



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Sociological Analysis of State Capacity in the South African Social Security Agency's Special CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant

by

Motsoakgomo Papi Nkoli

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Social Science

in the

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Professor Zitha Mokomane

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, **Motsoakgomo Papi Nkoli**, declare that this dissertation is my original work. This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria.

Signature: **Motsoakgomo Papi Nkoli**

Date: **23 April 2023**

DEDICATION

In loving memory of two of my brothers: Julian Robinson and Neo Thibile.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe the entirety of my experiences to the Consciousness in which the infinite dimensions of reality and unreality are contained. Nakapeli Mafube. Joale ke se ke le Seli. Ke Bofefo. Senakangoeli Nketelepele leetong la Leseli.

Ke leboha Bataung ba Nkoli ba Mokhauli le Bataung ba Maloisane.

My deepest gratitude goes to the study's anonymous key informants. Your contribution is invaluable.

My gratitude goes to Professor Zitha Mokomane for her untiring support, encouragement, guidance, kindness and nudges.

To Malerato, Moetelatsatsi, Nkoli and Kganya: Thank you for affording me the time and space to nourish an idea in my absent presence. Motho ke lekhoba la seo a se ratang!

This study was made possible on account of the funding of the Department of Social Development.

ABSTRACT

South Africa's national response to the advent of the CoVID-19 pandemic included government's announcement of the "extraordinary coronavirus budget" of R500 billion that was aimed at cushioning society and the economy from the socio-economic hardships that accompanied the pandemic. Part of this national response included the implementation of the CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) for beneficiaries who were unemployed and did not receive any other form of income.

Given SASSA's previous administration of the SRD programme for citizens or permanent residents who have insufficient means of livelihood, the responsibility to implement this grant rested with this agency. However, what remains unknown is how, in the context of intense, condensed and temporal shocks such as CoVID-19, the State decisively mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. In order to establish this, the research delved into the "opacity of the State social world" to demonstrate how the productive processes that arise from concrete and ongoing systems of social relations contested and influenced the meanings, configurations, choices and performance of State capacity under conditions of a covariate shock. An understanding of the social construction of State capacity is relevant to the *National Development Plan's* aspiration of developing and implementing critical interventions that are required to build a State that is capable of realising the vision for 2030.

Theoretically, the study is important for understanding how State institution-based social processes shape a State's capacity to implement policy decisions. The study is an invitation to theorise the State during shocks. It draws on Granovetter's (1985) concept of embeddedness and Migdal's (2004) State-in-society framework.

Methodologically, the question of how the State capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was approached as a case for the period May 2020 to April 2021. Within case study, process tracing and abductive inference were applied alongside the insider researcher approach. Process tracing was applied to trace institutional processes through which the State's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was developed. Data were collected with two qualitative research methods: document review and key informant interviews. The former entailed a systematic review of key informant-provided documents with the view to interpret and elicit their meanings and understandings of the study phenomena. On the other hand, key informant interviews were conducted with six officials that were assigned the role of key informant by their respective institutions owing to their in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research subject matter. Consequently, empirical knowledge on how the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised was

developed. The collected data were analysed by applying abductive inference. The objective of applying abductive inference was to identify data that were beyond the study's conceptual framework. This enabled the development and emergence of theoretically surprising explanations from within the CoVID-19 SRD grant as a case.

The study's key findings are that, firstly, the advent of CoVID-19 found a SASSA that was in the process of self-reconfiguration with the view to improve its institutional capabilities and effectiveness. Owing to this institutional confidence, SASSA withstood and rejected all the suggestions that the private sector should perform what this agency considered to be its core functions: the implementation of a cash transfer programme. Second, SASSA's resistance of corporate creep in the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant disrupted the interests of those State actors who sought to increase the role of the private sector in this grant. Ultimately, this activated the formation of typical as well as unlikely institutional relations and coalitions in support of SASSA's overall leadership of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Third, the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant would not have decisively been mobilised outside of the intense, condensed and temporal shock that is the advent of CoVID-19. Fourth, it is doubtful if the State verifiably knows its capacity to implement its responses to covariate shocks. This was evident in the absence of knowing SASSA's implementation capacity. Therefore, the extent to which practical efforts are being taken to measure, innovate and translate Cabinet's priority that a State that has the necessary capacity, capabilities and institutions that can meet the needs of South Africans should be developed comes to question.

Based on the study's findings the following three recommendations are made: Firstly, policy needs to be mobilised to define and regulate the State-wide data environment for it to be useful in the eventuality of covariate shocks. Secondly, noting that into the foreseeable future every South African will experience one form of covariate shock or other practitioners in, for instance, disaster management and social protection need to innovate responses to covariate shocks. Lastly, further research can be conducted on diverse factors that relate to the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant over the four iterations of its implementation: 2020—2024. Similar prospects are available for quantitative analyses of the extensive data that the CoVID-19 SRD grant collected on millions of applicants. Another prospective research area is conducting research on the State during times of shock. Lastly, this research opened opportunities for methodologists to conduct research on the experiences of State-based insider researchers as well as the factors that enable and constrain them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY	2
DEDICATION	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	4
ABSTRACT	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	9
1.1 Background to the study	9
1.2 Context and statement of the problem	10
1.3 Research Question	13
1.4 Specific Objectives	13
1.5 Rationale of the Study	13
1.6 Conceptual Framework	14
1.7 Structure of the dissertation	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
2.1 Introduction	18
2.1 State	18
2.3 Critique of the Weberian State	19
2.4 State Capacity	23
2.5 Covariate Shocks	28
2.6 Cash Transfers	29
2.7 Conclusion: State capacity through embeddedness and State-in-society ...	31
Chapter 3: Methodology	34
3.1 Introduction	34
3.2 Research design	34
3.3 Methods of data collection	35
3.4 Data analysis	46
3.5 Data Triangulation	46
3.6 Ethical Considerations	47
3.7 Reflections on positionality	48
3.8 Conclusion	54
Chapter 4: SASSA's Capacity through Socio-historical factors and Key Systems	55
4.1 Introduction	55
4.2 Socio-historical factors	55

4.3	Key systems of social relations that contributed to State capacity	64
4.4	Conclusion	67
Chapter 5: Analysis of concrete and ongoing systems of social relations		68
5.1	Introduction	68
5.2	Nature of State-level systems of social relations	68
5.3	Conclusion	76
Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations		78
6.1	Introduction	78
6.2	Summary of findings	79
6.3	Overall conclusion	80
6.4	Contribution of the study	81
6.5	Recommendations	82
References		84
APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE		85
APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE		85
APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT LETTER		85

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The coronavirus disease 2019, or CoVID-19 as it came to be widely known, was declared a pandemic on 11 February 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). In South Africa, the cumulative number of 622 551 people were confirmed to have contracted the virus between 5 March and 30 August 2020, and another 13 961 were reported to have died from it in the same period (Naudé and Cameron, 2020: 1). On the 31st December 2020 South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) reported that the cumulative total number of CoVID-19 cases had reached 1 057 161 (National Institute for Communicable Diseases, 2020). Four months later, on 30 April 2021 this number had grown to 1 581 210 (National Institute for Communicable Diseases, 2021).

In an attempt to reduce the rapid spread of the virus and rising deaths from it, the first CoVID-19 lockdown was declared on 15 March 2020 (CoGTA, 2020a). The lockdown entailed: the severe restriction of human movement; prohibition of non-essential gatherings, including the closure of economic, educational and most government institutions and activities; enforcement of clinical testing, isolation and quarantine; closure of the facilities of the Department of Social Development; and the limited sale of liquor products (CoGTA, 2020b). Among the widely documented and felt socio-economic impact of these measures was the population's loss of the ability to earn livelihood owing to the restriction of economic activities (for instance, see Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 1 and Bhorat et al., 2020: 1).

Nearly seven weeks following the announcement of the country's first CoVID-19 case on 5 March 2020, and 26 days after the first national lockdown was instituted (that is, on 21 April 2020), President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the "extraordinary coronavirus budget" of R500 billion. In the short-term, this budget was aimed at cushioning society and the economy from the socio-economic hardships that accompanied the CoVID-19 pandemic. This budget was directed towards, *inter alia*, the provision of medical testing supplies and food as well as addressing different dimensions of the loss of economic productivity (The Presidency, 2020a). Taking cognisance of the many people who lost the ability to earn an income owing to the CoVID-19-related lockdowns that have been characterised as "stringent" (Naudé and Cameron, 2020:2), being among "the earliest and strictest" (Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 1) and "extremely stringent" (Bhorat et al., 2020: 1), the CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (CoVID-19 SRD grant) of R350 per month was introduced as part of this extraordinary R500 billion budget. Originally, the grant applied from May to October 2020, but it was extended twice: in November 2020 and in February 2021, until the end of April 2021.

While on 25 July 2021 President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the extension of the CoVID-19 SRD grant until the end of March 2022, at the time of writing this dissertation, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was entering its third iteration of implementation as was announced by the Minister of Finance in the *2022 Budget Speech* (National Treasury, 2022a: 11). When delivering the

2022 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement Speech, the Minister announced that the medium-term “changes spending plans are driven mainly by government’s decision to extend the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant by one year, until 31 March 2024” (National Treasury, 2022b: 11). In other words, while cautioning that the permanence of this grant as a feature of the social assistance framework is dependent on the reconfiguration of State revenues and spending, the Minister announced that the CoVID-19 SRD grant will be running its fourth iteration of implementation from April 2023 until March 2024. Noting the length of the life of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, this study focuses on this grant’s implementation iteration during the May 2020 — April 2021 period.

On this backdrop, this research analyses the extent to which the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) mobilised the capacity to implement the “special CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant of R350 a month” for beneficiaries “who are currently unemployed and do not receive any other form of social grant or UIF payment” (The Presidency, 2020b). SASSA is a statutory agency that was established in 2005 to administer and distribute the country’s eight core social grants¹ on behalf of the government of South Africa, and specifically the Department of Social Development. While only introduced in 2020 with the advent of CoVID-19, the CoVID-19 SRD grant is among these core social grants. Whereas the Department of Social Development performs an oversight role over SASSA, it has no control over this agency’s operational functions.

The grant represents SASSA’s programme through which government made available temporary assistance to South African citizens or permanent residents who are in dire material circumstances to the extent that they are unable to meet their or their families’ most basic needs during the CoVID-19 national lockdown. The grant beneficiaries were paid monthly for as long as government made the grant available for public benefit.

1.2 Context and statement of the problem

Predating the introduction of the CoVID-19 SRD grant is a South Africa whose social configuration and people’s prospects and hardships are directly traceable to the country’s colonial origins (for instance, see Bundy, 2000 Magubane, 1996). This is the past that intentionally dispossessed the majority of South Africans (Piotrowski, 2019) and upon which apartheid was institutionalised (also see Haasbroek, 1971 and Magubane, 1996). It is in this colonial-apartheid past wherein the black population was constrained to limited spaces and their lives subjected to constant surveillance, restrictions, impoverishment, overt violence, social trauma, and perpetual dysfunctionality (Bundy, 2000). The brutality and racism of the British settlers upon which the South African society was founded “reflected the social milieu from which they came” (Magubane, 1996: 48) in as much as the State that emerged from it “was sustained and given legitimacy by the British parliament, whose leaders accepted the

¹ The seven other grants that are administered and paid by SASSA include: the older person's grant (old age pension); the child support grant; the care dependency grant; the grant in aid (if one lives on a social grant and needs someone to take care of them); the war veteran's grant; the foster child grant; and the disability grant.

'inferiority' of so-called subject races" (Magubane, 1996: 329). The path dependency that has influenced how this society socialises itself and responds to meaningful circumstances is likely to reinforce how present-day South African society responds to the eventuality of social, economic, health, and other exogenous shocks and disasters.

Observers such as Ncwane (2020) have expressed the view that the advent of the CoVID-19 pandemic serves as the opportunity for South Africa's post-apartheid government to undo the legacy of colonialism-apartheid spatial planning as well as to extend social security measures to the growing number of unemployed South Africans during this period (Ncwane, 2020: 24). To this end, it can be argued that the advent of CoVID-19 has rekindled earlier questions of how the South African government should, while targeting the attainment of the rights to social protection, realise the citizens' "minimum livelihood with dignity" (Norton et al., 2002: 542). With the understanding that social protection is a social policy tool that consists of "... public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk, and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society" (Norton et al., 2002: 543), the CoVID-19 SRD grant is government's cash transfer programme that, as mentioned earlier, was designed and implemented to benefit those *who are currently unemployed and do not receive any other form of social grant or Unemployment Insurance Fund payment.*

During the national lockdown period Schotte and Zizzamia (2021) undertook a qualitative study from which they reported that, compared with other countries, in South Africa CoVID-19 was "experienced... as a sudden and dramatic shock to labour markets" (Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 1). They found that the CoVID-19 lockdown measures that government introduced were causing serious labour market disruptions "with already disadvantaged workers bearing the heaviest burden" (Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 1). Moreover, the CoVID-19 shock resulted in generalised psychological distress and the weakening of households' underlying resilience against future potential shocks and loss of

... access to both formal and informal mechanisms of social insurance in the crisis. Several respondents reported defaulting on funeral policies, drawing down on savings, witnessing rotating savings and credit associations disintegrate, and losing access to remittance income (Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 2).

Whereas the estimates from the National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) survey showed that the CoVID-19 SRD grant reached 4.3 million people in July 2020, it was also reported that during the period between May 2020 and April 2021, this grant was accessed by more than 6.5 million beneficiaries each month (*Sunday Times*, 2021). These figures translate to 12% of South Africa's adult population, 11.5% of the labour force, and nearly a quarter (24%) of the employment-seeking population (Bhorat and Köhler, 2020). As of December 2020, 5.2 million eligible people had been paid the CoVID-19 SRD grant, and in March 2021 — a month before this iteration of the grant ended — SASSA had been continuing to pay just over 18 million grants (excluding the CoVID-19 SRD grant) in pre-existing grant types (SASSA, 2021: 5). It is particularly because of this that, in their policy

assessment of the South African social assistance amidst the CoVID-19, that Borhat et al. (2021), concluded, in part that:

...the addition of the COVID-19 grant has the potential to bring a large group of otherwise uncovered households into the system, assuming eligibility is broadly interpreted. Thus, the Grants plus (broad) policy delivers large increases in coverage rates in the middle of the distribution, as well as large increases in resource allocations to deciles 6 through 10. Moreover, the COVID-19 grant is able to reach additional households who would not be reached through the existing grant system... (Bhorat et al., 2021: 79).

Despite the apparent achievements of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the programme design and implementation options that the different State actors considered leading to, and during, the implementation of this grant largely remain unknown to the public. The extent to which institution level social relations, interactions and the broader implementation environment facilitated the realisation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant incarnate warrant a sociological investigation. Such an investigation will help demonstrate how the State capacity to implement this grant was mobilised in response to the adverse socio-economic impact that is described above. Comparatively, where Khambule (2021) analyses a series of administrative and research outputs to establish “how responses are structured” (Khambule, 2021: 393), this paper approaches *how the COVID-19 SRD grant was structured* by process tracing and abductively analysing state-internal social processes and relations through which this grant was conceptualised, resourced and implemented. With regard to social protection, specifically cash transfers, State capacity has been described as the ability to:

... identify and select, or process applications from, prospective beneficiaries (through either the exercise of discretion or the application of bureaucratic regulations); to make regular payments to approved beneficiaries; to raise the necessary funding; and to contain ‘leakages’ through fraud, corruption or appropriation... (Seekings, 2015: 4).

In the context of this research, State capacity is about the ability of State institutions to:

- secure fiscus funding for the CoVID-19 SRD grant;
- ensure that these funds are not misappropriated and misused by utilising mechanisms that effectively target the intended beneficiaries;
- design and institutionalise beneficiary-targeting systems that generate benefits for intended populations;
- harness the power of the data infrastructure that is at the disposal of the State for implementation improvement; and
- reliably make grant payments to qualifying beneficiaries when that payment is due.

The sociological study of the State’s capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant will achieve two outcomes: First, it will draw appreciation to the prospects and limitations of

theorising the ideal-type State where exogenous shocks are concerned; and, secondly, it will demonstrate how the State and society continuously shape one another in intra-State processes. An exogenous shock such as CoVID-19 provides the opportunity through which the State-society interface may be assessed by means of delving into the institutional processes that designed and brought about the implementation capacity of this cash transfer programme. Against the above backdrop, and as a pathway to understanding how different State actors contributed towards the configuration and performance of the capacity to implement this emergency social assistance programme, this study will trace the social interactions and processes that resulted in the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant; and also abductively analyse the narratives of these State actors (In this respect, Chapter 3 on methodology provides the necessary details).

1.3 Research Question

The study's main **research question** is: *To what extent has SASSA mobilised its capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant?*

1.4 Specific Objectives

- 1.4.1 To explore the socio-historical factors that influenced SASSA's capacity to respond to the call for the CoVID-19 SRD grant to be implemented.
- 1.4.2 To profile the key systems of social relations that influenced SASSA's ability to mobilise the requisite capacity to implement the CoVID-19 grant.
- 1.4.3 To uncover, analyse and demonstrate how the concrete and ongoing systems of social relations in which the different State actors are embedded influenced their conceptualisation and implementation approaches to the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

When critically considering the extent to which South Africa's social sciences have studied the "State capacity" phenomenon, Brunette (2014) observed that this branch of knowledge creation has largely neglect State capacity as a candidate for inquiry. In part, the neglect of State capacity as a "social fact" (Durkheim, 1982: 59) was possible under apartheid because that facilitated for attention to be deflected away from what the State was doing at that time (Brunette, 2014: 22). Nonetheless, in his research, and reliant on Picard's (2005) central thesis, Brunette (2014) demonstrates how the phenomenon of State capacity has been significant to the character of colonial South Africa society. Consequently, Brunette (2014) states that owing to colonial-era State capacity, present-day State institutions inherited "the behaviour of public servants [that] is delinked from formal institutions" (Brunette: 2014: 36).

By exploring the exchanges between those working in State institutions and the practices, values, norms, motives, interests, social relations, etc. upon which their institutions are operating, this study considers whether there are critical processes and interventions that undergirded SASSA's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant during the period May 2020 — April 2021. For the country, this is relevant to the *National Development Plan's* (NDP)

aspiration of developing and implementing critical interventions that are required to build a “state capable of realising the vision for 2030” (National Planning Commission, 2012: 408). The study is important for understanding how State institution-based social processes shape the State’s capacity to implement policy decisions.

The research also seeks to demonstrate the influences and significance of within-State processes over the contested meanings, configurations, choices and performance of the State capacity. Ultimately, studying the State-internal processes and structures through which the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised is an attempt at delving into the “opacity of the State social world” (Vanden Broeck and Mangez, 2020: 12). In the process, the productive processes that constitute and shape this social world under the conditions of CoVID-19 will be revealed. While the CoVID-19 SRD grant is one of the State’s socio-economic responses to the advent of this exogenous shock, by virtue of locating the case study in the State, this research links the relevant economic decisions to the web of State-internal interrelations, expectations, power struggles and shifting coalitions that involved economic actors as well as non-market institutions alike (Zukin and DiMaggio’s, 1990: 20).

On the backdrop that the processes, relationships and structures that are relevant to the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant are largely part of the State’s “social opaqueness” (Vanden Broeck and Mangez, 2020: 12), the dynamics that define these processes, relationships and structures are hitherto not common knowledge because, “the state itself is the source of the state’s ability to defy our efforts to unmask it” (Abrams, 1988: 63), “some matters are not to be discussed” (Vanden Broeck and Mangez, 2020: 14) as much as the “sociological ambivalence” (Merton and Barber, 1976: 6) of State bureaucrats.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

To achieve its objectives, this study draws on Granovetter’s (1985) concept of embeddedness together with Migdal’s (2004) State-in-society approach. The former emphasises that the analysis of behaviour and institutions is primarily determined by ongoing social relations outside of which these cannot be properly understood. Furthermore, embeddedness emphasizes the role of actual interpersonal connections and the institutions that support them, while also acknowledging the historical and structural roots of these relationships in the development of trust within ongoing institutional social relationships. Granovetter’s (1985) usage of embeddedness in economic sociology was a response to those who view “the economy as an increasingly separate, differentiated sphere in modern society” (Granovetter, 1985: 482). “His concept of embeddedness attempted to steer an intermediate course between what he referred to as ‘under-’ and ‘oversocialized’ views of social action” (Krippner, 2004: 110). Whereas the outcomes of under-socialisation are understood to be flowing “from the aggregation of actions made by isolated rational decision-makers” (Krippner, 2004: 110), views that social actors are over-socialised are as mechanical as much as they assume these actors to be submissive to consensually-developed systems of a common socialisation.

Therefore, to the extent that both the *under-* and *oversocialisation* conceptions of the actor atomise social actions from the social context within which they are being carried out, both these conceptions can be traced to Durkheim's (1914) last work, "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions", in which the separation of the actor from their social action is rationalised. To this end,

Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations (Granovetter, 1985: 487).

The embeddedness approach is useful for this study for purposes of tracing and analysing "concrete patterns of social relations" (Granovetter, 1985: 493) within and between the institutional processes wherein they are being performed. Consequently, as a conceptual framework, embeddedness helps the study to uncover, analyse and demonstrate the extent to which different State actors embedded their conceptualisations and implementation capacity of the CoVID-19 SRD grant "... in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations" (Granovetter, 1985: 487). Than proposing some universal principle, the application of embeddedness in this study allows for the empirical emergence of the social structures and processes wherefrom and between the different State institutions that contributed the capacity towards SASSA's implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. These concrete, ongoing systems of social relations include constant, formal and informal relations, processes and alignments between the interests and motives of various actors who are relevant to the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Therefore, the CoVID-19 SRD grant can be approached as a social structure and process within which competing actions and interests are facilitated and organised (Nee, 2005: 55). Thus, understanding the social relations between different State institutions is important to understanding how the State brings order to the governance of social life.

To introduce Migdal's (2004) State-in-society approach, it is important to first note Zukin and DiMaggio's (1990) observations on political embeddedness as the manner in which formal institutions and outcomes are moulded by power struggles that involve market and non-market actors. They continue to note that "the political context of economic action is made up of a web of interrelations and expectations" (Zukin and DiMaggio's, 1990: 20). In the same vein, Granovetter (1985) confronts economists' presumptions that market processes are not suitable objects of sociological study on the grounds that social relations have a peripheral and distractive contribution to the economy. It is at this point that the intervention by Migdal's (2004) State-in-society approach points to the limitations of the teleological relations that are assumed to be informing relations between social actors and institutions.

From the State-in-society vantage point, social relations are more than their material and instrumental dimensions because through them people "seek and create powerful common understandings or meaning in their relationships, forming a strong relational glue that binds them together" (Migdal, 2004: 6). Therefore, this study pursues the conceptual contributions

of the State-in-society approach with the object of uncovering, analysing and demonstrating how concrete and ongoing systems of social relations in which the different State actors are embedded influenced their conceptualisation and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

In this regard, Migdal (2004) argues that the best approach to understand domination, social processes and changes is that they are not the outcomes of the rationalised intents and actions of a powerful and resourced central actor. Consequently, drawing attention to the roles and influences of the multiple State actors who participated in the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, particularly the unintended outcomes that resulted from their multiple interactions, may help the study to understand why the State capacity incarnate differs from the intended outcomes. While this approach may explain more about the institutions that participated in the conception, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant than existing theories, it sharply draws analytical attention on different institutional actors' behaviours that may have been promoted, sanctioned or rewarded during the period being studied. As State-in-society emphasises the "process", it also focuses us to look into "ongoing struggles among shifting coalitions" (Migdal, 2004: 11) between the actors, and contribute to an understanding of how "unintended outcomes" (Migdal, 2004: 10) were generated between those who conceptualised, resourced and implemented the CoVID-19 SRD grant. As Migdal (2004) observes that while at times the power relations contest between the different State actors is obvious,

... sometimes, it is veiled.... In either case, the struggles over... which ideas should prevail are fierce and real (Migdal, 2004: 10).

The State-in-society approach questions the simplicity with which other theories view the State (in this case, the CoVID-19 SRD grant) as the uncontested pivot (Migdal, 2004: 11). Through the State-in-society approach, the influences and significance of taken-for-granted processes within the State over the configuration, choices, conduct and meanings of both the State and society are foregrounded.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the study; and it has explained the problem statement, research question and the relevant objectives. Further, it laid out the rationale of the study and treated the conceptual framework that it adopted.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

This study is reported in six chapters. This current chapter (Chapter 1) introduces the study's subject matter and problem statement; presents the research question together with its three objectives; outlines the rationale for the study; and lays out the central conceptual tenets that inspired this study.

