WORKFORCE CONTROL AND MANIPULATION:
A CASE STUDY OF THE
SOCIAL RELATIONS OF POWER IN THE CANNING INDUSTRY IN ASHTON

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study of the social relations of power within the canning industry in Ashton. The project had three main aims: 1) to document the physical situation at the two canning factories in Ashton, in order to profile the basic composition of the workforce, aspects of the labour process and working and employment conditions; 2) to examine the processes and mechanisms of control and then 3) to use the first two aims as a basis to take stock of what this control means in terms of workers lives: "i.e. examining the lived experience of control". I adopted a primarily qualitatively focused approach and used a combination of interviews and group discussions to elicit the information necessary to inform these aims. The results showed how in the logic of capitalist development, pre-existing social divisions are exploited. The interaction of these pre-existing social divisions within the structure of the workforce, combined with deliberate control mechanisms serves to divide, atomise and thereby control the workforce. I found the workers to be divided by gender and race, these divisions are intensified by differences between whether workers have seasonal or permanent employment and where they live. These divisions, aggravated by differences, are then combined with the deliberate use of piecework, the assembly line and the factories recruitment system. Workers experienced most of these control mechanisms as normal and natural and are mostly thankful to have work.
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1. Introduction

In 1996 I began work on the thesis portion of my masters degree. It has been a long and interesting journey from the initial conceptualisation of what I planned to research up to and including the material reality of what I eventually landed up researching. As with most academic pursuits, when my acquaintance with the material matured and my ideas developed, so too the initial goals and aims of my project transformed and metamorphosed. Thus the aims and goals of this project were not simply “born”, fully developed and ready to be implemented. Rather they evolved through a complex and time-consuming process. It is to a brief discussion of this “evolution” that we now turn.

When I began the thesis portion of my masters degree in 1996 there were quite a few areas of research which I was interested in pursuing. While completing a course in the Sociology of Health, I was offered the opportunity of working on a larger project already underway. This project was being co-ordinated by the lecturer of the course, Dr Judith Head. The aim of the project was to help draw up a development strategy for Ashton, a small town in the Western Cape. The project was being run in consultation with the Mayor of Ashton and the provincial office of the RDP. It was titled Ashton and the RDP - A Social Audit.

The project was aimed at examining various aspects of life in Ashton. As an Industrial Sociology student I was interested in focusing on the economic and industrial dimensions of Ashton. As Ashton’s economy is largely dependant on its canning industry, it was decided that a case study of occupational health within the canning industry would be an ideal project for me to research as a part of the larger social audit. This project would enable me to combine my interests in occupational health with an interest in women’s issues, the vast majority of workers in the canning industry being female.

I thus embarked on my research with the title:

“An investigation into the physical and psychological hazards women face in low status factory work.”
I worked as part of a larger group with two honours students investigating related issues around workers, working conditions and occupational health in the factories. The results of our combined research were quite straightforward. The results confirmed what we expected to find. The types of hazards the women face in the two factories could be neatly divided into two groups. The first set of hazards were direct physical hazards the workers experienced as a result of the type of work and machinery they were working with; the second set were related to stress and or psychological strains the women had to deal with in the course of and as a result of their work in the factory.

My first set of results, with the focus on health issues, while interesting, were somewhat unchallenging material for a masters level thesis. After consultation with Dr Russell I decided not to abandon my results, as quite a considerable amount of information on various aspects of factory life had been obtained, above and beyond occupational health issues. However I decided that it was necessary to change the focus of my analysis away from a rather descriptive account of occupational health in the factory to a more analytical account of this. Thus I went back to the drawing board, so to speak, to see what other issues emerged from the results aside from the health aspects. Initially I was considering examining the notion of whether the workplace was gender-blind; wanting to link women's incorporation into a male-dominated; male-designed and 'male-friendly' workplace, to women's occupational health. Thereby being able to use my initial research in a substantial way in my final project.

However this still seemed to be a little too descriptive. They were interesting questions to ask, but it still seemed as if I was not seeing the whole picture. At this point I decided that I had focused my literature search far too much on women's occupational health. I broadened my literature search and began to look at literature on women's place in the labour process and the labour process generally, and the 'picture' started becoming much clearer. There were some obvious parallels between what I was reading and what we had discovered in the factories in Ashton.
There is much written about the division of labour and the so-called ‘feminisation’ of the global workforce (See Beechey, 1983; Cohen, 1987, Cho, 1985, Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1987, Sassen, 1988, Mackintosh, 1981, Elson and Pearson, 1981 and Thompson, 1989). There is also quite a contentious debate surrounding the details of this ‘supposedly’ recent phenomenon.¹ The how and why of this argument we do not have time to go into. But what does seem to be clear from the above mentioned debate is that the sexual division of labour is a pervasive and seemingly universal characteristic of the world’s workforce. Wherever one may go from the first to the third world one ever present feature remains constant. As Mackintosh puts it:

"...the division of tasks varies from country to country. But the existence of some sexual division of labour, some sex-typing of activities, is a very persistent fact of human society." (Mackintosh, 1981: 1)

One of the concomitant effects of sexual stratification has been to reduce the wages of workers generally by paying women less than men. This occurs for a variety of reasons which are tied up with women’s subordination as a gender. Capital usually relies on the ideological justification that women are not breadwinners and as such can be paid less than men. (The realities and ramifications of this will be discussed in detail in the literature review). As an oft quoted statement suggests:

"Why pay a male worker anywhere to do what a female worker will do for much less?" (Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1987: 201)

However this suggests that the market is gender blind and operates without any consideration of gender differences. And in treating the economy as if it were gender blind, a common error has been to assume that it is simply the fact that women can be paid less than men which makes them so attractive to employers. This is certainly a great bonus to employers, but such reasoning is misleading.

¹Rose would contend this, as a historian interested in gender in the workplace and its history, she argues that for most working class women, the option to leave the work force permanently has never been a real option, not since the beginning of the industrial revolution. According to the author “women have been involved in the labour force, both the formal and casual....they formed an elastic labour force.” (Rose, 1986: 115) The theoretical arguments will be dealt with in more detail in the literature review.
Through my lengthily literature review I was tempted to follow this particular path, but the more widely I read the more I was cautioned away from this approach. It was upon reading Thompson’s “The Nature of Work”, that I found a standpoint which I concurred with:

"Capital is not impervious to divisions of sex or race. When shipping employers replace UK seamen by Indians on one quarter of their wages, they are not ‘blindly’ seeking the cheapest forms of labour. Rather, the logic of capitalist development is connecting to existing and recognisable forms of stratification. Therefore as Philips and Taylor put it, ‘the sexual division of labour in wage work cannot be seen either as a product of patriarchal imperative on the one hand, or of the long march of capital on the other.’ “ (Thompson, 1989: 208)

My point here is not to enter into an elaborate theoretical debate, but to illustrate how I arrived at my ultimate goal and aims. I began to see that while divisions in the labour force are often based on gender lines, "the logic of capitalist development will (sic) connect (sic) to existing and recognisable forms of stratification" (ibid.). This is to say that pre-existing social divisions do not disappear when people enter the workplace; often they are intensified, especially by exposure to a system where large numbers of people are competing over a very limited pool of resources. How much are these divisions further intensified when we have this happening within a small rural town such as Ashton, with a history of systematic segregation? According to Cousins:

"the rural periphery is characterised by a diversified agricultural economy, a large number of small rural towns in which agricultural processing industries are important employers, and good economic prospects. Social problems abound, however, due to the poverty and inequality which has accompanied economic growth for the benefit of a racially defined elite.” (Cousins, 1993:17)

I took a closer look at the results from Ashton and a number of important directive questions arose out of analysing the description of the workforce, the labour process and the recruitment process. The workforce is characterised by a large predominance of women working on seasonal contracts. Questions such as why such a predominance of women in these factories? Why in a town with a relatively high level of unemployment would companies actively seek to employ quotas of workers from other towns, rather than simply employing workers from Ashton? The more I
examined the physical make-up of the workforce, the more divisions between the workers I began to see. The workers appeared to be divided by gender, race, whether they were seasonal or full time employees and geographical location. It occurred to me that if ever the adage to divide and conquer was appropriate, never was it more so than in Ashton. At this point I understood what I was going to focus my project on.

I realised, when looking at the health problems in the factories, that what we were seeing was merely the tip of the iceberg. They were the visible symptoms of much deeper and more complicated issues. I saw how a complex interaction of race, gender and other social divisors, served to manipulate, divide and weaken the strength of the workforce. I hypothesised that central to understanding why working conditions and health conditions were so bad in the two factories - was to understand how these pre-existing social relations of power interacted within the structure of the workforce to control it and how much management was able to make use of these divisions. From this I was able to draw up my specific aims:

1) Documenting the physical situation at the two factories. This will be quite largely based on demographic information. The point of doing this is to profile the basic composition of the workforce, aspects of the labour process and the working and employment conditions. This is an essential part of the process. Although I am trying to move away from a descriptive approach, we have to start with this in order to move onto the next aim of the project:

2) The second aim is to examine the processes and mechanisms of control. Examining how the workforce is divided by various pre-existing social divisors and how the effects of these are combined with deliberate measures which are actively used by management to obtain greater control over the workforce.

3) The third and final aim is to use the first two sections to take stock of what this control and its implications, mean in terms of workers lives. Here we shall examine the lived experience of this control.
2. Literature Review

In this review we have a number of disparate issues to focus on. Section one examines various aspects of management control, which are pertinent to this study. In section two the implications of a workforce divided by gender is explored. Section three will look at selected indicators and statistics which give a contextual profile of gender and racial differences between workers in the Western Cape and South Africa. There is also some discussion around these statistics. Lastly section four will take a brief look at the canning industry in the Western Cape, the origins and history of the industry, and some comment on the process of canning.

Selecting the most appropriate literature from the vast amount available was an onerous task, but it was done with very specific criteria in mind. The writers and arguments presented in sections one and two were chosen because they help to illustrate the type of processes and mechanisms of control that are found in Ashton. As was mentioned in the introduction, I believe that the workforce at the two canning factories are controlled to a large extent by the interaction of various pre-existing social divisions within the structure of the workforce, that serves to divide and help control it. Gender as an organising principle within the workplace is certainly one of the issues which this thesis will be highlighting. As such there will be a focus on how this form of stratification divides the workforce and the implications this has for workers' everyday lives.

While a fuller and more comprehensive discussion around the theory of worker control would be ideal, there is a great deal of variation in methods of control. Control measures are determined by a variety of factors, depending on the type of industry, the country, the economic and political climate of that country, the level of worker organisation, the extent of capitalist development in that country and so on. Essentially I am just acknowledging the limitations of the discussion on control. The information presented in section three was chosen in order to help the reader develop a frame of reference with which to compare the conditions under which the workers in Ashton work and live with those of the "average worker" in the Western Cape. The information in the last section was chosen to situate this study in its particular industry.
2.1 Section One

2.1.1 Control and Resistance: Why?

The first and seemingly redundant issue to begin with is why do management need to control the workforce? It may seem obvious, but we need to lay out exactly why it is so. At its most theoretically abstract, Marxist scholars (and it is with this particular standpoint that I broadly agree) would state that capitalist production is based on a fundamental contradiction within the production process. Workers create the value in goods which constitutes the profit, however they are not rewarded for this. The surplus value which constitutes profit is appropriated by the capitalist and usually reinvested which serves to further develop the capitalist system of production and so the vicious cycle repeats itself. Because of this workers and management are pursuing different ends and while this mode of production remains in place, they will constantly be at loggerheads. The logic of capitalist development means that the capitalist is continually trying to find ways of increasing productivity and increasing profit. In order to do this the capitalist needs to keep costs as low as possible. Labour or workers are a cost. Labour, who are thinking beings with various needs and desires, want to improve their conditions and wages, hence the eternal dilemma. As Edwards states:

"The basic relationship in production reveal both the basis for conflict and the problem of control at the workplace. Conflict exists because the interests of workers and those of employers collide, and what is good for one is frequently costly for the other. Control is rendered problematic because unlike the other commodities involved in production, labour power is always embodied in people, who have their own interests and needs and who retain their power to resist being treated like a commodity" (Edwards, 1979: 12).

This is a very limited treatise of a very complex theoretical standpoint, but the fundamental conflict between the capitalist and the worker should be apparent. However as I mentioned above, this explanation is laid out in abstraction, we are discussing conflict in principle. The "why" workers need to be controlled also has a practical reality. When a worker is hired, it is only the potential to labour that has been
purchased. Without an efficient system which organises the labour of the workers, there might be a great deal of time and resources wasted. As Edwards states:

"Under all systems of social production, management of physical and human resources is necessary. Within capitalism, the management of resources has become management, a specialised function with two dimensions. Coordination is necessary to avoid the haphazard and wasteful use of the instruments of labour, and to meet the requirements of purchasing, financing, marketing and other factors. Exercise of authority over the labour of others is, however, a means of obtaining the desired work behaviour from others" (Edwards, 1979: 17).

Another very important reason to 'control' workers is to prevent them from organising themselves to challenge the management-imposed status-quo. Thus control not only requires the co-ordination of workers day to day working lives in physical terms, but it suggests that at an ideological level control needs the concurrent consent of workers.

"The objective fact of control ultimately depends on the existence of subjective consent" (Thompson, 1989: 152).

So we could view control as just one side of the coin, for control to be effective you need to 'manufacture' the consent of workers to this control as well. We could thus conclude that control is not simply something imposed from above, it has both physical and ideological dimensions. It is not created in a vacuum, but is part of the lived experience of workers and managers daily interaction. What also needs to be pointed out is that 'control' is not a static state, it lies on a continuum. At the one extreme there can be complete control with an ideologically conditioned workforce who are perfectly happy in their jobs and believe the situation they find themselves in to be totally equitable and fair. At the other end of the scale is a socialist revolution, where workers have developed true consciousness and have seen through the ideology of 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay'. They have recognised their alienation and exploitation and have thus cast off the shackles of capitalism. In reality most workforces are found somewhere between these two poles.
The extent of management control and worker resistance is extremely variable: it varies not just from country to country but from region to region and from time to time. There are traditionally 'hostile' industries and docile ones. The levels of class consciousness and trade union development is also extremely variable. These factors all serve to affect the type of control that is likely to be found in different industries in different areas. Nichols and Beynon illustrate this point:

"This can be seen in the case studies of ChemCo. Behaviour and attitudes of the workforce are shaped by its location in an area of England remarkably free from confrontational and industrial strife during this century" (Nichols and Benyon, 1977: 109).

Essentially then we can see that as one moves from one industry to another, one would expect to find differences in how management tried to control the workforce, because control is contingent on so many variables. It is because of this that management control and labour process theories are so very problematic. Many contemporary theorists, have developed theories which attempt to explain how it is that management control the labour process and workforce. Unfortunately most contemporary theorists, have failed to provide a labour process theory which applies in each and every circumstance and situation.

Braverman argued that Taylorism constituted a basic requirement of capitalism. (Braverman, 1974).

Salaman countered:

"But he overlooks the possibility that Taylorism represents only one of a number of possible work strategies" (Salaman, 1981: 170 - 171)

Edwards argued that:

"continuing conflict in the workplace and employers attempts to contain it have thus brought the modern American working class under the sway of three quite different systems for organising and controlling their work: simple control, technical control (with union participation) and bureaucratic control....., the three patterns for organising work prevail" (Edwards, 1979: 21)
It is extremely difficult to generalise and make assertions about control and labour process that will always apply concretely. Many theorists have come under fire for trying to do just that. Thompson criticisms of theories of management control is focused on this particular point. He states:

"The fact that the dictates of accumulation require control of the labour process by capital does not tell us what form of control will be applicable in different circumstances.. No one has convincingly demonstrated that a particular form of control is necessary or inevitable for capitalism to function successfully....In contrast, the debate has revealed that within the overall control of the labour process by capital there are a variety of techniques and structures available. The most consistent weakness of existing theory has been the tendency to counterpose one form of control to another" (Thompson, 1989: 151).

Arguments over the labour process and management control rage. And while it would be interesting to explore the debates and authors further, we are limited by time and space. Thus we are not going to enter into this debate, but rather examine aspects of control which inform the rest of the study.

I want to consider two ways that management obtain greater control over the workforce. One way is to actively use various measures, such as the assembly line, skills hierarchies, piecework etc.; however management also benefit from divisions between workers that weaken their power as a class. Pre-existing social relations of power which are not simply created by the capitalists, but which are carried into the workplace by workers and managers alike and serve to divide, atomise and weaken the workforce. It is to this first type of control, that which management actively create, that we first turn.
2.1.2 The Assembly Line

One of the most infamous 'types' of control is the assembly line, first introduced in Detroit (USA) in January of 1914, by Henry Ford. It is a means of organising the work process so that the task is broken up into its simplest component parts. Each of the 'parts' is then brought to the stationary worker by means of a moving conveyor belt of some sort. The worker performs a simple function on that part and the belt moves along, and the worker is brought another part. The benefit of the assembly line for management is that the pace of the work is determined by how fast the line moves along. They can effectively speed up production by giving the worker a very specific time period in which to complete each task. This form of work organisation also relieves the foreman of having to negotiate the number of tasks each worker has to perform, that function is taken over by the machine. As Bosquet states:

"The work quota is no longer laid down, negotiated and imposed by a human authority which remains open to argument; it is ordered by the machine itself, imposed by the inexorable programmed advance of the assembly line" (Bosquet, 1980: 374).

Braverman echoes Bosquet, saying that the assembly line:

"is favoured by management not just as an aid to labour, but chiefly because it enables management to control the pace of production" (Braverman, 1989: 40).

However, as 'useful' as the assembly line is for management, it is loathed by workers. It imposes not only a frantic pace on the work, but also a sense of complete loss of control over the labour process. If a worker cannot keep up with the pace on the assembly line, everyone's work is held up. The work never stops and the worker is forced to repeat one task over and over again. Work on assembly lines is boring, repetitious and does not usually require much thinking. The assembly line has thus produced one of the most hated forms of work organisation and its reputation as:

"one of the most abominable forms of labour" (Braverman, 1989: 40)
is well earned. There are numerous case studies of workers and working conditions in factories which are paced by assembly lines. (See: Benyon, 1975, Goode, 1985, Van Zyl, 1990) The statements below are from workers on a car assembly line and they capture some of the loathing workers have for this form of work organisation:
“It’s the most boring job in the world. It’s the same thing over and over again. There’s no change in it, it wears you out. It makes you awful tired. It slows your thinking right down. There is no need to think. It’s just a formality. You just carry on......If I had the chance to move I’d leave right away” (Benyon, 1975: 118).

and:

“It’s a relief when you get off the moving line. It’s such a tremendous relief. I can’t put it into words. When you’re on the line it’s on top of you the whole time....Y’know....day in day out....never stopping. I still have nightmares about it. I couldn’t go back on that line. Not for anything” (Benyon, 1975:118).

The above sentiments should indicate just how alienating assembly line work is. It certainly does not inspire workers or fulfil them, most will do anything just for a change of pace as the statement below indicates:

“the atmosphere you get in here is so completely false. Everyone is downcast and fed up. You can’t even talk about football. You end up doing stupid things. Childish things - playing tricks on one another” (Benyon, 1975:118).
2.1.3 Post - Fordist Production / Flexible Specialisation: Does this signal the death knell of the assembly line and its attendant forms of control?

The assembly line, was and is, associated with a particular system of production and accumulation, namely Fordism. As the date of the above quote illustrates, Benyon's study of assembly line workers at Ford, was done quite a long time ago. Since then there have been developments in terms of production methods, including technology. The extent of the changes is subject to fierce debate. Some theorists argue that we have moved to a post-Fordist era, where Fordist systems of production and technologies (like the assembly line) will soon become obsolete and be replaced with Post -Fordist technologies and systems of production (flexible specialisation) (See Piore and Sabel, 1984 and Matthews, 1989). Other theorists disagree and claim that flexible specialisation is merely 'computer- aided - Taylorism' (See Hyman, 1988, Sayer, 1989, and specifically South Africa see Baumann, 1991 and Ewert, 1992).

Irrespective of the outcome of this debate, the reality of flexible technologies and flexible specialisation do exist. We need to examine these changes and then see whether or not they have any application in the canning industry.

If Fordism is described as mass-production of standardised goods for economies of scale, then flexible specialisation would be the antithesis of that, namely: small batch production of specialised goods for economies of scope. Flexible specialisation is a system of production which combines both flexible technologies and flexible forms of work organisation. Flexible technologies owe their existence to the advancement in information technology and microelectronics. The development of these two has meant that machines now have the ability to process information, store it in the machines 'memory' and be programmed and reprogrammed. This is an incredible breakthrough because it allows machines to be reprogrammed at the point at which the work is being done. This means that the machine is not dedicated to one rigid task, but can perform a variety of functions. Thus the producer is not tied to one single product, but can produce a variety of different goods without having to invest in huge capital outlays which can only produce one type of product.

"Programmability is the key to flexibility, and it is flexibility that gives computerised systems such a boost in productivity." (Matthews, 1989:41)
The kind of flexibility which information technology allows must be acknowledged as a real departure from the rigid, dedicated machinery, typical of Fordist systems of production. The 'pure form' of flexible specialisation also requires a very different type of worker and workplace to accompany such flexible technology.

Along with changes in technology flexible specialisation advocates broad changes to the ways in which work is physically organised. Examples of this would be the Just in Time system. Here parts are ordered literally just in time for them to be used. This is a vast difference to Fordist production where materials were often stockpiled for months. With the JIT system there is little or no inventory at any time and the system works by 'pulling work through' on the basis of demand, instead of pushing work through to meet output targets. (Baumann, 1991: 4) This system allows less capital to be tied up in parts waiting for assembly and in stocks which have not been sold. Another example of flexible work organisation is the adoption of group technology (GT).

"GT involves the establishing of families of similar parts which are produced in a production cell which has all the flexible machinery required to produce all parts," (Baumann, 1991: 4)

instead of all the parts having to be transported from one place to another so that special purpose machines could perform their tasks on different parts, as was the case with Fordist production. GT is complimentary to JIT and the two together have seen the typical linear Fordist factory layout revolutionised into a cellular and much more flexible layout. (There are many other examples of work organisation which have changed but for the sake of brevity I will not address all of them.)

