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DOMESTIC SERVICE :
CHANGING RELATIONS OF CLASS DOMINATION 1841 - 1948
A FOCUS ON CAPE TOWN

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the degree of Master of Social Science

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the historical and sociological significance of domestic service in Cape and Cape Town class relations. The forces which led to the present class structure with its particular colour and sexual division of labour, where the majority of domestic workers were and are Black women were examined. It was felt that an emphasis on women's oppression only would obscure a broader understanding of domestic service in a class society where domestic service has been a major component of class, colour and sex oppression. A class analysis was used which allowed questions of gender to be posed. An historical investigation was necessary to analyse changing class relations and changes in the groups predominating in domestic service.

Census reports for the Cape and Cape Town were studied in order to construct a sociological "index" to the class structure. Although many people were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service, class position and the earliness of their incorporation into wage labour allowed many groups to move on to other types of employment. Those who predominated in domestic service were the most disadvantaged by their class, colour and gender.

It was because of a demand for cheap Black, mostly male, labour that Black women became trapped in domestic service in the absence of other options for employment. Ruling class demands for a supply of cheap labour as well as measures to control this labour were investigated. The Masters and Servants Acts were major sources of control and were both class and colour biased. Since so many people were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service, domestic service has been a major component in establishing class domination and control. Furthermore, domestic workers were also subject to informal control from their employers. It was only towards the 1900s that explicit demands were made for female domestic workers in order to release male labour for other sectors of employment. By 1948, pressures were building up from

the ruling class to introduce more stringent control over movement and this eventually led to extensions of pass laws after 1948.

An attempt was made to elaborate on how domestic workers experienced their oppression (racist and sexist attitudes of employers were a part) and to draw a link between class and sex oppression. By the nature of the close contact between employer and employee, employers could exert a great deal of control over domestic workers' private lives and this control was often sexist. Limited material on resistance was found and this, together with the lack of options for other sources of survival, illustrated domestic workers' unique oppression.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION : METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

1. Introduction

Domestic service has been extremely important in South Africa's history : it has provided thousands of people with a means of survival and it is an important component of the process of class, colour and sex oppression. Yet apart from some notable exceptions, the historical and sociological significance of domestic service has not been studied to the same extent as other aspects of changing class relations have.

Given the continued importance of domestic service in providing employment and given existing studies of the oppressed position of domestic workers, domestic service must have played a vital role in class relations. The object of this study is to pose sociological questions which will allow one to investigate domestic service within these changing class relations, to try to explain why certain groups predominated in domestic service, to investigate how domestic service operated within mechanisms of domination and control - in sum : how domestic service was related to the processes of class, colour and sex oppression.

The neglect of domestic service is due to a number of causes, amongst others :

- (a) class bias,
- (b) the neglect of women in academic studies (since the majority of domestic workers have always been women) and
- (c) the nature of domestic service itself.

Each of these possible reasons for neglect will be discussed briefly.

(a) Class bias

A large body of social scientists has ignored the dominated classes in favour of what they see as the more important actions of elites. This type of approach has no sense of the dialectic of history : the actions, responses and experiences of the dominated classes are equally as important as a study of ruling classes. Even the most powerless of dominated classes is not totally passive within a class structure and an analysis of the nature of their class domination will be informative for attempts to change it. It is necessary to look at the struggle between classes as well as working class experiences to try to alter traditional class biases.

Studies of non elites have been rare within sociology except perhaps among social reformers and historical materialists. Yet, whereas other non-elite groups such as peasants have attracted some attention, there have still been few historical investigations of domestic workers. This could be because the majority of domestic workers are women and because of the nature of domestic work itself.

(b) Neglect of women in academic studies

The neglect of female dominated areas of work can partly be ascribed to sexism.¹ If, in contemporary life, women are regarded as secondary in importance to men, the same attitude will predominate in contemporary interpretations of the past :

"For the most part women are made invisible. When discussed at all, women are treated with the same set of narrowly defined attitudes that oppress most women throughout their lives. Usually, they appear as part of the domestic scenery behind the real actors and action of national life" (Rosen, 1971 : 541).

¹Sexism is a concept similar to racism which encompasses the belief that people are different and inferior by virtue of attributes gained at birth. Values of superiority and inferiority are usually ascribed and stereotypes are often held which take little account of the divergence in human types.

Often, mention of women in historical writing has dealt with women in stereotypical ways - within "the family", but seldom in other areas of life. Thus, women may be "invisible" because they are only "seen" in these ways. Apart from the extreme of an androcentric approach to history (which may or may not be recognised), a researcher's interpretation of the past will vary with the issues which he or she highlights. This will depend on theoretical and ideological assumptions which need not be made explicit or questioned. A functionalist, for example, may focus on women as wives and mothers with the result that women could be seen as essentially changeless in changeless family roles within continually changing events. Domestic service is itself, to a certain extent, treated in stereotypical ways. Thus, domestic workers may also appear, with women, "as part of the domestic scenery" outside the mainstream of important events.

The types of questions asked about the past will also be influenced by what is regarded as important in the present.

"Historians' neglect of women has been a function of their ideas about historical significance. Their categories and periodization have been masculine by definition, for they have defined significance primarily by power, influence, and visible activity in the world of political and economic affairs" (Gordon et al, 1976 : 75).

History is thus viewed selectively. The "transmission and exercise of power" (Lerner, 1976(b) : 349) cannot give a full picture of any social formation, yet these constitutional and political struggles as well as the military actions which sometimes result are the aspects that receive most attention. Since most women were excluded from initiating these processes, or their participation minimised, little information is to be had on how women lived their lives. There is also, of course, a class bias in focusing on the "transmission and exercise of power".

Bearing in mind class bias, researchers attempting to include women in

studies of human history should be careful not to accept male elites' definitions of importance, thereby including only women that "achieved" in elitist ways. Such attempts may illustrate that some women were involved in power processes, but do nothing to alter one dimensional views of history as the history of the powerful only.

"The resulting history of "notable women" does not tell us much about those activities in which most women engaged, nor does it tell us about the significance to society as a whole of women's activities. The history of notable women is the history of exceptional, even deviant women, and does not describe the experiences and history of the mass of women. Also women of different classes have different historical experiences. To comprehend the full complexity of society at a given stage of its development, it is essential to take account of such differences" (Lerner, 1976 (b) : 357).

Fox-Genovese noted that merely adding women to historical accounts does not alter the perception of what is significant (1982 : 6). A correction of historical imbalances would instead require the posing of different questions; a prime example would be the consideration of gender in historical studies.

(c) The nature of domestic service

A third possible reason for the neglect of domestic workers in academic studies is the nature of domestic service itself. Domestic service is very much "hidden", it takes place behind the public facade, it is performed by anonymous people. Because of this, domestic service is "forgotten" by social scientists just as its importance is ignored in everyday life. In a country like South Africa where domestic workers are so much taken for granted and sexism rarely questioned, the oppression of large numbers of women in domestic service may still not be regarded as significant enough to be labelled an issue for investigation because of the different types of questions posed.

2. Works Consulted

There has not been a complete absence of works on domestic workers in South Africa. There are some empirical studies of conditions of service and wages of which the one by Whisson and Weil is perhaps one of the best known and most comprehensive (Domestic Servants : A microcosm of "the race problem" (1971)). This type of empirical research becomes dated very soon especially with respect to wages although there are usually useful theoretical insights and generalisations to be drawn from the studies.¹ Although Whisson and Weil stated that domestic service is a microcosm of "the race problem", they gave no attention to the initial or the continued process of the importance of domestic service in the South African social formation especially how it related to changing forms of class domination.

There were three works which provided the major impetus for this piece of work. Colin Bundy's paper "The abolition of the Masters and Servants Act" (1975) suggested that the Masters and Servants Act was no longer necessary when pass and influx control laws became developed enough to control the movement of Africans. This was an inspiration to find out more about the Masters and Servants Acts, to see whether they acted solely as a measure to control movement or whether they had other implications as well. It also seemed necessary to investigate the context in which the Masters and Servants Acts operated in terms of developing capitalist relations of production.

Charles van Onselen's "Witches of Suburbia : Domestic Service on the Witwatersrand between 1890 and 1914" (1978) provided detail of a specific form of resistance among Johannesburg domestic workers namely the formation of amalaita groups to redress wrongs by employers against domestic workers. He also gave a fascinating insight into the lives of domestic workers in Johannesburg and a specific example of the racism they faced embodied in the "black peril" scare between 1890 and 1914.

¹Whisson and Weil's study was of domestic workers in Cape Town. Eleanor Preston Whyte investigated domestic workers in Durban (1969).

Van Onselen's work provided an impetus to find similar information about Cape Town domestic workers' lives and to investigate whether similar forms of resistance occurred. These insights would have to be seen in terms of changing class relations as well as in terms of an attempt to understand the specificity of domestic workers' oppression. Since the time span of this work is longer than van Onselen's two decades, the same depth of information will unfortunately not be possible to duplicate.

The most important book was Jacklyn Cock's "Maids and Madams" (1980). The first aspect which provided inspiration was the way she analysed women in South Africa in terms of "the convergence of three lines along which social inequality is generated - class, race and sex" (1980 : 5). This seemed a useful frame of reference to apply to understanding domestic service since the ~~majority of domestic workers were Black women~~ and all three components of oppression would apply to them. A second aspect of great interest was Cock's chapter on the historical background of domestic service in the Eastern Cape. This seemed worthy of duplication and extension for the Cape Town region. Unlike the Eastern Cape, Cape Town had a long established urban population from which domestic workers were drawn as well as a different colour composition. Cock's historical section also left a gap which could only be filled by a detailed study of census reports to examine the composition of domestic service in terms of class structure (this is done in Chapter 3). The contemporary situation of domestic workers in Grahamstown highlights the past studied in this thesis.

It seemed worthwhile to undertake this investigation since no detailed sociological analysis had been done of the historical significance of and changes in domestic service in the 19th and 20th centuries as slavery was abolished and capitalist relations of production became established. The analysis was narrowed down to Cape Town only because this was the first town established by settlers in South Africa and it remained the largest city in the Cape as well as a focal point for so much that happened in the Cape. As noted, Cape Town had a settled urban

population from which domestic workers were drawn and the preponderance of "Coloured" people is unique in South Africa. However, it was not possible to focus only on Cape Town because sufficient material was just not available. Often it seemed useful to look at the Cape as a whole in order to make comparisons with Cape Town and its specific labour conditions (this seemed especially useful with employment figures in Chapter 3). Often one could only make inferences about Cape Town from the Cape material. Sometimes Cape conditions applied to Cape Town as well (for example laws applied to the whole of the Cape) despite Cape Town's particular circumstances. The time span of the investigation was narrowed down to 1841 - 1948. The significance of these two dates is that 1841 marked the enactment of the first Masters and Servants Act which was to play such a vital role in understanding domestic service and heralded new forms of labour control after the abolition of slavery. 1948 saw a further break in methods of labour control as policies of segregation were hardened into apartheid which tightened up influx control and began trying to turn the tide of people flowing into the towns. The pressures which led to these changes in control were evident towards the end of the period studied.

Although the period 1841 - 1948 is well rounded off in terms of the theme of domestic service as a mechanism of class domination, with hindsight the period is too long and the changes in class relations too broad so that many unique features of changing class relations could not be explored.

3. Statement of the problem : a theoretical shift

In the course of working on this thesis, a theoretical shift in the statement of the problem has occurred. Initially, domestic service was seen as a prime example of women's oppression. However, after working with the actual data, it seemed theoretically more accurate to recognise domestic service as a prime example of class oppression. This will become more clear when domestic service is discussed as a common first point of incorporation into wage labour and as a source of domination

and control of labour (especially in Chapter 4 but also in Chapter 3). The subordinate status of domestic workers was formally enacted in legislation (Chapter 4); informal subordination also occurred through various facets of the master/servant relationship (Chapter 5). The majority of domestic workers were and are female so for them the low wages and bad working conditions of domestic service are a major source of their oppression. A particular sexual division of labour led to women predominating in domestic service but the oppression of domestic service applies to both men and women - it is class oppression and it is because of the class structure and specific way that capitalism developed in South Africa that domestic workers were particularly oppressed and that domestic service became a female dominated source of employment. There were aspects of domestic workers' oppression that could relate specifically to women : the experience of sexism, the perpetuation of stereotypes of women as nurturers, the suffering of sexual abuse, the nature of domestic service which allowed (and allows) employers to exert a great deal of control over domestic workers' lives through restricting visitors for instance (see chapter 5 in particular). However, these were additional burdens for women. Thus the analysis moved away from an emphasis on women's oppression to a class analysis of domestic service.

It seemed that a focus on domestic service in terms of women's oppression would obscure an understanding of domestic service within its broader significance in the dynamics of a class society, not just its significance for women. Since "women" are not the category of analysis, a shift to understanding domestic service within class domination implied a focus on both women and men. This also allowed the posing of theoretical questions within the framework of class analysis. One of the major benefits of a class analysis is that it allowed the historical and theoretical links between class and sex oppression to be made clear, while at the same time showing that the link between class and sex is not the key to understanding domestic service.

A class analysis of domestic service implied an examination of domestic

service within the process of proletarianisation and process of establishing new forms of labour control and an analysis of the relationship between dominant and dominated classes. Included in this, an examination of the sexual division of labour was necessary in order to understand why domestic work was always, and became even more so, a female dominated job (Chapters 3 and 4). (As explained below the investigation of why domestic service was a female dominated job was only partial.) A class analysis of domestic service in terms of the processes referred to above is a complex task which continually raises new questions. Many questions are left unanswered in this study, but this is more realistic than a functionalist approach which notes the oppression of domestic workers and asks how this serves capitalism.

While also asking questions about gender, a historical materialist analysis allows the oppression of women to be understood in a broader context than solely male/female relations. Within this framework, the scope of this study could have been extended. If the major focus had been on working class women, a study of domestic service would still have been necessary but a whole host of other questions would also have had to be posed. Among these would be Bozzoli's suggestion to investigate struggles within and between classes and between men and women of indigenous societies (1981) which led to women entering domestic service (apart from coercive measures from the ruling class). One would also have had to examine why there was not a demand for female labour in other sectors of the economy; one would have to examine ideologies of femininity and how these were applied to different classes of women (Cock's "education for domesticity" in *Maids and Madams* (1980) could be an entry here).

In a focus on women's oppression, the importance of domestic service would have been one question among many others. In a focus on domestic service, questions of gender become aspects of a broader study of class relations. A historical materialist analysis allows the understanding of gender within the social formation as a whole. Domestic service was of

major importance in women's oppression, but this was a consequence of class relations. There was no conspiracy either by bourgeois or working class men to oppress women in this way.

"...men chose to build states and fight wars in ways that may have been misogynist, but essentially, on the most historically significant level, they were primarily concerned with winning wars or building states. They acted as agents of classes and communities and as such, sought to expand the power of the community or class they represented" (Fox-Genovese, 1982 : 15).

A historical materialist analysis places major emphasis on class relations. This framework is used to approach these sociological questions all of which include a consideration of gender :

- (a) an investigation of domestic service within changing class relations
- (b) an explanation of why certain groups predominated in domestic service
- (c) an investigation of the mechanisms of domination and control which affected domestic workers (of which sexual oppression, especially after 1900, was one).

4. Objectives of study

Large numbers of people have always been employed in domestic service. Unlike other countries, the numbers employed have not declined rapidly with further capitalist development. It is necessary then, to ask questions about the continued importance of domestic service in South Africa and exactly how people were oppressed within it.

Many of the objectives of this study have already been raised. The major objective was to analyse domestic service within changing class relations as stated above. Other objectives were to investigate the

questions raised by the work of Bundy, Cock and van Onselen discussed earlier. Some elaborations follow.

Initially, domestic service was not always very specialised i.e. people might not have performed only domestic work and it was an important source of incorporation for unskilled labour. Domestic service employment figures partly illustrate this process of incorporation. It will also be shown that incorporation into domestic service meant incorporation into a subordinate position. The proportion of men employed in domestic service declined in the period 1841 - 1948; for men domestic service acted mainly as a point of incorporation from which they were absorbed into other sectors of the economy over the decades. There were struggles between mining and agricultural capital over the available supply of male labour and attempts to replace male domestic workers with women (see Chapter 4). Insight is provided into the process whereby men were absorbed into developing sectors of the economy whereas women were not required for productive labour, enough cheap labour being supplied by men. For women, domestic service was often their sole option for survival. Domestic service also gives insights into colour division of labour whereby the numbers of White people in domestic service dwindled drastically so that domestic service became even more overwhelmingly Black dominated. Domestic service became linked with racism whereby it was deemed natural and proper for the subordinate group (mostly composed of Black people) to serve.

People did not always enter wage labour willingly : they were forced into wage labour through various measures including increasing shortage of land, the imposition of taxes and the granting of loans which had to be paid in money. For the people who were forced to enter wage labour, domestic service was an important source of survival. However, this thesis does have a partial deficiency in enabling an understanding of domestic service in its total context. By looking at domestic service in Cape Town i.e. at the end point, after people have entered wage labour, one misses the complexities for entry into domestic service. The indigenous population was not a homogenous group and different

forces affected different groups - the Khoi and Xhosa people experienced vastly different circumstances in their entry into wage labour. A worthwhile anthropological study would be to analyse why particular sectors of employment were entered by certain groups or sexes. The sexual division of labour in pre-colonial times could be related to the sexual division of labour in post colonial times. Bozzoli made important suggestions in her paper (1981) and a good example of such an approach is the paper by Jeff Guy "The destruction and reconstruction of Zulu society" (1982).

A further important feature of domestic service is that it has been a source of control of the indigenous population. The control was exerted partially through legal means such as the Masters and Servants Acts (see Chapter 4) and partially through the nature of the job itself since it allows a great deal of personal surveillance by the employer. Both these mechanisms of formal and informal control were thought worthy of investigation for an understanding of class relations as well as to understand why domestic service is different from other jobs.

A final objective is that this should be a rectification study. This is an attempt to illuminate the lives and experiences of all those thousands of people who are overlooked and ignored. The empirical data thus collected can hopefully act as a stimulus for further or allied research.

5. What theory has been utilised

This section will briefly assess the usefulness of selected theoretical positions for understanding domestic service.

Marxist-feminist theory was the starting point for this thesis but as more of the data was studied, it became clear that domestic service should be seen as an example of class oppression not specific to women only. The sex of female domestic workers could, however, compound their oppression as explained earlier. Furthermore, domestic service is

central to explaining the oppression of Black women within South Africa's working class. This approach does not deny women's oppression; domestic service, however, is not central to explaining this oppression as women experience other sources of oppression outside domestic service (for instance one would also have to look at other aspects of sexual division of labour and wage labour, family, sexuality, ideologies surrounding motherhood among others - again Bozzoli gives useful directions for research) Although some feminists would agree with the approach taken in understanding domestic service, others would not, so perhaps it is necessary to state what sort of theory has been rejected.

It does not seem useful to make the relationships between the sexes central for an understanding of domestic service. Domestic service does not illustrate the oppression of women by the men of their class nor even by the men of a dominant class. Domestic service instead illustrates part of the process of subordination of the indigenous people of South Africa in order to obtain cheap labour. Domestic service cannot be seen in terms of a primary contradiction between men and women, nor can the category "women" be seen as a homogenous category in which women are all "sisters under the skin". The falsity of such a position is particularly clear when looking at domestic service where a female employer could be the cause of a female employee's suffering. The political implications of rejecting a male versus female dynamic of oppression is that in order to change the position of domestic workers, one would have to organise on class lines of battle rather than sex lines. For similar reasons, the concept "patriarchy" is not used. Although patriarchy could be used adjectivally, its use usually results in an ahistorical universal system of women's oppression being posed. Even the recognition of different "patriarchies" still assumes that we understand what is meant by patriarchy. It seems better to look at each social formation in terms of areas of concern such as sexual division of labour in all spheres, gender stereotypes, sexism, differential treatment in law.

Approached in this way, specific aspects of a social formation could be

analysed in the historical and social context in which they occurred. This would guide strategy for the emancipation of women much better than referring to an all encompassing overthrow of patriarchy.

The emancipation of women must be linked to the class struggle as a whole.

"There cannot be, nor is there or will there ever be real "freedom" as long as there is no freedom for women from the privileges which the law grants to men, as long as there is no freedom for the workers from the yoke of capital, and no freedom for the toiling peasants from the yoke of the capitalists, landlords and merchants" (Lenin, quoted in Marx et al, 1977 : 58,59).

The "freedom" of any group is at risk while other groups remain oppressed. As wage labourers, women are part of the class struggle, yet their position is not always the same as the men of their class, nor do women of different classes experience the class struggle in the same ways. A successful resolution of the class struggle requires in part a full understanding of structural differences of various oppressed groups. Contradictions in working class solidarity will be exposed, but these would have to be worked through in any case. Investigation of a particular oppressed group within a social formation can never hinder resolution of the class struggle, therefore, since greater understanding must offer possibilities for greater opportunities to direct change.

Domestic work is non-productive labour and domestic workers are not exploited in the strict sense of the word : domestic workers do not produce commodities for exchange or therefore have surplus value extracted from them. To this extent, domestic workers are not of direct interest to factions of capital (except perhaps as an industrial reserve army of labour). Although feminists have argued about whether domestic work is productive or not, this statement of the problem has little bearing for understanding a colonial situation where large numbers of

people were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service and where domestic service was a mechanism whereby people were subordinated and controlled. A rejection of an examination of domestic workers' "economic" role (i.e. whether domestic work is productive or not) forces one away from a crude economism or functionalism towards an examination of relations of production. Thus domestic service is not analysed in terms of its economic "functions" for capitalism, but in terms of its changing role within class relations. Such an analysis of domestic service leads one to examine class oppression (rather than exploitation alone) in terms of political and ideological dimensions as well as the economic.

Although domestic workers do not have surplus value extracted from them, they do produce use values and are thus important in reproducing labour power. Dominant ideology tends to see production and reproduction as separate and this has resulted in much of women's work ("reproductive") being ignored (see tendencies to ignore women in academic studies discussed earlier). Marxist feminists have rectified this neglect by analysing the importance of and forms which reproductive labour takes under capitalism. However, by accepting a distinction between productive and reproductive labour one is trapped by the same sterility as dominant ideology and this leads to an emphasis on women's oppression within "the family" rather than seeing "reproduction" within a broader context of the process of reproducing a class society. A factory worker may be classed a productive worker, but he or she is constantly and unwittingly reproducing her/his class position through, among others, relationships with bosses, through lack of control over the working day. Similarly, at home, not all "reproductive" labour is performed by the housewife or domestic worker. A factory worker may perform some domestic chores or do repair or garden work, people wash themselves, relax and all these are reproductive chores. Thus, a rigid distinction between productive and reproductive labour is an economistic exercise which negates the complexity of relations of production. An understanding of domestic service as "reproductive" labour would compartmentalise domestic service and place too much emphasis on the

actual work done rather than understanding the wider significance of domestic service within relations of class domination in South Africa.

The domestic labour debate was a series of feminist analyses which stressed the importance of domestic work and whether domestic work was productive or unproductive labour¹. At a stretch, the domestic labour debate could be applied to domestic workers, but the application of the argument to domestic workers also exposed some of the absurdities of the debate. It seems a futile and pedantic exercise to focus on whether or not surplus value is extracted from domestic workers : the static economism of concentrating on productive/unproductive labour does not tell us much about domestic service within the complexities of class relations. However, an area for investigation suggested by this trend of feminism has unfortunately not been followed here and this could be worthwhile for future studies - this is a study of the family structure of domestic workers. The incorporation of people into wage labour obviously affected family structures and this aspect could be linked to a study of which groups entered wage labour from within the indigenous population. The nature of domestic service as a job must also have affected the families of domestic workers, changing over time and among different types of domestic workers - for example, those working in towns coming from settled urban communities, laundrywomen who had more control over their working day and many others.

In reviewing some theories about domestic work above, all seemed too narrow for a full understanding of domestic service. This ties in with the move to analysing domestic service within changing class relations.

6. Relationship between theoretical and empirical research

In order to understand domestic service, it seemed necessary to start with an empirical study of actual conditions. The thesis is, therefore,

¹Many papers were written on the domestic labour debate. Some of the more readily available ones were in New Left Review by Wally Seccombe (1974, 1975), Coulson et al. (1975), Gardiner (1975), Molyneux (1979).

empirically based and is intended to give empirical information on an underresearched area of work.

Although sociological theory about class domination in South Africa and the oppression of women served to shape a theoretical approach to analysing domestic service, what was of much greater importance was the empirical research which has shaped the final analysis of domestic service. One's research is always guided by a theoretical framework - in this case a historical materialist one. Ultimately, however, the empirical data caused assumptions to be questioned and caused the theoretical shift referred to earlier. It was the empirical data that shaped the final understanding of domestic service's importance in class relations.

Domestic service in the Cape has to be seen in terms of the process of gaining cheap labour from and the domination and control of the indigenous population. People were incorporated into wage labour in subordinated positions if they entered domestic service (and domestic service was a major point of entry). The contemporary disadvantaged position of women in domestic service can also be related to the supply of cheap Black labour : adequate cheap labour was obtained from men, thus large numbers of Black women were not required for productive labour. These women still had to support themselves when they lost access to the land, so domestic service was often their only possibility of earning a wage. This accounts for the continued large numbers of people working in domestic service. In apartheid South Africa, the position of African women has been made even more precarious. The homelands policy acts to reinforce the supply of cheap labour and politically, African women are seen to be based in the homelands and are prevented from moving to the towns. As the homeland areas are not able to support the population they theoretically hold, women often move to the towns "illegally" where domestic service is one of the few jobs they can enter. As "illegals" they are particularly vulnerable to low wages and bad conditions of employment.

In its connection with the provision of cheap labour and the measures of control to which domestic workers are subject, domestic service tends to reproduce dominant and subordinate classes. However, there are also political and ideological dimensions. Politically there have been innumerable laws to control domestic workers : sometimes these laws have applied specifically to domestic workers, sometimes they were intended to stimulate labour supply, later they developed to bolster the homelands policy. Ideologically, apart from class oppression, domestic service has partially acted to reproduce colour and sexual oppression. There has always been racism towards the indigenous people of South Africa by the colonisers and this racism was also often used to justify paying people of an "inferior race" or with supposedly smaller needs low wages. The racist bias of legislation to control domestic workers will be shown in chapter 4. As a job, domestic service tends to force people into subordinate positions and as the majority of domestic workers were and are Black, the subordinate and servile position of Black people was reinforced. Similarly, gender stereotypes of domestic work being women's work were and are reinforced by the majority of domestic workers being women. The relationship between domestic service and domesticity has been elaborated on by Cock and Gaitskell (1982). (Official views of women, motherhood and the family and how this was related to domestic service is an area which could have been elaborated on in an extension of this thesis.)

Empirical research resulted in the following central theoretical questions. Domestic service had to be analysed in terms of developing capitalism in South Africa and changing class relations which resulted as the indigenous population was incorporated into wage labour. Within this process, domestic service was an important mechanism of control : people were often forced into domestic service as their first waged job; within domestic service they were subject to laws and racist practices which maintained them in a subordinate position. Different levels of control arose from domestic service : formal measures of control mostly through legislation (discussed in chapter 4); the lack of options domestic workers had to survive in other ways once they were forced into

wage labour (illustrated by analysis of census data in chapter 3); the nature of the job which allowed employers to exert a great deal of control over the domestic workers they employed (chapter 5, but also chapter 4). Overriding these specific theoretical questions, the intention was to analyse domestic service in terms of class colour and sex oppression.

7. Chapter outline

Mindful of the objectives cited earlier, this thesis has four main chapters. Chapter 2, following this one, contains a brief overview of the conditions which existed before 1841. Class relations changed from slavery to the incorporation of the indigenous population into wage labour and control via passes and contracts. This chapter is an important preface to the main investigation because after the abolition of slavery increased sources of labour had to be obtained as well as new forms of control developed and the Masters and Servants Act of 1841 formed part of these new strategies to incorporate the indigenous population into wage labour and therein to control them. Moreover, many of the conditions of service of slaves were incorporated into the Masters and Servants Acts. It is necessary to understand conditions and contradictions which led to the introduction of the Masters and Servants Act in 1841 in conjunction with other measures. The context of domestic service performed under slavery and by formally "free" wage labourers was vastly different although in appearance they might have seemed similar.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the changing colour and sexual composition of domestic service in the Cape and in Cape Town. By studying census reports one is able to chart the differential incorporation of various groups into wage labour, the gradual withdrawal of White people from domestic service and an enlargement of the domination of women in the sector. By looking at the economy as a whole, one is able to understand domestic service within a context i.e. what options for other work there were and the importance of domestic service within the changing economy.

It is interesting to note the changing colour and sexual composition within domestic service itself, but this must be explained in terms of changes within the economy as a whole. Further information about how important domestic service was to each colour group is provided. A particular example was the different experiences of Coloured and African women in Cape Town who followed different paths into wage labour and were differently affected by the class structure. Some groups were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service but their privileged class position allowed them to move on to better jobs with expansion of the economy. Other groups, especially Black women and most predominantly African women, were trapped in domestic service with no other options for survival. The groups trapped in domestic service were generally those who entered wage labour last, who were not in a privileged class position as just discussed and who were disadvantaged by gender because there was not a great demand for female labour elsewhere in the economy. This is a lengthy chapter which attempts to locate people within the social formation. It was felt that only detailed research could enable a sociological "index" of the class structure to be constructed. It is necessary to have this numerical information provided by census reports so that one can make definitive statements about changing colour and sexual division of labour and so that one is aware that domestic service is not just a simple example of women's oppression. This chapter is linked to the next, because the abstract legal measures of chapter 4 are illustrated with concrete figures showing the composition of the labour force as a whole.

Chapter 4 investigates official and employer responses to domestic workers of which legislation such as the Masters and Servants Acts acting in conjunction with the Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts was a major component. After the abolition of slavery, increased sources of labour had to be secured. This chapter discusses measures to obtain labour as well as measures to control this labour. Measures of control were both formal (through legislation) and informal via the practices of employers (also discussed in chapter 5). Domestic service was a pivot both as an important first point of incorporation into wage labour and as a means

of control over the indigenous population. Labour policies changed over the period 1841 - 1948. The early period until about the beginning of the twentieth century was concerned with stimulating the supply of labour from the indigenous population, later periods were concerned with maintaining the labour supply and providing workers with skills and finally with reallocating the available labour, which was instrumental in domestic service becoming even more female dominated. Closer to 1948 pressures began to build up which led to ruling class demands for stricter control over movement; this resulted in the extensive pass and influx control laws of the apartheid era. Changing colour composition and competition between groups is also discussed. The focus is more on labour supply than on domestic service per se. Domestic service was often a first point of entry into wage labour and was thus crucial for viewing labour supply; people convicted of "vagrancy" could be forced to enter service. Domestic service was also linked to farm labour and labour policies were more concerned with farm labour than any other type of labour for many years - this link vitally affected domestic workers. This chapter is thus important in explaining domestic service in terms of class domination rather than the oppression of women.

After the rather institutional bias (on official statistics, laws and the responses of the dominant classes), chapter 5 attempts to highlight the experiences of domestic workers and the ways that they responded to their oppression. This chapter is necessary both as a balance to the previous chapters as well as an attempt to isolate why domestic service is different from other jobs. Apart from a proposed piece of legislation applying to domestic workers viewed in the context of the "black peril" scare, this chapter details some of the less formal constraints faced by domestic workers : racism, sexism and the nature of the job which allows employers to exert more control over domestic workers than most wage labourers are subjected to.

In conclusion, Chapter 6 summarises the findings to show that domestic service was a major mechanism of labour control in the Cape. Class structure, the way capitalism developed and the demand for cheap, mainly

male, labour resulted in the majority of domestic workers being Black women. In Cape Town, Coloured women formed the majority of domestic workers, with an increasing proportion of African women towards 1948, in the Cape the majority of domestic workers were African women. The people trapped in domestic service were disadvantaged by class, colour and gender.

8. A note on sources used

A number of sources (ranging from government commissions, census reports, newspapers, recorded interviews and diaries) was used for these various chapters. There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages in using particular sources and perhaps it would be useful to go through some of the problems experienced with this thesis.

The use of census reports must be seen within their limitations. The reports are invaluable in indicating trends in employment by showing the changing colour and sex composition of domestic service. Thus one can see the progressive incorporation of African people into domestic service or the progressive decline in the employment of men. However, due to the deficiencies of census data (referred to in detail in chapter 3), one cannot make absolute statements about the figures involved. Colour classification of people was erratic, counting of people in rural areas must have been difficult, classification of domestic workers must have been difficult in cases where people were sporadically employed or not exclusively employed in domestic service. It was difficult to combine results from different reports as the method of classifying and presenting the data differed (especially between the Cape government and the new officials after union). These were only some of the problems which result in figures which cannot be accepted entirely at their face value. When employment figures in various sectors are close one cannot say with certainty that employment in one sector was higher than in another by a figure to one decimal point until the gap becomes large enough for the researcher to be sure that there is a real difference.

Chapter 4 is largely based on legislation and government commissions and this is also problematic. Both reflect the interests of dominant classes (although as will be seen there were conflicting interests - the farmers usually wanted stricter control over labour than townspeople wanted) and to this extent reflect only one side of the class struggle. However, because domestic service was an important component in class domination, the emphasis on the legislation of the dominant classes reflects very real conditions for domestic workers.

The chapter on the experiences of domestic workers was intended to balance the "official" bias of previous chapters, but although some insightful sources were found, it was not possible to find the same amount of sources as were available for other chapters. Reasons for this have already been raised : domestic workers were unlikely to have had the time or inclination to record their feelings if they were literate, if such records were kept, class bias may have resulted in non-publication or non retention. Most documents held to be important have been written by male elites. Although newspapers sometimes gave colour to occurrences, they too suffered from various biases, not always evident. This chapter, then, suffers from conventional biases against studies of the working class and women which results in material just not being available.

Resistance is sometimes the only voice of oppressed people, but one cannot always assign defiant actions too much weight. Oppression does not necessarily lead to resistance; there has to be a political consciousness which can make links between immediate personal problems and the broader context. There was a large amount of information available on court convictions, but this was very difficult to use as there were usually merely total numbers of convictions listed without further qualification about the section of an Act under which a person was convicted (see Chapter 5 for more detailed discussion). Moreover, this type of defiance involved only a minority of domestic workers so for this, and a number of other reasons, nothing definitive could be said about open resistance to legislation.

There are both advantages and disadvantages in a sociologist without historical training doing historical research. Debates among historians may not be known so that the unwary sociologist may dance gaily through minefields without being aware of dangers. Furthermore, non historians do not always know the status of the sources used, thus deficient or dated sources may be used, others may be missed altogether. Contemporary researchers also sometimes suffer from historical blindness. An oversight which occurred in looking at early domestic service was that the existence of wet nurses among female slaves was forgotten - our knowledge of the present sometimes leads to oversights when looking at the past. On the other hand, this was not meant to be an exercise in historical research, but a sociological focus on domestic service in terms of class relations illuminated by historical research. This attempt to understand domestic service through using selective historical sources will hopefully excuse innocent blunders.

There are a number of reasons as to why historical research is important for sociology. Conventional analyses of South Africa's political economy were often sex blind and their statement of the problem would have differed from someone using a historical materialist approach. Conventional analyses can only be challenged through reinterpretation of the past and this has to be based on meticulous research.

Careful reconstruction of the past allows the development of historical materialist theory about South Africa. An accurate understanding of the past allows suitable strategies to be developed for liberation. Finally, historical research can fill gaps and correct oversights so that the experiences and significance of major groups of people are afforded the dignity of recognition. This will help to build histories and theories about the South African working class.

The sociological questions posed in this study of the importance of domestic service for class structure, changing class relations and mechanisms of class domination could not have been tackled without an

historical treatment of domestic service. For example the census data of Chapter 3 are used to try to locate groups of people within the changing social formation and the information of Chapter 4 attempts to detail changes in class domination. It is impossible to understand the present class structure without historical investigation of the forces that shaped the development of contemporary class relations.

On all these counts, an attempt to understand domestic service in its historical context seemed important and overdue.

9. A note on terms used

It is always a contradictory position to use government classifications of people when ideologically one does not accept those classifications. It is, however, impossible to avoid in South Africa where different groups of people had different experiences because they were perceived as different and treated differently under law and by custom. Government classifications of people on the basis of colour have thus been retained. To distance oneself from these arbitrary classifications, it has become custom to place the terms in inverted commas ("African", "Coloured", "White"). Constant use of inverted commas makes paragraphs cluttered, however. For reading ease, the inverted commas have been omitted despite the fact that in principle they should have been retained. The deficiencies of these "ethnic" classifications should always be borne in mind (for example "Asian" refers to groups with widely divergent cultures and origins). A more general and ambiguous term "colour group" is used to describe South Africans classified differently because of skin pigmentations rather than "race". "Race" is an arbitrarily imposed and static classification scheme that is not useful for explaining the biological complexities of South Africa's mixed and continually mixing gene pools, nor for explaining social aspects of inequality.