Henceforward, Chapter 2 will provide an outline of the key literature that the research considered including literature on: the State (and the critique of the Weberian State); State

capacity; covariate shocks; and cash transfer programmes. The chapter ends by integrating the literature together with the conceptual framework that is presented in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 3 an overview of the methodology that was used to achieve the study's objectives is presented. Among other things, this chapter discusses: the research design; process tracing; abductive inference; the study's data collection methods; the ethical issues that this study considered; and the researcher's positionality.

Chapter 4 traces the process of how the State mobilised the resources and capacity implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. This it does by way of outlining the socio-historical factors as well as tracing the exchanges within the key systems of social relations to the extent that these influenced the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation capacity of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Through abductive inference, Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the narratives that took place between the different State actors pursuant of influencing the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter of the study. It weaves together the study's context, conceptual framework, methodological application and findings together. Owing to abductive inference, it presents the dance between the conceptual framework and data. Perhaps most important here are the "theoretically surprising" explanations (Vila-Henninger, et al., 2022: 7) that arise from the research data. While pointing out to State capacity is worth bringing to primary social science pursuits, the chapter concludes by observing that State theory is devoid of explaining the State during exogenous shocks: the State-in-shock.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A study on State capacity that falls short of tackling the theoretical framing of the State would be as dubious as sociology being emptied of its core concern: the social (Elias et. al, 1997: 370). For this reason, this chapter starts by reviewing some theoretical literature on the State. So doing sets the backdrop against which successive thematic literature that is treated in the remainder of the chapter was considered.

On the premise that the CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (CoVID-19 SRD) grant was a State response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (CoVID-19) in South Africa, it may be advisable that a study on the State's ability to mobilise the capacity to respond to the socio-economic effects of this global shock should, at minimum, intentionally review Max Weber's classical literature on the State. By rendering a critical review of this classical theory, the chapter draws attention to the study's the *ad hoc* and historically-specific nature of Weber's State (Abrams, 1988: 60). Similarly, the State the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant took place in the context of a pandemic and through a State with a specific history. Therefore, the chapter starts by reviewing what the State is, and develops a critique thereto. This treatment of the State provides a setting against which literature on State capacity is reviewed. It is at this point that key literature on covariate shocks is introduced to demonstrate the State's capabilities to respond to shocks. The last set of literature that this chapter directs itself to is the review of cash transfer programmes. Following the literature review, and informed by the research question, an attempt is made to integrate key literature observations with the concepts of embeddedness and State-in-society that we discussed treated in Chapter 1 above.

2.1 State

According to Weber (1946), while the State is the instrument of first order for socialising power relations among those who control it, the role of the State bureaucracy is to rationalise relations throughout society. The bureaucracy does this by deploying the resources at its disposal, namely, the standing armies, public finances, etc. towards realising the State's intended objectives.

According to Weber, it is on account of the high levels of the rationalisation of everyday life in Western societies — a “special” condition that no other society enjoys — that State bureaucracy developed and matured in these societies (Helle: 2017: 62). Consequently, the West is the archetype of progress and rationality in which it is deeply embedded. This is evident in that rationality is elementary to the efficient functioning of the State. To this end, the State bureaucracy methodically carries out its duties owing to qualified persons (not elected ones) being appointed to the relevant positions of responsibility. These are the few attributes that distinguish the State from government, with the latter being constituted by persons who are elected through public processes.

In the Weberian State, “the material means of management [reside and are concentrated] in the hands of the master”, meaning bureaucrats than politicians (Weber, 1946: 221). From James Burnham’s (1973) vantage point, “The state — that is, the institutions which comprise the state — will, if we wish to put it that way, be the ‘property’ of the managers” (Burnham, 1973: 72) and “Those who control [the State] are the owners” (Burnham, 1973: 94) (Also refer to Komel, 2007).

While distinguishable from the elected government and political parties, the reality of political parties as well as the need to govern large populations gave rise to the bureaucratisation of what are otherwise social processes (Weber, 1946: 198).

In the meantime, the parallel impact of the phenomena of bureaucratising and democratising the State administration have increased the expenditures of the public treasury as much as it has increased the size of the State. Forged into a bureaucracy, the specialised and thoroughly-trained officials together with the material means and State records that they generate are “monocratically organized” (Weber, 1946: 197), firmly and hierarchically ordered towards “a common interest in seeing that the mechanism continues its functions and that the societally exercised authority carries on” (Weber, 1946: 228). Miliband (1983) takes this formulation of the State further by remarking “that the people who run it believe it has and do themselves have interests of their own” (Miliband, 1983: 60). In the same vein, elsewhere he mentions that

... top civil servants are, inside the state system, the voice of caution and moderation, and their permanent motto is ‘Pas trop de zèle’ [*Not too zealous*], at least for radical reform. Insulated as they have generally been from popular pressures which politicians in search of votes have, at least partially, been forced to heed, they have mostly played the role of advocates of the status quo, of conservative precedent, of hallowed routines (Miliband, 1969: 122). (*Researcher’s translation*)

2.3 Critique of the Weberian State

Weber’s heuristic construct — “what appears to occur with much greater frequency” (Bhambra, 2016: 4) — of the State is commonly (perhaps indisputably) accepted as authoritative cannon in sociology. However, the uncritical deployment and reproduction of classical theory largely serves “to perpetuate particular epistemological hierarchies” (Curato, 2013: 273). Even though sociology should interrogate the State as a taken-for-granted phenomenon, Curato (2013) reminds us that “the social construction of the discipline itself must be subjected to critical investigation” (Curato, 2013: 274). While the current research is focused on the former, it is beyond our current scope to critically investigate the social construction of sociology.

Referring to the non-insular nature of the State from societal influences, Migdal (2009) observes that State bureaucrats belong to the “crazy-quilt alliance and coalitions” (Migdal,

2009: 164) whose net effect is the undoing of the rationalised roles of the institutions that are part of the overall logic of the State. As a result, these State-society alliances subvert “the notion of unified institutions with recognizable missions” (Migdal, 2009: 164).

Miliband (1969) observed that beyond the vast pretensions that State bureaucrats are downright technical, impersonal, un-ideological and a-political, these serve as the functionaries that strengthen and consolidate the interests of the dominant economic structures and relationships. It also needs to be noted that Weber’s (1948) definition of the State disguises the fact that it specifically refers to the imperial State whose use of violence and ordering of extractive capabilities were employed not only domestically, but these were extensively and strategically used in the colonised regions of the world pursuant of colonial expansion and the extraction of resources from the colonies (Bhambra, 2016: 1). In the latter instance, the excesses of violence, repression and extraction were applied to the extent that former colonies are still haemorrhaging from the impact of colonialism wherefrom the colonising societies continue to enjoy legacy privileges as well as having an upper hand in different dimensions of life and relationships (for instance, see Magubane, 1996; Bhambra, 2016; Tharoor, 2016, Piotrowski, 2019). Thus constituted, there is acknowledgement that the colonisers subsequently created “the international system within which all states of the contemporary world are now operating” (Tilly, 1975 in Bhambra, 2016: 8). Taking from Weber (1948), this development represents the global institutionalisation of monocratic Stateism.

It is curious that, scholarship, particularly historical sociology, sidesteps discussions about how contemporary decolonised States such as South Africa should be faring in light of brutal periods of colonial subordination, displacements and genocidal violence (Bhambra, 2016: 8. Also see Schaller (2005) on the contradictions inherent in the work of advocates against genocide where this relates to African countries). Brunette (2014) attended to a similar question when saying “In comparison to Europe, then, the states of British settler colonies confronting industrialism were less capable, and less bureaucratised, their first attempts to confront it would often falter” (Brunette, 2014: 154). In other words, as a consequence of being formed under different circumstances, neither are States the same nor should they be expected to share the same attributes. In this regard, it is worth heeding Bhambra’s (2016) observation that post-imperialism States are not able to reproduce the conditions that facilitated imperialists’ earlier success. Likewise, Lottholz and Lemay-Hébert (2016) caution that insistence on the universal validity of concepts such as the State invariably put research such as this one at odds with Max Weber’s historical comparative account of the State. Also, although Weber’s (1948) account of the State-making process demonstrates the benefits accrued by the colonisers, he obviously fell short of detailing the adversities that the same process brought to the colonised societies. Perhaps the reasons for this neglect can be found in Mbembe (2009) when he articulates that colonies were regarded as savage-inhabited frontiers. Neither did the colonisers have the intention to organise colonised societies as States, nor did they view them as part of the “human world” (Mbembe, 2009: 24). Rather, the fiction of a State that colonisers developed in former settler colonies like South Africa was intended at ensuring and reinforcing: the continuity of the colonisers’ interest of exercising authority over former colonies; as well as framing the way the colonised see themselves

(Curato, 2013: 283); and the economies of former colonies were largely kept as undeveloped exporters of raw materials to the former colonisers (Acemoglu, 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010; and Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012) . Over and above, this post-colonial State helped to socialise the colonisers' social values in colonised societies (Bhambra, 2016: 11).

Bhambra (2016) argues that while evidence-supported critique continues to be levelled at the failures of the Weberian ideal type to account for the diversity of State phenomena that are being encountered within the unfolding world-historical context other than Europe, the dominant sociological narratives and imaginations continue to ignore these critiques and, instead, sustain the Weberian heuristic (Bhambra, 2016: 2). Ultimately, the goal of interrogating the Weberian State is to demonstrate that the South African State can be thought of differently.

An instance of different analyses and accounts of the State is Philip Abrams (1988) for whom the idea of the State started off its life as an implicit construct (Abrams, 1988: 82). He says, rather than being universal, the State was constructed “and used for specific social purposes in a specific historical setting” (Abrams, 1988: 80). While not a thing, material object, or a “fact of nature” (Abrams, 1988: 75), the State “is at most a message of domination — an ideological artefact” (Abrams, 1988: 81) as well as an “ideological device in terms of which the political institutionalisation of power is legitimated” (Abrams, 1988: 82). Therefore, the State is an ideological project whose means is the imaginative construction of institutions that form the State system (Abrams, 1988: 75—76) into “an a-historical mask of legitimating illusion” pursuant of class domination (Abrams, 1988: 77). Thus composed, the State is the symbolic identity of sustained and profound institutional disunity whose persistence, in practice, cannot be disproved (Abrams, 1988: 79). Following this reasoning, Abrams (1988) concludes that we should not

... believe in the idea of the state, not to concede, even as an abstract formal-object, [to] the existence of the state (Abrams, 1988: 79).

Abrams' (1988) analysis is useful to the extent that it explicitly emphasises the social construction of the State. His proposals sound radical in that they dismiss the objective existence of the State. At this juncture, we set aside a few sentences to treat Abrams' (1988) proposal. This will enable the dissertation to proceed without being dismissive.

In suggesting that the State be treated as a non-existent phenomenon, even at the formal-object level, Abrams (1988) is saying that the State has no social consequence. Hence, the State is a “message”, “symbolic”, and an “illusion”. He derives his proposition from the logic that rather than being a fact of nature, the State is a social fact (that is, social construct). The leap of logic that he then employs — from reality is a social construct to constructed reality is non-existence — defies the integrity of the field upon which social construction takes place. That is, notwithstanding that all phenomena may be facts of nature or otherwise (for instance, climate), such phenomena land themselves to being socially meaningful in one way or another

(for example, climate change). Therefore, there is no aspect of reality that has “extra-social” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 88) significance.

With specific reference to Abrams (1988), this means that society, the State and society are all social constructs. Calls for the non-existence of the State is a denial of the effects of the substance with which and processes of social construction. Further, it is a denial of the very structure that holds social reality as such. Continued denial of the process that generates social reality risks imploding the very field that holds all of the constructed reality: including Abrams as a social actor; his ideas; the State; all other concepts; and other expressions of reality. Consequently, acknowledging that society, the State and State capacity are outcomes of the same reality construction framework means that the rules that operate inside their shared constellation have material and socially-experienced implications that are significant for the continued stability of their shared social constellation (namely, society). In other words, the history and circumstances of a society have implications for the State and State capacity. In the same vein, the State has implications for the society in which it is carrying out its work as well as the capacity with which it does so in a socially meaningful manner. For these reasons, while acknowledging Abrams’ (1988) provocative analysis of the State, this dissertation proceeds with the inquiry into how the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

One limitation that is notable in theorisation about the State is the failure to account for the State in crises Comaroff & Comaroff’s (2001), notwithstanding that crises have been a constant feature of the State. All the same, the Weberian heuristic of the State is devoid of the constant of covariate shocks as forms of crises. In the context of CoVID-19 as a covariate shock — “Unexpected adverse events that affect areas or populations widely [... and] have a negative effect on the welfare of households” (Debebe and Raju, 2020: 3) — this research is identifying the insufficiency and explanatory power of the Weberian heuristic of the State to respond to the advent of CoVID-19.

In South Africa, the advent of CoVID-19 put expectations on the State for it to lead the implementation of comprehensive and society-wide programmes that are targeted at reducing the infections and impact of the pandemic. Further, it was anticipated that the State would facilitate the reconstruction and recovery of society and the economy (Zondi, 2021: 197) out of the impact of the pandemic (for instance, see the *South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan*). Ansell et al. (2021) suggest the need for the State to adopt robust governance strategies — “the ability of one or more decisionmakers to uphold or realize a public agenda, function, or value in the face of the challenge and stress from turbulent events and processes through the flexible adaptation, agile modification, and pragmatic redirection of governance solutions” (Ansell et al., 2021: 952) — with which it would attend to turbulent events such as CoVID-19.

In continuing to review other literature that are thematically interlinked to how the State mobilised the capacity to conceptualise, resource and implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant as a cash transfer programme, this chapter continues to treat literature on State capacity.

2.4 State Capacity

By State capacity Brambor et al. (2016) refer to “how states attain the ability to [enduringly] carry out government policies effectively” (Brambor et al., 2016: 3). It is the translation of this ability into actual outcomes that explains a country’s development relative to its internal encounters over a period of time, and when compared with developments elsewhere in the world. In agreement with this interpretation, Lupton (2020) noted that while everyone was at the risk of contracting CoVID-19, different institutional capacities to support disadvantaged populations across countries led to widely differing successes in managing the health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Similarly, Zondi (2021) observed that CoVID-19 exposed some major weaknesses that are inherent to sophisticated and big economies such as South Africa. These weaknesses were evident in the State’s shortcomings to protect vulnerable populations against the health and social effects of CoVID-19 (Zondi, 2021: 194).

Referring to State capacity, Mann (1993) says traditional theory is looking for State power in the wrong places (Mann, 1993: 132), and if the efforts of scholarship were to be shifted towards the study of the State’s infrastructural power — “the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm” (Mann, 1993: 113) — meaningful progress could be registered. He further points out that increases in infrastructural power have positive effects of social relations (Mann, 1993: 134).

For Goenaga (2015), the State is deeply embedded in social relationships through which it is continuously being shaped. For him the “differences in levels of state capacity are explained by differences in access by population — especially the popular classes — to organizational resources” (Goenaga, 2015: 37). In other words, the extent to which the State develops its capacity is influenced by whether the population can self-provide the services for which the State capacity should be developed. Consequently, the extent to which different social actors “collaborate with or resist” (Goenaga, 2015: 34) State-building efforts, particularly during periods of constituting State capacity, are the defining social processes for State capacity. Consequently, the elites in a society must be assured that their interests will remain collectively intact in order for them to incur the costs of widely-beneficial institutional developments (Kurtz, 2009: 510).

It is curious to note in Goenaga (2015) that exogenous “shocks transform the relative bargaining power of state and societal actors by increasing or decreasing the value of the resources they control” (Goenaga, 2015: 38). Consequently, the adversity that accompanies exogenous shocks can greatly undercut elite interests. Also noteworthy in Kurtz (2009) is his critique that scholarship leans towards viewing all State-building efforts as long-term processes (and thereby producing potentially misleading findings) than temporal events (Kurtz, 2009: 510). Kurtz’s critique is particularly relevant to pointing out the limitations of Mazzucato et al.’s (2022) suggestion that South Africa’s response to the advent of CoVID-19 should be “mission-oriented...[that is] do everything possible to drive major economic change across the various levels in government” (Mazzucato et al., 2022: 1). In Mazzucato et al. (2022), State-building is framed as “institutional long-term capacities” (Mazzucato et al., 2022: 12). Hay (1999) adds to this line of thinking by drawing attention to the need to analyse crises

as intense, condensed and temporal moments during which it is required of the State to institute decisive interventions that would transform it structurally. Consequently, “during such moments of crisis a new trajectory is imposed upon the state” (Hay, 1999: 317). In a similar respect, Khambule and Mdlalose (2022) note that exogenous shocks are historical occasions “to build the required institutional capacity long undermined by the neoliberal agenda of reducing the role of the state” (Khambule and Mdlalose, 2022: 192). Thus, the advent of COVID-19 “created a perfect opportunity for the South African government to test the limits of its state institutions by responding to the unprecedented socio-economic impact caused by the pandemic” (Khambule, 2021: 381).

Consequently, the development of dynamic capacities and capabilities at the level of the State in response to CoVID-19 was necessary. By way of encouraging market participation in State responses during CoVID-19, Mazzucato et al. (2022) propose that the State ought to catalyse their role through partnerships as these would lead to their entrepreneurial self-discovery (Mazzucato et al., 2022: 4 — 5). For Brunette (2014), the State-market distinction elides the “many ways in which state and market were fundamentally intertwined, the ways in which they were *mutually constituting*” (Brunette, 2014: 15). Analytically, this suggests that the State’s ability to mobilise the combined infrastructures of the State and civil society — of course, inclusive of the private sector among others — would result in positive State-society relations.

While this dissertation does appreciate the introduction of “mission-oriented” approach that Mazzucato et al. (2022) are proposing in response to the advent of CoVID-19, it is difficult to understand how, in moments of temporal and fatal crisis such as this, the State would operate on the basis of long-term mind-sets and policies that are actually responsible for the unresponsiveness of institutions where agility is required to protect lives. Than calling for the reformulation and reconfiguration of the State in the face of a covariate shock, these authors promote the continuity of market players’ entrepreneurial self-discovery through the State. Taking from Naomi Klein’s (2007) book, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, perhaps the State-facilitated entrepreneurial self-discovery that occurs during shocks can be characterised as the clean sheet effect (Klein, 2007: 4) owing to partnerships being strengthened “in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disasters as exciting market opportunities (Klein, 2007: 6). This is how the book’s sub-title, *The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* was obtained.

In light of the immediate and transitory effect of CoVID-19 on South Africa, particularly on those who were unable to earn livelihoods over the duration of the case study, it will be curious to establish whether CoVID-19 did weaken elite interests (chapters 4 ad 5).

While Fukuyama (2013) has defined State capacity as “a government’s ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services” (Fukuyama, 2013: 350), others say State capacity is the “degree of control that state agents exercise over persons, activities, and resources within their government’s territorial jurisdiction” (McAdam et al, 2001: 78) as much as it is “a function of state bureaucracy, the state’s relations with social actors, and its spatial and societal reach” (Soifer and vom Hau, 2008: 220).

In this sense, State capacity is a powerful resource base upon which whatever desired social and economic outcomes can be socialised and achieved. For instance, in assessing the relationship between State capacity and the health outcomes of 156 countries between 1970 and 2015, Majeed and Gillani (2017) reflect the theoretical foundations of State capacity in the works of Samuel P. Huntington (1968), Max Weber (1978) and Theda Skocpol (1985), as well as the contributions of subsequent scholars. Evidently common to these antecedent State capacity theories is the pre-eminence of low levels of corruption and the creation of law-abiding climate throughout society. Subsequent additions by Ross (1973) and Arrow (1985) elevated the need to address information asymmetry and contradictory social incentives between institutions and members of society (note the treatment of datafication as State capacity below). Besley and Persson (2011) and Hanson and Sigman (2013) define State capacity by the ability to raise revenue through taxes with which the State will carry out its priorities.

With regards to social protection, specifically cash transfers, Jeremy Seekings (2015) described State capacity as the ability to:

[...] identify and select, or process applications from, prospective beneficiaries (through either the exercise of discretion or the application of bureaucratic regulations); to make regular payments to approved beneficiaries; to raise the necessary funding; and to contain 'leakages' through fraud, corruption or appropriation [...] (Seekings, 2015: 4).

With a multiplicity of definitions at hand, Brambor et al. (2016) suggest that a high capacity State is itself an effect of other things, and therefore unmeasurable. Actually, State capacity is the result of the deployment of the necessary and sufficient resources (the measurable cause) towards increasing the likelihood that government policies and its intended outcomes are achieved. According to Hanson (2015), high State capacity "improves [human] development indicators more than democracy" would (Majeed and Gillani, 2017: 674). Put differently, it is the function of the State than the form of government that improves the lives of ordinary people. Similarly, Zondi (2021) observes that the pursuit of an exemplary democratic government with all the supporting legislative framework is not the bastion against the country's population being "haunted by disillusionment and underdevelopment" (Zondi, 2021: 192). Contrarily, Cronert and Hadenius (2020) found that State capacity and effectiveness are conditional on the form of government.

Samson et al. (2010) considered the success of cash transfer programmes on the policy environment within which they are operating as well as the historical evolution of the capabilities of the institution that are tasked with implementation. Owing to the reason that cash transfer programmes require inter-departmental contributions across different State departments, a dynamic institutional framework that coordinates, integrates, monitors and implements different policies towards ensuring the successful implementation of cash transfer programmes need to be established (Samson et al., 2010: 51).

Following these considerations, Majeed and Gillani (2017) assume the concept of State capacity that is defined by the ability to: collect adequate tax revenues; enforce lawfulness; and improve the quality of the services that the bureaucracy is implementing (Majeed and Gillani, 2017: 675). Therefore, for society's social and economic outcomes to improve, the State's capacity to implement needs to be improved. Noting that the State capacity to implement cash transfer programmes is not static (let alone the fluidity of the attributes of the programme's targeted population), it becomes important for those implementing these programmes to continuously assess how the different variables and measurements of State capacity work together towards improving the programme's responsiveness (Samson et al., 2010: 56). Therefore, in order for the measurements of State capacity to be transferable between similar contexts and across time, the resources that constitute State capacity must be "carefully selected" within each context (Brambor, 2016: 4). Likewise, and citing Neva Makgetla (2011), Brunette (2014) draws attention to: the lack of nuanced understanding of State capacity across the State by function, sphere, region, etc.; and he reiterates the call for area-specific research case studies to be conducted and thereby help generate empirical, rigorous and useful knowledge on State capacity in South Africa (Brunette, 2014). This current research assumes a case study approach to State capacity.

2.5 State in South Africa

Coming out of colonialism-apartheid², the most important legacy that the African National Congress-led democratic government of South Africa inherited is an institutionally-disjointed State whose public servants are decoupled from the formal institutions that they serve. This incoherence is the result of entrenched socialisation that rationalises the pursuit of parochial personal and sectional interests along material acquisition and ethnicity. This socialisation is founded upon the very colonial logic that intentionally created weak and less bureaucratized colonial States whose prospects to industrialise the economy are dim owing to the inability to reproduce the violent conditions upon which the imperialists-colonisers achieved these constructs (also see Brunette, 2014 and Magubane, 1996). This institutional legacy is sufficient for present-day South African State "to proceed in stultified form" (Persaud, 2021: 70) because colonisation sought "to break the resistance to ways of life imagined, lived, and reproduced outside the imaginary of imperialism" (Persaud, 2021: 78).

Moreover, bound by the transitional settlements that the employment contracts of White civil servants will be respected, South Africa's democratic government inherited a bloated State. Therefore, it became impossible to reduce the number of people who were in the employ of the State. It is particularly the legacies of British colonialism and Afrikaanisation that — while constraining in some regards and enabling in others — created a "significant path

² Referring to apartheid, Achille Mbembe (2003) declares "Here we see the first syntheses between massacre and bureaucracy, that incarnation of Western rationality"; the sovereignty of former colonies "consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power [by former colonialists] outside the law (*ab legibus solutus*) and where "peace" is more likely to take on the face of a "war without end" (Mbembe, 2003: 23); and a colony is "the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of "civilization"" (Mbembe, 2003: 24).

dependency” (Brunette, 2014: 22) with respect to how the question of State capacity is being approached and addressed in post-apartheid South Africa. For instance, the path dependency that present day approaches to State capacity are following is that while apartheid’s State capacity systems relied on limited and highly professional expertise of White civil servants. In the post-apartheid period the coverage of these systems was simply extended to the whole population. Unsurprisingly, this would overburden systems that were designed for significantly smaller population sizes.