Flexible specialisation has seen vast changes in production technology and work organisation. Thus in a structural sense the 'postfordist workplace' has changed. It is imperative to ask if these structural changes require a different type of worker. There is considerable debate over this issue. However purely from a theoretical standpoint it does stand to reason that if the new productive technology is highly flexible and "multi-skilled" so too should the workforce be flexible and multi-skilled. Maree when talking of "post Fordist workers" states that:
"The (sic) characteristics of post Fordist production require the following principles of post Fordist work organisation:

- horizontal and vertical integration of tasks
- broad levels of responsibility and multi-skilling
- group work or team work
- decentralisation of decision making through worker involvement and
- shared supervision

The principles are fundamentally in opposition to Fordist work organisation principles." (Maree, 1991: 80)

However, as was mentioned above, this is an extremely contentious debate. While these technologies and means of organising work certainly exist and are in use, the degree to which they are being used and the widespread applicability of these forms of production is essentially what is being challenged. Critics of flexible specialisation query the widespread applications of it on a number of grounds. According to Schonberger (in Sayer) wholesale application of flexible specialisation is extremely expensive and it thus has to be used almost 24 hours a day to make it profitable. Furthermore the same author argues that while Fordist machinery may be dedicated and thus inflexible that does not automatically mean that such machinery is large and costly. (Schonberger quoted in Sayer, 1989: 673) At present and in the conceivable future there are many products which, it can be convincingly argued, will be mass produced, for example simple consumer items such as ball point pens and foodstuffs such as biscuits or canned fruit. Thus there needs to be a real competitive advantage to investing in flexible specialisation. Products which require complicated assembly processes, have large profit margins and where quality is very important e.g. motor cars and computers; such products could conceivably benefit from the application of flexible technologies and work practices, however:

"there are also many simple mass assembly processes....Are we to believe that these face the same problems as the car industry." (Sayer, 1989:668)

Consequently one of the basic criticisms is that flexible specialisation's existence does not mean that mass production has disappeared or is no longer a viable way of producing products. Thus we can say that flexible specialisation as a production process is just one of the many ways in which a product can be produced.
Having examined the new technologies of flexible specialisation and concluded that they do not necessarily signal the death knell of the assembly line, especially considering that canning certainly doesn’t fit the profile for suitability of post-Fordist production methods; we can continue our discussion of active measures taken to control the workforce.

Given that assembly line work is so boring, monotonous and basically unpleasant, it usually needs some kind of coercive control, for it to work and be productive. As was mentioned earlier, there are two dimensions to control, one is the physical dimension, which in this case would be the assembly line; but there is also the ideological dimension. Essentially management needs to manufacture a level of consent from workers to this form of control. If management cannot do this, it can either work with a hostile, resistant workforce or it can find workers who are more amenable to the coercive types of control which tend to go hand in hand with assembly line work. According to Elson and Pearson, companies believe women are the most suitable for this purpose because:

"Women are considered [by companies] not only to have naturally nimble fingers, but also to be naturally more docile and willing to accept tough work discipline, and be naturally more suited to tedious, repetitive, monotonous work" (Elson and Pearson, 1981: 149).

By employing women management is able to plug into pre-existing social relations of power which make women easier to control through patriarchal dominance. Thompson notes that in terms of female workers, management don’t simply have to rely on coercive control even though women are less resistant to this form of domination. By harnessing what he calls 'socially constructed femininity', management are able to connect to:

"spontaneous consent derived from the experience of women in the wider society" (Thompson, 1989: 175).

Thus here is an example where we see the interplay between active measures taken to maintain control (the assembly line and coercive supervision of it) and how management benefits from pre-existing social relations of power, which divide the workforce.
This is merely one example of how management benefits from pre-existing social divisions which divide the workforce and thus make workers easier to control. Even in situations where control measures appear overtly coercive management will still try and maintain a level of voluntary consent and loyalty to the company. Edwards sagely notes that large corporations:

"have so many employees that to keep them working diligently is itself a major task, employing a vast workforce of its own" (Edwards, 1979: 12).

The implication of this is that the 'consent' of workers to their working conditions is based on the contrivance of management, who according to Edwards put a great deal of effort into making sure workers 'volunteer' a certain degree of consent to their working conditions and control measures.

While control is partially disguised when it is a machine which sets the pace of work, it is still not difficult to see who is working on the line and who is not. Technical control, such as that embodied in the assembly line is widely used, however as the discussion on the assembly line indicates, such control on its own is not enough. Other less overt forms of control are needed. Ideally management need to try and disguise the overt control measures. In most companies this requires efforts to focus attention away from management and also, very importantly, they need to try and prevent workers from appreciating that they (workers) share similar experiences and a common identity as workers. In order to do this management need to create, illuminate and exacerbate divisions between workers. According to Salaman:

"The differentiation of the organisational workforce acts to divide employees, even to set them against each another. The existence of numerous subtle gradations, levels, offices, ranks, offers to some members of the organisation the appearance of some sense of superiority over other members. It permits the impression that personal or group experiences and deprivations are the result of personal inadequacy, the inability to achieve....and (sic) these divisive consequences should be seen as results of purposive employer strategies; that to a considerable degree the differentiation of the organisation reflects the need for control through fragmenting potential solidarity, distracting attention away from real sources of deprivation, individualising structural processes" (Salaman, 1981: 175 -176).
Creating divisions between workers in this manner is one of management's 'smoke and mirror' tactics. Firstly it creates differences and fosters competitiveness between workers. Secondly it makes it more difficult to pin-point the source of control and object of resentment when there are so many subtle layers of control to see through. As Salaman so eloquently says, it serves to

"uphold and mystify organisational structure" (Salaman, 1981: 188).

There are often no fundamental differences between jobs, yet by making distinctions in job title and the corresponding payment, workers are lulled into believing that these differences are genuine. Such distinctions in job titles and pay grades also provides the scope for management to give a number of promotions and corresponding increase in wages, within most of the job-families. However in order for workers to gain promotion, they need to work hard, be disciplined and not to upset the applecart, so to speak. It also serves to foster a spirit of what Thompson calls 'competitive individualism' (Thompson, 1989), where workers believe that they can improve their status in the factory hierarchy through hard work and individual effort. Unfortunately, as Salaman so aptly puts it:

"Such views are not simply erroneous, though reassuring, they are responsible for division and rivalry among the workforce" (Salaman, 1981: 176).

2.1.4 Piecework

The introduction of a piecework system is another example of creating divisions among the workforce. Piecework, is a system where workers are paid according to the number of articles they perform some or other function on. Once again the onus is placed on the worker to work hard, because according to this system, the harder the worker works - the number of articles the worker manages to work on, the more money the worker will receive. Thus the job is 'individualised', making the worker responsible for his or her own success. In many instances, pieceworker have become relatively high earners in their factories. Often when this has happened companies have placed minimum quotas, where workers can only start earning after a certain number of articles have been completed. In many instances piecework has in fact introduced great hardship and exploitation. This is especially prevalent where it has been introduced in developing countries' export processing zones. (see Frobel et al, Cho, Fuentes and Ehrenreich and Sassen for a fuller discussion of the implications of
piecework etc. in developing countries and export processing zones.) However it is not restricted to these places, exploitative piecework performed in sweatshop-like conditions can and are found in the developed world.

Conditions for workers performing piecework also vary quite considerably according to the 'needs of management'. Piecework is used in situations where workers are barely able to fulfil their quota and are thus physically unable to make very much extra because the quotas are too high, or the piece-rate can be set really low to prevent workers earning too much.

While the situation mentioned above is more commonplace, there have been situations where piecework has been used very effectively as a means of dividing and controlling the workforce, by creating a 'pieceworker elite'. Thompson did a case study and he termed these pieceworkers the 'high fliers'. In his study the workers who performed the piecework earned quite a substantial amount more than the other workers and there was fierce competition to get these piecework jobs. Thus such a situation served to produce a great deal of rivalry between the pieceworkers and the regular workers (Thompson, 1989: 162 - 163).

2.1.5 Pre-Existing Social Divisions

Management do not simply have to rely on creating differences between workers. There are a plethora of differences which divide workers long before they step through the factory gates. Workers enter the workplace with the burden of prior socialisation and life-chances. This impacts on how the worker will be treated, each with their own pre-conceived ideas and notions of 'us and them'. However it is important to stress that management also enter the workplace with the burden of prior socialisation. The divisions which people (workers and management) bring with them are created within the broader society. Neither capitalism nor management create these divisions, rather it is in the very nature of capitalist development to connect to existing and recognisable forms of stratification.
The manner in which gender divides the workforce is quite complex. One of the problems with theories which try to explain women's place in the labour market, has been a tendency to treat the economy as if it were gender blind. This view, according to Humphrey is naive, as if men and women suddenly become 'unsocialised' in the workplace. The truth of the matter is that:

"Gender, or power relations between the sexes, permeates all social institutions, and the supposedly objective economic laws of market competition work through and within gendered structures. The market does not value male and female labour independently of gender" (Humphrey, 1985: 219).

In treating the economy as if it were gender blind, a common error has been to assume that it is women's cheapness relative to male labour which makes them so attractive to employers. This is certainly a great bonus to employers, but such reasoning is misleading. If capital were simply trying to employ the cheapest workers, then surely women could be employed to perform all work at cheaper rates than male workers? However this is not the case, women's incorporation into the labour market has been within quite distinct parameters. In discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the 'deskilling thesis' Joekes addresses this particular question. This author contends that if women were so attractive in terms of their objective 'cheapness and lack of skills', why then is the need for female labour restricted to certain industries? Joekes maintains that it is because women workers are women, and being a woman has a great deal of socially constructed meaning attached to it, that makes them so attractive to employers. (Joekes, 1985) This then begs the question what are the social meanings attached to being a woman that makes them so suitable for some occupations rather than others and how does management benefit from this division?
Much is made of women's supposed passivity and docility and resistance to monotony. Joekes says of this:

"Women are socialised into a subordinate role in domestic and public situations; the meekness, passivity and obedience to male command required of them in general are clearly attractive to employers in an industrial situation (Joekes, 1985: 189).

Humphrey notes that in most exchanges with managers, when questioned about women's suitability for assembly line work, almost all refer to women's docility, natural dexterity and patience. (Humphrey, 1985) However a more realistic way of saying this, as the above quote illustrates, is that women will put up with such conditions longer than men because they have been socialised within a patriarchal system to behave in this way. Furthermore, this patriarchal system and existing gender divisions allow women very few alternatives:

"a preference for monotonous work... might more accurately be considered as women's only realistic alternative." (Humphrey, 1985: 143)

When discussing women's' suitability for assembly line work Humphrey writes:

"in the context of assembly line work, the docility of women workers is, in part a comparison with men who have specific resistance to it (Humphrey, 1985: 227).

Fuentes and Ehrenreich illustrate this point another way by quoting a personnel manager:

"young male workers are too restless and impatient to be doing monotonous work with no career value. If displeased they sabotage the machines and even threaten the foreman. But girls, at most they cry a little" (personnel manager at an assembly plant in Taiwan, Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1987: 203).

Clearly then, male and female workers have different 'qualities' which management can harness in different situations. Women are no better suited to assembly line work than men, but because they have been socialised to be more passive and accepting of authority, they are easier to control on an assembly line.
What becomes abundantly clear from Humphreys’ study is that management can and do organise production and working conditions to best make use of gender differences. One of the consequences of using socially constructed attributes of male and female workers differentially, has been to create a notion of ‘male and female’ work. As such the labour process not only divides the workforce, but it also constantly reinforces gender differences between male and female workers and:

“this makes discrimination and job segregation even more difficult to combat, since they are structured around and reinforce the subordination of women” (Humphrey, 1985: 228).

Thus instead of one united working class we have a group of workers who despite their similarities are constantly reminded of their differences. Workers’ very identities are composed of structured differences, to not being a woman, not being black, not living in a specific area.

“Aronowitz stresses the divisive ethnic and religious distinctions within the American working class: black versus white; Irish versus Italians; Catholics versus Protestants; South versus North etc. Certainly out of work factors are important, but within organisations we can see that societal distinctions are deliberately echoed and supported” (Salaman, 1981: 176).

While this is certainly not an exhaustive discussion of the way in which management are able to control the workforce, hopefully it has illustrated some of the general tendencies. The discussion of how gender divides and thereby controls the workforce is also very general and only the tip of the iceberg. There is a rich and very extensive literature on the subject, unfortunately given the scope of this project we cannot do justice to this debate in a few brief pages (for further discussion see Stolcke, 1981, Afshar, 1985, Beechey, 1983, Pollert, 1981, Crompton and Jones, 1984, Elson and Pearson, 1981, Mackintosh, 1981, Thompson, 1989). However the intention of this section was to present aspects of control that would best illustrate the type of conditions and methods of control that are found in Ashton and in keeping with this I was forced to be pragmatic in my selection of material. In the next section we are going to go a step further and examine the implications of one of these control measures for workers everyday lives. As the workforce at the two canning factories in Ashton is mostly made up of coloured and black women, it seems appropriate that we focus on the implications of gender divisions, for these workers everyday lives. As
shall soon become apparent, gender divisions within the structure of the workforce have far reaching implications and it is to this that we now turn.
2.2 Section Two: The implications of gender divisions within the workforce

"The form of patriarchy in contemporary Britain is public rather than private. Women are no longer restricted to the domestic hearth but have the whole society in which to roam and be exploited" (Walby in Fine, 1990: 54).

"The family as the throne of 'patriarchy' has its own malevolent effectivity within capitalism and capitalist relations, it pursues women out into waged work" (Cockburn in Humphrey, 1985: 53).

These two quotations are a good start to explaining the manner in which women are incorporated into the workforce. Humphrey, Joekes, Thompson, Mackintosh, Stolcke amongst others* ( * see conclusion to last section) have written about the very problematic nature of women's incorporation into the workforce. Women are included within a very specific conceptualisation of masculine and feminine gender identities, formulated within the family and carried out into work. Women are perceived to be first and foremost actual or potential mothers. This is considered to be their primary role. Males on the other hand, within this construction, are always going to be working, they are also thus perceived to be actual or potential 'breadwinners'. Men and women do not therefore enter the workforce under equal or even similar conditions. The implications of this are vast and far reaching.

First and foremost it seems to contribute to a very specific division of labour by gender. As discussed in the Beijing Conference Report, there are distinct gender divisions both between and within occupational categories. Women are clustered into what have come to be considered as 'feminised' occupations, jobs which seem to be a natural extension of their 'female role' such as teaching, cleaning etc. Where they do work in the same sector as men, it is very rarely on an equal basis. The Report says of this occurrence:
"Women congregate in certain jobs within each sector. For example, they are secretaries rather than managers, nurses rather than engineers. Within both sectors and occupations, the position in which women find themselves is accorded less value, lower pay and fewer benefits" (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 37).

Joekes argues that the unfortunate reality of women's position within the world's workforce is that wherever women come to predominate in a particular industry or job, the grading or rating of that work usually comes down, as do the wages. Humphrey adds that:

"it is the sex of those who do the work, rather than its content, which leads to its identification as skilled or unskilled" (Humphrey, 1985: 219).

Clearly to show that women are treated unequally in the workplace and are not accorded the same status or recognition as male workers, is not to explain why this is so. This goes back to the roots of women's subordination and this is a hotly contested and unresolved debate. Suffice to say that our intentions here are not to resolve this debate but to acknowledge that capitalism did not create this situation of inequality. However:

"through the constant creation and reproduction of 'men's' and women's work, job definitions are organised in and through gender differences" (Thompson, 1989: 191).

Thus as capitalism makes use of these divisions between men and women to further control and manipulate the workforce it is effectively entrenching and perpetuating a system of patriarchal dominance. And within this system women's work is accorded lower value than men's, so women receive lower wages than men. This is a well documented phenomena. Joekes when discussing this issue, states that even in developed countries there are pretty distinct disparities between male and female earning power. This is normally explained by pointing to the fact that women are doing different jobs to men, but Joekes and Humphreys in their respective case studies showed that even women and men performing the same jobs do not earn equal wages. Joekes says of this:
"an increasing number of case studies show that even in job-for-job comparisons, women's earnings are usually less than men's. There is also mounting evidence that grading procedures are differentiated by sex, so that women's jobs are often classed as lower ranked in the occupational hierarchy than is in fact warranted" (Joekes, 1987: 18).

Humphrey, Joekes, Mackintosh, Stolcke, Thompson, Edwards, Fuentes and Ehrenreich, Elson and Pearson and most other authors who research gender stratification within the workplace, have all noted that one of the main problems with women's work is that as soon as a job becomes classified as such it becomes degraded. In discussing how women's work is valued, Thompson notes that:

"The work is not so much feminised because it has been degraded, as degraded because it has been feminised" (Thompson, 1989: 200).

The reasons why the work that women do is undervalued, go back, once again to the roots of women's subordination, which we are not going to go into. The objective reality of the situation as cited by all the authors mentioned above, is that skills which women learn in the home and at school as 'women', are not normally treated as skills, but rather natural abilities. Elson and Pearson go to lengths to explain how skills which are learned from infancy are not related to any biological inheritance,

"but are the result of the training they have received from their mothers and other female kin since early infancy, in the tasks socially appropriate to women's role" (Elson and Pearson, 1981: 149).

In contrast to this, natural male abilities, such as strength, tend to be viewed in the workplace as skills rather than genetic endowments. This is essential to maintaining the status quo, because while what Pollart calls

"the ideological preparation for selling different types of labour" (Pollart, 1981: 95)

does socialise men and women to expect and accept different workplace opportunities, this "ideological preparation" (ibid.) will still not make women accept obviously discriminatory treatment. Once again the ideological dimensions of control have to 'legitimate' the overt discrimination. The easiest manner in which to do this is to treat women's and men's natural abilities and skills differentially. Humphrey notes that:

__________________________________________________________________________________________
"There appears to be a systematic over-valuation of male attributes and a corresponding under-valuation of female ones" (Humphrey, 1985: 223).

Thus in most instances 'women's skills' such as dexterity and speed are treated as natural and are not accorded much or any status within the overall skill hierarchy. This helps keep women at the lower end of the pay scale and helps 'legitimate' paying women less than men.

When this system does not convince women that they should be paid less than men, there is still the fallback position of who constitutes the main breadwinner. As women are constructed as mothers first and foremost, and as workers second, the typical assumption is that males are always the breadwinner. This goes against the reality of the situation in many cases. In their work on women working in export processing zones in South East Asia, Fuentes and Ehrenreich discuss how multinational corporations use women's secondary status to legitimise paying them much less than they would pay men, supposedly because these women are not considered to be breadwinners. However the irony of the situation is that these export processing zones are primarily staffed by women, many of whom are the only members of their families able to get work. (Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1987) These women are usually the principal earners in their households. Joekes develops this argument further when she argues that paying women less than men might make some sense if women were only going to be available to work before and after they had had children and raised them. But the world is changing and family structures are changing with this. The author states that a much larger proportion of families are headed by women / and or women are the main breadwinners in these families. Such women do not have time to take years off work to raise children. They, and their families are dependant on women's wages. In her study of Moroccan clothing industry workers almost a third of all the women in the study were the main income earners for their families. (Joekes, 1985) Joekes dryly notes in a later piece of work:

"the fact that vast numbers (of women) are in practice responsible for the upkeep of dependant children, and that even in multiple-income households women's incomes are usually devoted solely to household expenses (unlike male earnings) and thus contribute as much or more to household maintenance and reproduction than men's, does not disturb the ideology of gender relations in this respect. As long as only the minority of women support
their families on their own, however (even if that minority is forty-nine percent), some theorists claim on the grounds of statistical probability that this is a justifiable reason to pay women less, whatever the injustice in individual cases" (Joekes, 1987: 86).

Unfortunately the notion of who qualifies as a 'breadwinner' does not just disadvantage women in terms of unequal wages, they are also overlooked when it comes to promotions. Humphrey and Mackintosh discuss this issue: They explain that there are interlocking reasons for this. It is believed that men have a life-time commitment to work, whereas women are going to get married and have children and therefore have a limited commitment to waged employment, so their wages are only supplementary or secondary. Thus within such a construction of gender roles, men should get promoted over women. Also men as traditional breadwinners need to earn a family wage and therefore should be put ahead of women, therefore should get promoted. Based on the same rationale, men tend to receive more training than women and therefore when promotions come up, men are generally better qualified for them. It is a rather vicious circle. To add insult to injury, women can not usually compete equally with men anyway because of their responsibility for domestic labour. Mackintosh argues that part of the construction of gender identities places domestic labour as a natural extension of the ‘female role’. The result of this situation is that :

"In many areas of the world, the sexual division of labour in the home forces women to work longer hours than men, to achieve at the end of the day a lower standard of living" (Mackintosh, 1981: 3).

Mackintosh goes on to note that domestic labour is largely unpaid for, not recognised as productive, and yet women's domestic labour was one of the underlying arguments used (originally) to bargain for a 'family wage' for the working man; the family wage establishing the man as the main breadwinner.
A final implication of this construction of gender identities, according to Mackintosh is that because women are not considered to be breadwinners they are perceived as a flexible source of labour. Thus capital can lay them off in times of economic hardship and rehire them in times of need. So effectively capital turns women into an underclass of workers, the work they do is undervalued, poorly paid, less stable and has not in any way improved the status of women generally. We come full circle to the quotes this section started with.

"...Women are no longer restricted to the domestic hearth, but have the whole of society in which to roam and be exploited" (Walby in Fine, 1990: 54).

It is also important not to forget that the material divisions which are reinforced and reproduced within the workplace, serve not just to discriminate against women as a group, but also to divide the working class, to divide male and female workers and basically to lessen workers power as a whole. It is a most illuminating example of how capital has connected to a pre-existing social division the effects of which divides the working class and allows capital greater control over them.
2.3 Section Three: Selected Statistical Indicators

The information and statistics in this section have been chosen to try and provide a profile of gender and racial differentiation. Hopefully this will serve as a frame of reference with which to compare the conditions under which the workers in Ashton work and live with those of the “average worker” in the Western Cape. There is a focus on women in this section because the vast majority of workers in the canning industry are women. The first issue to establish is where the majority of women are situated in the South African workforce.

2.3.1 Where women fit into the South African workforce

According to official South African statistics, women make up 39.6% of the economically active population.² When considering this statistic it is important to bear in mind that the official definition of “economically active” is rather limited. It excludes all women involved in subsistence agriculture and much like the rest of the world it ignores unpaid domestic labour. According to the Beijing Conference Report on the status of South African women, estimates which include the aforementioned groups of women, put women at 50.4% of the “extended labour force” in 1991³. The official statistics, while limited, clearly indicate the fact that there has been a very distinct increase in women’s participation in the workforce. In 1960, women comprised just 23% of the workforce as opposed to almost 40% currently. When we examine the more detailed statistics of women’s participation in the workforce, it is apparent that there are distinct parameters within which this inclusion has occurred. Now occupational segregation and the “feminisation” of particular occupations and even industries is not a phenomenon which is peculiar to South Africa. To greater and lesser degrees occupational segregation based on gender is globally pervasive. But

² Unpaid domestic work and women involved in subsistence agriculture are excluded from all official statistics and thus the rest of the statistics we shall examine will be limited because of this. The reason I have included them, even though the rest of the statistics will be limited, is that if I fail to mention them I am effectively contributing to their exclusion and continued “invisibility”. The “invisibility” and the important contribution this work makes to the economy will be discussed elsewhere.
in South Africa there is also an added dimension of occupational segregation based on race. This will become apparent when we examine how male and female workers of different races are included into different occupation groups. First of all we are going to examine the breakdown of different race groups for the Western Cape specifically. This is important as there is a much higher percentage of coloured people and a much lower percentage of black people than is found in the rest of South Africa. If we examined the South African statistics generally, this important aspect of the race breakdown, would not be apparent. I have used the Central Statistical Services Report on the Western Cape, completed in 1995, for all the statistics in this next section.
Total Population of the Western Cape

According to this report the population of the Western Cape was estimated to be 3721 200 people in 1995. From that the total breakdown of race groups was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>35 100</td>
<td>0.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>2 124 800</td>
<td>57.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>885 800</td>
<td>23.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>675 500</td>
<td>18.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>3 721 200</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Breakdown of total population in the Western Cape according to race group (Source CSS survey 1995: 7)

The Western Cape has a majority of coloured people, a minority of Asian people and similar numbers of black and white people. The numbers of male and females is almost exactly equal. That is the very general picture, now we can turn our attention to where these workers fit into the different industries and within these industries where they fit into the different occupational structures:
Breakdown of workers in the Western Cape by industry, race and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>col. male</th>
<th>col. fem.</th>
<th>wh. male</th>
<th>wh. fem.</th>
<th>bl. male</th>
<th>bl. fem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agriculture, hunting, forestry (A)</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining and quarrying (B)</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing (C)</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electricity, gas, water (D)</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction (E)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wholesale, retail trade, catering and</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodation services (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport, storage and communication (G)</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financing, real estate, business services (H)</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community, social and personal services (I)</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities not adequately defined (J)</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Breakdown of workers according to industry, race and gender (Source, CSS Survey, 1995: 75). (Note: Col = coloured, Bl. = black, Wh. = white)

[Note: Asian figures have been omitted due to the small sample size making reliable statistics impossible.]

