motivated carriers of values” (Bäckström & Davie 2010:5).
whereby the empirical and case study research would concentrate on four major confessional traditions in South Africa: Reformed, Anglican, Catholic and African Independent.\footnote{Swart & Bäckström 2005:6-7. However, although included as an initial case study, the African Independent Churches (AICs) were in the end omitted from the empirical study in the second part of the project because of the great difficulty that the WRIGP researchers were faced with in identifying and obtaining data from members of this group of churches in the case study area. For this reason the decision was made instead by the project leadership to focus on two churches in the Reformed tradition, because of their prominent position in the case study area: the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church (Erasmus & Mans 2008:7-8; Erasmus, Fokas & Pettersson 2009:4).}

3. The WRIGP project’s adoption of a similar methodology and plan of work in which: (a) perspectives on the topical issues of social welfare, religion and gender, as well as on specific models of church social welfare delivery in post-apartheid South Africa would be more generally developed from existing theoretical and case study material;\footnote{Through developing these perspectives the aim was to replicate to some extent the background studies in the initial working papers in the WREP project (see Edgardh Beckman 2004a; Yeung, Edgardh Beckman & Pettersson 2006a; b).} (b) interpretation and analysis of existing and new data/material would be done in an interdisciplinary way from a sociological, theological and gender perspective; and (c) new data would be generated from a particular local South African context or contexts\footnote{While the initial project proposal indicated an intention to undertake empirical research in more than one location (Swart & Bäckström 2005:8), various factors prompted the WRIGP leadership to in the end choose only one case study area, namely the Western Cape town of Paarl. These factors included, amongst others, financial and time constraints, the availability of previous research data and the extent to which the chosen majority churches were presented in the case study area (see Erasmus & Mans 2008:5).} in order to develop a set of perspectives in accordance with (i) the latter threefold interdisciplinary framework, (ii) the focus on the above-mentioned four major churches and, very importantly, (iii) an interviewee schedule investigating attitudes towards the role of the churches among three layers of the local population: the general citizenry, the churches and the public sector.\footnote{Erasmus & Mans 2008:5-14; Erasmus et al. 2009:3-4; Swart & Bäckström 2005:5, 6-8.}

The book in the context of international and national scholarship

This book constitutes the final, comprehensive product of the scholarly work undertaken in the WRIGP project. As such, the collective set of chapters bears testimony to the project participants’ deliberate and dedicated efforts – over the formal project work span of three years, but also in the subsequent period to complete this publication – to meet as closely as possible the aims, rationale and work plan that were set out in the initial proposal.

As a result, we are confident that this book can take its rightful and unique place in the new international scholarly debate on social welfare and religion referred to earlier in this introduction and that this recognition can be taken as the basis from which we may more pertinently appreciate the contribution of this book. Clearly, within the framework of what the WRIGP project wanted to achieve, this book essentially remains a South African contribution to the new debate, steeped in the realities of welfare and religion in South Africa. And it is from this vantage point that the reflections from more than one of the Northern/European contributors on the discussions of their South African counterparts
and their own experiences of the South African context rather highlight their impression of difference and difficulty of association. Despite the original project proposal’s recognition of the increasingly shared experiences of poverty and social change, what one finds in the responses from these contributors is an insight that, when one considers the magnitude of poverty and deprivation in South African society and the position of the churches in this context, any form of comparison or association is in fact impossible or at the very least extremely difficult. 21

In spite of this expression of difference, we appreciate this book as the end product of a unique, first initiative within the contemporary scholarly reflection on the theme of welfare and religion to establish contact and dialogue between scholars from the Southern and Northern debates. This recognition also leads us to present a somewhat more reflexive argument, namely that this book could be appreciated for the way in which it newly presents the challenge of poverty and its associated social ills to the Northern section of the welfare and religion debate. Furthermore, although this may at first glance seem to be perceived by our Northern/European colleagues as a predominantly South African (and for that matter Southern) challenge/problem, we are nevertheless encouraged by the way they offer comparative perspectives in which they not only deepen our understanding of the South African welfare and religion context, 22 but also value the international relevance of the developmental approach to social welfare that surfaces so strongly in the contributions of their South African counterparts. 23

It follows from this observation that the book should certainly not be seen as a retreat from the critical mindset that those of us on the South African side have sought to develop in our previous project work, with specific reference here to the NRF-funded project mentioned at the beginning of this introduction and the recently published book from that project, Religion and Social Development in Post-apartheid South Africa: Perspectives for Critical Engagement. 24 On the contrary, while the title of our present book (as in the case of the research project that it represents) indicates a choice for the concept of “welfare” in order to have enabled a connection and dialogue between South African scholars and their counterparts from the global North interested in the phenomenon of religion, we believe that the book in essence achieves what James Midgley has identified in the field of international social welfare as the challenge to bring the developmental approach to social welfare (or social development approach as it is also known) to the attention of representatives from the global North 25 – where “conventional state welfare approaches” are increasingly criticised “for allegedly harming economic growth”. 26