In his analysis of State capacity, Brunette (2014) argues that in the post-apartheid period, the State has largely been deployed towards: creating a class than effecting deep societal transformations; realising political expediency at the expense of the financial sustainability of services; prioritising fiscal considerations above similarly important socio-economic goals; and outsourcing State functions on the pretext of cost efficiencies instead of developing the State capacity (consequently, there is a perennial over-reliance upon consultants that runs parallel de-skilling in the State). Where it could have developed competencies and capabilities over a period of time, the State may have lost the opportunity to do so. With profound and innumerable State capacity challenges that South Africa is experiencing today “The golden age never was, if anything it lies ahead” (Brunette, 2014: 210).

Also relevant for this research is a study by Mohamed et al. (2020) who examined the deployment of State capacity during the registration of beneficiaries for the Inua Jamii social pension in Marsabit County in Northern Kenya. These scholars relied on Migdal’s (2004) State-in-society theory to explain State capacity during the registration of beneficiaries for this pension. Whereas the Inua Jamii social pension was initially introduced as a universal pension for everyone who is 70 years old and above, political expediency saw government pressurising fieldwork social development officers to complete the registration process so that the registration process does not overlap with the forthcoming elections. In so doing, political expediency ignored the realities of Marsabit County’s undocumented and transhumant communities. Wittingly or not, this resulted in some community members being unduly excluded from the benefits that they ought to be benefitting from. Contrary to the initial undertakings, the State introduced means testing for this pension than making it universal.

In light of the fact that State capacity is a phenomenon whose social utility and potency are tied to developments in pre-existing and often unrelated domains, Beckworth’s (2020) contribution that the Federal Reserve Bank’s capacity to implement direct cash transfers in response to CoVID-19 was considered. He argues that the Bank needed to revise its operating system so that it is enabled “to implement direct cash transfers in special situations like the current crisis” (Beckworth, 2020: 1). His reasoning for making this input in relation to State capacity is that the Bank “is nimbler and more likely to do so in a rules-based manner” (Beckworth, 2020: 2).

Underlying most measures of State capacity is the State’s *datafication* capacity (Brambor et al, 2016: 4). In this sense, datafication is the ability to represent human behavioural phenomena in quantified formats for purposes of organising and analysis in relation to other

phenomena, and their further translation into solutions, programme design and implementation improvements. Datafication transversally applies on a variety of social activities that the State, wittingly or not, collects data on. The collection of large amounts of data by the State represents “key aspects of modern state administration, and that ‘state capacity’ more generally can in several important ways be linked to the ability of the state to obtain and use high-quality information” (Brambor et al, 2016: 5). With datafication being a lived reality, it certainly does appear that “there is no hiding place from the infrastructural reach of the modern state” (Mann, 1993: 114).

Whereas Zondi (2021) concludes that the advent of CoVID-19 put the State back at the centre and this enabled the State to harness pre-existing capacities for its social responsiveness (Zondi, 2021: 202), this research seeks to establish the extent to which the State, through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

2.6 Covariate Shocks

Being a pandemic makes CoVID-19 a global covariate that is “not just a health crisis, but a socio-economic, humanitarian, political, security and human rights crisis” (Zondi, 2021: 195) that affected individuals and their families in every community throughout South Africa. During this period, generalised fatalism — the belief that one's actions have little or no impact on life's important outcomes, progressively disinvesting in achieving future goals, withdrawing from engaging with concerns that are beyond the immediate, and generally consenting to fate (Hayes and Clerk, 2021) — affected society's collective psyche and the manner in which community-based collectives re-formulated themselves and whether they would continue to function in response to exogenous shocks (Schotte and Zizzamia, 2021: 2).

In their *magnum opus*, Balgah and Buchenrieder (2010) examine the impact of natural shocks on households' risk management strategies. The duo identifies the different roles for formal and informal responses when addressing idiosyncratic and covariate shocks, respectively. They say the occurrence of a shock prompts responses that either come from outside the affected household, community, etc. (exogenous), or from the affected population's own resources (endogenous). “Endogenous response mechanisms... are part of the existing self-regulatory social machinery” (Balgah and Buchenrieder, 2010: 360, also see Jedwab *et al.*, 2020: 200) and are built into commonplace institutions and processes. Standing (2011) observes that globalisation and climate change have truly taken covariate shocks to a global level (Standing, 2011: 198) and consequently distinctions “between the deserving and the undeserving are arbitrary” (Standing, 2011: 215, also see Gerard *et al.*, 2020: 1). Consequently, exogenous responses are:

... *ad hoc*, unpatterned, unguaranteed, or irregular process expressed through actions, measures, and policies that formally fill gaps left by built-in responses; bypass endogenous channels; shift initiatives away

from regular actors, or superimpose alternative structures (Balgah and Buchenrieder: 2010, 360).

When a large or unprecedented shock occurs — and through dynamic processes — different responses may be transformed and recombined to respond to contextual shocks. Particularly informed by covariate shocks, the World Bank developed the Social Risk Management (SRM) framework through which social protection is considered to be: a public intervention that targets and benefits the sustainability of individuals, households and communities to manage the accompanying vulnerabilities; as well as providing support to the critically-affected populations during these times (Balgah and Buchenrieder: 2010, 361). As an exogenous response mechanism, SRM is the ability of a covariate shock-facing society to, through resistance or change, adapt to conditions in order to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of functioning and structure through countering internal information asymmetry (Balgah and Buchenrieder: 2010, 362). Establishing information efficiencies in programmes that respond to covariates is intended at enhancing implementation that, in turn, will improve social outcomes. In developing countries such as South Africa markets are often absent in the frontlines where society should be shielded from the impact of covariate shocks (Balgah, 2015: 1124). It is during times like these that the role of markets as ‘corporate citizens’ should be evident in their complementary contributions to State capacity-building initiatives (Balgah, 2015: 1125).

This section considered the literature on covariate shocks as part of informing the approach that chapters 4 and 5 will take in establishing the extent to which the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant amidst the CoVID-19 pandemic.

2.7 Cash Transfers

To understand the context that influences the extent to which a society is investing in direct cash transfer programme infrastructure, Chérrez (2019) reflects that where these relate to developing countries, income transfers and social security programmes are largely considered to be costly, unnecessary luxuries and “mere consumption expenditure” that divert important resources from priority “economic and social investments” (Chérrez, 2019: 4). Notwithstanding these views, recently, a sample of developing countries — including Ecuador, India, South Africa and Brazil — implemented innovative social security programmes that have been expanded and targeted to specific populations (e.g. children, the disabled, etc.). These programmes improved the quality of coverage beyond the traditional safety net.

In this instance, cash transfers are a form of social assistance that consists of “direct, regular and reliable non-contributory payments with the aim of reducing poverty and vulnerability” (Arnold et al., 2011 in Chérrez, 2019: 21). These programmes can be designed to be unconditional, conditional (Chérrez, 2019: 21) or a blend of both (Handa et al., 2020: 2). Factors such as the cost of implementing the cash transfer programme, State capacity to administer the programme’s viably, and political feasibility (also see Samson et al., 2010: 18) influence a programme’s design, intensity and configuration (Chérrez, 2019: 70). Whatever

beneficiary inclusion/exclusion errors that may potentially arise “can be reduced by combining multiple methods of targeting of beneficiaries” (Fuseini et al., 2017: 14). Ongoing innovations in data technologies promise to ease this realisation.

Lee (2019) notes that during shocks, cash transfers are a more effective way of providing assistance to those who cannot self-provide. This is especially because cash is the best complement to food programmes. The benefits of direct cash transfer programmes are likely to be immediate in countries that have reliable logistics, informational, knowledge management and communication infrastructure because these can facilitate the monitoring of financial transactions, expedite risks mitigation, and mediate targeted public-private partnerships. In this respect, mobile technologies present innovative opportunities for the efficient and effective implementation of cash transfer programmes. For instance, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs found direct cash transfer programmes to be particularly effective “in the most challenging security conditions” because of: their adaptability to “crisis-driven innovations” (Dahlke et al., 2021: 16); their accessibility and ability to generate cost efficiencies and stimulate local markets (Lee, 2019: 25); and their ability to promote a greater sense of dignity among beneficiaries, itself arising from the beneficiaries making choices (Standing, 2011: 204 and Harvey and Bailey, 2011: 7). While in Kenya and the Philippines mobile phone technologies innovated the delivery of direct cash transfers to beneficiaries, in Burkina Faso these programmes protected the country’s food security (Lee, 2019: 29). Therefore, the presence of diverse resources, institutional, policy and technological capabilities in a society, and their configuration and deployment towards the implementation of a cash transfer programme, amount to the development and implementation of State capacity in response to the covariate shock at hand.

Unlike the neoclassical economics approach that prescribes the role of the ‘invisible hand’ in the perfect markets in which rational actors maximise the wellbeing of all (Chérrez, 2019: 31), at the heart of designing cash transfer programmes is the understanding that “those in poverty can be empowered and entrusted to make effective/productive use of the monetary resources available” (Chérrez, 2019: 21) because doing so will: improve the incomes of beneficiary households; lead to the accumulation of productive human capabilities among beneficiaries; either soften or overcome the prohibitive costs that beneficiaries incur when accessing essential public services; and afford the beneficiaries to participate in the social and economic spheres where they would have otherwise been excluded (Chérrez, 2019: 21). According to Fuseini et al. (2017) direct cash transfer programmes are a path towards realising the aspiration of poverty reduction (Fuseini et al., 2017: 2) where hopes for economic growth fall short, and the promise of jobs-yet-to-be-created at a distant future may never materialise. In other words, during the times of covariate shocks “cash may be particularly appropriate to help support, protect and rebuild livelihoods” (Harvey and Bailey, 2011: 7). Whether a programme succeeds in reaching and benefiting significant numbers of the targeted beneficiary population depends on whether the binding factor of “mutual trust between the state and the beneficiaries” is achieved and sustained (Chérrez, 2019: 353) throughout the programme’s implementation lifecycle. Consequently, the means tests that accompany these programmes are more about

satisfying the economic orthodoxy than trust-building and realising better human-level outcomes: the proverbial reconstruction and recovery that should not leave anyone behind.

Handa et al. (2020) examine how cash transfer programmes in three African countries — Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique — selected and targeted their beneficiaries. While a programme’s target population may be defined as a “community” — *a sociological construct that dynamically refers to a type of population, their way of life, and the common values, beliefs, meanings, characteristics and shared attributes* (Marshall, 1996: 72—73) — “the compactness of a community” (Handa et al., 2020: 4) is a key determinant of the extent to which a cash transfer programme is accessible to the members of a defined community. In today’s society, it may be appropriate to add that a community is a social configuration of loose, infrequently occurring and *ad hoc* bonds and relationships. From their comparative analysis of the cash transfer programmes in these countries, Handa et al. (2020) conclude that “it is the quality of implementation of the targeting instruments rather than the choice of instruments which will affect performance” (Handa et al., 2020: 19). In other words, the State’s capacity to assemble institutions and infrastructure that can avail high quality data on beneficiaries is important to whether the programme is effective or not. Pre-existing institutional experience with implementing social transfers may come in handy where the State needs to implement a shock-responsive cash transfer programme (Harvey and Bailey, 2011: 58).

Whereas Seekings (2020) noted the lack of sufficient leadership to mobilise the capacity to implement the already delayed CoVID-19 SRD grant within the Department of Social Development and SASSA, Gronbach et al. (2022) note that the State could have done more to ensure that data technologies were intensively and widely used during the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

In establishing how the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised, the present study will reflect on how the attributes of this programme’s intended community, or target population, were defined relative to the State capacity.

2.8 Conclusion: State capacity through embeddedness and State-in-society

Granovetter’s (1985) embeddedness theory will be deployed together with Joel Migdal’s (2004) State-in-society approach to integrate the literature that we have just considered above. The integration of these conceptual frameworks into one will inform the study process in its establishment of how the State mobilised the needed capacity for the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

A combination of embeddedness and State-in-society will help to trace, locate and analyse the social relationships, processes and roles that different State actors carried out — throughout the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant — to mobilise the capacity for this grant.

Through its emphasis on the role of concrete personal relations and the structure of such relationships in the generation of trust within and between institutions (Granovetter, 1985: 490) the contribution of embeddedness and State-in-society to a useful and integrated conceptual framework of the literature is as follows: Firstly, embeddedness accounts for how the *social* between State institutions is constituted as part of society's ongoing relationships (Allin, 1902: 78). Therefore, the State represents a confluence of socially-originating (Allport, 1927: 170) structures and processes³ that emerge "out of the weaving of the intended acts and plans of many people, which none of the people involved in them willed or planned" (Elias et al., 1997: 360). Consequently, State capacity can consist of "'unanticipated consequences' of human efforts at planning and intentionally shaping them" (Bogner, 1986: 391). Than being a "static [that has been] emptied of its dynamics" (Elias et al., 1997: 370), State capacity is a social process within which embedded social relations and unanticipated processes are expressed.

Consequently, paying attention at the roles of the multiple State actors who participated in the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, and the unintended outcomes that are traceable to their multiple interactions in society may land the study on results that do not fit the initially-intended designs of any of these actors. This approach "may explain more about [the institutions that conceived, resourced and implemented the CoVID-19 SRD grant] than... existing theories [would] (Migdal, 2004: 10). Additionally, this approach sharply draws us to how the behaviours of the different State actors were promoted, sanctioned or rewarded (Migdal, 2004: 11) throughout the case study. On the grounds that the State-in-society approach emphasises the role of process during analysis, this approach requires that "ongoing struggles among shifting coalitions" (Migdal, 2004: 11) between these actors be looked into and understand how incarnate "unintended outcomes" (Migdal, 2004: 10) were generated.

Secondly, embeddedness allows for the uncovering of the "concrete, ongoing systems of social relations" (Granovetter, 1985: 487) that resulted in the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Than making "sweeping (and thus unlikely) predictions of universal order or disorder" (Granovetter, 1985: 493), embeddedness allows for the empirical establishment of the relevant relations, processes and structures that would have been at play between the different State institutions pursuant of invoking the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. It is in noting this that this research is developing a case study on State capacity. To this end, the study will explore and develop nuanced understanding of how State capacity was mobilised for the implementation of a specific State response during a specific period (during the first iteration of the CoVID-19 SRD grant). Further, this study is an attempt at contributing empirical, rigorous and useful knowledge on South Africa State capacity to the knowledge base of the discipline of social security.

³ When speaking of history as process Norbert Elias (1982) says "Each single aspect of human social life is comprehensible only if seen in the context of this perpetual movement.... It is formed within this moving context.... (Elias, 1982: 278).

Thirdly, the integration of embeddedness together with State-in-society is strengthened by Elias et al.'s (1997) observation that the “processes of functional differentiation and state formation — have a complementary relationship with each other” (Elias et al., 1997: 376 and Elias, 1982: 234). Therefore, the contribution of the State-in-society approach to the study of relationships within and between functionally-different State institutions pursuant of invoking the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant is that this approach locates these relationships within the State itself. In return, the State operates within a contextual society and particular historical influences.

Fourth, the State-in-society approach is founded on the understanding that social relationships are more than their material and instrumental dimensions because people “seek and create powerful common understandings or meaning in their relationships” (Migdal, 2004: 6) thereby giving rise to strong social relations between them. In the instance of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the State-in-society framework will help trace, locate and analyse respective State actors’ institutional contributions and influences during the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. This approach will help the research to underscore the attributes of the CoVID-19 SRD grant as: a process; constituted by institutional behaviours that attract sanctions and rewards; representative of “ongoing struggles among shifting coalitions” (Migdal, 2004: 11); and the social incarnation of unintended outcomes. Migdal (2004) observes that while at times the power relation between the different State actors is obvious,

... sometimes, it is veiled.... In either case, the struggles over revenues, other goodies, and which ideas should prevail are fierce and real (Migdal, 2004: 10).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is presenting an overview of the methodology that was used pursuant of the study's objectives. Defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) as "the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project" (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001: 14), a research methodology details, and justifies, the specific procedures that is used to identify, select, process and analyse information about a topic. The ethical principles adhered to throughout the study and research process are also discussed. The chapter is structured as follows. The next section (Section, 3.2) discusses the research design. This is followed by a description of the study site and the data source: documents and key informant interviews. Data management and analysis processes as well as efforts adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings, are then discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations that were adhered to before the chapter concludes with a short summary section.

3.2 Research design

Research design can be understood as the visualised process of — by means of best possible research methods and techniques — collecting and analysing data for the purposes of answering a study's research question and objectives (Babbie and Mouton, 2011: 72). This study's research design is as follows: Firstly, it adopted a case study approach to examine the extent to which SASSA attended to and mobilised the capacity to conceptualise, resource and implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The case study approach allows the research process to generate in-depth and multi-faceted understandings of the complexities of and causal relations within a defined issue of interest (George and Bennett, 2005; Crowe et al, 2011). In addition to *explaining, describing or exploring* the issues that are relevant to how SASSA mobilised the State capacity for the implementation of this grant, the case study approach also helped "to understand and explain [the] causal links and pathways resulting from a new policy initiative or service development" (Crowe et al., 2011: 4).

Within case study, the *process tracing* method was used to trace processes that speak to the State's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. In process tracing the researcher analysed the study's sources of information to establish the causal process within the case (George and Bennett, 2005: 6; and also see Beach and Rohlfing, 2018; Beach, 2017; Hall, 2013; Bennett and Checkel, 2012; Collier, 2011; Beach and Pedersen, 2011 and Bennett and Elman, 2006.). Additionally, in this study this relates to how the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant took place, and whether and how that capacity is responsible for the implementation of this grant. Finally, the abductive logic of inference, which aims "to identify data that are beyond the initial theoretical premise (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013: 2), was conducted to establish: theoretical linkages with the literature we considered in chapter 2. Kennedy (2018) state that "Abductive inference usually begins when researchers recognize an anomaly or surprising data, and therefore take 'an interest in the problematization and re-

thinking of dominating ideas and theory, [since] empirical impressions encourage such a need for novel thinking' (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011, p. 58)". Abduction inference enabled for the theoretical development and emergence of "a single unexpected piece of process-tracing evidence" (George and Bennett, 2005: 13. Also see Gonzales-Ocantos and LaPorte, 2021). These are the finding "theoretically surprising" explanations (Vila-Henninger, et al., 2022: 7) that are within the case.

3.3 Methods of data collection

The study employed qualitative research techniques to collect data. In the quest to enable theory-generation, qualitative research strategy largely facilitated for the research findings to be abductively-related to existing theories. This emphatically prefers that the study's key informants should bring their own interpretations of the study phenomena, thereby drawing sharp focus on the processes, meanings and structures of the social world that arise from these. Further, the qualitative approach welcomes the fluidity of the social reality that research participants co-create (Bryman, 2016; Flick et al., 2004). Than merely seeking to predict how State capacity was realised for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the qualitative research strategy enabled this study to uncover the rich descriptions and diverse understandings that key informants attached to the process that begot the State capacity with which the CoVID-19 SRD grant was implemented (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 53).

Apt to the pandemic conditions that underlie this study, qualitative research strategies held the greatest prospects of obtaining from the key informants who were directly involved in the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant substantial and accurate accounts about the implementation capacity development process. Because the unmasking of the State "is not automatic" (Abrams, 1988: 80), primary data that this research used were obtained by employing two qualitative data collection methods: namely, document review and key informant interviews.

3.3.1 Document analysis

Defined as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating printed and electronic documents, document analysis, like other analytical methods in qualitative research, requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009: 27).

The documents that key informants shared with the researcher were subjected to narrative analysis — a "cluster of analytic methods for interpreting texts or visual data that have a storied form" (Figgou and Pavlopoulos, 2015: 546. Also see; Hyvärinen, 2016; Elliott, 2005; and Franzosi, 1998). Document analysis helped to identify, group and analyse findings along the CoVID-19 SRD grant conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation process. Due to their ability to present continuities in the life of institutions (Gabriel, 2015) as well as being "standardized artefacts" and pointers "to other underlying phenomena and intentions" (Wolff, 2004: 284), the analysis of the key informant-provided documents helped to uncover aspects of how the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant were attended to and mobilised by

the different State departments and institutions. Moreover, these documents helped to link the information gaps that key informant interviews could not attend to (Altheide et al., 2008).

As part of the initial correspondence that was addressed to different government departments and institutions that contributed to the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of CoVID-19 SRD grant, these were informed and requested to participate in this study. The same correspondence explicitly requested that they share non-confidential documents that are relevant to this grant. During the interviews with each of the key informants from the six State departments and institutions that participated in the study, the request for non-confidential documents that are relevant to the case study period: May 2020 — April 2021 was reiterated. Consequently, a total of forty-seven (47) individual documents were received via electronic mail from four out of the six institutionally-assigned key informants. . Beyond this, the discretion of which documents to share with the study was entirely the prerogative of the key informants.

Having received the 47 documents at different times following the key informant interviews, an initial analysis that entailed assessing the presence of legal classification and duplication of the received documents was conducted. In doing this, we established that eight among these documents were either visibly classified, redundant copies or too operational and beyond the research scope. These were eliminated. This resulted in thirty-nine (39) documents that were subjected to a further relevance analysis. In other words, the remaining 39 documents were carefully studied in-depth to establish their contribution to in-case linkages and whether they fill knowledge gaps. This level of analysis resulted in twenty (20) documents being adopted for the purpose of research-informing analysis, while nineteen (19) were eliminated.

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN1	Agenda Special Covid Grant brainstorm[23768]	Brainstorm on Special Covid-19 Grant Agenda	Undated	This one-pager document reads like a proposed agenda for discussion. Its author(s) start by pointing out that inasmuch as the child support grant (CSG) may be the quickest way to get money to the people, getting the CoVID-19 SRD grant through this grant will exclude many. The agenda encourages a discussion of forward-looking design issues, including: population targeting; the use of existing data instead of instituting means tests; the ease and difficulties of receiving the needed data from different stakeholders for the purposes of implementing the grant; and opportunities to introduce blockchain-based transactions in the administration of social assistance.
DN2	Letter to Minister Zulu - Social grant Covid-19 increases	Social grant increases in response to COVID-19 lockdown socio-economic impact	21 April 2020	This is the letter wherein the Minister of Finance is informing the Minister of Social Development about the resourcing and targeting of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. While it is curious to note that nowhere in this letter does 'CoVID-19 SRD grant' appear, the Minister of Finance states that this R350 benefit per household (or up to two family members) is aimed at the informal workers in households not in receipt of social benefits. The letter states that the benefit should reach a maximum of 743 427 households in the first month, and be accessed by 2.7 million beneficiaries by the sixth month.

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN3	Write up of options_RR and CK (2)	Summary report on options to pay the special relief grant	Undated	The document states that whereas The Presidency had requested BankservAfrica to prepare a comprehensive CoVID-19 grant payment solution that would be implemented through the existing banking infrastructure, SASSA also initiated a parallel in-house solution. This would improve SASSA's operational efficiencies in responding to future shocks, as much as it would improve its grant-payment platforms. Both looked at exploiting digitised application, validation and payment solutions to service beneficiaries. The document expresses misgivings with BankservAfrica having full control over the flow of funds at the expense of SASSA and the Department of Social Development who are ultimately accountable for these funds.
DN4	C19 SRD Means Testing Proposal to Banks v3 200514 Comments	Special COVID-19 grant for Social Relief of Distress: Means testing requirements with the banks question and answers	14 May 2020	In this six-page document one sees the requirements that the different banks are bringing on SASSA in order for them to practicalise the means tests with respect to the financial flows into the applicants' bank accounts. The issues covered here include the technology used for the sharing of data between SASSA and the banks, concerns relating to the regulation of information accessibility, defining means testing parameters, fraud checking, etc..

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN5	Dianne Notes for CEO new system	Notes on progress made with SRD automated application process	Undated	The document updates the Chief Executive of SASSA on the progress that SASSA has registered in establishing the electronic grant application system that would service a large number of applicants from 24 March 2020. While describing the digital platforms (WhatsApp and USSD) by which applicants can get their applications to SASSA, a few speculations of how the applicants would be paid are made (this suggests that discussions with the banking sector may have not concluded at this stage). It looks like the document may have been authored in early April. The document suggests that financial reconciliation of all payments be conducted daily.
DN6	COVID 19 unemployment Grant Withdrawal (SRD) 2 June 2020	Postbank: Effecting a COVID 19 Grant Withdrawal (SRD) Withdrawal	02 June 2020	In great detail, this two-page document describes Postbank's process of opening a digital (cardless) bank account, how SASSA credits that account with the money, the requirements for the beneficiary to access (be paid) the benefit, the requirement for SASSA-Postbank financial reconciliation.