The term "Black" is used to refer to all South Africans who have been

disenfranchised or have never had a vote. "African" is used to refer to indigenous South Africans who mostly originated on the east coast of South Africa. "Black" is a term with the political intention of emphasising the common oppression of all colour groups in South Africa who are not classified White. ("Black" is never used in the way that the South African government now uses it to refer to "African" people.)

The more respectful term domestic worker is used in place of domestic servant although "servant" usually describes more accurately the servile conditions of work and real humiliations suffered by domestic workers.

The terms domestic service and domestic work can often be used interchangeably. However, more correctly, domestic service refers to a category of employment and domestic work refers to the actual work done. A person earns a wage for employment in domestic service, a housewife is not employed in domestic service. However, both domestic workers and housewives perform domestic work in their daily activities. Personal service is a broader census category within which domestic service falls (see Chapter 3 for detailed explanation). When referring specifically to census data it is necessary to be specific about whether one is referring to personal or domestic service. Generally, however, domestic service is used in discussion because it is domestic service which is of theoretical interest rather than the census category of personal service.

When necessary, other terms will be defined in the text.

CHAPTER 2

LABOUR CONDITIONS BEFORE 1841

1. Introduction

The history of domestic work moved through several distinct stages in changing class relations in the development of the Cape and Cape Town. The arrival of the Dutch East India Company in 1652 heralded the beginning of the struggles over land and labour with the indigenous people. In this process indigenous people were incorporated into the settler economy, often by force, through semi feudal farming arrangements and wage labour. Slavery was also introduced to provide labour. There were different class relations under slavery, during a transitory stage immediately before and after the abolition of slavery, and during a third stage after 1841 when domestic work was performed by formally "free" labourers (which also went through different stages). The nature of domestic service under slavery was in some ways similar to domestic service in later periods. However, it was only towards 1948 that Black women became trapped in domestic service and this was due to the way capitalism developed in South Africa and the class structures which resulted therefrom.

Although many people entered semi feudal relations with the colonisers, domestic service existed almost from the start of the Cape's colonial history. The close contact between employer and employee was one factor which affected class relations. By its nature (unequal relationship between employer and employee, the menial nature of the work), domestic service forced the indigenous population into a subordinate relationship with the settlers. In order to understand domestic service in South Africa, therefore, one must see it in the class context of a process of subordination and incorporation since it was often a first entry into wage labour. It is important to look at slavery in order to understand the early forms of domestic service. Aspects of slavery were adapted to

conditions of "free" labour - for example some provisions of slave codes were incorporated into later Masters and Servants Acts. Furthermore, since many slaves performed domestic work, attitudes towards slaves spilled over to attitudes towards "free" domestic workers.

Soon after Britain's second takeover of the Cape in 1806, the slave trade was abolished. Capitalism was developing in Britain and different labour patterns were emerging. To a certain extent different forms of labour control were foisted on the Cape. On the other hand, with Britain as the colonial power, the Cape was drawn more strongly into the world economy and labour needs changed in the Cape as well. An industrialising Britain imported raw materials, especially wool and food from the Cape. Cape farmers needed an enlarged labour force and this need was reflected in continual complaints of labour shortages. Slave labour could not be expanded to provide as much labour as the incorporation of a formally "free" labour force. The abolition of slavery and increased demands for labour led to changed patterns in the subordination of labour. Even before the abolition of slavery, there had been contracts for free labourers and early forms of pass laws. The abolition of slavery seemed to exacerbate the perennial labour shortages the Cape suffered from, thus Cape colonists were faced with an extreme labour shortage as well as a transition in their relations with labour. Due to the pressures discussed in this chapter, employers demanded ways of increasing their labour supply and also ways of controlling this labour. Early pass laws and labour contracts were built upon in the whole plethora of new laws controlling labour and the movement of labour which will be covered in chapter 4. The 1841 Masters and Servants Act has been taken as the most significant law in these changed labour relations after the abolition of slavery.

Aspects of labour supply which would emerge more strongly in later periods also originated in this period prior to 1841. The migration of what would later be called Africans to Cape Town and the southern Cape had begun slowly and there were also early attempts to foster White immigration to the Cape.

Thus the period just before 1841 was a period of transition in which slavery was abolished and the incorporation into wage labour of the indigenous population began to be intensified. This period also covered the increased influence exerted on the Cape by emerging capitalist needs in Britain which heightened demands for labour in the Cape. The period after 1841 covered the development of new forms of control over "free" labour via passes, contracts, Masters and Servants Acts, Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts (which to a certain extent built on earlier pass and contract laws). Domestic service formed part of the process of domination and control. In order to understand later forms of domestic service, it is necessary to trace the steps from slavery itself through the period of transition.

2. Arrival of Dutch settlers

People from Holland, dominated by mercantile capital, took control of the Cape in 1652. Conflict with the indigenous people living in the Cape began immediately. Settlers claimed land for themselves and this led to wars which ultimately dispossessed most of the indigenous people. Some fled further into the interior, epidemics of smallpox and measles killed many (Simons and Simons, 1969 : 12), others were "systematically exterminated" (Katzen, 1969 : 12), some became incorporated into the settler economy through exchanging sheep and cattle.

The settlers' attitudes to the indigenous population was encapsulated by the wars of extermination. They believed that the indigenous population was there to serve them : van Riebeeck suggested that the Khoisan¹ should be enslaved to provide labour for the settler community (Greenstein, 1973 : 28). The Council of Seventeen ordered van Riebeeck to drop this plan since such a move would exacerbate already uneasy and warlike relationships. Greenstein remarked that Khoisan labour could be obtained by means other than slavery anyway since by the middle of the

¹The general term Khoisan is used rather than KhoiKhoi and San since the distinction between the two was blurred, sometimes even in pre colonial times, and this makes contemporary distinctions problematic (Elphick, 1979 : 4; Newton King, 1980 : 200/201).

eighteenth century "the Hottentot population had been successfully reduced to a dependent, servile group whose only source of livelihood was employment in the Dutch colony" (1973 : 29). Thus from the start the settlers demonstrated ethnocentric racism, an arrogance in seizing land and labour and a belief in the indigenous peoples' inferiority (i.e. that they should serve).

From the Khoisan who had not fled or been killed, many women entered service with the settlers, a partial cause being the seizure of the indigenous women's previous means of livelihood by the settlers. One of the women, Eva, has become well known and her story is recounted by Laidler (1939 : 40-46). (Racist stereotypes have not been censored.) Although the exact time of her entry into service is unknown, she was already working for van Riebeeck's wife in 1654 which shows how quickly labour was secured. Eva was 14 when she was first employed and had a fairly long association with the Dutch settlers. She probably lived in the van Riebeeck household from 1658 until after 1660 and in that time learnt Dutch, wore European clothes and "laboriously attempted cleanliness" (!) With her knowledge of two languages she became an interpreter for the Dutch settlers and was used by them to further their goals among the indigenous people - not that the Khoisan were taken in by this ploy. From a description of her reception, she could hardly have been trusted since the Khoisan apparently used to say, "Behold the advocate of the Hollanders. She is coming to tell her people some stories and will later perhaps betray them all". Eva appears to have adapted to the settlers' lifestyle since she began helping entertain visitors and married a surgeon called van Meerhof. However, it is reported that she eventually went "bad" (in the terms of the account), got drunk, slept around and was restricted by the Dutch. Whether this is in fact true, whether the Dutch had other reasons for keeping her out of the way, or whether she suffered from conflicting loyalties from the contradictions between her old and new lifestyles cannot now be ascertained. She died in 1674 aged 31. Meer too romantically saw Eva as the "mother" of the "Coloured" people who sought to unite two cultures, both by her marriage and by her diplomacy (1975 : 34-36).

Eva was an exceptional person both in terms of most domestic workers' lives and in terms of the period of colonial history in which she lived. However, indigenous people entered domestic service from early on in the colonial history though with more menial careers than Eva had.

3. Slavery

A brief description of slavery in the Cape will be given in order to see how the experience of slavery was incorporated into the treatment of domestic workers. There were, however, vast differences in the form of domestic work under slavery and in the following period of "free" labour.

The slaves in the Cape came from many parts of the world : from Dutch possessions in the East Indies, Madagascar, Mozambique and West Africa. Although slaves had been requested earlier, large shipments only arrived in 1658 (Greenstein, 1973 : 29) - slaves were thus a part of the Cape economy almost from the start of the Dutch occupation.

The slave population in Cape Town grew quickly. In 1657 there was a total of 134 white settlers and 8 slaves at Cape Town. In 1691 there were 1 000 white settlers and 383 slaves. In 1763 the slave and settler population were roughly equal at 3 250 people each. By 1805 various groups were enumerated separately and there were 6 273 "Europeans", 1 130 free blacks and "Asiatics", 9 129 slaves and 452 "Hottentots". In 1827 there were 8 799 Whites, 1 738 free blacks, 6 222 slaves (all these population figures from Laidler, 1926 : 204).

The slave population did not appear to be entirely self reproducing and had to be supplemented by newly imported slaves (Rayner, 1981 : 6). Fertility rates were reduced by bad diet, hard labour and constant wet nursing (Worden, 1982 : 124ff.); there was also a preference for male slaves which led to a low female : male ratio which also reduced reproduction (Worden, 1982 : 110). Labour shortage was thus inherent in slavery in the Cape. There also seems to have been a relatively high

death rate among young and old from sickness¹, from unsanitary conditions in their living quarters, from fires in overcrowded living quarters and from general overwork (slave deaths increased in times of booms in production) (Rayner, 1981 : 24). Rayner quoted a wealthy wine farmer, Pieter Laurens Cloete who wrote to the Governors Council in 1826

"It is about ten years since I concentrated my agricultural views at Zandvliet, where I brought together about sixty or seventy slaves, almost all young, healthy, and of the best description. I experienced no particular calamities from dangerous or epidemic diseases ... and have suffered no other than the usual contingencies and accidents incidental on extensive farming; and yet during that period I have lost no less than twenty-eight slaves, young and old" (1981 : 24).

Because of slave deaths and continual labour shortages, slave owners were eager to obtain the services of children born to women in slavery. According to Laidler (1939 : 101), slave children started work at 10 years old. (By this he probably meant a full working day because children younger than this were sure to have been given jobs to do or to help their mothers.) There was also enforced labour for the children of "free" mothers which was a forerunner of later apprenticeship laws. Children born of these women were supposedly reared "at the mother's employer's cost until of use in service, when usually they were tempted away by someone else. So the burghers petitioned that such children be apprenticed to them for a period of years in order to reimburse them" (Laidler, 1939 : 99). The children of slaves or employees represented a "captive" potential source of labour for employers. Enforced labour for these children was introduced before 1841, but after 1841 when labour shortages continued with increasing severity, enforced labour of children of employees was entrenched in numerous laws (see chapter 4).

The restrictions placed on slaves illustrate the minimal amount of

¹For example in 1713 a smallpox epidemic which began among the washerwomen of the slave lodge killed 200 out of 570 slaves and nearly a quarter of the white population (Laidler, 1926 : 66).

freedom slaves had. Although the restrictions applied to "owned" people are extreme, they also represent the attitudes towards people doing menial jobs and several aspects can be recognised in racist and classist attitudes towards domestic workers today. There were a myriad of restrictions placed on slaves' behaviour, such as not being allowed to enter the Christian cemetery, the government garden without their master, or the church or its porch at the end of a service, not to whistle in the streets or to gamble, so as not to disturb the worthy owners at their daily activities (Theal, 1905 : 136/7). Several prohibitions reflected the fear the owners felt that slaves might "run amok" or "riot" or conspire among themselves to rise against their oppression. This represented the underlying fear often felt of servants by employers in close physical proximity with each other.¹ Thus there were prohibitions on carrying weapons except in the presence of their masters, of being out at night after 11 pm without a pass from their masters ("even with a light!"), of "making signals in the streets at night to their confederates", of being in groups of more than three during the day if they worked for different masters etc. etc. (Theal, 1905 : 137). That slaves did rebel and sometimes kill their masters is evident in several accounts : Lady Anne Barnard reported that the son of her butcher was killed by his slave "in revenge for having been refused liberty to go out on Sunday, though it was not his turn to do so" (1901 : 78). This particular slave also tried to kill his mistress and succeeded in stabbing one of her slaves. Retribution was swift - having been wounded, he was caught and hanged an hour later.

Slaves were not allowed to wear footwear as a sign of their slavery (Botha, 1962 : 295). A further indication of their subordination, mixed with owners' fear was the regulation whereby "slaves were made liable to immediate apprehension and punishment by flogging if found to have willfully pushed against a European of the lowest class, or a person descended from him, and the owner if present was bound to satisfy the

¹A more contemporary example is the "Swart Gevaar" panic at its extreme in the Witwatersrand but also felt in Cape Town round about 1914 (see chapter 5) when employers feared rape and poisonings from domestic workers.

person offended by the punishment of the slave" (Theal, 1905 : 136). The basis of these restrictions was the control of slave labour and the prevention of resistance. The control was often quite crude and violent reflecting the violence of the times. Like modern day laws controlling labour with racist elements, these restrictions also had petty elements reflecting the contempt felt for people in menial positions and the contempt for that person's autonomy (this will be elaborated on in chapter 5).

There were also some contradictions. For instance slaves were not allowed to sell or barter their clothes yet slaves were allowed to work as hawkers who sold goods on their masters' behalf (Theal, 1905 : 137).

Punishments for slaves were swift and harsh. Mowbray's previous name was Driekoppen which remembered the severed heads of three slave murderers who were placed on show as a grisly warning to other slaves. A master could punish a slave for "domestic offences" such as carelessness, neglect of duty, impudence, dishonesty, drunkenness, by giving not more than 39 cuts with a weapon (Botha, 1962 : 294). (These offences were later incorporated into Masters and Servants Acts.) Permission could be obtained for slaves to be placed in irons to prevent desertion (Greenstein, 1973 : 35). Punishment by the courts was also harsh - torture was often used to obtain confessions. Mentzel noted, however, that torture only seemed to have been used for slaves (Greenstein, 1973 : 37). (Torture and breaking prisoners on the wheel as punishment were abolished in 1797.)

Nominally, slaves were allowed some redress. Ill treatment could be reported to the police and a guilty master punished, slaves could also be sold if a master broke regulations (Greenstein, 1973 : 37). This apparent contractual equality would later be incorporated in the "liberal" Masters and Servants Acts (see chapter 4). In practice of course, masters held the power as the regulations show in the first place. Greenstein noted that "the only real restriction on cruelty towards slaves was the financial loss that a master would suffer were he

to kill or permanently disable one of his slaves (1973 : 37). A Guardian of Slaves appointed in 1826 was not particularly sympathetic to slaves' problems. Desertions of slaves were fairly common (there were frequent references to the use of the slopes of Table Mountain by groups of refugee slaves) and courts were not merciful to slaves caught after deserting. Pleas of ill treatment were often disregarded out of hand. Phillips quoted a magistrate who told a slave that such claims only served to aggravate the slave's position; the Guardian of Slaves said of another case "that this was clearly another to be added to the melancholy list of groundless complaints with which he was sorry to waste the time of the Court" (Phillips, 1980 : 7).

There was inherent tension in slavery due to the inability of the labour force to reproduce itself which necessitated changes in labour supply if economic development were to continue. Class relations were violent and crude. Ownership of a person allowed extreme forms of control, but violence towards the working class and humiliating restrictions on the behaviour of "servants" continued after the abolition of slavery. Slavery laid the foundation for these violent and humiliating methods of controlling menial workers and the powerlessness of domestic workers and close contact with employers made them especially subject to these measures of control after the abolition of slavery.

4. Slave duties

Early household units probably did not always employ specialised labour, thus slaves would have performed all duties required of them including housework. Specialisation could only develop with increased supplies of labour. Cape Town as an urban area would have been more likely to have had more slaves who specialised in domestic work - slave duties will be discussed mostly in the context of Cape Town.

In the absence of today's conveniences like sewerage and electricity, to mention only two, slaves' duties were arduous. Yet some urban householders of the time appeared to employ quite large numbers of

slaves in their houses. Ross quoted de Jong as saying "... I believe that, except for the least substantial burghers, there are many houses, large and small, where ten or twelve (slaves) are to be found" (1980 : 7). Obviously, poorer households could not have employed so many slaves, yet even taking into account exaggerations, some households seemed well served by slaves.

Among the householders who had numerous slaves, domestic chores were divided up minutely. The de Jong quotation above continued as follows :

"One or two have to go out each day to fetch wood, which takes all day. If the mistress leaves the house, there must be two for the sedan chair. The slave who is cook has an assistant in the kitchen. One does the dirtiest work every day ... and two are house slaves. Many Cape women do not gladly sleep without a maid in the room, and thus one is kept for this and, better clothed than the others, also has the job of lady's maid and carries the Psalm Book behind on visits to church. If there are children, each has a maid, although sometimes two daughters share. Small children need one to themselves. This is without one who washes and makes the beds, a seamstress and a knitter, as three or four are always kept busy that way, and I still have none for the stable" (Ross, 1980 : 7).

This quite extraordinary (though perhaps exaggerated) list is borne out to some extent by other accounts. For instance Botha said that when the family went to church, "a slave girl followed the mistress carrying her hymn-book, another held her umbrella while a third bore a footstool (1962 : 295). Because several households went to church in this way and the slaves waiting outside sometimes became "unruly", the regulation discussed earlier against slaves entering the church or its porch or making a noise during the service arose. Still other accounts refer to slaves providing musical entertainment after their daily chores (Botha, 1962 : 189) and a visitor to Groot Constantia reported that its owner

Hendrik Cloete who took over the farm on his father's death in 1799 "was awakened in the morning by a concert of 15 of his slaves, trained in music, who gathered outside his window, some singing a song of greeting, while others accompanied them on various instruments" (Kuttel, 1954 : 30). Similar reminiscences about the opulent and idle life style of the colonists abound. It probably reflected the insulated nature of the Cape in the time before capitalism developed when such a large amount of labour could be used in unproductive work.

There is no doubt that household tasks were arduous even if there were many domestic slaves. Wood for fuel had to be fetched every day and slaves had to go far afield for this; Camps Bay was mentioned, so was Table Mountain. Slaves using Table Mountain were able to help runaway slaves, however, and after a Company official was killed by rebellious slaves, Table Mountain was declared out of bounds and the Company made one of its own timber reserves available (Ross, 1980 : 9).

Feeding the household was also strenuous without the availability of commercially made bread and butter and other foodstuffs. Renata Coetzee (1977) provided a fascinating reconstruction of daily tasks, methods of preserving foods, how bread was baked without temperature gauges on ovens (there were usually two baking days a week, the slaves eating barley or rye bread and the owners the less nutritious white bread!) (1977 : 59), daily dairy duties and the churning of butter, the busy days in the fruit season when fruit was turned into jams and chutneys, the making of boerewors and soap candles. Coetzee provided the recipes of the day which gave all sorts of interesting insights, including how jellies were made without commercial gelatin. Many slaves were reputedly excellent cooks and the Malay slaves introduced dishes such as bobotie, sosaties, bredies to the Cape.

Coetzee's description of a typical day's meals (rising to tea and rusks, breakfast with venison, meat or fish, midday meal the same variety of meats with vegetables and fruit, "tea" at 4pm with preserves or pastries, dinner with the same selection as midday, or perhaps a bredie,

with fruit and bread and before going to sleep brandied fruits or wine, which had also been drunk with and before other meals (1977 : 80/81) must certainly kept the slaves busy and if the burghers really ate meals of that nature every day they must have been uniformly obese! It is highly unlikely that the slaves ate as well. Botha mentioned that slaves' food was "mostly of mutton, potatoes, rice and scrappings from the table" (1962 : 294). Apart from the food related tasks, there was also washing and ironing done without the benefits of running hot water and electric irons. According to Coetzee, table manners were quite elaborate which necessitated cleaning of cutlery, linen and ornaments (1977 : 78/80).

Slaves undertook a lot of childcare for the colonists even to the extent of breastfeeding babies. In this way, colonists' children internalised dominant class attitudes (see chapter 5 for a fuller discussion). A reference of Botha concerning slaves and child care raises two attitudes towards slaves that have remained in attitudes towards domestic workers today. The first observation is that children learnt a "domineering" attitude towards the people who cared for them thereby reproducing relations of production (dominance and subordination); the second is condescension and the cliché that slaves/domestic workers are "part of the family" - "Many ayahs became very attached to their little charges to whom they were afterwards given in ownership by the parents. Sometimes the young master or mistress emancipated the slave girl for her faithful services and she frequently nursed their children and grandchildren" (1962 : 178). In reality, manumissions were rare (Greenstein, 1973 : 40).

Some of the domestic slaves were highly skilled as references to expert cooks and musicians bears out. The previously mentioned Cloetes of Groot Constantia had one slave who was a tailor "who was kept busy making two suits a year of blue "Baftas" for each slave, as well as sewing for the household" (Kuttel, 1954 : 33). However, Worden noted that skilled slaves were only trained on the largest of Cape homesteads (1982 : 236) thus the majority of slaves performed more menial labour.

Ross provided greater detail of the range of occupations performed by slaves (1980). He said slaves performed three major categories of tasks. The first was domestic service, already discussed. The second category was the performance of productive labour. Apart from market gardeners almost all in this category were either craftsmen or fishermen. Ross believes that in the eighteenth century slaves dominated the skilled occupations in the Cape and quoted Burchell who visited Cape Town in 1811 as saying about the Malays¹

"The males are taught to be carpenters, cabinet makers, masons, shoemakers, tailors, cooks, coachmen, valets or handicraftsmen, while the females fill the station of mantua-maker, cook, nurse or of various other domestic servants" (1980 : 9).

As far as fishing went, "At least early in the eighteenth century the fishing community working Table Bay was made up of small men owning ships which were manned very largely by other peoples' slaves (Ross, 1980 : 10). The third category of work performed by slaves, and which was largely in their hands in Cape Town, was the retail trade, particularly of foodstuffs (Ross, 1980 : 10). As with the other skilled occupations, slaves turned their proceedings over to their masters.

Although the range of occupations performed was wide, slaves had severe restrictions placed on their movements and of course remained slaves all their lives. The number of manumissions was not high (there were 1 075 cases of emancipation in the eighteenth century, mostly in Cape Town itself) (Ross, 1980 : 12), and though some slave women married free men, this could not have been a common occurrence since van Riebeeck, and probably subsequent governors, was opposed to "mixed" marriages (Laidler, 1939 : 18). Female slaves were subject to a possible further

¹Perhaps the distinction between skilled and unskilled should be made on urban/rural grounds rather than "ethnic" grounds? (This would require further research.)

humiliation because of their sex and that was prostitution. Rape demonstrates to the rapist his "superiority", it also represents a lack of respect for that woman's personhood; it often serves as a means of "putting her in her place". Today, one sees newspaper reports of employers having sexual intercourse with their "servants". Due to unequal power relations, few of these cases can represent willing participation by the women. It represents the way domestic workers are seen by their employers, there to "serve" and "submit" in what ever way the employers demand; the sex of the domestic worker can only compound her oppression. Prostitution was apparently fairly common among female slaves, despite Company punishment for any whites caught transgressing the prohibition. Ross quoted Mentzel's description of the 1730s :

"Female slaves are always ready to offer their bodies for a trifle; and toward evening, one can see a string of soldiers and sailors entering the lodge where they misspend their time until the clock strikes nine. After that hour no strangers are allowed to remain in the lodge. The Company does nothing to prevent this promiscuous intercourse, since, for one thing, it tends to multiply the slave population and does away with the necessity of importing fresh slaves" (Note that it was said earlier that the slave population did not reproduce itself in large enough numbers to rule out the need for fresh imports.) (Ross, 1980 : 6).

Ross discovered no evidence that the money obtained from prostitution had to be turned over to the slave owners (1980 : 11).

The attitudes of owners towards slaves is reflected, in some respects, in contemporary attitudes towards domestic workers. There were numerous complaints about drunkenness, though this might have been as a result of the dop system or lack of other leisure activities if the extent of the drunkenness was in fact true. Malay slaves were apparently prized because as Moslems, they did not drink (Mayson, 1970 : 12). Owners complained of laziness and insolence. There were constant reports of

stealing.

These attitudes represent racist and classist stereotypes which remain today. They also represent the struggle between the owners/employers and the employees. Domestic workers have very few weapons at their disposal beyond "insolence" or non-cooperation and petty thieving and like any people in a disadvantaged position, these weapons may be used, whether consciously or not.

There were similarities between the lives of slaves (particularly those working in domestic work) and present day domestic workers. Household duties remain very similar, conditions were only more arduous earlier. However, the appearance of similarity should not be taken too far. Ross concluded his section on the occupations of slaves by stating "Moreover, fishing, domestic service and skilled crafts have continued to form major sectors employing the so-called "coloured" descendants of the slaves, almost until today" (1980 : 11). Ross is incorrect in making this statement. Simplistically this might appear to be true, but in reality, the form of domestic work has changed vastly and therefore different pressures have forced oppressed women into this sector. Before the mass migration of people to Cape Town starting around the twentieth century, it is clear that slave descendants did work in the same sectors as their ancestors. For instance, laundering was originally done by slaves in mountain streams. Long after emancipation the Platteklip and Capel streams passing through District Six from Devil's Peak were still used by washerwomen where they scrubbed linen with green pinecones (Manuel et al, 1967 : 47). (See chapter 5 for a discussion of twentieth century washerwomen.)

Slaves were subject to a different type of control from "free" labourers who were forced into wage labour because they had lost other means of survival. In the period before 1841, domestic work was either performed by slaves or was often the first entry into wage labour of indigenous people in a process of incorporation and subordination. In the later

periods of this thesis, prior to 1948, a system of cheap Black male labour had been entrenched and this left women without means of support (due mostly to land shortage) no other alternative other than domestic service because their labour was not required elsewhere. "Coloured" people may still have predominated in ex-slave occupations, but the context in which this work was performed and the pressures forcing people into these sectors was completely different.

5. Emancipation of slaves

The period just before and after the abolition of slavery in the Cape was a transitory phase from a phase of coercive labour relations to the next stage where increased supplies of labour were sought from the largely untapped indigenous population, yet there still had to be adequate controls over labour. Labour shortages worsened with the closure of the slave trade in 1807 which forced the colonists to look to the indigenous population for labour supplies. Juridical intervention was seen to be necessary to secure an adequate supply of labour from the indigenous population. Although the violence found under slave ownership remained to some extent, class relations changed to encompass more legal measures to control labour mobility and to force people into wage labour and contracts to bind wage labourers (in this instance a movement to more capitalist relations). New measures of control were developed to a fuller extent after 1841 starting with the Masters and Servants Act to control labour and the Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts to obtain a labour supply (discussed in chapter 4). Long before 1841, however, the first forms of control via contracts and passes over large numbers of the indigenous population (not only wage labourers) began to be developed and this is what is discussed in this section. Labour shortages and the emancipation of slaves did not lead to the abolition of domestic service. Domestic service was the first experience of wage labour for large numbers of people (see chapter 3 - domestic service was the third largest source of employment after agriculture and industry in the Cape between 1875 and 1946). Because of the unequal power relations in domestic service, people were incorporated into wage labour in a

subordinated position and domestic service was therefore important in class domination.

Rayner believes that the emancipation of slaves in the Cape was borne out of two pressures. Firstly, the British state was evolving into new forms. There was the need to consolidate control of private property in the hands of the bourgeoisie and to contain British working class militancy. To this end, there was a move away from more coercive measures of labour control towards control through education and the instilling of values of Christian morality, hard work and diligence. To a certain extent, these developments within Britain were imposed from outside on the Cape as a British colony. The second pressure arose from within the Cape. A large proportion of the labour force in the Cape had been obtained from slavery and from other coercive measures (such as forced indenturing of "Prize Negroes" - people "saved" from captured slave ships after the slave trade had been closed, but before emancipation¹). The British takeover of the Cape had drawn that Colony into a world economy with the potential for an increased demand for raw materials, particularly wool and food, to fuel British industrialisation. Coercive labour was unlikely to be able to support the expansion in the Cape economy since there were already labour shortages and there was the realisation among some slave owners at least "that labour could be secured more cheaply where it was ostensibly free" (Rayner, 1981 : 29).

In 1802 de Mist in his recommendations on the government of the Cape had advised the incorporation of the indigenous people into wage labour. "If the aborigines and former natives of the Cape were not treated with such consistent cruelty by the colonists, it would easily be possible, with their voluntary assistance, to do without the slaves which are at

¹Between 1808 and 1816 about 2 000 liberated Africans - "Prize Negroes" were released in the Cape to enter apprenticeships which according to Lady Duff Gordon were "a name for temporary slavery" (quoted by Saunders, 1979(c) : 161). People were still landed in later years - in the 1840s most of the over 1 000 liberated Africans were still having to enter apprenticeships (Saunders, 1979(a) : 132).

present considered so necessary (1920 : 251). To this end, he warned that "it will also be necessary to refrain from stealing their cattle, and rousing them to acts of vengeance" (1920 : 254). Furthermore, "We believe it to be of great economic value to the State to open up trading relations with the Kaffirs, to however small a degree. All reports agree on this point, that they are by nature a docile and peace-loving people an increase in the necessaries of life helps in the progress of civilization" (1920 : 246).

Prior to emancipation there was increased state intervention in master/slave relations as a prelude to the greater changes that were to occur. From relatively unrestrained punishments by masters, a Guardian of Slaves was appointed, owners had to justify punishments to magistrates and punishment record books were to be kept. These were some changes (although only in degree) to the coercive relations. This could have been prompted by high death rates of slaves (already referred to). The physical well being of slaves was particularly important after the closure of the slave trade when the slave population could not be reproduced by importing new slaves and labour shortages worsened (Newton King, 1980 : 180/181). Marriages between slaves were to be allowed and this emphasis on stable family lives could also have been an attempt to allow for better reproduction of the labour force. State intervention provided a transition in control from largely individualised coercive relations to the legal control which incorporated larger numbers of the indigenous population which existed in the next stage.

In 1827, the census report recorded 6 222 slaves out of a total of 16 959 people in Cape Town (Laidler, 1926 : 205). The wardmaster's report of 1824 was more interesting since it also recorded the number of people who were apprenticed :

8 246	White
1 870	free Blacks
656	apprentices or prize slaves
520	Hottentots
7 076	slaves
<hr/>	
18 368	
<hr/>	

(Laidler, 1939 : 457). (Since there is a difference between the figures in this report and the previous figures quoted, this report could have referred to greater Cape Town.)

Slavery was to cease after 1 December, 1834. At 30 November 1834 there were 39 021 slaves in the Cape Colony (21 613 men and 17 408 women) and 5 731 children under six years old.

Conditions for the emancipated slaves did not change very much since all emancipated slaves over six years old became "apprenticed" to their former owners for four years which in effect was a retention of the slave labour force. Simons and Simons point out that Ordinance 1 of 1835 which was supposedly intended to prepare slaves for freedom, allowed the imposition of punishments far harsher than those allowed under the slave laws (1969 : 18). Although the list of punishable behaviour contained many of the earlier restrictions placed on slaves' behaviour, it was also a forerunner of the restrictions to be listed in the Masters and Servants Acts.

Government compensation for slaves ranged from pound 65-0-4 3/4 for headpeople on farms to pound 5-13-8 for "aged diseased or otherwise non-effective" - of whom there were 892 out of the total of 35 745 compensations (Hengherr, 1953 : Appendix A). Within the range of compensations given by Hengherr, tradesmen were relatively high; 5 239 head domestic servants were compensated for at pound 47-4-3 3/4 each and 9 860 "inferior" domestic servants at pound 29-7-6 1/2.

Hengherr believes that the Cape government did not make adequate preparations for emancipation (1953 : 72/3). The Cape had no Poor Law and this left old or sickly freed slaves in a particularly vulnerable position and, as can be seen from the compensation figures, the number was not insubstantial.

When the system of forced apprenticeship ended on 1st December 1838, the Cape farmers entered a a period of labour shortages. Many ex slaves

moved to the towns, some obtained land of their own to farm, others sought better conditions elsewhere. The S.A. Commercial Advertiser of 20 February 1839 reported that "Farmers of all sorts, wine, corn and cattle farmers, in most, if not in all the western districts of the Colony, find their operations checked by the disappearance of their ordinary laborers. It is become difficult to secure even domestic servants" (Hengherr, 1953 : 86). Farmers reported that they needed two to six times more employees than they were able to entice into service "and several agriculturalists threatened to trek rather than remain to face ruin and the abandonment of agriculture which it was believed would result from the labor deficiency" (Hengherr, 1953 : 91). According to Hengherr (1953 : 73) some farmers offered their ex slaves bribes to enter apprenticeships - they also tried to bribe other farmers' workers; this was a "fairly common practice by which the colonists were irritated" (Hengherr, 1953 : 88). The labour shortages caused by the migration of slaves from their former masters was exacerbated by epidemics of smallpox and measles in 1839-40 (Simons and Simons, 1969 : 19).

The labour shortages led to accusations that farmers themselves were to blame for their inability to attract workers because of the low wages and poor conditions of work they offered. Farmers responded that compared with English wages, the "wages demanded were exorbitant" (Hengherr, 1953 : 92). Without further research, it is not certain whether wages did rise in response to the shortage of labour. Simons and Simons reference J.S. Marais that the "mean cash wage of agricultural workers in the western Cape rose from ten to fifteen shillings a month in the forties and the customary wine ration was also increased" (1969 : 19). Hengherr, on the other hand, from a comparison of wages in Blue Books and from newspaper articles said that "in spite of the assertion of farmers, there is no evidence that the rate had risen, except for mechanics ..." (1953 : 92/3). Later he said, "After 1838, then, it was only the artizan and domestic servant who earned more in comparison to pre-1838 wages. The rise in the rate of the latter -

in Cape Town a servant could earn up to 60/- a month plus board and lodging - was the only instance where scarcity forced up the wage of a laboring group" (Hengherr, 1953 : 93 - unfortunately he does not give his source). Perhaps the shortage of labour did only result in higher wages in the towns since Theal also referred to the migration to towns of former slaves where the townspeople were only too glad to obtain their services and paid high wages for the pleasure (1926 : 192). Manuel mentioned that freed slaves moved into houses in what was to be called District Six so that by the time this area was named in 1867, it was already overcrowded (1967 : 1).

One proposed solution to the shortage of labour was to encourage the immigration of new White settlers. Drives for White immigrants often took place in South Africa's colonial history - sometimes they were attempts to obtain skilled labour, often to obtain domestic workers and sometimes they were prompted by racism.

As with later periods (discussed in chapter 4), there were difficulties in obtaining White immigrants to supplement the labour force in the period before 1841. Over the period investigated by Hengherr (1830-1843), the Cape received an annual average of only 219 immigrants (1953 : 98). These immigrants did not always help to solve the labour problems either - "Instead of being the laborers and domestics the Colony wanted, they were discharged soldiers or people with no definite trade" (Hengherr, 1953 : 105). White servants tended to offer fierce resistance to exploitative conditions and in 1818 Somerset issued a proclamation which was designed to prevent desertion of White servants and apprentices (Newton King, 1980 : 185). Child immigrants were seen as a possible solution since they were adaptable both to a new lifestyle and to immediate gaps in the labour market. The "Children's Friend Society" was established in England in 1830 "to provide homes for destitute children" (Hengherr, 1953 : 99) and over roughly nine years 750 children were sent to the Cape where they usually entered a six-year apprenticeship, under which they were to be taught a trade as well as receive some general education. The indenture of these children cost

their masters 7 - 9 pounds which was relatively cheap and was another reason for their popularity (Hengherr, 1953 : 99). The immigration of children was stopped in 1839, however, because of rumours in England of ill treatment - rumours which Theal dismissed except in proved cases! (1926 : 194). There were other "creative" attempts to secure labour. One case was in 1827 where citizens were appalled at the increase of immorality because women were no longer subject to corporal punishment or the treadmill (!). In response, it "was decided to institute a Bridewell where women of loose character could be kept hard at work until they were sent to remote parts of the Colony as servants" (Laidler, 1926 : 160). This was not an isolated case in the history of domestic service that "immoral", poor, or orphaned women were trained in domestic work.

White immigration never had a significant impact on domestic service in the Cape. There were always White women who were employed as domestic workers, but even in the early years they never constituted more than 9% of all domestic workers in the Cape (all Whites were never more than 15% of all domestic workers) - see chapter 3. White immigration was never a success, then, in solving shortages of domestic workers or even other shortages. It was highly optimistic to believe that White immigration could ever solve such shortages - such hopes could only have arisen out of the racism existing in the Cape. Because of the colour structure, White domestic workers probably usually held the higher status, more skilled and better paying jobs in domestic service. It would seem reasonable to suppose that for the White women who came to South Africa, domestic work was seldom a long term job. A "good marriage" (Cock, 1980 : 189,190) was often the exit (in theory, though not necessarily in practice). Thus, for White women, domestic work was often a temporary job since they were able to move on to other jobs or options (chapter 3 contains a fuller discussion). Ultimately, the colonists were forced to look to the indigenous population for a supply of domestic workers since the crux of the domestic service problem revolved around the incorporation of the indigenous population despite continued attempts to

import White domestic workers.