Our outline below of the different chapters testifies that this book continues from where Religion and Social Development in Post-apartheid South Africa left the debate. Equally

21 See especially the chapters by Thomas Ekstrand (Chapter 16) and Ninna Edgardh (Chapter 17) in this book.
22 This appreciation relates to all the contributions by the Northern/European participants in this book.
23 See in this regard the chapters by Per Pettersson and Martha Middlemass Le Mon (Chapter 15) and Martha Middlemass Le Mon, Anne Birgitta Pessi and Per Pettersson (Chapter 18) in this book.
24 This book was published by SUN MeDIA in 2010. See also footnote 1 of this introduction.
focused on the *post-apartheid* South African context and equally concerned with the challenge to *transform* current religious discourses and practices in this context, we should also more pertinently observe how this book has benefited from the South-North collaboration that the WRIGP project has enabled. As the end product of a research undertaking that adapted itself closely to the conceptual and methodological apparatus of the WREP project, it certainly contributes to a further expansion and deepening of our *empirical* insight as well as to the *interdisciplinary* and *ecumenical* conversation that we regard as so important. But in addition to these distinctive contributions, and indeed most important to us, is the way in which it also reflects — more so than the previous South African project — a concerted effort to follow the WREP project in integrating and mainstreaming the theme of *gender* as a core analytical concept.

In so far as this book reflects the WRIGP project’s aim to incorporate gender as an analytical concept, the way in which it introduces into the academic discussion the concept of care and related theories on the caring role of women (especially in the global South or so-called developing societies), women and citizenship, a feminist ethic of care, and ecology and women (or ecofeminism) should surely be valued in an ongoing South-North dialogue. Clearly, through this conceptual and theoretical input the book significantly demonstrates what participants from the South have to offer to the debate, especially where such concepts and theories are directly related to the contextual realities of poverty, social exclusion and gender-based violence.

However, this appreciation of the Southern contribution also brings us to the point where we need to make an important qualification. Although the task to incorporate gender as an analytical concept presents a problem that cannot be confined to the outcomes of the WRIGP project and this book, as one of our Northern/European contributors also clearly suggests, a closer scrutiny of the various chapters in this book shows how the research team as a whole has only to a *limited* extent succeeded in integrating a gender perspective into the larger debate on welfare and religion. In effect, this means that the conceptual and theoretical input on gender in this book still remains, with some exception, a purely *social science* perspective, presented by and large within the interdisciplinary scope of the WRIGP project by the single specialist on gender theory in the South African group and showing little explicit integration with the other two key concepts of welfare and religion.

Nevertheless, our critical observations on the ongoing *challenge of integration* are not meant to degrade the significance and contribution of this book and by implication the

---

27 It should be noted that besides the initial project description and the various working papers emanating from WREP, two recently published books have become important sources describing and reflecting on the results of this project (see Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh & Pettersson 2010, 2011).

28 On the “Significance of Gender” in the WREP project, see Bäckström & Davie (2010:7).

29 See the chapter contribution by Ninna Edgardh (Chapter 17) in which she equally comments on the lack of competence in gender theory in the WREP project and the second Uppsala-based project that followed from WREP, known as WaVE (“Welfare and Values in Europe”).

30 The exception here is the chapter by Annalet van Schalkwyk (Chapter 5), which introduces in more overt fashion particular theological perspectives on gender and women.

31 We here refer to the contributions by Amanda Gouws in this book (Chapters 4 and 13).
WRIGP project. At the very least, we could rightfully claim that the research project presented itself as a valuable terrain of consciousness raising around gender analysis. And what started out as thinking about the “gender variable” indeed became a substantive concern embedded in the analytical framework of the case study of Paarl in the second phase of the project and subsequent analysis of the empirical data – as reflected in several chapters in Part 3 of this book as well as in the two appendices.

It is against the above background on the origin of this book, what it is about and what it aims to achieve, and importantly also its significance in the context of related international and national scholarship, that we now close this introductory discussion with some more detailed notes on the layout of the book and the specific discussions in the different chapters.

Layout and summary of the contributions

Structured into four sections and comprising nineteen chapters in total, as well as two appendices, this book closely follows the work plan according to which the WRIGP project was executed. This essentially entailed two working conferences in South Africa; the first in Stellenbosch, where the project participants on the South African side presented papers serving as thematic background to the more focused empirically founded case study work that followed; and the second in Paarl, where the South African participants presented papers on the actual empirical work undertaken in the same location (i.e. the town of Paarl).

Yet, whereas one can say that this book is basically and in a sequential manner structured according to the work that was presented and discussed at these two conferences, this does not tell the full story. In effect, these two conferences also provided the foundation for the Northern/European participants to afterwards prepare their chapters for this book and through this input make their integral contribution to the essential aim of both this book and the WRIGP project, namely to construct a South-North dialogue on the threefold theme of welfare, religion and gender, focusing on the post-apartheid South African context.