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN7	FINAL Briefing on Workshop Proposals 16042020 v3 PEAC	Proposals for South Africa's economic policy response to COVID-19	16 April 2020	The four-page document reports that on Thursday, 16 April 2020 The Presidency convened a number of South African economists from within the State, academia, civil society, organised labour and think tanks. These were joined by the Presidential Economic Advisory Council. The purpose of the meeting was to ask the economists to share proposals on the country's response to CoVID-19. They anonymously identified the following as the key responses: enabling an effective public health response; relieving hunger and social distress; providing support for wages to assist employers and employees; and ensuring that firms can access shock-bridging finance. Relevant to this research, this meeting identified that "The primary objective in the immediate term should be to protect households that depend on informal activities and social grants".
DN8	Means Test Proposal d3.280920	Problem Statement	28 September 2020	This two-page document states that as of August 2020 SASSA has, in partnership with banks, been implementing an income means test. This proxy means tests allows SASSA to determine whether or not the applicants have other means of income into their bank accounts. It further notes that the implementation of this stringent means test has resulted in nearly 2 million people being excluded from accessing the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN9	Kate Orkin Oxford Duke JPAL Africa	Social Protection in Response to COVID-19 Paper 1: Impact of extending the Special COVID-19 Grant for Social Relief of Distress (SRD) and the CSG Caregivers Allowance to March 2021	September 2020	The sixteen-page document was commissioned by The Presidency. It argues that the extension of the CoVID-19 SRD grant from October 2020 to April 2021 was likely to result in this grant: reducing hunger; preventing communities engaging in “distressed asset sales”, and thereby reducing their prospects of sustaining and increasing their autonomous long-term earnings; reducing school drop-outs; financing job seeking initiatives among beneficiaries and their dependants (this would not necessarily result in growing employment if the economy does not create jobs); preventing the negative effects that the CoVID-19 lockdown may have on subsistence farmers and small businesses; and unlikely to increase alcohol/tobacco use. The removal of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was likely to lead these outcomes in the opposite directions. The document states that the CoVID-19 SRD grant’s “targeting process for new beneficiaries has been at least as stringent as comparable countries’ processes, by checking beneficiaries against existing data.” In these comparative countries, national cash grant schemes and registries that target poorer citizens are institutionalised.

Document Number	Received File Name	Key informant-supplied documents		Relevance
		Document Name	Date	
DN10	COVID 19 unemployment Grant Withdrawal (SRD) 2 June 2020	Postbank: Effecting a COVID 19 Grant Withdrawal (SRD) Withdrawal	02 June 2020	In great detail, this two-page document describes Postbank's process of opening a digital (cardless) bank account, how SASSA credits that account with the money, the requirements for the beneficiary to access (be paid) the benefit, the requirement for SASSA-Postbank financial reconciliation.
DN11	Minister doc on COVID grant	DSD response to proposals for increased Child Support Grant and COVID grant	Undated	In this three-page document the Minister of Social Development welcomes the proposals that the various stakeholders have made with respect to how poor households can be cushioned from CoVID-19. With respect to the prospective introduction of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the document states that this grant is targeting precarious informal sector workers. These are currently neither serviced by SASSA nor the Unemployment Insurance Fund. As a result, they stand to lose the most from the CoVID-19 lockdown owing to the nature of their market that is heavily reliant on human traffic.

		Key informant-supplied documents		
Document Number	Received File Name	Document Name	Date	Relevance
DN12	MzansiY2	Postbank Mzansi Y2 Account	Undated	This two-page document describes Mzansi Account as a low-cost savings banking product that is designed to afford the unbanked point-of-sale purchases. For the purposes of opening a CoVID-19 SRD account, SASSA provides the Postbank with the SA identity numbers (SAIN) of the approved beneficiaries. Postbank uses the SAIN as accounts instead of the actual physical cards. The beneficiary needs to present herself in person at the South African Post Office branch together with her South African identity document (SAID) to request for the grant pay-out.

Above is the tabulated summary of the key informant-sourced documents that were analysed as primary documentary sources of information relative to the research question. The summary generated the document numbers (DN) that were used during the analytical cross-referencing. The actual names of the files that were received from the key informants are provided in the table (and these names were retained for future referencing and verification). Where a document has an in-document title and date, those are provided in the table. Corresponding to the document number, received document name, document title and date is the summary of the document's relevance to the study. For the purpose of this study, document analysis was primarily employed pursuant of process tracing to meet two objectives, namely:

- i. To explore the socio-historical factors that influenced SASSA's capacity to respond to the call for the CoVID-19 SRD grant to be implemented.
- ii. To profile the key systems of social relations that influenced SASSA's ability to mobilise the requisite capacity to implement the CoVID-19 grant.

3.3.2 Key informant interviews

Key informants are individuals who have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research subject matter. Owing to their extensive expertise key informants can provide insights into the operations of the broader system of research inquiry (UCLA, 2012). Gupta, et al. (2000) advise that the "key-informant methodology is inextricably intertwined with organizational context" (Gupta, et al., 2000: 324). In other words, how one carries out the key informant role is influenced by whatever is happening in the organisation that one is representing. By virtue of their institutional roles, knowledge, willingness, communicability and impartiality key informants are regarded to be "extraordinary" sources of information within the institutions that assign them the responsibility to participate in research projects (Marshall, 1996; Gupta, et al., 2000). For these reasons, key informants are better placed to provide research projects with high "quality of data that can be obtained in a relatively short period of time" (Marshall, 1996).

Anonymity

Owing to the sensitivities that arise from the exchanges that took place between State departments and institutions during the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, it was deemed appropriate not to mention the departments and institutions that participated in this study. This was to ensure that the responses and analyses in this dissertation are not ascribed to either of the key informants that were assigned by the participating State departments and institutions. In view of the great sway that institutional narratives hold over people's personal, professional, material and future prospects, anonymising the State departments and institutions that participated in the study was deemed to be in the best interest of all concerned while, at the same time, this study continues to catalyse robust intellectual debates on State capacity as they arose relative to the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The decision to anonymise the research-participating institutions and department was intended at managing the small population problem: "where there is a high risk that individuals may recognise themselves in the talk of others" (Saunders et al., 2015: 619).

Selection of key informants

On the grounds that the CoVID-19 SRD grant was effectively conceptualised, resourced and implemented by a limited number of State departments and institutions, letters requesting their participation were addressed to the relevant heads of seven (7) of these. The criteria for choosing the departments and institutions who would participate in the study were that they should satisfy one or a combination of these:

1. perform a central over-all conceptualisation and coordinating role in the State;
2. manage government's budget processes and coordinate financial relations;
3. policy departments that are responsible for implementation institutions;
4. implement social security services, in particular the CoVID-19 SRD grant; and
5. have widely-accessible physical and technological infrastructure for purposes of paying the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Six State institutions and departments responded affirmatively to the request for them to participate in the study. They further assigned relevant key informants from among their officials to be the study's key informants.

Data collection

Rather than limiting the respondents to a static mode of questions and answers, a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A) was designed to allow the key informants to interactively express the wealth of thoughts, attitudes, experiences, meanings and motives in relation to how SASSA mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Pursuant of abductive analysis along the process tracing frame, these key informant interviews were meant to uncover the "affects, powers, involutions" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 241) of decisions, actions and choices that are relevant to SASSA's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The interviews that were conducted with them "probe[d] beyond official accounts and narratives and ask[ed] theoretically-guided questions" (Tansey, 2007: 7).

As alluded to earlier, the data collection for this study took place during the lockdown period that was instituted by government owing to the spread of the CoVID-19 pandemic. Noting the constraints that CoVID-19 was imposing on conducting in-person interviews and fieldwork observations (e.g. Roberts et al., 2021; Thunberg & Arnell, 2021; Hall et al., 2021), key informant interviews were conducted by means of the Microsoft Teams virtual communication platform. This was in line with notions that during covariate shocks such as CoVID-19, "audio/visual digital interviews can be a good alternative for capturing people's narratives and perspectives when other options are not possible or available" (Thunberg and Arnell, 2021: 10). With the consent of key informants, all the interviews were recorded, and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was done through two approaches: process tracing; and abductive analysis. In process tracing the study's primary sources of information — namely, official documents and transcripts of key informant interviews — were analysed to establish the causal process within the CoVID-19 SRD grant. This analysis was particularly applied in Chapter 4 of the study. The second approach, the abduction logic of inference, was conducted on the narratives that arise from the transcripts of the key informants. To achieve this, the transcripts were read several times in search of narratives that are relevant to the central tenets of Granovetter's (1985) embeddedness and Migdal's (2004) State-in-society as the study's conceptual framework. To give effect to abductive inference, insights were drawn from complementing the strengths in the literature that we considered in chapter 2 above. This is the deductive inference first half of abductive analysis. Narratives that did not immediately relate with these conceptual frameworks ("theoretically surprising") and from which new understandings, concepts and theories of State capacity could arise were subjected to the second half of abductive analysis, namely inductive inference. These are data-driven discoveries. Where applicable, related narratives were combined with their nuances intact. Combined, these are abductive analysis. Thus, abductive inference lies along the same continuum of analytical tools where deduction and induction are found. Each assumes a different attitude to different aspects of the same data.

3.5 Data Triangulation

Triangulation entails the use of multiple methods or sources of data to attend to the same research question. Following Denzin's (1970) example, this study adopted comparative triangulation (Denzin, 1970: 475) in approaching this study. This consists of data triangulation, conceptual triangulation and analytical triangulation that were applied at different times throughout the study. Data triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources to inter-subjectively examine the verifiability of data sources' claims. In this study, six key informants provided data on the same process. So, their claims could be cross-checked against other key informants' contributions. Also, twenty key informant-supplied documents were analysed. The information that was communicated by these could be triangulated with information contained by other sources within the study. The second form of triangulation is the conceptual triangulation. On the premise that Granovetter's (1985) embeddedness and Migdal's (2004) State-in-society are concepts than theories, Denzin's (1970) theoretical triangulation was adapted to conceptual triangulation. Therefore the key tenets that arise from these conceptual frameworks were used to triangulate the findings in answering the question of how the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. These conceptual frameworks provided for this study to address its question by looking at the data through their conceptual lenses that interpret the State in different ways. The last form of triangulation that this study is proposing is analytical triangulation. Analytical triangulation entails adopting two or more data analysis approaches to the same data within the same study. This was the case in this study where process tracing was used to analyse temporal aspects of the study (first and second objectives of the study) whereas abductive inference was applied to the analysis of the concrete and ongoing systems of social relations within the CoVID-19 SRD grant (third

objective of the study) (for a detailed discussion on the social dimensions of processes see Cecchini et al., 2020). In assuming triangulation at three levels, this study heeds Denzin's (1970) caution that "Sociologists must move beyond single-method, atheoretical studies" (Denzin, 1970: 472).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was granted ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria (See Appendix B). In line with this approval, basic ethical principles of social research were adhered throughout the study, including during the write-up of the findings. These included informed consent, ensuring no harm, confidentiality, and voluntary participation as the pillars of the study. These principles are briefly described below:

Informed consent

According to Bryman (2016: 138), the principle of informed consent is that in research, participants should be sufficiently informed to make informed decisions about whether they wish to participate in a study. To this end, each key informant in this study was provided with an information sheet and consent letter (Appendix C) that they signed twice and returned to the researcher. The first signature indicates the full consent to participate in the study; and the second one is the consent for the interview to be recorded and transcribed. All six key informants completed and duly signed the consent forms.

Voluntary participation

Every key informant in this study was informed that their participation was voluntary. None of the key informants participated in the study under duress and coercion; or because they were unduly enticed to do so; and without their informed consent.

No harm

None of the key informants in this research study was harmed. An undertaking was made to each key informant that she/he will not suffer injury as a result of participating in this study. The key informants were individually informed about the intention of the study as well as the risks that the researcher thought could arise from participating in the study.

Confidentiality.

The consent form provided that all the information that the study obtained where the key informant could be identified would be kept strictly confidential. Further, this provision stated that the collected information would be published in scientific or scholarly publications and presentations. For these purposes, the identities of the key informants and the departments and institutions they represent will not be shared. Key informant interviews vary in length between forty-four minutes and fifty-two seconds (44: 52) to one hour forty-five minutes and thirty-seven seconds (1: 45: 37). Only the researcher handled the research data from the interviews, to the recordings, to the transcriptions, to the cleaning of the transcriptions and the analysis. By default, with each key informant, both the audio and visuals were recorded. In

total, six interviews were recorded. Following each of the recordings, these were stored on the researcher's regular computer in .mp4 format files. This is the same computer from wherefrom the key interviews were conducted. On this count, there was no need to transfer the recordings from one system to another. However, in the event that the computer is damaged these files will be accessible to me via a private online drive. Moreover, the Sociology Department has availed an online drive where each student can securely store fieldwork data. So, the documents that were sourced from the key informants as well as the primary recordings together with the cleaned transcripts were loaded and stored on the University-provided online storage drive.

Anonymity

As discussed earlier, another ethical consideration that arose during the analysis phase was the need to anonymise the State institutions and departments that participated in this study for reporting purposes. This decision was intended at managing the small population problem: "where there is a high risk that individuals may recognise themselves in the talk of others" (Saunders et al., 2015: 619).

3.7 Reflections on positionality

The researcher deemed it important to clarify his positionality and social role relative to the research project. Positionality refers to the researcher's worldview or positioning relative to the subject that is being investigated, research participants, the research process, the findings and their interpretation (Holmes, 2020: 2). For this reason, the researcher hereby reflects on the social environment that may have influenced his choice of the research project; access to and entry into the researched; relationships with key informants; and held views, values, and beliefs in relation to the research process. Whereas the researcher initially considered himself to be an insider researcher, the implications that the Hawthorne effect on the researcher-researched relations — influences that the study context may have on the regular researcher-researched behaviours, attitudes and knowledge of one another — he subsequently deepened the meanings of his positionality within the research project. Broadly, the Hawthorne effect refers to any alteration in the behaviour of the researched and the quality of data that is collected from them owing to the fact that the researcher is observing them (Mellinger, 2020: 102). Holmes is articulating this point when she says "who you are may indeed affect the fieldwork you do, and the answers you get" (Holmes, 2021: 3).

In the period leading to, and throughout the first year of the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant (May 2020 — April 2021) as well as for the duration of the research project, the researcher was employed in the Department of Social Development, a State department to whom SASSA is accountable. In the lead up to South Africa's first confirmed case of CoVID-2019, the researcher was responsible for all matters and functions that relate to research as well as monitoring and evaluation in the Ministry of Social Development. For a period of two months between May and June 2020 he acted as the Chief-of-Staff in the Ministry. When he was confirmed CoVID-19 positive at the end of June 2020 he stepped back from the logistically-demanding role of Chief-of-Staff, and continued to perform assignments that are

relevant to research, monitoring and evaluation. From 2019 to the date of submitting this dissertation, the researcher reported directly to, and worked closely with, the Minister of Social Development.

By virtue of the multiple roles that he occupied at different times in the public service dating back to 2010, the researcher sustained first-hand and intermittent or continuous interactions with four of the key informants prior to the research project. One of the key informants has been known to him since 2011. The second among the four has been known to him since 2015. The latter two among them were known to him owing to the fact that they meet and interact with the researcher on a frequent basis pursuant of official business whereby they provide their functional reports to the Ministry. Prior to this study, the remaining two key informants were altogether unknown to the researcher.

As part of his official duties, the researcher also had the privilege of participating in confidential official meetings as well as interacting with confidential reports and correspondence that are relevant to the CoVID-19 SRD grant. In this sense, being employed in the Ministry of Social Development afforded the researcher unbounded access to the behind-the-scenes social dynamics, encounters, relationships actors, exchanges and discussions that prominently influenced the CoVID-19 SRD grant incarnate.

It can also be said that the researcher's "institutional base" (Broadhead and Rist, 1976: 326) in the Ministry of Social Development as well as pre-existing relationships with most of the actors along the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant may have influenced his ability to gain access to the institutions and departments that participated in this study. Perhaps this is true. That being said, considered reflections on the nature of the researcher-researched relationships at different times throughout the research process would be helpful.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher naïvely regarded himself to be an insider researcher. However, towards the latter stages of data collection, particularly when he started with data analysis — following each interview, after reading each interview transcript for the first time, during narrative analysis, and when iteratively conducting abductive analysis — he found himself questioning what it meant to be an "insider". For this reason, and on the backdrop of the institutional setting that was elaborated here above, it is worth the readers' while to familiarise themselves with the nuances that are relevant to the researcher's insider researcher experiences as follows.

Noting the discomfiting questions that the researcher kept on asking himself, he started to consult the relevant literature on the subjects of positionality and the observer's effect on the quality of data the key informants shared with him (Le Bourdon. 2022; Holmes, 2021; Adu-Ampong and Adams, 2019; Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge, 2017; Ross, 2017; Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2012; Chavez, 2008; McCorkel and Myers, 2003; and Visser, 2000). From this point onwards I was able "to move with the discomfort" (Le Bourdon, 2022: 7).

As mentioned above, the researcher did not instinctively have a reflexive and critical grasp of his insider researcher role in relationships of privilege during the early stages of this research (Le Bourdon, 2022: 2). Partly, this initial indifference can be attributed to the fact that, similar to most humanities and social sciences' students, the research methodology training that he received emphasised “‘getting to know the field’, understanding participants, gaining access, and developing rapport” (Chavez, 2008: 491) than the need to understand the likeness and unlikeness that the researcher shares with key informants, and how these can complicate the research process and interpretation of data. The discomfort that grew in him as he started to handle the data nudged him into a reflexive posture wherein had had to, in hindsight, critically examine the different points at which he: pondered on the practical implications that the State-government relationship may have had on his ‘insider’ status, especially his encounters with the key informants in- and outside the research project; questioned the accessibility of the set of key informants to random researchers; became curious whether another researcher would have experienced the ease with which he collected data for the same research project; and whether the quality of the data would have been qualitatively different if a random researcher would have been collecting it for this research (Adu-Ampong and Adams, 2019: 4).

With these few considerations in mind, it is worth noting that he initially planned to have seven State institutions/departments that performed different roles along the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant to participate in this study. However, the seven are not the only State institutions and departments that carried out different responsibilities relative to the CoVID-19 SRD grant. After weeks of persistent telephonic and email follow-ups to the initial formal request that he addressed to this department, his request was declined with the reasoning that this department “is not able to assist you in this regard since the Department is not involved with the Covid-19 SASSA grants” (Key informant X correspondence).

Similar requests that the researcher addressed on the letterhead of the Department of Sociology of the University of Pretoria using his private email address were directed to the Directors-General, Heads and Chief Executive Officers of the remaining six institutions and departments were responded to affirmatively. Where the institutional responses did not include the names and contact details that the institution/department was assigning to be the study's key informant in the permission letter, the researcher made follow-up telephone inquiries to establish these details. Notwithstanding the fact that the researcher had prior professional knowledge of four of the assigned officials either in his earlier or current roles, he did not have a say in who the participating institutions/departments were assigning as their respective key informants.

The researcher gained access to the participating institutions and departments through common avenues that any researcher would have used. In other words, he directed his initial correspondence to the Directors-General, Heads and Chief Executive Officers as provided in the Internet-based directory of the Government Communication Information System (GCIS). In one instance, and perhaps owing to the University's letterhead as a trusted social marker, a permission letter from a Director-General referred the researcher to and assigned as a key

informant a senior official that the researcher did not have prior personal relations with. The University's letterhead could have increased his credibility as a researcher. In this regard, Adu-Ampong and Adams (2019) state that "researchers need to establish themselves as worthy of the time to be invested in the research" (Adu-Ampong and Adams, 2019: 10). He then wrote to the assigned official to inform him that the Director-General assigned him to be the study's key informant. In welcoming this assignment, the official in question quipped "Greetings and congrats on getting through the maze so far!" (Key Informant 6). Though said in jest, this statement demonstrates that State bureaucrats may actually be recognising the difficulties that researchers are experiencing to access them as sources of information. In the same email, this senior official copied two other officials, and his response further mentioned that he and these officials will avail themselves for this research's data needs. It was at this point that the researcher realised that one of the two copied officials was someone who had been known to him since 2011 when they were both working on a common international programme. Later on when he sought to secure an appointment for the interviews with either official for their first-hand knowledge of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, their availability resulted in the interview being conducted with the official that has been known to him since 2011.

While Key Informant 1 and the researcher have been acquainted since 2015 in different official roles than the ones they are currently serving in, the researcher nonetheless wrote him a formal request letter after learning that he is responsible for all CoVID-19 related matters in his institution. He responded affirmatively to this request. In the instance of Key Informant 2, the researcher addressed his request for participation to the Chief Executive Officer who, in turn, referred the researcher to this Key Informant. Similarly, the researcher learned about the participation of Key Informants 3, 4 and 6 when he received the permission letters from the Directors-General or the respective Chief Executive Officers of the relevant institutions or departments in question. Because landline contacts would not always be attended to during the CoVID-19 lockdown period, in the instances of Key Informants 4 and 6, the researcher counted on his extensive social networks to provide him with alternative contact details of persons from whom he could follow up the initial request or assigned official. Without these alternative contact details there is little that suggests that the institutions and departments wherefrom these key informants come would have participated in this study.

The researcher's assessment of his interactions with the key informants were varied. Within these variations, the experiences of insider-outsider identities coexisted in different configurations from one interview to the next, and the categories could overlap at different times within the same interview. To simplify these variations, the key informants can be categorised into three distinct types as follows: comrade; principal-collegiality; and distanced. The researcher has strong impressions that the relationships that he had with each key informant substantively affected the quality of the interview experiences as well as the information that the key informant felt at liberty to share during the interview. The experiences that correspond with these categories are as follows:

Comrade: Throughout the interview one key informant addressed the researcher as 'Bra' (meaning brother). Addressing the researcher in this manner may have been this key

informant's attempt to formalise an otherwise informal relationship that has developed between the two of them over the years. The exchanges that took place between the researcher and this key informant were unrestrained such that in one of his responses the key informant referred to the markers of the length of their relationship. In one instance during the interview, and unexpectedly, the key informant related a family story in the following:

What did he do? He went to UJ, dropped out of UJ. Coached basketball, stopped coaching basketball, sold bread. Stopped selling bread. Went back to coaching basketball. Went back to studying.

There were no self-evident signs that suggested that this key informant was withholding information from the researcher. Particularly where this applies to relations between different State institutions and departments, the researcher experienced this to be among the free-participating key informants. While the insider's vantage point to this research provided the researcher access to "nuanced and unique insight[s]" (Chavez, 2008: 476) to otherwise privileged dimensions of State reality, his experiences with this key informant as well as those in the next category particularly emphasised the value of being an insider researcher because of the different gradients of trust that the key informants performed throughout the interviews.

Principal-collegiality: The researcher related to three of the key informants through what may be termed the principal-collegial frame. The principal-collegiality frame is constructed from detecting, on the one hand, key informants relating to the researcher as their direct principal; and on the other, aspects of these relationships were enacted through pre-existing cooperation and collegiality that the key informants extended to the researcher. In one instance, and notwithstanding the fact that every key informant had signed a detailed consent form, at the beginning of an interview one of them sought verbal assurances for anonymity because "that obviously gives us freedom to speak more candidly..." (Key Informant 3). Similar to the "Comrade" category of key informant interview relationships, the researcher experienced this category of key informant interviews as approachable, candid, critical and engaging.

Distanced: The researcher experienced two of the key informants as distanced, circumspect and rationalised during the interviews. Peculiarly, at different times during the interviews, and notwithstanding the repeated prompts to reflect on the relationships between the different institutions and departments that participated in the process of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, these key informants either steered clear of being critical of the process or affirmed it in its totality. These key informants avoided what may be regarded as controversy. The researcher's suspicion is that these key informants' introverted participation may have been informed by "the intersection of politics, time and the research project's focus" (Visser, 2000: 13). In other words, during the research project, the CoVID-19 SRD grant experienced implementation and governance challenges. For instance, while one news article reported that the Postbank kept an incident of the theft of R90 million of SASSA money a "secret" (van Rensburg, 2022), another had reported that the Postbank was on the verge of losing "its status as a designated clearing system participant in the National Payment System" (de Wet, 2022). Thus, the quality

of information that these key informants provided may have been influenced by the politics that besieged some of the key informants during the time of the research. Visser (2000) continues to state that “We should consider the impact of positionality and political-temporal contingency in the research process in terms of multiple topical research agendas that could also turn out to be contentious and difficult to research” (Visser, 2000: 18).