[Note: Total number of workers n = 1 421 000, total number of male workers n = 857 784 and of those 451 887 = coloured men, 227 003 = white men and 170 985 = black men. Total number of female workers n = 563 216 and of those: 329 285 = coloured women, 164 530 = white women and 65 801 = black women.]
From table 2 we can see how men of different race groups are dispersed across the different industries. Coloured men predominate in the agriculture, hunting, and forestry industry, with 21.4% of all coloured males found in this sector. In the financing, real estate and business services industry a large proportion of white males are found with 16.2% of all white males found in this sector, as opposed to 4.3% of all coloured men and 2.3% of all black men.

The wholesale, retail trade, catering and accommodation services industry, is dominated, albeit with only a slim margin, by black men with 19.4% of all black men; 17.4% of all white men and 18.4% of all coloured men found in this sector. Overall there are no really glaring differences between male workers of different races and they all appear to be reasonably distributed across the different industries. Now let us examine this same distribution for female workers of different race groups:

Table 2 shows that unlike the male distribution across the different industries, the female distribution is not very even. 92.3% of coloured female workers are found in 4 industries namely agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale / retail trade and community and social services. 80.8% of white women are found in 3 industries namely wholesale / retail, financing and community and social services. And 80.8% of black women are found in just 2 industries namely wholesale / retail and community and social services.

Overall all women are poorly represented in the mining and quarrying sector, the electricity and gas sector, the construction sector and the transport and communications sector. This suggests that female workers in the Western Cape are clustered into a small number of industries. However it is important to notice that between the different race groups there are also important differences:

- 17.3% of coloured women are found in the agricultural industry as opposed to 1.9% of white women and 6% of black women.
- 24.2% of coloured women are found in the manufacturing sector whereas only 9% of white women and 6.2% of black women are found in that sector.
- 24.1% of white women are found in the finance, insurance and real estate sector, whereas only 4% of coloured women and a mere 2.4% of black women are found in this sector.
- almost 60% of black women can be found in the community and social services sector and 21.3% are found in the wholesale/retail sector.

Clearly there are some distinct gender and racial differences which accompany women's incorporation into the Western Cape's industries. We shall now examine the racial and gender breakdown of occupational groups:

**Breakdown of workers in the Western Cape by Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislators, senior officials and managers (A)</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professionals (B)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technicians and associate professionals (C)</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerks (D)</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service workers and shop and market sales workers (E)</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skilled agricultural and fisheries workers (F)</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craft and related trade workers (G)</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plant and machine operators and assemblers (H)</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary occupations (I)</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>armed forces (J)</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation unspecified (K)</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Breakdown of workers in the Western Cape according to occupation, race and gender (source: CSS, 1995: 85) (Note: Col. = coloured, Bl. = black, Wh. = white)
We can see from table 3 that when work is broken down into its occupational groups there are some distinct differences between men of different race groups. White males tend to cluster into the first three categories with 51.7% of all white male workers being found working as a) legislators, senior officials and managers; b) professionals and c) technicians and associate professionals. Coloured men on the other hand are found clustered into another three occupations namely: g) craft and related trade workers; h) plant and machine operators and assemblers and i) elementary occupations. Overall 70.8% of all coloured male workers can be found in these three occupation groups. 78.3% of black male workers can be found in just three occupational categories as well. Black male workers, like their coloured counterparts also predominate in craft and related trade workers and elementary occupations, but we also find them in e) service workers and shop and sales workers.

It seems that white male workers predominate in the higher status, ‘white collar’ jobs, while black and coloured males are more likely to be found in lower status, more ‘blue-collar’ occupations. Now let us examine the occupational distribution for females to see if a similar trend emerges.

Looking at table 3 we can see how women of different race groups are distributed across the occupation groups. White women are found predominantly in the first 5 groups a - e with 94.3% found here in the ‘white-collar’, non manual type occupations. Coloured women are more evenly dispersed across the occupation groups with representation in both the non-manual type occupations and the manual occupations: 41.9% of coloured women workers are found in occupations b to e i.e. as professionals, clerks, technicians and service workers etc., 55.7% of coloured women workers are found in occupational categories g to l, namely as craft and related workers, plant and machine workers with a large proportion (38.1%) in the elementary occupations category. 79.4% of black women workers can be found in just two categories, service workers and elementary occupations. Clearly there is
some disparity between the race groups. White women predominate in non-manual labour type occupations while black and to a lesser extent, coloured women, predominate in the manual labour type occupations.

Thus it appears that the trend apparent in the male occupational breakdown is also prevalent in the female occupational breakdown. Next we shall examine net monthly earnings by population group and gender and see if these differences translate into meaningful differences in earnings between gender and race groups.
2.3.2 Remuneration

The difference between what men and women earn is an extremely contentious issue. Since the 1981 Wage Act Amendment it has been illegal to have separate pay structures based on race or gender (Dove, S.A.L.B. March / April 1993). However the reality is that women are still paid less than men for a variety of reasons, discussed in section two. If one examines table 4 which show the percentages of women that are found in each income bracket, we can see very clearly that women earn less than men. As the salary goes up the percentage of women decreases in that income bracket.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>% Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 300 000 plus (A)</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 100 000 - 299 999 (B)</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 70 000 - 99 999 (C)</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 50 000 - 69 999 (D)</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 30 000 - 49 999 (E)</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 10 000 - 29 999 (F)</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 7 000 - 9 999 (G)</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5 000 - 6 999 (H)</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 3 000 - 4 999 (I)</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 1 000 - 2 999 (J)</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 1 999 (K)</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Income (L)</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Percentage of women (all races) in each income bracket in South Africa

These figures clearly show that women generally earn less than men across the board. However if we take a closer look at these figures, and we look at a breakdown of earnings by gender and race, another interesting phenomena emerges:
Breakdown of workers in the Western Cape earn per month:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 99</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 199</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 499</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 999</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 - 1999</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 3999</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 - 7999</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000 - 15999</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16000 - 32999</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 000+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unspecified</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 : Net monthly earning according to race and gender (source : CSS Survey, 1995: 77 - 84) (Note : Col. = coloured, Bl. = black, Wh. = white)
[ Note : Asian figures have been omitted because the sample was too small for reliable statistics.]
[ Note : Total number of workers n = 1 257 443. Total number of male workers n = 777 013 of which 429 911 = coloured men, 176 276 = white men and 164 914 = black. Total number of female workers n = 480 430, of which 293 069 = coloured women, 149 334 = white women and 34 751 = white].

When one examines table 4, it is not immediately apparent that there are some very distinct differences between the amounts earned by three race groups. 54.2 % of coloured males earn between R1000 and R3999, for white males that percentage is 72.2% and for black males it is 40.7%. A more telling statistic is that 88.4% of black males, 81.8% of coloured males, but only 37.7% of white males earn less than R2000 per month.

Women's net earnings show a similar trend as with the male net earnings. 88.3% of black women, 86.5% and only 54.4% of white women earn less than R2000 per month. 62.8% of those earning between R1000 and R3999 a month, are white,
48.7% of coloured women and 37.4% of black women earn this amount. There appears to be a distinct racial imbalance in what both male and female workers earn in the Western Cape. Interestingly the extent of imbalance between the different race groups is more marked when looking at the male figures than the female ones. However given what was discussed in section two, it is not so surprising that there is less disparity between the highest and lowest female income-earners than male income-earners, because as the previous section pointed out:

"with both the sectors and occupations, the position in which women find themselves is accorded less value, lower pay and fewer benefits" (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 37).

This is echoed by Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, who state:

"Perhaps most obviously women find they are confined to particular types of work and that these jobs are also the lowest paid in the economy" (Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992: 155).

Ginwala, Mackintosh et al get to the heart of this dilemma in their paper entitled: 'Gender and Economic Policy in a Democratic South Africa'. (Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992: 149 - 150) The structural conditions of the workforce which ensure that women remain as a underclass of peripheral workers is referred to by these authors as the 'eternal dilemma'. It is accepted that women are clustered into low paid, low status jobs and as such economic policy needs to be directed towards improving conditions in such jobs, however by the same token, policy must be directed towards ensuring that women do not remain clustered into such sectors and jobs, hence 'the eternal dilemma'. Therefore the very structure of the workforce (and society) is integral to women's lower pay.

However it is not simply the women who are forced into jobs with low status, low pay and little room for promotion who are subjected to inequality. It is experienced across the board by almost all women workers irrespective of job grade or status. Many women in jobs with better conditions and pay lose out to their male counterparts by not being able to claim the full benefits, (medical aid, housing benefits, travel costs etc.) which a male worker doing the same job is able to claim. Essentially the problematic nature of who fits the definition of 'breadwinner' lies at the heart of this. Unfortunately most employers and society at large still have a very narrow understanding of who or what a breadwinner is. Despite the fact that all women are
subjected to this, it is usually the women at the bottom who suffer most; Dove says of this:

"Crudely employer logic has been: all families have two parents, only one needs to work and tradition dictates that this be the father, so he should get paid more. (Sic) A large proportion of black households are in fact headed by women supporting their families on very low wages." (Dove, 1993: 68)

Bendeman, when discussing the 'breadwinner' concept, states:

"The breadwinner is usually defined as a male member of staff, or alternatively a female member of staff who is single, widowed, or divorced, or a married female member of staff whose husband is unable to find employment due to permanent disability. Married female members of staff are thus hardly ever considered to be breadwinners." (Bendeman, 1994: 194)

The 'breadwinner' concept effectively limits women's earnings because according to traditional interpretations of who the breadwinner is, women do not qualify. This is rather unfair given that quite a sizeable proportion of families are female-headed. A UNESCO report (cited in Ginwala, Mackintosh et al) done in 1988, estimated that the following percentages of black households were female headed:
- 59% in Bantusan rural areas
- 47% in Bantusan urban areas
- 25% on white owned farms
- 20% in small towns outside Bantusans
- 30% in metropolitan areas
(Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992: 163)

Family structures are changing and the reality of the situation is that traditional notions of who and what constitutes a 'breadwinner' often denies material reality. Ginwala, Mackintosh et al say of this state of affairs:

"any economic policies in South Africa which are based on the idea of a male 'breadwinner' in every household, or even in the majority of households, will be based on a false premise, and will cause further pain and suffering." (Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992: 163)
Unfortunately one of the problems mentioned above is that the reason women are paid less than men is because they tend to be found in the lowest paid, low status jobs in feminised occupations and sectors. Part of the reason for this is that women do not have the same access to education and training that men have: It is to this that we now turn.
2.3.3 Formal Education:

As one might expect given South Africa's apartheid past, education levels, access to training and illiteracy levels all have a very strong racial character. Up until a certain point of education there is very little difference in male and female participation rates. However as one gets up to the tertiary levels the gender divisions become starker. Unequal levels of education are evident in table 5 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to and including Std. 8</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 9 and 10</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and Diploma / Certificate</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Highest level of education of people over the age of 20, by gender. (Source, Maconachie, 1989: 80)

{ Note: These figures should be read as ... of all the people with no education, 55.2% are female; of all the people in South Africa with a doctorate, 83% are male etc.}
Graph 1: Line graph of highest levels of education of people over the age of 20 by gender.

Table 5 and graph 1 show that male and female rates of participation stay relatively close together up until tertiary level. Graph 1 shows quite clearly how male and female rates soar and plummet respectively, at tertiary level. Women slightly outnumber men when it comes to qualifying for post graduate diploma's and or certificates (55%). However this is explained by women's predominance in the teaching profession, which is a typically 'feminised occupation'. (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 28 and Maconachie, 1989: 90) Aside from this slight difference, at bachelor degree level only a third of all those with a bachelors degree are women; at masters degree level only a fifth of all those with a masters degree are women and at doctoral level less than a fifth of all those with doctorates are women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Coloured Women</th>
<th>Asian Women</th>
<th>Black Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to and including Std.8</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std.9 and 10</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and Diploma or Certificate</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>0.005%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.004%</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>0.003%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total :</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Highest level of education for women over the age of 20, by race (Source: Maconachie, 1989: 89)

While there may be quite serious differences between male and female levels of education, table 6 shows quite clearly that the differences become much starker when one looks at levels of education in terms of race.

Only a small proportion (1.2%) of all the women who have no education at all are white. In distinct contrast 34.5% of black women have no education, or 88.6% of all the women with no education, are black. As with the comparison of male and female levels of education, there are very obvious contrasts at tertiary level. Approximately three quarters (63.4%) of women with diploma’s / certificates are white and nine tenths of women with bachelor degrees, masters degrees and doctorates are white women. This does not reflect any kind of demographic parity considering that only one in every five adult females is white, yet nine out of every ten female graduates are white. (Maconachie, 1989: 90) Maconachie puts the situation very clearly:

"The contrast between the situation of white women and that of other women is immediately apparent if we ask: How many adult women have formal education beyond Standard 8?"
Six out of ten adult white women do (58%)  
Two out of ten adult Asian women do (20.8%)  
One out of ten adult coloured women do (9.1%)  
Less than one out of ten black women do (6.5%) "(Maconachie, 1989: 90)

The implication of such a situation is that when we say women are found in low status, poorly paid occupation's with fewer benefits, we are treating South African women as though they are a homogenous group. But as Maconachie states:

"Women's subordination in South Africa remains interwoven by significant race and class differences." (Maconachie, 1993: 46)

and Mthintso echoes:

"While there can be common problems amongst women of different classes and races, they do not necessarily share universal problems." (Mthintso in Mayosi, 1992: 81)

Essentially what these statistics point out to us is that it is black and coloured women who are found in the low status, poorly paid, 'fewer benefits jobs'. It is not simply a question of gender which needs to be tackled here, but gender, mediated by race. They do not act as two separate forms of oppression, rather they are interwoven and interlocking means of oppressing women.
2.3.4 Illiteracy

According to the Beijing Conference report, in 1993 out of a population of 41.5 million people, 12.5 million people were illiterate (30%). If we examine table 10 below, we can see that there are locational differences in literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Illiteracy levels by location and race (Source: Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 25)

These statistics are not broken down by gender, however as Ginwala and Mackintosh et al point out:

"Women form a very high proportion of people in agriculture and in rural areas. An estimated 71% of African women live in rural areas..." (Ginwala and Mackintosh et al, 1992: 166)

As there are a disproportionate number of black and coloured women in the rural areas (a legacy of previous discriminatory legislation), which also have the highest illiteracy levels, we can assume that it is black and coloured women who are most affected by illiteracy. Furthermore, despite the provision of literacy courses, women are less likely than men to benefit from such programmes because:

"the majority of learners in the industry programmes would almost certainly be men, as these programmes are usually provided by the larger employers and especially the mines, where males dominate employment." (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 26)
In tables 6 and 7 we can see that of all the people with no education, 55.2% are women, and of those, 88.6% are black women. So we can safely assume that the majority of illiterates are black women who live in the rural areas. I stress this point in particular because illiteracy is a serious stumbling block to further education and training. The people (black women) who could most benefit from additional training in the workplace to enable them to advance and move up in the workplace hierarchy, are the least likely to receive such training without basic literacy.
Another issue which makes women more vulnerable in the workforce is:

"women are more likely to be employed in temporary, casual or part-time positions. Such jobs are almost invariably less well-paid, less secure, and enjoy fewer benefits." (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 38)

Women's prevalence in part-time and casual employment is linked to their overall position in the workforce and the perception that they are not breadwinners - which, as discussed in section two and above, is false. None the less women are still more likely than men to be employed as part time or casual employees. Table 8 below shows the breakdown of women employed in various sectors according to whether they have regular or casual employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and Water</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant and Hotel</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communication</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Services</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Breakdown of women's employment by sector and whether they have regular or casual employment. (Source: Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 38).
While table 8 does not give us a gender breakdown, it is still shows some seemingly pervasive trends. Almost 80% (79.9%) of all the black women with casual employment, find that employment in just 3 sectors, namely agriculture, wholesale and retail and domestic services. 70.4% of all women with casual employment have employment in the aforementioned sectors. According to a world bank study cited in the Beijing Conference Report:

"In absolute terms 2 960 143 women and 4 451 648 men were employed on a regular basis and 458 781 women and 466 379 men on a casual basis."
(Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 38)

These figures show that of all the people with regular employment, 60.1% are male and only 39.9% are female. The figures for casual employment are almost equal with 49.6% of women and 50.4% of men making up the casually employed group of workers. The problem with this scenario is that as the first quote in this section pointed out, such jobs (casual) are "invariably less well paid, less secure and enjoy fewer benefits." (Ibid.)

One of the reasons women come to predominate in this type of work is linked to their perceived main function in life, namely having children. Horn says of this situation

"For women in industry the root of the discrimination they experience is their child-bearing function" (Horn, 1991: 11).

It is now to women's reproductive function and the implications for them as workers that we turn.
2.3.6 Maternity leave - mothers as workers:

Until very recently the laws protecting women's right to have children, while maintaining job security, were not very comprehensive in South Africa. Since the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act has been passed, this has changed. Workers are now entitled to four months maternity leave, with employment security, i.e. they cannot be dismissed for taking maternity leave. (Employment Law, January 1998: 7) Unfortunately though, there are still loopholes and limits to the provisions for pregnant women and working mothers. This shortfall in the law, still makes pregnancy a burden to working mothers.

The right to maternity leave has now been covered by the act, however leave is not the only requirement. Workers still need some sort of cash benefit to sustain themselves and the child while on leave, bearing in mind that the worker may have other dependants who rely on her income. The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) entitles mothers to forty-five percent of their regular salary for six months. However many women cannot survive on only forty-five percent of their regular wages, especially with the cost of medical bills etc. Many women are thus forced back to work very soon after the birth of their child. They lose out on the maternity leave and UIF benefits.

The issue of health insurance to cover pre and post natal clinics etc. is a rather thorny one. Salaried workers are usually in a better position when compared with their unskilled, waged counterparts. Salaried workers usually belong to medical aid schemes which provide access to decent private medical facilities. Waged workers (who are by far the majority) are forced to rely on free government clinics. These clinics are certainly valuable, but in order to attend such clinics, anytime after the official four months maternity leave (or if they are forced back to work soon after the birth for financial reasons), the workers usually have to take unpaid leave, which they ill afford.

Thus as Matthias stated in 1994, and despite the new act, her conclusion remains valid that for most women in South Africa the maternity benefits package is inadequate because:
"A standard maternity benefit package includes three vital components: the right of an employed women to a period of maternity leave, a cash benefit to replace wages lost during the leave period, and health and medical insurance during pregnancy, at the time of childbirth and for postnatal care...South Africa has each of these three components but they are skewed so that their effectiveness, and thus that of the whole policy package, is undermined." (Matthias, 1994:6)

Thus women's childbearing function is another area where women face discrimination. However once again this is not felt equally by all women. Given the nature of the South African labour force, with white women at the top of the racially divided job hierarchy and black women at the bottom, black women are the ones most likely to suffer from the shortcomings of maternity legislation. Black women are concentrated in the lowest paid, low skill, fewer benefit occupations, whereas white women are most likely to be the 'salaried workers' we spoke of above. Once again the experience of gender oppression, as expressed through the treatment of childbirth in the workplace, is strongly mediated by race as well.
2.3.7 Domestic Responsibilities

It is not simply pregnancy which serves to discriminate against women in the workplace. Much like primary care-giving is assumed to be a female role, by extension domestic responsibilities are also cast upon women workers, normally with little or no help from male partners, where one is present. Lolwana says of this situation:

“being female is regarded as uniquely qualifying a women for domestic work, no matter what her interests, aptitudes, or intelligence. For men the home has become organised as a place of rest and leisure and for women a place for labour characterised by mindless and unappreciated routines of housework.” (Lolwana, 1993: 49)

Ginwala, Mackintosh et al deal with the issue of women’s responsibility for domestic labour quite in depth in their paper ‘Gender And Economic Policy In A Democratic South Africa’. They stress the important and invisible contribution unpaid domestic work makes to the economy:

“The majority [of women] still bear the sole burden of domestic labour. Their contribution to the creation of our country’s wealth is unrecognised and mostly unpaid.” (ANC - NEC Statement on the Emancipation of Women in South Africa, 2 May 1990 - in Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992: 152)

The authors try to stress the fact that an in-depth study of domestic work, the time it consumes, the burden it imposes on women etc. needs to be done, so that economic policy and policy makers can take serious cognisance of unpaid domestic work and plan for it and so make it a vital part of the economy. They maintain that while women’s work in terms of domestic labour is subject to it’s "vanishing trick", (i.e. it is not recognised formally or informally), women will remain in a position of subordination. They comment quite dryly:

“it is extraordinary that, while we usually know in great detail how, say, machines are made and what labour goes into their production, economic policy usually pays very little attention and knows very little about the production and care of human beings.”(Ginwala, Mackintosh et al, 1992:152)
The basic implication of women's responsibility for domestic work is that it limits her ability to compete equally in the workplace with male workers. The average female worker has paid work and unpaid work constantly competing for her time. As such she can never compete equally or work as many hours as other (male) workers who do not share the burden of domestic responsibilities.

Through this section I have tried to illustrate as comprehensively and as realistically as possible the conditions under which the majority of South Africa's working women live. Women are generally found in low paid, low status, 'fewer benefits type' jobs usually in feminised occupations and industries. They are paid less than men, receive less education, less training and fewer opportunities for promotion. Women have higher rates of illiteracy especially in rural areas where due to apartheid policies black women were confined. Illiteracy serves to compound the problem of access to higher education and training. Women are also more likely than men to be found as part-time or casual employees, such jobs being less stable and less well paid than permanent appointments. All these inequalities are then laid at the door of women's 'primary role' in life, supposedly as mothers and primary care-givers. Hopefully these issues come across not as separate components of a system of discrimination, but as complex and interwoven issues which need to be addressed simultaneously if discrimination is to be removed or at least reduced in the workplace. Lastly it is important to stress one last time that women in South Africa do not form a homogenous group, While all women are subjected to patriarchy and are oppressed. The intensity and level differs quite considerably from white women workers to black women workers. The worst conditions and the harshest situations, which have been discussed above, are felt most keenly by the majority of women workers who are black.
2.4 Section Four: The canning industry in Ashton

2.4.1 Brief History

According to Goode, an economic historian, the canning industry in the Cape only took off in the 1930's. One of the largest problems with canning fruit up until then, was the actual process of getting the fruit into the can. Goode describes the original process:

"The production of suitable tins was the most important technical obstacle to overcome. In the very early years these were hand made, consequently output was low and the process used a lot of tin. The can had a small hole in the top for filling, limiting the size of the fruit pieces which could be used. Once filled these cans were soldered closed by hand, a slow process."

