



Producing Privatization: Re-articulating Race, Gender, Class and Space

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Abstract: This article combines insights into the mutually constituting nature of gender, race, class and space with Marxist analyses that interrogate how social relations both produce and are constrained by institutions to explore waste management privatization in Johannesburg. It argues that the crystallization of racialized, gendered inequalities within bargaining institutions underpinned financial motivations for privatization. The form of privatization varied across the city due to the ways in which the class of the area serviced articulated with the racialization and gendering of capital and labour in these spaces. An array of material conditions and ideologies informed these processes in which workers were active, although not necessarily progressive agents. Focusing on how privatization is produced through spatialized and institutionalized social relations illuminates avenues for struggle hidden from view in both aspatial, ideal-type feminist political economy analyses and geographic analyses of privatization inattentive to the mutually constituting nature of gender, race and class.

Keywords: privatization, neoliberalism, gender, race, class, South Africa, institutions

Privatization is often cited as a central component of neoliberalism. Indeed some scholars argue that privatization is the “necessary precursor” to all other aspects of neoliberalism (Mansfield 2007a:398), while others assert that, “[a]s a general concept privatization captures the process of transition from welfare state to neo-liberal state” (Fudge and Cossman 2002:4). Coming to grips with how privatization is produced can, therefore, deepen our understanding of neoliberalism as a contested, socio-spatial process (Brenner and Theodore 2007; Hart 2008).

A recent, special edition of *Antipode* (volume 39, number 3) explicitly sought to contribute, “to developing a geographical analysis of privatization by examining its role within the larger project of neoliberalism and analyzing its significance for remaking contemporary nature–society relations” (Mansfield 2007a:393). Theorizing property as a social relation (Mansfield 2007a:394) the edition provides important insights into how the dispossessions wrought by privatization create not only new forms of property but also new social relations and subjectivities.

Given this theoretical emphasis on the importance of interrogating social relations the consistent analytical silence in the edition regarding the gendered and racialized nature of the class relations produced by privatization¹ is striking, although not necessarily surprising. It has been some time since Nagar et al (2002:276) forwarded that feminist theory and method, and appreciation of the way in which capitalism is, “mediated through the simultaneous operation of gendered, sexualized, and racialized hierarchies” can both facilitate the development of more nuanced understandings of global processes and reveal new openings for change. Nevertheless, despite the continued production of innovative work on these issues by feminist geographers, in 2008 Linda McDowell still was compelled to observe that “somehow analyses of globalization, of restructuring, of institutional re-organizational across scales, of neoliberal workfare policies in the contemporary mainstream geographical literatures, like the influential regulationist school in an earlier decade, have continued as if gender relations were either invisible or irrelevant” (McDowell 2008:21). Aside from a small number of important works (see, for example, Hart 2002, 2006; Laurie 2005; Loftus 2007; Miraftab 2004; Roberts 2008) that have not had the impact on the broader debates that they merit, the same can unfortunately be said of the geographic literature on privatization and accumulation by dispossession.

Research on the gendered nature of privatization is not novel. For more than a decade feminist political economists have argued that as the public/private boundary is constituted by, and constitutive of unequal gender relations (Pateman 1988), the realignment of this boundary wrought by privatization is fundamentally gendered (Bakker 2003; Brodie 1994; Fudge and Cossman 2002). Although they do not adequately theorize the relationship between race, gender and class, they note that race and class influence how the boundary between the public and private is redrawn and how different women are affected by and respond to privatization (Bakker and Gill 2003; Brodie 1994, 1997; Fudge and Cossman 2002). Drawing on Connell’s (1987) argument that every state order rests on a gender order, these scholars further argue that privatization and neoliberalism are predicated on the forging of a new gender order that alters the gendered terms on which citizens access rights from the state, erodes the family wage model established during the Keynesian era, and is dependent on the development of new understandings of gender and gender roles (Bakker 2003; Brodie 2003).

This literature provides critical openings to explore the ways in which privatization, neoliberalism and exploitative relations of race, gender and class produce one another. However, its ability to do so is limited by its method of analysis, which remains at the level of abstract theorization or at most examines the content of policies, and does not meaningfully

engage with concrete instances of privatization. The feminist political economy literature focuses on how the gender order is encoded in policy, and pays scant attention to the geographically uneven ways in which it is produced, lived and contested. The concept of gender order therefore serves as a Weberian ideal type that homogenizes social relations across space. There is little sense of how it can be disrupted or transformed other than through interventions at the level of policy formation. As such, the feminist political economy literature provides few theoretical tools to understand the contested production of privatization. For this it is useful to turn to work by feminist geographers on the mutually constituting nature of gender, race, class, space and socio-economic processes and to Marxist analyses that dereify institutions and focus on how social relations both produce and are constrained by institutions.

Building on Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) insights regarding the production of space, Massey (1994) argues that as space is comprised of social relations it is necessarily gendered. Her foundational work reveals that as part of the process of industrial restructuring gender assumes different meaning and content in different places, and that these different genderings become constitutive of both the places and forms of restructuring produced within them. Massey does not foreground race within her analysis. However, other feminist geographers writing in the same period enriched insights into how gender, race and class are forged relationally and experienced simultaneously (Combahee River Collective 2000 [1983]; Davis 1983) by exploring the central role of space within these processes (Kobayashi and Peake 1994; Pratt and Hanson 1994). This has inspired a rich literature that illuminates the profoundly gendered, racialized and classed nature of the contested, spatialized processes through which neoliberalism, globalization and economic restructuring are constituted (McDowell 1999; Nagar et al 2002; Nightingale 2006; Sharp 2007). In her insightful overview of and critical intervention into debates on the relationship between gender and the environment, Nightingale (2006) employs a processual understanding of gender to argue that divisions of labour rooted in caste and gender are constitutive of ecological change, and that ecological change also plays an important role in the contested processes through which gender and other subjectivities are produced and performed. Drawing on these insights to analyze privatization it becomes evident that neither privatization nor racialized gender relations can be taken as a given whose impact on the other must be studied. Rather it is necessary to explore how racialized gender relations and privatization produce one another within particular places which are themselves transformed through these processes.

Though not dealing with privatization *per se*, Gillian Hart (2002, 2006) captures this dynamic through her concept of "racialized

dispossession” in which she draws on Stuart Hall’s theorization of articulation to argue that particular articulations of race, gender and class shape the form taken by dispossession in particular places, and that dispossession is constitutive of gender and race as well as class. Hart persuasively argues that Hall’s conceptualization of articulation has two main advantages over feminist theorizations of the mutually constituting nature of gender, race and class, both of which stem from its grounding in Hall’s reading of Marxist method. First, it captures the sense in which “they are mutually articulated, but remain specified by their difference” and together form “differentiated unities”, which can only be understood through “concrete analysis of concrete situations” (Hall 1974 [2003]:128, cited in Hart 2007:89–90). As such, rather than studying abstracted notions of race, gender and class as is the case in the feminist political economy analysis, it is necessary to interrogate the political work performed by specific articulations in particular places. Second, Hall’s theorization of articulation overcomes false divisions between the material and ideological due to the manner in which it “encompass[es] not only the joining together of diverse elements ... but also the second sense of articulation in English and French, namely, ‘to give expression to, or the production of meaning through language’” (Hart 2007:91).