State-Government Play and Positionality: Being an insider researcher means the researcher assumed an emic approach to the research study. Unlike an outsider researcher, this approach strengthened the trust, significantly reduced the power imbalances between himself and the key informants and increased the findings’ internal reliability (Healey, 2017: 6). Initially, and before conducting the key informant interviews, the researcher naïvely thought of himself as an insider. His later reflections revealed to him the implicit nuances that suggested aspects of him being an outsider while being an insider. The co-existence of insider-outsider positions largely manifested itself along the State-government distinction that defines the continued identity of the researcher (working for government) from most of the key respondents (working for the State) in the following manner:

Except for one, all of the key respondents did not work in a political office. In other words, they were in the State bureaucracy. The State-government distinction is real in that it separates those unto whom political powers are conferred from those who embody the institutional memory of the affairs of the country. Strictly speaking, those who serve political offices are considered to be serving the government of the day, and the length of time they spend in office is limited by the electoral term; whereas those who serve the State bureaucracy possess in-depth technical expertise in their chosen field and serve the State longer than political appointees do. When applied to positionality and the key informant interviews, key informants knew that the researcher works in a political office. Consequently, that may have defined him as being an outsider to the State bureaucracy. Even when political office confers certain perceived privileges, such an institutional positionality tends to create and reinforce the us-and-them identities between interlocutors on both sides of this divide. With the State-government identities being a constant feature of relationships within and between the institutions and departments that participated in this study, and with the researcher serving a political office being a known fact, the research process must have been influenced by this positionality.

Overall, the researcher partakes in the State-government ecosystem from within which the key informants responded during the interviews. Not only did this shared ecosystem afford him the privileged vantage point of conducting this research, it may have afforded him prior work-specific trust relationships that may have spilled into the research study. He reflected how, owing to his positionality, some of the key informants may have shared their insights that relate to the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Prospects are that these would otherwise not have been shared with outsider researchers.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the study's methodology looking at the research design, including the data collection methods. In these, document analysis and key informant interviews were presented as the study's methods. The temporal and process-defined objectives of the study (the first two) will be attended to applying narrative analysis to process tracing. The third objective of the study will be attended to by applying narrative analysis to abductive inference. Also in this chapter, the ethical considerations that were adhered to throughout this study have been detailed analysis. The study anonymised the study-participating State departments and institutions. The researcher's positionality was discussed in detail. The next two chapters present the key findings. Chapter 4 presents the findings in relation to the study's first and second specific objectives. The third objective is treated in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: SASSA's Capacity through Socio-historical factors and Key Systems

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we carefully trace evidence: that refers to the socio-historical factors that are relevant to the State's ability to mobilise the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant within SASSA; and with which the key systems of social relations that enabled the implementation of this grant can be profiled. The chapter discusses the findings through process tracing as an analytical approach. Pursuant of establishing how the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the first two objectives of the study, are being attended to in this chapter owing to the temporality-process fit of their attributes. To emphasise the temporality-process approach of this chapter, the reader's attention is drawn to the iterative meaning and usage of 'factors' as referring to both function and agency in a particular social history (temporality) and institutions (place) within which the CoVID-19 SRD grant arose (Abrams, 1988: 72). As a result, the two objectives that this chapter is attending to are: (i) the exploration of the socio-historical factors that influenced SASSA's capacity to respond to the call for the CoVID-19 SRD grant to be implemented; and (ii) profiling of the key systems of social relations that influenced SASSA's ability to mobilise the requisite capacity to implement the CoVID-19 grant.

Consequently, key informants' and document-obtained narratives of the CoVID-19 SRD grant were analysed for purposes of understanding how the different State actors contributed to, or mobilised, the implementation capacity of the CoVID-19 SRD grant (causation). In this sense, process tracing enabled the study to approach and relate the different, often viewed to be competing, CoVID-19 SRD grant causal mechanisms by locating them in relation to the different socio-historical factors that played themselves out as well as the key systems of social relations that enabled implementation within their institutional-infrastructure configurations (Tilley and Pawson, 2000).

In approaching the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of State capacity relative to the CoVID-19 SRD grant from the vantage point of process tracing, this study is addressing the knowledge gap that none of the studies that, thus far, are addressing themselves to the different dimensions of the State's response to the advent of CoVID-19 have done. Therefore, process tracing draws us to consider the institutional-infrastructure causal mechanisms whose presence is being implied in other studies (for instance, Zondi, 2021; Khambule, 2021; Khambule and Mdlalose, 2022; Mazzucato et al., 2022).

4.2 Socio-historical factors

This section considers the socio-historical factors that are antecedent to SASSA invoking the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The CoVID-19 SRD grant needs to be understood within particular social relations within which the State capacity

to implement it was mobilised. Consequently, the State institutions and departments that were part of conceptualising, resourcing and implementing this grant must be established as an account of the socio-historical process that is reflected here.

SASSA through the brief historical lens: A view into SASSA's implementation capacity requires an acknowledgement of the influence that the colonial-apartheid State's approach to social assistance had on present-day SASSA. Consequently, SASSA can be understood within its path dependence. Whereas Stinchcombe (1968) expressed path dependence as "an effect created by causes at some previous period [*becoming*] a cause of that same effect in succeeding periods" (Stinchcombe, 1968: 103), Mahoney (2000) brought out two nuanced variations of path dependence. The first of these variations is known as the "self-reinforcing sequences" (Mahoney, 2000: 508), and the second is the "reactive sequences" variation (Mahoney, 2000: 509). The self-reinforcing sequences variation says, with insignificant structural changes, State institutions reproduce their initially-adopted decisions, choices and preferences over long periods of time because the benefits of doing so are deemed to be greater than the costs. Consequently, a continuous pattern is reproduced through a series of decisions, choices, preferences and events. Historical sociology is enriching this variation of path dependency by analysing the processes that reproduce the patterns including the "functional, power, and legitimation mechanisms" that underlie them (Mahoney, 2000: 509). The reactive sequences variation identifies and interlinks a series of "temporally ordered and causally connected" reactions to earlier decisions, choices, preferences and events. Owing to the series of subsequent reactions, the trajectory of future developments substantively assume new and different directions from the earlier — pre-existing — path. A necessary property to the chain reaction is contingency:

"the inability of theory to predict or explain, either deterministically or probabilistically, the occurrence of a specific outcome... an occurrence that was not expected to take place, given certain theoretical understandings of how causal processes work" (Mahoney, 2000: 513).

As identified by Mahoney (2000) above, it is with the understanding that existing conceptual and theoretical frameworks may have certain limitations that process tracing was conducted (chapter 4) and abductive inference analysis applied (chapter 5) to the data. Doing so permits for the emergence of new knowledge.

Outlining the socio-historical that are relevant to SASSA's implementation capacity starts with noting that this agency was established in 2005 as the only State institution that, according to the *South African Social Security Agency Act 9 of 2004*, is legally mandated to manage, administer and pay social assistance throughout South Africa. The establishment of SASSA was intended at consolidating 14 inefficient, fragmented and unevenly resourced social grant payment systems that operated during the pre-democracy years (Gronbach, 2017: 11). Therefore, the need to address the State's pre-existing inefficiencies, incapacity to manage social assistance and institutionalise equity and fairness in the administration of the country's

social security environment were among the primary reasons for the historical establishment of SASSA.

Between 1943 and 1994, the State's social grant implementation capacity grew from 30 000 to 2.5 million beneficiaries (Seekings, 2015: 8 — 11). According to a business case document that proposed the established of SASSA, in 2001 the South African government paid 3 492 372 social assistance grants (Department of Social Development, 2001a: 20) using its legacy social grants payment and administration technology — known as SOCPEN — that dates back to the 1930s (Barca and Chirchir, 2014: 59 and Transform, 2017: 26). Excluding the beneficiaries of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, in 2022 this number increased to 18 842 326 (SASSA, 2022: 4). The surge in the size of the beneficiary population is relevant to contextualising the historical capacity against which the CoVID-19 SRD grant was conceptualised, resourced and implemented. The present-day social assistance environment wherein SASSA is operating lies in contradistinction from the severely limited and discriminatory one that was intended at creating the “welfare elite” out of White people (Visser, 2009: 225).

Centralised CoVID-19 Response Coordination: As part of the State's response to the advent of CoVID-19, the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant were centrally-coordinated in the State. According to one key informant, centralisation was particularly important because of the need to strengthen the State's capacity to implement on the back of the controversial “nine wasted years” (Zeeman, 2019) during which the State's implementation ability was impaired.

Notwithstanding the high levels of centralising and coordinating the State's CoVID-19 responses, at different times throughout the study period, exogenous factors prompted that adaptations be effected to the implementation of the COVID-19 SRD grant owing to the adverse stop-and-start effects on its continuity. The one factor that is worth noting here is: The CoVID-19 SRD grant was originally announced to apply from May to October 2020. This end date was subsequently extended by a further three months (November 2020 to January 2021). In turn, this was also extended by yet another three months (February to April 2021). Whereas these extensions were premised on commissioned scientific papers, the variable that the State neglected in effecting them relate to the procurement of the different services that constitute SASSA's capacity to implement this grant. The unpredictability of the termination or extension of the COVID-19 SRD grant rendered SASSA resourcing plan for the continued implementation of the grant intermittent.

SASSA and Outsourcing: Perhaps the most prominent historical factor that contributed towards the impairment of SASSA's implementation capacity in the recent years is its long history of outsourcing the payment of social grants (a subject that Gronbach, 2017 and Vally, 2016 attend to in great detail). This resulted in the protracted case between AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd (AllPay) and Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) in which the Constitutional Court declared SASSA's appointment of CPS to provide social security grants distribution services over a five-year period invalid owing to SASSA not following proper procurement policies (Constitutional Court, 2014: 34). This encounter

accounts for the resistance that other State actors displayed at SASSA's suggestion that it can assume the overall responsibility of coordinating and implementing the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Nonetheless, this resistance was largely premised on anecdotal accounts than verifiable knowledge about SASSA's capacity to implement this grant (Key Informant 2) because particularly following the hostilities that relate to ending the relationship with CPS, SASSA started explore its internal capacity and resources with the view to self-administer and self-pay its regular grants that include the old age, disability and child support grants. This action was consistent with a condition that was handed down by the Constitutional Court on 23 March 2018 where, among others, it stated that:

1. CPS "must file with this Court an audited statement of the expenses incurred, the income received and the net profit earned under the contract [and this statement will be verified independently by SASSA's auditors who will have unrestricted access to CPS's financial information, and subsequently be approved by the National Treasury]";
2. the personal data of social security grant beneficiaries that CPS "obtained in the payment process remains private and may not be used for any purpose other than payment of the grants... [this will include CPS being precluded] from inviting beneficiaries to "opt in" to the sharing of confidential information for the marketing of goods and services"; and
3. a Panel of Experts that would have to "evaluate [and report on] the steps proposed or taken by SASSA aimed at SASSA itself administering and paying the grants in the future [meaning by September 2018]" was appointed. The earlier order of this Court (17 April 2014) required SASSA to lodge a report wherein it is "setting out all the relevant information on whether and when it will be ready to assume the duty to pay grants itself".

Unlike in the earlier years when grant administration and payment were functions that were largely performed by service providers, increasingly, SASSA started to "take more responsibility as well and not just the accountability" where the administration and payment of grants were concerned (Key Informant 2). Practically, this entailed SASSA generating payment files and crediting each beneficiary's bank account with the relevant amount for the grant type. It is this reconfiguration in how SASSA-internal capabilities were utilised that gave this institution the confidence to insist that it would implement and manage the new CoVID-19 SRD grant on behalf of the State.

Capacity Partnerships: SASSA's capacity to enter into partnerships to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was constrained by a few factors as follows: (Bhorat, 2017 and Dawood, 2017

1. ***The institutional path dependency that includes colonialism-apartheid's early definition of South Africa's social assistance landscape***

As elaborated earlier, present-day institutional capabilities and capacities as well as policy choices where social assistance were concerned were influenced by the persistence of South Africa's past choices. In some respects, structural factors at an institutional and macro levels had acted to reinforce the limitations that accompany earlier decisions (for instance, technological capabilities (or limitations), and fiscal constraints that resisted the realisation of responsive social policy programmes).

2. *Historical fragmentation of the capacity to implement the unevenly-resourced social assistance across South Africa*

Coming out of colonialism-apartheid, South Africa's social assistance environment was defined on the basis of race and further resourced along the tribally-defined homeland administrations. This resulted in the post-apartheid State inheriting an institutionally-disjointed and bureaucratically-weak social assistance environment that benefitted people along the lines that were determined by colonialism-apartheid. The establishment of SASSA had to reflect the integration of these administrations, efficiencies and the ethos of equality and democracy. As a result, the multiple social assistance administrations were rationalised into SASSA. It is against this earlier-developed institutional backdrop that SASSA had to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

In the *Business Case for an Agency Model*, a document in which the Department of Social Development (2001a) elaborates the need for the establishment of the agency that is now known as SASSA, some of the factors dating between 1994 and 2005 that immediately prompted the establishment of SASSA include: the continuity of the "problem of poor service delivery"; the growing need to institutionalise and standardise sound financial management and operational efficiencies among the provincial authorities; the threat of "increasing demands" for social assistance services, particularly the introduction of new grant types, on the fiscus owing to the need to respond to the population's deteriorating socio-economic conditions; and the call by the National Treasury for the Department of Social Development to make the payment of social grants financially sustainable (Department of Social Development, 2001a: i). To these Gronbach (2017) identified: the competing demands on budget allocations that, in turn, resulted in long delays in beneficiaries receiving their grant payments; the vulnerability of grant beneficiaries to unscrupulous moneylenders; and the National Treasury's concerns over the rising cost of distributing grants (Gronbach, 2017: 13) as the factors that applied during this period.

3. *Systemic inefficiencies*

Mainly as a result of the need to protect the employment contracts of White bureaucrats during the transitional period from apartheid to democracy, South Africa's democratic government inherited a bloated State. Also, the wholesale inheritance of a social assistance system that apartheid had designed for Whites who were a numerical minority meant that this system was going to be overburdened when all of South Africa's population was going to be transposed into it. Because the system that served

Whites was comparatively better designed and resourced than the rest, this system became the default system into which the social assistance beneficiary population would be incorporated. Combined, these factors are indicative of some of the systemic inefficiencies upon which the post-apartheid social assistance environment — consequently, the CoVID-19 SRD grant — was founded.

4. ***Recent history of fraud, corruption and the transgression of the Public Finance Management Act by SASSA***

As implied above in the Constitutional Court matter, SASSA was found to have violated the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act in awarding the grants' payment tender to Cash Paymaster Services without following due process.

5. ***Pre-2019 reputational damages***

Largely hinged on the Constitutional Court processes and outcomes, SASSA enjoyed wide public ill-repute (Gronbach, 2017 and Dawood, 2017). SASSA's damaged reputation created doubt in its ability to be trusted with the responsibility as great as implementing the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

6. ***Obsolescence SOCPEN technology***

Since the 1930s, the administration and payment of social assistance grants in South Africa has been facilitated by means of a technology that is known as SOCPEN (Barca and Chirchir, 2014: 59 and Transform, 2017: 26). The post-apartheid government inherited this old technology and continued using it for the purpose of disbursing grants. With the advent of CoVID-19 in South Africa in 2020, SASSA was paying over 18 million social grants using the largely manual and cumbersome SOCPEN technology that has limited data integration and policy coordination capabilities. Even though SOCPEN had linkages with other management information systems in government, these were limited, paper-based, not real-time and not easily updateable (Barca and Chirchir, 2014: 59—63). The onset of CoVID-19 demanded that the administration and payment of the CoVID-19 SRD grant be via agile and expedient technologies: requirements that SOCPEN could not satisfy.

Civil society capacity partnership: The legal matter of Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town and Another v Minister of Social Development and Others presented a capacity partnership between SASSA and Scalabrini. This case stems from when the Scalabrini Centre approached the North Gauteng High Court asking it to determine whether the exclusion of asylum seekers and special permit-holders from receiving the CoVID-19 SRD grant was lawful and constitutional. Owing to the fact that CoVID-19 affected asylum seekers and special permit-holders were affected by CoVID-19 in the same way that it affects nationals (locals), the Scalabrini Centre deemed their exclusion by the Department of Social Development to be arbitrary, irrational and unreasonable. Consequently, the exclusion of asylum seekers and special permit-holders from this benefit violated their constitutional rights to equality, dignity and access to social security. On 18 June 2020, the Court ruled in favour of the Scalabrini Centre to the extent that eligible asylum seekers and special permit-holders were entitled to

receive the CoVID-19 SRD grant. As a result of this ruling, SASSA had to effect additional modifications to its grant-targeting mechanism (grant design). In this particular instances, SASSA augmented its implementation capacity by involving the litigants in the co-design of the solutions that would make the grant accessible to asylum seekers and special permit-holders. Key Informant 2 brought this to light in the following:

So, for that reason they were able to go to their constituency as well and say, 'Look, work is happening, you will get the grant. We just busy with the development'. And I think that was one of the big lessons we learned was to involve people who are directly affected because then they understand the effort that goes into it.

Developing state-level implementation capacity partnerships: The need to establish implementation capacity partnerships helped SASSA to mobilise the provisions of the Master Service Agreement that it had with the South African Post Office (SAPO) — an agreement that gave effect to the appointment of the South African Post Office to manage the payment of all of SASSA's social grants and the distribution of the social relief of distress (SRD). This agreement was concluded in 2018 following the termination of SASSA's relationship with CPS. It facilitated for SAPO to attend to the payment of over 4 million COVID-19 SRD grant beneficiaries. Key Informant 4 mentioned that the role of the private sector in the implementation of the COVID-19 SRD grant was largely displaced when someone “remembered” that this Agreement caters for SAPO to, on behalf of SASSA, distribute Social Relief of Distress payments to citizens or permanent residents who have limited livelihood resources (SASSA, 2022).

Thus, the partnership with SAPO presented two advantages: SAPO had the capability of performing banking transactions via South Africa's National Payment System⁴ by reason of its subsidiary company, the Postbank; and had approximately 1 200 physical branches in different communities throughout the country wherefrom it could service those in need of COVID-19 SRD grant cash payments. Consequently, the SASSA-SAPO Master Service Agreement enabled SASSA to pay unlimited numbers of CoVID-19 SRD grant beneficiaries per day using banking industry-level technological capabilities. Notwithstanding the resultant role of SAPO branches becoming CoVID-19 super spreader events in the subsequent months (Parliament, 2021), the physical accessibility of SAPO branches combined with the speed with which the grant payments could be delivered made this state capacity partnership arrangement attractive.

SAPO's role in being a CoVID-19 super spreader event arose from the fact that hundreds of thousands of approved CoVID-19 SRD grant beneficiaries would be seen queueing outside SAPO branches when 'social distancing' was a requirement. In the process, SAPO had to

⁴ The National Payment System is operated, regulated and supervised by the South African Reserve Bank and consists of a set of instruments, procedures and rules that enable the payer to transfer funds from one financial institution to another for the purposes of paying the intended beneficiaries (South African Reserve Bank).

balance several challenges at once. One way was easing the accessibility of cash payments to people who needed this intervention the most when they could not earn a livelihood owing to the closure of most of the economy. Doing so meant SAPO had to assume the risk of having large quantities of physical cash in its branches for beneficiaries to access it when they needed it. Related to the cash handling responsibility was the need for SAPO to promptly provide SASSA with auditable financial reconciliations for the payment of successive months to be released. A conflict developed between SASSA and SAPO owing to the pressures that politicians were putting on SASSA for it to remove the risks that link the grant with the CoVID-19 super spreader events (Key Informant 4).

Divergent views on SASSA's implementation capacity: Prior to SASSA assuming the responsibility to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant different State actors expressed three conflicting views about this agency's institutional and implementation capacity. The following views surfaced during the key informant interviews: The first view was that SASSA had no capacity to implement the COVID-19 SRD grant owing to its limitations as publicised in the Constitutional Court case involving CPS and AllPay (Key Informant 1). For this reason, the commercial banks-owned BankservAfrica — “the nexus of the South African payments system, and the largest automated clearing house in Africa” (BankservAfrica) — turned out to be the natural institution that the state approached with the request for it to bring its implementation capacity in aid of the state. This would have meant that BankservAfrica would have assumed the full responsibility for the payment of the CoVID-19 SRD grant through the network of South Africa's commercial banks. Especially noteworthy here is that, in the early days of the conceptualisation of the COVID-19 SRD grant, SASSA was not the state's default implementation mechanism.

The second view was that while SASSA had limited implementation capacity, it approached the question of how it would cater the capacity shortfall by looking into developing state-wide implementation partnerships. Therefore, SASSA identified the activities that it could perform on its own. This was followed by identifying outstanding areas that could be fulfilled by other state institutions relying on their institutional and technological capabilities. Lastly, the private sector would then be brought in to carry out whatever areas where, practically, the state had no implementation capabilities to do so either owing to private sector domination of the available technologies, or beneficiaries' pre-existing consumption choices (this is specific to the population's banking preferences).

The third view was particularly articulated by Key Informant 2 who expressed that in the decade or so before the advent of COVID-19 the state had no verifiable knowledge of SASSA's actual implementation capacity. Claims that SASSA was incapable of successfully carrying out the CoVID-19 SRD grant were, at best, anecdotal and baseless. Contrary to these claims, as we learned above, SASSA reconfigured its capacity and resources since the order of the Constitutional Court. Now with the responsibility to implement the COVID-19 SRD grant falling squarely on SASSA, it piloted the feasibility of using WhatsApp Messenger service (WhatsApp) as a channel that the public could use for the public to use to make applications for the grant. It did this in partnership with the Department of Health. This piloting via relationships within the

state served as the practical platform upon which the subsequent COVID-19 SRD grant-implementation infrastructure was developed by SASSA.

Data partnerships: Other state-level partnerships that were necessary for the relatively successful implementation of the COVID-19 SRD grant are data partnerships. At the heart of the institutional partnerships that SASSA entered into pursuant of the implementation of the COVID-19 SRD grant is the timely availability and reliability of implementation-informing data. In this regard, in its *First Special Report on the Financial Management of Government's Covid-19 Initiatives*, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) notes that the “rich data [that is in the custody of different state institutions] is not integrated, shared across government or effectively used” (Auditor-General of South Africa, 2020a: 14). This gave rise to SASSA implementing the COVID-19 SRD grant against the backdrop of “outdated, limited databases and inadequate verification controls” (Auditor-General of South Africa, 2020b: 12). In this regard, SASSA drew on the data of state institutions such as: the Department of Employment and Labour; the Department of Home Affairs, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF); the South African Revenue Service (SARS); the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); the Department of Correctional Services and commercial banks to validate the eligibility of applicants. However, owing to the weak governance environment that the AGSA identified, during the case study period the AGSA still identified the possibilities of the grant being paid to ineligible persons on the grounds that they may be receiving other incomes or state support (this included the discovery of some 30 000 state employees receiving this grant). Key Informant 2 expressed it as follows, “I think that’s been one of the things as we’ve grown with this grant is that we’ve continued to look for more databases to do validation against”.

The challenge with accessing validation data between State institutions and departments is that the shared data may not be current, may be inaccurate and may not be clean. Therefore, the integrity and relevance of the data that was shared for the purposes of ensuring that those who needed the CoVID-19 SRD grant duly received this benefit was ever-important throughout the case study. To this end, the need to strengthen programme implementation data was important for the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Improving this aspect held the prospects of improving State capacity for the implementation of this grant.

Owing to the State’s weak data capabilities (outdated, inaccurate and rogue data), in September 2020 SASSA developed a specialised CoVID-19 SRD grant reconsideration (appeals) process. This would provide the declined applicants with the opportunity to dispute such decisions. It was during this time that SASSA and the Department of Social Development partnered with commercial banks for the purposes of monitoring the financial inflows into (not account balances of) beneficiaries’ bank accounts. In this sense, a bank account became a means test proxy whether a beneficiary was receiving benefit from other State institutions or departments or other sources. (Key Informant 3).

In order for the bank validation system to achieve its intended purpose — namely, monitoring the financial inflows into (and not the account balance of) the CoVID-19 grant beneficiaries’ bank accounts — SASSA established a relationship with the Banking Association South Africa

(BASA), a formation that represents the interests of commercial bankers. Performing the monitoring of financial inflows on beneficiaries' bank accounts through BASA helped SASSA to detect beneficiaries with multiple bank accounts.

In this regard, the validation exercises that commercial banks carried out entailed that they establish historical financial inflows into a beneficiary's account on the month before the application was submitted. The length of this historical validation process explains the long wait between the approval of the application and the payment of the CoVID-19 SRD grant into the beneficiary's bank account.

4.3 Key systems of social relations that contributed to State capacity

Implementation: According to Key Informant 3, the mandate of, the central coordinating institution was to ensure that implementation happens. This meant mobilising the inputs of the National Treasury, some universities, a number of economists as well as think tanks across the ideological spectrum for them to contribute to the conceptualisation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant as well as the development of its resource estimates. To this end, the grant was initially developed to support the self-employed, those in the informal sector and those who, according to Key Informant 3, "would not be able to do the normal hustle that they have to create some income for themselves".