Child immigration having been curtailed and adult immigration not providing the volume of people hoped for, the indigenous population had to be the major source of labour. New measures of control had to be adapted to the incorporation into wage labour and control of the untapped indigenous population not a captive slave population. These measures of control became fully developed after 1841, but juridically the later laws did not arise out of thin air. Some measures of controlling the indigenous population will be discussed now in order to understand the legal precedents for the post 1841 legislation.

One of the earlier laws applying to the indigenous population (excluding the attempts by the earliest Dutch settlers to obtain a labour supply) occurred after 1799. Inhabitants of Graaff Reinet revolted against British rule and the supposed partiality the administration exhibited towards Black inhabitants of the Cape. When British troops were sent to quell the revolt, Khoisan farm workers joined the troops against their masters. Afterwards when the farm workers were ordered to surrender their arms, they refused and joined Xhosa troops who were attempting to repel the settlers. The British administration was faced with a revolt by Khoisan people on the frontier as well as a war against the Xhosa. The British sought to "buy off" the Khoisan in order to avert a firm alliance between Xhosa and Khoisan people. This was done by the promise of land and better treatment on farms. As part of this, any farm labour contract of more than three months was to be registered. The labour regulations were adopted by the Batavian administration during their short rule as well. Simons and Simons summarised the effects of these regulations as laying the basis for future labour legislation as well as giving the Khoisan some legal protection; they quoted Walker (History of Southern Africa) as saying "Under this growing rule of law, most of the Hottentots took service, and not only ceased to be a peril to the Colony, but in due course became a reinforcement to it against the Kaffirs" (Simons and Simons, 1969 : 14). The practice of contracts for domestic and farm workers was to be greatly extended.

When British administration returned to the Cape after Batavian rule, Caledon's proclamation of 1 November 1809 contained some important clauses : including some protective clauses for servants, strict pass laws were to be applied to Khoisan and labour contracts of over a month had to be registered (Newton King, 1980 : 177). In effect, Khoisan were forced into continual service. On leaving one contract, the compulsory pass limited the time for finding new employment. An unemployed person could be jailed as a vagrant and forced into service anyway. There is "no doubt that the contracts made with the Hottentots under the circumstances just described were very disadvantageous to them" (Theal, 1905 : 317), nor was there adequate protection against the excesses of some masters (Theal, 1905 : 318).

These and the laws discussed in the following paragraphs represent the early forms of contracts and pass laws which were later built on after 1841. Two other proclamations dated 1812 and 1819 supplied farmers with further control over labour. The proclamation of 1812 allowed farmers to apprentice the children of their employees between the ages of 8 and 18 without remuneration. This was intended to repay the farmers for the costs of maintaining their employees' children, but of course they also gained access to new supplies of labour. Theal gave more rosy reasons : "The apparent object of this proclamation was to give permanency to the residence of Hottentot children with the farmers after the former had attained an age at which their services could be useful, and to afford an opportunity of receiving instruction (1905 : 321).

The 1812 proclamation was extended in 1819 to include the apprenticeship of orphans. The conservative Theal fully recognised the implications of these two proclamations :

"From the general demand for labour that has existed at the Cape, and from the habits which seem to have prevailed at an early period among the Dutch settlers of detaining the children of the Hottentots, there has been no reluctance in the former to avail themselves of the opportunities which

these laws, especially the last, have afforded of increasing the number of unpaid labourers on their estates" (1905 :321).

There is no doubt that farmers did use the opportunities they were offered. With the exclusion of a few districts, between 1812 and 1823, 3 933 Khoisan children were born; 2 295 of these children were apprenticed (Theal, 1905 : 321). The indentures made provision for adequate food and clothing for the apprentice, that the apprentice should be "instructed in the principles of the Christian religion" as well as receive instruction in "agriculture or other useful employment (Theal, 1905 : 321). These provisions were incidental to the major aim to obtain labour.

It seems that landdrosts frequently relaxed the necessary conditions under which children were eligible for apprenticeship and Theal gave several examples of landdrosts who "supported the master's pretensions to the services of Hottentot children on very slight grounds, extending the application of the powers with which the proclamation of 1819 invested them in the case of unprotected children, to such as required no protection (Theal, 1905 : 323). It is not solely contemporary theoretical sensibilities that allows one to speak of extension of control over labour and its abuses, since dissenting voices of the time also spoke of abuses. The landdrost of Graaff Reynet denied that farmers had any rights to the labour of their employees' children since it was clear to him that "by the low wages the Hottentots have hitherto received, the trifling quantity of food their children may require is always taken into calculation in fixing their wages, so that unless the children are apprenticed with a view to afford them a better education than their parents are supposed capable of giving, the measure stands without any argument in its favour (Theal, 1905 : 327).

There was no great demand for skilled labour, so if these children had received some education, it was unlikely to have secured them better jobs than their parents. However, the rudimentary education of their

labour force would have assisted farmers in communication as well as providing better skilled farm labourers. A religious education could also have provided a more controllable labour force. These were ideological aspects of less coercive, but nonetheless expansive control over labour.

A letter from a Major William M. G. Colebrook of 14 May 1828 chronicled the extension of attempts to subordinate the indigenous population, the unpopularity of service contracts with employees and their resistance to the nature of the control being exerted over them.

"That the Contracts of Service have been generally unpopular with all Classes of free Servants, whether Europeans or Hottentots, is proved by the Regulations which have from time to time been applied to enforce them upon Europeans."

"As the Engagements of the Farmers with the Hottentots are for the most part on terms very unfavourable to the latter, considering the value of their labour throughout the Colony, it might certainly be expected that they would be inclined to consult their own interests and inclinations by refusing in some cases to renew them, and by seeking in others to evade them."

"The privilege of retaining their children as apprentices if they have been born on the farm and have resided for 8 years may in itself account for the inducement of the Hottentot to frequent removal, and his indisposition to engage beyond a short term" (All from Theal, 1905 : 206).

Ordinance 50 of 1828 repealed some of the offending conditions. The pass system for the Khoisan was lifted as was the risk of flogging for contravention of labour laws. Service contracts were reduced to one year and the approval of parents was needed for the apprenticeship of their children (Simons and Simons, 1969 : 16). The obtaining of parents' approval would still be subject to abuse, however. Hengherr

quoted the S.A. Commercial Advertiser of 9 January 1836 on the "wide spread" practice of "illegal apprenticing of coloured children on longterm indentures" (1953 : 74) and Ordinance 3 of September 1838 tried to tighten up on these continuing abuses. Newton King believed that Ordinance 50 attempted to increase labour supply by trying "to diminish and depoliticise" Khoisan resistance and thereby engender more stability (1980 : 197).

While Khoisan people obtained a reprieve from passes, 1828 also brought passes for Africans wanting to enter the Colony in search of service. "Hereupon numerous Kaffirs came over the boundary, professing to seek employment, but in most instances to wander about begging and looking for opportunities to steal" (Theal, 1926 : 11). The frontier colonists were "brought into a state of panic" and the admission of servants was suspended in 1829 with all "wandering about" without passes to be apprehended" (Theal, 1926 : 11).

Unlike the period of slavery, this period of transition concentrated on the incorporation of the indigenous population into wage labour. New forms of subordination via legal contracts and passes arose. Although the indigenous people that were forced in to wage labour were mostly Khoisan at this stage, passes were extended to Africans and in the period after 1841 control over Africans was expanded. Labour shortages were the pressures that led to these early laws which became more developed after 1841.

6. Conclusion

The Cape passed through various stages of labour control before 1841. The earliest colonial settlers entered into wars over land with the indigenous population. The loss of previous means of survival forced many of the indigenous population to enter semi feudal or wage relations with the settlers. The method of obtaining labour was obviously violent. The violence of the wars was echoed in the coercion of slavery

where the person of the slave was owned and where control often took violent forms. At this stage, the Cape consisted of small numbers of self sufficient farmers who were largely not influenced by the world economy since exports were low. Goods were imported, however, and the buying of slaves required a fair amount of money, so some surplus must have been made. Labour requirements were not large and were mostly supplied by slaves, although the slave labour force was not really self reproducing which led to an inherent tension in slavery.

It was attempted to give some insight into the experiences of slaves as well : the fear the settlers had of slave uprisings reflected in the restrictions on slaves' behaviour, the petty restrictions imposed with self righteous belief in their superiority by the more powerful group on the oppressed, the day to day activities of domestic slaves. Some female slaves bore a further burden of oppression and that was prostitution. Domestic service had its roots in slavery although it was explained that the context in which slavery and domestic service occurred were very different. Mechanisms arising from the class structure which trapped Black women in domestic service towards 1948 arose from the particular way capitalism developed. Many of the restrictions imposed on slaves were incorporated into Masters and Servants Acts which were promulgated after 1841. Slavery also introduced the apprenticeship of slaves' children which would be continued in other forms when slavery was abolished. A lot of the prejudices towards slaves and the fears of a suppressed group are reflected in attitudes towards people who serve today : domestic workers. Domestic work is not always merely a job where an employee carries out the instructions of an employer. Domestic work carries with it an ideological package of superiority/inferiority, power/dependency, contempt.

In the closing years of slavery, the Cape economy was emerging into new forms. More of the land was being farmed and this required more labour. Furthermore, Britain as the coloniser, demanded supplies of wool and food from the Cape thereby drawing the Cape into a world economy where

the Cape was affected by world prices and economic cycles. In order to meet Britain's demands, more labour was required. Slavery was not able to meet the requirements and the largely untapped indigenous population was the most obvious source of labour. Thus there was a transition from the violently coercive labour controls of slavery to a more subtle yet also highly effective control of formally "free" labourers. In part, the movement towards more subtle forms of control (though chapter 4 will show that violence still occurred) was enforced by Britain where there was a movement towards control through education, religion, family laws. However, a reflection of changes in Britain could only be a partial explanation for changes in the Cape - the Cape was not able to secure sufficient labour through slavery and had to develop new forms of obtaining and controlling large supplies of labour.

In the transition towards new and less violent forms of labour control, there was increased state intervention in the control of slaves : punishments were scrutinised and were theoretically subject to limitation, marriage between slaves was to be allowed. These allowed a more stable labour force, religion and its moral control was introduced and there was also an attempt to promote more healthy slaves who could not literally and figuratively be flogged to death.

Closure of the slave trade led to labour shortages. Immediately on the emancipation of slaves the "apprenticeships" secured labour, but on the expiry of these there were even more widescale labour shortages and many freed slaves moved to the towns. It was clear that new measures of control had to be formalised quickly and increased supplies of labour had to be found equally quickly. Immigration was one source of new labour that was tried and would continue to be pursued in future years, however, this would never solve labour shortages nor change the composition of domestic service. The largest supply of labour could only come from the indigenous population and measures to obtain this labour and to control it were contained in several new laws. The new laws built on earlier laws which had been applied to the indigenous

population. Initially it was mostly Khoisan people who were incorporated into wage labour but by 1841 all the indigenous population was included in the process of incorporation and subordination. The context of subordination thus shifted to an emphasis on the indigenous population (passes and the apprenticeship of children were two manifestations of this) and subordination and control of a formally free labour force took place within wage labour (contracts illustrated this).

Thus the pressing problems of the period after the abolition of slavery were an urgent need for hugely increased supplies of labour and with the abolition of slavery, new ways to control "free" workers. The needs were urgent because of the development of agriculture and because of the demand from abroad for Cape exports. These needs herald the laws developed after 1841, the most important being the Vagrancy Acts which forced people to accept almost any conditions of service offered to them in order to avoid arrest as "vagrants" and the Masters and Servants Acts which acted to control people already in wage labour. The Masters and Servants Acts were specifically concerned with domestic workers among other "servants". Since domestic work was often a first experience of wage labour, domestic service became dominated by Black people as they were incorporated into wage labour. People entering domestic service also entered a particularly subordinate relationship with their employers - domestic service was therefore central to class domination.

The next chapter examines which groups entered wage labour via domestic service and the changing composition of domestic service within the class structure.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMPOSITION OF DOMESTIC SERVICE WITHIN CHANGING EMPLOYMENT TRENDS EVIDENCED IN CENSUS REPORTS :

A SOCIOLOGICAL "INDEX" OF CLASS AND SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR IN THE CAPE AND CAPE TOWN

1. General introduction to the chapter

Large numbers of people have worked in domestic service from early in the Cape's colonial history. In order to make more definitive statements about domestic service in the Cape and Cape Town, it is necessary to know who was working in domestic service - what proportion of the domestic workers were male or female, which colour groups predominated, what changes took place. However, one can only understand domestic service within a context.

In order to understand why certain groups of people predominated in domestic service, it is necessary to look at employment patterns in the economy as a whole. This enables one to understand the range of employment opportunities in the economy according to its particular stage of development and also some of the forces which resulted in particular groups of people predominating in certain sectors. The preponderance of different groups of people in various sectors of the economy should provide pointers for understanding the colour and sexual division of labour within that social formation.

This chapter will attempt to locate groups of people within the social formation. By analysing employment patterns a partial sociological "index" of groups within the class structure will emerge.

The major source of information for this chapter has been government census reports of occupations. The census reports were invaluable for tracing changes in employment trends as well as giving detailed information on the composition of a particular sector of employment.

The census reports cannot be accepted entirely at face value, however.

Despite the fact that census reports can illustrate broad trends in employment patterns, they can only give a partial view of reality. Census reports are compiled by and for those in power and to this extent must give a one sided interpretation of a labour history. Figures supposedly cannot lie, yet the way those figures are collected and the way they are arranged can vary enormously. The fragmentation of the working class into different colour groups illustrates ruling class strategy. Other problems with the official nature of census reports have been well documented. Undercounting is one major problem and this is particularly true for Black people who may be trying to avoid detection by the government. Because domestic service offered jobs to people who were often on the margins of wage labour, or entering wage labour for the first time, domestic service was also liable to undercounting. Feminists have noted that domestic work performed by women without pay is overlooked in theory and in practice. To a certain extent, despite the fact that they earn wages, people working in domestic service are also overlooked. Domestic workers employed irregularly or not employed strictly as domestic workers only must also sometimes not have been counted. Census reports can, therefore, only give a partial overview of employment trends. An emphasis on census reports is in itself somewhat superficial and economistic - this chapter has to be related to other chapters.

There are also theoretical and political problems in using the government classifications of people in the census reports since it implies an acceptance of colour differences (see discussion in chapter 1). However, in South Africa it is difficult to avoid these distinctions since there were differences in the rates of incorporation into wage labour of the indigenous population. Differential treatment on the basis of colour is particularly evident with respect to Cape Town where entry into the city was made progressively more and more difficult for Africans.

Other difficulties with using census reports arise out of the compilation of the reports themselves. Boundaries of the Cape and Cape Town were progressively extended and although this could merely have led to larger numbers, what is more likely is that proportions in different sectors of employment changed as more agricultural regions were added to the Cape. Together with ideological problems with the identification of colour groups, there are practical problems as well : the geographical distribution of different colour groups varied over different parts of the Cape, classification schemes changed with changes in ruling ideology. In order not to suggest spurious accuracy, percentages calculated from census reports have been rounded off to the nearest whole figure. (See Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of problems with census reports and the methods used to try to be as consistent as possible.)

Census reports can illustrate the changes in employment options as industry developed. (This can, however, only be discussed on a superficial and generalised level as capital itself is not investigated.) Through the development of capitalism in South Africa viewed through the Cape, two main themes will be followed in this chapter :

1. As will be discussed in other chapters (especially chapter 4), domestic service was a point of incorporation for large numbers of unskilled workers who were forced into wage labour. The progressive incorporation into wage labour of the indigenous population will be illustrated by census figures as will the different rate of incorporation for various groups. The impetus for proletarianisation cannot be seen from a study of census reports. The impetus from wars, legislation and land shortage will be discussed as far as possible in the next chapter. Generally, indigenous people who entered wage labour early in the Cape colonial history attained a wider range of employment opportunities than people who entered wage labour later and who were to a large extent confined to lower paying, lower status jobs. This became linked to

differential treatment of different colour groups in ruling class strategy. Thus, a study of the proletarianisation of the indigenous population incorporates an analysis of changing colour composition of sectors of the economy as well as some indication of changing class relations.

2. As well as changing colour composition of various sectors of the economy, census data can illustrate changing sex composition of the labour force. The changing colour and sex composition of domestic service will be examined and the process whereby domestic service became progressively more female dominated and where the proportion of "Whites" in domestic service declined progressively will be described.

The census reports will thus be used to illustrate the incorporation into wage labour of different groups within the indigenous population and changing colour and sex composition of various sectors of the economy including domestic service. As well as this, the question of why domestic service was dominant for certain groups during the development of industrial capitalism will be tackled.

To start with, a picture will be drawn of the economy as a whole. As noted earlier, this will enable one to see employment trends overall at various times and therefore what options of employment were open to people. Only then will the proportions of different groups in domestic service itself be looked at as well as how important domestic service was as an area of employment for the various groups.

Although Cape Town falls within the Cape, it is necessary to distinguish between the two - there are differences between the population groups as well as wage earning activities of city based people in Cape Town compared with people spread over the whole of the Cape. This chapter will thus be handled in two discrete parts - one applying to the Cape as a whole and the other to Cape Town alone.

2. Overview of domestic service in the Cape and Cape Town

The occupations of people in Cape Town and the Cape as a whole have changed enormously as the economy developed from a primarily agricultural economy towards industrial capitalism. Despite this, the census reports reflect the continued importance of domestic service for wage labourers in the Cape and in Cape Town. The changing composition of domestic service also reflects changes that occurred in the economy. Because domestic work is non productive labour, capital is not directly interested in controlling the supply of domestic workers or in their working conditions. However, as will be seen, domestic workers are obviously affected tangentially by the actions capital takes with regard to the supply of productive labour and domestic service has often acted as a reserve army of labour in times of expansion or depression.

Why did people work in domestic service?

The original Dutch settlers needed labour and this they obtained from the nearby indigenous people they conquered. The population in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town was forced into mainly agricultural labour and lost their land and means of support. Agricultural labourers must have performed domestic duties as well but there also seemed to have been purely domestic workers from the start. These domestic workers could have been women of the indigenous population who had lost other means of support and had to find some means of survival. Domestic workers could also have been people testing the possibilities of a new situation. The settlers seemed to expect domestic help - whether they had had domestic help in Holland or whether their view of conquered people made them expect subservience is not clear without further investigation. In any event, there always seemed to be people in Cape Town who could afford to keep servants and the urban settler population seemed to have had a very comfortable standard of living on the whole.

Slaves came to Cape Town early in its colonial history. They worked in agriculture and also in domestic service. As chapter 2 shows, there

were large numbers of domestic slaves for the wealthy. As the settler population expanded, they displaced more of the indigenous population and also demanded more labour. More indigenous people and slaves worked on settler farms.

By 1841, slavery had been abolished and the Cape was a British colony. The Cape's main exports were wine and wool, the wool being especially important for export to Britain. Through this, the Cape was drawn into the emerging world capitalist economy. Agricultural expansion led to demands by the farmers for a larger supply of labour. (Laws to stimulate this labour supply are discussed in chapter 4.) People also became available for domestic work through losing access to land. At the same time, there was a growing urban based "mixed" population. They had always lived in Cape Town, and there were not many other opportunities for work since manufacture and commerce, although present, did not provide jobs for large numbers of people. Many of these women (and some of the men) entered domestic service and it seemed to be established that the settlers had domestic help.

Although small numbers of African people had been displaced by war, droughts and disease and had come to Cape Town, in the early periods of the Cape colonial history, there were not large numbers of African people in Cape Town and those who were economically active mostly worked in the eastern Cape.

With the development of mining, farmers struggled to compete for the available labour. A phase of large scale stimulation of the labour supply was entered and measures to force entry into wage labour were intensified. With the large scale demands and the consequent provisions to force people into wage labour, African men (and some women) began to move to the towns. Long established industries in Cape Town were able to expand and many more emerged. In time and with laws restricting access to land, rural areas became impoverished because of overcrowding and women who could previously have remained in rural areas had to enter wage labour. However, there was not a great demand for female labour in

productive work, so the only alternative for the vast majority of these women was domestic work. A relatively high standard of living of the White working class (as seen in government Cost of Living reports) meant that they could employ domestic workers. In this respect, South Africa was different from other countries in that some members of the working class had demanded wages high enough to employ a domestic worker. (The development of a significant Black middle class which could afford to employ domestic workers falls out of the time span covered by this thesis as does an examination of equivalents to domestic workers in the pre capitalist mode of production.) Julie Wells showed that although a structure was established for influx control, the laws were initially not strictly enforced and this obviously suited industrial capitalists who were able to obtain the labour they required (1980). Only after 1948 did changed conditions lead to attempts to monitor the influx of people to the towns more strictly (developing pressures are discussed in Chapter 4).

P A R T I : C A P E

1. General description of employment in the Cape 1875 - 1946

This section looks at employment patterns in the Cape as a whole. Table 1 looks at percentages of wage earners working in sectors of the economy. An attempt was made to include wage labourers only.¹ For this reason, "wives" were disregarded and the following categories were subtracted from agriculture : peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives (see Appendix A). The classification of people working in agriculture was probably subject to undercounting and incorrect classification, so agriculture as well as personal service should be regarded with caution. In the years from 1841, even up to 1946, Table 1 shows that the majority

¹Wage labourers refers to people who earned a wage. Economically active population was the total obtained from the census occupation tables (excluding wives and dependants). Economically active population included peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives, who often did not earn a wage. These three agricultural categories were subtracted from the economically active population to obtain total number of wage earners.

TABLE 1

Cape: Percentages of wage earners working in different sectors of the economy

Census year	Agriculture	Industry	Personal Service	Commerce	Professions	Transport	Indefinite/other	Total %	Total wage earners
1875	70	12	10	4	4	-	-	100	298 664
1891	45	20	20	7	5	-	3	100	377 800
1904	36	29	16	11	6	-	2	100	617 923
1911	38	25	21	10	5	-	1	100	580 879
1921	31	13	21	6	4	4	21	100	794 239
1936		Data	not available		for African population				
1946	31	20	19	8	6	7	9	100	1 108 894

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table V, 1891 (for 1875); Part VII, Tables I and IX, 1891; Part VII, Tables I and III, 1904
 Union of South Africa Census Reports: Tables VII and VIII, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26 of 1921; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13 of 1946

Notes: 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

2 Wage earners were calculated by subtracting the following categories from total population: wives (who were listed in occupation tables until 1911), dependants, unspecified, and peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives. (1875 figures are based on economically active population.)

3 Some categories have been reamalgamated for consistency, for example when "public administration" appeared separately in 1921, it was added to "professions" where it usually appeared. When "clerks" appeared separately, they were included in "commerce". Although "transport" used to fall under "commerce", it was shown separately after 1921 to demonstrate its growth.

4 1921 figures are suspect since the occupation classifications were different from all other years (see Appendix A). The number in "indefinite/other" is unacceptably large.

5 See Table 6 for detail of "personal service".

of the Cape population worked in agriculture¹ (although its relative contribution to National Income dropped). There were vastly more people working in agriculture than agricultural wage labourers since few Black people had entered wage labour in the time of the earlier census reports. Appendix B lists people defined as economically active by the census reports (which included peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives) and compares this with wage earners proper (i.e. excluding peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives). Both figures are then seen as a proportion of the total population. In this way one can see that many people survived from farming on their own account and few were actually wage earners. Table C in the appendix is an equivalent of Table 1 except that people working in various sectors of the economy are seen as a proportion of the economically active population (which included non wage earners in agriculture). By comparing Table 1 with Table C one can see that even more people were working in agriculture than were reflected in the table of wage earners.

Hobart Houghton described the Cape in the 1860s when imperial capital was beginning to have an impact.

"The general character of the economy of the Colony was that of a sparsely populated country largely engaged in pastoral farming and self subsistence agriculture, too poor to advance rapidly by domestic capital formation, and lacking in exploitable resources to attract foreign capital. Nevertheless some of the essential requirements for further development were in process of creation. The economic impact of international markets was carried into the interior, not in the wagons of the Voortrekkers, but upon the backs of the merino sheep. It was a slow process ..." (1975 : 4).

The interest of English capital in the Cape was illustrated by the

¹The hidden nature of domestic service should be borne in mind here since some of the people listed under agriculture could have been domestic workers on farms.

advent of what were called "imperial banks" in the 1860s which arose out of England's belief that "South Africa was a country full of rich and exploitable resources" (Buirski, 1980 : 21). By 1875, diamonds had been discovered and the effects of this had lifted the Cape out of the recession of the 1860s. Unlike the Transvaal, mining did not provide a large source of employment, except for Kimberley, and only a small proportion of the Cape economically active population¹ worked in mining (mining is not listed separately in the tables - before union, mining was located under industry). Mining did provide stimulation for the development of other sectors of the economy which was important for the Cape.

In 1875 there were few options for employment apart from agriculture. In the earlier years reflected in the census reports, industry was not highly developed and was then usually based in the towns, predominantly Cape Town.² In the Cape Colony in 1865, only Cape Town had a population of over 10 000 (it was nearly 39 000). In 1875 most commercial goods and foodstuffs were imported; exports were wool, hides, skins, and ivory (Buirski, 1980 : 19/20). This illustrates the lack of industrial development.

¹The strict definition of economically active includes only people who are "in the labour field" (Department of Statistics, Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, undated : 91) and excludes people who do not make money in some way. Since the census reports listed non wage earners like peasants in their occupation tables, this thesis makes a distinction between wage earners and economically active which includes peasants who did not earn wages.

²Industry was very widely defined as illustrated by some of the categories included under industry : road and construction workers, refuse disposers, people working in "food, drinks, narcotics and stimulants" in "animal and vegetable substances", in "minerals" and in "working and dealing in art and mechanic productions in which matters of various kinds are employed in combination"(!).

In 1841 Cape Town had 6 candle manufactories, 1 soap, 3 hat, 2 whale fisheries, 3 fisheries for curing fish for exportation, 6 water mills and 2 steam mills for grinding wheat, 1 iron foundery, 1 distillery, 1 tannery, 4 breweries, 7 snuff manufactories, 9 brick fields, 1 brick oven and 1 lime kiln (Blue Book, 1841). There were numerous additions over the years for example steam printing presses, gun manufactories, saddleries, sail and boat building, biscuit manufactory from 1868 and bread from 1878, 6 basket manufactories from 1878, about 30 boot and shoe factories from 1878, just under 10 confectionery and jam factories from 1878. Some of the factories were located at the bottom of Adderley Street (Buirski, 1980 : 19/20).

Even though the sector which could be classified "industrial" was a small part of the total population in 1875, its make up was interesting. Nearly half of those working in industry were Black men followed by White men, then Black women at about 10% and finally, a much smaller number of White women. At this stage very few White women worked in industry but the proportion had probably risen by 1891 (see Table 5).

Despite the relatively undeveloped industrial sector in earlier years, the next largest form of employment after agriculture has always been industry, as can be seen from Table 1.¹

Although employment in personal service has sometimes been close to employment in industry, Table 1 shows that personal service ranked third in being a source of employment over the years covered by the census reports.² (Most people listed under personal service were domestic workers. From Table 6 one can see that over the years less than 3% of the people in personal service were not domestic workers.) Even in 1946 about a fifth of all wage earners in the Cape worked in domestic service. This was a lot of people. From Table 1 it can be seen that this was roughly the same number of people as those working in industry and more than twice the number of people working in other sectors of the economy, excluding agriculture.

Commerce has always ranked next in line after personal service although Table 1 shows a possible increase in importance over the years because until 1911 transport fell within commerce so figures after 1911 should

¹The figure for wage labourers in industry in 1921 is suspect. The category of "indefinite/other" workers is unacceptably high and it is probable that some of these people should have been listed under industry.

²It was usually possible to isolate domestic workers from within the wider category "personal service". In the reports up until 1911, the wider category included the supply of board and lodging as well as domestic service. In the reports from 1921, personal service included jobs such as hairdressers/barbers, beauticians, firefighters, bartenders as well as domestic workers. To be consistent, the broader category has been called personal service although the name given to this category sometimes changed. Domestic service fell within personal service. (See Table 6 for more detailed analysis.)

be viewed in this light.

The next largest category of employment was professional occupations, though employment in transport was close from 1921.

Despite changes, the order of importance in terms of employment potential has remained roughly the same between the census reports of 1875 and 1946 and this was in order of importance : agriculture, industry, personal service, commerce and the professions.

1.1 Summary

An important point to note from Table 1 is that the relative importance of domestic service in the Cape economy remained more or less constant (or even grew if some of the people listed as "indefinite" in 1921 and 1946 worked in personal service). The continued employment of people in domestic service is different from other countries in that employment in domestic service did not decline with economic development. The number of people in wage labour increased, but other sectors of the economy did not expand enough to absorb the increase. The continued importance of domestic service attests to the fact that people were forced into wage labour and in the absence of sufficient jobs in other sectors of the economy, domestic service was a source of wages for people who had no other means of survival. It is now necessary to see who supplied this steady stream of domestic workers.

Having described employment opportunities in the Cape economy, the extent to which the men and women of each colour group were able to enter those sectors of employment will now be examined briefly. By looking at employment patterns an "index" to the class structure will emerge. The next section will examine how class position allowed some groups greater options in their employment; this in effect incorporates a study of sex and colour division of labour. Domestic service often acted as a point of first entry into wage labour, but some groups remained there whereas others were absorbed into other sectors of the economy with capitalist development.

2. Options for employment various colour groups : Cape 1875 - 1946

This section will look at the sectors of employment which were important for each colour group. Table 2 (men), Table 3 (women) and Table 4 (detail of Black groups) look at each sex and colour group and show what proportion of each group was employed in particular sectors. This enables one to judge to what extent each group of people was able to take advantage of employment possibilities. One expects to find that groups were not evenly spread across the economy because they were incorporated into wage labour at different rates and because of different opportunities resulting from class position. Like Table 1, these tables are based on wage earners only and exclude peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives. (See Appendix B for the proportion wage earners formed of the total population.) The colour groups of earlier census reports have been grouped together in the groups they were to be reclassified under after union i.e. White, Coloured, African. (Only two of the earlier census reports gave a detailed classification of the five original colour groups and this is reflected in Table 4.)

2.1 Employment options for White men

The range of jobs in which White men were found over the census reports reflects their status. From Table 2 one can see that the general trend over the years was that industrial employment was second in importance¹ after agriculture for White men. The third most important area of employment over the census reports was commerce. The relative importance of commerce as an area of employment for White men grew between 1875 and 1946 as can be seen from Table 2 (especially when one remembers that transport was originally part of commerce). Following these three main areas of employment were professional occupations.

¹The jump in 1904 could have been as a result of large scale White immigration in 1902. Following the Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902, the Cape Colony and Natal experienced a short period of "hectic prosperity" where capital and immigrants streamed in (Hobart Houghton, 1975 : 15). This was reflected in the increase of non-agricultural occupations in industry, commerce and the professions. Railway development around the turn of the century aided further industrialisation and added to employment opportunities. The jump in 1946 could have been due to the general upsurge of industrialisation (see Bloch, 1980).

TABLE 2

Cape: Percentages of male wage earners (divided into colour groups) working in different sectors of the economy

MALES		1875	1891	1904	1911	1921	1936	1946
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	Agriculture	53	50	34	45	41	36	27
	Industry	20	23	30	24	15	15	22
	Personal service	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Commerce	15	14	21	19	18	16	18
	Professions	9	9	12	9	9	14	12
	Transport	-	-	-	-	8	13	13
	Other/indefinite	0	2	1	1	7	4	6
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners		64 000	115 108	206 488	182 372	177 986	225 257	244 493
Total Black	Agriculture	76			49			
	Industry	15			33			
	Personal service	6			9			
	Commerce	3			6			
	Professions	0			2			
	Transport	-			-			
	Other/indefinite	0			1			
	Total	100			100			
N=estimated wage earners		124 056			268 676			
Coloured	Agriculture		60	45	49	50	49	39
	Industry		24	37	34	13	18	35
	Personal service		9	6	8	5	6	4
	Commerce		5	11	7	2	6	2
	Professions		1	1	1	1	6	3
	Transport		-	-	-	5	6	8
	Other/indefinite		1	0	1	24	9	9
	Total		100	100	100	100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners			92 768	129 134	140 265	136 388	180 986	217 922
African	Agriculture		55	43	49	44		47
	Industry		29	44	33	23		22
	Personal service		8	4	9	14		7
	Commerce		4	6	5	0		1
	Professions		3	3	3	3		2
	Transport		-	-	-	4		10
	Other/indefinite		1	0	1	12		11
	Total		100	100	100	100		100
N=estimated wage earners			73 683	134 351	128 411	185 537		309 990
Asiatic	Agriculture					3	1	1
	Industry					8	11	21
	Personal service					15	15	14
	Commerce					60	67	50
	Professions					1	2	2
	Transport					11	2	4
	Other/indefinite					2	2	8
	Total					100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners						4 508	4 145	4 910

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table V, 1891 (for 1875); Part VII, Tables I and IX, 1891; Part VII, Tables I and III, 1904

Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part V, Tables III number 2, Tables VII and VIII, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26 of 1921; Vol 7, Tables 4, 12, 17, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13 of 1946

- Notes:
- 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 Wage earners were calculated by subtracting the following categories from total population: wives (who were listed in occupation tables until 1911), dependants, unspecified, and peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives. (1875 figures are based on e.a.p.)
 - 3 The names the population groups were given changed over the census reports. They were grouped together in the way they are now classified. "Coloured" contains people formerly classified "Malay", "Hottentot" and "Mixed". African contains people formerly classified "Fingo" and "Kafir and Bechuana" (see Table 4 for detail).
 - 4 See Table 1 for additional notes numbers 2, 3, 4.
 - 5 Sectors of employment have been listed in order of importance for the Cape as a whole.

White men were able to take advantage of economic development by entering a wide range of better paid jobs which reflected their education. Employment in agriculture declined over the years as White men moved into other sectors. From Table 2 one can see that domestic service was not important as a source of employment. The education received by White men and the resulting wide range of employment options reflect the dominance of White men in the class structure of the Cape.

2.2 Employment options for White women

The wide range of jobs held by White women reflects their dominant class position compared with Black women. Some sex typing of jobs was indicated by the fact that White women did not work in agriculture, industry and transport to the same extent as White men did and that their involvement in personal service was greater than that of White men.

Between 1875 and 1911, women working in the home appeared separately in census reports as "wives". Until the 1904 census, there was also a relatively high proportion listed under agriculture and this probably included farmers' wives even though those listed separately as farmers wives were subtracted from agricultural workers in Table 3. There must still have been inconsistencies since after 1904 there was a big drop in women listed under agriculture (see Table 3). Thus, in looking at female wage labour, the categories of wives and agriculture will be disregarded (although they should still be borne in mind) since they are either dropped or not used consistently over the census reports. This then means, of course, that a lot of work performed by women is hidden, but this is always so with women's work; even when they receive wages, the areas they work in - domestic service or seasonal temporary work being prime examples - may lead to their not being included in census reports.

When looking at White women in wage labour in the Cape (Table 3) until 1904, and possibly after, the most important area of wage labour was

TABLE 3

Cape: Percentages of female wage earners (divided into colour groups) working in different sectors of the economy

FEMALES		1875	1891	1904	1911	1921	1936	1946
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	Agriculture	82	25	35	10	5	2	2
	Industry	5	18	14	22	10	23	14
	Personal Service	9	21	20	24	18	17	11
	Commerce	1	6	7	10	25	24	44
	Professions	3	17	17	28	24	27	22
	Transport	-	-	-	-	0	3	2
	Other/indefinite	0	13	7	6	18	4	5
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners		32 288	24 408	45 664	30 747	42 453	54 002	67 860
Total Black	Agriculture	69			7			
	Industry	6			3			
	Personal Service	25			87			
	Commerce	0			0			
	Professions	0			2			
	Transport	-			-			
	Other/indefinite	0			1			
	Total	100			100			
N=estimated wage earners		78 320			99 084			
Coloured	Agriculture	no information	12	11	4	5	3	6
	Industry	no information	4	3	4	5	10	16
	Personal Service	no information	76	82	89	85	83	66
	Commerce	no information	0	1	0	1	1	1
	Professions	no information	1	1	1	2	2	2
	Transport	no information	-	-	-	0	0	0
	Other/indefinite	no information	6	2	2	2	1	9
	Total	no information	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners			48 975	56 913	58 108	51 820	62 998	90 159
African	Agriculture	no information	19	29	10	8	no information	25
	Industry	no information	3	2	2	1	no information	2
	Personal Service	no information	69	64	85	41	no information	64
	Commerce	no information	0	0	0	0	no information	0
	Professions	no information	1	2	2	1	no information	2
	Transport	no information	-	-	-	1	no information	0
	Other/indefinite	no information	8	3	1	48	no information	7
	Total	no information	100	100	100	100	no information	100
N=estimated wage earners			22 858	45 373	40 976	185 405		172 708
Asiatic	Agriculture					0	0	0
	Industry					12	13	28
	Personal Service					31	36	20
	Commerce					56	47	32
	Professions					0	2	2
	Transport					0	0	0
	Other/indefinite					1	2	18
	Total					100	100	100
N=estimated wage earners						142	339	852

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table V, 1891 (for 1875); Part VII, Tables I and IX, 1891; Part VII, Tables I and III, 1904

Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part V, Table III number 2, Tables VII and VIII, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26 of 1921; Vol 7, Tables 4, 12, 17, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13 of 1946

- Notes:
- 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 Wage earners were calculated by subtracting the following categories from total population: wives (who were listed in occupation tables until 1911), dependants, unspecified, and peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives. (1875 figures are based on e.a.p.)
 - 3 The names the population groups were given changed over the census reports. They were grouped together in the way they are now classified. "Coloured" contains people formerly classified "Malay", "Hottentot" and "Mixed". African contains people formerly classified "Fingo" and "Kafir and Bechuana". (See Table 4 for detail.)
 - 4 See Table 1 for additional notes numbers 2, 3, 4.
 - 5 Sectors of employment have been listed in order of importance for the Cape as a whole.

domestic service, accounting for around 20% of White women wage earners. Table 3 shows that the proportion of White women working in this sector dropped off after 1936 as did the relative importance of domestic service as an area of employment. The type of work done by White women working in personal service also changed (see Table 6). In the early census reports White women were working in houses as domestic workers; in the later census reports, White women were more dominant in personal service jobs. Personal service included what are called "pink collar" occupations - hairdressers and beauticians and these were jobs in which White women predominated. Thus, despite the fact that only small numbers were working as domestic workers, their presence in this sector remained relatively constant because of the other jobs classified as personal service. Even for White women remaining within personal service, there was a move away from domestic service proper.