In recent years feminist geographers have begun to interrogate key aspects of privatization. Adrienne Roberts (2008) focuses on the gendered implications of privatization by exploring the relationship between primitive accumulation, production and reproduction. Drawing on scholars such as Sylvia Federici, Roberts argues that “the primitive accumulation of water generates contradictions and tensions not solely for capitalist relations of production, but more crucially, for relations of social reproduction” (Roberts 2008:536). She further argues that primitive accumulation of water plays an important role in creating and deepening hierarchical relations of gender, race and class as due to pre-existing gender divisions of labour, when water distribution is skewed along lines of race and class it is women who are forced to increase their unpaid labour (Roberts 2008:548–549). Alex Loftus (2007) takes this focus on the gendered implications of privatization and commodification of water further by exploring the political possibilities generated by their gendered effects. Engaging with feminist standpoint theory, Loftus argues that due to their position within divisions of labour women have particular experiences of water privatization that can be drawn on to develop critical vantage points crucial in the advancement of struggle. Loftus does not explicitly explore how these gendered knowledges and mobilizations shape future transformations in the waterscape. However, taking a dialectical and processual approach his work allows us to understand these gendered insights and actions as constitutive of subsequent changes.

Other scholars focus more directly on the role of gender in producing privatization. Laurie (2005) argues that neoliberal water policies are undergirded by development discourses tied to particular constructions of masculinity. Contesting water privatization in Cochabamba, Bolivia therefore entailed the production, deployment and valorization of alternative, non-hegemonic masculinities. Miraftab (2004) also emphasizes the importance of gender ideologies in the forging of privatization, although she focuses on the construction of particular types of femininity as opposed to masculinity. Miraftab argues that council officials in Cape Town invoked the patriarchal gender discourse of “municipal housekeeping” to justify low wages paid to women working on privatized waste management schemes in the townships. She further argues that “[g]ender beliefs also influence black and poor women themselves”, for it is due to their acceptance of their role as caregivers that they are willing to work for little or no pay (Miraftab 2004:888). The exclusive focus on masculinity by Laurie and on femininity by Miraftab is problematic. Nevertheless, when taken together, their work highlights the importance of interrogating how masculinity, femininity and relations between the two are invoked and transformed in relation to privatization.

While this focus on discourse is useful it can create the misconception that all that is required to bring about gendered transformation is a change in the attitudes, beliefs and related practices of locally based actors. Miraftab (2004:883) notes that private providers could pay low wages to women as their contracts did not require them to pay bargaining council wages. However, she does not interrogate the gendered and racialized processes that created the institutional and legislative context that rendered this possible. Surprisingly absent from the literature on gender and privatization (and on gender, labour and the environment) is an appreciation of the ways in which racialized gender relations become crystallized in institutions such as bargaining councils which then shape the terrain for action. As noted above the feminist political economists focus exclusively at this level and fail to explore how articulations of race, gender and class in specific places lead the same laws and institutions to take different concrete forms in different settings.

In his incisive critique of institutional political economy, Gregory Albo (2005) provides an alternative ontology of institutions that can overcome these divides. Albo argues that while institutional political economists err in attributing ontological primacy to institutions, Marxist analysis must grapple with the ways in which power relations and class struggles become crystallized in the institutions which actors then act through, are constrained by and transform in the course of further struggles. Although Albo focuses exclusively on class struggle, bringing his analysis into conversation with feminist insights makes it clear that

institutions are forged in dialectical relationship with struggles around interrelated racialized, gendered and classed forms of exploitation. Analysis of the relationship between articulations of gender, race, class, space and privatization must, therefore, be attentive to the relationship between the material and the ideological, and to the dynamic role of institutions in this process.

This article takes up this challenge by focusing on how racialized gender relations forged and institutionalized at multiple scales shaped waste management privatization in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is based on research conducted in 2002 and 2003 for the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) and the Municipal Services Project. The research formed part of a broader project on gender and local government restructuring through which the union tried to grapple with the gendered nature of municipal service privatization and ensure that it would address these issues in its anti-privatization campaigns and strategies. The privatization of waste in Johannesburg was one of three instances of privatization studied for the project.²

In 2001 the city of Johannesburg implemented the controversial *iGoli 2002* plan to marketize and privatize council functions. As part of this plan the council's waste management departments were converted into a private company called Pikitup, which is wholly owned by the city. The research was initially intended to explore the gendered and racialized implications of this shift. However, investigations revealed that privatization had taken markedly different forms in different parts of the city, most of which were not mentioned in either the *iGoli 2002* plan or Pikitup's business plans, and many of which predated *iGoli 2002*. Following Hall (2003:129), this article seeks to understand the social processes through which the complex, differentiated forms of privatization in different parts of the city were constituted and produced in relation to one another. It argues that the historical racialized gender division of labour in the waste management sector played an important role in producing collective bargaining institutions that do not cover parts of the sector that have come to be associated with African female labour. This crystallization of racialized and gendered inequalities within bargaining institutions created the possibility for private companies to pay dramatically lower wages than municipal providers and thus underpinned the privatization process in Johannesburg. However, the specific form assumed by privatization varied across the city due to the ways in which the class of the area serviced, and hence the ability of service providers to extract payment for privatized services, articulated with the racialization and gendering of capital and labour within these spaces. A complex combination of material conditions and an array of ideologies converged to produce forms of privatization that were intimately bound up in the production of gender, race, class and space. The article highlights that workers were not passive recipients

of racialized gender ideologies who were simply interpolated into processes of privatization. However, it observes that women workers seeking to overturn the status quo must win solidarity from their comrades and from their unions. Furthermore, because of the ways in which inequalities between workers have become institutionalized in bargaining council agreements, this struggle includes far more than simply challenging the beliefs and ideas of management, as it requires institutional transformation as well.

The stakes in focusing on the social processes through which privatization was constituted are political as well as theoretical, as this approach can illuminate struggles hidden from view in both aspatial, ideal-type feminist political economy analyses and geographic analyses that overlook the constitutive role played by racialized, gendered social relations. SAMWU, which is the main municipal union in both Johannesburg and the country, adamantly opposed *iGoli 2002* in bargaining meetings and backed this up with a number of strike actions (Barchiesi 2007). Throughout its mobilization it focused on the content of the plan and its adoption in virtually unchanged form was a major defeat. Since then, the union has engaged in little action against *iGoli 2002*. This can partially be attributed to the SAMWU local's hesitancy to oppose the ANC, which governs the Johannesburg Council and with whom it is in alliance.³ However, it also stems from the union's implicit theorization of anti-privatization struggle which focused on preventing the implementation of the plan. A more processual approach rooted in an understanding of how the privatization envisioned in the plan was actually produced opens up new sites, scales and forms of struggle that could be employed to undermine *iGoli 2002*'s reproduction, even while it remains official Council policy. Given the constitutive role of re-articulations of gender, race, class and space in the privatization process strategies and tactics that see gender as irrelevant or of secondary importance are unlikely to succeed. This article concludes by arguing that new organizing strategies being piloted by the union have the potential to take up these challenges.