(Goode, 1985: 3)

Thus improving the canning process, turned canning from a lengthily process, only considered as a last resort to get rid of farmers low grade fruit, into a viable option for all the farmers crops. The demand for fruit had been boosted by the first world war, and then during the second world war, the industry witnessed a large scale expansion which saw the steady growth of the canning industry up until the 1970's. The industry was helped on it's way by government interventions, which removed competition, bought produce for government ministries and, where necessary, enacted various labour laws to restrict the bargaining power of trade unions and workers. (Ibid.).

According to Van Zyl, the town of Ashton exists, largely as a result of the canning industry which started there in the 1930's. (Van Zyl, 1990: 34) There are two canning companies in Ashton, Langeberg Canning and Ashton Canning. Langeberg was the first to start in Ashton, in 1938. It was established by a group of farmers, the farmers association of Montagu. It was established primarily as a means of solving the farmers marketing concerns, i.e. with a co-operative canning factory, the farmers were guaranteed sale of their crops, before the crops were harvested. The actual factory and surrounding buildings were built in 1940, just in time to benefit from the boom in the canning industry which accompanied the second world war and it's aftermath. Ashton Canning developed later. It was founded in 1949, by J.C. Barnard,
and the company is still owned and run by the Barnard family. Ashton Canning has 5 of its own farms which produce fruit to be canned although it does buy fruit from other farms in the area as well.

Langeberg has since become a subsidiary of Tiger Oats,

"The 1960's and early 1970's were times of economic extremes for Langeberg. At the start of the 1960's the organisation was facing bankruptcy. Then as a result of it's efforts at rationalisation, plus state assistance and more favourable marketing factors, the co-operative was able to make a dramatic recovery." (Van Zyl, 1990: 70)

However the turbulence of these years and then the difficult 70's combined with the added pressure of economic sanctions against South Africa in the 1980's, eventually led to Langeberg merging with the larger Tiger Oats (a subsidiary of Barlow Rand) in 1989. (bid)

2.4.2 The Canning Process

As stated above canning only became a viable venture once canning technology had improved. However that was a function of improving the actual tins. The canning process, has altered very little since its beginnings in the 1930's. As Goode states:

"While methods and techniques have improved the basic principles remain unaltered." (Goode, 1985: 6)

What has altered in the interim is the technology and the organisation of labour in the canning industry. From its inception until large scale mechanisation and the introduction of assembly lines in the 1950's and 60's, almost everything in the production process was carried out by hand preparation of the fruit. This involved cutting and canning and was carried out by pieceworkers, who were also women. One of the characteristic features of the canning industry is the sexual division of labour which has characterised it from its start. Goode says of this:

"From the outset, the sexual division of labour conformed to the characteristic pattern of women employed in fruit preparation and men doing the heavy work of transporting and working the retorts." (ibid.)
Workers were paid by piece-rates while the work was all performed by hand, but as the process became mechanised in the late 1950's, the piecework system was phased out almost completely. The increased mechanisation saw a complimentary increase in ratios of supervisors to workers. Since the mechanisation of the '1950's and 60's production has remained virtually unchanged, most factories still using the same machinery which was installed in the 50's and 60's.

"The labour process continues to be a labour intensive one, but one in which the higher productivity of labour is achieved by extensive mechanisation in virtually all parts of the process, save the inspection parts." (Ibid.)

Thus methods and processes used at Langeberg Canning and Ashton Canning, could still be described as characteristic of typical mass production of standardised products using assembly lines.
3. Methodology

My project in Ashton started out as part of the larger project, Ashton and the RDP - a social audit. The aim of the larger project was to help draw up a development strategy for the town. The project had various small groups working on smaller projects, such as my own, that would contribute towards the larger project. At the beginning it was quite difficult trying to get a clear focus on what each group was focusing on, as each smaller group had members focusing on various aspects of a particular dimension, for example, my group was looking at the economic and industrial dimensions of Ashton. The group I was in was made up of myself and two honours students. Between the three of us we had various aims: to investigate women and occupational health within the factories, to look at production methods within the factory and then to examine future development within the canning industry. Initially I and one of the honours students were interested in pursuing the women and occupational health avenue, while the third member of our group was interested in the last two aims. Thus when we began as a group we had a broad set of aims which we wanted to cover. However through the process of exploratory work in the field coupled with my literature search, my specific aims changed from this initial focus on women’s occupational health in the factories. I saw that the health issues were symptomatic of how the workforce was organised and controlled and thus my focus shifted from health aspects of factory work, to examining the make-up of the workforce, the divisions between the workers based on pre-existing social relations of power such as gender and race. Ultimately my last aim was to examine how workers then experienced these processes and mechanisms of control.
3.1 Summary of Respondents and the Nature of the Information they provided

Workers - Male:
- 9 workers - all permanent, 7 coloured men and 2 black men (September and November 1996)

Workers - Female:
- 6 coloured permanent workers (September and November 1996)
- 12 coloured seasonal workers (September and November 1996)
- 3 black seasonal workers (September and November 1996)
- 6 coloured seasonal workers (July 1998)
- 4 discussion groups with groups of women workers, the groups ranged from 3 workers to 8 workers (3 discussion groups were held in September and November 1996 and one was held in July 1998)

We attended a FAWU Committee Meeting (FAWU is the official trade union of the factories in this study) (12/4/1996)

The workers provided information about: working conditions in the factory, the labour process (part they were involved with), health problems they experienced, the recruitment process, relations between workers and management, relations between black and coloured workers. They gave insights into their lives as seasonal workers, their experiences of assembly line work, their experiences of racial and gender divisions and structural unemployment.

Management:
- the Personnel Manager from Ashton Canning - Mr Philip Olivier (September 1996)
- the Personnel Manager from Langeberg Canning - Mr Gieli Scholtz (September 1996)
- the Production Manager from Ashton Canning - Mr Johan Visser (September 1996)

The personnel managers provided information about: the demographic make-up of their workforces, the recruitment procedures, workplace rules, trade union representation, the division of jobs in the factory, promotion and training procedures.
The production manager gave us detailed information on the production process, production output, labour requirements, suitability of machines versus humans and visa versa, piecework and the division of labour.

Medical personnel:
- Dr Spiller - official factory doctor (November 1996)
- Dr Pietersen - Doctor at the Food and Allied Workers Benefit Fund Clinic (November 1996)
- 3 Nursing Sisters, Sister at Ashton Cannings' on site clinic, Sister at Zolani's clinic, Sister at Cogmanskloof clinic (September and November 1996)

All the medical personnel treat the workers from the factories. They provided us with basic information about the type of injuries, illnesses and stress-related disorders the workers suffer from, as a result of work in the factories and where appropriate their living conditions and lifestyle. This was very important, because work in the factories does have health risks (as will be discussed in the results), and life as a seasonal worker also has stress-related problems.

General:
- Mr Nico Nel - Town Clerk in Ashton (March 1996)
- Mr Sayed - former Mayor of Ashton (September and November 1996)
- Mr Ebrahim - Principal of Cogmanskloof High (April 1996)

These three informants provided background information about Ashton the town. Mr Nel as the town clerk had access to the voters roll and gave us demographic information about the population of Ashton. These three provided information that was not directly related to my aims, but was necessary as background material for a study set in a small town.

My research was conducted in Ashton. We went on several day trips during 1996, where we did exploratory work and started interviewing people. In September and November of 1996 I spent two weeks living in Ashton in order to do fieldwork. I then returned to Ashton in July of this year to complete my fieldwork. As time was very pressurised I was only able to spend a couple of days there this year.
3.2 Access

Access was quite a central issue in this project. The larger project was not simply looking at one factory or one group of people. Essentially everyone who lived in Ashton was a potential subject of the group project. As such access had to be negotiated at a central level. Most of this was done by Dr Head, with the authority of the University of Cape Town behind her. As we were working on part of the bigger Ashton Project, the hard work of negotiating access with all the central gatekeepers had already been done for us. We had the co-operation of the mayor of Ashton at the time, Mr Sayed, and the provincial office of the RDP. We were also fortunate to be able to work with Rob Davies, who is a member of parliament and who was responsible for bringing a number of European Members of parliament to Ashton, where amongst other things they met with the management of the two factories regarding expanding export of canned fruit. Rob Davies and Dr Head also met with the workers of the two factories at the same time. This was very fortuitous for my group and I. Given my (and our aims), this opened the door, so to speak, to the two groups of people we needed to speak to. We needed input from representatives of management of the two companies in order to get information about the demographic make-up of the workforce, official policy regarding workplace rules, treatment of workers, the labour process and so on. We also needed to speak to workers from the factories. We needed to ask them about what happened at the factories with regards to treatment of workers, the labour process, how the factory operated and various other issues which would illuminate the structural conditions of the workforce and the divisions between them. Negotiating access to the management's of the two factories and the workers was then much easier, given Dr Head's first encounter with them.

We first gained access to workers through the shop stewards whom Dr Head had met initially. Our problem with using this means of access was that most of the shop stewards were permanent workers, so all the workers they could get hold of for us, in order to be interviewed, were also permanent workers. Permanent workers represented the minority of workers. We needed to find an additional means of gaining access in order to solve this bias. Another problem with choosing these workers as gatekeepers was that they as a group had several grievances with the factories and the trade union, consequently this might have influenced who they asked to be interviewed by us. They may have chosen workers who would highlight
the problems they were concerned with. We wanted to speak to a varied, cross-section of workers, this meant we needed to speak to seasonal workers as well. This was very important as we expected that workers experience of the factory, management and work itself would be influenced by whether or not they were seasonal or permanent employees.

Unfortunately when we were staying in Ashton, the season had not yet begun. Thus there were no seasonal workers at the factories for us to speak to. Luckily we were able to use our association with the Mayor (Mr Sayed) in order to meet more workers. The Mayor and his family owned a small general store, which many of the residents of Ashton came to, to buy goods. Thus the Sayed family were quite well associated with many workers, seasonal and permanent. When the mayor's son, Luqmaan Sayed, discovered that we wished to speak to seasonal workers, he started the ball rolling by asking patrons whom he knew to be seasonal workers, if they were willing to be interviewed by us. Luqmaan Sayed would explain who we were, where we were from and what we were doing in Ashton. We asked the first few seasonal employees whom we had gained access to through Luqmaan, if they knew of any other workers who would be willing to speak to us. Using this snowball technique we managed to gain access to quite a varied group of seasonal workers. Bearing in mind that most of the seasonal workers are women, they varied in terms of ages, level of education, number of seasons worked at the factory, marital status and number of dependants. We also wanted to speak to both black and coloured seasonal workers. (White workers were left out because they make up such a tiny proportion of the seasonal workforce i.e. only 0.3% of Langeberg Canning's seasonal workforce is white.)

The problem with gaining access to workers in this way, was that we did not get to speak to any black workers who lived in Zolani, as the shop was quite a way from the black township. It also excluded workers from the surrounding towns, who might have had very different views about some of the issues which were being investigated. We tried to balance our selection of respondents by going to Zolani and trying to gain access to workers. However this attempt was not very successful as we did not have anyone to introduce us to the workers, or to vouch for us. Thus we did not manage to conduct as many interviews in Zolani, as in Ashton. (Please refer to beginning of this section for a complete list of interviews and discussion groups) We had to talk to
people in the street and ask if they had worked in the factory, and people were understandably reserved about speaking to us.

In the process of doing the interviews I met a teenage girl, who had worked a season in the factory, but was still at school. At the time we met she was in Standard 8 at the high school in Cogmanskloof. We met again when the school brought a group of standard nines to Cape Town for a field trip the following year. Dr Head organised a tour of UCT, with a talk on careers, we then hosted a tea for the students. The teenager, mentioned above, and I talked quite a bit during the afternoon and I asked her if she would be willing and able to find some workers who would be prepared to talk to me when I returned to finish my field work. The teenager was very enthusiastic and when I did return, she had organised a group of women who were available to be interviewed. This enabled me to select workers according to slightly more specific criteria for my final round of interviews. My final round of interviews were intended for exploring the lived experience of control more thoroughly. As such I wanted to speak to workers who had 'lived' the typical life of a seasonal worker. Therefore I wanted to speak to women who had worked many seasons, who had raised families and who had been around for long enough to notice any changes in the factories and life in Ashton generally. I was fortunate that the teenager also accompanied me to each interview and this certainly enhanced my credibility and the respondents trust in me.
3.3 Exploratory Work in the Field / Pilot Work

Our exploratory work in the field was performed during five day trips we made to Ashton, before we went to stay there for two weeks in September and November. The exploratory work was very useful in two vital areas. Firstly it enabled me to refocus my research and clarify my aims. Secondly it gave us important information about which research tools would work best for us.

How did this happen? As my original focus was on women and occupational health, before we began our pilot work, Dr Head and I interviewed Dr Leslie London, who has done quite a bit of research on the health of agricultural workers, including canning workers. (See London et al, Dermatoses - an occupational hazard in the canning industry, South African Medical Journal 1992; 81: 606 - 612) Dr London gave us some useful and interesting information about the type of health problems one might encounter in assembly line work and the deciduous fruit farming industry. After this I was able to draw up an initial set of questions which our group could use in order to determine the type of health problems likely to be found in the factories. (Please refer to the appendix to see the first 'questionnaire')

This set of 'health questions' which I had drawn up, was tested during our exploratory day trips. It was then discarded as the questionnaire proved far too stifling. Workers could give answers to the questions, but the nature of the questions tended to encourage very short answers, e.g. the possible answers to: have you ever suffered from a bladder infections or vrot vinger (a form of contact dermatitis, which causes acute inflammation of the nailbed) are yes or no. The problem revealed at this point of exploratory research was that obtaining the 'health information' was not particularly complex or revealing, what I needed to do was focus on something slightly more sociologically challenging. Another problem which arose at this time was the fact that 3 people all with differing aims, wanted to interview the same set of people. However this problem proved to be rather instructive. Our first few 'informal interviews' during our pilot work revealed a much broader picture of the situation within the factories, than I would have found if I was working alone and simply focusing on the 'health issues'. The student who was interested in the production methods within the factory and future developments within the canning industry would ask questions about work processes and which workers were responsible for which jobs etc. This initial
collaborative exploratory work was invaluable because it helped me to see that while the health problems certainly existed within the factory, what was more interesting and worthy of attention was the context within which these health problems arose. This evolved into my final focus on how the workforce is manipulated and controlled through the interaction of various pre-existing social divisors. Thus this pilot work was invaluable in refocussing my aims, as mentioned above. It also showed us that questionnaires of the type I drew up to examine health issues would not be a useful research tool. We needed to speak to workers and managers and find out what the situation at the two factories was like. We needed to get information from management, but we also needed to look at workers lives in order to see how they experienced control in the factories and how it impacted on their lives. As workers were our main focus, the research tool needed to be designed around them. Thus given our needs in terms of our aims we decided that the only way to get the kind of information we needed, with the flexibility we needed as a group, was to use interviews which were based on an in-depth approach.
3.4 Interviews - why this Research Tool was chosen

At a general level we decided to use this method of obtaining information because we needed to explore a range of issues, with both management and workers. This needs space and time. You have to spend enough time with the respondents to develop some rapport and trust. This requires a certain amount of ‘space’. The interview gives the researcher the time and space to do all of this. If a respondent goes off at a tangent, there is space to deal with the issue in question and give the respondent the opportunity to discuss the issue. This can be very revealing, even if it is not directly related to the issues at hand. An example of this (with interviews with workers) was the issue of education. I was not focusing on it as a specific issue, but frequently during interviews, respondents would start talking about the issue of education and how they wished they had received more, or wanted their children to receive a better one. This focus on education revealed a less fatalistic attitude towards life chances than I had imagined would exist. After the first few interviews I would let respondents talk or sometimes argue freely about it. In this way the interview can become more of a two-way process. Respondents can use the interview to express frustrations and feelings, the researcher can obtain desired information and through the process, hopefully, the interview can be slightly cathartic.
3.4.1 Constraints

One of the constraints we faced as a group was a shortage of time. We had many day trips to Ashton where we able to conduct interviews, but we only had a little over two weeks where we physically lived in Ashton. We first stayed in Ashton in September of 1996 and then we were able to stay for a further week in November of that year, in order for the honours students to complete their fieldwork. I was fortunate, because as a masters student I was allowed much more time to hand my thesis in. Thus I was able to return to Ashton this year in July to finish my fieldwork. So this was more of a group constraint which impinged on my initial fieldwork. If we had made use of questionnaires in this time we would have been able to have far more respondents. However we felt that depth was more important than simple numbers of workers interviewed.

A second problem relating to time, was finding time in the permanent workers schedule for them to speak to us. We were only able to speak to them during their lunch breaks, which was approximately forty-five minutes. Another major problem was the fact that quite a number of the workers were scared to talk to us. This particular constraint forced us to think of ways which would make the interview less intimidating, and as such this constraint pushed us into considering the use of discussion groups. The use of discussion groups meant that instead of facing us alone the women could answer the questions and discuss issues in groups. We thought this would be far less intimidating for the women. As it turned out the discussion groups were a rich and valuable source of information. The constraint was then transformed from an obstacle into a facilitating aspect of our research.
3.5 The Discussion Groups

As the above discussion indicated, our decision to use discussion groups was prompted by the fact that the workers were quite nervous to talk to us. When we discussed issues with them as a group, it started very much like a game of verbal tag. One worker would hesitantly put her ideas forward and this would prompt another worker to add their experiences or ideas to that, which led to another worker adding in and so it progressed, normally into very spirited and raucous discussions. This medium was particularly useful for the shy respondents who could prompt another worker to tell a particular anecdote. In this way the respondent did not have to take centre stage or say very much, themselves. This method allowed the respondent to contribute, by using someone else's voice. Another useful aspect of this method is that the workers served as one another's collective memory, if one respondent could not remember all the details or told them incorrectly, the others could remind or correct the respondent.
3.6 Drawing up the Interview Schedules

The interview schedule developed in stages. The first interview schedule, was the one I drew up after my interview with Dr London. It was very specific and focused very narrowly on health care aspects. (See appendix) As was mentioned earlier, the first set of questions were rather stifling and did not encourage discussion. We also realised that the responses to the questions on specific health risks of assembly line and factory work, need not be asked to every respondent, as they were quite standard and the information could be gleaned from other sources. (For more discussion see Doyal :1989, Roberts : 1992, Workplace Information Group : 1993, Salie and Gwagwa : 1995, and Kisting : 1997)

Our next step was then to focus on drawing up questions which looked more at the context within which health problems arose, rather than focusing on occupational health. My aims revolved around exploring how the workforce was controlled through the combination of pre-existing social divisions and deliberate management strategies to affect control. Thus we needed to see how the workforce was divided and differentiated, we also needed to see what strategies management used to maintain control. Thus instead of asking workers how often they had suffered from mechanical backache while working on the assembly line, we asked them why they thought women did all the work on the assembly line and why weren’t men found working on the assembly line? Here exploring the gendered differences in the organisation of work in the factory. (Please refer to the appendix for the interview schedules).
3.7 Interviewing Management

Interviewing management representatives from the two companies was quite different to interviewing workers. The managers seemed somewhat uneasy about being interviewed by us and there was a general tendency to be quite defensive when answering questions. An example of this was when we "probed" Mr. Scholtz (personnel manager at Langeberg Canning) about the incidence of vrot vinger at the factory. The interviewee told us that Dr. Leslie London did not do any of his research at Langeberg Canning and that he was very unhappy with Dr. London's report. This information was volunteered before we were given any indication of the incidence of the problem at the factory; we had to ask the question again to get an answer. Obviously there was some concern that we would produce research which would cast the companies in a bad light. Thus one of the biggest problems with interviewing managers was to get them to answer the questions we posed, without going off at a tangent or hi-jacking the interview for public relations purposes.

The questions we posed to management were quite similar to those we asked workers. However we were trying to get them to give us the 'official policy' on various issues, so we needed to stick to the issues quite narrowly. We did this in order to have the 'official policy of the factory' to compare with the reality of the situation in terms of the workers experiences and ideas. Thus these interviews needed to be semi-structured, so that we could cover all the necessary areas concerning issues such as health, working conditions, the work process, recruitment, suitability of male and female workers for various jobs. We also needed demographic information about the workforce, which they had the official figures for. The semi-structured interviews which we conducted with management lacked what Bernard calls:

"the free-wheeling quality of unstructured interviewing" (Bernard, 1994: 209)

But as the above hopefully shows this type of interview was chosen specifically because we wished to avoid that.
3.8 Interviewing Workers

When we began interviewing workers we tried to make use of a rather rigid list of questions. The result, as discussed above, were very limited answers. Thus after the first few interviews we discarded the 'fixed set of questions' and decided to let the interviews follow a much more unstructured path. We had a set of issues which we were interested in and so we developed a very flexible set of topics which we could use to prompt discussion. An example of this would be asking workers "what are the problems which seasonal workers encounter out of season time?" This gave the workers the freedom to define the content of the 'story'. Asking questions such as "what do you do for money when the season finishes?", is more specific and limits the response. Bernard says of such unstructured interviewing:

"In unstructured interviewing, you keep the conversation focused on a topic, while giving the informant the room to define the content of the discussion" (Bernard, 1994: 211).

The first batch of interviews and discussion groups followed this pattern, which seemed to work very well. We were sensitised to issues above and beyond what we expected to encounter. We were made aware of how everything in Ashton is intertwined; e.g. most workers on the farms had some experience of factory work, and vice versa. This appreciation of the closeness of Ashton as a social system really added to the depth of the interviews.

This worked well for the first part of my fieldwork, however when I returned to Ashton this year to complete my fieldwork, I went there to "fill in the gaps" in my research. I was interested in very specific aspects of workers lives and thus my interviews needed to be quite structured and focused. I was mainly concerned with obtaining specific information about how workers experienced control in the factory as seasonal employees. I was interested in specific aspects of the workers lives and in order to obtain the information I needed, I asked quite specific questions, such as "how do the supervisors treat you when you make a mistake?". Thus in this instance the focus of the questions from the initial interviews were simply narrowed and made more rigid. Once again I was trying to avoid the "free wheeling quality of unstructured interviewing " (Ibid.) (Please refer to the appendix to see the interview schedules)
I am a white, middle class women. The majority of my research was conducted with coloured working class women. I have to admit, whether I like it or not, my background sculpts how I view the world and in the same way, it sculpts how the respondents view me. Hopefully it has already been made clear that Ashton is still a largely segregated community. And I as a white women was probably associated with the white people of Ashton. My interactions with the white people in Ashton, gave me the impression that racist attitudes are still firmly entrenched within the town. I did not meet everyone in Ashton, so I cannot generalise, but what contact I did have with them, gave me this distinct impression. (An example was when we were staying in a guest house in Ashton, the owners wife gave me a kettle to make coffee in my room. She offered to keep the milk (for the coffee) in her fridge in her house (which was right next door to the guest house). She then told me that she didn't want any of the others coming into her house, only I was allowed to come in and fetch the milk.)