This book unfolded over a period of more than five years during which many of the initial papers were further refined and in some cases even substantially rewritten through the assistance of a number of additional authors. Bearing in mind therefore that the book is the outcome of a rather complex production process that even entailed approaching authors who were not part of the original research team to write and help rewrite some of the chapters, the remaining part of this section now offers a summary of what has become the end product of this process.

---

32 The working theme of this conference, which took place 6-8 December 2006, was “Welfare, Religion and Gender in Post-apartheid South Africa: A South African-Nordic/European Exchange of Perspectives.”

33 The working theme of this conference, which took place 11-14 March 2008, was “Church, Welfare and Gender: The Case of Paarl.”

34 This particularly concerns Chapter 7 (Austen Jackson), Chapter 8 (Brian Gelant, Frouwien Bosman) and Chapter 9 (Hennie Pretorius).
Part 1: Theoretical perspectives

The first part of the book consists of five chapters that all originate from the initial papers presented at the first working conference. Intended to create the theoretical and contextual background against which an interdisciplinary debate on the theme of welfare, religion and gender in the post-apartheid context could be further developed, these chapters offer a set of perspectives from the disciplinary angles of social policy, religious demographics, religion and development, gender studies and feminist theology that could all be considered as informing and enriching the thematic whole in an important way.

To start off, Sulina Green discusses how social welfare policy changed in the post-apartheid dispensation from a racially segregated residual approach to a developmental one. This leads her to not only unpack the meaning of different concepts that inform the developmental approach – social development, developmental social welfare and developmental social work – but also to touch upon the importance of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) in promoting this approach. Rooted in a new-found emphasis on human rights, this new approach has, according to Green, led to important social achievements that to a certain extent also include improvements in the situation of women, although daunting challenges remain to reduce poverty and inequality in South African society.

In the next chapter Johannes Erasmus not only adds value to a general Christian interdenominational orientation in the South African welfare and religion debate, but also to an inter-religious orientation. Utilising national census data, his analysis shows that besides a growing category of “no religious affiliation” in the data, a strong identification with the Christian religion, but also with religion in general, prevails in South African society. Yet, his analysis also shows that this picture is complicated by a trend away from denominational loyalty with far-reaching implications for social welfare, given the structures that mainline denominations have developed over time to render welfare services. Representing essentially a decline in the membership of mainline denominations, it can be predicted, according to Erasmus, that this diminishing loyalty will in all probability lead to an equally diminishing resource base, although this prediction does not take into account the ongoing growth of the Pentecostal churches and their potential as social welfare providers.

From a different angle Ignatius Swart next takes a closer look at the unfolding of a religious discourse on social development in post-apartheid South Africa in order to determine the extent to which this discourse really contributes to the transformation of social welfare thinking and practice. Through interrogating the discourse promoted by the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA) and other major role players in the South African religious sector, Swart continues his ongoing problematisation of the way in which this discourse has embraced the idea of a religious-state partnership in the field of social welfare and the conceptual apparatus of social capital to support this idea. This problematisation leads him to point out further how this development in

---

35 As such this chapter draws heavily on previous publications by Swart to advance an argument that he also regards as necessary and important to contextualise the thematic focus on welfare and religion in post-apartheid South Africa in this book. See also the acknowledgement in footnote 1 of this chapter.
South African religious discourse is based on an American case study that was published in the book *Welfare in America*. He contends that this represents an “out of context” reading of the book that, if countered by a deeper reading of the book and contextual application of the paradigm of social development, should lead the religious sector to make a newfound contribution both on the level of critical moral debate and in promoting actual empowerment “from below”.

In the penultimate chapter in the section Amanda Gouws contributes by providing a gender perspective on social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa and the challenges still facing women in this context. Approaching her analysis specifically from a feminist perspective on citizenship, she shows that the citizenship role and position of women are problematic, because the division of labour in the private sphere of the home has been left unchallenged. Within this analytic framework her gender perspective on social welfare shows that the gendered relationships between paid and unpaid work, and undervalued care work, constitute the basis of women’s lived experience of poverty. She argues that the South African social welfare model assumes that women are the dependents of male breadwinners and that this model as such still supports notions of social welfare that are out of touch with South African realities. According to this interpretation, welfare provisioning that characterises the “deserving poor” as those who are linked to the market and the undeserving poor as those who receive grants, stigmatises women as undeserving despite the fact that society depends on women’s care work to function as normal.