In order to develop these arguments the article begins by providing an overview of the complex form taken by waste management privatization in Johannesburg. It then explores how particular articulations of race, gender, class and space informed the production of privatization by focusing on the historical evolution of racialized divisions of labour in the sector, the gendered nature of collective bargaining institutions and the social relations underpinning the production of spatially differentiated forms of privatization. The third section analyses how these various forms of privatization were forged in relation to one another. The conclusion identifies some of the theoretical and political openings created by this approach to theorizing and analyzing privatization.

Waste Management Privatization in Johannesburg

In the late 1990s, in line with the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy, the ANC national government instituted a number of policies that created material and ideological pressure for local municipalities to implement market-oriented restructuring and privatization of municipal services (Barchiesi 2007; Pape and McDonald 2002; Ruiters 2002). Johannesburg's *iGoli 2002* plan is widely acknowledged as the most radical instance of this transformation in municipal governance. The profoundly undemocratic process through which the plan was developed and adopted has been documented by Barchiesi (2001, 2007), Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell (2002) and the Johannesburg Council itself (City of Johannesburg Council 2001). Despite strike action and strong opposition from unions and social movements, the plan was endorsed by the Council and came into effect on 1 January 2001.

iGoli 2002 implants market logic into the heart of the municipality. According to the plan, "[t]he challenge is to transform the current bureaucracy into a business approach because the city is a 'big business'" (Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council 1999b:6). *iGoli 2002* hollowed Council out to a rudimentary skeleton. Departments identified as non-core were sold to the private sector. Those identified as core and retained in-house were marketized, with some parts acting as clients and others as contractors. The remainder were transformed into either utilities, agencies or corporatized entities (UACs). The UACs are private companies with the city as sole shareholder. They are differentiated from one another on the basis of their ability to generate profit, with utilities deemed capable of being financially self-sufficient and profitable (Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council 1999b:20).

Waste management was targeted for transformation into a utility and on 1 January 2001 the Council created the largest private waste management company in Africa when it converted its waste management departments into a company called Pikitup (<http://www.pikitup.co.za>). The municipality contracted Pikitup to provide all waste management services for which it bore constitutional and legislative responsibility.⁴ However, research conducted in five of Pikitup's 11 depots in 2002 and 2003 revealed that in each depot area a complex and unique configuration of actors was providing waste management services that were the contractual responsibility of Pikitup (see Table 1 for information on the depot areas and service providers).

Pikitup was the main provider of waste management services in each area. However, each depot subcontracted other private companies (known as "third party contractors" or TPCs) to provide trucks and drivers as well as temporary workers. Some depots also subcontracted TPCs to provide collection and street cleaning services. Black-owned companies were only contracted to provide services in African informal

Table 1: Pikitup depot areas

Depot	Description of area ⁵	Municipal waste management service providers
Selby	Central business district and inner city	Pikitup, 3 TPCs, 3 CIDs
Norwood	Wealthy, formerly white suburbs such as Houghton and Norwood	Pikitup, 4 TPCs, 1 CID in the Rosebank business area
Zondi and Central Camp Satellite	African township of Soweto	Pikitup, 8 TPCs including black economic empowerment companies, Zivuseni Provincial Public Works Programme, volunteer initiatives
Avalon and Poortjie Satellite	African informal settlement of Orange Farm, coloured township of el Dorado Park, Indian township of Lenasia	Pikitup, 9 TPCs including black economic empowerment companies, volunteer initiatives in the townships and informal settlement
Marlboro	Wealthy, formerly white suburbs such as Sandton, African township of Alexandra	Pikitup, 7 TPCs including black economic empowerment companies in Alexandra township, 1 CID in the Sandton business district, volunteer initiatives in the townships

Compiled by the author.

settlements and townships as part of “black economic empowerment” initiatives. Utilization of TPCs was extensive, accounting for between 17.6% and 41.8% of depot budgets.

Additionally in each area providers neither contracted nor paid by Pikitup also provided street cleaning services, even though Pikitup was contracted to do this. In formerly white business districts these initiatives took the form of city improvement districts (CIDs) funded by local businesses. In the townships volunteer campaigns co-ordinated by ANC ward councilors cleaned the streets, and in the case of Soweto a provincial poverty alleviation project called Zivuseni also provided this service.

Although *iGoli 2002* included only a single, city-wide plan for the waste management privatization, empirical observation therefore revealed that privatization took very different forms in different parts of the city. As Gillian Hart reminds us through her useful concept of “relational comparison” rather than analyzing each of these forms of privatization as independent cases, it is necessary to explore how they were, “... formed in relation to one another and to a larger

whole . . . [as] particularities or specificities arise through *interrelations* between objects, events, places, and identities” (Hart 2002:13–14). The following sections explore how and why privatization came to take the particular complex form observed and how it was maintained and reproduced. Based on the understanding that nothing is objectively or naturally given and that everything is constituted through social relations (Ollman 1976:14) the focus is on unearthing the social relations that underpin these various forms of privatization. Rather than treating space as a passive container for privatization the ways in which social relations, space and privatization were co-produced (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]) form the main focal point of the analysis.

Producing Waste Management Privatization

It is important to locate analysis of the form taken by waste management privatization in the *iGoli 2002* era within an historical perspective. The utilization of TPCs was not a Pikitup innovation. Rather, the Pikitup depots inherited most of the contracts from the municipal waste management departments, which started subcontracting service delivery to private companies in the 1980s (Barchiesi 2001:36). This was in line with the late apartheid state’s promotion of municipal service privatization. Government support for privatization in this period was in synch with global trends associated with the rise of neoliberal governance. But the specific context of municipal boycotts and township uprisings aimed at destabilizing the apartheid state created additional political motivations for privatization in apartheid South Africa. The state naively hoped that service delivery by private companies as opposed to the hated, undemocratic black local authorities would diminish the protests and deflect criticism away from the black local authorities. It also punted privatization in the townships as a way to create business opportunities for black entrepreneurs and bolster the development of a more moderate, black middle class (Crankshaw 1986; Heymans 1993; Innes 1987).