I did not do the first part of my research alone. I was accompanied by two honours students from the University as well. One women is black and the other is coloured. Thus as a group we represented a racial balance of sorts. This 'racial balance' seemed to help us in most interview situations. However the dominance of each of us depended on the interaction at hand.
3.9.1 Interviews with white management

I took the lead in most of these interviews. The managers while very polite in manner, directed most responses to me, despite the fact that there were two other interviewers normally present. The manner in which they spoke to me indicated that they assumed I was ‘one of them’; I assume it was because I am white. In one situation the interviewee was overtly racist: he was asked what the major social problems related to health were. His response:

“using a toilet was a serious problem, the coloureds and blacks didn’t know how to use a toilet..... It was a major headache, worrying about 2 400 women with sanitary problems, but we have overcome this through education”
(interview with Mr Scholtz, Sept. 1996).

The above mentioned manager discussed the issue with the greatest of courtesy as though my presence acted as a buffer to the other two women being offended. While this was trying, I feel that management would not have opened up as much as they did, if I had not been there. I assume that these men thought that my ‘whiteness’ made me ‘one of them’ and that I somehow identified with them because of this.
3.9.2 Interviews and discussion groups with workers

Interviews with workers were quite different to those with management. Most of our interviewees were coloured women. They seemed a little wary of me in the beginning of most interviews. However as most of our interviews with the women turned into quite lively discussions, they seemed to ease up after a little while and were then responsive when I asked questions and probed issues. I have to suggest that my impression that the women were wary of me, could very well be my own projection of how I would expect them to feel and behave, given the situation of racial division in Ashton. It was for this reason that I tried not to take over in interviews in order to let my co-researchers take the lead and thereby hopefully reduce my image as a domineering white person (expecting them to perceive me as such). However the reality of the situation was that my two companions were doing their first real fieldwork, as such they were quite inexperienced and while I would hardly call myself a seasoned researcher, I did have more experience in negotiating the pitfalls of doing research in the field. Often I was forced to take over in interviews when the other two got bogged down in details. Two other related problems were that a) almost all the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, which I speak and understand well but my one companion did not and b) the other honours student, while enthusiastic, was rather shy. These three factors usually forced me to be the dominant interviewer. I do feel that more information would have been gleaned if I had not been there, or if the dynamics of the interview could have been organised differently. However given the particular problems I mentioned above, this was not a feasible scenario.
3.10 Ethical Considerations

When I started working on this project we carefully explained to each interviewee what we were doing and what the project could and could not achieve. We did not let workers think that there would be any immediate benefits or solutions to their problems in the factory as a result of talking to us. We did explain that the importance in doing the research lay in finding out what the situation was, in order to document it, to document their feelings, frustrations and problems which would serve as a record. What purpose the record will ultimately have, remains to be seen.

The members of management from both companies provided us with our information quite freely. They were informed of what we were doing and appeared to be quite content to have their interviews taped. As such no attempt has been made to disguise the identities of the managers whom we interviewed. The workers on the other hand were quite nervous about speaking to us. We assured them that their identities would remain unknown, but that the information which they gave us would be used for projects which would become accessible to the public.

We interviewed shop stewards as well as regular workers, but as the shop stewards are easy to identify, I have chosen not to refer to them as shop stewards in order to protect their anonymity. Thus I do not differentiate explicitly in the text between workers and shop stewards. In certain places it would be very useful to know that the informant was a shop steward, however it would be very easy to distinguish them from the other workers. I assured them of their anonymity and to the best of my ability I have maintained this promise.
4. Ashton: A Profile

Physical Location

Ashton is a small town in the Breede River Valley, sandwiched between Robertson and Montagu. Ashton, although usually referred to as though it is one discreet unit, it is made up of three quite separate communities. The white community live in what is known as Conradiedorp, which is physically right in the heart of the town. The coloured community lives in Cogmanskloof, and approximately 4 kilometres away from the centre of town, we find Zolani, the black township. (See appendix for map of 3 areas.) Thus for municipal and census purposes, Ashton is made up of the three smaller communities of Conradiedorp, Cogmanskloof and Zolani. However when 'locals' (here I am referring to black, white and coloured 'locals') talk of Ashton they are usually referring to Conradiedorp and Cogmanskloof, with Zolani treated as though it is a separate town.

Demographic Profile

There are approximately 13 000 people who live in Ashton (here we are referring to all three communities. Until approximately two years ago Conradiedorp and Cogmanskloof came under the municipality of Ashton; and Zolani was treated as a separate municipality, however since then the two municipalities have merged to become one municipal unit. There are also about 5 000 people living on farms in close proximity to Ashton proper, and this brings the total population up to about 18 000 people in total. (These figures have been adapted from the municipal election statistics of 1995. We are forced to use these as the only other statistics are the 1991 census results, which are somewhat outdated. The latest census results are not available yet. (Source: Buttner, 1996: 2) } When we take these municipal election figures and break the population down according to area, we see that there are approximately 2000 people living in Conradiedorp, 6200 in Cogmanskloof and 4800 in Zolani. This does not give us a 'racial' breakdown of the figures. However given the fact that the town is still essentially segregated along race lines, we can interpret these results as 2000 white people living in Conradiedorp, 6200 coloured people living in Cogmanskloof and 4800 black people living in Zolani.
**Demographic Profile**

Graph showing the proportions of coloured, black and white people who make up the population of Ashton.

(Source: Buttner, 1996: 2)

In 1995, with the total population estimated to be 13,000 for Ashton proper (i.e. excluding people who live on nearby farms), approximately 47.7% of the population was coloured; 36.9% of the population was black and 15.4% of the population was white. (Source: Ibid.)

In terms of the age distribution of the population the Wesgro report says:

"Age distribution appears to be fairly standard for the province with 66% between 15 and 66 years in age, 30% younger than 14 and 4% above that age" (Ibid.).

**Infrastructure**

There are three separate communities in Ashton, each with differing levels of infrastructure development. Basic infrastructure needs such as running water and electricity are in quite an impoverished state in Zolani. Conditions in Conradiedorp appear to be the best. The Buttner says of this situation:
"Infrastructure in the form of water and electricity supply will need to be expanded and upgraded with the rapid growth of the town.... For the poor section of the population there are severe backlogs, with people in Cogmanskloof, especially the impoverished streets, locally known as A and B Streets in Cogmanskloof, and large parts of Zolani, have water supply problems with many people having to share communal water taps, and many people not being able to afford electricity.... Housing is a very definite problem, mainly in the form of overcrowding and families living in informal structures in backyards... In Zolani the need is particularly high with 400 or more households in informal housing (some self-built mud-houses) or sharing rooms in hostels etc. In A and B Street there is tremendous overcrowding with sometimes 3 or even more households sharing a plot in different rooms and backyard structures" (Buttner, 1996: 2 - 3).

Although Buttner does not state it explicitly, by virtue of its exclusion from these discussions of infrastructure problems in Ashton, Conradiedorp does not have the same infrastructure problems. It appears that development has not occurred equally throughout the town. The best conditions are found in the white part of town, with the poorest conditions in the black part of town. Having spent time in the town and specifically a day mapping Cogmanskloof and Zolani, I can testify to the conditions of impoverishment and severe overcrowding. These conditions are sharply contrasted when one goes through the white part of town, where neat concrete and brick houses with garages are the order of the day.

Schooling is an issue of some concern, with quite differing conditions in the three areas. There are two junior schools and one secondary school in Ashton. Most white children are bussed to schools in Robertson and Worcester. Coloured children attend the schools in Ashton and most black children attend the school in Zolani. However Buttner does point out:

"the school in Zolani has problems, with one school to Std. 10 with children from the age of 6 to 25 in the same school" (Buttner, 1996: 3).

The same report also says of schooling in Ashton:

"School facilities are reasonable" (Buttner, 1996: 3).
Essentially the school facilities only cater reasonably for the people of Cogmanskloof, as the school in Zolani (which I visited personally and can testify to its dire shortage of facilities, teachers and equipment) is a poor relative of the school in Cogmanskloof. The white residents have simply opted out of the system altogether.

Health services, much like most other social services in Ashton are suffering from a wasteful duplication of resources. There are 3 clinics, one in each area in Ashton. However as there are differing conditions and demands placed on the 3 different clinics, they are far from equal. At present if one goes to the clinic in Zolani, it is in the worst state, followed by the clinic in Cogmanskloof, the 'white clinic' does not get used nearly as much as the other two, yet it has good facilities and personnel. If the three clinics could be combined and put in a central location in Ashton, then everyone could get access to the same treatment, but as it is now, residents of Cogmanskloof and (more specifically with) residents of Zolani, are forced to wait in long queues, with overworked nurses, while the clinic in Conradiedorp is under-utilised. (Information supplied by nursing sisters at the three clinics, interviewed in September 1996).

**Economic development and industry**

The economy of Ashton is heavily dependant on deciduous fruit farming and the canning industry, according to Cousins, and:

"deciduous fruit accounted for one quarter of the value of agricultural output of the Western Cape in 1990, despite only occupying 1 percent of the farming land."(Cousins, 1993: 19 - 20)

Unfortunately, while the canning industry and to a lesser extent the farms provide much needed employment, it is mostly seasonal. As such, Ashton suffers from a very high level of seasonal unemployment. During season, Buttner estimates unemployment to be about 500 people, however out of season (which in a bad season can be as long as 10 months) the number of unemployed can shoot up to almost 6000, which is almost half the population of Ashton, or 46.2% of the total population. (Buttner, 1996: 3) These figures need to be treated with caution as we do not have a gender or age breakdown for them, added to this, they have been extrapolated from the original statistics.
A small handful of people are employed in shops, the petrol station and the post office. However for many of the residents of Ashton, structural seasonal unemployment is a fact of life.

Social Problems

Ashton is encumbered with quite a number of social problems, mostly related to the situation of widespread structural unemployment. Outside of season time, a large proportion of residents have little or no income. This places a great deal of strain on the communities. The predominance of farming in the area with its attendant dop-system\(^4\); (information provide during interviews with workers in Ashton in September and November of 1996) also sees alcoholism as a major problem in Ashton. Accompanying these two major problems are other problems which follow on from widespread unemployment and alcohol abuse, namely:

- domestic violence,
- a high incidence of TB,
- high incidence of malnutrition amongst children and also adults
- gangsterism,
- drug abuse
- illegal 'smokkelhuisies', where alcohol and dagga can be bought.

(Information supplied by medical personnel in Ashton, interviewed in September of 1996, and also from interviews with workers over September and November 1996)

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\(^4\) Interviews with workers who had spent time working on the farms and / or had relatives working on farms, all indicated that an unofficial dop-system was still very prevalent.
5. Description of Results

The aim of this project is to examine the ways in which the workforce is controlled and manipulated by pre-existing social relations of power. We did this by focusing on how these social relations of power were reconstructed and re-enforced by the structure of the workforce. Inherent in this was examining how much management was able to make use of these divisions to its advantage. This first section of results is going to describe the basic demographic make-up of the two factories i.e. the structure of their workforces, the occupational, gender and racial divisions of labour. After we have described what the workforce looks like, we shall examine the various divisions which are apparent from this, their interactions and the controlling effect these divisions have on the workforce. Lastly we shall examine what the lived experience of this control is like for workers. All the statistical data in this next section was supplied by Mr Gielie Scholtz, the personnel manager at Langeberg Canning and Mr Philip Olivier, personnel manager at Ashton Canning.
5.1 Section One - Demographic Data

5.1.1 Langeberg Canning

Breakdown of workforce in terms of race and gender and whether they are seasonal or permanent workers:

Langeberg is the larger of the two factories with a total of 2 857 workers, of which 2 672 are seasonal employees and only 185 are permanent workers. The permanent workers have year round employment, whereas the seasonal employees are employed every year on a new contract for about six months or as long as the season lasts. The breakdown of the permanent and seasonal employees in terms of race and gender looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Breakdown of permanent workers at Langeberg Canning, according to race and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1 631</td>
<td>1 832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2 272</td>
<td>2 672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Breakdown of seasonal workers at Langeberg Canning, according to race and gender.
Effectively what these statistics tell us is that:

- permanent employees make up only 6.5% of the total workforce
- seasonal employees comprise the vast majority (93.5%) of the workforce
- Of the permanent employees:
  - 78.4% are male and 21.6% are female
  - 34.6% are white (27.6% are male; 7% are females)
  - 26.5% are black (21.6% are male; 4.9% are female)
  - 38.9% are coloured (29.2% are male; 9.7% are female)
- Of the seasonal employees:
  - 85% are female and 15% are male
  - 0.3% are white (0.1% are female; 0.2% are male)
  - 31.1% are black (23.9% are female; 7.2% are male)
  - 68.6% are coloured (61% are female; 7.5% are male)
- of the total workforce:
  - 2.6% are white
  - 30.8% are black
  - 66.6% are coloured
A graphical representation of the data makes the patterns a little easier to discern:

Bar/Column Plot (PERMSEA3.STA 6v*2c)

Graph 1: Bar graph of male workers according to whether they are seasonal or permanent workers and race.
Graph 2: Bar graph of female workers according to whether they are seasonal or permanent workers and race.
Graph 3: Bar graph showing the proportions of male and female workers that make up the permanent and seasonal workforce.
If we examine these statistics in terms of race, we can see that in terms of white workers:
- 87.7% of all white workers are permanent workers
- 12.3% of all white workers are seasonal workers

in terms of black workers:
- 5.6% of all black workers are permanent workers
- 94.4% of all black workers are seasonal workers

in terms of coloured workers:
- 3.8% of all coloured workers are permanent workers
- 96.2% of all coloured workers are seasonal workers

Graph 4: bar graph of percentage of each race group that are permanent workers and percentage that are seasonal workers.
Where workers are situated in the Langeberg Canning hierarchy:

Permanent staff - management, office and factory workers:
We were not given any specific breakdown of the race and gender composition of management. However we were told by Mr Scholtz that there was only one women on the management team and no black people whatsoever. He referred to this as an "excellent opportunity for him", as Langeberg Canning are trying to implement an affirmative action programme. So we were left to conclude that the management of Langeberg Canning is almost exclusively made up of white and coloured men. While the exact proportions of white males and coloured males was never conveyed to us by Mr Scholtz, who had minute details of other aspects of workforce make-up, interviews with workers and shop stewards from Langeberg Canning indicated that the top management of Langeberg Canning was largely made up of white men. At lower levels of management there are more coloured and some black males, who work as foremen and supervisors. There are also some women supervisors, who direct control women workers on the assembly line. Aside from management, there are permanent workers in the office who perform clerical and secretarial functions, these workers are mainly white women with some coloured women. The other permanent workers are found in the factory. Here work is very clearly divided into 'male' and 'female tasks'. In fact when management, shop stewards and workers were asked to describe the production process, work was always divided into 'male' or 'men's work' and 'female' or 'women's work'.

In terms of the factory there is not much difference between the jobs which are performed by permanent workers and those performed by seasonal workers, so I will not discuss them as two separate categories. In the factory men are found as machine operators, forklift operators and drivers, team-leaders and labourers (most of the labourers are casual employees) and cleaners. Women work as fruit cutters, sorters, team leaders and cleaners. The vast majority of women employed at Langeberg Canning work at different points along the assembly line. There are male and female cleaners, however they fulfil different functions. The male cleaners are responsible for cleaning machines and heavy equipment and the female cleaners are responsible for 'lighter' cleaning. Another important fact to stress is that there are very few white people who are found in actual factory, the vast majority of people who work in the factory are coloured and black. White workers in the factory are usually
foremen, engineers or fitters and turners and male. That is the basic structure of the workforce at Langeberg Canning. Before we analyse what these facts actually tell us, we shall first examine what the structure of the workforce looks like at Ashton Canning.
5.1.2 Ashton Canning

Limited demographic breakdown of workforce:

Ashton Canning is the smaller of the two factories, with a total of 2,295 workers. Ashton Canning, unlike Langeberg Canning, is completely privately owned. It also owns five farms in the region which produce some of the fruit which is canned. While Langeberg Canning had reasonably clear and detailed information about the demographic breakdown of its workers, the same cannot be said of Ashton Canning. When interviewed, the personnel manager, Mr Philip Olivier, was unable to give us a breakdown of workers in terms of race. He was only able to give us a breakdown of workers in terms of gender and their status as permanent or seasonal workers. I do not think that the information was being withheld from us as Mr Olivier was quite forthright about other seemingly sensitive issue’s, but rather that the company do not keep track of the racial profile of their workforce. Langeberg as a subsidiary of the larger Tiger Oats Company is publicly under pressure to push an affirmative action programme. Ashton, as a private company, are not facing such pressures and so there was no need for them to keep a detailed racial profile of their workforce, (at the time I interviewed Mr Olivier). However since then, the new Employment Equity bill has been passed and in the future Ashton Canning will have to keep detailed records of its workforce. More than that they will actively be forced to promote an equity programme in order to make their workforce demographically representative. (Ray, 1998: 52 - 53) Ashton Canning has a total of 2,295 workers. Out of that total, 268 or 11.7% are permanent workers and 2,027 or 88.3% are seasonal workers. There is no gender breakdown of the permanent workers, however we were told how many workers are paid weekly and how many are paid monthly:

- there are 190 weekly-waged employees
- there are 78 monthly-salaried employees.

Standard convention is that manual and semi-skilled workers are usually paid weekly-wages and that white-collar, clerical and office workers are usually paid monthly salaries. Interviews with workers indicated that all the management and the vast majority of the office workers at Ashton Canning are white, so we could posit that most of the 78 salaried employees are white and that most of the waged employees are coloured. I say coloured not ‘coloured and black’ because we were told during...
Interviews with workers that Ashton Canning only started hiring black people in 1995 and since then only 2 black workers had been appointed as permanent staff. Out of the 2,027 seasonal employees:

- 1,443 or 71.2% are female and
- 584 or 28.8% are male

Data: ASHWORK.STA 1v * 2c

Graph 5: Pie chart showing the proportions of male and female workers who make up the seasonal workforce at Ashton Canning.
We are not given any indication of the racial make-up of the seasonal workforce. As has been stated above, Ashton Canning only started hiring black people recently, and workers informed us that there were approximately 50 seasonal black workers at Ashton Canning. We can make an educated guess that the rest of the seasonal workforce are coloured. After this deductive approach to Ashton Canning's racial profile, we could probably say with some certainty that:

- the management and office staff who constitute 3.4% of the total workforce are mostly white
- the permanent weekly staff who constitute 8.3% of the total workforce are mostly coloured with 2 black workers
- the seasonal workers who constitute 88.3% of the total workforce are approximately 97.5% coloured and 2.5% black

{ Please note that these figures are only estimates based on deductions made from information given in interviews with management and workers. }
Where workers are situated in the Ashton Canning hierarchy:

It has already been mentioned that Ashton Canning is privately owned and is run as a family business. The management is completely white, the number of women involved in management was never indicated to us. We do not know how many of the office workers and clerks are women, but given the fact that it does tend to be a feminised occupation, we would expect that quite a few women are involved in that area of the workforce. Essentially Langeberg Canning and Ashton Canning are both involved in the same business which is canning fruit; as such the type of work and division of labour in the two factories is very similar. The tasks are divided into ‘male’ and ‘female’ and the situation at Ashton Canning is very similar to the situation at Langeberg Canning:

‘Male tasks’ : - machine operators, fork-lift drivers, team-leaders, lorry-drivers and labourers

‘Female tasks’ : - fruit-cutters, fruit sorters, team leaders and cleaners.

Clearly from this we can see that there is very little difference between the two factories in terms of workforce structure. Both have the majority of their workforce made up of seasonal employees, who are also mainly women. The management of both companies is made up predominantly of white males. The one big difference between the two factories is that Ashton Canning has a very small proportion of black workers as part of both its permanent and seasonal workforce (only 2.3%); whereas Langeberg Canning has a much larger proportion of black workers in its workforce (30.9%).
5.2 Section Two - Divisions as Mechanisms of Control

Looking at the structure and make-up of the workforce of the two companies, we can see quite clearly that there are a number of distinct divisions within them. It is important to point out here, that there are differences between workers, which are not the same as divisions. However differences can often become divisions within the workforce, due to its structure. An example of this, is the different areas which the workers come from, this should not divide workers, as they all share the same relationship to the means of production. However, given Ashton's severe unemployment problems and the uncertain nature of seasonal employment, this issue of geography has turned a difference into a division between workers.

One of the most salient differences between workers is that between those who have permanent employment and those that are only seasonally employed. Between the two groups lies the huge gulf of structural unemployment that the one group is subject to and the other group is immediately spared. Workers from the two groups have different needs and concerns, as such this difference has become a division between workers. What neither group is spared are the horizontal and vertical divisions within the structure of the workforce. Occupational, gender and racial divisions of labour make up the horizontal and vertical divisions of labour and it is to this that we first turn our attention and observe how these divisions actively divide and control the workforce and how management is able to manipulate them. (Please refer to appendix for a diagram of the workforce structure)

Vertical and horizontal divisions permeate the entire workforce, both permanent and seasonal workers are divided by its lines. Examining the structure of the workforce a number of divisions are quite clear. There are quite a number of vertical divisions within the hierarchies of the two companies. At the very top we see an almost completely white male management, (Langeberg has one white female member of management) underneath that are the technical managers and shift leaders of the factories, who are also mostly white males, with some coloured and black males (more so at Langeberg than Ashton because Langeberg has an affirmative action programme). Underneath that are the production foremen and then underneath that are the supervisors and then the team-leaders who are mostly male, but there are a few women at this level. At the lowest level i.e. those workers who do not
control any other workers, there are still horizontal divisions between workers. They are divided up according to the perceived gendered nature of the work. There are distinct female areas of work and there are distinct male areas of work.

A note on definition:
Horizontal divisions between workers are those divisions between jobs which are dissimilar, yet don't differ in status. There are horizontal divisions for various reasons, but the important issue to note is that such divisions do not require a difference in status or ranking. Vertical divisions on the other hand are the divisions between different levels where different jobs have differing amounts of power, prestige and status attached to them, i.e. the element of ranking comes in here. E.g. there is a vertical division between the position of managing director and an assembly line worker.
5.2.1 Racial divisions between workers

One of the most abundantly clear divisions within the workforce, are the vertical racial divisions between the mostly white management (top management and technical management) and the almost exclusively coloured and black workers on the factory shopfloor. This should not be surprising, given that 20.9% of all white male workers in the Western Cape are found in the 'legislators, senior officials and managers' occupational group, compared to 3.4% of all coloured male workers and 3.6% for all black male workers. (CSS, 1995: 85)

A less obvious racial division and one which is not apparent from simply looking at the occupational division of labour in the structure of the workforce, is the horizontal division between coloured and black workers. Ashton is still an extremely divided community. If one examines the diagrammatic map of Ashton in the appendix, it represents in pictorial terms the situation which exists in reality. There is one town, but three very separate communities. Thus workers are separated and differentiated by geographic location. They are also differentiated by language. While everyone in Ashton speaks Afrikaans, black people in Ashton speak Xhosa to one another. There is a distinct lack of identification and unity between these two groups and this was made apparent when interviewing workers, coloured workers referred to any other coloured people in the area as 'our people'. The same situation occurred when talking to black workers. There was a distinct sense of 'us' and 'them'.