In the final contribution to the section Annalet van Schalkwyk again headlines the theme of women and gender by discussing the importance of ideas from an emerging ecofeminist theology or oikotheology to move us toward a better understanding of sustainable development and the realisation of sustainable communities in South Africa. Being critical of the way in which current debates around welfare, development and religion in South Africa (not the least by other authors in this book) do not take ecological factors into account, Van Schalkwyk points out how an oikotheology on the contrary takes seriously God’s creative presence in the whole earth and cosmos, the living ecosystems of the earth, humanity’s relationship to the natural world, the church in relation to the earth community, and the dependence of the economy on the ecology. By drawing on the international literature on “women and development” she finds important support for her argument in the more recent emphasis on women and the environment in this literary corpus. She argues that ecofeminist theology shares many assumptions with this approach, including the perspective that the welfare of people who are vulnerable can only be understood in terms of the well-being of whole communities and the surrounding ecology.

**Part 2: Denominational perspectives**

The four chapters offered in this part of the book similarly originate from the first working conference’s aim to create a meaningful contextual background for further focused and informed discussion on the project theme. Substantially reworked and rewritten in the
WELFARE, RELIGION AND GENDER IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

course of preparing this book, this set of chapters may be regarded as indicating the way in which the authors respectively take critical account of how four prominent church traditions in South Africa (i.e. the traditions specifically identified in the initial project proposal) are responding to the challenges of social welfare in the post-apartheid dispensation against the background of their own separate historic developments and in terms of their own doctrines, discourses and programmes. In this respect these four chapters provide valuable insights into how the broad church sector in South Africa is gradually coming to terms with its respective histories and adapting to new modes of social welfare involvement in the post-apartheid dispensation.

Starting off with the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) within this common framework Willie van der Merwe advances the argument that the DRC’s ability to forge an effective response to contemporary social challenges will determine this church’s credibility in the post-apartheid milieu. Against the background of the DRC’s past involvement in the social welfare sphere Van der Merwe identifies the DRC’s Declaration of Vocation of 2002 as particularly important to guide the church in this regard. Yet, he continues by drawing attention to significant challenges relating to the implementation of the declaration. His argument in essence is that, while the change in the DRC’s attitude regarding the present social challenges and its recognition of its role as a social institution in society is apparent in its post-apartheid discourse, much remains to be done in terms of identifying appropriate institutional structures and methods of practice through which the church’s social mission may be expressed.

In their discussion of the Anglican Church, Delene Mark, Ignatius Swart and Austen Jackson next present, on the basis of the existing literature, a rather critical perspective on this church’s historical involvement in social welfare. They give credit to the historic role of this church in creating educational institutions in the country, as well as to the welfare role that Anglican women have historically played, but are particularly critical of the way in which this church’s colonial origins and accompanying paternalistic inclinations have inhibited it from playing a more critical and progressive role in transforming South African society. Nevertheless, they also contend in the second part of the chapter that the Anglican Church has made good progress towards a new-found strategic commitment towards the poor and concomitant community engagement in the post-apartheid era. They argue that a new indigenous church leadership and the new organisational initiative around what has become known as Hope Africa are main driving forces behind this new development.

In the following discussion on the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) Brian Gelant, Ignatius Swart and Frouwien Bosman give us a clearer insight into how this church has historically established itself from its initial marginal position as an important role player in social welfare in South African society. From this vantage point and after highlighting the importance of particular principles and themes in the social teachings of the RCC in directing this church in its understanding of its role in society and the social welfare

---

36 See in this regard again our observations in footnote 34 and the corresponding paragraph in the main text.
37 See in this regard again our observations in footnote 17 and the corresponding paragraph in the main text.
sphere, the discussion pays more detailed attention to the way in which the mode of Catholic social engagement has shifted in the post-apartheid dispensation from political to economic liberation. The authors contend that a rights-based approach to social welfare may today be regarded as being at the centre of the new mode of engagement, which they find meaningfully reflected in the work of two organisational initiatives: Siyabhabha Trust/Caritas South Africa and Catholic Welfare and Development.

In the last chapter on the African Independent Churches (AICs) Hennie Pretorius draws our attention to the important place of this tradition of churches within contemporary African and global Christianity. Pretorius continues by also offering important insight into the role of the AICs in changing gender relationships and providing women with a platform from which to challenge the male-dominated sacred world and traditions, as well as culturally ascribed gender roles. In contrast to the view of some scholars on the threatened position of the AICs in South Africa because of their supposed inability to adjust to the changed socio-economic and political landscape, Pretorius argues that the prevalence of HIV and Aids and the concomitant renewed focus on the healing and social support offered by these churches could serve once again to strengthen their position in, and impact on, contemporary society. This view is supported in the last part of the chapter by a case study of the Community Bible Society in the Khayelitsha area in Cape Town, which illustrates the role of AICs in supporting the African working class in adapting to disrupting urban milieus and addressing social challenges such as HIV and Aids.

Part 3: Case study perspectives

In this part of the book all five chapters constitute revised versions of the papers that were presented at the second working conference by South African team members in the project. Accordingly, this set of chapters now shifts the discussion to that phase of the research in which a new round of empirical work was done in a specific case study area, namely the Western Cape town of Paarl. In a more specific way, the chapters together reflect a deliberate attempt by the authors to separately and collectively interpret the data and develop perspectives and themes in accordance with the different analytic categories and interviewee questions that directed the research. The result consequently

---

38 It should be acknowledged at this point that all the chapters in this section as well as Chapter 15 by Per Pettersson and Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon and Chapter 19 by Effie Fokas in Part 4 were published as a Special Issue of Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 133 (March 2009). Permission to republish the articles here is accordingly acknowledged in the first footnote of each chapter.