In 1875 and 1891, industry was the second most important area of employment for White women. Although industry lost its importance for White women relative to other jobs, the number of White women working in industry remained fairly constant until 1936 when industrial employment for White women reached a peak corresponding with a general growth in industrial employment in the Cape. By 1946, the relative importance of industry for White women had dropped off slightly, but still not below the pre 1936 figures. Thus White women streamed into newly created industrial jobs but many moved out again into commerce when it began expanding.

The decline in industrial employment was reflected by a startling increase in the number of White women employed in commerce. In 1891 - 1911, Table 3 shows that commercial jobs provided the least employment for White women. In 1921, commercial employment became the most important area of employment for White women and not only remained the most important in the following two census reports, but grew to encompass over 40% of all White women wage earners (see Table 3).

When looking at White women's employment over the census reports, they

have been employed in a fairly wide range of occupations. In the early reports, the range was narrower and, unlike White men, included the lower paying personal service sector as the most important source of employment. White women were drawn into industry in increasing numbers as industry expanded. However, the importance of industry for White women was superseded by the growth of another sector of employment : commerce. Commercial employment had always been important for White men, but the expansion of this sector in the twentieth century drew in White women in ever increasing numbers, until it became the most important area of employment for White women. The employment patterns of both White men and women reflect the growth of white collar jobs and their initial monopolisation by Whites (in 1921 for example, at least 80% of those jobs classified commerce, public administration or clerical were held by White people, with men in the majority). Professional employment for White women grew with commercial employment thus the growth and resulting changes in the Cape economy resulted in White women moving into better paid higher status jobs. Domestic work declined in importance; the growth of industrial employment drew in many White women, but after a peak in 1936 tailed off and White women were absorbed into the growing commercial sector.

There was some sexual division of labour between White men and women indicated by the lesser importance of jobs within industry and agriculture and the greater importance of domestic service for White women compared with White men. Although fairly high proportions of White women worked in professional occupations, in absolute numbers they were much lower than White men (White men were usually at least double the numbers of White women). The higher status jobs held by White men reflect their dominance compared with White women. (Unfortunately, this gender dominance cannot be explained within the confines of an examination of census data.) However, despite their relative disadvantage compared with White men, White women were advantaged in the colour division of labour of the Cape. This is shown by the importance of commerce and the professions in providing work for White women which

reflects those women's privileged class position with respect to education and the opportunities to enter those jobs. Domestic service has been important for all Cape women as reflected by its initial importance for White women (though domestic service was never as important for White women as it was for Black women). Domestic service was a point of incorporation into wage labour for some White women, but with capitalist development, the privileged class position of White women allowed them to move on to other occupations. As will be seen, few Black women had this option.

2.3 Employment options for Black people

It is unfortunately not possible to be quite as detailed when discussing Black men and women and their incorporation into wage labour. Before 1921, Black people were classified as Malay, Hottentot, Fingo, Kafir and Bechuana and Mixed; from 1921 the classifications were "Native" or African, Coloured and Asiatic;¹ in 1875 and 1911 all were combined as Black. Thus many distinctions were lost in the confusion. (There were distinctions : for example people classified Malay had been predominantly based in Cape Town for generations whereas Fingos had moved to Cape Town in small numbers from much later and this was reflected in the jobs they held, Malay men, for instance, having a very high involvement in industry compared with other Black men).

Information about employment opportunities for Black people is contained in Tables 2, 3 and 4. Groups that would later be classified as Coloured or African have been grouped together in 1904 and 1911 in order to trace trends. (Breakdown into all five population groups in 1904 and 1911 is contained in Table 4.)

Over the entire period 1875 - 1946 reflected in Tables 2 and 3 the ranking of jobs for Black men was agriculture, industry, personal service and commerce though with changes in the economy and with larger

¹This change in classification reflects a change in social classifications whereby distinctions became less important as Black people were grouped more and more together as "non White".

numbers of men entering wage labour, the relative importance of industry as a source of employment for Coloured and Asian men grew. Jobs for Black women could roughly be ranked as personal service, agriculture, and industry though there were differences : employment in industry overtook agricultural employment for Coloured women after 1921, whereas African women were not largely employed in industry and commerce was important for Asian women. The groups will be discussed separately later. One sees immediately the large scale involvement of Black women in domestic service from 1875 - the actual numbers involved grew enormously. Some interesting points can be made about women's employment in industry

In 1875 the area of industry where almost all women worked was "persons working and dealing in textile fabrics, in dress and in fibrous materials". Although this accounted for only about 6% of economically active Black women, this category is interesting since Black women accounted for just over half the people working in textiles followed by White women at about one-fifth, then White men and then Black men. Thus Black women have a long history of involvement in the textile industry and were certainly not drawn in in the mid 1900s only (although obviously the industry was small in 1875). One can guess that the Black women in the textile industry were mostly Coloured women since the industries were likely to have been established in towns and at this time there was not such a large number of other Black women in towns.

From Tables 2 and 3 one is able to see the increasing entry into wage labour and the concentration of Black people in lower paying jobs especially domestic service for women.

The census reports for 1891 and 1904 provided detailed classification of five Black groups.¹ Although this cannot give us information on long term trends, the two reports are interesting for showing comparative

¹These were Malay, Hottentots (largely from and west and southern Cape), Fingos from the east coast, Kafir and Bechuana also from the east coast, and Mixed who were spread over the whole Cape but were concentrated in the south western Cape and became labelled Coloured later.

TABLE 4

Cape: Percentages of wage earners (divided into colour and sex groups) working in different sectors of the economy
Detail for Tables 2 and 3

		M A L E		F E M A L E	
		1891	1904	1891	1904
		%	%	%	%
Malay	Agriculture	12	10	0	0
	Industry	64	65	8	7
	Personal Service	9	4	87	88
	Commerce	13	20	1	1
	Professions	1	1	1	1
	Other/indefinite	1	0	3	3
	Total	100	100	100	100
	N=estimated wage earners	4 154	4 916	2 297	2 069
Hottentot	Agriculture	74	66	15	16
	Industry	13	25	3	1
	Personal Service	9	5	74	81
	Commerce	3	4	0	0
	Professions	0	0	0	0
	Other/indefinite	1	0	8	2
	Total	100	100	100	100
	N=estimated wage earners	16 467	29 437	8 613	14 686
Mixed	Agriculture	59	41	12	10
	Industry	25	40	5	4
	Personal Service	8	6	76	82
	Commerce	6	12	0	1
	Professions	1	1	1	1
	Other/indefinite	1	0	6	2
	Total	100	100	100	100
	N=estimated wage earners	72 147	94 781	38 065	40 158
Fingo	Agriculture	53	38	17	29
	Industry	26	42	2	2
	Personal Service	6	3	70	58
	Commerce	6	10	0	0
	Professions	8	7	5	9
	Other/indefinite	1	0	6	2
	Total	100	100	100	100
	N=estimated wage earners	10 766	20 334	3 573	6 959
Kafir and Bechuana	Agriculture	56	43	20	1
	Industry	29	45	2	2
	Personal Service	8	4	68	65
	Commerce	4	6	0	0
	Professions	2	2	1	29
	Other/indefinite	1	0	9	3
	Total	100	100	100	100
	N=estimated wage earners	62 917	114 017	19 285	38 414

Source: Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Tables I and IX, 1891
Part VII, Tables I and III, 1904

Notes: 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
2 Wage earners calculated as explained in Table 1.

involvement in wage labour by the five groups. From Table 4 one can see that Malay men were minimally employed in agriculture compared with the other men. If one included peasants in agriculture, the involvement of Fingo and Kafir and Bechuana men closely followed by Hottentot men would be even larger.

Involvement in sectors of employment were apparently much the same for all groups of Black men (except Malays). It is necessary to bear in mind, however, that only around 10% of Fingo men and around 20% of Kafir and Bechuana men were wage earners in 1891 and 1904 (see Appendix B) compared with around 60% of Malay, Hottentot and Mixed men who were wage earners. This means that involvement in commerce and industry was far more meaningful for Malay, Hottentot and Mixed men than for Fingo and Kafir and Bechuana men. The urban nature of Malay men is indicated by their minimal involvement in industry and commerce. Appendix B shows the early incorporation into the settler economy of men classified Malay, Hottentot and Mixed by their larger proportions of wage earners.

When one looks at the women, one confirms that Malay women were not rurally based and instead worked in domestic service and industry. (Figures for women in agriculture were much higher for Fingo, Kafir and Bechuana women; although figures for women in wage labour in agriculture for Hottentot women were lower, they were still higher than those for Malay women and even Coloured women.)

Personal service was very important for all these Black women and much lower proportions of Black women were listed as "wives" than White (not reflected in Table). About a third of all Malay, Hottentot and Mixed women were wage earners (see Appendix B) and domestic service was by far the most important source of employment. (Less than 10% of Fingo, Kafir and Bechuana women were wage earners - Appendix B.) Small proportions of Malay women, followed by Mixed women, were employed in industry which again attests to the long term urban nature and incorporation into wage labour of Malays and their higher status relative to other Black groups. None of these groups worked in the range of occupations in the same

numbers as White people and Black women had even less options than Black men since they worked mostly in domestic service. From these figures one can see which groups were drawn into wage labour first, that they were drawn into low paying jobs and that women had the least choice being confined almost entirely to domestic service. Apart from 1875, Black men also had a much greater involvement in domestic service than White men.

The groups that were incorporated into wage labour most slowly were African people and within these, women even more slowly than men. Their slower incorporation into wage labour indicates that they had other means of survival unlike the more urbanised colour groups like Malays and Coloureds (reflected by involvement in agriculture shown in Appendix C). However, the groups already incorporated into wage labour were the ones that were drawn into developing sectors of the economy first (illustrated by involvement in commerce by Malay men in Table 4 and Coloured men in Table 2). African people were seen as a source of cheap labour and this together with the comparative lateness of their entry into wage labour explains colour divisions of labour in the labour force and their predominance in low paying unskilled labour including domestic service. The labour of African men was needed in agriculture and industry. However, Black women were also forced to enter wage labour, but with lack of options, domestic service was often the only hope of survival.

After 1921, the classifications Coloured, Native (for African) and Asian were used.

The people reclassified Coloured were Mixed, Hottentot and some Malay and, as said earlier, these people were already largely incorporated into wage labour. From 1921 - 1946 Coloured men were employed in a wide range of jobs. The top two sectors of employment remained agriculture then industry, though agriculture declined and employment in industry increased. Thus, the greatest change for men incorporated into the classification Coloured was the increased importance of industry as

a sector of employment, with the biggest jump being in 1946. They were also slowly being absorbed into white collar jobs. (Transport used to be listed under commerce, so compared with census reports before 1911, there was an increased employment in commerce in 1921-1946.)

Coloured women were also involved in a relatively wide range of jobs, although some of them like the professions and commerce involved less than 2% of Coloured women wage earners. The most important sector of employment was personal service. Involvement in personal service, however, declined by nearly 20% of Coloured women wage earners. Their employment in industry rose from less than 5% of wage earners in 1921 and before to about 16% in 1946. This reflects a general increase in industrial employment, but with the existence to a large extent of gender specific jobs in industry, the increasing involvement of Coloured women in industry by 1946 also reflected the exodus of White women into commercial jobs.

The groups reclassified "Native" or African were Fingo and Kafir and Bechuana and census reports only gave returns for these people in 1921 and 1946 so trends are difficult to trace. Agriculture and industry were the most important areas of employment for men, but unlike Coloured men there was no decrease in agricultural employment and increase in industrial employment. (Most men in industry were recorded as "unskilled labourers" and those in transport were recorded as "railway labourers" in 1921, so industry and transport did not provide skilled jobs.) Comparatively more African men were employed in personal service than Coloured men. Compared with other men, African men were less involved in skilled urban jobs and minimally involved in better paying higher status jobs.

The most important areas of employment for African women in these two census reports were agriculture and personal service (though the large proportion of women listed under "other" presents problems). Unlike Coloured women employment in industry was very low with minimal involvement in other sectors of employment. From Appendix B one can see

that only around 20% of African women were wage earners, the overwhelming majority still lived off the land even in 1946.

The other new classification after 1921 was Asiatic or Asian which was composed mostly of new Indian immigrants to South Africa. This was a largely urbanised population (agriculture was of minor importance as a source of employment) and seems to have been relatively well educated and privileged in the Cape. The largest number of men worked in commerce. In 1921 and 1926 personal service had been the second most important sector of employment for Asian men but by 1946 it had declined to third place although the proportion of Asian men working in personal service remained roughly constant at around 15% of wage earners.¹ The number of men working in industry had increased more than two-fold until in 1946 this was the second most important area of employment. This also reflects the increase in industrialisation.

Unlike all other Black women, but in common with White women, the most important area of employment for Asian women was also commerce. Employment in personal service was high but overtaken by increasing employment in industry by 1946. For Asian women, jobs were mostly urban based and employment was much more evenly spread between commerce, personal service and industry than for other Black women. However, the Asiatic population was a very small proportion of the total Cape population.²

2.4 Summary

An earlier section gave a profile of how the Cape economy developed in terms of employment opportunities - this section looked at which sectors of the economy various groups in the Cape were employed in. By doing this it was hoped to get an overview of sex and colour divisions of

¹Although most Asian women working in personal service were domestic workers, only 23 out of 689 of the men were - a tiny proportion.

²In 1946 there were only 9 353 people classified Asiatic in the Cape which was less than 1% of the total Cape population and the number of women who were actually wage earners was tiny.

labour as well as rates of incorporation into wage labour which, to a certain extent, were interrelated. The earlier section found that the importance of domestic service remained relatively constant in the Cape economy, this section started to investigate which groups provided the steady stream of domestic workers.

As expected, different groups were not spread evenly across the sectors of employment and this was related to how early they had been incorporated into wage labour, class position and gender stereotyping of jobs. Because Tables 2, 3 and 4 were based on wage earners only, spread across sectors of employment was far more even than it would have been if the tables had been based on census reports' definition of economically active population. Since economically active population included non wage earners surviving off the land, this would have pushed Black involvement in agriculture up to 70 or 80% with a proportional decrease in other sectors.

White people had the widest range of jobs as a result of their privileged class position and resulting education which enabled them to fill new jobs as the economy expanded. White women, too, were able to take advantage of new employment opportunities in industry and then in commerce. White women, more than any other group of women, were not as frequently forced into wage labour by economic necessity thus often stayed home as housewives (see Appendix B). However, White women were not as numerous in the skilled well paid jobs as White men were. Domestic service was initially far more important as a source of employment for White women than for men. Unlike Black women, however, White women were able to move out of domestic service when other employment opportunities became available and this reflected their privileged class position. There was sexual division of labour, however, because White women did not fill the same range of jobs as their men did, especially in agriculture and industry. Industrial jobs tended to be gender linked thus there was a limited number of these jobs available for White women to move in to. When commerce developed later on, White women moved into the lower paid jobs compared with White men.

Among Black people, the groups that were able to take advantage of changes in the economy providing more skilled jobs were those who had been incorporated into wage labour early on in the settler economy. These were generally people who were later classified Coloured (Malays, Mixed and Hottentot in descending order of incorporation). Coloured men were not able to make the same gains as White people because of class and therefore lack of opportunity and because of colour discrimination. African people were the last to be incorporated into wage labour as they obviously had land from which they supported themselves (see Appendix B) until land shortage and legal coercion forced more of them into wage labour (discussed in Chapter 4). African labour was sought as cheap labour (see Chapter 4). Because of this, their lack of education and late incorporation into wage labour, Africans filled the least skilled, lowest paying jobs and were only minimally incorporated into more skilled jobs. Domestic service was more important for African than for White men.

There were also differences between men and women in the Black groups. Because of their class position (especially the stress on cheap Black labour), domestic service was relatively important to all Black men but their employment in agriculture and industry was much greater. However, domestic service was far more important to Black women whose employment in agriculture and industry was low. Black women were slower to be drawn into wage labour than even Black men and then domestic service was often the only available employment. Measures to stimulate labour supply applied across the board, not just to the type of labourer (usually young and male) that was required. Women lost their means of survival as well as the men the measures were aimed at; women therefore also needed to enter wage labour and because their labour was not needed elsewhere in the economy, domestic service was an important source of employment. Coloured women had been drawn into wage labour earlier than African women and their employment in industry rose towards 1946 but there was a limited supply of other jobs for them because of sex stereotyping of jobs (Coloured women tended to follow White women as they moved to better paying jobs by filling the gap they left). Thus

because of the small number of jobs for Coloured women elsewhere, domestic service was still important as a source of employment though not quite as important as it was for African women. The employment of African women in agriculture was higher than other groups of women which reflected their rural base.

The demand for cheap Black labour led to large numbers of people entering wage labour, often via domestic service. Black women were generally trapped in this sector as there was not a call for their labour elsewhere.

3. A brief look at the composition of the industrial sector¹ : Cape 1875 - 1946

It is useful to look at the composition of the industrial sector because employment in productive labour seems to indicate how permanently groups had been incorporated into wage labour. It is, therefore, useful to see which groups predominated because a high involvement in industry usually indicated a low or declining involvement in domestic service (being the sector of major interest here) and a correspondingly higher or potentially increasing involvement in white collar occupations (corresponding to a greater development of commerce, banking and administration with economic development).

Table 5 shows that although Black men initially accounted for about half those employed in industry in 1875 (and this proportion grew further to 1946) White men as a group were larger than the next two largest groups (Kafir and Bechuana men, then Mixed men) in the earlier reports. The figures for 1921 are suspect², but the changeover probably began around

¹The category which has been used here is each census report's definition of "industry" - the census reports' classifications of industry have been taken at face value.

²This census listed occupations without classifying them into groups. In amalgamating what appeared to be industrial occupations some occupations must have been left out. Some people listed under "other and indefinite" might have worked in industry because the proportion which White men made of the total sector was too high and that for Africans too low.

TABLE 5

Cape: Composition of industrial sector - the percentage each colour and sex group makes of the total number working in industry (N)

Census year	WHITE		TOTAL BLACKS		%	N
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
1875	36	4	49	11	100	37 297
1891	34	6	57	3	100	77 906
1904	34	3	61	2	100	177 889
1911	30	5	63	2	100	143 294

BREAKDOWN OF BLACK GROUPS									
MALAY		HOTTENTOT		MIXED/COLOURED		KAFIR & BECHUANA		FINGO	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	3	-	23	-	24	-	4	-
2	-	4	-	21	-	29	-	5	-

Census year	WHITE	
	Male	Female
1911	30	5
1921	50	8
1936		
1946	23	4

COLOURED	
Male	Female
33	2
32	4
35	6

AFRICAN	
Male	Female
30	0
5	0
no information	
30	1

ASIATIC		%	N
Male	Female		
0	0	100	143 204
1	0	100	100 125
1	0	100	224 986

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Tables I and V, 1891 (for 1875 and 1891); Part VII, Table I, 1904
 Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part V, Tables VIII and III number 2, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26, 1921; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13, 1946

- Notes:
- 1 The category "industry" has been left as defined by each census report. It would be impossible to standardise between different census reports.
 - 2 1921 figures are suspect (see Appendix A). Large numbers of Africans were listed as "railway labourers" which appeared under "transport" in Table 1. Possibly this should have been classified under industry.

1911. Thereafter, with the greater development of industry, by 1946 White men had been usurped as the largest proportion of people working in the industrial sector falling below Coloured men then African men each of whom accounted for over 30% of all people working in industry.

Hobart Houghton classified the period from 1933 as one of prosperity (1975 : 32ff.) where for the first time manufacture was to contribute more to National Income relative to agriculture and mining. Manufacture had received a stimulus after World War I and the Pact government which had come to power in 1924 had placed heavy emphasis and aid on South African industry, which was further stimulated by World War II. Industry was only established as an important area of employment in the Cape in 1946 when 14% of the economically active population (see Appendix C) or 20% of wage earners (see Table 1) worked in industry. During World War II, White soldiers were mostly replaced in manufacture and construction by male and female Coloureds and by Asian and African men and by some White women (Social and Economic Planning Council UG 9/1943 : 1).

Table 5 shows a steady increase in the employment of women, especially Black women in industry. Disregarding the figure for 1875 which seems suspect for Black women (it is too high compared with subsequent years), the proportion which White women formed of those employed in industry was higher than all Black women until 1946. (It is most unfortunate that there are no figures for Africans in 1936 because this was probably a crucial report for showing changes in trends.) From Table 5 one sees that the proportion of White women working in Cape industries reached a peak in 1921. Even though that year's figures were suspect, from other knowledge of White women's employment in industry, it is probable that 1921 or thereabouts was a peak for the employment of White women in industry. After this, White women were drawn into other sectors of the economy. As White women moved out of industry, there was an increase in the industrial employment of Coloured women (complemented by a decrease in their employment in domestic service - see following sections).

As can be seen from Table 5 by 1946 African women were also forming a tiny proportion of those employed in Cape industries from being virtually invisible. Thus, there was a moving out of White men and women and a replacing by Coloured men, African men and Coloured women. The proportion all women formed of the industrial sector had only increased slightly so the change was among colour groups, not between sexes. Women in the Cape formed only about 10% of the industrial sector the majority of whom had always worked in the textile industry. (This dominance has continued.)

Although Black men dominated in industry, not many were in skilled jobs. Most of the African men were called "general labourers" and well over a half of the Coloured men were also thus called. On the other hand, in 1946 the largest number of White men were listed as metalworkers which probably represented skilled workers and artisans. Thus the expansion of the industrial sector seemed to have drawn in unskilled men and the numerical dominance of Black men does not imply upward mobility and entry into skilled labour (although they probably received better wages than agricultural wages).

In looking at the composition of industry, one sees the increasing proletarianisation of Black people through the increasing dominance of Black men. They were generally incorporated into unskilled positions. There was also a small increase in the incorporation of women, especially the more urban based Coloured women and by 1946 African women (who as a group were the last to be proletarianised) began appearing as a small proportion of those employed in industry. As well as proletarianisation, the composition of the industrial sector illustrates changing colour composition since both White men and women moved out of industry to be replaced by Black people. The movement into industry was the first real option many Black women had to earn wages other than in domestic service. Black people had few options and the jobs Black men filled in industry were mostly unskilled; the alternatives available and types of jobs filled reflected class position.

4. Composition of the category of domestic service : Cape 1875 - 1946

The composition of the category of domestic service will be looked at from two angles. Firstly the numbers of different groups working in domestic service will be analysed - this will show which groups made up the largest numbers of domestic workers and offers some insight into the progressive incorporation into wage labour of various groups. Domestic service was often a point of entry into wage labour since it was generally unskilled and did not necessarily involve a move to a town. Secondly the importance of domestic service for the various groups will be assessed - small groups such as Malay women constituted a small proportion of all domestic workers, yet for those women, personal service was an important source of income.

Table 6 lists the proportions which the various groups made of the total number of people working in personal service. Table D in the appendix lists total numbers of domestic workers. Domestic service was one job in a broader category called personal service in reports from 1921 and before this "persons engaged in the supply of Board and Lodging, and in rendering personal offices for, and attendances on man". Apart from the provision of board and lodging, the broader category in the earlier reports also included hairdressers, office keepers as well as domestic workers. The non domestic worker categories were comparatively small. Personal service after 1921 included categories like hairdressers which, although more people worked in them than in earlier years, were still small within the category as a whole. Tables include both categories, personal and domestic service, where possible.

In 1875 the largest group in personal service had been Hottentot women (see Table 6) which illustrates their proximity to the settlers and their early incorporation into wage labour. However, they were soon superseded by Mixed and then Kafir and Bechuana women. If one looks at the second part of Table 6 on domestic service only, Hottentot women always fell below Mixed and Kafir and Bechuana women (which also illustrates the early proletarianisation of Hottentot women since they

were in the relatively higher status personal service categories rather than domestic service). By 1921, the number of African women in domestic and personal service had grown to be larger than Coloured women (Table 6) who by this time were being drawn into industry (see previous section).

Three main points arise from Table 6.

1. There was an increasing female dominance in personal and domestic service as men moved out to other sectors of the economy (see columns showing total number of men and women). Domestic service had always been a predominantly female source of work. In 1875 women formed over 70% of those in personal service; this had grown to over 80% in 1946. The largest male component of domestic service remained African men thus demonstrating their disadvantaged class position.
2. The dominant class position of Whites was illustrated by the decreasing proportions of Whites working in this sector especially after 1921 when White women were drawn into other sectors (White men had never formed a substantial proportion of this sector). By 1946 the proportion of White women working as domestic workers was negligible although they were still represented in personal service in the "pink collar" sector. When other options of employment were available, people did not work in domestic service which illustrates that workers were well aware of the disadvantages of domestic service.
3. There were changes in the proportions of African and Coloured people. Although the proportion of Coloured people (especially women) had been substantial, some eventually moved to other sectors of employment and domestic service became the preserve of African women. This illustrates the earlier incorporation into wage labour of Coloureds as well as the disadvantaged class position of Africans.

One sees then that domestic service could act as a point of incorporation into wage labour from which some groups moved on to other jobs. White women soon moved out, but Black women had few alternatives as Table 3 showed. Coloured women were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service but a few moved out as other employment opportunities arose (for example industry see previous section). African women were the last to be drawn into wage labour and had few other options for employment as there was not a demand for their labour elsewhere which accounts for their continued dominance in domestic service. (From Table 3 one saw that the majority of Black women worked in personal service and African women especially were minimally employed in other sectors.)

An overall picture of the composition of the personal service category is obtained from Table 6. However, it is necessary to look at Tables 7 and 8 to gauge the importance of domestic service to each group. Table 7 shows how many people in each sex and colour group worked in domestic service as a proportion of the total number of wage earners in that group. Table 8 shows this as a proportion of the economically active population (which included non wage earning peasants) of that group. The comparison is sometimes interesting : for instance domestic service may have been very important to a group of wage earners, but the importance of domestic service as a source of survival may diminish when viewed as a proportion of the economically active population (which included peasants). This difference is especially illustrated by Kafir and Bechuana women, later incorporated into African. Taking 1946 as an example, Table 7 shows that over 60% of African wage earners worked in domestic service whereas only around 30% of the economically active population did (Table 8) due to the large numbers who had not entered wage labour.

Table 7 shows that personal service was an important source of employment for all groups of Black female wage earners between 1875 and 1904 though slightly less so for the more rurally based groups of Fingo, Kafir and Bechuana; the later incorporation into wage labour of Fingo

PERSONAL SERVICE

Cape: Number working in personal service as a proportion of the wage earners of that sex and colour group

Census year	WHITE		MALAY		MIXED		HOTTENTOT		KAFIR AND BECHUANA		FINGO	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
1875	3	9	9	87	8	76	9	74	8	68	6	70
1891	2	21	9	88	8	82	9	81	8	65	6	70
1904	2	20	4		6		5		4		3	58

TOTAL PERCENT			TOTAL NUMBERS OF WAGE EARNERS		
Male %	Female %	Total %	Male	Female	Total
5	60	10	188 056	110 608	298 664
3	56	16	281 559	96 241	377 800
			469 973	147 950	617 923

Census year	WHITE		COLOURED		AFRICAN		ASIATIC	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1911	2	24	8	89	9	85	-	-
1921	2	18	5	85	14	41	15	31
1936	2	17	6	83	-	-	15	36
1946	2	11	4	66	7	64	14	20

TOTAL PERCENT			TOTAL NUMBERS OF WAGE EARNERS		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
5	72	21	451 048	129 831	580 879
7	46	21	514 419	279 820	794 239
no information for Africans			777 315	331 579	1 108 894

DOMESTIC SERVICE ONLY

Census year	WHITE		MALAY		MIXED		HOTTENTOT		KAFIR AND BECHUANA		FINGO	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1891	1	15	8	17	8	60	9	64	8	61	6	60
1904	1	13	3	17	5	60	5	66	4	53	3	45

TOTAL PERCENT			TOTAL NUMBERS OF WAGE EARNERS		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
5	48	16	281 559	96 241	377 800
3	43	12	467 973	147 950	617 923

Census year	WHITE		COLOURED		AFRICAN		ASIATIC		TOTAL PERCENT			TOTAL NUMBERS OF WAGE EARNERS		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1911	1	16	7	74	9	78	-	-	5	62	18	451 048	129 831	580 879
1946	0	2	3	64	7	64	0	17	4	51	18	777 315	331 579	1 108 894

Source: Calculated from Appendix D (Total numbers of domestic workers), Tables 2, 3, 4 (or Appendix B) (Total numbers of wage earners)

Notes:

- 1 Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
- 2 The proportions for personal service are the same as those for personal service in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4.
- 3 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation in Cape Colony, section 5).
- 4 Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years.
- 5 Proportions for 1875 and 1936 are based on economically active population. Since neither of these years included figures for Africans and since there were never great differences between economically active population and wage earners for Whites, Coloureds and Asiatics, this is not important. The 1921 figure was based on African wage earners and White, Coloured and Asiatic economically active population (which was not vastly different from wage earners).
- 6 A breakdown into domestic service was not available for every year.

women was reflected by their lower employment in personal service. Malay women were an unusual group since the majority of the women were classified as "laundry women and their assistants" and relatively few worked as domestic workers. From the top part of Table 7 one sees that nearly 90% of Malay female wage earners worked in personal service until 1904 (higher than all other groups of women) whereas less than 20% were domestic workers. It was traditional for these women to be laundrywomen and the tradition was continued well into this century until commercial laundries and home washing machines became more common. (See Chapter 5 for more discussion on washerwomen.)

From 1911, Table 7 shows that employment in personal service remained important for Coloured and African women wage earners though there was a slight decline in importance for Coloured women as they were drawn into other areas of wage labour notably industry - by 1946 just over 60% Coloured female wage earners worked in personal service compared with nearly 90% in 1911. The more disadvantaged African women lacked this choice.

Earlier discussions demonstrated the lack of employment options for Black women wage earners. However, one is able to see differences between Black groups when one looks at Table 8 to see how important personal service was for the economically active population (which included peasants) of each group. Table 8 shows that before 1911 groups like Malay, Hottentot and Mixed had little access to land and were incorporated into wage labour early since over 80%, over 60% and round about 70% of their economically active women worked in personal service. On the other hand, although personal service was important for female Kafir and Bechuana wage earners before 1911, less than 10% of their economically active women worked in personal service, many being classified "peasants". This must be seen in terms of the low numbers who were in wage labour (Appendix B). After reclassification, Table 8 shows that the numbers of economically active Coloured women working in personal service remained high (though with a drop of nearly 20% towards 1946 as they moved into industry) whereas the numbers of economically

active African women working in personal service rose steadily from less than 10% to nearly one third as more and more African people were forced into wage labour (though even in 1946 less than 20% of African women were wage earners - Appendix B). Ruling class concern with this steady proletarianisation was reflected by official reports discussed in Chapter 4 which contained demands to halt the entry of Africans to towns.

Relative to other women, domestic service was not as important to White women as a source of earnings. Until 1904, of the small number of White women wage earners, domestic work was the most important source of wage labour (Table 3). (Due to the small numbers of White women that were economically active, they did not form a large percentage of all domestic workers - see Table 6.) After this the importance of domestic service declined as White women entered industrial and commercial jobs.

Asiatic women formed the smallest proportion in domestic work from 1921. The number of women classified Asiatic in the Cape was small and only a small proportion were wage earners (see Appendix B). Although it is difficult to make generalisations, about a third of those workers worked in personal service. (Personal service was the second most important source of work after commerce in 1921 and 1936 and third most important after commerce and industry in 1946 - Table 3.)

For men, Table 7 shows that less than 10% of Black wage earners worked in personal service between 1875 and 1904 and after 1911 this appeared to remain about the same for African men, but the number of Coloured male wage earners working in personal service declined from close to 10% in 1911 to less than 5% in 1946 which illustrates their relative advantage compared with African men. When looking at economically active men in Table 8, one sees that the number of Malay, Hottentot and Mixed men working in personal service up to 1904 were similar to the figures in Table 7, reflecting their widescale incorporation into wage labour. There was a similar drop in the employment of economically

active Coloured men in personal service after 1911 as was seen in Table 7. As with African women, personal service was more important for African male wage earners (Table 7) than for economically active African men (Table 8) (this applied to Fingo, Kafir and Bechuana before 1911 as well). This reflects their access to other sources of survival. Personal service was never a major source of employment for Cape African men (unlike the Witwatersrand).

White men were among the smaller groups working in personal service (Table 6). Personal service was unimportant as a source of work for White men (Tables 7 and 8) as they had a wide range of other options open to them.

Malay and Asiatic men were always the smallest groups within personal service (Table 6). Domestic work was not important for Malay men because of their large incorporation into industry and commerce even in 1891 and 1904. For Asiatic men, round about 15% of their wage earners and economically active men worked in personal service (Table 7) where most worked in hotels.

4.1 Summary

Domestic service in the Cape has been both a point of entry into wage labour from which some groups have moved on to other sectors of employment and the only source of wage labour for other groups with no alternatives.

Groups classified Hottentot, Malay, Mixed and White (largely men) were incorporated into wage labour early on in the history of the Cape. The men of all these groups were found in domestic service from the time of the early census reports, but their participation in domestic service declined as they entered other areas of employment. Thus, if domestic

service were used¹ as a point of entry into wage labour by Hottentot, Malay or Mixed men, it was already losing its importance by 1891 as these men entered other areas of employment. It seems more possible that domestic service was a point of entry for White women when there were few other sources of wage labour for women, but as other opportunities arose, domestic service was discarded in favour of other jobs. White women, therefore, moved into wage labour via domestic service but moved out again as other jobs opened up. There were much higher proportions of Hottentot, Malay and Mixed women in wage labour in the early census reports than White women and the overwhelming majority of these women worked in domestic service. By the time these women were reclassified Coloured, there was a slow movement into other jobs, particularly industry and particularly since 1936. However, although large numbers of these women had been incorporated into wage labour since the time of the early census reports, for most of them there was no movement into other areas of employment (despite the fact that some did and that this movement continued after 1946). In 1946 over 60% of the economically active Coloured women still worked in domestic service. African women entering wage labour (in increasing numbers towards 1948) had the least alternatives for employment apart from domestic service. This lack of movement illustrates how working class women became trapped in domestic service : domestic service was a point of entry into wage labour, but for most working class women there was no moving out, despite further capitalist development. Chapters 4 and 5 explain how domestic service acted as a means of class domination; large numbers of Black women were subject to this type of class oppression with few avenues of escape since their labour was not needed elsewhere.

¹This does not imply active choice, nor forethought on the part of a group of people that domestic service could be "used" to enter wage labour from which point people could then move on to other types of work. The time span covered in this investigation of census reports means that for an individual there was often no moving on; yet in the history of the Cape economy, groups which had dominated a particular type of work were gradually incorporated into other areas of work. Only with hindsight can this process be described in the terms that it is here - for people involved in a process, there is seldom the same analytical clarity.

5. Conclusion : Cape

This section looked at overall employment opportunities in the Cape, the extent to which different colour and sex groups were employed in various sectors of the economy and the composition of the domestic service sector of the economy. These aspects were related to how early a group had been incorporated into wage labour and the changing colour and sex composition of various sectors of employment. In analysing the census reports in this way, it was hoped to obtain some sort of index of the class structure of the Cape.

The importance of domestic service in the Cape remained relatively constant. Between 1875 and 1946 it was the third largest source of employment in which about 10% of the economically active population of the Cape was employed. The large numbers of people employed in domestic service can only be understood within the context of the economy as a whole. Chapter 4 will discuss some of the measures which forced people into wage labour with developing capitalism and this was reflected by increasing numbers of wage labourers. The demand was mainly for cheap Black male labour and most of these men were incorporated into agriculture and industry. However, large numbers of people were forced into wage labour and the economy did not expand enough to absorb all of them - for these people, personal service was an important source of livelihood.