When Pikitup was formed it had several motivations for maintaining the subcontracts. At a conceptual level, although subcontracting of waste service delivery was not specifically mentioned in the *iGoli 2002* plan, it was in keeping with the plan’s contractor–client model. But the main motivation was financial. As waste management includes the provision of non-revenue generating street cleaning services, Johannesburg’s waste management departments had always operated at a deficit and were among the largest recipients of subsidies from the rates account. In 1999/2000, just prior to the formation of Pikitup, the shortfall in the waste management department’s budget was 93.2 million rand (Barchiesi 2001:19–21; Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council 1999a:15). As a utility, Pikitup was expected to be financially

self-sustaining and generate a profit. It was therefore under extreme pressure to limit its expenditure. Across the globe one of the main incentives for privatization and contracting out is the possibility of breaking or circumventing collective agreements and hence lowering the wage bill (Brown, Bryson and Forth 2008; Cohen 2006; Coyle 1985; Dantico and Jurik 1986; Geldstein 1997; La Botz 2008). The case of Pikitup was no different. South African industrial relations are characterized by centralized collective bargaining through national bargaining councils. For Pikitup, the primary attraction of TPCs was that they were excluded from the effective scope of coverage of the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC). As such they could pay workers lower wages and benefits than the municipality and Pikitup.⁶

Most workers doing collection work for private companies were covered by the Road Freight Bargaining Council (RFBC), whose 2003 agreements provided minimum wages that were 59% those of the SALGBC.⁷ The vast majority of TPCs were established, white-owned companies, some with links to multinationals. However, in the early 1990s service delivery in the informal settlement of Orange Farm was contracted to the “Entrepreneur Development Programme” of Billy Hattingh and Associates (now trading as TEDCOR). As part of this programme, locally based entrepreneurs were contracted to service different parts of Orange Farm. Each entrepreneur was to drive the collection truck him or herself and hire workers to do loading and street cleaning. Couched in the language of black economic empowerment this model capitalized on a provision of the RFBC agreement that exempted workers employed by owner-drivers from coverage. A similar initiative was pursued in Alexandra township (although in Alexandra some contracts went to larger companies technically covered by the agreement), and in Soweto owner-drivers were contracted to provide trucks and drivers. As a result, most of the African workers employed by these “empowerment” projects were not eligible for the minimums and protections of the RFBC agreement. The limiting of contracts with black companies to townships underlined the spatially delimited notion of empowerment during this period.⁸ The construction of townships as places for the creation of a black entrepreneurial class resulted in the production of spatialized differences in rights and benefits between African workers employed by different kinds of companies. The reproduction of township spaces, a black entrepreneurial class, and a disenfranchised group of African workers were therefore intimately bound up in one another through this particular form of privatization.

By contrast, street cleaning workers were not covered by any bargaining council, regardless of what kind of companies they were employed by or which part of the city they worked in. As there is

no minimum wage legislation in South Africa, in the almost complete absence of unionization among these workers,⁹ TPCs could unilaterally determine their wages.

Massey argues that it is necessary to explore how processes at other scales are present within, and influence those in the place being studied as each place, “includes relations which stretch beyond—the global as part of what constitutes the local, the outside as part of the inside” (1994:5). In the case of waste management privatization in Johannesburg the preceding analysis indicates that the selective coverage of collection workers based on the clauses of the national RFBC agreements and the absence of a national bargaining council for streetcleaning workers created the conditions that allowed TPCs to undercut municipal/Pikitup wages. The policies and practices of national institutions therefore had profound implications for privatizing strategies within Johannesburg as they created the primary, financial incentive for using TPCs.

As noted above, it is commonly observed in international literature that privatization allows companies to undermine collective bargaining. However, this is typically treated as a fact that explains lower wages and benefits associated with privatization, rather than as a social phenomenon to be explained. If institutions such as bargaining councils are seen as comprised in and through social relations, then it is imperative that they be dereified to reveal the social relations crystallized within them (Albo 2005). The following sections explore the historical production and institutionalization of racialized gender relations within the waste management labour market. In so doing they establish that gendered divisions within the labour market played a critical role in creating the differential coverage by collective bargaining agreements that subsequently shaped the form taken by privatization.

Gendered and Racialized Production of the Labour Force

As in many other apartheid-era urban areas, Johannesburg’s waste management labour force initially had been comprised of contract male migrant workers from the homelands working on renewable, yearly contracts. Chiefs in different areas were contracted to provide workers for specific types of work, thus replicating the apartheid segregation of different groups into homelands in the urban workplace and extending the power of chiefs into urban areas. The contract migrant labour system therefore played an important role in producing the homelands as supposed places of origin to which African workers were tied while working in the city.

In Johannesburg waste management workers were drawn from the amaBhaca group (interviews, P. Mashishi, 11 September 2003; J. Mawbey, 3 May 2004). Emphasizing the inseparability of material and ideological moments, Persaud (2003:129–130) argues that the forging of a labour force is intimately bound up with constructions of race,

ethnicity, gender and colonial practices and indeed the association of waste management work with the amaBhaca became foundational to how both were defined. To this day, when people in Johannesburg refer derisively to waste management workers they call them amaBhaca, even though the majority of waste management workers now come from other ethnic groups.¹⁰

The range of people employed in waste management expanded after a 1980 strike when large numbers of workers were dismissed and replaced by African migrant workers from other ethnic groups as well as locally based Africans. The formal demise of influx control in 1986 further facilitated a shift towards employing locally based workers (interviews, P. Mashishi, 11 September 2003; J. Mawbey 3 May 2004). Given the racist construction of the apartheid labour market it was virtually unquestionable that Africans would be employed to fill these low-skilled, devalued, “dirty” jobs.

However, these shifts away from a clear association between place, ethnicity and work opened the way for the employment of African women already residing in Johannesburg in the previously all-male waste management sector. Since the 1980s feminist scholarship has shown how ideological constructions of the supposedly natural characteristics of “third world” and “racial-ethnic” women have dialectically shaped and been shaped by the kinds of jobs for which they are hired (Fernández-Kelly 1983; Mies 1986; Mohanty 1997; Nakano Glenn 1991; Salzinger 2003; Wright 2006). Similarly, African women’s entry into Johannesburg’s waste management sector was brokered on highly gendered and racialized terms linked to their presumed inherently greater dexterity in sweeping (interview, IMATU Selby Shopstewards, 29 January 2003). As a result of this association of sweeping with African women’s “natural talents” African women were hired exclusively to work in street cleaning. Even in 2003, 100% of women employed by TPCs and 93% of women employed by Pikitup worked in street cleaning. Only 1% of women Pikitup workers were employed in collection.

Jenson (1989) argues that jobs themselves, and the value attached to them, are gendered. The entry of African women into street cleaning resulted in a feminization of this section of the waste management sector. Although a significant number of African men continued to work in this section in both Pikitup and the TPCs, many (especially in Pikitup) were old or unwell and had been deemed incapable of doing the “manly” work of loading. The relatively recent association of street cleaning and femininity had become so entrenched and naturalized that many of the men street cleaning workers interviewed felt emasculated by doing this work. Concurring with his colleagues that even though he swept at work he would never sweep at home, one man reported that he did not tell his wife what he did so as not to compromise the status attached to having a

secure job (Focus Group, Norwood Men Pikitup workers, 3 December 2002).