39 This work was conducted over several months in 2007.

40 Two previous rounds of empirically based work in Paarl, conducted under the auspices of the URDR and related to the URDR-initiated research mentioned at the beginning of this introduction in fact preceded the WRIGP case study research. They generated the data for the Transformation Research Project and the Church and Community Research Project in 2004 and 2002 respectively (Erasmus & Mans 2008:21-25; see also Chapter 14 by Ignatius Swart in this book).

41 To this end a report (Erasmus & Mans 2008), excerpts from which have been included in two appendices in this book, was compiled after the empirical work. The report became a valuable source for the writing of the papers for the second working conference (and it can as such be read as important background to the chapters in this section); it includes a valuable summary of the empirical evidence in addition to the information reflected in the two appendices.
is a collective perspective that – if, for instance, juxtaposed with the chapters in Part 2 – presents important empirical insights into the extent to which churches on the ground in a particular local South African context still fall short of the progressive welfare roles that they are ideally expected to perform, both from the perspective of gender and the developmental approach to social welfare.

Connected strongly to the theme of her chapter in Part 1 of the book, Sulina Green’s chapter in this section represents the first attempt to interpret the data from the Paarl case study in more specific terms. Against the conceptual background of post-apartheid social welfare policy, her concern especially relates to the different groups of interviewees’ understanding of social welfare and the functioning of the local welfare system in Paarl. Her findings importantly point to a limited recognition among the interviewees of the concept of welfare from a developmental perspective. This particularly concerns the church representatives and local citizens interviewed, as is evident from the way in which they use the concepts of welfare and charity interchangeably. At the same time, the overall situation seems to be one in which the local welfare system has hardly succeeded in implementing the developmental approach to social welfare, and that a great need remains to promote empowerment and collaborative strategies in the local context of Paarl.

In the next contribution Johannes Erasmus examines the case study data from the point of view of what could be considered as the “double legacy” marking South African churches as welfare agents, with divided perceptions of churches as, on the one hand, trusted institutions that have extensively served the poor and vulnerable, and on the other, as inhibitors of change and supporters of the status quo, including – historically – apartheid. Approaching the matter in this way, Erasmus concludes that this double legacy in many ways continues to prevail amongst representatives of churches, the population and public authorities in the case study area. To this extent he even foresees the possibility that, similarly to what occurred in the apartheid era, a new division may develop in the church sector regarding its position on the poor and government’s reluctance to deliver services to them.

Required from the start of the empirical phase of the research project to develop a theological perspective on the case study data, Nadine Bowers du Toit consequently seeks to answer the very important question about the extent to which and in what way theology influences the practical welfare work of the church. Through the introduction of a number of theological themes central to the discourses of the denominations that the Paarl case study focused on, Bowers du Toit’s reflection on the data leads her to answer affirmatively that theology has indeed had a significant effect on both the church’s motivation for involvement and on its effectiveness on the ground in terms of engaging with issues of poverty. This leads her to newly stress the need for a theology as well as social welfare practice that is built from below and is people-centred in the way that it works with people and not for them. Bowers du Toit labels this an “incarnational” approach that follows the pattern laid by Jesus in life and deeds.
In the penultimate contribution to this section Amanda Gouws applies the theories on a feminist ethic of care that she introduced in her chapter in Part 1 of the book more directly to the Paarl case study. Viewing the data through this theoretical lens, Gouws closely follows Sulina Green in her own critique of the charity mentality and mode of doing driving the churches’ welfare work in the case study area. From the vantage point of her theoretical framework, however, she also proceeds by pointing out the lack of an awareness regarding gender in this work. For Gouws this lack of awareness furthermore stands in stark contrast to the gendered nature of social problems in the case study area. She ultimately argues that care is contextual and that quality care will depend on how the care burden of women is made visible and supported by the welfare programmes of the state sector, as well as in the relationships of interdependence with the church and the community.

In his endeavour to develop a sociological perspective on the case study data, Ignatius Swart in the last chapter questions whether and to what extent churches fulfil the high expectations placed on them in the championing of a religion-state partnership in welfare provision by such national religious bodies as the National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD) and the National Religious Leader’s Forum (NRLF). Swart applies this question to the case study results and in so doing draws extensively on Arthur E. Farnsley’s analysis of legislation (and expectations) related to faith-based organisations in the United States. In the end this application and use of Farnsley’s work leads to a contribution that not only broadens the parameters of the dialogue that this book seeks to achieve beyond its South African-European focus, but also offers critical insights into the strengths and weaknesses of church welfare services in the case study area.