The extent to which groups of people were able to take advantage of **other** employment opportunities or whether they were trapped in personal **service** depended on how early they had been incorporated into wage labour, their class and gender.

White people had the widest range of jobs and were employed in the higher skilled, better paid jobs. Despite their privileged class position and education compared with Black people, White women were less

advantaged than White men. Personal service was initially fairly important for the employment of White women but their class position allowed them to move out, first to industrial jobs and then to commercial jobs as new opportunities presented themselves.

For the Black groups, employment in personal service acted as an indicator of how early they had been incorporated into wage labour and their relative privilege. Personal service could have been a point of entry into wage labour for Black men (because it was of relative importance as a source of employment) but Coloured men, at least, were able to move on to other jobs. Even though only about 10% of African male wage earners worked in personal service, this was higher than Coloured men reflecting the later entry of African men into wage labour and their relative disadvantage compared with Coloured men. Personal service was of vital importance for the employment of Black women and most of them were trapped in this sector. As an indication of their earlier incorporation into wage labour and greater privilege, there was a small movement of Coloured women out of personal service into industry after about 1936. Although there was a change in the colour composition of industry, (White men and women moving out to be replaced by Black men and women), there was not a similar change in the sexual composition of the industrial sector; there was thus a limited amount of industrial jobs for Coloured women to fill. The majority of Coloured women wage earners still worked in personal service in 1946. African women had the least alternatives of employment and although even in 1946 less than 20% of the Cape African female population had entered wage labour, an overwhelming majority of African women wage earners worked in domestic service.

There was a demand for cheap Black, mostly male, labour. Class measures to force people into wage labour affected both men and women, yet there was not a large demand for the labour of Black women. Although domestic service might have been a point of incorporation into wage labour from which other groups moved to other sectors of employment, for the majority of Black women domestic service was their only source of

employment. Black women were disadvantaged by their class position, they were generally incorporated into wage labour after their menfolk, there were few opportunities for their employment in other sectors of the economy due to gender linking of unskilled jobs - all these factors led to the large numbers of Black women working as domestic workers. Measures by the ruling class to obtain cheap Black labour were major factors which led to Black women being trapped in domestic service. The large numbers of Black women in domestic service can only be understood in terms of the way the South African class structure emerged. By careful examination of the census reports it was hoped to obtain an insight into the makeup of this class structure.

University of Cape Town

PART II : CAPE TOWN

1. Introduction

Cape Town is the longest established city in South Africa and its activities, centred around commerce, industry and government administration, have obviously been different from the Cape as a whole.

In the period covered by the census reports, the population has always contained a greater proportion of Whites and what were to be classified Coloureds and a smaller proportion of Africans than the rest of the Cape. The Coloured people were descended from the original White settlers, slaves and the indigenous population close to Cape Town. African people really only began coming to Cape Town from the mid 1800s. Table E in the appendix shows that up to 1946 Whites always made up at least 50% of the population, people classified Coloured round about 40% and Africans much lower proportions.

This section will look at domestic service within the context of Cape Town job opportunities to try to understand domestic service within class, colour and sexual divisions of labour. Because Cape Town with its predominantly White/Coloured population was different from the Cape, the first section will trace the movement of Africans to Cape Town because this is what changed the population profile of Cape Town. After this, a general description of jobs available in Cape Town will be given and the extent to which different colour and sex groups were able to take advantage of different employment opportunities. The spread of people across different jobs will be related to how early they were incorporated into Cape Town's labour force, class and sexual division of labour. Finally, the composition of the category of personal service will be examined as well as the importance of personal service as a source of employment for the various groups. This too will be related to past discussions on how early a group was incorporated into the Cape Town labour force, class position and sexual division of labour.

2. Movement of Africans to Cape Town

The African component of Cape Town was not there from the start. It is useful to trace the migration to Cape Town of this component of the population since it was Africans who changed the nature of Cape Town's population composition. The migration of Africans to Cape Town also illustrates the success of measures to force the indigenous population in the Cape into wage labour.¹

It is difficult to write about the movement of Africans to Cape Town because population groups were not always clearly defined. Although the intention is to speak about the movement of people from present day South Africa to Cape Town, there were slaves of African descent in Cape Town and there were also over 4 000 "Prize Negroes" (Africans from captured slave ships after the slave trade was suspended) who were apprenticed to Cape employers, some in Cape Town itself (Saunders, 1980 : 16). People from the eastern frontier often came as migrant labourers or returned to their homes after a contract or imprisonment (see below) was completed. With time, the population became more settled.

Some people from the eastern frontier of the Cape came to Cape Town in the first decades of the 1800s; some were political prisoners. It seems that it was only from the late 1830s that there was a settled community of Mfengu of any number in Cape Town. Saunders noted that as there was a shortage of manual labourers, these people found jobs with ease (1980 : 19). After the cattle killing of 1856-7 and the famine that followed, thousands of Xhosa people were left destitute and some of these came to Cape Town (some were shipped from East London to Cape Town (Saunders, 1980 : 20). Women among them were most likely to have entered domestic service if they entered wage labour at all - the jobs Saunders referred to for men were on public works (1980 : 21). By 1865, the census reported that there were over 400 "Kafirs" living in Papendorp (present day Woodstock) which Saunders felt might have been underestimated

¹The indigenous population nearer Cape Town was incorporated into wage labour early on in colonial history if they were not decimated or chased further away (see Chapter 2).

because of the less clear ethnic differences of the time (1980 : 22). The 1875 census of Cape Town in the Mayors Minutes of 1895 recorded only 171 Fingos, Kafirs and Bechuanas - about 5% of the total Cape Town population, although some could have been incorporated into "Mixed and other". (Whites were over 50% of the total population of Cape Town in 1875.) (The figure for "Africans" is different from that given in Table E in the appendix; the proportion of Africans in Cape Town was nevertheless small.)

The Cape-Xhosa war of 1877-8 led to nearly 4 000 people being sent to the Western Cape including some prisoners of war. According to Saunders, there were floods of requests for these people to be indentured for the required three years, especially since the first six months required no cash wages to be paid and the wages thereafter remained low (1980 : 24). Although some of these people deserted or made their way back to the Eastern Cape, some of them must have stayed and the women were undoubtedly employed in domestic service. A drought of 1877 must also have pushed many people into wage labour (Harries, 1979 : 126). Between November 1879 and May 1882 the number of Africans in Cape Town was topped up with 2 401 men from Mocambique, at least half of whom remained in Cape Town (Saunders, 1980 : 28).

By 1881, numbers of Africans in Cape Town were high enough for White Capetonians to begin to see "the Kafir element which has entered so largely into our population" as a "problem" (quoted by Saunders, 1980 : 29), but the economic depression which began around this time reduced a further inflow of Africans (1980 : 30).

The census of 1891 in the Mayors Minutes of 1906 recorded 623 Fingos, Kafirs and Bechuanas in Cape Town (just over 1% of total population), only 76 of whom were women. Saunders recorded much larger numbers at the beginning of the twentieth century, however - over 1 500 migrant workers in Cape Town with perhaps 8 000 Africans living in greater Cape Town (1979a : 135). The discrepancy between the figures of the Mayors Minutes and Saunders could arise from the Mayors Minutes referring only

to Cape Town proper (for example excluding Rondebosch, Mowbray among others); it could arise from undercounting - Africans may not have been counted if they were "squatting" and it seems that many did live in caves and makeshift shelters (Saunders, 1979a : 136). Saunders's work is quite exhaustive and should probably be given more weight.

The post Anglo Boer war boom in the Cape and in Cape Town probably led to an increase in the African population in Cape Town. By 1901, there were sufficient Africans in Cape Town for them to be segregated at Uitvlugt, later renamed Ndabeni, the first "location" in Cape Town (Saunders, 1980 : 33). An outbreak of bubonic plague was the impetus for the establishment of Uitvlugt¹ and by the middle of 1901, there were over 7 000 people in Uitvlugt, over 500 of whom were women (Saunders, 1979a : 141). White Capetonians' fears of illness focused on Black people² as well as racism which Saunders says was rising at the same time as the Transkei areas were being incorporated into the Cape Colony (1979a : 143) led to the establishment of urban segregation. This was formalised in parliament by Act 40 of 1902 and only

"registered voters, bona fide domestic servants and those with special permission were exempt from its provisions, (i.e. urban segregation) and even registered voters had to observe the restrictions - such as that which forbade the consumption of liquor - if they lived in the location" (Saunders, 1979a : 157).

The population of Uitvlugt remained relatively constant until 1904 when the effects of a recession forced many men to seek work at the mines (Saunders, 1979a : 144/5).

Although overcrowding and squatting had existed before, large scale

¹This "massing of Kafirs in the midst of the City was the greatest blot on the sanitary condition of the City" (Medical Officer of Health's report, Mayors Minutes, 1901 : cx1).

²See discussion of a venereal disease scare also focussed on Black people, especially domestic workers, discussed in Chapter 5.

squatting occurred from about the 1920s. Overcrowding of Uitvlugt (Ndabeni) led to it being impossible to enforce the segregationist legislation of 1902 and other areas of Cape Town began to accommodate Africans. There were complaints that Africans were taking labour from Coloureds, and even indirectly from Whites (Saunders 1979b : 171). Langa was established in 1923 (officially opened in 1927) to try to halt integration. At that stage, the African population of Cape Town was estimated at over 4 000 at Ndabeni, 5 000 - 6 000 living in Cape Town, 600 - 900 living in a dock compound (Saunders, 1979b : 175). The Cape Town City Council saw the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 as giving them the ability to control Africans through allowable deportations and the requirement for registered contracts of service.

The Urban Areas Act was applied to Cape Town in stages. In 1926, urban Cape Town was brought under section 5 which forced all Africans to live in a location, with roughly the same exemptions as 1902 (exempting also owners of property worth 75 pounds) (Saunders, 1979b : 180). Later in 1926, section 12 forced Africans to carry documents recording their permission to seek work in Cape Town. There was great resistance to this legislation as well as to the establishment of Langa.

By August 1927, the "legal" African population of Cape Town was 10 000 registered employed and about 1 800 registered voters (Saunders, 1979b : 184). Opposed to this, Pinnock cited the 1926 census as recording 70 000 Black people in Cape Town of which over 70% were judged to be living in overcrowded dwellings (1980 : 142). Thus conditions for African workers were very difficult (see Chapter 5). Several African women who first came to Cape Town in this period (interviewed by Sociology students in 1982) said that they took jobs as domestic workers because this provided them with accommodation. Attempts to control the situation were contained in numerous Acts and ordinances; for example the Urban Areas Act of 1923 which attempted to control the influx of people to urban areas also made urban squatting illegal; the Slums Act of 1934 was an attempt to clear slums by force (Pinnock's paper of 1980 contains more information). From about the 1930s, there was talk of

tightening up on entry of Africans into Cape Town, especially women (Saunders, 1979b : 195) with the implications women held of a settled urban population.

During and after World War II, more Africans streamed into Cape Town. The 1939 census recorded 18 500 Africans in Cape Town, by 1945 this had risen to 38 000 (Saunders, 1979b : 199). In response to this, entry into Cape Town was tightened up (UG 18/1943 : 6). Despite this, it was estimated that 8 000 - 9 000 Africans were living "illegally" in the slum quarters of the city, in semi developed townships and in the bush (UG 18/1943 : 6). People were obviously able to slip through the net and this caused ruling class demands for tighter control over the movement of African workers. These pressures are elaborated on at the end of the next Chapter.

This brief overview detailed the growth of an urban African labour force in Cape Town.

3. General description of employment in Cape Town 1891 - 1946

This section looks at employment patterns in Cape Town which allows a comparison with the Cape. Table 9 shows in which sectors of the economy Cape Town's economically active population worked. On only two occasions were the number of peasants given and these were very low : less than 10 and about 50 people. Neither of these would have altered proportions. Thus, for Cape Town, which probably had very low numbers of self supporting peasants, the economically active population and the numbers of wage earners can be regarded as equivalent. (See Table F in the appendix for a comparison of economically active and total population.)

The census reports of 1891 and 1911 included wives in the domestic category without further breakdown which presented problems when estimating economically active population. A guess was made as to how

TABLE 9

Cape Town: Percentages of the economically active population working in different sectors of the economy

Census Year	Industry	Commerce	Personal Service (Domestic Service)	Professions	Agriculture	Transport	Other	Total %	Economically active population
1891	36 %	13 %	23 %	12 %	12 %	- %	4 %	100 %	44 468
1911	43	24	19	10	4	-	-	100	68 706
1921									
1936	33	19	18	8	3	12	7	100	140 101
1946	35	18	16	10	2	11	9	100	198 385

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1891

Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1911; Vol 7, Tables 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16;

Vol IX, Table 14, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13, 1946

- Notes:
- 1 Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 The number of economically active people in personal service for 1891 and 1911 has been estimated (see Appendix A for method). The census reports did not separate wives and wage earners.
 - 3 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation in Cape Colony, section 5). Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years. The figure for domestic service in brackets is part of the figure for personal service.
 - 4 As with categories in the Cape, some categories of employment have been reamalgamated if they appeared separately for consistency.
 - 5 Economically active population was calculated by subtracting the following categories from total population: wives (who were listed in occupation tables until 1911), dependants and unspecified.

many in the domestic category were actually wage earners, based on proportions in the Cape in the same years (see Appendix A for exact method). This is obviously not entirely valid : there may have been higher proportions of women earning wages in the domestic category in Cape Town than in rural areas because more jobs were available in Cape Town. In the absence of access to land, it could have been more necessary for urban women to work and other options were not plentiful. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry regarding the Cape Coloured population of the Union (UG54 - 1937) for a later period pointed out that farm labourers had the benefit of housing and wage payments in kind which urban people lacked. Urban workers had higher expenses and casual workers in the towns were often out of work for periods. Thus it was often a struggle to make ends meet and women had to earn wages, usually from domestic service.

"The Cape Coloured family in the urban areas very often forms an earning unit, the income of the parents and one or more of the children being pooled to meet household needs. It does not appear to be exceptional for the contributions of a mother and a daughter from domestic service or the washing of clothes and similar work to be as important as those of the "chief" wage earners, the father" (UG54 - 1937 : 69).

On the other hand, there may have been more wealthy people in Cape Town so that White women for instance need not have had to work. However, since numbers of women working in the domestic category as a percentage of their colour group have changed only by a few percentages between the census reports which provided a breakdown between wives and domestic workers and the two reports in which the number of wage earning domestic workers had to be estimated, this guess of how many women in the domestic category were actually wage earners is not likely to be too outrageous.

As a city of long standing, Cape Town's working people were obviously differently employed from the Cape population. In the Cape, agriculture

had always provided employment for the largest numbers of people. In Cape Town between 1891 and 1946 Table 9 shows that industry had always provided the largest source of employment. Most of the Cape's industry was in Cape Town and this is reflected in the importance of industry to Cape Town. The booms caused by the mineral discoveries and the Anglo Boer War also had beneficial results in Cape Town itself which may be the cause of high industrial employment in 1911 (Table 9). Mainly White refugees from the Anglo Boer War streamed into Cape Town and the mini boom in Cape Town during the war also attracted other workers many of whom found work in construction and the harbour. In 1896 the Cape Town Resident Engineer complained in the Mayors Minutes of the difficulty of getting labour "owing to the large number of other constructional works now being carried out in and about Cape Town" (Report of Resident Engineer, 1896, xxvi).

In time, however, the influx of people led to unemployment and overcrowded housing. Coloured workers in particular faced great competition from the influx of White workers. Relief works such as road building were initiated by the government, the Divisional Council and the Cape Town City Council (van Heynigen, 1980). Conditions for Cape Town worsened in the post war slump when capital was funnelled from Cape Town towards Johannesburg. Worker protest was epitomised by the rather contradictorily named "unemployed strikers' march". Although African people must also have been badly affected, the concern was mostly for White unemployed, "Certainly no African appears to have received assistance from the relief committees, although they may have been recorded under the general category of "coloured" (van Heynigen, 1980 : 82). (See Chapter 4 for more discussion on this period.)

It was to be expected that a long established town like Cape Town would have the largest proportion of its economically active population working in industry. It is interesting to note that in 1891 the second largest area of employment was personal service (see Table 9). Even though the number of wage earners in the domestic category had to be estimated, the difference between the proportion working in personal

service and the proportion working in the next category, commerce, was sufficiently large for one to accept that the second largest source of employment in Cape Town in 1891 was indeed personal service. It is also interesting to note how little developed commerce was in 1891.¹ By 1911, the second largest source of employment after industry was commerce. Despite the fact that commerce remained second in rank² after industry, personal service still remained third in line in providing jobs for Capetonians and more people were employed in personal service than in the professions and in agriculture.³ The importance of personal service in Cape Town reflects the importance of this sector in the Cape as a whole.

The estimated numbers of wage earners in personal service for 1891 and 1911 appear reasonable when compared with the figures for 1936. The trend was for employment in personal service to decline slightly and in agriculture more rapidly whereas employment in commerce grew as was to be expected from further economic development (see footnote #2). Industry retained its importance.

3.1 Summary

In the Cape the order of importance in terms of employment potential was agriculture, industry, personal service, commerce and the professions. Unlike the Cape, Table 9 shows that industry and commerce were major sources of employment for Capetonians as befitted the major city in the Cape. After industry and commerce came personal service, transport and

¹This is despite the fact that in Buirski's study of changes in the composition of Adderley Street post 1880, he noted an increased presence of lawyers and notaries which in turn reflected a larger scale of business (1980 : 26). Though there were more clothing and draper shops, much of the goods were imported as the comment of a writer in 1892 shows, "England and America work for you at the Cape" (Buirski, 1980 : 27).

²In the early reports, transport was a subsection of commerce. Therefore, if the old categories were kept for 1936 and 1946 and transport was added to commerce, the proportion of people working in commerce would be very much larger than those working in personal service.

³The early high figure for agricultural employment in Table 9 indicates that the farms of Wynberg and along the Liesbeeck River were still extensive in 1891.

the professions. In an urban setting, few people worked in agriculture. Even in this industrial and commercial setting, however, large numbers of people still worked in personal service and the proportion did not drop greatly over the years. There was not a large enough demand for workers in productive labour or commerce to absorb people working in domestic service. There might also have been a greater demand for domestic workers in an urban setting where people worked away from the home. The large number of people working in domestic service has important implications for class domination (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Having described employment opportunities available in Cape Town, the next section will look at which groups predominated in the various sectors of employment, again, to provide an "index" to the class structure. The colour and sexual division of labour will be related to class position and in this way it is hoped to explain which groups provided the large numbers of domestic workers.

4. Options for employment various colour groups : Cape Town 1891 - 1946

This section will look at the sectors of employment which were important for each sex and colour group. Table 10 (men) and Table 11 (women) look at the proportion of the economically active population of each colour group employed in sectors of the economy. This will give an indication of class position and the extent to which groups of people were able to take advantage of employment possibilities.

4.1 Employment options for Whites

As with the Cape as a whole, the privileged class position of Whites was indicated by the wide range of jobs they held. There was, however, a difference between the jobs held by men and women.

Areas of employment for White men have remained relatively constant. The largest proportions of Cape Town White men were employed in industry, commerce and the professions (and the new category of

TABLE 10

Cape Town: Percentages of the male economically active population (divided into colour groups) working in different sectors of the economy

	MALES				
	1891	1911	1921	1936	1946
WHITE					
Industry	39	39	27	30	28
Commerce	22	35	32	31	28
Personal Service	4	5	4	3	3
Professions	25	15	13	13	18
Agriculture	8	3	3	2	2
Transport	-	-	13	14	15
Other/Indefinite	2	3	8	7	6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
N = estimated economically active population	17 197	28 605	34 634	49 483	63 036
TOTAL					
Industry	49	63		53	56
Commerce	11	19		5	4
Personal Service	11	8		5	5
Professions	2	1		1	4
Agriculture	25	8		7	2
Transport	2	1		20	16
Other/Indefinite	2	8		9	13
TOTAL	100	100		100	100
N	14 764	21 425		37 823	50 974
AFRICAN					
Industry				46	46
Commerce				1	1
Personal Service				22	20
Professions				1	2
Agriculture				4	4
Transport				19	15
Other/Indefinite				7	12
TOTAL				100	100
N				8 770	21 141
ASIATIC					
Industry				13	23
Commerce				68	49
Personal Service				12	13
Professions				2	2
Transport				3	4
Other/Indefinite				2	9
TOTAL				100	100
N				1 769	2 356

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1891;
Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1911;

Part V, Table 6, 1921; Vol 7, Tables 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Vol IX, Table 14, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13, 1946

- Notes:
- 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 Information is not available for all years.
 - 3 Sectors of employment have been listed in order of importance for Cape Town as a whole (see Table 9).

TABLE 11

Cape Town: Percentages of the female economically active population (divided into colour groups) working in different sectors of the economy

	FEMALES				
	1891	1911	1921	1936	1946
WHITE					
Industry	35	38	12	20	14
Commerce	9	17	34	41	50
Personal Service	18	16	18	15	9
Professions	21	24	18	18	20
Agriculture	7	0	0	0	0
Transport	-	-	1	1	2
Other/Indefinite	10	5	17	5	5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
N = estimated economically active population	4 114	7 014	13 484	20 846	26 638
TOTAL					
Industry	8	12		17	29
Commerce	1	1		1	2
Personal Service	84	85		73	54
Professions	1	1		2	3
Agriculture	2	0		0	0
Transport	4	1		0	0
Other/Indefinite	4	1		7	12
TOTAL	100	100		100	100
N	8 393	11 662		19 980	29 686
AFRICAN					
Industry				2	2
Commerce				0	0
Personal Service				85	85
Professions				1	2
Agriculture				0	0
Transport				0	0
Other/Indefinite				12	11
TOTAL				100	100
N				1 343	4 190
ASIATIC					
Industry				22	37
Commerce				29	15
Personal Service				44	25
Professions				4	2
Transport				0	1
Other/Indefinite				1	20
TOTAL				100	100
N				87	364

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1891;
Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1911;

Part V, Table 6, 1921; Vol 7, Tables 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Vol IX, Table 14, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13, 1946

- Notes:
- 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 Information is not available for all years.
 - 3 Sectors of employment have been listed in order of importance for Cape Town as a whole (see Table 9).

transport from 1921). As can be seen from Table 10, after industry initially being the most important area of employment, proportions working in commerce grew so that probably from before 1921 most White men were employed in commerce. The proportions of White men working in agriculture and domestic service declined rapidly so that in 1946 only a few percent worked in personal service and less than 1% worked in domestic service (see Table 13).

White men were spread over a wide range of jobs in Cape Town. Their dominant class position was reflected by the fact that these jobs were generally better paying, demanded further education and of higher status (participation in lower status jobs, particularly domestic service declined to a tiny proportion). Unlike the Cape where agriculture was the most important sector of employment, Cape Town figures reflect the urban nature of the jobs available. It is unfortunate that there were no figures for 1904 to see whether there were any visible effects from White immigration schemes of that time.

For White women, as with figures for the Cape, the most startling development was the growth of commerce as an area of employment. However, as a reflection of the urban nature of jobs in Cape Town, the development of jobs in commerce for White women was even more dramatic than in the Cape as a whole. From Table 11 one can see that by 1921 commerce was the largest area of employment for White women, from accounting for under 10% of economically active White women in 1891; by 1946 commerce had grown even further accounting for around 50% of economically active White women. Employment in professional occupations also remained constant (in 1946 about one fifth of economically active White women worked in the professions - the second largest group after commerce). This privileged position reflects the situation in the Cape, except, again, that the Cape Town proportions in the professions are higher. From Table 11 one can see that employment in industry remained fairly high, but declined over the years.

Although the number of women working in personal service had to be

estimated for 1891 and 1911, the figures seem realistic when compared with the figures of subsequent years. Table 11 shows that employment in personal service accounted for well over 10% of economically active White women until 1936 and only really declined in 1946 when commercial employment became so high (in 1946 Table 13 shows that a very low proportion of White women worked as domestic workers although a higher proportion were in personal service as beauticians and hairdressers.

Even more so than in the Cape, White women in Cape Town were able to take advantage of their privileged class position to enter higher skilled and paid jobs. Their relatively well paid jobs probably allowed the employment of domestic workers which was desirable for female wage earners because they had responsibility for the bulk of housework and childcare.

There was some sexual division of labour between White men and women : women's employment in industry declined, they did not work in transport to the extent that men did and personal service was far more important to them than to men. As with the Cape, personal service may have been a point of entry into wage labour, but unlike Black women, the privileged class position of White women enabled them to enter better paying jobs.

4.2 Employment opportunities for Black people

The Black colour groups were more difficult to look at because in 1891 and 1911 all were grouped together and in 1921 they were excluded altogether. Only 1936 and 1946 had detailed breakdowns into Coloured, Asiatic and African.

Despite the earlier discussion that there were larger numbers of Africans in Cape Town than recorded officially, the census reports were based on Africans comprising less than 3% of all Black people in Cape Town - thus the figures for 1891 and 1911 can be taken to refer mostly to Coloured people. Over these two census reports, the importance of industry and commerce for Black men grew as can be seen from Table 10

whereas the importance of agriculture dropped sharply from providing jobs for almost a quarter of the economically active Black men (the second largest source of jobs after industry) to providing jobs for less than 10% of economically active Black men.

The jobs held by Black men reflected their urban location. However they did not fill the same range of jobs as White men did - their class position is highlighted by a lesser involvement in commerce, far less in the professions and a greater involvement in agriculture and domestic service (see Table 10).

Black women of the working class were far more disadvantaged than their menfolk. Although Table 11 shows a slow increase in their involvement in industry, by far the majority worked in domestic service (although this figure was estimated as for White women, it seems reasonable when related to the following years). The disadvantaged class position of Black women compared with White women is seen in Table 11 by Black women's overwhelming employment in personal service and minimal involvement in other sectors. Although White women were able to take advantage of better paid urban jobs, Black women were trapped by their class in personal service.

To try to get some indication of what happened before the census reports of 1936 and 1946, it was necessary to look elsewhere. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union (UG54 - 1937) examined the industrial work force in the Western Cape each year from 1924-5 to 1933-4. Since most industries were sited in Cape Town, this report was relevant for Cape Town. During this time industry had received a boost from the effects of World War I but suffered a depression in 1932-3.

In the years from 1924 to 1930 the absolute numbers employed of each colour group increased. The rise in the absolute numbers of White workers was much more marked than for Coloureds and Africans. Furthermore, the drop in employment in the depression of the 1930s was

not nearly as drastic for White employees as it was for African and Coloured workers. Because of these two factors, there had been a gradual rise in the proportions which White workers made of the total employed in industry during the whole period. (This was the time of the "Civilized Labour Policy" brought in by the Pact government in 1924 which favoured White workers.) The proportions of Coloured workers declined steadily. (Despite the decline, however, there were still more Coloured workers employed in industry in 1934 than Whites.) The Commission concluded that the decline in Coloured employment could be attributed to the increase in White employment figures (UG54 - 1937 : 61). The 1920s was a period when thousands of African people were moving to Cape Town and their presence and their desperate acceptance of lower wages challenged Coloured workers. (The end of World War I ended an economic downturn in South Africa and this, with the effects of the 1913 Land Act, probably increased the movement of people to the towns.) Several Coloured people interviewed by Don Pinnock in District Six recalled the competition posed by newly arrived African workers, a challenge experienced even by domestic workers (1980, for example : 134).

The Commission was more specific when looking at private undertakings. They said that the increase of Whites in 1932-3 should be attributed to the increased number of White women employed - the number of White men had actually decreased, but the increase in White women was sufficiently large to cause the total proportion of Whites employed in industry to rise (UG54 - 1937 : 62).

"To some extent and due to a variety of causes, the European population of rural extraction finding its way into factory and industrial life was lacking in habits of industry, particularly with regard to hard manual work, but sheer economic pressure has brought, and is still bringing about remarkable changes in this respect, thus increasing the value of the fresh labour supply" (UG54 - 1937 : 62).

An investigation of the composition of industry is a useful index of employment patterns. To some extent, industrial employment represents full proletarianisation. It is a sector of employment which often draws workers from more marginal areas of employment (especially domestic service); workers first drawn into industry are often the first to move out of industry to white collar occupations as the economy develops. The years before the detailed census reports of 1936 and 1946 would probably have shown a strengthening of White peoples' position in the economy since they obtained preferential treatment in times of depression; there was an inflow of African people into Cape Town and they were absorbed into industry at lower wages (probably also into domestic service); Coloured people suffered under the "civilized labour" policy which favoured White workers, as well as being undercut by the wages paid to Africans. The influx of White people from rural areas was shown by the increased employment of White women in industry. The class position of White people protected them in times of depression; the low wages that could be paid to African workers made them attractive employees in hard times; Coloured workers suffered the effects of the depression with no saving grace (see also last section Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

The 1936 and 1946 census reports for Cape Town provided details for all colour classification groups.

The numbers of Asiatic men and women in Cape Town were small. Tables 10 and 11 show that commerce and industry were important sources of employment for both sexes. Although over 10% of the men worked in personal service, very few were actually domestic workers - most worked in the hotel trade. Asiatic women were employed in personal service to a greater extent than Asiatic men and to a lesser extent in commerce. This was a relatively privileged group judging by employment patterns. Asiatic women in particular appeared to be in better paying jobs than other Black women (the number of Asiatic women in wage labour was, however, too small to be definitive).

About half the economically active Coloured men in Cape Town worked in industry followed by transport in 1936 and 1946 (see Table 10). About 5% of economically active Coloured men worked in all other sectors (including personal service). Employment in agriculture declined.

Although large numbers of Coloured women worked in personal service, Coloured women in Cape Town reflected their urban setting because the increasing proportion working in industry was far greater than for Coloured women in the Cape as a whole. There was quite a large increase in industrial employment (see Table 11) probably to replace White women leaving industry for commerce. Despite a drop in employment in personal service as Coloured women moved into industry, Coloured women were disadvantaged compared with White women; employment in commerce and the professions was low and even in 1946 Table 11 shows that over 50% still worked in personal service.

The jobs where African men worked in 1936 and 1946 remained relatively constant - over 40% of the economically active African men worked in industry, about half that proportion in personal service (where, unlike White and Asiatic men, most were domestic workers), followed by transport (see Table 10). The importance of industry for African men in Cape Town was not typical of the Cape as a whole where agriculture was overwhelmingly the most important sector of employment. Higher proportions of African men worked in personal service than in the Cape as a whole. This was probably a reflection of their disadvantaged class position, in the absence of agricultural jobs for unskilled African men newly arrived in Cape Town, personal service was sometimes the only option of employment. Urban employment accentuated their disadvantaged position.

Table 11 shows that over 80% of the economically active African women in Cape Town worked as domestic workers, with very low involvement elsewhere. Urban African women had even less alternatives than African women in the Cape as a whole outside of personal service.

White men and women were generally found in jobs in all sectors of the economy and became concentrated in white collar jobs to a much greater degree than in the Cape as a whole. Coloured men were concentrated in heavy industrial jobs. Although the majority of Coloured women worked as domestic workers, by 1946, an increased proportion was to be found in industrial jobs. Women had always predominated in the textile industries.¹ African men also worked in industry, but unlike Coloured men, personal service remained important as a source of jobs. This represents their later inclusion into wage labour in Cape Town itself and maybe unskilled men newly moved to Cape Town were only able to find this type of job. African women had the narrowest choice of jobs of all Capetonians. They were overwhelmingly involved in personal service and minimally involved in other jobs. Many women not officially recorded in census reports were also likely to have worked as domestic workers. The jobs held by Asiatic men illustrated their education and relatively privileged position - the largest number worked in commerce followed by industry although they were not a homogenous group, since fairly large numbers still worked in personal service. The jobs of Asiatic women were difficult to assess, but they worked in a wider range of jobs than other Black women did. The relatively better trained worked in industry and commerce, yet there were still large numbers working in personal service (mostly as domestic workers).

Compared with the Cape as a whole, industry and commerce were far more important sectors of employment in Cape Town. Commerce was particularly important for men classified White and Asiatic; industry was particularly important for Coloured and African men as well as White and

¹It was possible to find odd variations where women were not employed in predominantly female fields of industry. For example just after the turn of the century women were employed as print compositors at lower rates of pay than men. In the report of the Select Committee on Imported Contract Labour (A6 - 1908), the Manager of the Argus Company reported that they had employed two women compositors at a wage below the trade union rate. "We have taken on two girls at 17/6 per week but I don't consider it is under the ordinary rate. I believe there is no rate for girls, it is a matter of what they can produce." They were employed because of their lower wages: "Well I find in the case of Messrs. Juta's work the contracts are mainly given to the Rustica Press who employ girls, we must employ these girls or get out other machinery, and in preference to getting out more machinery we prefer to give employment to people in the country, whether girls or boys".

Asiatic men. Except for White women, personal service was incredibly important as a source of wage labour, even for urban women. Apart from an increasing proportion of Coloured women being drawn into industry by 1946, most Black women still had no other options for employment besides domestic work.

4.3 Summary

Despite large numbers employed in commerce and industry as to be expected from a long established city, personal service was the third largest source of employment in Cape Town. This section looked at the importance of different sectors of employment for colour groups in Cape Town. (See summary 3.4 of Cape employment options for additional comments.) Discussion of the employment trends illustrated several theoretical points that have been noted throughout the discussions.

1. Class position was illustrated. Whites were in the most privileged situation and worked in the widest range of jobs. This was the only group for which domestic service was not so important. The availability of urban jobs in commerce, industry and the professions made Whites' privileged position even more clear than in the Cape.
2. The groups incorporated into wage labour in Cape Town last were the least privileged. Africans, generally and African women specifically, held a narrower range of jobs than groups that had been in Cape Town longer. With no other means of survival, they were even more dependent on personal service than in the Cape.
3. Sexual division of labour was illustrated. The women of each colour group had a narrower range of choices than the men of their colour group and generally worked in lower paying lower status jobs. Domestic service was an important sector of employment for all Cape Town's women (though only in the early years for White women). Class position allowed some groups of women to move out of personal service.
4. Differences relating to class position and earliness of incorporation

into wage labour between different colour groups of women were illustrated. White women's employment in personal service declined as employment in industry and then commerce increased. Coloured women later moved into industry with a decline in personal service. In 1946, however, African women were still overwhelmingly employed as domestic workers. Their labour was not needed elsewhere so having moved to Cape Town, domestic service was sometimes their only option. The employment of more privileged women in other sectors of the economy created a continuing group of employers.

5. Throughout, a connection was made between domestic service and the least privileged people. African people streamed to Cape Town in search of jobs, for many their only alternative was domestic service. Cheap Black male labour was demanded in other sectors of the economy, so many men were able to move out of domestic service. In the absence of demands for similar amounts of female labour, African women in particular were trapped in domestic service. Some groups were able to enter wage labour via domestic service and then move to other jobs as the economy developed, other groups had no alternatives and domestic service remained their only source of employment.

4.4 Additional comments

The movement of colour groups in and out of sectors of employment that has been discussed here was not a painless process of one group moving to higher status employment and another group filling the gap thus formed. The process of changed patterns of employment resulting from economic development was often painful and the contradictions often took place between colour groups.

Although people classified Coloured were a numerically large group in Cape Town, they often faced competition from two sides - from the more privileged, usually better educated Whites who most times had government support, and from Africans starting to enter wage labour in Cape Town in large numbers. These Africans were desperate for jobs and had little

strength from which to bargain, this often resulted in their wages undercutting Coloured wages.

Two examples of the pressure experienced by Coloured workers will be given. The first arose from the report of the Economic Commission of January, 1914 (UG12 - '14). This Commission assessed the view of many Whites in the Cape that "the white man is relatively losing ground" (UG12 - '14 : 40). The Commissioners disagreed. "It would certainly seem, when comparison is made over the last 20 or 30 years, that a larger proportion of the skilled trades of the Cape has fallen into the hands of the whites. Prior to that time the relative number of whites was small, and many trades were almost exclusively carried on by the coloured" (UG12 - '14 : 41). It is difficult to pick this trend up in census reports because they cover too many years and are too broad and the Commission did not provide supporting figures for its view. However, it is known that there were great efforts to attract artisans from overseas and the figures of Immigration Officers show that many did actually come to the Cape. Perhaps these were some of the men who displaced Coloured artisans who were then forced into unskilled labour.

The second example of pressure experienced by Coloured people was contained in the 1937 report of the Commission of Enquiry regarding the Cape Coloured population of the Union (UG54 - 1937).

"The Coloured man is now beset on two sides; on the one by the Native who competes with him at a lower wage; on the other by the European who is able to influence the position in such a manner as to exclude the Coloured man from various avenues of employment which he had been able to pursue before" (UG54 - 1937 : 33).