Although the linking of particular notions of African femininity and street cleaning was hegemonic, it was not simply accepted and reproduced by all workers. As Eagleton (1991:115) observes, hegemony is relational and must be constantly produced. As such it is an “unstable equilibrium” constantly open to contestation (Hall 1980:52). While some of the literature on the mutually constituting nature of gender, race, ethnicity and work within paid employment misses this dialectic and focuses exclusively on management’s construction of workers (see for example Mies 1986; Mohanty 1997; Salzinger 2003), Wright (2006) emphasizes that women do not passively assume the identities produced for them by management and explores the implications for the politics of production and forms of managerial control. In the context of non-wage labour in a community forestry project, Nightingale (2006) explores how women actively contested new tasks allocated to them, although she observes that the manner in which they did so drew on and reinscribed exploitative caste and gender relations. What both authors highlight is the need to be attentive to the ways in which women receive, respond to and potentially contest the ways in which they are constructed and the roles which they are assigned within divisions of labour. In Johannesburg, while many women workers thought that collection work was too difficult and heavy for women, others disagreed:

No it’s not heavy. It’s right. I liked it, and I wanted to leave this job and work in loading, but they said no, it’s a men’s job. So just because it’s December [a time of high absenteeism] I would be working in a truck. They would not tell you that it’s a men’s job, they would tell you that they have labour shortage (Focus Group, Avalon Women Pikitup Workers, 12 December 2002).

At least some workers were therefore aware that management chose strategically when to invoke and when to ignore gender ideologies.

Although many women rejected their confinement to street cleaning, this did not necessarily lead to a transformation in the division of labour. The primary problem was management’s attachment to racialized and gendered constructions of their abilities and proper roles. However, as Kobayashi and Peake note, “[o]ne of the reasons that patriarchy is such a complex and durable form of social relationship is that it contains much that women have traditionally viewed as positive . . .” (1994:230). Women who rejected the racialized gender division of labour were hindered in transforming management’s attitude by lack of solidarity both from other women workers who acquiesced to and were even actively supportive of these constructions, and from their male counterparts who overwhelmingly expressed deeply conservative notions regarding gender. In focus groups men workers repeatedly

invoked arguments regarding women's supposed physical weakness, African women's traditional responsibility for sweeping the kraal in rural areas, and even the assumed hazards associated with pregnancy to argue that African women were incapable of doing the "man's work" of loading or driving trucks. For them it was self-evident that "there are jobs which one can see are for a male person, and can be dangerous to a female . . ." and that "[i]f a woman is a general worker she should clean, pick up papers and not load" (Focus Group, Zondi Central Camp Pikitup Men Workers, 28 November 2003). Neither of the main unions in the sector (both of which had heavily male-dominated leadership) had prioritized challenging the gender division of labour.

Although the hegemonic construction of the proper roles for African women workers was unstable and far from all-encompassing, in the absence of concerted action to overturn the gender division of labour it was secured and re-produced for at least two decades. The confining of African women to street cleaning was not unique to Johannesburg.¹¹ While the social processes leading to this gender division of labour within each particular place must be understood as unique, the analytic of relational comparison suggests that these processes were inner-related and shaped by ideological constructions of gender, race and work that were held at scales broader than each municipality.

Gendered Production of Bargaining Councils

This particular racialized gendering of work played an important role in the forging of uneven coverage of workers by bargaining councils. In South Africa collective bargaining is arranged sectorally. Having been excluded from the municipal sector, coverage of workers employed by private waste management companies hinged on the level of organization and institutional representation in the private sectors where they were located. Since its inception, the South African trade union movement has been male-dominated and preoccupied with the interests of male workers in key sectors of the economy. Women workers, the issues that confront them and typically female jobs have been largely ignored and marginalized (COSATU National Gender Committee 1992; Orr 1999; Tshoedi and Hlela 2006). Revenue-generating collection work by private companies is covered by a bargaining council as it fits within the broader scope of an established, financially lucrative, predominantly male sector of the economy, in which both unions and employer organizations have long been organized. Street cleaning by private companies, on the other hand, is a relatively new phenomenon which does not fit neatly into any established sector. In terms of skills and activities it bears strongest relation to the contract cleaning sector and the domestic work sector. However, neither of these highly feminized sectors is covered by a bargaining council, and each has

been deemed sufficiently unorganized and unprotected to warrant a ministerial determination on minimum wages.¹² Gendered assumptions by unions regarding who constitutes a unionizable worker, and what constitutes a sector worth organizing have played an important role in creating the wage disparities that encourage Pikitup to contract private companies to deliver waste management services.

Spatially Differentiated Forms of Privatization

With street cleaners not employed by Pikitup excluded from all national bargaining council agreements, gender, race, class and space were re-articulated in interesting ways in the street cleaning initiatives by providers not contracted by Pikitup. As noted above, these included CIDs in formerly white business areas, volunteer campaigns in the townships, and the Zivuseni poverty alleviation project in Soweto. These initiatives all emerged in response to the deterioration in street cleaning services that started in the era of the municipality and was exacerbated by Pikitup's cost-cutting corporate strategy that focused on reducing expenditure on non-revenue generating street cleaning services. However, the specific form and nature of each was linked to the ways in which class, race, gender and space were co-produced and articulated within particular parts of the city.

In the business areas of historically white, bourgeois suburbs and the downtown area businesses felt that dirty streets and high crime levels were bad for business. In the mid-1990s they began forming and financing CIDs that cleaned the streets and provided private security guards in specified areas. Due to their preoccupation with crime the CIDs not only employed African male security guards, but also hired an almost exclusively African male street cleaning labour force, whom they dressed in military-style uniforms which were indistinguishable from those of the security guards, save for the colour. The workers were clear that this was to create the image of a stronger security presence by making "people think that we are security" (Focus Group, PPS Men Workers, 27 November 2002). They were instructed to assist with security work by reporting on criminal activity. Some had even helped to catch criminals. The workers argued that this was unfair as they were paid less than security guards, who were never required to sweep (Focus Group, RBMD Men Workers, 26 November 2002).

As noted above, Massey (1994) argues that particular constructions of gender can play a central role in the form and nature of industrial restructuring in particular places. Analysis of waste management privatization in Johannesburg reaffirms the intimate relationship between the production of space and the production of gender relations and further highlights the inseparability of race and gender. The desire to recreate the business areas as safe, crime-free spaces led the CIDs to

re-gender street cleaning work in bourgeois areas to capitalize on the association of masculinity and security. After several decades in which street cleaning had become associated with constructions of African femininity, in the business districts it was re-masculinized. Although as street cleaning workers these African men were not covered by any bargaining council agreements, they were employed by private companies and were protected by South Africa's labour laws.