Part 4: Northern/European perspectives

The final part of the book presents five chapters by the researchers on the Northern/European side of the project team, who all participated in one or both of the working conferences. Based on this experience and the insights that were gained from the authors’ own project work on the Northern/European side, these chapters form an indispensable part of the South-North dialogue that this book claims to establish. Together and in accordance with the respective thematic angles (sociological, theological and gender) from which they approached their own project work, the authors offer a range of comparative perspectives on what they perceive to be the differences – but in other instances also the similarities – between the South African and European (and in some cases even broader Northern) contexts of welfare and religion. Although for some the dominant impression, the notion of difference does not constrain other contributors to the section from also identifying common challenges with regard to the different contexts and in this respect even going so far as to appreciate the potential contribution of the South African welfare

42 Although this refers predominantly to the WREP project, it should be noted that some of the contributors to this section regarded it as appropriate to also include the project that succeeded WREP, “Welfare and Values in Europe” (WaVE), as part of their frame of reference.
and religion discourse (which they have encountered through the WRIGP project) to the European and global discourses.

Two sociologists of religion, Per Pettersson from Sweden and Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon from England, open the collective discussion by offering a European perspective on the role of churches as social agents in South Africa. Although they are not ignorant of the differences between the respective welfare and religion contexts (not least also between their own European contexts), the two authors stress that many of the challenges faced by the churches in the South and the North should be considered as similar in nature. This prompts them in turn to newly ask the question about what the role of the churches as welfare agents should be in terms of this recognition about common challenges. To this end, they find particular relevance in a typology by R. M. Kramer of different forms of voluntary sector involvement in their own European contexts to promote an argument about the relevance of the developmental approach in the South African welfare and religion discourse also for the churches in their own context. For them this relevance extends to issues of empowerment, gender and ecclesial identity.

By providing a comparative analysis from a theological perspective, Thomas Ekstrand, a Swedish systematic theologian, stands out amongst the contributors to the section in the way in which he advances his impression of difference. His argument is an honest acknowledgement that his own Swedish context and horizon of interpretation differs to such an extent from the South African situation that it is hardly possible for him to understand the magnitude and scale of poverty and deprivation in this context. In this acknowledgement he avoids the trap of imposing a Eurocentric worldview and prejudice upon the South African context that he has to respond to, which is also clearly reflected in his theological argumentation. However, in making some more definite comparative remarks about the respective situations of the Church of Sweden and the Dutch Reformed Church on the basis of the denominational perspectives developed in the WRIGP project, Ekstrand does offer a more concrete perspective on the challenge of theological reconstruction of both churches in the context of political and social change, albeit in very different circumstances.

In developing her comparative analysis from the perspective of gender, Ninna Edgardh, a Swedish researcher in ecclesiology and gender studies, likewise proceeds from an equally strong statement about “different points of departure”. Drawing from the Cultural Values Map produced by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel in the context of the World Values Survey research, Edgardh argues that the way in which this map positions the Swedish and South African societies as extreme opposites gives a meaningful impression of the differences between the two societies. While such recognition of differences has, according to her, important implications for the way in which issues such as poverty and the situation of women should be viewed differently in both contexts, she nevertheless also finds scope for identifying similar challenges with
regard to the promotion of gender equality in the social welfare sphere of both societies.\textsuperscript{43} She concludes that future studies on welfare and religion could only contribute to this end by adopting methodologies which integrate gender more profoundly and visibly as a social factor and perspective.

In the penultimate chapter three sociologists of religion – Martha Middlemiss Lé Men and Per Pettersson from Sweden, and Anne Birgitta Pessi from Finland – build on the sociological perspective presented in the first chapter in the section. In this discussion, however, these three authors apply themselves more purposefully to the question of the extent to which the case studies from the WRIGP and WREP projects provide evidence of churches in South African and European society contributing to the upholding of values of solidarity in the wake of processes of increasing globalisation, modernisation and individualisation. By also introducing the idea of the “common good” in this respect – whereby values of solidarity are supposedly upheld by different sectors across welfare systems – the authors conclude their comparative view of the WRIGP and WREP results with a seemingly positive appreciation of the important role that churches currently play in this regard, that is, irrespective of the welfare system and the way in which welfare is conceptualised.

Finally, Effie Fokas – a political sociologist from Greece – provides a broader orientation, within the context of the WRIGP project, to the global scholarly debate on religion and welfare. Taking ideas and perspectives from a wider scholarly discussion on the contemporary place of religion in the public sphere as her frame of reference, Fokas then focuses more specifically on the question of how religion is publicly represented through churches’ and other religious agencies’ involvement in the social welfare sphere. She argues that theological and political considerations are at stake, which she then examines and applies to the contexts of Europe, the United States and South Africa from the vantage point of material from the WREP and WRIGP projects. The conclusion from her comparative analysis is that questions of religious identity are paramount in all three contexts, both from a political and theological point of view.