"Native competition in the field of domestic service is also widening in extent, notwithstanding the fact that the Cape Coloured woman held, and to a large extent still holds, an initial advantage in having acquired training in this type of

work during many generations of service with the European. Here again the Natives, both male and female, often show considerable aptitude, and, as in other fields, their requirements with regard to housing, treatment and wages are more easily satisfied. In addition, there is a decided disinclination ... among many Cape Coloured menfolk today to enter domestic service, and this helps to provide the Native with an opening for work. As in the case of farm labour, the displacement in domestic service of the Cape Coloured by the Native is affecting the Western Province only relatively slightly as yet, but is no longer practically absent as it was in former years. In other areas to which the Native has already advanced in comparatively larger numbers, his competition is becoming severe" (UG54 - 1937 : 34/5).

If the above is kept in mind, figures showing proportionately less involvement in unskilled jobs for Coloured people did not necessarily mean better jobs and wages for Coloured people who had formerly worked as domestic workers (although the trend has been for Coloured workers to enter better paying jobs in greater numbers). What it could have meant was that instead of Coloured people moving out and African workers filling the gap, African people were entering the towns and being employed at lower wages thus leaving Coloured workers in a vulnerable position.

There were labour bureaux which theoretically should have been able to help these displaced workers, but even before the days of the civilised labour policy, the official year book for the period 1910 - 1917 stated that the general policy was in effect to look after Whites by replacing Black with White workers (UG54 - 1937 : 47).

Although poverty has always been a possibility for the urban working class, statistics for the period 1938-9 reflect the real hardship suffered. (See Chapter 5 for additional information.) In Cape Town :

1. One in every four households was below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL)
 2. Of every ten households below the PDL, 8 were Coloured, 1 African, 1 White
 3. Of every 10 Coloured households, 5 were below the PDL
Of every 10 African households, 5 were below the PDL
Of every 10 Asiatic households, 2/3 were below the PDL
Of every 10 White households, less than 1 was below the PDL
- (Batson, 1942 : 13).

Thus, although the changes in employment trends appear abstract, in reality they reflected struggles within and between classes and experiences of real hardship.

5. Composition of domestic service : Cape Town 1891 - 1946

Domestic service in Cape Town will be looked at in the same way as it was for the Cape. It will not be done in quite the same depth as some of the theoretical points would be repetitive. Firstly, the composition of domestic service will be examined to see which groups predominated in Cape Town. This will give some indication of class relations in Cape Town and the incorporation into wage labour of the different colour and sex groups. Table 12 looks at the proportion each colour and sex group made of the total number of domestic workers. Table G in the appendix contains the total numbers of domestic workers in Cape Town from which these proportions were calculated. Secondly, the importance of domestic service as a source of employment for the various groups will be assessed by looking at what proportion of the economically active population of each colour and sex group worked in personal service. This information is contained in Table 13.

When looking at domestic service in Cape Town, it is difficult to tell exactly what was happening until 1936 and 1946. The 1921 census report had figures for Whites only. The "domestic" category of the 1891 and 1911 census reports included wives as well as wage earners although the

TABLE 12

Cape Town: Percentage which each division forms of total number of domestic workers
PERSONAL SERVICE

Census year	WHITE			TOTAL BLACK			COLOURED			AFRICAN			ASIATIC			Total no. of domestic workers		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %			
1891	7	7	14	16	70	86										100	10	156
1911	9	8	17	13	70	83										100	14	179
1921	Figures not possible to calculate - data only available for whites																	
1936	7	13	20				8	58	66	8	5	13	1	0	0	100	24	626
1946	6	8	14				8	52	60	14	11	25	1	0	0	100	31	003

DOMESTIC SERVICE ONLY

Census year	WHITE			COLOURED			AFRICAN			ASIATIC			Total no. of domestic workers		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %			
1936	0	7	7	8	70	78	9	6	15	0	0	0	100	18	168
1946	0	2	2	7	62	69	15	14	29	0	0	0	100	24	499

Source: Calculated from Appendix G (total numbers of domestic workers).

Notes:

- 1 Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- 2 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation in Cape Colony, section 5).
- 3 Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years.
- 4 Since the 1891 and 1911 census reports did not separate wives and wage earners, the number of wage earners in personal service for these years had to be estimated; similar proportions to the Cape were used. (See Appendix A for method.)
- 5 Detailed information was not available for all years.

number of wage earners in this category was estimated (see Appendix A). In addition, the 1891 and 1911 census reports classified people merely as "Black" or "White". This was not too problematic - most of the Black women were likely to have been Coloured since large numbers of African women had not yet travelled to Cape Town. This is confirmed by Table 12 which indicates that even in 1936 African people formed only just over 10% of all domestic workers in Cape Town. However, the broad category Black, while telling one about class structure in Cape Town, does not allow one to follow the progressive incorporation of African women into wage labour in Cape Town.

The years 1891 - 1921 were the times of White immigration drives when White domestic workers in particular were sought. It is likely that most White immigrants recruited as domestic workers would have worked in towns¹, but there is no way of picking this up in employment figures when using ones own estimates. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on White immigration.)

Table 12 shows that Coloured women have always constituted the largest number of domestic workers in Cape Town (well over 50% of all workers). When domestic service on its own is considered, the proportion they formed of the total number of workers was even higher - over 60% of the total. Despite their dominance, there was a slight decrease in their involvement in this sector and the gap they left was filled by African people. As a source of employment, personal service has been important for Coloured women; Table 13 shows over 50% of all economically active Coloured women worked in personal service in 1946 and this figure was much higher earlier. The only group more reliant on personal service as a source of income was African women. Because of the larger numbers of Coloured people in Cape Town compared with Africans, Coloured women were

¹This view is supported by a paper on the impact of European and Asian immigration in Cape Town. The "abnormally large population increase <from> 1891 to 1904 was brought about largely as the result of immigration from Europe leading to a considerable majority of males over females in Cape Town (17 566) and 'Europeans' over 'other than Europeans' (10 738)" (Bickford Smith, 1978 : 1).

TABLE 13

Cape Town: Number working in personal service as a proportion of the economically active population of that sex and colour group

PERSONAL SERVICE

Census year	WHITE		TOTAL BLACK		COLOURED		AFRICAN		ASIATIC	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
1891	4,3	17,8	11,2	83,8						
1911	4,5	15,9	8,8	85,4						
1921	4,1	18,0								
1936	3,5	15,0			5,4	72,2	21,8	84,3	11,8	43,7
1946	2,9	8,8			4,9	54,2	20,3	84,8	13,1	25,0

Total Male %	Total Female %	Total domestic workers %
7,5	61,1	22,8
6,2	59,3	19,9
6,1	44,3	17,6
6,5	36,3	15,6

Total nos. of economically active population		
Male	Female	Total
31 961	12 507	44 468
50 030	18 676	68 706
97 845	42 256	140 101
137 507	60 878	198 385

DOMESTIC SERVICE ONLY

Census year	WHITE		COLOURED		AFRICAN		ASIATIC	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1921	0,5	11,6						
1936	0,1	5,9	3,7	63,6	19,0	80,9	1,0	35,6
1946	0,04	1,5	3,1	51,3	17,5	83,7	0,5	22,5

Total Male	Total Female	Total domestic workers
3,2	35,6	13,0
3,9	31,5	12,3

Total nos. of economically active population		
Male	Female	Total
97 845	42 256	140 101
137 507	60 878	198 385

Source: Calculated from: Appendix G (total numbers of domestic workers) Tables 9, 10, and 11 (economically active population)

- Notes:
- 1 The proportions for personal service are the same as those for personal service in Tables 9, 10, and 11.
 - 2 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation in Cape Colony, section 5). Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years.
 - 3 Since the 1891 and 1911 census reports did not separate wives and wage earners, the number of wage earners in personal service for these years had to be estimated; similar proportions to the Cape were used. (See Appendix A for method.)
 - 4 Detailed information was not available for all years.

a larger part of this sector in Cape Town than in the Cape as a whole.

Table 12 shows that the number of Coloured men working in domestic service declined (as occurred for White men and women). As a source of income, personal service was about equally unimportant for Coloured men in Cape Town and the Cape (under 5% of Cape Town's Coloured men were employed as domestic workers - Table 13).

The proportion which both African men and women formed of all domestic workers in Cape Town grew until by 1946 African men were the second largest group after Coloured women and African women the third largest group, as seen in Table 12. The more rapid increase of African women in Cape Town's domestic service represents their later movement to Cape Town. Despite the fact that there were more African men than women in Cape Town and more African men working as domestic workers than African women, Table 13 shows that domestic service as a source of income was less important for African men than women. Domestic work was still important for African men as a source of income, more so than for other groups of men (about 20% of those earning wages worked in personal service). However, over 80% of economically active African women in Cape Town earned their living from domestic service. In the Cape as a whole, only 30% of the economically active African women (or about 60% of wage earners) worked in domestic service, thus domestic service was far more important for urban African women than for their sisters in other areas of the Cape who had alternative means of support.

The position of White women in personal service was interesting. Even in 1936, White women had been a large group compared with all other groups except Coloured women. The importance of domestic service as a source of income for White women dropped rapidly after 1921 (see Table 13) and by 1946 they were a small proportion of the category, especially of domestic service (Table 12). These figures were roughly similar to Cape figures. The number of White men in this sector also declined and was never particularly important as a source of employment (in 1946 only 22 White men worked in domestic service - see Table G in the appendix).

Owing to the small number of Asiatics in Cape Town, the proportion they formed of all domestic workers was small although the importance of domestic service to Asian women as a source of income was relatively important (see Table 13). Very few Asian men worked as domestic workers - they were rather to be found working as waiters and bartenders and this was reflected in the higher numbers working in personal service (see Table 12).

5.1 Summary

An examination of the composition of personal service in Cape Town and the importance of domestic service for different colour and sex groups supports findings from examining total employment figures.

Employment figures in domestic service showed a startling decline for White men and women and a lesser decline for Coloured men and women (see Tables 12 and 13). By 1946 options for employment in other sectors of employment for these four groups had grown so that few White men and women or Coloured men still worked in domestic service (domestic service was still very important for Coloured women even though the numbers working in domestic service had declined). This illustrated relative privilege : Whites, the most privileged were able to move out of domestic service and some movement out of personal service shows that Coloureds were more privileged than Africans. The composition of domestic service also illustrated rate of incorporation into wage labour in that Coloureds who were incorporated into the Cape Town labour force before other Black people were able to move out of domestic service first.

The number of African men in domestic service was higher than all other men and domestic service was also more important for African men in Cape Town as a source of income than any other group of men. This indicates both their disadvantaged class position and the fact that they were incorporated into Cape Town's labour force later than other groups of men. Domestic service was even more important as a source of employment

for African women. In all cases women were more disadvantaged than men. This was partly due to their later incorporation into wage labour, it was also due to sexual division of labour where there was not a large demand for women's labour in productive labour so they were trapped in unskilled domestic service.

Two important points can be made

1. The class nature of domestic service is illustrated by its greater importance as a source of income for African men and women than other men and women. African men and then women only moved to Cape Town in great numbers in the later years covered by this study and this later incorporation into wage labour is illustrated by high figures working in domestic service with few options in other sectors of employment (with women having the least options). A further example of the class nature of domestic service was its rapid decline in importance for White women as they moved to other sectors.
2. Domestic service was an overwhelmingly female dominated job (see Tabel 12). Domestic service was far more important as a source of income for the women of each group than it was for the men (see Table 13). Women with more privileged class positions were slower to move out of domestic service than the men of their class; less privileged women were far more trapped in domestic service than the men of their class. This illustrates how by 1946 large numbers of women were still marginal to the industrial labour force, but living in Cape Town and having no other means of support had to work in domestic service to survive.

Sexual division of labour defined domestic service as predominantly a woman's job and even when more jobs were available in productive labour, Black men provided the cheap labour rather than Black women.

6. Conclusion : Cape Town

As a city of long standing, the jobs available in Cape Town were more geared around commerce and industry than in the Cape where most people were employed in agriculture. Although the two largest groups of workers were to be found in commerce and industry, the third largest source of employment was personal service. The importance of personal service was similar to the Cape. What was different was that in the absence of other sources of survival, Black women were even more dependent on personal service as a source of livelihood than in the Cape. African men, too, were more dependent on personal service as a source of employment in Cape Town than in the Cape as a whole.

Employment in domestic service in Cape Town remained relatively constant. Black women always formed the largest proportions of domestic workers; initially with very few African women in Cape Town, these were mostly Coloured women. To this extent, the female dominance in personal service was related to sexual division of labour. However, large scale employment in personal service was also related to class and how early a group had been incorporated into the labour force of Cape Town.

Class position resulted in there being more Coloured men in personal service than White men. The privileged class position of White women also enabled them to move out of personal service into newly created jobs in industry and commerce. The privileged class position of White women was even more accentuated in Cape Town with a greater availability of industrial and commercial jobs than in the Cape. Towards 1946, there was a slow movement of some Coloured women into industry which was also evidence of their greater privilege relative to African women. The fact that Coloured women moved into industrial jobs rather than African women was also due to the fact that Coloured women had been part of the Cape Town labour force longer than African women had been.

African men were more dependent on personal service as a source of employment in Cape Town than in the Cape as a whole. In the Cape,

unskilled workers could work in agriculture; this was not available to any great degree in Cape Town. African men formed a larger proportion of personal service than all other men; their participation in personal service in Cape Town was also greater than their participation in the Cape. Thus for African men, both their class and their later incorporation into wage labour in Cape Town resulted in a greater dependency on personal service than all other men. African women were the last to be incorporated into the Cape Town labour force. They were the most dependent on domestic service as a source of survival - over 80% of economically active African women in Cape Town survived from working in domestic service. This was even though their slow movement to Cape Town meant that the proportion they formed of all domestic workers was not as large as Coloured women; this was also unlike the Cape where African women formed the largest proportion of all domestic workers.

In the absence of other means of survival, class differences were accentuated in Cape Town. For example, the movement of White women into commerce was more stark than in the Cape figures, the dependence of African women on domestic service was more stark. As with the Cape, whether groups of people were able to move on to better jobs with economic development after being incorporated into wage labour via domestic service depended on class position and how early they had been incorporated into wage labour. On these two counts, African women were the most disadvantaged. In the absence of a large demand for female labour, Black women were trapped in domestic service.

* * * * *

This lengthy chapter has provided the basis for understanding trends in the changing class structures of the Cape and Cape Town. A detailed analysis of census reports was necessary to locate groups of people within the social formation, to create an "index" to the class structure. Domestic service was a job for the least privileged

unskilled groups of people. Class position allowed some groups to move on to better paid jobs, other people were trapped in domestic service. The census reports show just how many women worked in domestic service. Ironically, this could justify a theoretical emphasis on women's oppression in analysing domestic service. However, the starting point for analysing the importance of domestic service for women has to be an examination of class relations so that the full implications of the place of domestic service in South Africa's class structure are not obscured. It was measures to obtain large supplies of cheap unskilled Black, largely male, labour that resulted in a particular sexual division in wage labour and forced women into domestic service as they lost other means of survival. The following chapter elaborates on the position of domestic service within class relations and examines the mechanisms whereby domestic service acted as a measure of class domination and control.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 4

DOMESTIC SERVICE : A PROCESS OF INCORPORATION INTO WAGE LABOUR AND SUBORDINATION.

LEGISLATION IN THE CAPE AS A MEASURE OF CONTROL

1. Introduction

After the abolition of slavery, colonists were forced to obtain their labour from the indigenous population. Chapter 2 discussed the pressures which led to an emphasis on the indigenous population as a source of labour, chapter 3 described the differential rate of incorporation into wage labour of the indigenous population and how domestic service often acted as a point of incorporation. The dominance of Black women in domestic service described in Chapter 3 can only be understood in terms of the way the class structure developed which led to a particular linking of class, colour and gender. This chapter discusses official measures to stimulate and control labour as well as changing class relations and explains why domestic service can only be understood in terms of class domination, rather than in terms of the oppression of women.

Although this chapter discusses legislation as a means to force the indigenous population into wage labour and as a measure of control, this does not imply that laws are important in themselves. Legislation reflects the needs of the ruling class, it does not evolve by itself without opposition, nor can legislation in itself be used as a means of periodising history. The period covered by this thesis starts with the first Masters and Servants Act in 1841 since this was the time when more rigorous attempts were being made to incorporate the indigenous population into wage labour and new measures of control (after the abolition of slavery) were being developed.

This chapter deals, therefore, mostly with employers' demands for labour

and official responses in the face of shortages of agricultural and domestic labour. The link made between agricultural and domestic labour accounted for the harsh conditions domestic workers faced; the major problem was always the shortage of agricultural labour. Laws to stimulate a supply of labour and to control employed people were often combined with early forms of pass laws as discussed in chapter 2.¹ The employers' demands and legislation usually apply to the Cape as a whole. Despite the fact that the majority of domestic workers were women, this period is not concerned with the oppression of women as such, but with class and colour oppression and how this affected women within the indigenous population. An emphasis on domestic work as women's work only arose later in the period when attempts were made to replace male domestic workers with women. Thus, although sexual division of labour had resulted in domestic service being a female dominated job, this received greater formal recognition only after the turn of the century (though attempts to attract female immigrants to work in domestic service had occurred throughout the period). A concerted effort to attract women only occurred when there were shortages of male labour elsewhere.

Domestic service is a pivot for understanding class domination in the Cape. With the abolition of slavery (referred to in chapter 2) and with the need for increasing supplies of labour, several measures were introduced to stimulate the supply of labour (such as legislation forcing people to become employed - discussed in this chapter, loans and taxes introduced in later years). Warfare and resulting land shortage also forced people into wage labour. Domestic service was an important point of incorporation into wage labour for unskilled labour. However, domestic workers were incorporated in violent and racist terms which entrenched their class position. Their servile status was enforced by the Masters and Servants Acts thus domestic service acted as an

¹ Just before 1841, Ordinance No. 2 of 1837 was passed by Benjamin D'Urban. One of its intentions was to prevent the entry of armed Africans into the territory by allowing them to be repelled by arms; this aspect was concerned with the armed struggle with indigenous people. Other clauses referred to workers and contained a system of passes for Africans as well as provisions to enforce employment.

important source of control and domination over the indigenous population. The specificity of domestic workers' oppression is therefore explained through the violence, racism and force with which their labour was secured, their incorporation into wage labour as unskilled domestic workers and then the subordination and control to which they were subject as domestic workers. The subordination and control was partly formal (through legislation) and partly informal (through the nature of the job and the racism of their employers - this chapter and chapter 5). Domestic service is therefore seen within class domination, including colour oppression, in the changing class relations between the colonisers and their descendants and the indigenous population. Because the focus in this chapter is on legislation, the emphasis is on control.

For purposes of interpretation, this chapter has been divided into three major subheadings :

- (i) stimulating a labour supply and new forms of control
- (ii) maintaining a labour supply
- (iii) reallocation and changing composition of labour force

These distinctions are not absolute, nor can precise dates be attached to them. The entire period involved continued shortages of labour and thus a continued need to stimulate a supply of labour. However, there do appear to be differences in emphases which warrant distinctions. In the first phase when the number of people in wage labour was small there was concern to create a supply of labour and to set up the legislation that would help to create a supply of labour as well as to control it. From just before the beginning of the twentieth century, there was still the need to obtain large supplies of labour because of conflicting demands from the newly opened mines. There was also, however, concern with maintaining and controlling the existing labour force. New emphases on educating a "suitable" type of worker arose. Large numbers of people were entirely dependent on wage labour for survival which resulted in fierce competition for jobs and changes in the colour division of labour. By 1930 when the rate of industrialisation had

speeded up and was to accelerate further, there were still shortages of labour. One of the suggestions to solve labour shortages was to make better use of the existing labour force which affected the composition of domestic work since it was felt that men should not be working in domestic service when their labour was needed elsewhere. In this period, domestic service in both the Cape and Cape Town became even more female dominated. The largest colour group in the Cape had been Africans from a long time back; in this third period more Africans moved to Cape Town and Africans became a larger group within domestic service in Cape Town. There was a corresponding concern with overcrowding in Cape Town. This stops just short of the apartheid era when measures to prevent Black people from forming a permanent urban labour force were more stringently applied. Some of the pressures which led to the introduction of apartheid measures were evident in the final period, for example housing problems in Cape Town, a desire to extend passes to African women so that they could be subject to the same controls as men. These pressures led to the development of new forms of control after 1948 which would be more effective for labour control than the Masters and Servants Acts. Thus, although the Masters and Servants Acts were still in force by 1948, pressures which would lead to their being superseded by other forms of control already existed. The Masters and Servants Acts were probably more effective in establishing class domination than in controlling the movement of a massive force of cheap labour.

2. Stimulating a labour supply and new forms of control

The abolition of slavery had given the Cape colonists two problems :

1. a plentiful supply of cheap labour had to be obtained
2. new forms of controlling labour were necessary

This first period saw strenuous efforts to force people into wage labour, the introduction of the Masters and Servants Act in 1841 mainly to control labour and the Vagrancy Act in 1879 to stimulate labour supply. The demand was always for cheap labour (throughout all three periods) which necessitated higher degrees of coercion. This section

illustrates the violence and racism to which "servants" were subject. Also illustrated are the colour bias of the legislation and its support for ruling class interests. The link made between agricultural and domestic workers explains the disadvantaged position of domestic workers because of continual shortages of agricultural labour. The nature of domestic service put domestic workers in a disadvantaged position since employers could exert a great deal of personal control. However, the legislation governing domestic workers enforced their subordinate position so that domestic service acted as a major mechanism of class domination

2.1. The first Masters and Servants Act in 1841 : a measure of control

A sufficient number of Africans had been incorporated into wage labour for the colonists to require a more rigorous system of control over their labour. To this end, the first Masters and Servants Act was passed in the Cape on 1st March, 1841, based on a similar form of control in Britain.¹ This was to act in conjunction with measures to stimulate the labour supply discussed in subsequent sections. The Masters and Servants Act was important for class relations because it enforced a subordinate position for "servants" who were mostly Black.

Although a "servant" could also be employed in "manufactures", the two major forms of employment that this Act covered were agricultural work and domestic service. As will be seen, the strong link made between agricultural and domestic workers which lasted over most of the period under review has had important implications for domestic workers and explains the stricter controls over this type of work.

The provisions of the first Masters and Servants Act have been categorised under four major areas which allow a conceptual understanding of the implications of the Act.

¹The Masters and Servants Act was to be amended in 1856, 1873, 1874, 1875 and 1889 in response to changing requirements, but was only to be repealed in the next century in 1974.

(i) The Masters and Servants Act was primarily a measure of control over a category of wage labourers. As a measure of class domination, servility and subordination were enforced for workers defined "servants".

(ii) Despite the fact that the Masters and Servants Act was an instrument of control, the Act was couched in liberal assumptions of master and servant being "equal" partners in a contract.

(iii) Paternal power in "servant" families was entrenched so that a father could apprentice his children. Apart from securing more labour this had implications for gender and nuclear family ideology.

(iv) Additional labour could be obtained through the apprenticeship of children.

(i) Masters and Servants Act as a measure of control

With the abolition of slavery and the realisation that labour had to be obtained from the indigenous population (see chapter 2, there was a distinction between "free" labourers and ex slaves and apprentices and a greater attempt to bind "free" labourers into long term labour contracts (the maximum duration of contracts was longer for free labourers).

The Act was a measure of control to force a servant to perform stated duties. Once a person had entered a contract (and these could be for a substantial period), the master had a secured worker. (Chapter VIII imposed punishment on anyone who tried to prevent a servant from entering or completing a contract or who tried to agitate to change conditions of service or wages.) Not only was the labour of the worker secured, but the Act imposed standards of performance and of behaviour. Misconduct on the part of the servant was very broadly defined and included negligence or injury to the master's property, refusal to work, violence or insolence towards the master, "scandalous immorality", drunkenness (chapter V of 1841 Act). (Several of the misdemeanours were adapted from slave codes, see chapter 2.)

Servants' misdemeanours could be punished by dissolving the contract, imprisonment or a penalty not exceeding one month's pay. (This might have given masters a degree of latitude in imposing their own fines and chapter IV of the Act did indeed give the master leave to deduct wages for absence without leave or neglect of work.)

Misdemeanours on the part of the master were not quite as broad nor as heavily punished. Improper conduct on the part of the master meant that the contract of service had not been properly adhered to in that stipulated wages or articles of the agreed amount or quality had not been paid. "Punishment" comprised immediate rectification of contractual duties and the servant could also be compensated for injuries physical or otherwise by the master. If the compensation was not honoured, the master could have his goods seized and sold in order to make compensation or go to prison for up to a month. The contract could also be dissolved either as compensation or in addition to the above.

Contraventions for both master and servant covered dishonouring of the contract : non performance or inadequate performance of duties by the servant and non support on the part of the master. Desertion on the part of the servant was a criminal offence. There were quite large differences in misdemeanours on the part of the master and that of the servant. The master's misdemeanours covered only non-performance of contract duties; this applied to the servant as well, but added to this were other types of misconduct which did not apply to the master. The listing of unacceptable behaviour for the servant underlined that person's subservient position as well as how domestic service was (and is) different from other work. Although both parties could take each other to court, unequal power relations made the summoning of a master unlikely - an employer could make the life of an employee far more uncomfortable than the opposite situation. Furthermore, an employee would require a degree of self confidence and knowledge of legal procedure as well as the time and ability to travel to a magistrate (who might not be sympathetic), although the Act stated that if a servant

were too poor to afford the cost of a summons or process then it could be free. Although both parties to the contract were apparently protected, actual conditions weighed on the side of the employer. (This was even acknowledged to an extent with provisions of what should occur if the master - no mention of servant - should appeal against a decision.)

Further control as well as protection for the master was exerted through the control of character references. Chapter VI laid down penalties for forged characters and stated that masters were not bound to provide a reference for their employees. The provisions were stacked against servants : a servant was liable to a large fine (10 - 50 pounds) or imprisonment for forging a reference whereas the only possible penalty for a master was that if a false character were given, the master was to compensate any third party who had employed the servant if damages were caused by that servant.

A final measure of control was that masters were required to register births and deaths of servants or their children (chapter VII) and thus control over an emerging proletariat was instituted.

(ii) Assumptions of equality

Although the Act was written with the liberal assumption of protecting both parties to the contract, in reality the parties to the contract obviously lacked equality and the master had the power of the law and material conditions on his side. The master was also able to deduct wages for misconduct on the part of the servant.

The definition of the contract of service itself was open to abuse : "any agreement whether oral, or written, whether expressed or implied". Given that the Masters and Servants Act was a measure of control and given that employees were less likely to take their employers to court, this hazy definition was likely to have been detrimental to employees or even people who had not seen themselves as employees and suddenly found

themselves governed by stringent conditions. This is despite the fact that the contract could be annulled if it were found that either party had been induced to enter it by "any fraud, misrepresentation or concealment" which was unlikely since these were not equal partners to a contract.

The master and servant were regarded as parties to a contract in which the master provided food and lodging and the servant provided service "at all fair and reasonable times" (which left the servant open to abuse). Changes to the contract had to be negotiated. For instance, the consent of a servant to the continuation of a contract was required if the master moved more than a specified distance. (This "consent" was in reality a hollow freedom when there were other laws forcing people to remain in wage labour.) Conditions of employment such as wages, notice and sick leave were stipulated in the contract which was more than present day domestic workers receive. This was probably born out of the liberal nature of the British government and its move towards less coercive measures of binding workers (see chapter 2). Both master and servant were theoretically able to take the other to court. However, the indigenous population suffered from severe inequalities - coercion wielded by the Colony's police and army; the imposition of laws which disrupted their lifestyles and began the process of forcing them into wage labour; unequal access to state machinery through lack of knowledge, vulnerable position and discriminatory practices; racism which presupposed the inferiority of "servants".

Because of the differences in power, education, and familiarity with law, servants were unlikely to have taken advantage of this safeguard, yet liberal British law emphasised formal equality while the actual working of the law was open to grave abuse.

(iii) Enforcement of paternal power

Chapters II and III of the Act laid stress on a nuclear family under the guardianship of the father (the father could contract his children, on the father's death the wife and children's contracts expired after a

month¹). (Specific mention was made of the fact that girls could be apprenticed to domestic service.) The stress on family could have arisen out of the desire to stabilise labour and its reproduction after the breakdown that had occurred under slavery. Colonial interpretation of tribal custom and the emphasis by missionaries on monogamous patriarchal families within "Christian marriage" and opposition to polygyny were also probably important. In theory this meant that a newly married female servant could have her contract dissolved by her husband who then had control over her wages (provided he compensated the master!) (chapter IV) and in this way reflected sexual oppression. A more important effect of enforcing the authority of the male servant was that masters gained access to the labour of their servants' families.

The master was furthermore entitled to dissolve a contract if pregnancy or child birth prevented a woman from performing her duties or if a "live in" servant married (chapter IV). This emphasises women as mothers residing with their husbands within a nuclear family. It would probably have caused hardship to the women concerned since there was no mention even of a month's notice, but in view of the continual labour shortages, it seems unlikely that such an option was often exercised. It is interesting that there was a stress on a nuclear family so early in South Africa's history and applied to indigenous people who did not have a history of nuclear families. Despite the fact that large numbers of working class women do not (and did not) live within nuclear families, the ideology of the nuclear family has been important in defining women's position in wage labour (for instance justifying lower wages because of husbands' support, limiting overtime and in this case securing the labour of a male servant's children).

(iv) Additional labour via apprenticeship of children

Farmers gained access to additional labour through the apprenticeship of

¹The second provision seems strange when there was a labour shortage. It would be interesting to investigate the gender ideology that led to this preference for male labour.

"destitute" children (chapter III). Although there were fines if a child were kept for longer than a month without permission, evidence presented in chapter 2 shows that there were often gross irregularities. The provisions regarding these child apprentices were particularly paternalistic (although in practice the children were probably treated the same as any other worker). The contract stated that the apprentice "shall faithfully and honestly serve and obey his master"; the master in turn was to provide, apart from maintenance and clothing, education and religious instruction. Although individual cases of masters fulfilling these conditions can be found, it is doubtful whether many apprentices received any "education". The stress on religious instruction could be seen in terms of missionary activity among the "natives" and the emphasis from England.

The Masters and Servants Act was primarily a measure of control although some provisions allowed additional labour to be gained through the apprenticing of children. Despite appearances that the servant was an equal partner to a contract, the Masters and Servants Act served to dominate the indigenous population. The indigenous population was incorporated into wage labour at a disadvantage - in a servile status - in which their behaviour was controlled far beyond the listing of duties. The servile status of domestic work itself was entrenched.

The first amendment to the Masters and Servants Act was enacted on June 4 1856 (Act no. 15). There were no substantial changes but several aspects were tightened up.¹ By 1856 there was no longer a distinction between freed slaves and other employees. The maximum length of a contract had been increased from 3 to 5 years which probably bears testimony to difficulties with labour supply. There was also recognition of warfare between the colonists and the indigenous

¹For instance a contract with a child under 10 years of age was invalid. Despite this, the fine for keeping a destitute child without notifying a magistrate was only between 5 and 20 shillings which would not have been a great deterrent. Punishments of recalcitrant servants were also extended. For instance, a servant could enter successive periods of imprisonment for refusing to resume service and this would be added on to the end of the term of service (as would any period during which a servant absented him/herself).

population in a clause which said that an agricultural labourer or herdsman was to remain in his master's service during any "public commotion or invasion of the Colony" for the duration of the trouble even though the servant's contract might have expired in that time. Furthermore, if a servant were called out for burgher service (employers obviously "served" the interests of the colonists in all respects), then the master was bound to support the servant's family while he was away (chapter II, clause 15).

Other laws worked in conjunction with the Masters and Servants Acts. Act 22 of 1857 was intended to prevent the introduction of children "belonging to Native Tribes" into the Colony without the sanction of the Governor which could imply that colonists had been solving labour shortages in this way on quite a large scale. Act 26 of 1857 was intended to maintain people in employment. If anyone delivered a message to a servant purporting to be a message from his chief that he should return, the messenger could be sentenced to imprisonment and hard labour for not more than two years. The seriousness of the intention to maintain a stable labour force can be gauged by the severity of the punishment.

The first Masters and Servants Act and its amendment were strong measures to control the indigenous population since people were incorporated into wage labour on a disadvantaged basis and a servile status enforced. Domestic service was the pivot of this focus. Additional labour was also obtained through obtaining the labour of male workers' families and destitute children. These laws of domination were attempts by the government to control the indigenous population. The formal "equality" between master and servant contained in the laws was a bone of contention with employers who hankered after more violent and immediate control over workers without court interference.

2.2 Reaction of employers to early laws : racism and violence

The previous section described the Masters and Servants Act as a measure

of control. Despite the wide powers afforded them, employers resented the legal red tape involved. This section demonstrates that the supposed equality between masters and servants was a sham : the reactions of employers demonstrate their belief in their superiority. Although colour was not mentioned in the Masters and Servants Act, reaction of employers also demonstrates the belief that Black people were subordinate. Class relations were racist and violent.

Despite the inequality between master and servant in the Acts, employers still believed themselves inconvenienced as a petition from some inhabitants of Fish River in 1859 showed (A.26-'59). "Your memorialists find themselves in the greatest oppression between master and servants law" because of the distances to the magistrates courts

"which renders it difficult to seek for redress, which is the cause of many cases being looked over, while the master is suffering under a continual aggravation, and losing his property, which is the cause of masters forgetting themselves and making themselves guilty to heavy and shameful punishments as the examples of last circuit court"

Even when magistrates courts were closer, the master still had to make several trips "which is a severe punishment", neglect his work, or keep a son out of school.

The petitioners obviously wanted control over their servants - they suffered "continual aggravation" - but they resented the formal vesting of control in the courts and admitted that many rather took the law into their own hands.

Another petition of 1859, from sheep farmers and others of Somerset East (A31-'59), made racial prejudice, the imposition of punishments without going through the courts and the desire for more violent punishment, even more stark. The petitioners wrote of their kindness of giving "barbarians" work that was repaid with theft and "they have become so

insolent in their general demeanor (sic) that the greatest prudence and forbearance is required to keep the master from committing himself by taking the law into his own hands". They complained about distances which had to be travelled to the courts and of sentences being reversed in Cape Town by people who had no knowledge of their local conditions. Furthermore, they believed imprisonment was not effective

"Imprisonment carries no disgrace to the native mind, and as for the hardship of spending a few weeks upon the roads, he does not heed that, for he meets with more consideration during the time he is serving out his sentence than even his master is bound to bestow upon him as per contract".

(This does much to describe actual working conditions.) Since a "month's imprisonment is rather courted than feared by the debased savage" they asked for "whipping and solitary confinement, coupled with spare diet" - "it would be a mercy in the end, because it alone would meet the need of the case" (A31 - '59).

A petition from landowners of Albany in 1866 also stressed the need for corporal punishment, the inconvenience of travelling to magistrates courts and asked for a pass system to prevent stock theft. They did not want "natives wandering, without let or hinderance, over their property" - when "such natives are requested to leave the farms, they brandish their kerries, and that but for the law-abiding character of the farmers, breaches of the peace would frequently be committed" (CP2-'66). They also recommended that a stop should be put to "heathenish customs of dancing, and the buying and selling of wives" since they believed stock thefts occurred in order to provide meat for feasts which arose out of these practices.

The contents of the petitions attest to the violence of the relations between colonists and the indigenous population and these relations were different from the relations experienced in Cape Town. The east coast of the Cape was being progressively seized by the settler population, despite violent resistance by the local population. The racism of the

white settlers, borne out by their arrogance in assuming a right to the land, was probably heightened by their fear of the resistance. Since the farmers needed labour, contradictory desires formed a delicate balance : there was an attempt to force the indigenous population into employment (and some child stealing to gain workers) while on the other hand there was a desire to control free movement of the indigenous population to prevent stock losses. The government might have believed it was necessary to move to less violent forms of labour control (with their "liberal" laws), but the farmers certainly did not agree. Slavery had given them almost complete control over their servants - they wanted the same control over "free" labourers. The general violence of the border areas probably also led to the desire to beat their workers into submission and to dispense with inconvenient legalities. The indigenous population was being incorporated into wage labour in violent and racist terms and this entrenched their class oppression. Domestic service was a major point of incorporation and this explains the specificity of domestic workers' oppression and the violence and racism under which their labour was secured and controlled.

2.3 Government reaction to employers

There were sufficient employer complaints for the government to appoint two select committees to investigate conditions of the Masters and Servants Act (A.23-'71 and A.5-'72). Their deliberations led to a distinction between agricultural and other servants which made conditions for agricultural workers more severe but also worsened conditions for urban domestic workers.

The 1871 Select Committee received a memorial from some "Coloured Persons engaged as General Labourers, Artizans, etc." from Genadendal (A.23-'71). They asked for some relief for the "labouring classes" from the "objectional laws" thus far enacted. They disapproved of any distinction between "agricultural and town labourers ... as it will greatly confuse and complicate matters between servants and masters, and work most injuriously to the welfare of memorialists as a class". They

asked for the following amendments "without delay"

1. magistrates should have the option to impose a fine "instead of imprisonment as a felon"
2. they noted that a servant's duties were listed and asked that the same be done for the master
3. some provision for the payment of a servant's wages when the master was "unwilling or unable to pay".