By contrast, in working class townships strategies to augment service delivery deepened the association of African women with unpaid and poorly paid street cleaning work. The townships lacked concentrations of businesses like those in the CIDs capable of financing additional street cleaning services. Within the context of deep structural unemployment township residents had high levels of default on service payments and were unable to contribute financially to schemes to supplement service delivery. The Zivuseni project filled the gap by lowering labour costs and transferring financial responsibility to the Provincial government. The volunteer initiatives further reduced costs by getting residents to provide unpaid labour.

Zivuseni was established by the Gauteng provincial government in April 2002. It sought to alleviate poverty by providing short-term work opportunities for the poor and unemployed, promoting self-reliance, and building local capacity through skills development (Mthombeni 2003:1–3). One Zivuseni project employed local residents on three-month contracts to do street cleaning work in the African township of Soweto. Due to the high incidence of poverty in female-headed households Zivuseni had a target of 50% female employment (Mthombeni 2003:3). However, a relatively large number of men withdrew from the waste management project. Women workers attributed this to their unwillingness to do dirty, “female” work for low wages (Focus Group, Women on Zivuseni Project, 6 November 2002). As a result, 69% of the workers were female (Mthombeni 2003:3). Most of the men who remained were doing “more manly” loading work (Focus Group with Men on Zivuseni Project, 6 November 2002). In this instance, while management did not explicitly evoke ideologies associating African women and street cleaning, the ideologies of the workers themselves contributed to the production of a predominantly female labour force.

Zivuseni overcame the problem of limited community-based financial resources to finance service delivery by displacing financial responsibility to the provincial government. The project's viability was enhanced by its ability to limit workers' wages, expectations of long-term employment and ability to mobilize by rendering them “beneficiaries” ineligible for the full protection of labour law. Miraftab argues that discursively framing workers on waste management campaigns in Cape Town “as *campaign members*, rather than *employees* removed any pressure to assess the payments that ... workers

received ... by the criteria of fair labour compensation” (Miraftab 2004:889). The importance of this discursive work was also evident in Zivuseni. Project documentation referred to the workers as “beneficiaries” and in an interview the project manager was at pains to correct every instance when they were referred to as workers (interview, L. Musame, 23 July 2003).

However, it is critical to note that the discourse of this provincial project carried weight because it was embedded in national legislation that cast these workers outside of the full protection of the labour law. The Ministerial Determination for Special Public Works Programmes (Republic of South Africa 2002a) and Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for Special Public Works Programmes (Republic of South Africa 2002b) exempted workers on special public works programmes such as Zivuseni from key provisions of the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*: these workers are limited to a maximum of 24 months’ employment, do not qualify for unemployment insurance and are not eligible for retrenchment packages if their contracts are terminated for operational reasons. Although technically they are allowed to unionize, a senior Zivuseni manager noted that this would accomplish little as management would not be willing to negotiate wages for 3-month periods (interview, L. Musame, 23 July 2003). The truncated period of employment would also make it exceptionally difficult for workers to unionize.

The volunteers co-ordinated by ANC ward councillors in the townships had even less status and security than the Zivuseni “beneficiaries”. Many of these volunteers had worked 5 days a week for several years for no pay. As they were not technically employed they did not qualify for coverage by labour laws. Long-term volunteer initiatives comprised primarily or exclusively of women have been documented in a number of South African cities (Miraftab 2004; Samson 2003). Miraftab (2004) argues that in the case of Cape Town municipal officials invoked a discourse of “municipal housekeeping” to naturalize the exploitation of women’s free labour as part of volunteer campaigns. Discussions with volunteers from Orange Farm revealed that this type of discourse was successful in mobilizing women as it resonated with their desire to ensure the removal of illegal dumping sites that caused health hazards for their children. Rather than being simply interpolated into a discourse advanced by officials, women’s own sense of their gendered responsibilities led them to proactively choose to participate in the volunteer initiatives.

A number of men also volunteered in Johannesburg. More than racialized gendered discourses and ideologies were therefore at play in mobilizing volunteer labour. The councillors promoted volunteerism as a form of active citizenship and revolutionary commitment. This framing of volunteerism was officially endorsed by the ANC when it declared

2002 the “year of the volunteer” and launched the Letsema campaign. The National Executive of the party motivated support for Letsema by arguing that apartheid was defeated by legions of “volunteers” and called on South Africans to volunteer and “become their own liberators” by helping to eradicate poverty (ANC NEC 2002). Given enduring commitment to the ANC and the struggle for transformation, this discourse resonated with many volunteers and their participation was at least partially attributable to their commitment to these broader goals. These tactics to mobilize volunteer labour therefore affirmed Gillian Hart’s (2007) observation of the powerful ways in which the ANC has articulated specific formulations of nationalism and the national democratic revolution with neoliberal policies.

It should, however, be noted that like their counterparts in Sol Plaatje (Samson 2003) and Cape Town (Miraftab 2004), many volunteers were also motivated by the hope that they would curry favour with the councilor and be prioritized if and when paid work became available. Orange Farm volunteers reported that the councilor had promised that when the existing contract with the black entrepreneurs expired the workers would be fired and they would be given the jobs. A complex combination of material conditions and an array of ideologies therefore underpinned the unpaid participation of mixed-gender, but primarily women African community members in the volunteer campaigns.

An appreciation of this type of complexity is important when analyzing how these forms of privatization were produced and beginning to identify both potential points of slippage and contestation and the elements that undermine the realization of this potential. Through her concept of “double articulation” Massey (1994:8) highlights the mutual constitution of places and the subjects within them and the ways in which the production of particular subjects becomes definitive of particular places and vice versa. In the case of waste management privatization in Johannesburg, the successful implementation of the CIDs, Zivuseni and the volunteer initiatives were each predicated on the forging of an association between particular places and workers with different kinds of rights—African male, privately employed street-cleaning workers protected by labour laws and business districts as sparkling, safe, spaces for consumerism on the one hand; and African female beneficiaries and volunteers denied the legal status and protections of workers and townships as places of self-improvement and revolutionary commitment on the other. If these specific associations were erased and if the relationships between space and subject were re-coded, then it would be exceedingly difficult to justify the differing terms and conditions of employment associated with these various forms of privatization.

Many CID, Zivuseni and volunteer workers saw through these ideological constructions. A CID worker captured the feeling of many

saying, “I can say that I feel like I am working for the municipality even though I am not getting paid by the municipality. But the job is the same and I help them a lot” (Focus Group with RBMD Men Workers, 26 November 2002). As Zivuseni workers were based at the Pikitup depot they were acutely aware of the significantly higher wages paid to Pikitup workers. They argued that Pikitup should hire them directly as they were doing Pikitup’s work (Focus Group with Men on Zivuseni Project, 6 November 2002; Focus Group with Women on Zivuseni Project, 6 November 2002). Volunteers in Orange Farm demonstrated that they identified themselves as workers by showing up in full force at a workshop that was aimed at workers employed by the Billy Hattingh/Tedcor subcontract and participating for a period of time in joint mobilizing with these, the very workers whose jobs they had been promised.