\textsuperscript{43} There has, for instance, been criticism of the social welfare systems of countries in the North by feminist scholars who point out that there are still gender-blind aspects to the analysis of social welfare systems. Even where welfare systems have been very women-friendly, neo-liberal capitalist policies have eroded gains made by women. But these are seldom accounted for in mainstream analysis. For a comparison of Britain, Canada, France, the USA and Australia see O’Conner, Orloff & Shaver (1999); and for a comparison of the USA, the Netherlands, Sweden and Britain see Sainsbury (1996).
References


Theoretical Perspectives
Introduction

Since the first democratic elections in 1994 South Africa has embarked on a long and strenuous process of reconstruction and development. However, after eighteen years of transition from white political domination to a representative democracy, this society is still facing serious political, social and economic problems. Apartheid has clearly left a worse aftermath than was realised in 1994, and the removal of apartheid legislation has not eliminated many of the inequalities that existed before.

Indeed, in present-day South African society poverty is still rampant and when the structural dynamics surrounding the poor are taken into account, it is clear that not enough has been done to alleviate the problem and its associated ills. For South Africans one of the most daunting challenges that therefore remains is to achieve a reduction in poverty and inequality, and hence bring about a progressive change in the social, economic and physical conditions of especially the poorest in society.

The post-apartheid government, however, made a commitment to address these pressing problems, and prominence was given to development in its agenda for transformation. A developmental strategy for social welfare was adopted with a focus on meeting basic needs, eradicating poverty and investing in human capital. The government also undertook a review of the country’s welfare system in order to address the injustices of the post-apartheid system and design a welfare policy that would be compatible with the government’s agenda for transformation.

---

1 This chapter was initially prepared for presentation at the First Working Conference of the WRIGP project in Stellenbosch, 6-8 December 2006.
2 Terreblanche 2002:419.
3 Triegaardt 2002:325.
4 Terreblanche 2002:419.
5 Drower 2002:10.
To contextualise this chapter, the development of social welfare in South Africa is briefly traced by touching on a few key dates. The chapter then describes social welfare within the paradigm of social development, whereafter it takes a brief look at the design of social welfare policy for post-apartheid South Africa and the providers of developmental social welfare services. The chapter ends by identifying some shifts, accomplishments and challenges for social development.

**Brief historical overview**

This section starts with a short description of some relevant demographics of the country before the discussion moves on to present a brief historical overview of the development of social welfare over a period of about a century and a half in South Africa.

South Africa has a population of just under 45 million and covers a land area of 1,219,090 sq km. There are nine provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, which has the largest population (21%), followed by Gauteng (20%), the Eastern Cape (14%), Limpopo (12%), the Western Cape (10%), North-West (8%), Mpumalanga (7%), the Free State (6%) and the Northern Cape (2%). South Africa is a culturally diverse society where for official purposes people are classified into the following population groups: black/African (79%), white (9%), coloured (9%) and Indian (3%).

Social care and assistance to needy citizens is an intrinsic part of civil society and the religious convictions of people often motivate them to provide such care. Traditionally, the social welfare needs of the poor in South Africa were addressed at the local level through the social structures of the family, community and church, before the state began to intervene in a constructive manner.

The discovery of minerals in South Africa in the 1860s brought about accelerated urbanisation and related socio-economic problems, with poverty as one of the main consequences. Migrant black male labourers from rural areas were housed in closed compound systems that developed on the mines and they were isolated from their families. Numerous socio-economic problems and high levels of poverty were experienced by both the black and white communities during this period.

As a response to the devastation and needs of white women and children that resulted from the South African War (1899-1902), women’s charitable organisations like the Afrikaans Christian Women’s Society (Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging: ACVV) emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. Other charitable organisations like the Child Welfare Society soon followed, with offices opened first in Cape Town in 1908 and a year later in Johannesburg, rendering social welfare services to all population groups in those areas.

The growing concerns about poverty amongst the white population culminated in an investigation into the “poor white problem” in the early 1930s. The investigation was...
organised by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and funded by the Carnegie Foundation in New York. The Carnegie Commission’s Report published in 1932 was of particular importance for two reasons. It made the government aware that welfare in South Africa needed attention and that direct government involvement through the establishment of a social welfare department was consequently required.

In response to the recommendations of the Carnegie investigation the first state Department of Social Welfare was established in 1937. During this time social welfare organisations for vulnerable target groups in society such as the blind, deaf and the mentally ill were also established. The creation of National Councils for these target groups to promote the planning and co-ordination of service delivery was a major organisational step forward.

With the assumption of power by the National Party in 1948, a period of 46 years of apartheid laws and policies started. In the welfare sector segregation was reflected in the establishment of separate state departments for every population group. Although this fragmented service delivery to the four main population groups proved to be an unethical, inefficient and unaffordable system of social welfare, it continued until 1994. This diversification of social welfare services to the various populations groups by the apartheid government was evident from legislation that prioritised quality services for the white population group.