The writers ended as follows

"Memorialists have further to state that at present they are unrepresented in the Houses of Parliament, that strong prejudices still exist in this Colony against colour, race and class, and that memorialists hope that under these and other circumstances your Excellency, as Her Majesty's representative, will guard the interest of memorialists in this as well as in other matters".

It was most unusual for a petition from members of the working class to be received.

In 1873, the Masters and Servants Act was amended - the demands of farmers were largely supported and a distinction was made between farm and other servants. The requests of the workers cited above were thus largely ignored; although the option of a fine or imprisonment for the servant was allowed, the master's duties remained at the level of providing shelter and food. If a fine did not persuade a master to pay a servant's wages, then his/her movable property could be seized, so the servant received some protection if the servant was able to institute proceedings of this nature.

The 1873 Act greatly extended the section on misdemeanours of servants, introduced more severe punishments and attempted to streamline court procedure and to enforce appearances of both parties¹. In the process,

¹A later amendment in 1875 contained even more provisions relating to prosecution, appearance and custody.

a clear distinction was drawn between farm and other servants (for instance maximum length of imprisonment and maximum fines were slightly longer and larger for farm servants). The government went a long way towards meeting employers' demands although they were not given the extremes of control over their workers that they requested. Punishments were prescribed for "any abusive or insulting language" to a person in authority over a servant "calculated to provoke the peace" thus emphasising the subservient position of employees. Although the chairperson tried to block it, farm servants could also be punished for making "any brawl or disturbance". The length of contracts was reduced to a year.

Apart from stricter control over the behaviour of servants, the 1873 amendment also gave stronger and extended protection to the property of the master (although pass laws were not yet introduced to reduce stock thefts). A clause which said that a servant should not without leave and for the servant's own purpose "make use of any horse, vehicle, or other property belonging to his master" both enforced the subordinate status of the servant and protected the master's property. Furthermore, a "herdsman" was liable to punishment if he/she failed to report the loss or death of an animal in her/his charge, or if the dead animal were not kept for inspection - other provisions covered almost every other eventuality. This extended protection directly answered farmers' complaints that they had been losing livestock.

These increasingly severe provisions were really intended to apply to farm servants which implies that farmers in border areas were the ones the government was trying to help rather than Cape peninsula employers. Non agricultural domestic workers were, however, included in the provisions of the Acts and even if employers experienced less problems with urban domestic workers, the employers still had a great deal of power over their workers which they could use if they wanted to and this

was how Cape Town domestic workers could be affected¹. Conditions for domestic workers were so severe precisely because of the link with farm labour and because of its importance as a major source of incorporation and subordination of the indigenous population. Class and colour oppression (rather than sexual oppression) were identifying aspects.

Labour shortages remained bad. John X. Merriman reported that there had been attempts to obtain labour from the interior, but there had been unforeseen difficulties with chiefs and the distances that would have to be covered - "it soon became evident that but little help was to be looked for from this quarter" (Report on Immigration and Labour Supply for 1875, G8-'76 : 1). In an attempt to gain suitable labour from England, there had been a scheme of aided immigration since August 1873. In the two years after the scheme's inception about two and a half thousand people had been encouraged to settle in the Cape without government aid (only 107 of these people had been women) and 624 people had received aided passages (again, more men than women). About a third of the women who had received aided passages were domestic workers of one or other kind (cooks, domestic servants, housekeepers, housemaids, laundresses, gardeners etc.). Thus, immigration did not add large numbers of domestic workers.

As also noted in chapter 2, immigration measures had racist undertones and added tiny proportions to the labour force. A real solution to the labour shortages could only come out of further tapping of the indigenous population. Numerous select committees were appointed to investigate the shortages of unskilled labour over the years. Several of the people who gave evidence to a committee in 1879 suggested that

¹Summaries of all contraventions under the Masters and Servants Acts exist. However, it is not noted under which section of an Act a servant was convicted, nor is there a breakdown of the geographical areas in which the contraventions occurred. This type of information is necessary to evaluate the emphasis placed on provisions of the Acts by masters (in accusations) and magistrates (in convictions). There is a detailed analysis of geographical areas of convictions within the Cape Town area, so urban based domestic workers were obviously convicted under the law, but it would be interesting to see whether the border areas had a higher number of convictions than the urban areas and whether the sections under which people were convicted differed according to whether they were urban or rural.

African labour should be imported to the Cape to relieve labour shortages. English and German immigrants were also suggested, but they tended not to remain menial workers. A farmer from Wynberg commented that as soon as German immigrants got money, they tended to "set up for themselves" (A26-'79 : 5).

Some interesting points arise from the 1879 Select Committee. The first is that the Cape was a land of opportunity for white immigrants who could quickly secure a better living for themselves and that the indigenous people were seen as a source of cheap labour. A second is that by raising wages, more labour might have been obtained. The same farmer from Wynberg was unable to obtain workers at 2s. per day (with no food) but admitted that he might have obtained more labour if he had offered 3s. per day. He added

"The great stumbling block is the wages paid by the Divisional Council, which are as high as 3s. a day. We are unable to compete with that" (A26-'79 : 2).

The shortage of labour was, therefore, a shortage of cheap labour and employers were eager for the government to maintain this supply of cheap labour. A third point is that employers often provided even non-agricultural employees with plots of land and cottages. By providing family accommodation, the employer got access to additional labour. The Wynberg farmer had built two-room dwellings for families¹ and said, "I erected the cottages in order that I might secure the labour of the occupants" (A26-'79 : 4). He generously paid the "rate of wages in the labour market" to labour thus obliged to work! (A26-'79 : 4). Although much of the data thus far has applied to rural workers in the Cape, these last three points apply just as much to Cape Town workers. Class domination was based on cheap labour and family labour and the colour component of class relations was made clear by the movement of immigrants out of menial labour.

¹He said that the average number of people living in the cottages was four. Sometimes families were larger, but "in some cases the elder children and the women go out to service" (A26-'79 : 4).

In the face of continued shortages of unskilled cheap labour, the government appointed several commissions of enquiry. In the process, conditions for domestic workers were made more severe and a distinction was made between agricultural and non agricultural "servants". Domestic work epitomises class and colour domination and this early desire for cheap and controlled labour shows how domestic work was essential in establishing this domination. The main focus was on agricultural labour - the connection made between farm and non agricultural "servants" harmed people who worked in towns such as Cape Town as domestic workers. However, the connection between the two types of labour explains the history of the severity of conditions of service of domestic workers since it was concerned with the domination of the indigenous population.

2.4 Control over movement to stimulate labour supply and the class nature of the laws

Farmers had complained bitterly of both labour shortages and lack of control over their workers. While amendments to the Masters and Servants Act gave them increased control over their workers and some protection against stock thefts, there was little control over people who were not employed. Further stimulation of the labour supply was required. (See chapter 3 for just how few Black people had entered wage labour at this time.) Where the Masters and Servants Acts could not fill these needs, other laws were promulgated to fill the gap. This section covers the introduction of the Vagrancy Act which was also a measure of class control. Continued complaints about labour supplies reflected the violent class relations between masters and servants as well as the class and colour bias of the legislation. The demand that the families of male servants should also work illustrated the difference between agricultural servants and industrial workers. Although most of the examples come from rural areas of the Cape, the class nature of the legislation also applied to Cape Town servants.

Act No. 23 of 1879 was passed "For the Prevention of Vagrancy and Squatting". Its intention was to suppress "idleness and vagrancy" and

to prevent farmers from suffering "serious losses of stock by thefts" which it was believed were perpetrated by unemployed and "idle" people. People found guilty of a wide number of offences¹ were defined as "idle and disorderly" or "vagrants". People found guilty could be arrested and imprisoned, or, more importantly, sentenced to a term of employment. The wages were to be determined by the magistrate and the term of service was not to be greater than the term for which they could have been imprisoned. In this way, people who found no need to enter wage labour could be forced into a job and once there could be controlled by the Masters and Servants Act and liable to imprisonment if "escape" was attempted.

One side of the 1879 Vagrancy Act was to force people into wage labour, another side of it was to prevent stock theft.² To this end, if a person found driving stock was not able to give satisfactory replies to a whole range of people who were empowered to interrogate and arrest, then it was assumed that the stock was stolen and the person could be arrested.

The Vagrancy Act was well used (in Cape Town as well). From 1880, over a thousand people were convicted of offences under Act 23 of 1879 in the Cape Colony (excluding Transkei). Convictions rose rapidly to a peak of 2 365 in 1885³ (Blue Books).

¹"Any person found wandering abroad and having no visible lawful means, or insufficient lawful means of support" or not giving "a good and satisfactory account of himself" or "wandering" or "loitering" "over any farm" or "near any dwelling-house, shop, store, stable, outhouse, garden, vineyard, kraal, or other enclosed place".

²A third side deemed that people "without sufficient clothing for the purposes of decency" found in a public place should be taken to be "disorderly persons". Apart from demonstrating colonial ethnocentrism, people who did not adopt western dress were unlikely to have been wage earners and could thus be recognised as falling outside the reach of colonial control.

³Although the bulk of those accused were Black, it is interesting that around 14 - 18% of those accused were White. It is not stated whether Whites formed the same proportion of those actually convicted since the convictions are not broken down into colour groups. (After about 1890, the proportion of Whites accused fell to well below 10% of all those accused.)

There were now two important laws for the control of labour in the Cape. The Vagrancy Act helped to push people into wage labour and the Masters and Servants Act served to control wage labourers.

Class relations are, however, dynamic, and because of employers' continued dissatisfaction with labour, another select committee was convened in 1889 to investigate the Masters and Servants Acts as well as the Vagrancy Act of 1879 (A3-'89). Once again, major complaints were about the inconvenience and the distance which had to be travelled in order to take an employee to court¹; the lack of immediate punishment; the inconvenience a master suffered when a convicted servant was imprisoned and thus lost his/her services; a preference for corporal punishment; and often a strong distaste for the intervention of the courts in the master - servant relationship.

The complaints contained in the 1889 Select Committee gave an insight into the nature of relationships between masters and servants. Theoretically, laws reflect ruling class interests. Practically, this was illustrated by a number of the people who gave evidence to the select committee. "It would be absurd to have one law for both. You must have one law for the master and one for the servant (A39-'89 :13). Thus, it was thought that masters should not be subject to the same punishments, particularly imprisonment, as servants "because there is a great difference between a master and a servant" (A39-'89 : 14). Employers also accepted that the Masters and Servants Acts should be applied in the interests of the master - "I therefore think that the Magistrate would give every chance for the farmer to get out of the difficulty by reasonable explanation" <if a farmer wrongfully arrested someone for vagrancy> (A39-'89 : 42). Nor were employers often taken to court under the Masters and Servants Acts

¹"I find that the greatest grievance of which the farmers complain is the great distances they have to travel to a Magistrate's Court. In some instances it very often happens the prosecutor may have to go into a Court over a very trifling matter and perhaps have to travel the distance two or three times. In some cases a farmer may have to take all the hands away from the farm as witnesses in the case, leaving no one on the place to look after business ..." (A3-'89 :xi).

"but my practical experience of 25 years' farming is that servants do not take their masters before a Magistrate; they are only too willing for the master to adjudicate and punish; and I think that the greatest punishment you can give a servant is to dismiss him at a moment's notice" (A39-'89 : 24).

Although Simons and Simons commented on the fact that colour was not mentioned in the Masters and Servants Acts (1969 : 20) (despite the way they were actually applied), employers were not neutral towards different colour groups and one employer said that "European" servants should be treated differently from Black workers and a "great deal" left "to the discretion of the master"(A39-'89 : 28). On the surface the Acts applied to a group of workers : the previous comments demonstrate the practice of the Acts serving to subordinate indigenous people.

There were objections because the Acts restricted complete control by the master. A representative comment was that servants preferred to be punished by their masters rather than to be taken to appear before a magistrate :

"The law should never sanction it; <a master dispensing punishment> but I hold that the power is already in the hands of the master. If he is a fair and just master my experience is that his servants will always submit to be punished by him. They have the greatest distaste to Magistrates interfering between master and servant" (A39-'89 :27).

If employers had to accept the "interference" of the courts, then they wanted much prompter punishment. Some suggestions were that the master should be able to take the servant instantly to some adjudicator for punishment rather than having to give the servant notice of this intention.¹

¹"I think if it were once known by the servants that they could not put their masters to all the trouble and expense of taking them to the Magistrate's Court, it would, in almost every case, be a check on disobedience" (A39-'89 : 8).

The attitudes towards punishment give an indication of the sometimes violent relations between employer and employee as well as the degree of coercion necessary to force and keep people in wage labour. One farmer disapproved of dismissal as a punishment since a "bad" servant might be induced "to commit an offence in order to break the contract" if the "only punishment for an offence was his dismissal". "In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they would take that advantage" (A39 - '89 : 11). A farmer who was in favour of corporal punishment said that imprisonment was not a deterrent

"... they say it is more pleasant to be in gaol than to be working for the farmers. I have often heard servants say, "Take me to the Queen's Hotel, because there I am well provided for; I can sleep whenever I like, and work whenever I please" (A39-'89 : 9).

Even a spare diet in prison was not regarded as severe enough since "a Kafir can go three or four days without food" (A39 -'89 : 13).

Detailed discussion occurred on what type of corporal punishment with what type of instrument was best. Since the Acts did not provide for instant punishment, several employers freely admitted to taking the law into their own hands as they had previously.

"In most cases the farmers are satisfied to bear their grievances rather than go to the Magistrate, or else they take the law into their own hands, and then, very often it is the case, when they do so, in a moment of passion, they go too far, and the servant lodges a complaint against his master, who thereupon has to endure all the inconvenience of going to town and being fined" (A39-'89 : 3).¹

Although workers must have resisted the violent conditions, this was

¹Although other evidence was that servants seldom filed complaints against their masters.

often limited to lack of co-operation¹ or trying to avoid service or running away from contracts.

As a means to add to the supply of labour, a suggestion was made that the Vagrancy Act should be improved "to more effectually prevent the going about of men who ought to be in service, and who have no visible means of existence" (A39-'89 :33). Although employers did use the Masters and Servants Acts² a Civil Commissioner complained that sufficient use was not made of the Vagrancy Act. Farmers were given power "to arrest any man found on his ground" yet most waited until a theft occurred (A39-'89 : 40).

Amendments to the Masters and Servants Act in Act No. 30 of 1889 followed the recommendations of the Select Committee closely. Employers did not receive the harsh punishments they wanted and they were still subject to the "interference" of the courts, but more access to the law was provided through special Justice of the Peace courts. The 1889 Act extended the provisions which previously applied to farm servants to any male employed as a domestic servant and thus they too could be imprisoned without the option of a fine.

Non farm servants had always been disadvantaged by the Masters and Servants Acts, but the 1889 amendment identified them even more closely with farm servants. Since the emphasis had been on obtaining and holding farm labour, the 1889 amendments were a step backwards for non farm servants.³ This amendment reinforced the position of domestic service as a means of class domination and control.

¹"The servants who are left <when one of their group was taken to court> are perhaps trying every way to annoy their master and place him in a difficult position ..." (A39-'89 : 4).

²A Civil Commissioner said that most of the cases he tried were concerned with disobedience, neglect of duty and similar, very few on insolence (A39-'89 :37). (Maybe employers punished "insolence" themselves).

³None of the complaints heard by the select committee had been about non farm servants. However, there had been evidence from diggers in Kimberley about their servants and the amendment could have been intended to give these employers wider powers.

Following recommendations of the select committee, the Vagrancy Act was extended in Act No. 27 of 1889 and served to give owners of land more powers to force people found on their land into wage labour. It also gave employers more control over their employees (through being able to search their living areas to look for "disorderly persons" without a warrant). The extensions of the Acts could have been attempts to help farmers counter the growing demands by the newly opened mines for labour.

Despite the emphasis on obtaining labour from the indigenous population, the racism of the Cape Colony meant that the search for White immigrants was not abandoned. Government Notice No. 742 of 1889 printed regulations under which aided passages were to be granted to domestic servants, mechanics, artisans and other skilled workpeople from England who were prepared to enter contracts of at least twelve months with employers in the Colony. Between 1891 and 1901 about 220 young women came to South Africa as domestic workers from St. Helena. This arrangement was believed to help both the domestic workers and Cape employers who would obtain "the services of persons suitable for domestic service at considerably less cost than in the case of servants engaged in the United Kingdom (PMO Vol. 227 file no. 9/07)

Complaints from employers about a lack of cheap labour (with added competition from the mines) and a desire for more control over labour continued and in 1890 the report of a further select committee "on the Labour Question" was presented (A12-'90). Once again, it was proposed that "native" labourers should be introduced into the Cape (it was hoped that these people from further afield would help to reduce stock theft since they did not have families living near the farms!). The wishes of the employers were similar to earlier years : they wanted cheap labour and thought the high government wages should be brought down into line with farm wages; they wanted implicit approval of coercive control over their workers; there were even complaints about constraints imposed by the legal length of contracts and starting times after the worker had

agreed to enter service.¹

There were new complaints as well and they provide interesting insight into (sometimes changing) living conditions. These concerned attitudes towards Black schooling (which was a prelude to the class relations discussed in the next section) and the relations between employers and the families of their male labourers.

The government was requested to negotiate with mission schools "in order to arrive at a system of school vacations, which would correspond with the seasons when that kind of labour is most urgently required" (A12-'90 : iv). By this time then, some Black children were receiving some schooling and there was conflict between the missionaries and farmers about the loss of labour although in the long term the type of schooling received was to the benefit of farmers.²

Comments about families are interesting because they illustrate farmers' beliefs that they had a right to the labour of all members of a worker's family and that the family should submit to their authority. Such beliefs were partially supported by the Masters and Servants Acts. This also illustrates how the experience of farm servants, and to a lesser extent full time domestic workers, was different from other wage labourers. It appears that when a man entered service on a farm, he brought his entire family with him. One farmer complained that he sometimes had to employ and feed a whole family in order to retain the services of a man (A12 - '90 : 48). (The emphasis on male labour is interesting - despite complaints that it was not enough, the labour supplied by the women and children could not have been insubstantial.)

¹"We cannot fix a date for the ploughing and reaping seasons to commence, and as we have to pay extra wages we don't want the men to come too soon" (A12-'90 : 16).

²A question asked of a member of the legislative assembly was "You believe in instilling into the native the elementary rudiments of education, to add to that the proper understanding of his duty towards his God, towards the State and towards his master?" - "Yes" (A12 - '90 : 51). (This question should be used as an illustration for sociology students of the bad interviewing technique of putting words into respondents' mouths!)

The farmers clearly thought they had rights of control over the entire family. One person said he thought an employer should chastise his workers' children as if they were his own so that they should learn "how to treat their master, and be obedient to him, and how to do his work properly" (A12-'90 : 45). Another farmer complained of worker parents who complained to magistrates about the master giving "a couple of cuts" with a riem to quarelling "young natives" ... " and the master is thus placed in such a position that he refrains from correcting them, and thus the young generation is altogether spoiled, and is made useless for the country" (A12 - '90 : 45). Employers thus saw it as essential that the children of their workers should be trained¹ (and beaten) to accept service. The intertwining of class and colour prejudices is illustrated by the following comment on "spoilt natives" :

"He considers himself as good as a white man, he does not consider himself one of a subject race, and he roams about from place to place, and at last comes to the village where numbers congregate together" (A12-'90 : 49).

Despite the stress laid on male labour, farmers expected the wives of those men to work as shown by this complaint

"A farmer's wife is sometimes even compelled to do all the housework herself, cooking, washing and everything while all the time there may be two or three of these kafir women on the farm, being fed by the farmer, but who refuse to do any work" (A12-'90 : 48).

Wage labour for farm workers was not then based on one person's labour. A farmer ostensibly hired the labour of a man, but expected the work of his wife and children as well and expected the whole family to submit to the authority of the employer. In this way, conditions were vastly different from industrial wage labour.

¹On education one interviewee said, "I am not opposed to educating a native, but I am in favour of teaching him what is necessary for him to know in order to become a good subject during life, and to entertain the expectation of better things hereafter : further than that I would not go" (A12 - '90 : 50/1).

With the introduction of the Vagrancy Act, Cape employers were given laws to force people into wage labour and since many people were incorporated into domestic or agricultural work, the Masters and Servants Act gave employers measures to keep these people in wage labour and to control them within employment.

In 1891 the Vagrancy Act was amended so as to appoint "inspectors of locations" who were given all the powers conferred on farm owners under the Act and who were also empowered to give permission to people who wanted to settle in the "locations". This illustrated growing urbanisation but the continuing need to stimulate the labour supply.

2.5 Summary : Stimulating a labour supply

Throughout the periods discussed, there were shortages of cheap unskilled labour. This early period of stimulating the supply of labour saw the introduction of the Vagrancy and Masters and Servants Acts to stimulate labour supply, control movement of the indigenous population and to control employed people. Cheap labour was what was required and a great deal of coercion was needed to obtain and control this labour. Class relations were violent and racist. The class and colour bias of the laws was made clear. The subordination of this class of workers was enforced through several means and standards of behaviour were prescribed which other classes of workers were not subject to. Although the laws contained no reference to colour, the practice and interpretation of the laws by employers made clear that they were a means of dominating the indigenous population.

Domestic service was at the centre of this class and colour domination. To an extent, domestic workers were disadvantaged by being grouped with agricultural workers (both defined as servants). Since agricultural labour was under supplied, provisions relating to agricultural workers were particularly severe. Yet domestic workers were grouped with agricultural workers partly because there was not always a clear

distinction between the two and also because domestic work was often a point of incorporation and the colonists saw it as essential to assert their colour and class dominance immediately. The conditions of service for domestic workers were extremely disadvantaging and entrenched an inferior unequal position for them which has continued. In addition, by the nature of the close work relationship, domestic workers have always had control exerted over their personal and family lives as the desire by employers to obtain and exert control over male workers' families illustrates. More women than men might have been working as domestic workers, but a distinction was not made between the sexes : domestic work was important in incorporating the indigenous population into wage labour in a subordinate position - class and colour domination were distinguishing features.

The introduction of concerns about the schooling of the indigenous population heralded a new period where there were attempts to consolidate and train the existing labour force i.e. there was an ideological shift from violent coercion to more subtle forms of control and incorporation of which schooling was one. In the face of continued shortages of labour, however, it was still necessary to stimulate new sources of supply.

3. Maintenance of existing labour force, despite continued labour shortages and continued attempts to obtain new labour

3.1 Introduction

In the earlier period a major aim had been to stimulate a supply of labour. In this next period there were still shortages of labour - there were complaints that the wives of male workers would not work and desires that access to land by Black people should be restricted - and there were still struggles over control. However, there were much larger numbers of people in wage labour and much larger numbers of people moving to towns all over the Cape (see Chapter 3 for growth of Cape Town population figures and slower movement of Black people to Cape Town within this growth).

High White wages allowed people to employ domestic workers : large numbers of people worked in domestic service; there were still shortages of domestic workers. Although there was not the same degree of violence in class relations as the first period, there were extensions of control over domestic workers. One of the new forms of control was the opening of servants registry offices in Cape Town.

This period was one of depressions. Despite this, demand for domestic workers remained high. Although there were still attempts to attract White immigrants into domestic service, domestic service became more dominated by Black people. Domestic service was an important source of survival in bad times. The depressions forced people into domestic service in the absence of other jobs; preferential treatment for Whites in "civilised labour" policies also forced Black people into domestic service.

With larger numbers of proletarianised people, there was recognition that the Masters and Servants Act might eventually become redundant (this trend will be discussed in the next period). In this period, however, the control which the Masters and Servants Act provided was

regarded as a necessity by the employer class.

3.2 Maintenance of labour force and desire for more labour

A select committee on the labour question in 1892 revealed that many more Black people had in fact moved to towns since a large part of the argument revolved around "locations" and whether they helped to depress or stimulate labour supply.

"It has been urged that the general abolition of native locations would compel natives to seek work. Your Committee, however, is of opinion that the better regulation of native locations - to prevent their being the resort of loafers, vagrants, and others without visible means of subsistence - is more desirable in the interests of labour, and, in fact, a few well regulated locations or villages in some districts would be a source of supply where labour is now scarce" (C2-'92 : vii).

As an indication of the emphasis on the maintenance of a labour supply, and the existence of a relatively stable labour force schooling for Black people was seen as a means to create a more permanent labour supply

"To improve the labour supply and the condition of the labourer, inaugurate a more extensive system of individual training in all native centres, especially in native territories, undermine barbarism by all and every means and inculcate instead even rudimentary principles of civilised usages. More wants will thus be created, consequently more necessity for the native to go out to work in order to acquire means of satisfying them" (C2-'92 :xx).

However, the children were to be schooled to accept their class oppression¹ and farmers would conveniently obtain the services of a

¹I believe the best industrial education for these children is good hard work on a farm. Of course, every human being is the better for being educated" (!) (C2-'92 : 21).

captive group of child workers

"it might be arranged that the hours to be devoted to industrial pursuits should be employed in work to be performed on that farm, so that if the farmer has work to do which the children can do, it shall be done under the eye of the teacher" (C2-'92 : 18).

With urbanisation new problem areas arose such as alcohol abuse "... the number of drunken coloured people about Wynberg and Constantia on Saturday afternoons is a disgrace to the community" (C2-'92 : 6). The "dop" system was used by a number of employers - they said that workers refused to work without wine and doubtless they obtained a docile labour force.

Liquor was probably both a means to control a labour force and, for the workers, an escape from harsh conditions of service. Some employers saw drunkenness in racist terms "they are only children and do not know the evil results" <of drink> (C2-'92 : 11); whilst one made the nature of alienation explicit "the lower classes of all nations are strongly addicted to drink" (C2-'92 : 15).

On the one hand there were indications of more people in wage labour and a movement to towns, while on the other there were still labour shortages and the need to find new sources of labour. The Vagrancy Act had been intended to stimulate a supply of labour and there were complaints that it was being under utilised in attempts to solve the labour shortage. Whether as a result of this reminder or not, convictions under the Vagrancy Act took a big jump after 1892. The Vagrancy Act was, in fact, tightened up again in 1895 (Act No. 34) which attests to continued labour shortages.

It was pointed out that it was difficult to get people to enter wage

labour voluntarily if they were able to survive off their own land¹

If "a native makes a living in some way, and need not work, his immediate wants being supplied, how can you compel him to work for a farmer? And in Kafirland there are many natives who live in some way or another" (C2-'92:43).

In years to come, overcrowding and the Natives Land Act of 1913 reduced the number of people able to support themselves off the land, but at that time there was concern that so many of the indigenous people had access to land. The absolute belief that the indigenous people should have to enter wage labour is demonstrated by the number of people who felt that there should be laws forcing healthy young people to work.²

As an indication of the desire for more labour, complaints that the wives of male labourers would not also work continued. Farmers complained of the insolence of men who refused to let their wives work and of women who pretended they were "sickly and too weak" (C2-'92 : 29) to avoid working. Interviewees of the 1892 select committee seemed to think that Black people had accepted the ideal of a wife supported by her husband

"... the women are aware now of the fact that the men must work for them, instead of as formerly when they had to work for the men like slaves. Now, the young girls will not work at all" (C2-'92 : 67)

This need not have illustrated the acceptance of western sex roles, but

¹This understanding was also extended to "Coloured" people - "The difficulty in obtaining sufficient labour I attribute to the large number of coloured people cultivating plots of garden ground, from which they raise sufficient by the sale of vegetables and fruit - particularly strawberries - to support themselves and their families during at least the best part of the year" (C2-'92 : xvii).

²"Well, my opinion is this, that when a man servant comes to a farmer and wants employment, he must not only engage himself, but his wife and children, if they are grown; and Parliament should legislate to that effect" (C2-'92 : 28).

might have been resistance against incorporation into wage labour. With other sectors of the economy competing for male labour, it was probably even more difficult for farmers to get the labour they required and the demand for female labour was made explicit. The labour of women was necessary to make up shortfalls in male labour, particularly in domestic service so that men could perform other work. Census reports in Chapter 3 showed that nearly 80% of all domestic workers in both the Cape and Cape Town were women, it seemed that there were still feelings that this proportion should be increased to release male labour. Although there were not explicit statements that domestic work was women's work as occurred in the next period, this was partly implied in the demands for women to enter domestic service.

Some employers thought that if wage rates were lower, then women would be forced to work to make up family incomes; others admitted that when they had tried to reduce wages, they had not been able to obtain the number of workers they required. Thus the demand was still for cheap labour and there were always complaints about unfair competition from large (especially government) employers who paid high wages. A labour recruiter who was commissioned to recruit labour at the frontier had this to say about low wages

"It was their main objection. It is true that they would prefer to work in large bodies, but if the wages offered by the farmers had been adequate, they would have engaged themselves as farm labourers (C2-'92 : 8).

By now there were substantial numbers of people living in urban "locations" where they had no other means of support and had to enter wage labour. The movement of people to towns to enter unskilled labour and the breakdown of old ties and lifestyles was manifested in visible liquor abuse. There was growing stress on forcing wives of male labourers into domestic service - pressure which some women resisted - so that men could perform other work.

3.3 Shortages of domestic workers : Urbanisation, poverty and competition for unskilled jobs

In contrast to previous sections, this section concentrates on Cape Town just after the turn of the century and is primarily concerned with the maintenance of an already existing labour force. From the previous section and from census reports in Chapter 3, it was evident that there was a relatively stable labour force. Control was extended over this urban labour force of domestic workers by labour bureaux and an amendment of the Trespassers Act (which applied to the Cape as a whole). The years after the turn of the century were years of depression in which the racism of the society protected White workers at the expense of Black workers and many Black workers lost skilled jobs. Domestic service was an important alternative source of survival for these proletarianised workers. Thus, in times of depression, domestic service acted as a reserve army of labour. Possible militants were incorporated into domestic service where they were subject to an extensive form of class domination.

Despite the depression, there were shortages of domestic workers. The shortage of domestic workers might have been a reflection of the availability of other options of employment in an urban industrialised setting or of relatively high White wages in a racist society which made employment of large numbers of domestic workers possible. In any event, Chapter 3 showed that the movement of African people to Cape Town at this time was still slow and domestic workers were sought from other groups of people. One suggested source of domestic workers was immigrants.

The drive to obtain domestic workers from England was entrenched in the Immigration Act 47 of 1902 (which provided for assisted passages for domestic workers). From 30 January 1902 to 31 July 1903 28 men and 239 women received assisted passages under this scheme (Appendix to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament C15-1903). However, the proportion of domestic workers within this number was always low (Annexures, Report of

Medical Officer of Health, Mayors Minutes : 7).¹

As with earlier periods, immigration was not a solution to shortages of domestic workers. In this period further control was extended over domestic workers by servants registry offices (see below) and by an amendment to the Trespassers Act in 1906. This amendment (No. 23) made further inroads on domestic workers' privacy by declaring that no one could visit "servants or employees" without permission (C4-'06). Since stock theft could not have been as common as previously, this was probably solely concerned with the control of employees.

The aftermath of the Anglo Boer War and a trade depression from 1904 led to a drop off in building operations and unemployment which was especially severe between 1906 and 1908 (UG30 - 32 : 8). The Cape government opened a labour bureau in 1902 to help people find employment² and began relief works on railway works, the forest department and road making.

Young White women without other means of support were trained for domestic work which illustrates how domestic service acted as a reserve army of labour. A 1906 Select Committee on Labour Settlements for Indigent Whites had the following to say

"The evidence of Miss Moller, the matron of the Girls' Indigent Home, at Graaff-Reinet, shows that institutions such as those contemplated by the Act, may be of some assistance in the solution of the "poor white" question. The girls are rescued from undesirable and, in many cases, immoral surroundings, and are trained in house-work, so as to become useful as mothers' helps" (C3-'06 : viii/iv).

¹Between 1904 and 1907 over 1 000 domestic workers arrived in Cape Town each year, roughly around 3% of the total immigrants. In the depression year 1908, domestic workers accounted for 8% of all new immigrants (Statistical Registers).

²Initially the labour bureau was for Whites only; in 1906 services were extended to "Coloured" men.

The depression might have helped farmers to obtain more labour, but many more desperate people moved to the towns. Perhaps the effects of the lack of jobs led to people entering domestic service who would not normally have done so but there was still a critical shortage of domestic workers as this reference to Cape Town shows

"The South African Immigration Association has continued a useful work as an agency for European women, and the Coloured Section of the Bureau has also done some work in securing servants; but it would be no exaggeration to say that were 300 capable girls and women, European and coloured, to register their names for employment in domestic capacities at the present time they could all be readily placed within a very short period. The demand is far in excess of the supply, and, despite the period of depression, there has been constant difficulty in getting servants, while the rate of wages in general has been fully maintained" (G21-1907 Annexures : 10).

The demand for domestic workers was well enough entrenched to remain unsatisfied even in a depression.

Despite the shortage of domestic workers, a minute from L.S. Jameson said that as assisted passages from England had been suspended for the time being, it was not possible to extend the same aid to people wanting to come from St. Helena although any domestic workers would be easy to place. He believed that during the depression, the demand for domestic workers had decreased and "many persons have been forced to enter service who were previously in more independent circumstances" (1907 : PMO 227 file no. 9/07). This contradicts the experience of the labour bureau (Jameson was, however, making excuses for not granting assisted passages) but it was probably true that many more people had to work as domestic workers in times of depression. This again demonstrates the nature of domestic service as a source of employment when nothing else was available.

Whether prompted by the shortage of domestic workers or not, a number of "servants registry offices" were opened in and around Cape Town. In this way there was the possibility of exerting stronger control over domestic workers in the city and was an indication of the large size of the labour force. Applications to open an office had to be accompanied by a guarantee that the applicant was a "fit and proper" person by a local magistrate or a petition from responsible citizens or a police report. Most of the applicants were of necessity fairly well off (or people with good connections) since one applicant was told that the six people who petitioned on her behalf were not adequate because they were not ratepayers.¹ Thus working class people were prevented from exerting any official influence over the supply of domestic workers. A scale of fees was prescribed (both domestic worker and employer paid a shilling to register) according to the wage paid and this was to be paid by employer or employee "or to be shared in equal or other proportions by both employer and servant". It would be interesting to know how often the workers had to pay this fee. Even when there were shortages of domestic workers, domestic workers were placed in a potentially vulnerable position in using the registry offices. The domination of domestic workers was so extensive that not even these disadvantageous conditions were resisted.

Act No. 20 of 1906 was intended to regulate the opening of servants registry offices. One half of the regulations applied to the granting of licences, the records the licence holders had to keep and the fees they could charge. The other half applied to the domestic worker who had to supply the name and address of his/her last employer. In this way, some control could be maintained over the character references of domestic workers. A domestic worker giving false information was liable to a maximum fine of 5 pounds or to maximum imprisonment (with or

¹The police report said : "The signatures attached are genuine. The persons signing attached are with one exception workmen (3 of them coloured) who work for a weekly wage & pay rent for the house they live in, so consequently do not directly pay rates as they are not the owners of property". This was despite the fact that the applicant, Mrs Annie Allan, was "of a good character" (CT1 11/98 Resident Magistrate - letters received from private individuals 1906 - 1913).

without hard labour) of 14 days. A registry office licence holder who contravened the Act in any way (including overcharging and accepting bribes) was only liable to a maximum fine of 5 pounds and the possible cancellation of the licence. The lack of power and unequal treatment of the domestic worker was again demonstrated.

Business must have been fairly brisk, and the demand for domestic workers high because one licence holder wrote to the Resident Magistrate complaining of a rival who sent someone before the first registry office opened to entice away "any girls that are waiting for situations, thus damaging my business" ... "Also I am informed that he entices the girls by going as far as giving them beer thus making them unfit for other offices" (CT1 11/98). That such actions occurred demonstrated the extensiveness of the demand for domestic workers. In 1907 licences were issued to 8 servants' registry offices in Cape Town and 3 in Wynberg; by 1908 this had increased to 12 in Cape Town and 5 in Wynberg (Chief Immigration Officer, 1908 and 1909, Annexures to Votes and Proceedings).

Domestic service was important for both women and men during the depression. The labour bureau for White women was discontinued - on "the whole there is not a large demand on the Bureau, the greater part of work of this class being conducted through the ordinary registry offices in Cape Town" (Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly 1908 : 6). For working class White women suffering the effects of the depression, this implies that domestic service was an important source of work. The number of men applying for work through the government labour bureaux was greater than ever before in the seven years that the bureau had operated yet the number of men sent to jobs was the lowest on record. Many tradesmen had to accept work as ordinary labourers, other men were advanced fares to the Transvaal or to the then Rhodesia. In this way, the number of White artisans who were unemployed fell, but "Coloured" men still suffered unemployment and "in not a few respects, show a marked deterioration of character and bid fair to provide a most dangerous element in the population of the Peninsula" (G6 - 1909 : 7). Quite a large number of men applied for work as domestic

workers in Cape Town as Table 14 shows. The record of business of the Cape Town labour bureau in Table 15 gives an indication of the extent of unemployment. Both Tables 14 and 15 show how few of the men who applied for employment were found employment by the bureau.