However, this awareness sat alongside recognition that few if any other employment opportunities existed. Zivuseni workers who were interviewed in the last week of their employment were thankful for their income and were distraught at the prospect of losing it. When asked what they would do when the project ended, one male Zivuseni worker responded by saying, “That question is very [hurting]. It’s hurting. Because [we are going to do] nothing. No income, no what. It’s back to starvation. Simple as ABC” (Focus Group with Men on Zivuseni Project, 6 November 2002). Harsh material conditions of structural unemployment bolstered appreciation for income received (or hoped for in the case of the volunteers) to ensure the reproduction of these distinct forms of privatization within different places in the city.

Articulating Forms of Privatization

Other than Zivuseni and some of the CIDs, the other forms of privatized service provision all predated Pikitup. This fact is important for several reasons. The first relates to union strategy and tactics. Although there was strong union opposition to *iGoli 2002*, substantial privatization had already occurred in the waste management sector. Discussions with union representatives revealed that they had been largely unaware of this and none of the union demands related to *iGoli 2002* included a reversal of pre-existing forms of privatization. Failure to engage with pre-existing forms of privatization limited the union’s ability to root its opposition in lived experiences of privatization and to develop nuanced tactics informed by an understanding of how the specific forms of privatization were produced.

The second reason is that rather than the privatization of waste management being developed in relation only to *iGoli 2002* these pre-existing forms of privatization were articulated into Pikitup’s corporate strategy. This was done at the levels of both formal policy and informal

practice. Pikitup management knew that by subcontracting service provision it was able to significantly lower wages and the costs of service provision. As a result, the three year business plan adopted in 2003 committed Pikitup to conducting “cost/benefit analysis” of in-house versus subcontracted provision and to contracting TPCs (Pikitup 2003:14) in pursuit of cost reduction (Contract Management Unit 2003:5.12). The business plan prioritized granting contracts to black companies to promote black empowerment and “ensure that Pikitup maintains a positive Corporate Image whilst focusing on its core competencies” (Pikitup 2003:19), core competencies which evidently did not include providing services to impoverished black residential areas with high levels of non-payment for services.

Pikitup’s business plans made no mention of CIDs, Zivuseni or volunteers. However, management was aware of these initiatives and capitalized on them to decrease expenditure on non-revenue generating street-cleaning services. For example, once a CID was established Pikitup could virtually halt provision of street cleaning services in that area (interview, M. Letsela, 15 October 2002). With Zivuseni this link was more formalized. Pikitup had recommended Soweto as the project site and Zondi depot supervised the workers. Although the volunteer initiatives had started independently Pikitup developed the concept of “Eco-munities” to formalize these activities and harness benefits for the company. The long-term goal was to establish eco-munities tasked with cleaning the environment in each ward (Venter 2002:14), which Pikitup would assist to form non-profit companies so they could raise funds to finance their activities (interview, L. Venter, 11 February 2003).

Far from being a fixed policy implemented top-down, waste management privatization under *iGoli 2002* was therefore a dynamic process forged out of the incorporation of pre-existing forms of privatization into Pikitup’s de facto corporate strategy. Rather than being independent phenomena that were cobbled together by Pikitup, these forms of privatization were produced in relation to one another. The CIDs, Zivuseni and volunteer campaigns were all responses to the same poor quality of service provision by the Council and then Pikitup. Moreover, their specific forms were rooted in the same gendered, racialized, class relations. For example, due to apartheid era spatialization of social relations of capital accumulation, townships lacked the economic base to finance private service delivery and were forced to rely on poverty alleviation projects and volunteer campaigns for precisely the same reasons that bourgeois areas possessed such resources and were able to pay for CIDs. Affirming the “extroverted” nature of place (Massey 1994:7), it is therefore clear that the forms taken by privatization in different parts of the city were informed by social relations and processes which extended beyond those particular places

and which bound them intimately to one another into an inner-connected complex whole.

Conclusion

Waste management is an essential part of modern urban life. Yet, repulsed by the stench and messiness of waste we tend to render it abject, external and alien to ourselves (Kristeva 1982). For the most part we place our bins outside the door or dispose of our waste where we can, deride those who collect it, and attempt to quickly erase it from our mind's eye. Retrieving waste management from the realm of the invisible, this article brought the spatially differentiated forms of privatization in Johannesburg into view, and treated this complex reality as a phenomenon to be explained. It revealed that the differential forms assumed by privatization in different areas of the city can only be understood by exploring the ways in which racialized gender divisions of labour were forged over time and crystallized within bargaining council agreements and how within this socially constituted context race, gender, class, space and privatization produced one another in different parts of Johannesburg. As such it moves beyond analyses that posit that privatization results in either a straightforward perpetuation of apartheid social relations or a shift from race to class apartheid (Bond 2004). It also foregrounds the centrality of gender to the social relations underpinning privatization, something which is still all too often ignored in both the geographic literature on privatization and neoliberalism, as well as the South African "race-class" debate (Charman, Swardt and Simon 1991; Manicom 1992). In addition, the method of analysis employed in this article exposes the limitations of ideal-type feminist political economy approaches that see neoliberalism and privatization as pre-formed policies implemented uniformly across passive space and that pay insufficient attention to the contested processes through which they are developed, implemented and challenged.

An approach rooted in an understanding of how the privatization envisioned in the *iGoli 2002* plan was actually produced makes visible new challenges and opportunities for struggles against privatization. Building on work that focuses on how workers both confront and are complicit in the production of racialized gender inequities (Nightingale 2006; Wright 2006), this article has highlighted that women workers seeking to overturn the status quo must struggle to win solidarity from their comrades and their unions. Informed by Albo's (2005) argument that historical materialist analysis must take a dialectical approach to understanding how social relations and institutions produce one another, it has further emphasized that as inequalities between workers have become crystallized in bargaining council agreements and labour legislation this struggle includes far more than simply challenging

the beliefs and ideas of management, as it requires institutional transformation as well. While this adds greater complexity and potential barriers to transformation, it also opens up a new terrain of struggle that could force change on recalcitrant employers. If the municipal unions began to engage the Road Freight Bargaining Council on behalf of privatized collection workers and to fight for collective agreements for privatized street-cleaning workers they could increase their wages and benefits and undercut the advantages of privatization. Similarly, acknowledgement of the role played by Zivuseni and ward councilors in creating the particular forms of privatization in different parts of Johannesburg reveals important targets for union engagement above and below the level of the municipality that have not featured in union anti-privatization strategies that located sole agency within the Johannesburg Council. An understanding of how privatization is produced in different areas further emphasizes the need for the union to move away from uniform campaign strategies and develop approaches that identify and address the key points of slippage and contradiction within each particular spatialized form of privatization.