The apartheid government followed a conservative and residual approach to welfare. This approach is associated with minimal state intervention through the financing of social welfare services and social security. It proceeds from the view that the family and free market are the primary mechanisms for meeting people’s needs. Only when these natural systems break down, does support in the form of social welfare come into play. This implies that the underlying value of the residual approach is that the individual is primarily responsible for helping him- or herself without any dependence on government support. Social welfare services are thus remedial in nature and focus on addressing shortcomings in the individual instead of eliminating shortcomings in the general structure of society.

It was only in 1994 after the first democratic elections that the African National Congress (ANC) established an integrated and united Department of Welfare. For the first time in the country’s history the needs of all population groups were served on an equal basis. The ANC government rejected the conservative and residual approach adopted by the apartheid government. At the same time it also rejected an institutional approach to welfare, which, although more liberal than the residual approach, could not be afforded because of the country’s limited economic performance and capacity.

Instead the ANC government adopted a third welfare approach, one that was to be developmental in scope and had to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. Of importance is that, unlike

---

the residual and institutional approaches, the developmental approach had to link social and economic policies. Its main feature would be its concern with development.\textsuperscript{14} In this sense it was regarded as a desirable alternative to address poverty, as it was based on the assumption that individuals would be enabled to function independently when both their inherent potential and their social environment developed together.\textsuperscript{15}

**Conceptualising social welfare within the paradigm of development**

The paradigm shift in social welfare policy from welfare to development led to misconceptions and confusion about the terminology used to describe the notion of development and its concepts.\textsuperscript{16} This section takes a closer look at definitions of these various concepts, namely social welfare, social development, developmental social welfare and developmental social work.

**Social welfare**

Zastrow\textsuperscript{17} offers a broad description of social welfare as “(a) nation’s system of programmes, benefits and services that help people meet those social, economic, education, and health needs that are fundamental to the maintenance of society”.

This definition of social welfare supports the conservative and residual approaches whereby religious and voluntary organisations usually supply social welfare services, and whereby the state and other sectors in society gradually become involved in rendering formal welfare services. It clarifies what people can expect from society and can serve as a measure to tell how well society is meeting the needs of people.\textsuperscript{18}

In contrast, however, another definition is found in the post-apartheid government’s White Paper for Social Welfare, which describes social welfare from a liberal and developmental approach as “an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes and social security to promote social development, social justice and the social functioning of people”.\textsuperscript{19}

The focus of this definition is on services,\textsuperscript{20} and it provides a starting point for understanding the paradigm shift to developmental social welfare in South Africa. Moreover, social welfare forms part of a range of services that aim to achieve social development and include health, nutrition, education, housing, recreation, rural and urban development and land reform.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{14} Gray 1996:6.
\textsuperscript{15} Van Eeden et al. 2000:11, 20, 21.
\textsuperscript{16} Lombard 1996:163.
\textsuperscript{17} Zastrow 1999:6.
\textsuperscript{18} Patel 2005:19.
\textsuperscript{20} Lombard 1996:163.
\textsuperscript{21} Potgieter 1998:69.
The following clarification by Gray\textsuperscript{22} of the distinctions between social development, developmental social welfare and developmental social work is important since she explains that they are three related but different concepts.

**Social development**

Social development is a theory and approach to social welfare that posits a macro-policy framework for poverty alleviation and combines social and economic goals.

This conceptualisation supports the view that “(t)he social development approach transcends the residual-institutionalist debate by linking social welfare directly to economic development and programmes”.\textsuperscript{23} It is also important to note that most South African authors\textsuperscript{24} use James Midgley’s definition of social development as a starting-point for their conceptualisation and interpretation of social development. He defines social development as “a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development”.\textsuperscript{25}

In other words, social development requires that the social and economic sectors should work together to converge social and economic goals. Therefore the assumption is that the economy should operate in such a way as to generate social gains for people and also make it possible for people to participate in the economy and create their own means of generating a livelihood.\textsuperscript{26} In this way, social development would be the best way to deal with poverty. The key assumption is that participation and partnership, rather than a system of social service provision, would be the main means of alleviating poverty.\textsuperscript{27}

**Developmental social welfare**

Developmental social welfare is the name given to South Africa’s new welfare system, which is moulded by the theory of social development as embodied in the White Paper for Social Welfare.\textsuperscript{28}

This interpretation of developmental welfare calls for a redesigning of the focus and the way in which social services and activities are organised to facilitate development at the national, provincial and local levels of service delivery within the paradigm of social development.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{22} Gray 2006:53, 54.
\textsuperscript{23} Midgley 1995:1.
\textsuperscript{24} Lombard 1996; Gray 2006; Patel 2005.
\textsuperscript{25} Midgley 1995:5.
\textsuperscript{26} Gray 2006:56.
\textsuperscript{27} Gray 2006:56.
\textsuperscript{28} Ministry for Welfare and Population Development 1997.
\textsuperscript{29} Mazibuko 1996:157.