As black and coloured workers do not simply see themselves as one united group, but two separate interest groups, it is not difficult to imagine how the two groups view one another as competitors for the factories limited job opportunities. Which is not to say that either the coloured community or the black community see the white community as any kind of ally. It is simply that white people in Ashton are not competing for the same pool of resources that the coloured and black workers are competing for. The black and coloured workers seem to have accepted with a sense of fatalism that despite the changes in the constitution, the reality of white control of positions of economic power has remained pretty much unchanged in Ashton so far. Accompanying this control appears to be a fair amount of racism, as was suggested to me by workers recounting how they are still referred to as 'hotnot' and 'kaffir', by white managers. (This is merely an anecdote, and does not constitute conclusive
evidence, however it does point to workers feelings and experiences of the factory, which shall be discussed in greater detail in section 3)

The point being stressed here is that black and coloured workers did not appear to see any fundamental changes in the immediate status quo, or changes in white attitudes as these workers experienced them. As a group of workers they share the fact that they are discriminated against by white management, however they share this discrimination as two very separate groups of workers, one of the legacies of apartheid's forced separation.

Management of the two companies are not unaware of this rivalry in their labour force. This was clearly illustrated during our interview with Mr Scholtz who gave us his perception of the racial tensions in Ashton:

"I experience a kind of discrimination between coloureds and blacks as well. It's not only the whites who discriminate, its the coloured also. Even though black people are a minority in this area and coloureds are in the majority, because of the political situation blacks are allowed majority representation in everything. This is why the coloured is so frustrated. The blacks are demanding that we must employ half blacks and half coloureds." (Interview with Mr Scholtz, personnel manager at Langeberg Canning Sept. 1996)

It must be mentioned here that Langeberg's recruitment policy, sets aside various numbers of workers that they hire from different areas in the region. (This is discussed in greater detail in the section on recruitment). According to the figures given to us by Mr Scholtz, Langeberg Canning only hires 728 of the 2 672 of its seasonal workers from Ashton. Ashton Canning has a similar system of recruitment. Thus there is quite a bit of pressure and competition to obtain these seasonal jobs. It must also be pointed out that, much like in Ashton itself, areas surrounding Ashton are still de facto divided by race. Thus a recruitment policy which sets out how many workers from different areas will be hired is implicitly setting out how many black and coloured people will be hired.

Here we have an interesting interplay between two controlling mechanisms. The racial divisions between workers are pre-existing social divisions and the effect they (racial divisions) have within this system is to divide and thereby control workers. The
recruitment system which management uses is a measure which they have actively taken to maintain control. The recruitment system also serves to reinforce and compound the racial divisions. It then helps to deflect too much attention being focused at changing the essentially white management structure and workers are left to squabble over how many coloureds and how many blacks should be employed at the bottom of the hierarchy by the two companies. The individual factories did not create the racial divisions which exist in South Africa, however by using one active method of control which then emphasises a pre-existing social division it can be seen as one indirect way in which management controls the workforce.
5.2.2 Gender divisions within the workforce

Another seemingly glaring division in the structure of the workforce is the quite distinct separation of male and female jobs. (See appendix for breakdown of ‘male’ and ‘female’ jobs) Women and men have distinct places in the hierarchy of the two companies. Very few women occupy management positions at either factory. The vast majority of the women employed are seasonal workers who work on the assembly line, sorting fruit, cutting fruit and labelling tins. The workers who do form part of the permanent workforce are found doing stereotypical feminised jobs, such as cleaning, working on the assembly line during the off-season; or clerical and secretarial work in the offices. There is nothing earth-shatteringly unique about this scenario, we could just as easily be talking about a food processing plant in Venezuela. The sexual division of labour is a pervasive and seemingly universal characteristic of the world’s workforce. Wherever one may go from the first to the third to the developing world, one ever present feature remains constant - there is some form of sexual division of labour which establishes which jobs are suitable for women and which are suitable for men. Furthermore, as the Beijing Conference Report on the status of South African women noted:

“women are more likely to be employed in temporary, casual or part-time positions. Such jobs are almost invariably less well-paid, less secure, and enjoy fewer benefits.” (Beijing Conference Report, 1994: 38)

The question we need to ask is why are so many women employed as seasonal employees. Ashton has substantial unemployment problems and there is a large pool of unemployed male as well as female workers who could be employed. Why is it that management hires mainly women to do the seasonal work?

According to the production manager at Ashton Canning, Mr Johan Visser, the reason they employ more women than men is because:

“Women are better cutters of apricots, they’re quicker, they’re better workers than men and they’re easier to work with.” (Interview with Mr Visser, Ashton Canning Sept., 1996)

Another suggestion which came out of a FAWU committee meeting was that:

“the work is women’s' work.” (FAWU committee meeting 12/4/1996)
Some basic opinions have been raised here for why management hires so many women as seasonal employees. These opinions can be summarised as follows: Management argues that women have a greater aptitude for such work, and are easier to work with, or is it that they're easier to control? The other suggestion is that the work is perceived as 'women's work' and as such no self-respecting male would want to do it. I believe all of these are applicable to varying extents; to explain why it is that women land up as the majority of seasonal employees. However the reasons given above, tend to imply that management are hiring women as an active step towards maintaining control over the workforce. While this is certainly one of the effects of hiring so many women workers, the reason women predominate in the seasonal work is connected to a much more complex and pervasive system of gender stratification.

Management's argument that women have a greater aptitude for the work, is quite a typical response and widely held belief that management have about female workers. Elson and Pearson say of this phenomenon:

"Women are considered {by companies} not only to have naturally nimble fingers, but also to be naturally more docile and willing to accept tough work discipline, and be naturally more suited to tedious, repetitious, monotonous work." (Elson and Pearson, 1981: 149, brackets are my insertion)

According to the personnel manager of Ashton Canning, he is not concerned about the education level of seasonal employees as the work is so unskilled it is not necessary to have much education and anyone could do it. The reality of the situation is that most of the work done by seasonal employees is unskilled and does not require much training at all. Thus the argument about women's greater aptitude for the work loses some of its credibility. The more likely reason management hires so many women as seasonal employees is because of the nature of the work. Almost all the female seasonal employees work on the assembly line, performing some function on the fruit. When Mr Visser stated that "they are easier to work with", he was simply revealing his belief in the global perception, amongst workers and managers alike, that women are more docile workers and by implication, are easier to control. Humphrey has stated that:
"The term 'docile' is applied to women, but it also contains an implicit reference to men as 'non-docile'. It is used in the context of the aptitudes and behaviour of female and male workers in relation to assembly line and like types of work." (Humphrey, 1985: 227)

Humphrey goes on to explain the main ways in which male workers are not suited to assembly line work. First of all he contends that it is very costly and difficult to create promotion opportunities on the assembly line as it is essentially a 'dead end' type of job. Males are more likely to demand promotion opportunities and some kind of career path than women. Secondly because assembly line work is boring and monotonous, for it to be profitable it needs to be tightly controlled, Humphrey states that:

"the supervision is intrusive and aggressive, amounting almost to bullying of workers..." (Humphrey, 1985: 226)

Humphrey believes that such supervision is not likely to be tolerated by men. Lastly Humphrey states that when work becomes perceived as 'feminine' males will be very resistant to doing such work precisely because it is regarded as 'feminine'. They would rather do (incredibly) hard work in difficult conditions as long as their masculinity is affirmed by it.

All three of these factors seem to be present in the two companies: First of all, all of the 9 male workers interviewed in this study (all were permanent workers), emphasised the need for more training and promotion opportunities in the factories. The male workers from Ashton Canning bemoaned the fact that workers from Langeberg were 'able' to get further training at the factory, as Langeberg operates as a satellite campus for the Port Elizabeth Technicon. This does suggest that training and promotion are an important issue for the male workers we interviewed. In the case of the female workers, when interviewed, training and promotion were not seen

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5 Langeberg Canning pays for workers to do additional training at the nightschool, however this is restricted to permanent employees and the time schedule requires workers to give up 2 or 3 nights a week (after work). Mr Scholtz informed us that: "the drop out figure is very high. It is difficult to study part time, very few people can adapt to the conditions. There is a lot of hard work involved in part time study and my experience is that workers are too lazy." (Interview with Mr Scholtz, Sept. 1996)
as priorities. The younger female workers interviewed (6 workers between 15 and 19), all had plans to study further outside and did not intend to stay working at the factory as seasonal employees, and thus in their interviews did not consider training or promotion in the factories as 'issues'. The older women workers seemed more circumspect about the reality of the situation. The issue of further training and promotion, was not emphasised in interviews by any of the older seasonal workers (15 workers between the ages of 22 and 58). As far as 'promotions' went, most wanted permanent positions at the factories. This was as far as any of the older seasonal workers seemed to perceive promotion. If one refers to the diagram of how the work in the factory is broken up according to jobs and gender (please refer to the appendix) the ceiling for coloured and black women appears to be supervisory positions, which is one step above where they are now and still has them on the assembly line. The situation for the permanent women workers (6 permanent women workers were interviewed), is much the same, except that they have year round employment.

Thus these attitudes suggest that the female workers would be less likely to agitate for promotions off the assembly line. The male workers on the other hand are much more pro-active in their attitude. One male worker was quoted as saying:

"there are coloured people with lots of power, but there are always a white manager above them" (Interview with worker, Ashton, Nov. 1996).

However despite this white male hegemony at the apex of the canning industry, it is still much easier for male workers to think of training and promotions when a visible path for them exists. It is thus not difficult to see why management would choose to have 2 000 women resigned to their fate, as it were, of a working life on the assembly line; rather than 2 000 men agitating for promotion off the assembly line.

Secondly in terms of the control on the assembly line one needs to appreciate that assembly line work is incredibly boring and monotonous. A honours student who worked on this project with us and who has worked a season in a fruit canning factory in Mossel bay, attested to the fact that despite the physical discomforts of the work, by far the most distressing aspect was the incredible monotony and boredom which assembly line work induces. As such work on the assembly line needs to be tightly controlled, to prevent workers attention wandering. Workers have to be kept alert and
have to remain focused by the ever present supervisors. Interviews with seasonal workers indicated quite clearly the level of control which they experienced as a result of their work on the assembly line. As an illustration, this is the response a worker gave when asked about whether workers may talk to one another while they work:

"No! Under no circumstances, because we are supposed to concentrate on the work, we can whistle a word to one another, but not while the supervisors there otherwise whoa!... most times there's a supervisor on your head the whole time." (Interview with seasonal worker, Ashton, Nov. 1996)

The above quote is merely an illustration of how one worker experienced the control of the assembly line (the experience of control is discussed in more depth in section 3). However this is one issue which does not need 'proving', as such. Work on the assembly line needs tight control, this is an integral aspect of it. Managers themselves will attest to the role supervisors play in keeping the workers 'in line'. If one glances through the induction document which Ashton Canning gives all its seasonal workers, the rules of the factory are really strict. They are more like the rules you would expect to find in a primary school, rather than for adults in the workplace. As an example, in the induction document, rule 39 on the Strictly forbidden list is as follows:

"Only in the case of an emergency will people be allowed to go to the toilet, and never within an hour, or an hour after break times." (Ashton Canning Induction Document, translated from Afrikaans)

Lastly the belief that assembly line work is a feminised job and therefore unsuitable for male workers is very prevalent amongst both the male and female workers that were interviewed. We noted how the workers at the FAWU committee meeting described assembly line work as 'women's work'. There is also a historical legacy of hiring women for the fruit preparation / assembly line work. Goode, who has researched the history of labour process in the fruit canning industry since it's beginnings in the 1930's; says of the sexual division of labour:

"From the outset, the sexual division of labour conformed to the characteristic pattern of women employed in fruit preparation and men doing the heavy work of transporting and working the retorts." (Goode, 1985:8)
Men and women do not enter the workforce as 'ungendered beings'. They bring with them the baggage of socialisation within a patriarchal society with all its attendant inequalities. Management as part of the same society is merely connecting to a pre-existing system of stratification. They did not create this situation of social inequality. The effect of hiring women to do the assembly line work is such that management obtains greater control over its workforce and in the process of doing this management is helping to reconstruct and re-enforce pre-existing social relations of power which effectively serve to reinforce the subordination of women. Management benefits from this system of control. Each time this systematic segregation of male and female tasks is enforced within the structure of the workforce, this artificial division appears to be more and more a normal and natural division, by workers and management alike. The apparent 'naturalness' of these divisions makes them all the more insidious and difficult to combat.
5.2.3 Division between permanent and seasonal employees

One of the most glaring distinctions between the seasonal and permanent workforces, is the fact that men (of all races) fill most of the permanent positions and women (coloured and some black) fill most of the seasonal positions at the two companies. (Refer back to graph # 3 on p.87) All the workers that were interviewed in the course of this research (excluding the young cohort of teenage girls) placed a very high premium on permanent employment at one of the factories, however any employment at the factories, even if it is seasonal, is much coveted. In order to appreciate this, one needs to understand that Ashton’s economy is very dependant on the canning industry. The town of Ashton grew up around the canning factories. According to the historian Van Zyl:

“Apart from its factory buildings and warehouses, the most visible monument to the success of Langeberg was - and still is - the village of Ashton, which owes it development entirely to the co-operative. (Van Zyl, 1990: 34)

Aside from the canning industry, there are many farms in the rural areas surrounding Ashton, where people can obtain employment, however given the conditions on the farms and the wages workers receive, this is not much of an alternative. (Wages and conditions of farm work is discussed in more detail in section 3) Furthermore the factories are the largest overall employer in the area, and the wages (for seasonal and permanent workers) are much higher than anywhere else. A worker explains the rationale of factory work:

“Look you must see that the factory pays the most money, and at the end of the day it is a question of - if I am not willing to do the job, there are many guys who will come and do my job, because there is more money, because a brick-layer gets less than a sweeper in this factory.” (Interview with a worker in Ashton, Sept. 1996)

Due to this there is pretty fierce competition to get jobs at the two factories. Seasonal employment, as has already been mentioned, is renegotiated every year and the

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6 Estimates from workers and shop stewards at Langeberg Canning and Ashton Canning would put an average weekly wage at about R330. Langeberg workers do seem to earn a little more and Ashton workers a little less, but the amount appears to be negligible.
worker is only employed for part of the year (anywhere between 4 and 6 months). Permanent employees have employment security, pension schemes, medical aid schemes and a reliable income all year round. Seasonal employees have to obtain a new contract with the factories each season, and there are no guarantees that they will be re-employed. Once the seasonal worker has obtained a new contract for the season, they can still be laid off for short periods in between the different fruit harvests. With this system of seasonal employment, the seasonal workers only have employment security (against unfair dismissal etc.) for the contracted period and are only sure of the employment and regular income for the harvest period. And with each new season workers have to go through this whole uncertain and stressful process of recruitment and selection with no guarantees. One seasonal worker told me how she had worked at the factory for 20 seasons (20 years), and she still had to go through the official recruitment and selection process each year. Both Mr Scholtz and Mr Olivier informed us that Ashton Canning and Langeberg Canning generally rehire about 80% of the previous season’s workers, but if they ‘misbehaved’ in the previous season they would not get a job in the following one. Most of the seasonal employees are women. Thus the vast majority of workers who are subject to the vulnerability of seasonal employment are women. At Langeberg Canning and Ashton Canning, 85% and 71.2% respectively, of their seasonal workforces, are made up of women.

An important implication which affects the majority of female workers at the two factories is that only permanent workers are given maternity leave with the accompanying benefits by the factories. In statistical terms this means that 40 workers at Langeberg Canning or 1.4% of the total workforce are provided with maternity benefits and the vast majority, some 2 272 females or 80% of the total workforce are afforded no benefits at all. (At Ashton Canning the number of female seasonal employees who do not get any maternity benefits is 1 443 or 63% of the total workforce.) This is according to the personnel managers of both companies. Barker discusses the legality of this situation with regards to the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act:

“In terms of s 25 employees are entitled to maternity leave of four months duration. It is not specified to be paid leave” (Barker, 1997: 44)
Included in these provisions are that the worker may commence her leave four weeks before the birth of the child, and extend this until six weeks after the birth. (unless certified to be medically fit for work) According to the Employment Law Journal:

"The dismissal of any employee during this entire period would be automatically unfair." (Jan 1998 vol. 14: 7)

Seasonal workers are covered by this new act, however the act has not come into effect yet.

Essentially though, getting maternity benefits is not at the top of the workers priorities list. Obtaining employment is paramount and getting pregnant effectively prevents getting employment during the season. Mr Olivier openly admitted:

"our criteria for employment, states that we don't want any ...uh...pregnant women.....our permanent workers we haven't got a problem with, but our seasonal workers, especially if the season is eight months or six months. It is difficult to employ someone on a part-time basis if she's pregnant. So we said that's one of the questions we'll ask if we employ her - if she's pregnant. The majority answer the question real honestly." (interview with Mr Olivier, personnel manager at Ashton Canning, Sept. 1996)

Mr Scholtz said that Langeberg Canning will hire pregnant women, they just want to know when the baby is due in order to ensure that they can look after the worker and her unborn baby. However when interviewing female workers a different picture emerged:

[A group of workers asked whether a seasonal worker will get employment if she is pregnant]

"No! You don't get work. And if they find out she's pregnant then she'll never ever get work again." (Interview with female workers at Ashton Canning, Sept. 1996)

So if a seasonal worker wants to have a baby or gets pregnant, this means a serious loss of income for her and her family. The manner in which the factories handle seasonal workers pregnancy forces these workers to treat maternity leave and benefits as a secondary issue. If they are pregnant at the beginning of the season they will not try to get a job because this will effectively blacklist them for the following season. Some women do conceal their pregnancies, however this is a risk, because
as Mr Scholtz pointed out the conditions in the factories are not conducive to a healthy pregnancy i.e. standing for almost nine hours on end, high temperatures in the factory. According to the Employment Law Journal, the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act stipulates that:

"If expectant or nursing mothers do elect to work, employers are prohibited from requiring or permitting them to perform duties which are hazardous to their health or that of their new born children." (Jan 1998, vol. 14, no. : 7)

However given the ‘unofficial conditions’ of employment, this does not help the seasonal workers. It is essentially a double edged sword for these workers. If they get work while pregnant and management find out, they know that they may jeopardise their chances of future employment. If they hide their pregnancy, they risk their and their unborn babies lives. While permanent workers are offered some measure of protection and benefits while they are pregnant, their seasonal sisters have to treat pregnancy as a serious impediment to obtaining employment; an abnormal condition treated as if it were a sickness rather than a normal human and worker experience. While the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act certainly gives workers more protection than they had in the past, if one refers to the literature review and the discussion on the act, it still does not provide enough protection in terms of law, and as the act has not yet come into effect, we have no idea of the vigilance, or lack thereof, with which this particular provision will be pursued.

This is just one of the implications of seasonal employment, which is borne by women. However all the seasonal workers, both male and female, are aware of the vulnerability of their position, and are subjected to the constraints that places on them. One worker at Ashton Canning (a permanent worker) said of this situation:

"Casual workers have no rights - its a big big big problem. The treatment of casual workers is different to permanent workers... it scares the permanent workers....You're powerless inside the factory and you're powerless outside the factory." (Interview with worker at Ashton Canning, Nov. 1996)

Thus seasonal employees as a group could be described as intimidated, vulnerable and aware of their "disposable" status to management. Clearly then management does not have to expend much effort or energy at all in terms of controlling the vast pool of seasonal workers. Management simply relies on the very insecurity upon
which seasonal employment is based to help control the workforce. What's more as the above quote illustrates, it is not just the seasonal workers that are intimidated by their vulnerable position, the situation serves to intimidate permanent workers as well.
5.2.4 Recruitment

We have examined why management employs so many women as part of the seasonal workforce. Now we are going to consider the manner in which the workers are recruited, as this can also be very instructive as to management's endeavours to control the workforce through the manipulation of social divisions.

Both companies have recruitment systems which effectively work like a quota system. Mr Scholtz was able to tell us in minute detail the exact numbers of seasonal workers that are hired for Langeberg Canning and the area they come from. The list is as follows:

- 195 workers from Suurbak
- 120 workers from McGregor
- 120 workers from Bonnievale
- 195 workers from Swellendam
- 504 workers from Montagu
- 690 workers from Robertson
- 120 workers from Nqubela

Out of the total number of seasonal workers which Langeberg Canning hires, 1,944 out of 2,672 workers or approximately 73% are not from Ashton. This means that only 27% of the seasonal workers are actually recruited from Ashton itself. (This total figure for Ashton then needs to be divided between Cogmanskloof and Zolani).
Graph 6: Pie Chart showing the distribution of seasonal employees at Langeberg Canning in terms of area they come from.

The seasonal employment 'pie' has been cut into quite a number of pieces. We considered this to be a rather curious state of affairs, given the fact that Ashton itself has a vast pool of unemployed workers to choose from. Langeberg Canning even provides free transport to and from work to workers from other towns. We asked Mr Scholtz why they used this particular recruitment system to employ their seasonal employees and he answered like this:

"For twenty three years we've employed these people and they are dependant on the work. It would be much cheaper to hire everyone from Ashton, but we have a social responsibility to employ these people, without this employment there would be disastrous effects on the communities." (interview with Mr Scholtz, personnel manager at Langeberg Canning, Sept. 1996)

Mr Olivier was not able to give us such detailed information about how many workers Ashton Canning hires from different areas, but he did explain how their recruitment system worked:
"but between last season and this season there, we lose some workers and that's about 200 workers we lose.....we must go get new workers, 200. So we divide it .... half of the 200, we'll get from Ashton itself and 25 from Bonnievale, 25 from Montagu, 25 from Robertson and 25 from McGregor. So that's how we divide it. We sent a notice in the town, we've got an opening for a 100 people .....we give preference to family members that is working here at our company. " (Mr Olivier, personnel manager at Ashton Canning, Sept. 1996)

Ashton Canning, then has a recruitment system where half its seasonal employees are chosen from Ashton and the other half needed are chosen from the four areas mentioned above.

What are the implications of such a recruitment policy? Well first of all it serves to enlarge the pool of potential workers from which they can select their workers. The implication for workers means that the labour market which is already competitive is made even more competitive. There is much rivalry and ill-feeling towards workers from other towns 'taking the jobs away' from people in Ashton. (This is discussed in more detail in section 3) Once again what is effectively only a geographical difference between workers has been transformed into a division between workers. It was mentioned above that approximately 80% of the former seasons workers are rehired, with such a broad pool for management to recruit workers from, this increases the pressure on workers not give management 'any reason' not to rehire them the next season. The large pool of unemployed people outside the factory and the treatment of workers inside the factory serves to constantly remind seasonal workers of their powerlessness.