The social actors that the State consulted across the institutional and ideological spectrum on the nature and configuration of the CoVID-19 response for incomeless populations unanimously agreed that government's intervention should be in the form of cash transfers than food vouchers. President Cyril Ramaphosa was one of those who was pro-grants saying "No, that's [food vouchers are] too demeaning" (Key Informant 1). These actors were of the view that cash transfers would facilitate for the people to make the purchasing choices that suited their needs. In Key Informant 3's words, "... it wasn't like one day we got into a room and we thought 'Let's do the cash grants'. It was an evolving process".

The initial beneficiary modelling estimated that the "precise number of 6.9 million people" would be the grant's target population. Key Informant 6 reported that the initial suggestions of how the conceptualised grant could be implemented ranged from the use of the Department of Employment and Labour's Employment Services of South Africa⁵ to the Child Support Grant. However, these were dismissed with Key Informant 6 saying he had

"to make a point that the child support grant is not the grant that will reach those people that I have in my head that will be made vulnerable by the closure of the economy".

⁵ Established pursuant of the Employment Services Act 4 of 2014, Employment Services of South Africa is a database that contains the details of work-seekers. SASSA and the Department of Social Development rejected the use of this database on the grounds that it would have narrowed the targeting of beneficiaries.

President's Interest: With SASSA now at the helm of implementing the CoVID-19 SRD grant with the assistance of a number of State institutions and departments, both the Department of Social Development and the centrally-coordinating State institution closely carried out performance oversight on SASSA's implementation of this grant. Surprisingly, as mentioned by three key informants, throughout the case study period the President took personal interest in SASSA's performance on this grant to the extent that he received weekly performance reports. Particularly in the first few months of the grant, SASSA was under pressure to pay a huge number of approved applicants. The spread of reports of the non-payment of approved applicants through social media platforms helped to exacerbate the pressure on SASSA. The President's personal interest in the successful implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant suggests that inasmuch as this may initially have presented a burden of expectations on SASSA, these expectations turned out to be a gift that added to SASSA's actual implementation.

On the backdrop of a range of external and internal influences that range from policy commentators who were critical of government's responsiveness to CoVID-19, to the unfolding infection rates and death of citizens, this study could not directly establish the reasons for the President's expectations on SASSA. Notwithstanding, the recurrent citing of the President's interest by key informants elevated this high among the key social relations components that influenced the performance of State departments and institutions that brought their capacity on-board the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Minister's War Room: A key informant shared that in the first few months of the advent of CoVID-19 in South Africa the Minister of Social Development established and conducted a 'war room' by which all social development responses to CoVID-19 were coordinated for further input into State-wide response processes. The war room was operationalised through sub-groups that formulated specialised solutions to, for example, the introduction of technology for service continuity, food provision, etc.. According to this key informant, one of these sub-groups was tasked with devising social assistance solutions to the impact of CoVID-19 and particularly answering the question: "How do we get money into the pockets of individuals during the lockdown". The most immediate option that the war room came up with was using the existing grant types to get money to those who were going to need it the most under these conditions of shock. As this key informant mentioned, initially the Minister's War Room considered the use of the extensive beneficiary social grant system — namely, SOCPEN — to distribute this grant because it already had beneficiaries' banking details. However, as the deliberation continued over the subsequent weeks, the limitations of SOCPEN became apparent and this made it an unlikely technology to be used to get this grant to those who need it. However, this legacy technology continued to be used to pay top-up grants into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries of SASSA's pre-existing grant types.

NATJOINTS as a System of Social Relations: An acronym for National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, NATJOINTS, is constituted by the State to carry out specific assignments at a given time. As the name suggests, NATJOINTS was originally founded as structure of high-ranking officials within the security and intelligence sector for purposes of

sectoral coordination. In the context of CoVID-19 it comprised of Directors-General of State departments and specialist State-level experts on any subject matter that needs to be attended to. With the advent of CoVID-19, the functioning of the NATJOINTS was reinforced in that all the State bureaucrats who were assigned to one or another assignment that responds to CoVID-19 were all converged in one venue to conceptualise, process, decide and activate the State's CoVID-19 responses *in situ*. Akin to the warehousing of otherwise disjointed and drawn-out State approval processes, during the case study period all the State's CoVID-19-relevant responses were efficiently and duly processed through the NATJOINTS and thereby eliminating the complicated bureaucratic delays that are inherent to the State. In the same vein, the decisions that were relevant to the CoVID-19 SRD grant were also processed through the NATJOINTS as a systems of social relations that enabled the expression of the State's capacity towards the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of this grant.

Owing to the number of public servants who met during the NATJOINTS meetings on a daily basis throughout the case study period, its work was operationalised through various specialist workstreams. Specifically, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was processed through a sub-workstream within NATJOINTS' social impact workstream. It is this sub-workstream that drafted the base documents upon which the CoVID-19 SRD grant was founded (Department of Social Development, 2020).

The operational configuration of the State through the NATJOINTS throughout the CoVID-19 lockdown period is in opposition to the rational portrayal of the State in Weberian terms. In fact, one cannot help but to point out to the glaring absence of theorising the State during times of exogenous shocks. Granted that shocks of this nature are synonymous to the first societies, one has to ask whether the dearth of theorisation of the State in times of shocks may have been intended at presenting a Western State as a resilient organisation of society and the only way at organising society. In other words, the curious blind spot on exogenous shocks in State theories suggests the intentional presence of a denialism on the collective part of State theorists.

Beyond the State, having been processed by NATJOINTS, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was transmitted to the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC). The NCCC was a structure that Cabinet established for the purposes of coordinating and approving government's responses to CoVID-19. In return, the NCCC tabled the CoVID-19 SRD grant at Cabinet for decision and adoption.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the uncertainties that surround the continuity of the CoVID-19 SRD grant had direct implications for the grant's resourcing as well as implementation planning. From the vantage point of systems of social relations, the failure by the State to plan together may be symptomatic of less than optimal concrete relationships between the State actors who are responsible for the different components along the CoVID-19 SRD grant value chain.

4.4 Conclusion

By exploiting the strengths of process tracing of establishing, understanding and explaining the causal links and pathways of a new policy initiative, this chapter identified and discussed the different socio-historical factors within which the key systems of social relations that enabled the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. These included SASSA's entanglement with the self-reinforcing variations of path dependence that are evidenced in the colonialism-apartheid social assistance which this agency was intended to undo. From living memory, the chapter identified SASSA's pre-2019 legal battles as an important factor when considering the immediate environment against which this agency's capacity to implement the State's significant cash transfer programme had to be developed. The inability of the State to verifiably ascertain SASSA's implementation capacity suggests that the State does not know itself. Combined, the socio-historical factors that were identified in this chapter point out to the path dependence within which SASSA's implementation capacity of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised. In its latter section, the chapter process traced key systems of social relations that influenced SASSA's ability to mobilise the requisite capacity to implement the CoVID-19 grant. Relations-linked challenges that influenced implementation were identified. The burden of expectations on SASSA and the role of other State-level processes that enabled the grant were discussed. Particularly, the chapter demonstrated how the social positioning (or embeddedness) of different social actors influenced different aspects of the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The chapter proposed a critique of State theories in so far as these are quiet about the State during exogenous shocks. This is notwithstanding the extensive theorisation of the State in the context of war, particularly externally-directed forms of violence.

Chapter 5: Analysis of concrete and ongoing systems of social relations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study by applying abductive logic of inference to the narratives that arose from the interviews with key informants and the selected documents that they shared with the research process. Pursuant of establishing how the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant, this chapter attends to the third objectives of the study, namely: to uncover, analyse and demonstrate how the concrete and ongoing systems of social relations in which the different State actors are embedded influenced their conceptualisation and implementation approaches to the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Having traced the socio-historical factors and key systems of social relations that were relevant to how the State mobilised the capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant in Chapter 4, this chapter analyses the key informant interviews and the supplied documents for how the social relations of different State actors influenced their approach to the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Abductive inference allowed for the study to draw inferences relative to the conceptual framework and literature that was considered for this study. This permitted the study to make theoretically-surprising findings.

In approaching how the State mobilised the capacity to conceptualise, resource and implement the capacity for the CoVID-19 SRD grant from the abductive logic of inference, the study merged the respective strengths of deductive and inductive inferences into one. Whereas the narratives that are relevant to the central tenets of Granovetter's (1985) embeddedness, Migdal's (2004) State-in-society, and other literature (in chapter 2) are deductively related to the findings, abductive analysis further allows for the inductive emergence — from the study's sources of information — of theoretically-surprising (new) understandings, concepts and theories that are relevant to State capacity during the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. These are data-driven discoveries. Through abductive inference, this chapter addresses the knowledge gaps that arise from the isolated application of deductive or inductive inference alone. This way, abductive inference permits the study to express the richness of the narratives that arise from the key interviews and the selected documents.

5.2 Nature of State-level systems of social relations

What is in a name: The naming of the CoVID-19 SRD grant arises from a number of social systems. First, the name suggests that the cash transfer was devised in response to the advent of CoVID-19. Second, one key informant mentioned that 'SRD' was inserted in the name because when designing it, the first database that the State used to model the population of the unemployed was that of SASSA's Social Relief of Distress (SRD). This is the database of

all the beneficiaries who received SASSA's SRD since its inception: "That is why it is called the SRD grant..." (Key Informant 1). The State uses the name CoVID-19 SRD grant either when it communicates with the public, or colloquially. Otherwise, the formal name that it uses when referring to this intervention is CoVID-19 SRD. The formal name indicates that this is a social relief of distress cash transfer programme that was devised to respond to the advent of CoVID-19. Consequently, than being a grant, this is an intervention whose provision is linked to assisting individuals who cannot provide for their most basic livelihood needs as a result of CoVID-19. A reading of section 4 together with section 13 of the *Social Assistance Act* (Act 13 of 2004) demonstrates that the CoVID-19 SRD is not a grant as commonly believed. The grants that SASSA administers include the child support grant; the care dependency grant; the foster child grant; the disability grant; the older person's grant; the war veteran's grant; and the grant-in-aid. There is no CoVID-19 SRD grant. Having the CoVID-19 SRD to be recognised as a grant would require the Department of Social Development to undertake the necessary legislative and budgetary processes that would secure the fiscal appropriations that are relevant to a social assistance grant. Notwithstanding, and as a manner of speaking as well as for consistency, the dissertation will continue to refer to it as the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Factors that influenced the grant value: A common understanding is that the State decided the value of the CoVID-19 SRD grant to be at R350.00 largely to contain the grant's cost while benefitting the population that has been identified by the beneficiary modelling approach. While there is no scientific basis for how the grant's value was arrived at, another constrain to the value of this grant was the State's ability to borrow money from the money markets, and the costs of that borrowing. It was following these that, partly, funding for CoVID-19-relevant interventions was "secured by shifting resources from existing programmes" (National Treasury, 2020: 8). Consequently, the decision of the value of the grant was first communicated through the Supplementary Budget Review 2020 (National Treasury, 2020: 15). A key informant reported that with South Africa's credit rating being "very low" at that time, the country was faced with the prospects of paying very high interests for borrowing money to realise its response to CoVID-19. According to another key informant, "we got the arbitrarily decided on 350. You know, there's no science in the 350".

Grant design: The social actors that the State consulted across the ideological spectrum unanimously agreed that government's intervention should be in the form of cash transfers than food vouchers. These actors were of the view that in giving the people food vouchers, the State would be deciding for the people. Therefore, cash transfers were deemed to be best in facilitating the people's purchasing choices that are suited their needs. This resonates with Guy Standing's (2011) view that cash transfers promote a greater sense of dignity and choice-making among beneficiaries.

When the debates on the targeting and design of the CoVID-19 SRD grant ensued, the State used a few research outputs. One of the key informants shared that during their early meetings, the National Treasury initially favoured that the value of the cash transfer be fixed at the food poverty line of R585.00. However, this suggestion was retracted as quickly as it

was proposed on the realisation that it may open the floodgates that may support views that are in favour of the basic income grant.

In deciding on the implementation mechanism for this new grant two criteria had to be met: the mechanism should not require setting up new delivery infrastructure; and the decided-upon mechanism should not require the processing of new legislation. These were the factors that resulted in the activation of the existing social relief of distress mechanism for the purposes of implementing the new CoVID-19-responsive cash transfer programme. To this end, the provisions of the regulations that are relevant to the *Disaster Management Act, 2002* were mobilised (Key Informant 3).

A dimension of the development of the CoVID-19 SRD grant that is worth noting is that South Africa's banking behaviour data was used as the canvas upon which the size of the qualifying population was determined. Moreover, the targeting of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was never a clear cut matter between those who were involved in its conceptualisation. One of the key informants articulated this as follows:

“... it was not a grant for the unemployed. It was targeted at people displaced by CoVID. So it is not for everybody who is unemployed... if you have been unemployed all along and have been surviving, then it's not a new problem that is created by CoVID”.

Another key informant stated that limiting the grant's benefit only to people whose prospects to earn a livelihood owing to the hard lockdown was a narrow interpretation of who the grant should target and benefit. With the exclusion argument not finding a wide appeal, “the best we could do was push for a tougher means test to make sure that you don't include people that are not eligible” a key informant stated, a point that (Senona, 2021: 15) also reported. This key informant said that if the CoVID-19 SRD grant was intended to benefit the country's unemployed population then it would have been designed to reach 13 million people and not the 6.9 million that the modelling process generated. According to a key informant, the reason the CoVID-19 SRD grant was benefitting populations beyond the one intended during the modelling phase is

“we don't have a word for this target group.... And if it is a grant for the unemployed, why is Social Development the one doing the grant for the unemployed when we have the Department of Employment and Labour”

Institutionalisation as performance of trust relations: Key informants mentioned that the founding of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was motivated by the need of the State to protect communities from the worst effects of CoVID-19. Therefore, the SRD grant serves as an example of the State-initiated interventions that are intended at cushioning populations who, at the time of its introduction, were unable to earn livelihoods owing to the closure of economic activities. Looked at from a systems of social relations vantage point, the grant may be said to

be the incarnation of State-society trust formation. In other words, inasmuch as an intervention of this nature is not unique to South Africa — thereby indicative of policy mimicry at the global level in response to the advent of CoVID-19 — the grant facilitated for the State to carry out social actions through which it could have been communicating to the population that it was capable of attending to the needs of the vulnerable sections of the population. In turn, this adds to the performances of social trust formation between the State and the population that is benefitting from the CoVID-19 SRD grant. The reinstatement of this grant following a three months hiatus in 2021 was prompted by the social unrest that unfolded in two provinces in July of that year. These took place when the CoVID-19 SRD grant was not in operation and when the target population was vulnerable to hunger, unemployment and the environment of fatalism. While suggesting that all the CoVID-19 responses that were initiated by the government of South Africa were “deleterious” (van Wyk and Reddy, 2022: 4) to informality, van Wyk and Reddy (2022) also found that these responses “had differential impacts on various population groups” (van Wyk and Reddy, 2022: 4). In so saying, van Wyk and Reddy (2022) are denying the contrary facts that were established by this research to the extent that the State implemented the CoVID-19 SRD grant particularly as a socio-economic buffer for people whose ordinary means of livelihood is the informal sector. To disprove van Wyk and Reddy (2022), Bhorat et al. (2021) remark that the primary concern that informed the design of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was “to soften the impact of the lockdown on the working poor who are formally or informally employed... [and were] unlikely to have access to unemployment insurance or private income safety nets” Bhorat et al., 2021: 64). On the backdrop of the generalised sense of psychological fatalism that is founded on constant media reports on CoVID-19-related infections and increasing mortality rate (for example, Su et al., 2021), the quality of implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant (Handa et al., 2020) appears to have been framed as the State’s performance of a gesture that is targeted at building trust in the beneficiaries as suggested by Standing (2011) and Harvey and Bailey (2011). This should not be understood to mean that such gestures were reciprocated. Moreover, as an informality-targeted State intervention, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was made possible by the fact that, as observed by Goenaga (2015) in relation to State building initiatives, its presence did not threaten the integrity of elite interests in government’s overall CoVID-19 SRD responses. To this end, Senona et al. (2021) reported that, as part of government’s overall extraordinary response of R500 billion to CoVID-19, only R13 billion was directed to the CoVID-19 SRD grant (Senona, 2021: 15). This allocation represents 2.6 percent of the total R500 billion relief package. To Kurtz’s (2009) point, the major priorities of the R500 billion were: R200 billion — a loan guarantee scheme help companies with operational costs, payment of suppliers, rent and salaries; R100 billion — to help protect existing jobs and create new ones; R70 billion — tax relief measure; and R20 billion — intended at improving municipalities’ delivery of basic services. During the time when the State was in shock owing to the novelty of CoVID-19, the role of concrete personal relations and structures led to it actively creating common understandings, meanings and relationships that are targeted protecting lives with all of society.

Therefore, including the participation of all of society at different stages of the lifecycle of the grant helped to emphasise the presence of social solidarity during CoVID-19 (Mishra and

Rath, 2020). One needs to bear in mind that, for whatever reasons that may be relevant to political sociology, the State's motivation to protect communities from the effects of CoVID-19 are demonstrations of the range of factors why State-in-society was performed in this instance: on the one extreme, the State had to demonstrate its capabilities in protecting the populations within its jurisdiction from the effects of CoVID-19; and on another, the State may have been motivated to avert the worst possible social fallout to emanated from the unbearable levels of hunger and unaffordable cost of living that, in turn, would be owing to the closure of economic activities. So, the institutionalisation of trust relations through the CoVID-19 SRD grant was intuitive to the State preserving itself.

Another way in which the central coordinating institution performed trust was in bringing together the different State and non-State actors on-board the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation process. This ties to Grannovetter's (1985) principle that the performance of trust in ongoing institutional relations takes place against the historical and structural embeddedness of such relations (Granovetter, 1985: 486). Whereas other State actors showed little trust in SASSA's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant, the clout of the central coordinating institution may have urged SASSA to perform. Less obvious is that this coordinating role drew support from all over the State (for instance, getting other State institutions and Departments to provide databases against which SASSA could verify grant applicants). One key informant suggested the presence of fluid alliances throughout this case study period in that even where his institution may have been regarded to have been adversarial to SASSA, during one of the early meetings in which SASSA's complete takeover of the CoVID-19 SRD was being discussed, he says he told the meeting: "I am not going to sit here and watch you bulldoze SASSA." This points to the possibility of the fluidity of the relations of trust between different State actors throughout the case study period.

Resistance within State-in-Society: The CoVID-19 SRD grant was informed by pre-existing forms of resistance that are taking place in society. For instance, when the grant was conceived it was initially assumed that most South Africans have bank accounts. If that were the case, the State would have easily paid the grant into the bank accounts of the approved applicants as suggested by the initial default disposition to have BankservAfrica as the preferred institution to implement this grant. Were that the case, the configuration of the State's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant using bank accounts would have been far effortless than the one experienced during the case study period (Key Informant 2). When it came to the actual implementation of the assumption, SASSA's experience was that the approved applicants resisted to provide their banking details for the purposes of the grant monies to be paid into these accounts. Applicants withheld their banking details for fear that the State would look into and see what was in their bank accounts. Notwithstanding the claims by the State-in-society framework, the resistance that the State encountered here suggests that society can weaken the State's grip around it. Consequently, the State learned that significantly more people were unbanked.

Likewise, SASSA encountered a lot of resistance from the mobile network providers when the database that is relevant to Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of

Communication-Related Information Act (RICA) was requested for the purposes of effecting payments via mobile money services. In this regard, the South African identity number that the applicant provided to SASSA had to match the one linking to the telephone number that they provided for the purposes of RICA. Otherwise, the State would not know if the approved grant was being paid into the phone number of the right person. These manifestations of resistance demonstrate the limitations that are implied in, for instance, Brambor et al. (2016) and Dahlke et al. (2020) who assume that, without sustained and targeted relations, the presence of enabling infrastructures and data will be availed towards State capacity-building initiatives. Granovetter's (1985) conceptual framework helps us to explain this phenomenon by saying that social actors neither behave, decide and conduct themselves as atoms nor do they slavishly adhere to a script that is written for them by actors who occupy particular social intersections, in this instance. Therefore, the different manifestations of resistance at different times throughout the case study must be understood as part of the broader social dynamics that lie beyond the CoVID-19 SRD grant. These acts of resistance are as purposive as much as they are embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations (Granovetter, 1985: 487).

The CoVID-19 SRD grant has elements of what Migdal (2004) speaks about when he says its practical implementation should not be seen as the rational outcome of actors "with overpowering resources and ideas" (Migdal, 2004: 10). Consequently, a key informant said during the case study period her institution could ignore what the National Treasury were saying provided that they were within the Cabinet allocated budget. This resonates with Goenaga's (2015) observation that exogenous shocks can greatly undercut elite interests. Similarly, this resonates with Kurtz's (2009) critique that temporal encounters such as CoVID-19 do add profoundly to State-building efforts in ways that long-term State-building processes may never do.

Weak oversight: A key informant expressed that there were instances during the conceptualisation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant when the Department of Social Development agreed to processes without understanding their practical implications on SASSA's ability to carry them out during implementation. According to this key informant, this blunder could partly be explained by the Department's weak oversight on, and insufficient consultation with, SASSA. The key informant continued that this limitation on the part of the Department was because of the low trust relations between SASSA and the Department such that SASSA did not trust that the Department would give the agency sufficient and useful feedback following strategic engagements elsewhere in the State system. This point has implications for existing concrete and ongoing trust relationships between different State actors whose levels of trust in each other has practical implications on the type, affordability and practicality of the State capacity that can be made available in response to the exogenous shocks. The performance of weak oversight between a policy department and its agency or entity is bound to be weaker during times of exogenous shocks owing to the general weakening effect that shocks have on society as a whole as well as standard bureaucratic norms (Goenaga, 2015).

Reinforcements of weak State capacity: One key informant opined that if State institutions and departments were not operating in silos and not hanging onto their departmental or institutional apron strings, the State would realise the capacity to carry out whatever priorities that are before it. However, referring to the number of State departments, another key informant said “We are operating like 36 different governments instead of being one government”. In other words, the competition that is between different State institutions and departments results in State-wide incoherence. In the case of the CoVID-19 SRD, it appears that pre-existing SASSA-SAPO institutional arrangements and the life-threatening nature of the pandemic underlie the relative success with which the State capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised.

Some of the key informants were of the view that State departments and institutions were not provided with the opportunities to learn and grow from their mistakes. As a result, they implement less and less over time while they are being displaced by the private sector that is increasing its foothold in the State under the pretext of State capacity-improving partnerships. One key informant strongly expressed that the State mistrusts its capacity to implement, and often opts that the private sector performs certain functions. Increasingly, this approach weakens the State. This key informant suggested that the State should intentionally strengthen its implementation capacity than relying on the private sector.

State-level neurosis: Whereas the State’s interventions that respond to CoVID-19 were being centrally-coordinated in order to mitigate the “completely destroyed” State capacity, Chapter 4 demonstrated that in the specific instance of the CoVID-19 SRD grant “... we didn’t know if they [SASSA] had the capacity”. Particularly interesting to the nature of the social relations between the State actors relative to SASSA assuming the primary responsibility to manage and pay this grant is the expression “We were standing a little bit on the toes because we were quiet nervous...”. This suggests the presence of a form of State-level neurosis that is undergirded by two main factors: First, institutional anxieties that arise from historical concerns about the lack of implementation and performance throughout the State system. With CoVID-19 giving rise to what this dissertation called generalised fatalism earlier, the need to protect lives weighed heavily of society’s collective psyche and further demanded that all institutions of society, including the State, must reconfigure themselves in the face of this exogenous shock in order for society as a whole to continue beyond this period. Second, State-level neurosis may be fuelled by perceived hostilities against implementation at the level of the State. As reported in Chapter 4, and thereby supporting the State-level neurosis proposition, a key informant said that the State did not trust SASSA to successfully implement the grant.

Unknowability of State Capacity: The State does not know its implementation capacity. If that were not the case, the State would have first approached SASSA for it to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Instead of doing that, the State first approached BankservAfrica for it to implement this cash transfer programme. Key informants stated that the State rather express its preference for private sector solutions over State-originated ones. Perhaps this is because the former are as expedient as they are banal. However, where the Cabinet of the Sixth Administration has State capacity as the first among its seven priorities, it follows that the State

would have explicitly developed concrete and ongoing relations and systems that would verifiably keep it in the know about the dynamics of the multifaceted nature of State capacity. Conversely, showing preference for private sector solutions suggests intimate predisposition for private sector capabilities than developing State-specific ones.