Perhaps most significantly, acknowledgement that privatization is rooted in material and ideological re-articulations of race, gender and class foregrounds the need for unions to develop organizing strategies that move away from a presumption of male workers with common interests (McDowell 2008:23–24). Focusing on how privatization is predicated on the acceptance of/acquiescence to new exploitative roles and self-definitions by African, working class women in the townships could encourage the union to value and support forms of contestation and struggle that they have not seen as linked to privatization. Sustained attention to the specific needs and interests of different types of African men and women workers could help the union to recruit more members and to demand and win changes that would improve their specific conditions. Furthermore, as Loftus (2007) argues, although there is nothing necessarily privileged about women's standpoints, the situated knowledges developed by African women workers through their sensuous activity within gendered divisions of labour has the potential to open up new political possibilities in struggles against privatization.

Finally, by focusing on both material and ideological moments the argument presented stresses that while workers may reject the codings of space and social relations that together with labour laws and bargaining council agreements render them "nonworkers" and strip them of the rights afforded to others doing the same work in other parts of the city, material realities of high unemployment and the desperate need for work may mitigate against mobilization. Seeing through ideological constructions is only one element required to motivate workers to struggle against privatization.

The key challenges therefore still lie ahead. This article provides some initial insights into the importance of conceptualizing privatization as produced in and through spatialized social relations, and identifies some potential points of slippage and contestation which could be used to bolster anti-privatization struggles. However, much more work remains to be done to develop a fully processual understanding of waste privatization in Johannesburg which can inform political practice. One clear limitation of this article and the research on which it was based is the exclusive focus on workers and unions. Greater understanding is required of the role of community members, social movements, owners of private companies, elected representatives and state officials.

With respect to workers, the preceding analysis identifies broad areas that require greater probing in order to understand how re-articulations of race, gender, class and space are contested and produced and to identify the most strategic forms of political mobilization and intervention. Deeper ethnographic work can contribute to such a project. However, research necessarily generates partial and limited understandings of points of slippage and contestation, and it is only through political organization and mobilization that these can be truly identified and exploited. As noted above, the research on which this article is based was conducted for SAMWU and the Municipal Services Project as part of a project that sought to build capacity within the union to conduct feminist analysis of privatization and to integrate attention to the gendered and racialized nature of privatization into the union's anti-privatization campaigns. As a second phase of the project, in 2008 the union embarked on a pilot initiative to develop its ability to organize, service and represent women workers in municipalities and privatized companies. Outside of Johannesburg these include colored and Indian as well as African women, adding complexity to the articulations of race, class, gender and space. The pilot focuses on creating a space for the women workers and the union to develop a nuanced understanding of how different women workers experience privatization and how they are currently responding to and engaging with it. Particular attention is being paid to the ways in which women are already organizing and supporting one another. Such an approach is new for the union and many challenges and obstacles will need to be overcome if it is to be successfully implemented. It does, however, have the potential to result in more innovative and effective forms of organizing, the formulation of new and different demands on employers, the state and bargaining councils and more successful strategies to pre-empt and reverse privatization. As a key starting point, the processes of identifying insights from the pilot and integrating them into union organizing strategies can hopefully play an important part in transforming the male-biased nature of the union itself (Beall 2005; Hassim 2005; Orr 1999; Pointer 2004; Tshoedi and

Hlela 2006), something which will be central to advancing the struggle against privatization.

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Endnotes

¹ Mansfield's (2007b) article on the Western Alaska Community Development Quota programme observes that the quota is intended to redress the prior dispossession of indigenous people. Although acknowledging the relationship between race, colonialism, dispossession and the market-oriented, privatizing redistributive programme she neither explores nor theorizes how the original dispossession and current granting of quotas construct and transform the meaning of race. She also does not analyze whether the quotas benefited indigenous men and women differently thereby transforming gender relations and creating gendered points of tension in support for the programme. Aside from this limited contribution, in the rest of the collection race and gender are not seen as pertinent to either the formation of class relations or the contested (re)production of privatization.

² For further information on the project, see <http://www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/Gender/index.htm> (last accessed 17 November 2008).

³ Barchiesi (2007) cites divisions between the SAMWU national and provincial offices regarding the approach to be taken to *iGoli 2002* as one of the reasons for the failure of the union's campaign. He attributes this difference to the more "pragmatic" approach adopted by the province. What he does not discuss, however, is how this pragmatism was bound up in the differing attitudes of the national and provincial offices towards the alliance with the ANC and cooperation with newly emerging social movements. The well known saga of the Johannesburg branch's relationship with the Johannesburg Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) aptly demonstrates this point. At its 2000 national congress SAMWU passed a special resolution on *iGoli 2002* calling for collaboration with other organizations opposing *iGoli 2002*. At the November 2000 Central Executive Committee meeting another resolution specifically required SAMWU structures to participate in the APF on a principled and strategic basis. Initially the Johannesburg branch played a critical role in forming the APF. However, the local SAMWU office bearers were more closely wedded to the alliance than their national counterparts. Perceiving the APF to be "ultraleft" and "anti-alliance" they pulled out of the forum, in contravention of the CEC resolution.

⁴ Pikitup also competes with private companies to provide lucrative commercial services such as medical, hazardous and bulk disposal.

⁵ Although racial segregation is not legally enforced in post-apartheid South Africa, due to the deeply racialized nature of class formation residential segregation persists. Only a privileged minority of Africans, Indians and coloureds have moved into the still predominantly white, wealthy areas, and the townships retain virtually the same demographic profile as during apartheid. The terms African, Indian, coloured and white were used to classify racial groups during apartheid and are employed in post-apartheid legislation and policies which seek to redress apartheid inequalities.

⁶ As a private company Pikitup was not technically bound by the SALGBC agreements. However, during the *iGoli 2002* negotiations the municipality agreed that it would abide by them.

⁷ Focus groups revealed that many employers were violating the RFBC agreements and labour laws and workers were being underpaid and denied benefits, thus creating an even greater differential with Pikitup employees.

⁸ During the time that the research was being conducted, Phambili-Wasteman, a black owned company which had merged with a multinational, was pursuing large-scale contracts in other parts of the municipality and the country.

⁹ Survey results found that while 97% of Pikitup employees were unionized, only 8% of TPC employees were union members.

¹⁰ Beall (1997) notes a similar mutually reinforcing devaluation of ethnicity and waste management work in South Asia.

¹¹ A preliminary research trip to eight municipalities, in-depth research in three others, and a national SAMWU workshop with women workers from every province confirmed that the confinement of women workers to street cleaning was the norm throughout South Africa.

¹² Although the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union had recently made inroads in organizing contract cleaning workers, the union had not prioritized organizing street cleaning workers and was hesitant to do so as it felt this encroached on SAMWU's turf and conflicted with the COSATU federation's position on poaching (interview, A. Ramakgolo, 11 September 2003).

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