Another important implication of hiring workers from many different areas is that trade union organisation is made much more onerous. The geographical distribution of workers makes it very difficult to organise meetings which are convenient and accessible for all workers. From our discussions with the seasonal workers, it is clear that while most of the workers do belong to the union (FAWU), there is very little participation. Membership seems to be treated more as a matter of form than a belief that the trade union will do anything meaningful for the workers. Furthermore due to the nature of seasonal employment, most of the shop stewards at the two factories
are permanent workers and due to the predominance of men in this category of workers, the shop stewards are, with one exception, all male. Thus we have a situation where the majority of the workers are seasonal female workers, yet they are being represented by permanent male workers. As has hopefully become clear from previous discussion, the two groups have different needs and priorities. As a seasonal worker told us when asked about whether she felt that women’s needs were well represented by the trade union:

"It’s easier to talk to the women, we can talk much easier to the women than the men. Also the men are only really concerned about themselves, the women are concerned about the women." (Interview with female seasonal worker, Nov. 1996)

In this instance management has managed ‘to kill two birds with one stone’. Expanding the pool of potential labour helps keep the workers more intimidated and fearful of losing their jobs and it makes trade union organisation and effective representation all the more difficult. This is clearly an instance where a particular mechanism (recruitment) is actively used by management to maintain control of the workforce.

5.2.5 Piece work and the Assembly line

The last two control mechanisms we are going to discuss are the assembly line and piece work. These two forms of control are directly related to management trying to maximise it’s control over the production process. Piece work is used to maximise productivity, Goode says of this system of production:

"under highly labour intensive methods of production, the control of the direct producer by payment incentive systems is favoured by capital, as workers push themselves at a rate that will secure a profit for capital at the norm, and obscures from workers the increased rate of surplus value appropriation when they produce above the norm." (Goode, 1985: 16)

Workers are paid per piece and this places the onus on the worker to work as fast and as hard as possible in order to maximise their potential earnings.
When the fruit canning industry began in the Western Cape in the 1930's almost all the work was done by hand and payment was by piece rates. However, after the 1950's, when the canning industry began large scale mechanisation of the canning process, almost all piecework was eliminated. One of the arguments used as a rationale for mechanisation was that piecework as a method of payment was very expensive. While piecework can make overall labour costs (more) expensive, Goode suggests that part of the reason for the drive towards mechanisation, was to gain more control over the workforce:

"But piecework was by no means a total form of control, as it involved only 'formal' subordination, and capital was still required to assert factory discipline through supervision directed at maintaining quality. Nor was the piecework system devoid of workers devising tactics to assert control and resisting their exploitation." (Goode, 1985: 17)

The introduction of widescale mechanisation did not remove the need for large numbers of workers, as the process was (and is) still labour intensive, so there was a need to control the workers by other means:

"For workers the shift towards mechanised production resulted in being paced at the machines speed, a speed set by management. Piece work was not slow....but the machines now pushed them faster." (Goode, 1985: 23)

Nowadays an interesting synthesis of assembly line work and piece work is used by both factories as an aid to controlling their vast seasonal workforces. Almost all the women employed on seasonal contracts work on the assembly lines with some aspect of the fruit preparation. There is also, however an elite group of workers, who cut the apricots by hand. These workers are paid piece rates and are amongst the highest earners in the factories. During our interview with the production manager of Ashton Canning, we asked why other fruits were cut using machines, yet the apricots were still cut by hand. Mr Visser explained to us that the apricots present a problem because the machines can't cut the apricots directly in half. Thus they are forced to use female apricot cutters, who (according to him) are also very expensive. During a season, Ashton Canning employs about 500 apricot cutters.
In many industries the workforce can be controlled by manipulating skill divisions between workers and creating 'skills hierarchies'. Workers in these industries are then divided by means of these skills hierarchies with different grades and payment and status attached to different levels. However in the canning industry this is a little difficult to do as

"generally low levels of skill over the entire workforce rendered canning workers structurally weak in their ability to control the labour process, yet it had contradictory effects on organisation for while workers could not use their skills for defensive organisation, the workforce was not fractured by skills divisions open to manipulation by bosses." (Goode, 1985: 14)

Thus while these apricot cutters may be more expensive in terms of labour costs, they serve a very useful purpose as they are a means by which to divide the workforce. This is achieved because a) the apricot cutters are pushing themselves to work as fast and as hard as they can, b) because piecework is the exception rather than the norm and it pays the most money, there is a great deal of competition over these jobs. This divides the pieceworker elite from the ordinary assembly line workers. While the pieceworkers are controlled by their payment system, their lesser paid assembly line counterparts are controlled by the assembly line itself, which sets the pace of their work. Both groups are controlled by the labour process and the difference between them serves as a division as well.

Thus the two factories make use of a variety of mechanisms to control the workforce. They have the physical control achieved by the assembly line and piecework. They also have an interesting recruitment system, which helps maintain an extremely competitive labour market. These are measures actively taken by the management's. However management also benefits from the effects of gender and racial divisions within its workforce. When all of these factors are added together there is a rather complex and multi-layered system of control. In the next section we are going to examine how workers experience this control.
In the previous section we examined the work processes and mechanisms of control which workers in the factory were subjected to. All of these processes and mechanisms are based on and maintained by tying them into pre-existing social relations of power. The effect of this system is to produce a controlled and obedient workforce. The beneficiaries of this system are the owners of the factories, they benefit materially from this system. The question we now have to address is: How is this system experienced by the workers?

In this last section we shall be exploring the lived experience of this control. In order to do this we need to address two questions: a) how do workers experience the particular control measures which we discussed in the previous section and b) what are the implications of these control measures for workers' lives. The use of the word experience should be taken to mean how the workers feel about or how they responded to the various control measures.
5.3.1 The assembly line

The first issue I was interested in pursuing was how workers experienced work on the assembly line. It is reputed to be one of the most abominable forms of labour, however workers in Ashton seemed to have varied opinions about this form of work organisation. Opinions about the assembly line appeared to be quite strongly correlated with age and future plans. The youngest worker interviewed was 15 at the time of the first interview and the oldest worker was 58 years old.

First of all we are going to examine the physical experiences of assembly line work, because assembly line work in the canning industry has definite health risks which the workers have to deal with. (See London et al, 1992, Workplace Information Group, 1993 and Kisting, 1995) All the interviewees agreed that the first thing one needs to overcome with the line is nausea. The movement of the belt makes new workers feel ill and it takes quite a while to get used to. It produces nausea and the experience is often associated with feeling light-headed or drunk. Some workers describe their first days on the line:

"the first day when I went there and worked by them my head spinned and I threw up and the supervisor screamed at me to leave and I cried....but you get drunk, I can't stand there and watch the belt, so they put me out back." (Interview with 15 year old worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996).

Another young worker said of her first experience:

"I was sick in the beginning working on the belt, your head spins....I had a sore head and I was nauseous." (Interview with 17 year old worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

An older worker remembers her first experience:

"no for the first two weeks you do feel like that, your head spins when you're on the line. It is also the smell of the chemicals which makes you feel very sick." (Interview with 30 year old worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

This experience of nausea and illness is apparently a rite of passage, so to speak, for all assembly line workers. Even workers in their fifties recounted that the first few weeks on the line were quite unpleasant. However these feelings of nausea do pass once one becomes accustomed to the moving belt. There are other, more persistent ailments which affect all the women irrespective of age or experience. The most
common occupational ailment, according to Dr Leslie London are skin problems. The most common of these being what is popularly known as ‘vrot vinger’ or rotten finger. This is a chronic inflammation of the nailbed, which is not dangerous, but rather painful and takes 6 months to cure completely with treatment. The condition arises as a result of having one’s hands exposed to the fruit juice and the chemicals used to get the skin off the fruit. (Information supplied by Dr London at interview, August 1996 or see London et al, Dermatoses - an occupational hazard in the canning industry, South African Medical Journal, 1992; 81 : 606 - 612). Another constant complaint is backache and swollen feet and ankles. The women work eight or nine hour shifts, where they are standing for most of the time. The assembly lines are also set at a specific height, so any worker who is shorter or taller than the average height at which the line has been set is straining their neck or back. Also the continual concentration on keeping up with the pace of the line is quite exhausting. Two interviewee’s express their feelings about this:

“When I’m finished work I’m totally exhausted. When I get home I can’t do anything I just sit and do nothing. I can’t do anything else. “ (interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

and:

“a women stands and works, you stand from when you clock in, till when you clock out. I tell you your legs and feet are really sore.” (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Clearly from a physical point of view the work is demanding and not without discomforts. However most of the reports on assembly line work stress the boredom, monotony and alienation workers feel when working on the line. (See Benyon, 1975, Goode, 1985 ) If we examine workers experience of the line in this light we see distinct differences between how the younger and the older workers perceive their work. The younger workers, those still at school, saw their work at the factory as temporary. It was perceived as a stopgap measure, not something they saw themselves doing forever. All interviewees under the age of 22 had plans to obtain some further qualification and none of them aspired to spend their futures working at the factory. A 17 year old worker discusses her future plans:

7 Dr London is a medical doctor, who works in the department of community health at U.C.T.’s medical school. He has done a lot of research into the occupational health of agricultural workers especially in the canning industry.
"I would hate to work in the factory as a permanent job, I just work the
seasons to pay for my studies, to keep me on the go. I want to study further, I
will work in the factory in my holidays, but only until I'm finished studying."
(Interview with 17 year old worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Almost all the younger workers also complained about the boredom and monotony of
assembly line work:

"it becomes very boring just to stare at the line all day, here goes the fruit, it is
the same fruit, there is no variety, but sometimes things happens in the
cleaning process because some of the fruit is not so very clean and then we
get a break." (Interview with a worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

The older women, on the other hand, seemed more resigned to the reality of their
worklife and their employment. Almost all the older workers had children (all 6
permanent workers and 13 out of 15 older seasonal workers have children) and their
future plans were related to providing for their children's future. As an illustration of
the type of sentiments expressed to me on this point, one worker said:

"I'll go out of my way to help my child study further, they must work hard to
make a better future for themselves. They must have the opportunity for a
good future. They mustn't struggle and suffer like I did when I was growing up.
They must be happy and have an easier life than I did." (Interview with worker
in Ashton, July 1998)

Invariably these workers did not see themselves doing any other type of work in the
future and with the exception of one woman who was completing standard nine, none
planned to study any further. All the older workers aspired to getting a permanent
position at the factory (permanent positions for women workers being quite scarce).
They all claimed to enjoy their work, yet of all the interviewees only one worker could
actually point to an aspect of the work itself, which she found satisfying, of which she
said:

"there's a feeling of satisfaction to pick the best fruits to go into each tin."
(Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996).

Most other interviewees, when pressed about which aspects of the work they
enjoyed, all pointed to the social contact which they experienced working together on
the line:
"I enjoyed the friends and camaraderie of the factory work." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

and:

"I enjoyed it a lot to be with the other women, like when I was a forewoman, it was nice to work with the people...and the little chats about our little houses and our children." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

and:

"it's very hard work but you enjoy it still because there's lots of jokes and you make a new circle of friends." (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

Aside from the social aspects of the work, most of the workers (17 out of 21 seasonal workers) admitted that the pace of the assembly line was quite pressurised and made them nervous. A number of the older workers are pieceworkers at the factory. Pieceworkers get paid per piece and so the pressure on them to work quickly and continuously is even greater than on other workers. This is because their wages are determined by the speed at which they work. None of the young women interviewed were 'allowed' to do any piecework. This was considered to be the exclusive province of the older and more experienced women. When the young workers were asked about piecework, one had the following to say:

"Its mostly adults who do that, who have done it for a long time. They can get up to R700 a week, or depending how well you can cut....if I worked there I'd have stumpy fingers, it's people who are skilled at it, they've worked there for many years, their fingers won't get hurt." (Interview with a 15 year old worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

Piecework, while paying the most also produces quite a bit of stress. Workers are constantly worrying about 'making their quota' and this adds to the pressure of the assembly line. This comment from a fifty-six year old pieceworker, who had worked 20 seasons prior to our interview is an illustration of one women's experience of this:

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8 Pieceworkers have to cut apricots in half, so that the pip pops out, it is done with one swift movement, using a small knife, which workers call 'lepeltjie' which means little spoon. The owners have tried to get a machine which could perform this action, but up to know, no machine has managed to do it as well as the women can. This was told to us in an interview with Mr Scholtz, personnel manager at Langeberg Canning.
“the peaches season is very pressurised, you don’t even get a chance to look up, you can only look in front of you. It goes really really fast, and you can’t let any bad fruit through. You get quite worried. Will I manage tomorrow? Will I make my quota?” (interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Another worker, (who had previously stated that she enjoyed the work) when asked whether she would like to do any other kind of work, commented:

“look we have to be satisfied, it is so that some days you just can’t take it, but because we need it, we must take it. Some days you walk through the gate and you feel I can’t take it, but I have to.” (discussion group with workers in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

When I moved away from the actual work process and questioned the type of supervision they were subjected to on the assembly line, two factors emerged. Much like in Humphrey’s schema (see p102), supervision at the factories in Ashton is ever present and quite aggressive. Getting shouted at is also apparently a very common occurrence for workers on the line. One worker had the following to say about the supervisors:

"some of the supervisors, men, they are strict, not on our ways, but on their own way, they swear and shout and that’s what people don’t like." (Interview with seasonal worker, Ashton, Nov. 1996)

Another worker described her experience of control by supervisors:

“You get no control over what you do, the supervisor says you do this and you do that. You get no control there is always someone supervising you.” (Discussion group with permanent female workers Sept., 1996)

According to workers I spoke to, it isn’t just the immediate supervisors who exercise very direct and intrusive control over the workers. At Ashton Canning, the managing director (and owner) often walks around the factory floor, shouting at workers he doesn’t feel are doing their work properly. The following anecdote about the managing directors behaviour was recounted to me by one worker:
"the grootbaas (big boss) and that's what he calls himself, he stomps around the factory and you'd better look busy or he'll just fire you on the spot. He just says walk! He calls the workers his little slaves. That really upsets the people, we are not slaves, we object to the term." (Interview with worker, Ashton, July 1998)

The general feeling expressed to me about the treatment of workers by supervisors, was that it made the workers feel powerless. They were not oblivious to the abuse, but were not in a position to turn around and answer back. They are forced to repress their words and feelings. One worker had this to say:

"Sometimes you have to swallow your words and just not say anything to the supervisor." (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

This helps to project a public display of docility, 'docility' being one of the main reasons women are supposedly so well suited to assembly line work. However as Elson and Pearson (Elson and Pearson, 1981) have argued and as the above comment suggests, this supposed docility is a well worn mask, which hides the resentment and anger which women feel, but due to their gender and position in the factory (as seasonal workers) they also feel powerless to do anything about. This forces them to "swallow their words". The whole process then becomes a vicious cycle, with each "swallowing of words" reinforcing the myth that women are docile workers.

Of all the interviews and discussion groups which I conducted only one woman actually liked an aspect of assembly line work. While the older women all claimed to enjoy their work, the aspects which they enjoyed had nothing to do with the actual work process itself. The factors which the women liked were above and beyond the work. They liked earning money, they liked the friends they made, they enjoyed the social dimensions of the work, but most found the work hard, both physically and mentally. They did not enjoy the intrusive nature of supervision. In fact the vast majority did not like the work at all. We could say that for almost all the women interviewed, both young and old, they did not enjoy work on the assembly line. What is important to note is that the two groups i.e. the young workers and the older workers, have got different orientations to work and these are most likely tied to their different responsibilities and future plans. In the next section we shall examine how life as a seasonal worker impacts on / effects workers lives.
5.3.2 Life as a Seasonal Worker

The flow of life in Ashton is determined as much by the seasons in the factories as by the seasons of nature. The season (in the factory) represents a time of plenty, where, as one interviewee told me:

"in season time, every day is Christmas." (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

During the season, the factory provides thousands of seasonal workers with regular jobs and regular incomes, the vast majority of these seasonal workers being women. Unfortunately the season only lasts for a couple of months each year. When there is no more fruit to can, the season ends. As one worker put it:

"The seasonal workers, the women, they work with the fruit. When the seasons' over and there's no more fruit, then there isn't work for us women." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998, interviewee's emphasis)

When the season ends, the regular income also ends and workers have to face the uncertainty of many months where they may or may not find odd jobs to do until the next season. One worker says of this period:

"Then you are really jobless, but many get odd jobs in the white community or go and work on the farms. At the moment there are many of our people who are seasonal workers on the farms, until the twentieth, when the season starts then everyone comes to work in the factory. In that time though, there is really bad unemployment in Ashton." (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996).

Another worker says:

"everyone waits all year for the factories. It's the only way a person can earn their money, to buy yourself a little something. At that time you can make things right, to buy clothes or furniture or whatever. That time, the season time, everyone looks forward to that time, honestly, for one reason, you get a real salary." (Interview with worker in Ashton, 1998)

One of the important issues to point out here is that an essential part of the experience of being a seasonal employee is that one's life is characterised by periods of unemployment. In Ashton (as in many other small rural towns in South Africa) the
structural unemployment (itself a problem) which accompanies seasonal employment helps to aggravate and hence perpetuate other social problems within the system. One of the most serious social problems which plagues Ashton, is a very widespread abuse of alcohol. According to Dr Spiller (the official doctor on call for the two factories), the abuse of alcohol is widespread, but is much more prevalent among male workers than female workers. Dr Pietersen (the doctor at the Food workers benefit fund clinic) concurs with Dr Spiller and elaborates:

"I see a lot of stress. These are mostly lifestyle problems, marital problems, because of the husbands' drinking and the wife works a double shift. The workers have overcrowded living conditions. Drinking is a big problem here, but mostly with the men." (Interview with Dr Pietersen, Nov. 1996)

Widespread structural unemployment does not improve social problems, usually it worsens them. People react to stress in different ways, but when one outlet for that stress has been provided and you have been conditioned into using that outlet, chances are alcohol abuse and the other types of abuse which go with it simply increase in time of stress, i.e. out of season time. Thus while the factories certainly provide much needed employment, the nature of that employment (seasonal) combined with the legacy of an apartheid past, helps to aggravate and perpetuate some serious social problems which plague the farming communities. Cousins says of this situation:

"agricultural processing industries are important employers, and good economic prospects. Social problems abound, however, due to the poverty and inequality which has accompanied economic growth for the benefit of a racially defined elite." (Cousins, 1993: 17)

It was mentioned above that many of seasonal workers get jobs on the farms. While this is an alternative to sitting at home and not earning any money at all, it is not a very lucrative alternative. Farm workers are notoriously badly paid and workers on farms around Ashton are no exception to this rule. Cousins when discussing the very low wages of farm workers in the Montagu - Ashton farming community, agrees with this assertion and goes even further by quoting Hamman, who writes that:

"it can with some justification be claimed that farmworkers earn starvation wages." (Hamman in Cousins, 1993: 18)
When workers were asked about farm work during interviews, they usually had quite a lot to say! We were told about the very low wages and poor treatment on the farms. One worker had the following to say about the situation on the farms:

"the money is terrible! .....The farmers are actually very 'skelm' with the workers, they rob them....under a hundred Rand a week. Also they take a lot of sums off because the farms have shops and the workers buy food on the books and so they have nothing left over when they get their wages on Friday." (Interview with workers in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

Given that the situation on the farms is much worse in terms of wages and conditions than the situation in the factory, a decision to seek work on the farms cannot be seen as an alternative, but rather as a survival strategy. Farm work is not the only 'alternative', some workers obtain domestic work in the white area of town. Other workers try small entrepreneurial ventures. One worker told me how she started a small 'houseshop', where she sold cigarettes, chips, sweets etc. from her house. However the problem was that most people did not have much money during the off-season period and so could not afford to buy things and those she gave credit to, could not pay their debts. (Information provided during an interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

In the light of these 'alternatives' the factories are understandably, perceived by most workers, to be the lifeblood of the town and consequently their lifeblood. When the factories don't work the majority of women, who are seasonal employees, are made redundant and are forced to seek work on the farms. Therefore it is not surprising that many workers see any employment at the factories as a 'blessing' even if it is only seasonal employment. Thus their (general) feelings towards seasonal employment could be described as gratefulness and a feeling of privilege. This 'gratefulness' and sense of privilege is illuminated in the following quotes:

"it's true you can't call it anything else, it's a God-given opportunity. We are privileged to be given the opportunity to work. Look at the other countries, look at how their conditions are; the people are dying of hunger - you see it on TV. It's a heartsore story, you see the children covered in flies, they are so thin. Oh, it is a terrible thing, so you see our people, we must see that we are very privileged to be able to work." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

and:

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"it's just that we can't work through the year, that's the biggest problem. But further than that we can't really get upset, we're thankful to have the jobs."

(Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)
5.3.3 Gender Divisions

In this section we are going to examine how the workers feel about the gender divisions within the factory. There are distinct divisions between male and female jobs within the factory. Women do all the fruit preparation tasks along the assembly line, the only males found on the assembly lines are stacking crates off them. When workers were asked about why they thought women predominated on the assembly line, a typical answer was that assembly line work was women's work, or that the women work with the fruit. When workers were asked why men were not found in fruit preparation along the assembly line, one interviewee put the general consensus quite succinctly:

"You see a man is a man, and a man believes it is a women's work to cut open apricots." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

When asked about appropriate male jobs, strength and physical ability were usually stressed. As one worker pointed out to me:

"they give the difficult work to men e.g. they use men to pack crates and the sweat rolls off their bodies and I feel sorry for these poor guys, it's a very difficult type of work." (Interview with worker in Ashton, September 1996)

An important point to make here is that the gender divisions are intersected by occupational divisions of labour. It is not simply one and the same thing. Occupational divisions are strongly influenced by these gender divisions (and racial divisions), but if they were one and the same then there would be no women in management positions. Having said this there are very few women in positions of authority, within the factory and workers across the gender divide seem to accept this as perfectly natural. One female worker informed me:

"Men make better managers, they have more leadership qualities. Men are also more stable. They can sort out problems, they are much stronger than us women. They stand by their opinions and facts." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

This reflects a perception among the workers that the gender divisions which exist are quite normal and natural. During one interview with a fifty-eight year old female worker, I asked the respondent why men did not work on the assembly line with the
fruit. The older women patiently explained to me that women worked on the assembly line and men worked in the stores and drove the forklifts and were managers. When I rephrased the question, she patiently gave the same explanation again. I rephrased the question a third time and this time the respondent took my hand and addressed me as "kind" (child in English) and once again gave me the same answer. I realised that the women understood the question, it was I that was having trouble understanding her answer. In this respondent's perception of things, there were quite simply male jobs and female jobs. Women worked on the assembly line because they were women, and it suited their 'natural abilities', men heaved crates because it was hard work and men do hard, physical work. It had 'always been like that.