Key informants expressed that in so far as technologies are concerned, the relative success of the CoVID-19 SRD grant in paying more than 6 million approved beneficiaries during the case study period “could also be the beginning of the end of SOCPEN” in that the new digital, automated and data-supported technologies that SASSA adopted within a period of six weeks for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant threaten to reach the numbers that SOCPEN was servicing (just over 18 million in 2020).

Not only did the State develop the capacity for SASSA to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant and implement this grant within a short space of time, SASSA continued to pay more than 18 million regular grants to the child support grant, care dependency grant, foster child grant, disability grant, older person’s grant, war veteran’s grant, and the grant-in-aid beneficiaries on a monthly basis throughout the case study period. During the first few months, the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was not a straightforward affair for SASSA as the public expectations on government’s response to CoVID-19 were high. While implementing the CoVID-19 SRD with completely new grant implementation infrastructure, as detailed in chapters 4 and 5 SASSA stumbled from one State capacity challenge to the next. Over all, that resulted in the incremental improvement of the capacity to implement this grant.

Contestations and interests: Throughout the case study period State actors were at odds with one another regarding different aspects of the CoVID-19 SRD. A key informant stated that relationships between State actors is as relationships between siblings: “We don’t want others to fight any of us. But among ourselves we got quiet nice boxing matches about work”. For instance, another key informant stated that right up to the point of writing the President’s speech wherein he first announced the CoVID-19 SRD grant, they were “jostling around you know” because what went into the speech would determine the grant’s qualifying criteria and value. The second example relates to the extension of the lockdown. Against the analysed documentary evidence, one key informant expressed that the rationale for the extension of the strict alert levels 4 and 5 of the lockdown from three to six months was not sufficiently canvassed in view of the fact that such a decision had implications for financial planning and the availability of resources for the purposes of continuing the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Third, a key informant reported that in one meeting one representative passionately argued in favour of the State’s intervention being distributed as vouchers than cash transfers. It occurred to her later in the discussion that only a big retailer would benefit from the sale of these vouchers. The issue that was inferred from this remark by the key informant was that at different parts of the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant, different people brought their personal biases that may have unduly influenced the State capacity. Consequently, the State and its processes are not insulated from the prejudices of the professionals who work in it. Fourth among the areas of contestation that the key informants shared with the research is the conceptualisation of the

CoVID-19 SRD grant. Whereas some State actors saw it as a response to the hard lockdown, others understood it as an opportunity to pilot the basic income grant. These two understandings require different configurations of State capacity. In the first instance, the State's implementation capacity would be confined to the hard lockdown period (strict alert levels 4 and 5 of the lockdown), and in the latter the State capacity would require that the current implementation capacity be strengthened with the view towards institutionalisation. The fifth example of the contestations and interests between the State actors was expressed by a key informant when she said of all the disagreements that he witnessed throughout the period, the key disagreement was the issue of the affordability of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. She stated that this contestation saw The Presidency and the Department of Social Development on one side of the debate, and the National Treasury on another. The last example relates to the social construction of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. A key informant said that different actors in civil society "know that government does not sing from the same hymnbook". For that reason, different civil society formations were approaching different government and State actors in an attempt to influence outcomes in particular ways that suited their cause.

These examples are accounts of how the CoVID-19 SRD grant was contested, socially-constructed and formulated by different State actors. Inherent to them are examples of the spectrum of identities and interests in which these actors may be embedded. Far from being one-dimensional, the key informants' narratives are the enactments of the dynamics, motives and social influences within which the State is being carried out. From the State-in-society vantage point, the key informants' narratives render a performance of the "ongoing struggles among shifting coalitions" within the CoVID-19 SRD grant and the State. This performance includes a display of the range of behaviours that the State promotes, sanctions or rewards when performed by different State actors (Migdal, 2004: 11—12). In this regard, one key informant stated that they were astounded that the grant was introduced "for the unemployed" (a form of a reward) "when we don't have the funds".

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter applied abductive inference to link the research narratives to the conceptual framework as well as to permit for theoretically-surprising findings to arise from the rich data that the study collected. Owing to abductive inference, the chapter was able to analyse the key informant interviews and the supplied documents for how the social relations of the different State actors influenced their approach to the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. As a result, among others, the manifestations of these social relations is demonstrated in: analysing the grant design and value; showing how weak State capacity was being reinforced; approaching the institutionalisation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant as the performance of trust relations; suggesting the presence of State-level neurosis during CoVID-19; pointing out to competing interests within the CoVID-19 SRD grant; and arguing that the State does not know its implementation capacity.

With all the challenges and weaknesses during its first year of implementation, the successful implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was in large part due to strong relationships, coordination and collaborations between the State departments and institutions that participated in it in the quest to attend to the plight of citizens whose livelihoods are generated in the informal sector. Strong relations in places were complemented by undermining robust State-in-society relations in other instances. These permutations were experienced both within and outside the State. In both instances (and all the variations in-between) SASSA's ability to implement was either obstructed or eased in one way or another. This is owing to the mobilised implementation (or inability to mobilise such capacity). This consideration demonstrates how, from a State-in-society vantage point, different social actors influenced the State and the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Whereas the State bureaucracy represents “the institutional materiality of the State” (Poulantzas, 2000: 49), State capacity is the embodiment of the necessary vitality with which the State demonstrates its responsiveness to ongoing socialisation process. The history and nature of the State, the society in which the State carries out its mandate, the capacity that the State develops in fulfilment of its mandate, and the nature of the social problem that the State capacity is directed towards have a co-emergent relationship. Adapted from Cayoun and Shires (2020), in this regard co-emergence refers to the reciprocal shaping and relationships between these social dimensions. Co-emergence should be understood as referring to the contingency of particular socially-constructed phenomena and processes (among these are the State and State capacity). It is for this reason that this research (re-)introduced State capacity to scholarship. In this respect, this research answer the question: To what extent did the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) mobilise its capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant? The grant was introduced in recognition of the need to afford a level of financial benefit and livelihoods for people in the informal sector as well as the incomeless.

While the study’s main research question was: *To what extent has SASSA mobilise its capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant?*, the following were its objectives:

- i. To explore the socio-historical factors that influenced SASSA’s capacity to respond to the call for the CoVID-19 SRD grant to be implemented.
- ii. To profile the key systems of social relations that influenced SASSA’s ability to mobilise the requisite capacity to implement the CoVID-19 grant.
- iii. To uncover, analyse and demonstrate how the concrete and ongoing systems of social relations in which the different State actors are embedded influenced their conceptualisation and implementation approaches to the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

The research answered the main question by approaching the CoVID-19 SRD grant as a case study. Within case study, process tracing and abductive inference were used. Firstly, the process tracing method was applied to trace institutional processes through which the State capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was developed. As a result, narratives that were established in key informants’ interviews and supplied documents were analysed from the process tracing vantage point with the view to establish the causal process within the case. Secondly, abductive inference, with which data that are beyond the study’s conceptual framework were identified, was conducted. Thus, the emergence of theoretically surprising explanations of how the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised were enabled. The study’s peculiar disposition is that it was conducted by an insider researcher. Resulting from this, and relative to outsider researchers who may not be *au fait* with State internal social nuances, may have been a distinctively different approach to data analysis by the researcher.

6.2 Summary of findings

The overall results of how certain factors were favourable to the State capacity to be mobilised in the instance of the CoVID-19 SRD grant are considered here. The following four are of relevance:

Firstly, immediately in the pre-CoVID-19 period SASSA had been embroiled in a protracted legal battle in the Constitutional Court in which its implementation capacity was interrogated. Coming out of this damaging battle, SASSA resolved that instead of relying on private sector service providers for the performance of its core business — namely, the administration and payment of social assistance grants — this agency would reconfigure its internal capacity and capabilities to enable grant self-administration and self-payment to happen. Therefore, the advent of CoVID-19 found a SASSA that was in the mode of self-reconfiguration with the view to improve institutional capabilities, efficiencies and effectiveness. Perhaps informed by the trauma and embarrassment that the court case brought this agency, it is plausible that when the State's CoVID-19 response for unemployed and incomeless populations was being discussed, SASSA stood against and rejected all the suggestions that the private sector should perform what this agency considered to be its core functions: the implementation of a covariate shock-responsive cash transfer programme. The analysis of the collected evidence throughout the case study period suggests that SASSA's predisposition was to take advantage of the conditions of shock to strengthen its implementation capacity.

Second, rather than being railroaded into accepting suggestions for increasing the role of the private sector in the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD, not only did SASSA stand against dominant State actors who sponsored this “corporate creep” (Irvine, 2007: 13) that would have displaced the State. The agency put forward substantive arguments in favour of the greater development of the State's implementation capacity. Doing so disrupted the interests of those State actors who sought to increase the role of the private sector in the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. This also made itself evident when, notwithstanding earlier doubts in SASSA's implementation capacity, a constellation of typical as well as unlikely institutional relations and coalitions formed in support of SASSA's overall leadership in the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. From this vantage point, while SASSA had explicit historical intentions of developing the capacity that would enable this agency to implement its core business, the support that other State actors expressed for SASSA to assume this responsibility helped to, at the minimum, delay the corporate creep in the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Third, key informants expressed that it was doubtful if the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant would have been developed outside of the unprecedented conditions of generalised fatality that accompanied CoVID-19. In other words, owing to the threat of infections, deaths and loss of livelihoods that are attributable to a novel cause, different State actors decisively came together to devise and implement CoVID-19-responsive solutions. In the South African context, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was among the State's decisive interventions that transformed the structure of the State during its first year of implementation: May 2020 — April 2021 period. This generalised fatalism together with the

intense, condensed and temporal nature of CoVID-19 as a covariate shock, and the State's need to mitigate the effects of the State capacity that was impaired in the few years that precede CoVID-19 prompted the State to centralise its overall CoVID-19 responses. The uncertainty around SASSA's successful carrying out of the CoVID-19 SRD grant generated nervousness in the State. The study proposed that this is the State-level neurosis that is undergirded by two main factors: First, the State displaying institutional anxieties that are premised on SASSA's historical capacity to implement and perform. Now with the need for State institutions to protect the lives of South Africans weighing heavily on society's collective psyche, doubts were plentiful whether SASSA would promptly and sufficiently reconfigure itself to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Second, State-level neurosis appears to have been fuelled by the perceived hostilities that militate against the successful implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.

Fourth, had the State known its implementation capacity where cash transfers were concerned, it would have first approached SASSA for it to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Instead, non-State actors were preferred for them to develop the capabilities for the implementation of this cash transfer programme. This raises curious questions that relate to the seriousness with which the State is institutionalising, measuring, innovating and translating Cabinet's priority — namely, the development of a State that has the necessary capacity, capabilities and institutions to meet the needs of South Africans — into a lived reality. Over and above servicing over 18 million regular grant beneficiaries using its legacy technology, SASSA adopted new technologies with which it successfully paid 5 896 501 approved CoVID-19 SRD grant beneficiaries (Correspondence dated 13 March 2023) using newly-established implementation partnerships during the case study period. Certainly, the advent of CoVID-19 disrupted the operations of the rational State that would have been overbearing on the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant during the case study period. Consequently, not only did CoVID-19 afford for the demands of the National Treasury to be ignored, but it also facilitated for whatever elite interests that were present throughout this period to be undermined. This also points out to the effect of weakening the Weberian State in South Africa. The above factors suggest that, contrary to the long-term approach that is taken by State-building theories, the CoVID-19 SRD grant was an instant intervention that profoundly built the State in ways that years of effort would not have been able to.

6.3 Overall conclusion

In SASSA's instance, the State mobilised the capacity for the conceptualisation, resourcing and implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant by closely coordinating the roles and contributions of different State and non-State actors. As a result, this State capacity was carried out when SASSA assumed the responsibility to self-administer and self-pay the CoVID-19 SRD grant. For that to happen, SASSA brought the value of State-level concrete and ongoing social relations on-board the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant as a targeted cash transfer programme. Consequently, and owing to the intense, condensed and temporal nature of CoVID-19 as a covariate shock, decisive interventions that transformed the structural implementation of this grant were instituted. During the period May 2020 to April

2021, the CoVID-19 SRD grant defined a new trajectory that South Africa's social assistance environment had entered in response to a covariate shock: CoVID-19. Mahoney (2000) characterise this trajectory as consisting of reactive sequences wherein a series of "temporally ordered and causally connected" reactions occur relative to earlier (pre-CoVID-19) decisions, choices and preferences on State capacity. Owing to the series of subsequent events (the advent of CoVID-19) and reactions (SASSA's State-level concrete and ongoing relations), the trajectory of future developments substantively assumed new and different directions of implementing State responses to covariate shocks from the earlier path by which social assistance had hitherto been dependent on. During the case study period, SASSA's newly developed capacity successfully paid 5 896 501 approved CoVID-19 SRD grant beneficiaries.

6.4 Contribution of the study

Theory: This study critiques the continued centering of the Weberian heuristic of the State as a lens for all States to be looked at. To this end, the relevant historical, structural and disciplinary factors are presented. Particularly relevant to a State-led CoVID-19 response, the Weberian State falls short of accounting for a State-in-shock. Notwithstanding the fact that covariate shocks are as old as human society, one has to probe what accounts for the dearth of State theorisation in times of shocks. The curious blind spot on analysing covariate shocks in State theories suggests the presence of scholarly denialism on the collective part of State theorists. Consequently, the proposal is that sociology is better off approaching the State and State capacity as social constructs than as primordially and spontaneously self-causing and self-constituting phenomena.

Methodology: The study combined the strengths of process tracing, abductive inference and insider researcher to take an emic approach to the research question. Unlike outsider researchers, an insider researcher is equally *au fait* with State internal social nuances as well as outsiders' notions of the State. Additionally, an insider researcher is a distinctive data analysis tool. Within a case study approach, firstly, the insider researcher applied the process tracing to trace institutional processes through which the State's capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant was developed. As a result, narratives that were established in key informants' interviews and supplied documents were analysed with the view to establish the causal process within the case. Secondly, the insider researcher applied abductive inference, with which data that are beyond the study's conceptual framework were identified, was conducted. Thus, the emergence of theoretically surprising explanations of how the State capacity for the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant was mobilised were enabled.

Policy: The study established that even though the State closely coordinated its CoVID-19 responses, the absence of the necessary and quality policy element — implementation-informing data — compromised the realisation of government's overall comprehensive CoVID-19 response. This is particularly important in the age where big data is a socially significant phenomena. Consequently, central to the added success of the CoVID-19 SRD grant would have been the timeous availability, accuracy, completeness, and consistency of the grant implementation-informing data.

6.5 Recommendations

Policy: In order for government's CoVID-19 responses to give effect to the desired outcomes and impact, policy needs to be mobilised to define and regulate the State-wide data environment for it to be useful in the eventuality of covariate shocks. This can only be socialised and achieved throughout the State system many years before the advent of a covariate shock. Noting that different mandates of the State collect different data on the different dimensions of every member of society, the persistence of the silo approach to data collection, usage, integration, distribution, management and storage throughout the State accounts for the resultant lack of the State's readiness to exploit these data when the CoVID-19 SRD grant needed them. The State's response to covariate shocks must necessarily be premised on these data's accessibility and integrity as a matter of policy priority.

Practice: In their infinite manifestations — as armed conflict, social unrests, economic instability, health pandemics, climate change effects, etc. — covariate shocks are significant owing to the social impact that they having on society. Without this social significance, these would be inconsequential to social life. Not only has the multiplicity of covariate shocks been witnessed in South Africa, but their recurrence and erratic nature are becoming commonplace. This suggests that into the foreseeable future South Africans will experience one form of covariate shock or another. Whereas CoVID-19, floods in the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces as well as droughts in the North West provinces are among those that continue to be encountered, the social unrest that affected parts of the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces in July 2001 is notable. Among covariate shocks that are seasonal are the fires and rains that destroy the informal settlements and communities in parts of the City of Cape Town every winter. At a population level, the lessons of this study can be applied to the country's growing population of persons with HIV and AIDS (Statistics South Africa, 2021: 15). Noting the above, practitioners in, for instance, disaster management and social protection stand to benefit from innovating institutional responses and limitations that were established through this research. Moreover, earlier, Guy Standing (2011) previously observed that phenomena such as globalisation and climate change have taken covariate shocks to a truly global level (Standing, 2011: 198). As a result, disaster management and social protection practitioners are best advised that during covariate shocks distinctions "between the deserving and the undeserving are arbitrary" (Standing, 2011: 215). For this reason, the basis for benefit exclusions in covariate shock-responsive cash transfer programmes urgently need to be reframed.

Further research: Firstly, while the current research is focused on the first iteration of the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant (May 2020 — April 2021), there are prospects for research to investigate a diversity of factors that are relevant to this grant over the four year period: 2020—2024. Secondly, over the duration of its implementation the CoVID-19 SRD grant collected quantitative data on millions of applicants. This provides opportunities for quantitative sociologists to conduct pioneering analyses on these data. Population dimensions that relate to employment patterns, gender, financial inclusion, etc. can be analysed and

reported. An immediate prospect that is embedded in these quantitative studies is the reframing of the unemployment and poverty discourse in its entirety. Thirdly, there are promises for further research to be conducted on the State during times of shock. Lastly, possibilities are available for further research to be conducted on the enabling elements, constraints and experiences of State-based insider researchers.

References

- Abrams, P., 1988. Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977). *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (1), pp. 58—89.
- Acemoglu, D., 2003. Root causes. *Finance & Development*, 40 (2), pp. 27—43.
- Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J.A., 2010. Why is Africa poor?. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 25 (1), pp. 21—50.
- Adu-Ampong, E.A. and Adams, E.A., 2019. 'But you are also Ghanaian, you should know': Negotiating the insider–outsider research positionality in the fieldwork encounter, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26 (6), pp. 583—592. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419846532>.
- Allin, A., 1902. The basis of sociality, *American Journal of Sociology*, 8 (1), pp. 75—84. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/211118>.
- Allport, F.H., 1927. The nature of institutions, *Social Forces*, 6 (2), p. 167—179. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3004689>.
- Altheide, D., Coyle, M., DeVriese, K. and Schneider, C., 2008. Emergent qualitative document analysis. In *Handbook of emergent methods*, Edited by: Hesse-Biber, S. N. and Leavy, P., pp. 127—154. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ansell, C., Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J., 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic as a game changer for public administration and leadership? The need for robust governance responses to turbulent problems. *Public Management Review*, 23 (7), pp.949—960.
- Auditor-General of South Africa, 2020a. *First special report on the financial management of government's Covid-19 initiatives*.
- Auditor-General of South Africa, 2020b. *Second special report on the financial management of government's Covid-19 initiatives*.
- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J., 2001. *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford University Press, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Balgah, R.A., 2015. A novel framework for analyzing idiosyncratic and covariate shocks in developing countries. *WIT Transactions on The Built Environment*, 168. pp. 1123—1134.
- Balgah, R.A. and Buchenrieder, G., 2010. The dynamics of informal responses to covariate shocks. *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research*, 2(4), pp. 357—370.
- BankservAfrica, <https://www.bankservafrika.com/website/> [Accessed on 26 June 2022].

Barca, V. and Chirchir, R., 2014 *Single Registries and Integrated MISs: Demystifying Data and Information Management Concepts*.

Beach, D., 2017. Process-tracing methods in social science. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.176> [Accessed on 24 April 2022].

Beach, D. and Pedersen, R.B., 2011. What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? The Three Variants of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations. Preliminary Draft version not to be cited.

Beach, D. and Rohlfing, I., 2018. Integrating cross-case analyses and process tracing in set-theoretic research: Strategies and parameters of debate. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 47 (1), pp.3—36.

Beals, F., Kidman, J. and Funaki, H., 2020. Insider and outsider research: Negotiating self at the edge of the emic/etic divide. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26 (6), pp. 593—601.

Beckworth, D., 2020. COVID-19 Pandemic, Direct Cash Transfers, and the Federal Reserve. *Mercatus Center Research Paper Series, Special Edition Policy Brief*.

Bennett, A., 2010. Process tracing and causal inference. In *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Edited by: Brady, H. and Collier, D., pp. 207—220. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bennett, A. and Checkel J.T., 2012. Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices. *Simons Papers in Security and Development*, 21/2012, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University.

Bennett, A. and Elman, C., 2006. Qualitative research: Recent developments in case study methods. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, pp. 455—476.

Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T., 1967. *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Anchor.

Bhambra, G.K., 2016. Comparative historical sociology and the state: Problems of method. *Cultural Sociology*, 10 (3), pp. 335—351.

Bhorat, H., Köhler, T., Oosthuizen, M., Stanwix, B., Steenkamp, F. and Thornton, A., (June 2020). The Economics of CoVID-19 in South Africa: Early Impressions. DPRU Working Paper 202004, University of Cape Town.

Bhorat, H. and Köhler, T. (30 September 2020), The new Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress grant: Understanding who it reached, *Daily Maverick*, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-09-30-the-new-covid-19-social-relief-of-distress-grant-understanding-who-it-reached/> [Accessed on 03 September 2022].

Bhorat, H., Oosthuizen, M. and Stanwix, B., 2021. Social assistance amidst the COVID-19 epidemic in South Africa: a policy assessment. *South African Journal of Economics*, 89 (1), pp. 63—81.

Bowen, G.A., 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9 (2), pp. 27—40.

Brambor, T., Goenaga, A., Lindvall, J., & Teorell, J., 2016. The Lay of the Land: Information Capacity and the Modern State. *STANCE Working Paper Series*; 2016 (2).

Brunette, R. 2014. *Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa* (Masters Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Faculty of Humanities, Political Studies).

Bryman, A., 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.

Cecchini, M., Kaas, J. G. and Beach D., 2020. Social Process Tracing — Bringing Back the Social into the Process. APSA Preprints. doi: 10.33774/apsa-2020-q0gm5.

Chavez, C., 2008. Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality. *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (3), pp. 474—494.

Chérrez, B. R. L. 2019, *Cash Transfer Programmes and Conditionality: Why Not a Lump-Sum Payment Trusting the Poor?* (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh).

Collier, D., 2011. Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44 (4), pp. 823—830.

Comaroff, J and Comaroff J.L., 2001. Naturing the Nation: Aliens, Apocalypse and the Postcolonial State. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27 (3), pp. 627—651.

Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2014. AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Others v Chief Executive Officer of the South African Social Security Agency and Others (No 2) [2014] ZACC 12

Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2020. AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Others v Chief Executive Officer of the South African Social Security Agency and Others (No 2) [2014] ZACC 12.

Cronert, A. and Hadenius, A. 2020. Institutional foundations of global well-being: Democracy, state capacity and social protection, *International Political Science Review*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0192512120917186>.

Curato, N. (2013), A Sociological Reading of Classical Sociological Theory. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 61. pp. 265—288.

Dahlke, J., Bogner, K., Becker, M., Schlaile, M. P., Pyka, A. and Ebersberger, B., 2021. Crisis-driven innovation and fundamental human needs: A typological framework of rapid-response CoVID-19 innovations, *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 169, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0040162521002316>.

Dawood, Z., 2017. SASSA puts the livelihoods of the poor at risk, <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/sassa-skimming-the-poor> [Accessed on 1 November 2022].

Debebe, Z.Y. and Raju, D., June 2020. Covariate Shocks and Child Undernutrition: A Review of Evidence from Low- and Middle-Income Countries. South Asia Region, Office of the Chief Economist, World Bank Group.

Denzin, N.K., 1970. *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. Aldine.

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020a. Classification of a national disaster. Gazette number 43096.

Department of Social Development, 2001a. *Business Case for an Agency Model: A Proposed Delivery Model for a National Social Security System*.

Department of Social Development, 2001b. *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa*.

Department of Social Development, 2004. *Social Assistance Act No 13 of 2004*.

Department of Social Development, 2020. Economic mitigation and relief measures for Covid-19: Proposals to support the poor and the informal economy.

Department of Social Development, 2021. *The Rapid Assessment of the Implementation and Utilisation of the Special COVID-19 SRD Grant*.

Department of Social Development, 2022a. Why are we called the Department of Social Development, <https://www.dsd.gov.za/index.php/about> [Accessed on 03 September 2022].

Department of Social Development, 2022b. Presentation to the “Standing Committee on Appropriations on the on the Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B23 – 2022]”, https://pmg.org.za/files/221118Standing_Committee_on_Appropriations_SCOA_on_the_2022_Medium_Term_Appropriation_18_Nov_2022_Final_version_1.pptx [Accessed on 19 November 2022].

de Wet, P., 21 December 2022. SA’s ‘future state bank’ risks losing Payment System access because of Sassa security issues. Business Insider South Africa. <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/postbank-gets-a-reserve-bank-deadline-to-get-security-and-systems-together-2021-12> [Accessed on 22 December 2021].

Durkheim, E., 1982. *The Rules of Sociological Method*, The Free Press, New York.

Durkheim, E., 2005. The dualism of human nature and its social conditions. *Durkheimian Studies*, 11 (1), pp. 35—45.

Elias, N., 1982. *Power and Civility: The Civilizing Process Volume II*. Pantheon Book, New York.

Elias, N., van Krieken, R. and Dunning, E., 1997. Towards a theory of social processes: a translation. *British Journal of Sociology*, pp. 355—383.

Elliott, J., 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Sage Publications, London.

Figgou, L. and Pavlopoulos, V., 2015. Social Psychology: Research Methods. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 22, pp. 544—552.

Flick, U., von Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I., 2004. What is Qualitative Research? An Introduction to the Field. In Flick, U, von Kardorff, E and Steinke, I. (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (Translated by Bryan Jenner), Sage Publications, London. pp. 3—11.

Franzosi, R., 1998. Narrative Analysis — Or Why (And How) Sociologists Should be Interested in Narrative, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, pp. 517—554.

Fuseini, M. N., Enu-Kwesi, F. and Antwi, K. B., 2017. Social Cash Transfers: Some Underlying Debates and Implications for Policy-Making. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 14 (2), pp. 1—22.

Gabriel, Y., 2015. Narratives and Stories in Organizational Life, in Georgakopoulou, A., and Anna, D.F. (Eds.), *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 275—292.

George, A.L. and Bennett, A., 2005. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Gerard, F., Imbert, C. and Orkin, K., 2020. Social protection response to the COVID-19 crisis: options for developing countries. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 36 (Supplement 1). pp. S281—S296.

Gonzalez-Ocantos, E. and LaPorte, J., 2021. Process Tracing and the Problem of Missing Data. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 50 (3), pp. 1407—1435.

Goenaga, A., 2015. The Social Origins of State Capacity: Civil Society, Political Order and Public Goods in France (1789—1970) and Mexico (1810—1970) (Doctoral thesis submitted to the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada).

Gronbach, L., Seekings, J. and Megannon, V., 2022. Social protection in the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons from South Africa. *CGD Policy Paper*, 252.

Haasbroek, D.J.P., 1971. The origin of apartheid in South Africa. *Historia*, 16 (1), pp. 9—29.

Handa, S., Huang, C., Hypher, N., Teixeira, C., Soares F.V. and Davis B. 2020. Targeting effectiveness of social cash transfer programmes in three African countries, African Development Bank,

https://afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Knowledge/Session%20III.1.1_3.%20Targeting%20Effectiveness%20in%20Social%20Cash%20Transfer%20Programs.pdf

[Accessed on 12 August 2021].

Hall, J., Gaved, M. and Sargent, J. 2021. Participatory Research Approaches in Times of Covid-19: A Narrative Literature Review, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Volume 20. <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1177/16094069211010087>. pp. 1—15. [Accessed on 01 September 2021]

Hall, P.A., 2013. Tracing the progress of process tracing. *European Political Science*, 12 (1), pp. 20—30.

Harvey, P. and Bailey, S., 2011. Cash transfer programming in emergencies. Humanitarian Practice Network at Overseas Development Institute. London. England.

Hay, C., 1999. Crisis and the structural transformation of the state: interrogating the process of change. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 1 (3), pp. 317—344.

Hayes, J. and Clerk, L., 2021. Fatalism in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic: implications for mitigation and mental health. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.560092.

Healey, N.M., 2017. *Reflections on the value of insider research as a qualitative research methodology*. SAGE Publications Ltd. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526401489>. Preprint.

Helle, H.J. (2017) Max Weber's View of Religion in China. China: Promise or Threat?, *Critical Social Sciences*, 96. Brill Publishers. Leiden. pp. 59—70.

Holmes, A.G.D., 2020. Researcher Positionality—A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research—A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8 (4), pp. 1—10.

Holmes, C.E., 2021. Standing out and blending in: Contact-based research, ethics, and positionality. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 54 (3), pp. 443—447 (Preprint 1—12).

Hoogendoorn, G. and Visser, G., 2012. Stumbling over researcher positionality and political-temporal contingency in South African second-home tourism research. *Critical Arts*, 26 (3), pp. 254—271.

Hyvärinen, M., 2016. Narrative and Sociology, *Narrative Works*, 6 (1), pp. 38—62.

Irvine, H., 2007. Corporate creep: An institutional view of consultancies in a non-profit organisation. *Australian Accounting Review*, 17 (41), pp.13—25.

Jedwab, R., Khan, A. M., Damania, R., Russ, J. and Zaveri, E. D., 2020. Epidemics, poverty, and social cohesion: Lessons from the past and possible scenarios for COVID-19. *CoVID Economics*, 49, <https://www2.qwu.edu/~iiep/assets/docs/papers/2020WP/JedwabIIEP2020-13.pdf> [Accessed on 12 August 2021].

Kennedy, B., 2018. Deduction, Induction, and Abduction in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*. 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070> [Accessed on 24 June 2023].

Khambule, I., 2021. COVID-19 and the Counter-cyclical Role of the State in South Africa. *Progress in Development Studies*, 21 (4), pp. 380—396.

Khambule, I. and Mdlalose, M., 2022. COVID-19 and state coordinated responses in South Africa's emerging developmental state. *Development Studies Research*, 9 (1), pp. 192—205.

Komel, M., 2007. Managing Politics (Burnham's theory of the Managerial Revolution). In Rolenc, J.M. (Ed.), *Crucial Problems of International Relations Through the Eyes of Young Scholars*. Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague. pp. 247—257.

Kurtz, M.J., 2009. The Social Foundations of Institutional Order: Reconsidering War and the "Resource Curse" in Third World State Building. *Politics & Society*, 37 (4). pp. 479—520.

Le Bourdon, M., 2022. Confronting the Discomfort: A Critical Analysis of Privilege and Positionality in Development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F16094069221081362>.

Lee, J., 2019. Cash Transfers in Emergencies, *Columbia Social Work Review*, 10 (1), pp. 21—32.

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E., 2001. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. Merrill Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River.

Lottholz, P. and Lemay-Hébert, N., 2016. Re-reading Weber, re-conceptualizing state-building: from neo-Weberian to post-Weberian approaches to state, legitimacy and state-building. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29 (4), pp. 1467—1485.

Lupton, D., 2020. Special section on 'Sociology and the Coronavirus (CoVID-19) Pandemic', *Health Sociology Review*, 29 (2), pp. 111—112.

Magubane, B.M., 1996. *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa, 1875 — 1910*, Africa World Press Inc.. Trenton.

Mahoney, J., 2000. Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society*, 29 (4), pp. 507—548.

Majeed, M.T. and Gillani, S., 2017. State capacity and health outcomes: An empirical Analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 11 (2), pp. 671—697.

Mann, M., 1993. The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 25 (2), pp. 185—213. <https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/mann/Doc1.pdf> [Accessed on 25 November 2021].

Mayorga-Gallo, S. and Hordge-Freeman, E., 2017. Between marginality and privilege: Gaining access and navigating the field in multiethnic settings. *Qualitative Research*, 17 (4), pp. 377—394.

Mazzucato, M., Qobo, M. and Kattel, R., 2022. Building state capacities and dynamic capabilities to drive social and economic development: The case of South Africa. UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, Working Paper Series (IIPP WP 2021/09). Available at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/wp2021-09>

Mbembe, A., 2003. Necropolitics. *Public Culture*, 15 (1), pp. 11—40.

McCorkel, J.A. and Myers, K., 2003. What difference does difference make? Position and privilege in the field. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26 (2), pp. 199—231.

Mellinger, C.D., 2020. Positionality in public service interpreting research. *FITISPos International Journal*, 7 (1), pp. 92—109.

Merton, R.K. and Barber, E., 1976. Sociological Ambivalence. In Merton, R.K. (Ed.), *Sociological ambivalence and other essays*. The Free Press. New York. pp. 3—31.

Meyer, S.B. and Lunnay, B., 2013. The application of abductive and retroductive inference for the design and analysis of theory-driven sociological research, *Sociological research online*, 18 (1), pp. 86—96.

Migdal, J.S., 2004. *State in society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. Cambridge University Press.

Migdal, J.S. 2009. Researching the State. In Lichbach, M.I. and Zuckerman, A.S. (Eds.), *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp. 162—192.

Miliband, R., 1969. *The State in Capitalist Society*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. London.

Miliband, R., 1983. State power and class interests. *New Left Review*, 138 (1). pp. 57—68.

Mishra, C. and Rath, N., 2020. Social solidarity during a pandemic: Through and beyond Durkheimian Lens. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100079>.

Mohamed, T.S., Porisky, A. and Muthui, P.M., 2021. The politics of social protection in Kenya: State capacity, political competition and social pension registration in Marsabit County, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre (ESID). The University of Manchester, Manchester.

National Development Agency, 2020. The NDA CoVID-19 programme hailed by civil society organisations, https://www.nda.org.za/newsroom/posts/the_nda_covid-19_volunteer_programme_hailed_by_civil_society_organisations [Accessed on 1 November 2022].

National Institute for Communicable Diseases, 31 December 2020. Latest confirmed cases of COVID-19 in South Africa, Media Statement, <https://www.nicd.ac.za/26464-2/> [Accessed on 03 September 2022].

National Institute for Communicable Diseases, 30 April 2021. Latest confirmed cases of COVID-19 in South Africa, Media Statement, <https://www.nicd.ac.za/latest-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-in-south-africa-30-apr-2021/> [Accessed on 03 September 2022].

National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2020. *COVID-19: Humanities and Social Sciences Responds*, Johannesburg

National Planning Commission, 2012. National Development Plan 2030 Our Future — Make it work.

National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa, 2020. *Supplementary Budget Review*, <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2020s/review/fullsbr.pdf> [Accessed on 28 June 2022].

National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa, 2022a. *2022/23 Budget Speech*.

National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa, 2022b. *Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement*.

Naudé, W. and Cameron, M., 2020. Failing to Pull Together: South Africa's Troubled Response to COVID-19, *IZA Discussion Papers*, No. 13649, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn.

Ncwane, S.H., 2020. The outbreak of the COVID-19 in South Africa: The re-emergence of contextual realities in *COVID-19: Humanities & Social Sciences Responds*, National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Johannesburg, South Africa, pp 24—25.

Nduna, M., Mayisela, S., Balton, S., Gobodo-Madikizela, P., Kheswa, J.G., Khumalo, I.P., Makusha, T., Naidu, M., Sikweyiya, Y., Sithole, S.L. and Tabane, C., 2022. Research Site Anonymity in Context. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, DOI: 10.1177/15562646221084838.

North Gauteng High Court, 2020. Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town and Another v Minister of Social Development and Others (22808/2020) [2020] ZAGPPHC 308; 2021 (1) SA 553 (GP) (18 June 2020).

Ocheni, S. and Nwankwo, B.C., 2012. Analysis of colonialism and its impact in Africa. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 8 (3), pp. 46—54.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 13 January 2021. Media statement: Potential of super spreader effect at SASSA grant payment points concerns Committee Chairperson, <https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-potential-super-spreader-effect-sassa-grant-payment-points-concerns-committee-chairperson> [Accessed on 01 November 2022].

Persaud, R.B., 2021. Hegemony and the postcolonial state. *International Politics Reviews*, 9, pp. 70—79.

Piotrowski, A., 2019. Colonialism, Apartheid, and Democracy: South Africa's Historical Implications on the Land Reform Debate, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research*, 11 (4), pp. 53—71.

Reichertz, J., 2004. Abduction, deduction and induction in qualitative research. In Flick, U, von Kardorff, E and Steinke, I. (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (Translated by Bryan Jenner), Sage Publications, London. pp 159—164.

Republic of South Africa, 2020. South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202010/south-african-economic-reconstruction-and-recovery-plan.pdf [Accessed on 16 October 2020].

Richardson, R. and Kramer, E.H., 2006. Abduction as the type of inference that characterizes the development of a grounded theory. *Qualitative Research*, 6 (4), pp. 497—513.

Ridder, H.G., 2017. The theory contribution of case study research designs, *Business Research*, 10 (2), pp. 281—305.

Ross, L.E., 2017. An account from the inside: Examining the emotional impact of qualitative research through the lens of “insider” research. *Qualitative Psychology*, 4 (3), pp. 326—337.

Samson, M., van Niekerk, I. and Quene K.M., 2010, *Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes*, Economic Policy Research Institute, Claremont, Cape Town.

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J. and Kitzinger, C., 2015. Anonymising interview data: Challenges and compromise in practice. *Qualitative research*, 15 (5), pp. 616—632.

Schaller, D.J., 2005. Raphael Lemkin's view of European colonial rule in Africa: between condemnation and admiration. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7 (4), pp. 531—538.

Schotte, S. and Zizzamia, R., March 2021. The livelihood impacts of COVID-19 in urban South Africa: A view from below, *WIDER Working Paper 2021/56*, Helsinki, <https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2021/994-5>.

Seekings, J., 2015. *State capacity and the construction of pro-poor welfare states in the 'developing' world*. CSSR Working Paper No. 359. Centre for Social Science Research. Also available from: <http://cssr.uct.ac.za/pub/wp/359/>.

Seekings, J., 2020. *Bold promises, constrained capacity, stumbling delivery: The expansion of social protection in response to Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa*. CSSR Working Paper No. 456. Centre for Social Science Research. Also available from: https://humanities.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/humanities_uct_ac_za/1380/files/WP456Seekings.pdf.

Torkelson, E., Zembe-Mkabile, W. and Senona, E., 2021. Social Protection in a Time of Covid. Also available from: <https://www.samrc.ac.za/sites/default/files/files/2021-07-28/SocialProtection%20in%20a%20Time%20of%20Covid.pdf> [1 August 2021].

Slembrouck, S., 2015. The Role of the Researcher in Interview Narratives. In Georgakopoulou, A. and Anna, D.F. (Eds), *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 239—254.

South African Reserve Bank, 2022. Payments and Settlements, [https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/what-we-do/payments-and-settlements#:~:text=The%20national%20payment%20system%20\(NPS\)%20is%20a%20set%20of%20instruments,one%20financial%20institution%20to%20another](https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/what-we-do/payments-and-settlements#:~:text=The%20national%20payment%20system%20(NPS)%20is%20a%20set%20of%20instruments,one%20financial%20institution%20to%20another) [Accessed on 15 September 2022].

South African Social Security Agency, 2022. *Sixth Statistical Report* (September 2022), <https://www.sassa.gov.za/statistical-reports/Documents/September%202022%20%20social%20assistance%20%20report%20Final.pdf> [Accessed on 01 October 2022].

South African Social Security Agency, 2022. Social Relief of Distress, <https://www.sassa.gov.za/Pages/Social-Relief-of-Distress-Grant.aspx> [Accessed on 01 October 2022]

Standing, G., 2011. How cash transfers promote work and economic security. In Chowdhury, A.A. and Sundaram, J.K. (Eds.), *Poor Poverty: The Impoverishment of Analysis, Measurement and Policies*. Bloomsbury Publishing, London, pp. 197—221.

Stark, E., 1977. The epidemic as a social event. *International Journal of Health Services*, 7 (4), pp. 681—705.

Statistics South Africa, 2021. *Mid-year population estimates, Statistical Release P0302*. July 2021. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022021.pdf> [Accessed on 22 April 2023].

Stinchcombe, A.L., 1987. *Constructing Social Theories*. Brace and World, New York.

Su, Z., McDonnell, D., Wen, J., Kozak, M., Abbas, J., Šegalo, S., Li, X., Ahmad, J., Cheshmehzangi, A., Cai, Y. and Yang, L., 2021. Mental health consequences of COVID-19 media coverage: the need for effective crisis communication practices. *Globalization and Health*, 17 (1), pp. 1—8.

Tharoor, S., 2016. *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*. Aleph Book Company, New Delhi.

The Presidency, 21 April 2020. President Cyril Ramaphosa outlines expanded COVID-19 Coronavirus economic and social relief, <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/statement-president-cyril-ramaphosa-further-economic-and-social-measures-response-covid-19> [Accessed on 22 April 2020].

The Presidency, 25 July 2021. Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on progress in the national effort to contain the Covid-19 pandemic, <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/statement-president-cyril-ramaphosa-progress-national-effort-contain-covid-19-pandemic-4> [Accessed on 26 July 2021].

Tilley, N. and Pawson, R., 2000. Realistic evaluation: an overview. In *Founding Conference of the Danish Evaluation Society*, 8.

Trampusch, C. and Palier, B., 2016. Between X and Y: how process tracing contributes to opening the black box of causality. *New Political Economy*, 21 (5), pp. 437—454.

Transform, 2017. Management Information Systems and Approaches to Data Integration — Manual for a Leadership and Transformation Curriculum On Building and Managing Social Protection Floors in Africa”, available at <http://socialprotection.org/institutions/transform>.

Tremblay, M.A., 1957. The key informant technique: A nonethnographic application. *American Anthropologist*, 59 (4), pp. 688—701.

Vally, N.T., 2016. Insecurity in South African Social Security: An Examination of Social Grant Deductions, Cancellations, and Waiting, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42 (5), pp. 965—982.

Vanden Broeck, P. and Mangez, E., 2020. Ambiguous coexistence and social transaction: On a sociology of opacity and institutionalized discretion. *The American Sociologist*, 51 (2). pp. 172—187.

van Rensburg, D., 31 March 2022. R90m hack at Postbank kept under wraps. News24. from <https://www.news24.com/fin24/companies/amabhungane-r90m-hack-at-postbank-kept-under-wraps-20220330> [Accessed on 1 April 2022].

van Wyk, D.T. and Reddy, V., 2022. Pandemic governance: Developing a politics of informality. *South African Journal of Science*, 118 (5/6), <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2022/13163>.

Vennesson, P., 2010. Process tracing and historical inquiry: policy-making sequences and “possibilism”. In *APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper*.

Vila-Henninger, L., Dupuy, C., Van Ingelgom, V., Caprioli, M., Teuber, F., Pennetreau, D., Bussi, M. and Le Gall, C., 2022. Abductive Coding: Theory Building and Qualitative (Re)Analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, pp. 1—34. p.00491241211067508.

Visser, G., 2000. Researcher positionality and political-temporal contingency in a post-apartheid research environment. *Research Papers in Environmental and Spatial Analysis, Research Papers in Environmental and Spatial Analysis*. Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics.

Visser, W., 2009. “From RDP to GEAR to Post-Polokwane”. The ANC and the provision of social security for post-apartheid South Africa. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 45 (3), pp. 225—240.

Weber, M., 1946. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press. New York (Translated, edited, and with introduction by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills).

Wolff, S., 2004. Analysis of Documents and Records. In Flick, U, von Kardorff, E and Steinke, I. (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (Translated by Bryan Jenner), Sage Publications, London. pp. 284—289

World Health Organization, 2020. *Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Report — 22*, <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200211-sitrep-22-ncov.pdf> [Accessed on 03 September 2022].

Zeeman, K., 26 March 2019. Gwede Mantashe contradicts Ramaphosa: 'nine wasted years is a myth', *Sunday Times*, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2019-03-26-watch-gwede-mantashe-contradicts-ramaphosa-nine-wasted-years-is-a-myth> [Accessed on 1 October 2022].

Zondi, S., 2021. Covid-19 and the Return of the State in Africa. *Politikon*, 48 (2), pp. 190—205.

Zukin, S. and DiMaggio, P., 1990. Introduction. In Zukin, S. and Dimaggio, P. (Eds.), *Structures of Capital: The Social Organization of the Economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1—36.

APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Department of Sociology



SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF STATE CAPACITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY'S SPECIAL CoVID-19 SOCIAL RELIEF OF DISTRESS GRANT

Interview Guide

Agenda:

1. Preliminaries:
 - 1.1 All the interviews are conducted via the Microsoft Teams platform and are recorded.
 - 1.2 Every respondent has completed and consented to the relevant provisions of, and signed, the research consent and participation form.
2. Welcome and introduction
 - 2.1 Introduce the research objective to the informants
 - 2.2 Notify the informants that the interview is being recorded and re-read the confidentiality and risk/discomforts sections of the consent form (recorded).
3. Start the discussion using the questions on the next page.
4. These are key informant interviews with respondents who possess insights into the different dimensions of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.
5. Invite the respondents to feel free to elaborate when providing responses.
6. Conclusion of the discussion and closure.

Key informant Interviews (Questions)

- 1 Please tell us who you are, and which State institution you represent.
- 2 Please elaborate what your role has been in the conceptualisation, development, resourcing, implementation and management of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.
- 3 Did the State have the necessary and sufficient capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant before it was implemented? How did the different institutions put this implementation capacity together? Please provide the relevant details.
- 4 What necessitated the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant outside the SOCPEN system?
- 5 What are the elements that made the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant possible?

- 6 Please indicate and elaborate the key capacity that was brought by your institution to the conceptualisation, development, resourcing, implementation and management of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Please elaborate on the relationships that your institution pursued towards making this capacity part of the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant.
- 7 What value do means tests add to the beneficiary targeting phase of the CoVID-19 SRD grant? What is your institution's views of grant means tests and the need for universalisation? Please provide the relevant details.
- 8 Please share the key relationships' challenges that you encountered with different State institutions in the quest to realise the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Please elaborate on how these were resolved?
- 9 What lessons for inter-departmental relationships did your institution draw from participating in the CoVID-19 SRD grant?
- 10 What State capacity lessons did your institution draw from the implementation of the CoVID-19 SRD grant. Please provide the relevant details.
- 11 How can the State's capacity to implement future emergency cash transfer programmes be improved?

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



14 December 2021

Dear Mr MI Nkoli

Project Title: Sociological analysis of state capacity in the South African Social Security Agency's Special CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant
Researcher: Mr MI Nkoli
Supervisor(s): Prof ZS Mokomane
Department: Sociology
Reference number: 13384903 (HUM021/0921)
Degree: Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 14 December 2021. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Harris'.

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Sociological Analysis of State Capacity in SASSA's Special CoVID-19 SRD Grant

Key informant Information and Consent Sheet

Who I am and why I am here

My name is **Motsoakgomo I Papi Nkoli**. I am a **Master's Student** in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. As partial requirements of my studies, I am undertaking a research project entitled **Sociological Analysis of State Capacity in SASSA's Special CoVID-19 SRD Grant**. The main aim of the project is **to examine the extent to which SASSA mobilised its capacity to implement the CoVID-19 SRD grant**.

Request for your participation

To assist me in gathering the information required to complete the project I am requesting you to be interviewed on **the inter-departmental processes that are relevant to the conceptualisation, resourcing, implementation and successes of the CoVID-19 SRD grant**. The interview will not exceed **two** hours. I also request your permission to audio-record the interview. On the next page there is a place for you to sign (or make an "X" sign) as an indication that you are giving me permission to conduct the interview and, if you are willing, for it to be audio-recorded.

Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. If you choose not to take part there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. If you agree to participate, you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview.

Your participation will cost you nothing and there will be no penalty, loss and direct benefits to you.

1. This research is being done in accordance with all relevant policies of the University of Pretoria.
2. As a researcher I will be applying ethical practices throughout this research: from the point of inception to the point of publishing the results.
3. When writing up my research results I will comply with the University's policies regarding plagiarism.

Confidentiality

Information WHICH WILL IDENTIFY THE INTERVIEWEE will be kept confidential. At the start of the interview, I will take down a few of your personal details. However, your name will not be written down, and no one will be able to link you to the views you express. However please note the following:

- The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including my supervisor.
- As per the University of Pretoria policy, the transcripts of the group discussion will be stored securely and in an anonymised format at the Department of Sociology for a maximum of 15 years.

Risks/Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way at any point during the interview or after, please let me know and I will provide you with the details of trained counsellors/social workers at **LifeLine Pretoria** who will be on standby to offer your services free of charge as follows: 012-804-1853.

If you have any concerns regarding the way the interview was conducted, or any other concern regarding your participation in this study, please contact the Postgraduate Coordinator of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria (who is also my supervisor) on 012-420-3744 or by email at Zitha.Mokomane@up.ac.za. I can be contacted on 079-523-5501 or by email at papinkoli@gmail.com.

CONSENT

1. I hereby agree to participate in the expert interviews as part of a research study entitled **Sociological Analysis of State Capacity in SASSA's Special CoVID-19 SRD Grant**.
2. I have the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed study before signing consent.
3. My personal identity will be kept confidential throughout this study.
4. I understand that my answers will remain confidential.
5. My participation in this study is voluntary and there will be no penalty, loss of benefit if I decide not to take part in this study.
6. I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without having to explain why.
7. I have the rights to access the data that I provide to this research project.
8. I agree to the data that I am providing to the researcher to be used in future research projects and publications.
9. I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this discussion.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the audio recording of the interview that I am participating in.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....