One of the problematic implications of strict gender divisions, is that the pervasive belief in a male breadwinner stands unchallenged. As was mentioned earlier, all the older women (22 years and older) would like to obtain permanent jobs at the factory, however the vast majority of permanent workers are men. (Refer back to graphs 1 and 2 on pp. 85-86) When the workers were asked why they thought men predominated in the permanent positions, the notion of a male breadwinner was the most common response. As one worker put it:

"They provide the men with the work, because you see the man is obviously the breadwinner, so they give the men preference." (Interview with female worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Because of the way in which the work is structured in the factories, most seasonal employees are women. These two categories, seasonal employment and being female are interlocking. Both represent positions of vulnerability within the work hierarchy in Ashton. As seasonal employees, they are only guaranteed work for a couple of months every year. As women, within a patriarchal society, the gender stereotyping of work into 'male' and 'female' jobs is very pervasive. Both male and female workers interviewed believe that permanent positions are first and foremost the province of 'breadwinners', which most seasonal workers do not feel they can qualify for because they are women.

From the interviews and discussions it was clear that the experience of gender divisions within the factory are considered as quite normal extensions of the natural roles which men and women should fulfil. Unfortunately part of the women's role in
this scheme of things, (as it is in the rest of the world) is an almost sole responsibility for domestic work and childcare. This means that on top of her day in the factory, the women has to go home and start her second shift there. All the women interviewed were responsible for all their own domestic work. The only exception to this were the young women who were still at school, they had chores, but were not responsible for the bulk of household duties. This double burden is quite exhausting, one worker describes the experience:

"I only used to get to bed at two in the morning. When I got home there was always bread to bake, food to cook, clothes and nappies to wash, then you've got to sort the children out for the next day. That's how it went over and over again all the years that I worked there at the factory." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

The major implication of workers experiencing gender divisions within the factory as normal and natural, is that the status quo is maintained, unchallenged. It means that women working a double shift, not getting permanent jobs and working on the assembly line are seen as simply fulfilling extensions of their primary role as mothers. The irony of this is that, as one respondent told me:

"My own Mother raised all my children, while I was working." (Interview with worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Thus the gender divisions within the factory help to keep a system of discrimination in place. The very 'naturalness' upon which the gender divisions are based then helps to mask the severe disjuncture between perception and reality.
5.3.4 Racial divisions: workers experience

The most easily discernible racial division which workers experience, is a division between themselves and the white management. There was a definite sense of frustration and anger at the lack of change which has taken place in Ashton generally, but at the factories especially. The situation at the factories was explained to me by one worker in this way:

"the management here by us is white, it's just white; there's no coloured or black people. The whole top management is white. And they just look after themselves, their brothers. I am a coloured man, he's a black man, they've still got the manner of the old apartheid system, is always in them, it's a little heavy and sad..." (interview with workers in Ashton, September 1996)

Another worker had this to say:

"There was a post open in the office for a receptionist, female, there were coloured and black girls who applied for the post and if Ashton Canning was really open to change, to give a better appearance to the rest of the world, then why didn't they appoint a coloured or black in the office. So what I am trying to say is that Ashton Canning is not willing to use affirmative action to give the people who have been down-trodden a chance to improve their lives and show their capabilities......at all times the whites come in very easily and we'd like to see our people sitting there." (Interview with worker, Ashton, September 1996)

Other sentiments expressed by workers were more openly descriptive about the management, as one worker said of Mr Scholtz, the personnel manager of Langeberg Canning:

"Scholtz is just a racist" (interview with workers in Ashton, Sept. 1996)

Another worker had this to say about the managing director of Ashton Canning, Mr Barnard:

"Things will only improve when Barnard dies. He's a dictator and a racist, things can't change properly until he is gone. The fact is that Ashton Canning is a one man show. It makes it very difficult, because they're very dependant on him" (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996).
The workers feel there is a sense of complete lack of communication between the white management and themselves. This does not mean that the two groups don't talk to one another, but that they are using two very different discourses! The workers feel that the management are very stuck in the past, to the 'old ways'. Note the following opinion from a worker when he discusses the situation:

"They still call us 'hotnot' and 'kaffir', I'm sorry to say, because I am a coloured man, its not that I'm trying to make that person sound bad. But look we are supposed to be in changeover period to the new South Africa. I must forget the vierkleur. I must treat you as I would treat my wife or children...I mean I mustn't treat you different simply because you are white. That's old times, its 1945's times. We're in 1996, it's a new era. But here a white man....(shakes his head). You don't always want to speak about the white person. It's not nice and it is not right. We are now supposed to be one, we are no longer two separate groups. But if the relationship between us doesn't come right then things can't change. We need to have a relationship where we understand one another. Look I lived with white people in Sea Point, same in a house and it was great. There was black people and white people and we got on well. So when I left the Cape to come here, whew! I am from the Platteland, but I lived for years in the Cape and my world view I got from there. But here black and white still don't know how to communicate or can't communicate." (Interview with worker in Ashton, September 1996)

This opinion of white management is not improved at all by the treatment workers receive from the white medical staff hired by the factories to look after the workers health problems and needs. The factory doctor, Dr Spiller, still has two waiting rooms at his practising rooms next to the factory. When we visited Dr Spiller, we went to the 'wrong' waiting room. The first waiting room we went to, was almost a bare room, with a concrete floor and wooden benches against the wall. The only decoration were aids prevention posters. The doctors receptionist came rushing in to take us to the 'other waiting room'. This room was nicely decorated, there were comfortable armchairs and plush carpets. There were piles of magazines to read and a little table and chairs with paper and crayons and a box of toys to keep children amused while they waited. We asked the receptionist why there were two waiting rooms. She explained to us that the one room was for the workers from the factories and the other room was for the 'proper patients'. This particular state of affairs is certainly not in keeping with the
spirit of a "new South Africa". In fact if anything, much like one worker described above:

"they've still got the manner of the old apartheid system." (Interview with worker in Ashton, September 1996)

Aside from the basic separateness of facilities which gives workers a clear message, the actual treatment meted out to workers by the white medical staff, was described by one worker as "unethical". Two workers describe a typical visit to one of the white doctors:

"As we are sitting here across the table from one another, that's the way he diagnoses people. He says to you what's wrong with you, and you say I have a pain here or there and while you are talking he will come and examine you on top of your clothes. He doesn't test your blood pressure or anything else. He doesn't examine you like a normal doctor examines you." (Interview with worker in Ashton, September, 1996)

And:

"The people expect that the doctor should examine them properly. It's unethical, I don't care how clever a doctor is, he can't just look at people and prod them through their clothes and know what's wrong with them. It's unethical." (Interview with worker in Ashton, Nov. 1996)

Treatment from the factory's white clinic sister is even worse according to the workers:

"To tell you the truth she won't touch a coloured or black person...I'm sorry to say this but she just won't touch people who are not white. She has another nurse who helps her. I went there to get my back rubbed with some stuff. She sent for someone to come do it. I said to her, 'but you're here, you must rub my back', she said 'I'm busy', so I said 'but you are paid to do this!'" (Interview with worker in Ashton, September 1996)

Thus the division between the white management and the coloured and black workers, is the most obvious division. The racism the coloured and black workers experience from the whites at the factory, is extremely pervasive and a definite source of anger and frustration. However it is not the only racial division between workers. There is a distinct division between the coloured and black workers. It
certainly is not as acrimonious as the division between whites and blacks and coloureds, but it does exist. It is apparent in the manner in which respondents talk about one another. Both coloured and black workers referred to other coloured and black people as “our people” and “their people” respectively. There is a definite sense of separateness between the two groups. When a coloured worker was asked about the relationship between black and coloured workers she replied:

“The people seem to get on o.k. Some black people, there are some who work on their own and don’t join in, there are some who join in.” (Interview with seasonal worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Essentially the division between coloured and black workers seems to be experienced as a sense of separation. A division which is experienced with quite a good deal more emotion, is the recruitment process, it is to this that we now turn:
5.3.5 The Recruitment Process

Workers from Ashton are generally quite unhappy about the manner in which the factories hire workers. Ashton has quite a high level of unemployment, and workers feel that it is very unfair that workers from other towns get employment in the factories while "their people" sit at home. However some workers have differing reasons for why they think the factories hire workers from different areas as these comments from workers illustrate:

"I think that's the biggest problem here in Ashton. You know, they come from so many places, McGregor, Robertson, Worcester, Suurbrak, Bonnievale, Montagu and other people, even from Cape Town and then our people get pushed out. This is where all the problems come always. Look our people cannot be happy about this because our people don't have jobs, because of these towns, they work and we sit in our houses." (Interview with seasonal worker in Ashton, July 1998)

Another worker had this to say:

"It isn't, for me, fair, that they hire people from other places, but our people in Ashton do it to themselves. Some days they work, some they don't, it's their own fault. So the factory people go and look for other people in other towns, people who are willing to be at work everyday." (Interview with seasonal worker in Ashton, July 1998)
Despite the above respondent's attempt to explain the recruitment system the factories use, it was quite apparent that workers were not particularly happy that workers from other towns were getting jobs, while they sat at home. One can thus appreciate how this system of recruitment might actually cause divisions between workers. It is an example of a division between workers which management actively created and maintains. It serves to create rifts between workers from Ashton and the workers from the other areas. It gives management a very flexible labour market to choose its workers from and it provides a very competitive labour market for workers to be in. One more measure which actively and quite deliberately serves to atomise workers and thereby make them easier to control.
6. Accuracy

Accuracy in research involves the reliability and validity of one's findings. Reliability and validity, while going hand in hand are not the same thing. Reliability refers to whether another person can go and do the same research using the same tools at some later stage and get the same results. Validity on the other hand is a measure of how effective your research tools are at reflecting the reality of the situation.

All the demographic information which is presented in the first section of results is based on information supplied to me by the companies being researched. I believe it is a accurate reflection of workplace composition as it was at the end of 1996, beginning of 1997. The information presented in section two and three of the results was obtained through quite a number of interviews and group discussions with workers, management and various miscellaneous informants in Ashton, such as the mayor and medical practitioners in the town. In terms of workers interviewed I tried to make the group of respondents as varied as possible, in order to hear as many different perspectives as I could. However one of the problems with my research, which I mentioned in the section on access, was that I did not interview enough black workers. Most of my respondents are coloured and this makes my study a little biased in terms of that. It is not representative enough with regards to black workers.

This research is qualitatively focused. My information was gleaned from interviews and group discussions which I held with workers and management. The interviews and group discussions with workers were based on sets of issues which were put up for discussion, but the workers could decide on the content of the discussions. However if one looks at the interview schedules, one can see that many of the issues I was investigating are sufficiently codified and systematic to be tested again. Even though quite a substantial portion of the research was examining peoples experiences and feelings towards the control they experience in the factory and how it impacts on their lives; I believe that this could be tested again, at a later stage, using the same questions and prompts and get the same or similar responses. I feel that my return to the field in mid - 1998 was important in gauging if the situation, feelings and experiences which I had investigated during 1996 were still applicable and valid in 1998, which did appear to be the case.
In terms of validity, I feel that the unstructured interviewing which we were able to do with workers, by putting issues up for discussion and allowing the workers to determine the content of the discussion meant that we were sensitised to issues above and beyond what we expected to encounter. It really added to the amount of depth we were able to achieve in the research. I think one of the most important factors I discovered through this process of unstructured interviewing was the ‘closedness’ of Ashton as a social system. When workers were asked to tell us about problems out of the season, we weren’t simply told about not having a regular income. Workers pointed to the general social problems in Ashton, to having to seek work on the farms, to the dop system and how many of “their people” had alcohol abuse problems as a result of this work, to how the alcohol abuse led to family abuse, to Monday - sickness (see glossary), which made getting seasonal employment difficult and so the list continued. Essentially then this unstructured form of interviewing allowed us access to a much more in-depth look at life in Ashton as a function of seasonal employment. Another important factor which allowed me a more in-depth look at workers’ lives, was the fact that my research was conducted over two years.

One practical issue regarding the accuracy of my research is the fact that almost all my interviews were conducted in Afrikaans because everyone in Ashton speaks it. I am a mother-tongue English speaker, however I do speak and understand Afrikaans well. I was allowed to tape almost all my interviews and I also took notes, in order to have as accurate a record of what people said as possible. However the project itself is presented in English. All quotes and information presented herein have been translated from Afrikaans into English. While it may appear trivial, the language issue must not be neglected. In Bozzoli’s study, Women of Phokeng (1991), the author takes pains to express the problems of dealing with information which has been translated, in Bozzoli’s case from Setswana to English, because much of the subtle nuances and implications of word choices which are there in Setswana are lost in the translation into English. (Bozzoli, 1991: 12) This does not mean that research done in another language and translated is of inherently poor quality, but that the problems of translation must be acknowledged as they do detract from the quality of the information which has been translated.
7. Conclusion

In the introduction I indicated that I intended to explore control in relation to the interaction of various pre-existing social relations of power within the structure of the workforce. This project has examined these pre-existing social relations of power, as well as some deliberate attempts by management to extend its control over the workforce. The two sets of controls interact within the structure of the workforce; the workforce itself set within and also part of the broader structure of society. The two structures work in and through one another and impact on one another. Workers and management come to the workforce, already socialised within a very stratified society, with distinct ideas, perceptions and stereotypes. These are then played out within the work arena.

A central aim of the thesis was to examine how the workers experienced the control measures and processes. I discovered that assembly line work has definite physical hazards and discomforts. It is also really boring and monotonous and unlike Van Zyl who wrote:

"The loneliness of the production line : some occupations appear to have led to dreamy isolation for the worker involved." (Van Zyl, 1990: 52)

I have yet to meet a worker who had anything remotely romantic to say about work on the assembly line. All the workers I spoke to said that the friendships and money made working on the line bearable, the intrinsic value of the work itself was never spoken about.

Life as a seasonal worker proves to be a life of continual struggle, going from the hectic pace of the factory, to the wretched wages and pay on the farms, or domestic work in the white part of town. Life as a seasonal worker is more about a life lived with structural unemployment, than a life lived with seasonal employment. The structural unemployment then helps to exacerbate social problems such as alcohol abuse. However because there is little other choice, the workers are extremely thankful for these seasonal jobs, perceiving the factories as the lifeblood of the town and giving them even more scope to control and exploit workers fears and ultimately their unity.
In the specific situation of Ashton, we have a very competitive labour market, partly as a result of economic conditions, but mostly as a result of deliberate attempts by management to keep the labour market as competitive as possible. This is done by using a recruitment system which acts like a quota system. Within this scenario, differences between workers easily become divisions, with each division further weakening the workforce.

The most obvious division between workers is between white workers who dominate the top management positions, white collar office work, middle level management and supervision within the factory, in permanent posts. Statistics for coloured and black workers show the sharp contrast between where coloured and black workers predominate in lowest level jobs on the factory floor, and in seasonal posts; compared to their white counterparts. This stark division helps to re-enforce a division which existed long before the workers walked through the factory gates. The division between coloured and black workers does not appear as starkly, it seems just like a difference between workers. However when one examines how the two groups react to hiring policies (with regards to black and coloured workers) of the factories, it is quite apparent that this difference has become a division between them. They do not see one another as sharing the same relationship to the means of production, but rather as competitors for each others jobs. Thus one pre-existing social relations of power combined with the deliberate actions of management actively divides the workforce.

The division between seasonal and permanent workers is another stark contrast, that was illustrated in this project. Permanent positions are dominated by white people and males of all races. The seasonal positions are dominated by coloured and black women. The implications of this are vast and far reaching. The system has women predominating in the lowest status, lowest paid, and temporary positions. This helps to actively re-enforce gender stereotypes around male and female roles. The male - role being intrinsically tied to the breadwinner role and the female - role being intrinsically tied to the 'care-giver' role i.e. mother with household responsibilities. The systematic structuring of the workforce connects to the pre-existing patriarchal system of dominance and helps to reproduce and re-enforce it. However the division between male and female workers does not equal the difference between permanent...
and seasonal workers. There are male as well as female seasonal workers, and all seasonal workers are subject to the vulnerability of this work.

The assembly line is used as a means of controlling workers, but the intrusive and 'bullying' tactics necessary, make women, who are socially conditioned to be more obedient and docile, better suited to this type of work organisation. The argument that women have a greater aptitude for this kind of work belies the fact that women are hired, because they are women, capital is connecting to a pre-existing division in order to exploit women's position of weakness in the patriarchal system. Thus we have a combination of a pre-existing social relation of power with a management imposed system of production which effectively controls workers. As this division and control occurs within such an accepted structure the divisions within the workforce appear to be natural. The fact that workers experience these gender divisions as quite normal and natural is testimony to this. Sadly this makes such divisions all the more difficult to challenge and the status quo remains intact.

Piecework is another way in which management is able to divide an otherwise undifferentiated (in terms of graded skills) shopfloor. It puts some workers in a position to earn a lot more money than other workers. It also puts the onus on those workers to work harder in order to make their quotas. In a competitive labour market, such as we have in Ashton, this turns a difference between workers into a division between workers.

When all these divisive measures are added together with the recruitment policy which the two factories favour, one lands up with a complex web of divisions between workers. These divisions, weaken, atomise and undermine the strength of the workforce. The problem with these divisions is they do not simply end there, they also help to re-enforce other systems of dominance and control. Patriarchy works in and through the structure of the workforce, as does racism (and other divisions). Why is this important? It is vitally important, because if we wish to restructure our society and head towards the democracy millions of people worked and died for. We have very little hope of success if we don't attack the problem from every angle. It is no good hoping that democratic reforms in legislature and public policy will simply trickle down and eventually transform the workplace. We need to start with democracy at the workplace and build it up from there.
Bibliography:


1) Monday Sickness: This is the name given to workers who don't go to work on Mondays because they have drunk so much over the weekend they are too ill to go to work.

2) Vrot Vinger: This is the common name given to a form of contact dermatitis. It causes an inflammation of the nailbed, which is not dangerous, but rather painful. It is caused by exposure to fruit juices, the chemicals used to remove the skin of some of the fruits. It is treated topically and takes approximately 6 months to heal completely.
Questionnaire:

Section 1: Demographic Data:
1) Name:
2) Age:
3) Marital status:
4) Number of dependant children
5) Type of job
6) Where do you live?
7) How many seasons have you worked in the factory?

Section 2: Industrial Accidents and Diseases:
1) Have you suffered from one of the following ailments in the last year?
   a) mechanical backache
   b) any repetitive strain injuries
   c) eye strain
   d) swollen / aching feet
   e) vrot vinger
   f) bladder infections
   g) constipation
   h) high blood pressure
2) Have you suffered from any other ailments in the last year?
   2.1) If so please specify the nature of the ailment
3) Have you been involved in any accidents while working at your present employer?
   3.1) If yes - how many accidents?
   3.2) How serious was the accident?
   3.3) How did the accident happen?
4) How often do you feel tired at work?
5) Are you responsible for all the domestic work at home?
6) (If answer was no) How much housework are you responsible for?
Section 3: Stress and stress levels:

1) What are the 3 things you worry about most when you are at work?
   (prompts: children, pace of the work etc.).
2) How often do you suffer from headaches?
3) How fast is the pace of the work?
4) How much control do you have over your work?
5) How would you rate your job in terms of fulfilment?
6) How much time do you spend each day on leisure activities / relaxation?
Questions for Management:
- Name
- Position
- Can you give us some information about the company’s history?
- What does your job entail?
- How are workers recruited?
- How are the workers selected?
- Why wouldn’t you hire a worker?
- How long does the season last?
- How many seasonal employees do you hire?
- What is the demographic breakdown?
- How many permanent employees do you have?
- What is the demographic breakdown?
- Why are there so many women hired for the seasonal work?
- What do the seasonal workers do in the factory?
- What are the main health risks for workers in the factory?
- What arrangements are made for pregnant women in the factory?
- How much maternity leave are workers allowed?
- What about maternity benefits?
- Are the conditions the same for permanent and seasonal workers regarding pregnancy?
- Do you have a system of job rotation?
- How do workers get promoted?
- Does the company provide any training to workers?
- How would you describe the relationship between coloured and black workers?
- How would you describe the relationship between management and the trade union?
(production questions)
- Could you describe the production process? (probe)
- What do the women do?
- What do the men do?
- Are there machines available to do some of the manual operations?
- Prompt: Why do you use workers for that? Why don't you use machines?
Questions for Workers:

Section 1:
1) Age?
2) Marital status?
3) no. of dependants?
4) How many seasons have you worked?

Section 2:
1) How much housework do you have to do?
2) Who looks after your children while you are at work?
3) Are you happy with this arrangement?
4) What do you do if your child gets sick while you are at work?
5) What is your biggest worry while you are at work?

Section 3:
1) What do you do at the factory?
2) Do you enjoy your job?
3) Why?
4) Why do you think the factory employs so many women?
5) Do you think women are better suited to some jobs?
6) What skills do you think are necessary for your job?
7) Do you think men have these skills?
8) Why do you think there are more permanent male workers than female ones?
9) Would you like a permanent position?
10) Why / Why not?
11) How many supervisors are female?
12) Who do you think make better supervisors and or managers, men or women?
13) Why / Why not?
14) How do the supervisors treat the workers?
15) Are you ever scared of the supervisors?
16) What do the supervisors do if you make a mistake?
17) Can you talk while you work?
18) Do you want to talk to the other women while you work?
19) How fast is the pace of the line / work?
20) Do the black and coloured workers get on?
21) Are there any men on the line?
22) Why not?
23) Why do you think there are no men working on the line?
24) If they were on the line, would they do the same work as you?

Section 4:
1) How did you get work at the factory?
2) If you worked there the season before, do you automatically get rehired?
3) Why would the factory not rehire you?
4) Do you think the factories should hire workers from other areas?
5) Why / Why not?
6) Are you happy at the factory?
7) Why / Why not?
8) Do you think they treat you fairly at the factory?

Section 5:
1) Do you belong to the trade union?
2) Are you involved in the trade union?
3) What does the trade union do for its female members?
4) What do you think the trade union should be doing for its female members?
5) Would you become a shop steward?
6) Why / Why not?
APPENDIX C cont.

Section 6:

1) What do you think are the main problems with being a seasonal worker?
2) What rights do you have as a seasonal worker?
3) What rights would you like to have as a seasonal employee?
4) Do you think seasonal employees should have employment security?

Section 7:

1) What do you do out of season?
2) What do people do for money out of season?
3) Do you worry about the end of season time?
4) What would you do if you could do anything in the world?
5) What is your greatest wish for the future?
6) What are your hopes for your children?
7) What are your hobbies?
8) What do the people do here as a community?
9) What are the biggest problems in Ashton generally?

Thanks and farewell etc.
STRUCTURE OF THE WORKFORCE

TOP MANAGEMENT
- Managing Director
- Financial Director
- Production Manager

Office Workers
- Secretaries
- Clerks
- White and Coloured Females

White Males (1 White Female)

Shift Leaders
- Male

Production Foremen
- Male

Supervisors
- Males with some Females

FEMALE JOBS
- preparation of fruit
- cutting fruit (piecework)
- sorting fruit
- inspecting fruit
- weighing cans
- receiving and sorting cans
- labelling cans
- cleaning (light)

MALE JOBS
- machine operators
- forklift truck drivers
- cleaning (machinery / factory)
- receiving fruit from farms

Artisans Engineers
- Coloured and White Males