In this way domestic service served as a reserve army of labour and also a way of defusing militancy due to the formal and informal measures of control to which domestic workers were subject. Unfortunately, due to deficiencies in the census reports for the relevant years, it is impossible to see if there was a significant increase of men working in domestic service in Cape Town (see Chapter 3).

As already noted, in times of depression, Black people generally suffered more than Whites. The report of the Economic Commission of 1914 (UG12 - '14) noted that the competition between colour groups was especially fierce between people classified White and Coloured. "It would certainly seem, when comparison is made over the last 20 or 30 years, that a larger proportion of the skilled trades of the Cape has fallen into the hands of the whites. Prior to that time the relative number of whites was small, and many trades were almost exclusively carried on by the coloured" (UG12- '14 : 41). The general policy of the labour bureaux was to look after Whites (UG54 - 1937 : 47). This probably means that more Black people were forced into domestic service who had previously been in more skilled jobs.

As an indication of how far the labour force had stabilised, workers were able to demand concessions from employers in the form of two Acts : the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Workmen's Wages Protection Act, both of 1914.¹ Two notable exclusions from the protection the Acts offered were domestic workers and agricultural workers. (An amendment

¹More research on working class resistance to capital would have to be done in order to understand the context of these two Acts. Unfortunately, this chapter has not been concerned with a picture of the whole of the working class, but only with a section. These two Acts are of concern by default because domestic workers did not fall within their provisions and this was a forerunner of the situation today when domestic workers are excluded from protective legislation.

TABLE 14

Cape Town Labour Bureau: Analysis (by Trades) of Men Applying for and Provided with Employment

Trades or Callings (Grouped)	Applications					Provided with Employment				
	1906	1907	1908	1909	1909	1906	1907	1908	1909	1909
Artisans, Building trades	503	609	447	497	497	300	104	78	103	103
Artisans, Engineering trades	210	381	360	191	191	127	75	62	46	46
Factory workers (not included in above). .. .	138	195	136	158	158	123	51	41	49	49
Clerks, book-keepers, storemen, canvassers, and salesmen ..	277	377	359	239	239	45	42	30	23	23
* Servants, coachmen, waiters, gardeners, &c.. .. .	243	542	591	629	629	154	108	77	88	88
Overseers, timekeepers, gangers, constables, and warders ..	86	135	136	60	60	103	50	28	38	38
Farm hands.. .. .	27	170	288	320	320	41	17	18	10	10
Labourers and handy men.	520	1 378	1 862	1 995	1 995	607	484	396	602	602
Totals	2 004	3 787	4 179	4 089	4 089	1 500	931	730	959	959

From: Report of Chief Immigration Officer, Annexures G6 - 1909:6
G4 - 1910:8.

TABLE 15

Cape Town Labour Bureau: Record of business

Year	No. of Men asked for by employers	Applications for employment	No. of Men sent to definite work	No. of Men sent to interview prospective Employers
1902	2 297	2 617	1 820	1 123
1903	3 980	3 945	2 814	4 021
1904	2 074	1 851	1 461	1 627
1905	1 917	1 912	1 300	1 263
1906	1 922	2 004	1 500	902
1907	1 444	3 787	931	844
1908	765	4 179	730	907

From: G6 - 1909:6

to include domestic and agricultural workers was defeated by 57 votes to 32.)

The reasons for the exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers give interesting comment on the nature of domestic workers' oppression. One reason was "that domestic servants as a body were not as a rule subject to the risks attaching to ordinary employment" (House of Assembly debates, 1914 : 2120). This is, of course, nonsense since several household tasks are potentially dangerous (climbing ladders, cooking, for instance.) A second reason, usually applied to farm workers, was that farmers cared for workers and their families if they were sick or injured. "Surely the honourable member knew that farm labourers remained with the employers and were practically members of the family (House of Assembly debates, 1914 : 3575) - an old cliché (see also Chapter 5). Another person commented that the Masters and Servants Act provided for domestic workers which was not so in practice due to unequal power relations. In this respect, workers were at the mercy of their employers and could demand nothing as a right to which they were entitled.

The third type of response highlighted the antagonistic relationship between employer and employee. It was argued that employers would not be able to afford the cost of the insurance "They must consider the small man" (House of Assembly debates, 1914 : 3573). (Dr J Hewat, representing Woodstock, noted that since domestic workers' wages were so low, there would be no hardship to the employer since the annual cost of insurance would only be about 10 shillings.) Other members representing farmers were more explicit. One said that employers should also be protected since they often suffered through their workers' negligence, "one never heard anything about the workmen being grateful" (House of Assembly debates, 1914 : 2124).

"The agricultural portion of the country did not ask for a Bill like this. But the honourable member for Gardens <Mr W D Baxter> wished to have this Bill forced on the agricultural section, so that they should insure. But the agricultural

employer had absolutely no control over his employees. If the honourable member for Gardens knew the position he would never have spoken as he had done. If the amendment were agreed to, the poor farmer would not be able to employ men" (Mr J J Alberts, Standerton, 1914 : 3572).

These responses make the conflicting interests of workers and employers very clear. One farmer even admitted that he was voting in his own class interests.

The real concern in these discussions was with farm workers and it was the interests of farmers that won out. Once again, a link was made between farm and domestic workers to the detriment of domestic workers. Both types of workers were paid directly by individual employers rather than large firms employing many people. In these cases employers were likely to feel more strongly about the wages they paid and this may be one of many reasons why domestic workers' wages were lower than other workers' wages.

Conditions for the working class continued to be bad and the "poor white problem" began to be referred to. The labour bureaux still focused their attention on Whites "In the main the position at present is that the labour bureaux instituted by the Government in a number of the larger centres are intended to serve the employment of civilized labour. As far as the activities of the bureaux are concerned this means European labour and, to some extent, Coloured labour, for which labour bureaux are in existence in a few centres with a relatively large Cape Coloured population" (UG54-1937 : 48).

The problems of Whites being forced off the land and lacking training meant that when they poured in to the towns they had to take unskilled work. Many might have entered domestic service and the Carnegie Commission certainly recommended domestic work as a solution for poor white women's dilemma. At the same time more and more Africans were

being forced from the reserves by economic necessity (UG30-32 : 8). Both these forces increased the urban proletariat and allowed for the expansion of industry. The first decade of the 1900s saw the establishment of many new industries which were stimulated by World War I and its aftermath.

"The necessary labour force for this expansion of industry was obtained partly by the migration of the more capable and more ambitious of the white unskilled rural workers, by the employment of female labour and by the introduction of the native from the reserves into industry (Unemployment Investigation Committee UG30-32 : 8).

Many Africans forced off the land entered domestic service. High White wages allowed large scale employment of domestic workers (at an average wage of 29s per month)¹.

"The fact that native wages are relatively low doubtless accounts for the appearance of the native servant in many families in which in other countries the work would be performed by the various members of the family" (UG14-26 : 178).

By this stage the focus was not so much on stimulating a supply of labour but on maintaining an existing supply of labour at low wage levels. The reasons for low Black wages led to a discussion of the Masters and Servants Act

"Native labourers are, however, subject to certain restrictions of law and custom which, it was urged before us, affect their bargaining power, tend to keep their wages down, and, in effect put a premium on the employment of natives in preference to white labour. These restrictions are imposed

¹Costs of keeping a servant were estimated at approximately 50 pounds per annum. This included a wage, food and room adding up to 3 - 5 pounds per month (UG14-26 : 178).

partly by the Masters and Servants Acts and partly by the Native Labour Regulation Act (1911)" (UG14-26 : 37).

The Masters and Servants Acts had "penal consequences" for what "in common law, is a purely civil contract" so that someone contravening the law was open to criminal prosecution (UG14-26 : 39). In assessing the importance of the Masters and Servants Acts, the Commissioners first emphasised that the Masters and Servants Act was intended to apply to Black workers although the original Acts did not specify colour groups. "But the sole justification for it was, of course, the contract between civilized masters and raw natives as their servants" (UG14-26 : 39). Although the commissioners felt that the Act was intended to exclude occupations normally followed by Whites, courts had often debated what was meant by the definition "servant". Despite this ambiguity, the "law in fact, has been narrowed in order to keep out persons regarded as unsuitable for its operations and proceedings are infrequently taken under it where white employees are concerned" (UG14-26 : 39).¹ The racism of the working of the Act was thus made explicit.

The colour emphasis was also felt to be a nuisance in some respects since "a feeling tends to be established that the manual worker - whatever his colour - belongs to a different species of animal from other human beings. Those provisions also help to maintain the tradition that manual work is degrading for white people which ... has had serious consequences in the creation and continuance of the poor white problem" (UG14-26 : 328). The class nature of the Masters and Servants Acts was also recognised. "Economically, these Acts operate to prevent natives as a class from bettering their position" (UG14-26 : 328) ... "these provisions are partly instrumental in making the native more acceptable to an employer than would be a white labourer without them" (UG14-26 : 329) ... "the native looks upon the contract as as

¹"In 1923, the number of prosecutions for offences under the Masters and Servants Acts was 886 Europeans and 18 369 non-Europeans, which do not appear to be inordinate figures when the number of the population affected by the Statutes in the four provinces of the Union is considered" (UG14-26 : 40).

mysterious device on the part of the white man for getting the best of him and he is unable to look upon it in any other light than that" (UG14-26 : 329).

The time was approaching when the Masters and Servants Act would be inadequate for controlling large numbers of workers and influx control and pass laws would be introduced instead. In the meantime, however, it was felt that the provisions of the Acts were still necessary since extensive control could be exerted over workers and workers were allowed some protection against employers (UG14-26 : 40 and 329) (see earlier for a discussion of how this liberal assumption was baseless in reality).

The Commissioners recognised that this legislation might eventually become redundant and should begin to be phased out before being repealed (UG14-26 : 355)

"but some differential treatment is inevitable where dealing with labour that is mainly illiterate and of inferior race. The clauses which penalize the labourers also operate to protect him, and the clauses penalising the master (which could not exist without the former) are very necessary for a labourer who has no possible chance of asserting his rights through civil procedure" (UG14-26 : 40:).

By this stage it appeared to be accepted that forcing a worker to stay with an employer as a form of punishment was not a satisfactory way to secure a labour force. Notwithstanding this, the "moral" effect of the Masters and Servants Acts was still appreciated (UG14-26 : 32). It reinforced the subservient position of servants and its racist application reinforced the oppressed position of indigenous people. These were times when Whites feared Black competition. Yet from the evidence it seems that large numbers of Whites lived comfortably enough and because of low Black wages could afford to employ a Black domestic worker thus entrenching those workers' position.

A problem was still how to maintain the labour at its cheap rate and this had bearing on the future homelands policy. At that time, the Commission did not think that providing more reserves would be a solution

"The provision of adequate native reserves has been delayed too long for it to be possible now to provide reserves within which it would be possible for the present native population of the Union to live without dependence on outside employment; and it was for too long the policy of the Union to drive the native, by taxation and other devices, to work for Europeans for it to be possible now to exclude him from the field of employment he is occupying" (UG14-26 : 152/3).

3.4 Summary

By this stage more people were living and working in towns and there was more concern with maintaining an urban labour force of domestic workers. The depression of the opening years of the twentieth century led to poverty and competition over unskilled jobs. Despite this, there was still a shortage of domestic workers and to cope with the demand, servants registry offices allowed greater control to be exerted over urban domestic workers; at the same time potential working class licence holders were prevented from opening offices. Thus class domination of domestic workers was maintained. During the depression a lot of people (including men) who might normally not have entered domestic service had to accept domestic work as the only work available. Although a solution to the "poor white problem" (which received increasing attention) was for White women to enter domestic service, the status of domestic service as a job for Black people was further entrenched in this period. After the worst of the depression, relatively high White wages allowed large numbers of Whites to employ domestic workers which was one aspect of the large numbers of domestic workers. Many skilled Black workers lost their privileged positions and were forced into subservient positions of which domestic service was an example in this time of the "civilised labour" policy.

The link between agricultural and domestic workers was maintained (again to the detriment of domestic workers) and the intent of colour domination and the racism of the Masters and Servants Acts were made explicit by several government appointed commissions. People were aware that with the availability of pass and other laws, the Masters and Servants Act could eventually be phased out. However, they still felt that the "moral" effect on workers of the threat of penal rather than common law prosecution was needed.

4. Reallocation and changing composition of the labour force

By the 1930s large numbers of people had entered wage labour. During this later period, continued labour shortages forced a reallocation of the existing labour force. The composition of domestic service in the Cape and Cape Town changed in two respects.

1. Domestic service became even more female dominated and for the first time there was explicit stress on domestic service being women's work and additional forms of control for women were suggested. Female oppression became more overt within class domination.
2. The number of Africans in domestic service increased as more Africans entered wage labour and Coloureds struggled to compete for jobs. (Both these trends can be seen in the changing composition of domestic service in Table 6, Chapter 3.)

Competing demands from mining and agriculture led to the belief that male labour in domestic service was wasted and that these men should be replaced by female domestic workers. To this end there was official policy to counter employer prejudices against employing women and to encourage African women to enter domestic service. This led to demands for more control to be exerted over women (especially African women). There were not large numbers of men working in domestic service in the Cape (see Chapter 3) - the men causing concern were mostly in the Transvaal and Natal - however, the effects of trying to get men out of domestic service to help solve labour shortages elsewhere were also felt

in the Cape. Domestic service in the Cape and Cape Town had always been female dominated. Now, however, there was the belief that it should be more female dominated and more sexist assumptions came into play. (See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of sexist assumptions.)

By 1920 Africans accounted for over 60% of domestic workers in the Cape (from less than 20% in 1875) (Table 6, Chapter 3) and in Cape Town from negligible to over 10% in 1936 and close to 30% by 1946 (Table 12, Chapter 3). Africans were slower to move to Cape Town, but there was a steady movement and many of these people entered domestic service as their only choice of employment. The increasing number of Africans moving to Cape Town threatened Coloured workers' jobs since Africans could generally be paid lower wages. Another effect of Africans moving to Cape Town was increasing housing shortages and this was one of the pressures that led to Cape Town officials wanting to restrict the entry of Africans into Cape Town. Eventually pass laws and influx control would become more effective forms of domination than the Masters and Servants Act which seemed more applicable to stages when people were being incorporated into wage labour as opposed to large scale proletarianisation.

Labour shortages over the whole of South Africa led to argument on whether the reserves reduced or increased the supply of labour¹. Two suggestions were made to reduce labour shortages. The first suggestion was to raise the standard of living of the "tribal native" in order to enmesh him or her into wage labour (4/1930 : 14). The second suggestion was a better use of existing workers. There was criticism of the number of men who worked in domestic service (estimated at 13% of the available African male labour force in South Africa (4/1930 :15) as this was a waste of healthy male labour which could be deployed to the mines. This problem was more specific to the Transvaal since it was the gold mines

¹Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Labour Resources of the Union, 4/1930. It was argued that when people had their own land they would not enter wage labour while on the other hand it was argued that the existence of support from the reserves led to wage levels being depressed which aided employers.

that needed the labour and there were more men working in domestic service in the Transvaal than in the Cape. However, the solution proposed was to replace male domestic workers with women and this stimulated the supply of African women to domestic service in the Cape as well.

There was, however, prejudice against employing women because "of an objection, frequently well founded, to the lack of morals of many of this class" (4/1930 : 15). Sexist objections like this were not voiced about men. Tribal elders were reportedly opposed to women entering domestic service because of the lax morals in towns and also because this undermined their authority. Women who were prepared to work in domestic service "have already by their action shown an impatience of discipline and restraint, which does not augur well for their chances of continued employment as domestics" (4/1930 : 16). The emphasis on discipline and restraint gives some indication of the nature of class domination of domestic workers. In addition, the lack of passes with regard to women was seen to be a nuisance since domestic workers who stole or absconded could not be traced. Similarly, it was seen as a shortcoming that most men who came to the towns were subjected to a medical examination whereas this was not the case with women (4/1930 : 16).

There was never any question that employers should do without domestic workers. Men who had been incorporated into wage labour as domestic workers were required in other sectors - women were suggested as replacements. Employers wanted the same amount of control over women domestic workers as they had over men. The limited amount of control which could be exerted over women via passes was seen as a problem. An additional prejudice was applied to women and this was the concern with "morals" and their resistance to "discipline". It was seen as necessary to have "suitable" accommodation for female domestic workers where they could be "supervised". This was a form of oppression to which men were not subject and the nature of domestic work as opposed to other work (living on the premises of the employer for example) made it difficult

for women to avoid this interference in their personal lives. Pressure to apply passes to women was reinforced by the Report of the Native Economic Commission in 1932 despite African opposition

"They <Africans> strenuously resent and object to any interference with the movements of women, except that need is felt for maintaining parental control over unmarried girls.¹ Any power on the part of the police to demand passes from, and arrest, women for failure to produce them, opens the way to grave abuse. The only point urged in favour of it was the power which it gives to control the residence in urban areas of dissolute and immoral women" (1932 : 108).

Thus for the first time there was serious consideration that passes should be extended to women. Looking only at passes from the view of domestic service, this was partly in order to give control over an increased supply of women to domestic service, so that men could enter other sectors of employment which suffered greater shortages. The desire for women to enter wage labour as domestic workers was largely in reaction to shortages of male labour elsewhere. Domestic service, by its nature, allowed the possibility of extensive control to be exerted over the lives of women.

Chapter 3 showed that as Africans moved into domestic service, other colour groups moved into better paid, higher skilled jobs. However, the increasing numbers of Africans in domestic service was not without personal hardship to other colour groups. Rather than drawing on an established proletariat, Cape Town employers were faced with a large influx of Africans entering wage labour. The Report of the Unemployment Investigation Committee noted that less skilled Whites had problems since they had been supplanted by Africans as farm servants and had no other alternatives of employment (UG30-32 : 11).

¹Again the patriarchal concern with maintaining control over women's sexuality.

One of the suggested solutions for unemployment was that "poor European girls" should enter domestic service (another was a further strengthening of the Vagrancy Act). Although Tables 3, 7 and 8 of Chapter 3 showed that domestic service was less popular with White women, there were still suggestions that White unemployment could be lessened if women entered domestic service. (Chapter 5 refers to the poverty in which many of the working class lived at this time of depression.)

The flooding of Africans into domestic service caused hardship for Coloureds in Cape Town and the Cape particularly during the 1930 depression. "The Coloured man is now beset on two sides; on the one by the Native who competes with him at a lower wage; on the other by the European who is able to influence the position in such a manner as to exclude the Coloured man from various avenues of employment which he had been able to pursue before" (UG54-1937 : 33). Employment figures in industry demonstrated a steady decrease of "Coloured" workers between 1924 and 1934 (from 54% of the total industrial labour force in the Western Cape to 46%) whereas the proportion Africans formed of the total remained relatively constant and that of Whites rose from 31% to 41% (UG54-1937 : 61). Because of the "civilised labour" policy of the time, Whites were given preference in jobs and this often resulted in discrimination against Coloureds (UG54-1937 :38). Whites obtained jobs in industry to a greater extent than Coloureds did.

With respect to unskilled work, Coloured people were also facing competition from Africans who were generally paid lower wages and from Whites who could not afford to be fussy when they too were suffering hardship

"The increase in the supply of unskilled European labour has affected the employment of Coloured workmen by local authorities, such as divisional councils. The opportunities of Coloured (sic) obtaining employment with the latter on road gangs have, in many cases, been restricted by the utilization of more European labour, to which preference is

often given, usually at higher rates of pay for the same work" (UG54-1937 : 69).

Domestic work did not provide an automatic refuge either

"Native competition in the field of domestic service is also widening in extent, notwithstanding the fact that the Cape Coloured woman held, and to a large extent still holds, an initial advantage in having acquired training in this type of work during many generations of service with the European. Here again the Natives, both male and female, often show considerable aptitude, and, as in other fields, their requirements with regard to housing, treatment and wages are more easily satisfied. In addition, there is a decided disinclination ... among many Cape Coloured menfolk today to enter domestic service, and this helps to provide the Native with an opening for work. As in the case of farm labour, the displacement in domestic service of the Cape Coloured by the Native is affecting the Western Province only relatively slightly as yet, but is no longer practically absent as it was in former years" (UG54-1937 : 34/5).

(This trend can be seen in census reports, see Chapter 3.) The Report also noted that there was increased competition from White people for domestic work (UG54-1937 : 70). As in the depression in the first decade of the twentieth century, domestic service acted as a source of employment for people who lost other jobs.

Conditions were thus difficult for Coloured people in the depression. The numbers of African people flocking to the towns was larger than ever before and they competed at low wages in this transition period before Coloureds were absorbed into industry in greater numbers. At the same time, desperate Whites were also competing for jobs and they were invariably given preferential treatment. The abundance of cheap Black workers was providing employers with cheap domestic labour and the inflow of Africans to the Cape Peninsula was altering the colour

composition of domestic service. It was noted that Coloured families in towns were usually earning units where the income of all members of the family was pooled (UG54-1937 : 69). In agricultural areas as well, it was reported that women tried to supplement the family income by doing domestic work, taking in washing, or seasonal or badly paid farm work. Yet, the wages of women in domestic service were generally lower than men's (UG54-1937 : 70) which added to the hardship of these families. At the same time, Coloured women reputedly preferred the hours, generally higher wages and greater freedom of factory work and took these jobs whenever they were available. Despite the depression, there was still a large demand for domestic workers and Coloured women were usually preferred in Cape Town

"Employers have difficulty in obtaining reliable Coloured servants and complain that a considerable section of the Coloured females offering themselves for service are untrustworthy, lazy and dishonest. Though certain advantages attach to domestic service, such as the value of the wages in kind and the training in home-making and general housekeeping, it has become unpopular" (UG54-1937 : 70).

Despite a bad depression, there was still a large demand for domestic workers which indicates how well entrenched the employment of domestic workers was. People who would not otherwise have worked as domestic workers entered domestic service in the absence of other jobs. At the same time, Coloured women were starting to move out of domestic service into industry which created openings for African women. Employers, however, still appeared to prefer to employ Coloured women in the particular way colour distinctions were made by employers.

Despite changed conditions and greater urbanisation, farmers still complained about labour shortages in similar ways to earlier times : too many men in Natal and the Transvaal worked as domestic workers rather than on farms; farmers did not use all the provisions of the Masters and Servants Acts which could aid them; farmers struggled to get the

families of their labourers to work for them. It was said that fathers had lost their traditional control over their children (7/1939 : 21). The provisions of the Masters and Servants Act which allowed people over 16 years old to enter their own contracts was criticised as being against African custom - what seemed to be implied here was that if fathers had legal control over grown children, it would be easier to secure the labour of those grown offspring. There was also support for the suggestion that tax defaulters and other minor offenders should be compelled to enter service to relieve the labour shortages (7/1939).

Bad treatment of workers was still accepted as fairly commonplace

"We accept, however, that cases of assault by way of flogging for misbehaviour or neglect of work do occur. Fines in the form of stock are also imposed as compensation for damages done. The records of the magistrates' offices do not show that these practices are very prevalent, but our knowledge and experience warn us against accepting the absence of court proceedings as proof that they do not exist to some extent amongst a certain class of farmer (7/1939:6).

There also still appeared to be illegal apprenticing of under age children as this comment about desertions suggests

"Farmers must take a share of the blame in regard to deserters who are not traced; many of these are young boys who are not servants under the Act and are not taxpayers, and it is impossible to trace them" (Chief Deputy Commissioner of the South African Police, 7/1939 : 19).

Thus, on one level, farm and domestic workers were still subject to the same abuses and control. This was largely a function of the privatised nature of the work - large numbers of individual employers cannot be policed and farmers in particular could avoid scrutiny. On another level, conditions in towns like Cape Town had changed enormously as Africans flooded to the towns to enter wage labour.

By the early 1940s, Cape Town was becoming crowded with this influx of people and "squatter" settlements were growing on Cape Town's outskirts

"The constant struggle to reconcile the urge for food with the requirements of shelter is an important underlying cause of the displacement of population which has fringed Cape Town with its unsightly pondokkie settlements" (UG18/1943 : 39).

It was not only the inflow of Africans, but also the poverty of city dwellers that caused the growth of squatter communities. People went to the Cape Flats in order to escape the high rents charged in the city since repayments on plots were generally lower than rents. A study of Parkwood Estate found that 1 100 people, mostly Coloured, lived in "pondok dwellings" on its 43 acres. The area was unsanitary and services such as water were not laid on. The death rate was three and a half times higher than that for Whites (infant deaths accounted for 50% of all deaths and 70% of the families lived below the poverty datum line (UG18/1943 : 15). Furthermore, it "is no exaggeration to say that little more than one-half of the Native population in the Municipality of Cape Town and considerably less than one-half on the Cape Flats are satisfactorily housed" (UG18/1943 : 21).

There was official concern about this unruly settling. Information on the labour requirements of commerce and industry was called for as well as how much accommodation individual employers could provide. Apart from this, it was proposed that government and public works should provide accommodation and the Cape Town City Council should provide additional hostels (for single workers). Only once there was sufficient housing for everyone, especially employed Africans, would it be possible to act against Africans living illegally in peri urban areas. It was estimated that 8 000 - 9 000 Africans were living illegally in Cape Town, yet it was difficult to impose the Native (Urban Areas) Act when housing was so chaotic. These were the pressures that Cape Town was experiencing and which led to a desire to restrict the free entry of Africans into Cape Town.

Some formal applications to live in Cape Town were refused (UG18/1943 : 6). The desire was to restrict illegal entry as well. A perceived preference for African labour as opposed to Coloured labour¹ was seen as a problem - "To restore equilibrium, efforts should be made to remove the physical and behaviour disabilities from which the Coloured workers are reputed to be suffering, rather than to introduce restrictions on the employment of Native labour" (UG18/1943 : 8).

The forcing of Africans into wage labour had been hugely successful :

"But of course it must be remembered that one of the main objectives of Native taxation is, or was, to exert pressure on Natives to seek work in agriculture, mining or manufacturing. In this objective it is probably very successful and the Native Economic Commission considered that in this respect it exerted a salutary influence" (UG48/45 : 37/8).

Large scale proletarianisation had occurred. A lot of people had been incorporated into wage labour via domestic service where they were subject to the control of the Masters and Servants Act. However, the Masters and Servants Act was more suited to times when class domination of wage labourers was being established. Conditions had changed as the era of apartheid approached. Large numbers of people had lost access to land and were totally dependent on wage labour; these people were streaming to towns and causing problems for the ruling class as Cape Town experienced. Under this more established form of capitalist wage labour, different types of control were called for and these measures, of which pass laws and influx control were major components, were introduced or intensified after the period covered in this thesis. The pressures which led to the changed forms of control already existed, however.

¹Coloureds supposedly had "character disabilities" which made them less reliable. There was also a belief that Africans had better physiques (UG 18/1943 : 8).

This period saw more of a stress on domestic service as a female occupation. Male labour was needed elsewhere and it was felt that men were not used to their best advantage in domestic service, so policy was to try to encourage women to enter domestic service instead. This was a South African wide phenomenon, but its effects were seen in the Cape and Cape Town as well. With an emphasis on female domestic workers, more sexist assumptions came into play such as concern with the "morals" of the women. The perceived problems of employing women in domestic service also added to pressures to extend passes to women. More and more people were becoming fully proletarianised and living in towns. The inflow of Africans led to changes in the composition of the domestic service category and pressure on Coloured people in competing for jobs. The inflow of Africans also led to pressures to restrict entry to Cape Town which would be acted on after 1948. Initially domestic service had been important in establishing control. In this later period, the working class was constrained through poverty and lack of employment options. Domestic service was an important source of employment, but under very disadvantaged conditions. Control of movement would be more effective for the ruling class under developed capitalism than the control exerted by the Masters and Servants Act.

5. Conclusion

Domestic service has been a crucial element in establishing class domination.

After the abolition of slavery, it was essential for the Cape colonists to obtain large supplies of cheap unskilled labour. Perhaps because of lack of specialisation or clear distinction between the two, agricultural and domestic labour were seen as similar categories of labour and this connection partly explains the severity of domestic workers' experiences. The Masters and Servants Acts acting in conjunction with the Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts were measures to stimulate and to control labour supplies. Agricultural and domestic work were both points of incorporation and people were incorporated at a

disadvantage and into a servile position. Standards of behaviour were imposed on domestic workers which did not apply to other workers. The Masters and Servants Acts were both class and colour biased. Domestic service was, therefore, a pivot in the domination of the indigenous population. People were often incorporated in violence and subjected to violent and racist means of control and these were further aspects of domestic workers' oppression.

Although violence and racism were still factors of domestic workers' lives up to 1948, more subtle forms of control (such as schooling) also evolved to maintain a labour force. As people became more urbanised, additional forms of control such as registry offices sometimes arose. There was a large demand for domestic workers probably arising out of high White wages which allowed people to employ domestic workers. During two periods of depression, there was no drop in demand for domestic workers and domestic service was important in providing jobs for desperate people in Cape Town. Preferential treatment for Whites drove many skilled Black workers into domestic service.

With the influx of people into wage labour and to towns, the sexual and colour composition of domestic service changed to different degrees in both Cape Town and the Cape between 1841 and 1948. Women were always a growing majority but it was only in the later period that employers laid stress on female domestic workers and then only because male labour was needed elsewhere. This gave impetus for demands for more control over women arriving in towns and made explicit sexist assumptions about the "morals" of the women for example. The nature of domestic service allowed employers to exert this kind of sexist control and surveillance over female domestic workers if they so desired. The proportion of African people in domestic service grew over the entire period and demonstrated the steady incorporation of Africans into wage labour and their slower movement to Cape Town. There were still proposals to solve "poor white" problems by encouraging those women to enter domestic service, but the number of White women in domestic service declined - the focus had always been on the domination and subordination of the

Black population despite the apparent colour blindness of the Masters and Servants Acts. Closer to 1948, Coloured people were subjected to the competition of cheaper African labour for domestic work.

The influx of people in to the towns and resulting overcrowding led to ruling class desires to restrict the number of Africans who could enter towns. Although there was legislation to control the movement of Africans to towns, it was difficult to enforce and was not as comprehensive as the future apartheid legislation. The pressures which arose towards the end of these periods paved the way for the introduction of extensive pass and influx control laws. The Masters and Servants and Vagrancy Acts had been important in forcing people into wage labour and establishing class domination over the indigenous population. With mass proletarianisation, different forms of control were needed. Thus although the Masters and Servants Act was only repealed in 1974, pressures which led to its being superseded by pass and influx control laws arose before 1948.

Although domestic service has always been dominated by Black women, it cannot serve as a specific example of sexual oppression. Instead, domestic service illustrates the class and colour oppression of large numbers of Black South Africans and influences the way Black South Africans are seen in other sectors of employment. Class relations reflected the violence to which domestic workers were subject and the servile position they occupied. Domestic service was a major element in subordinating and controlling the indigenous population as it was a major point of incorporation into wage labour for unskilled labour. ✱

The nature of domestic service in South African resulted in domestic workers occupying a subordinate position. However, historically, domestic service was part of a process of the incorporation into wage labour and subordination of the indigenous population. There was supporting legislation to enforce this subordination. In later periods, closer to 1948, domestic workers still occupied a subordinate position. However, with mass proletarianisation, there was a need for different

laws to control the indigenous population and to maintain a cheap labour force. These laws were fully developed after 1948 but the pressures which gave rise to ruling class demands for new forms of control were evident in the period before 1948. This discussion has been emphasising domestic service within a process of class domination.

It was because of the demand for cheap Black male labour and the measures to obtain this labour (which affected men and women) that women became so dominant in domestic service. These demands and measures were part of changing class relations between developing factions of capital and labour. As women lost access to the means of production and in the absence of a demand for their labour in other sectors of the economy, domestic service was often their only choice of survival. Only once the emphasis was on women as the preferred source of domestic workers, were explicitly sexist demands made to control women, but even these were often couched in racist or class terms (for example passes for women). Domestic service thus illustrates class and colour oppression. The extensive nature of this class oppression, discussed in this chapter, indicates that a focus only on women's oppression in domestic service would be too narrow (see Chapter 1 for theoretical shift). Chapter 3 showed that Black women had few options of employment outside of domestic service, this chapter discussed the forces which led to the class structure developing in this way as well as why domestic service was a crucial element in the establishment of class domination.

One aspect of class oppression under capitalism is the fact that workers own only their labour power which they sell in order to survive. Different types of workers (factory or domestic workers for instance) obviously experience this oppression differently and the particular experience of domestic workers will be explored in Chapter 5. The fact that Black women were trapped in domestic service was crucial for their position in the class structure and for their experience of their oppression. This will now be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

1. Introduction

The experiences of domestic workers have not been ignored in previous chapters. The chapter on legislation discussed the racism and violence to which workers were subjected. It also reflected changing relations between employer and employee varying from violence to paternalism and changing to include struggles over schooling and control over the families of workers. Both the chapter on legislation and the chapter on the census reports reflected the struggle of domestic workers to survive especially when women were often the sole supporters of families and the wages of female domestic workers were normally lower than those of the men. Poverty was always a possibility especially in times of depression.

Despite the aspects already discussed, the experiences of domestic workers will be brought together in a separate chapter in order to give greater insight into their position. This chapter aims to investigate how domestic workers experienced their class domination and how they reacted to this domination. The mechanisms of class domination took place within a particular ideological framework (for example racism, sexism, middle class prejudices) which affected domestic workers' daily lives. It is hoped to personalise class domination through relating specific experiences and ideologies which shaped domestic workers' lives.

Domestic workers were subject to various forms of control, due to their job and to their class position and their class position led to particular problems of which poverty was one. Ideological elements were the racism and sexism to which domestic workers were and are subjected (sometimes related to the enforcement of cheap Black labour and

sometimes specifically related to women's oppression). At the same time, domestic workers were continually subject to conditions which perpetuated their own oppression as well as reproducing cheap labour : their low wages and lack of alternatives made their escape from domestic service unlikely, it was furthermore difficult for them to afford schooling for their children so that they might have a different life (if structural conditions allowed it). The existence of black domestic workers also reproduced dominant racist and sexist ideology - Black people are there to serve wealthier people and women are there to "clean up after everyone".

As should now be clear, the focus of this study has changed. A relatively adequate supply of cheap Black male labour led to lower demands for women in productive labour, unlike the case of the British Industrial Revolution. With declining productivity in the reserves, and the absence of alternatives in other sectors of the economy, domestic work often became the only option of work for many women. (See Chapters 3 and 4 for a description of the process whereby domestic service in the Cape and Cape Town became progressively more female dominated.) Within this class analysis, sexual oppression is still important to isolate - the sexual abuse of slaves, the concern with female domestic workers' "morals" and resulting greater control exerted over women domestic workers are only two examples - but the process whereby domestic work became predominantly female arose from the unique development of South Africa's class structure. This chapter pays more attention than other chapters to the oppression of women working as domestic workers in a class society.

Notwithstanding good intentions, a description of domestic workers' experiences is a difficult task. The bias of retained documentation is seldom from the viewpoint of oppressed groups, be they working class or women (see Chapter 1). There has been recent interest in "rewriting" history, but for the period covered by this thesis, no description of their lives by domestic workers themselves has been found. The domestic workers may not have been literate, would have struggled to have found

the time, probably did not have the peculiarly bourgeois habit of recording their experiences and thoughts and would have been extremely unlikely to have found a publisher if they did. The lack of voice of those domestic workers was also due to their lack of organisation (discussed in this chapter). When employers or travellers described domestic workers or daily housework, they tended to do so from their own perspective : domestic workers tended to be referred to in terms of what they did for their employers or how their actions affected their employers. * Questions of how they coped with care of their own children, of their relations with the opposite sex, of how they coped with illness and a host of other questions are just not raised. This illustrates the "invisibility" of domestic workers and the way their humanity is denigrated. This is part of their unique oppression, which makes it very difficult to get a picture of the people involved. One is able to get some idea of the domestic workers and their responses by reading police reports and reports of court cases, but these refer to a minority. Only a few domestic workers were charged for "unseemly behaviour" or for theft or for assault and murder and thus the majority of domestic workers survived without their lives and struggles being recorded or noted. (Two important exceptions are the work of Cock and van Onselen discussed in Chapter 1.)

Because of the anonymity of working class people who have lived and died without comment, the contemporary interest by some historians, social scientists and students in oral histories is vitally important. History does not consist of the actions of "important" people - they can only represent in a unique fashion mass movements - we cannot afford to lose the experiences of working class people. Jacklyn Cock's principle in her Ph.D. thesis of letting the domestic workers speak for themselves is important and provides invaluable insight. Working class histories do not provide the "truth" of course - one cannot explain historical events solely in terms of any one perspective. They do, however, provide a balance to bourgeois perceptions and demands as well as show how ordinary people actually live and are affected while wars wage or

factions of capital battle to secure their interests.

The examples used to illustrate the experiences of domestic workers were chosen on a theoretical basis. They are intended to illustrate the processes within the social formation which provided the contexts of the constraints continually experienced by domestic workers. A theoretical understanding of the constraints enlightens our understanding of the actual experiences of domestic workers living within those constraints.

Chapter 4 (illustrated by census figures in Chapter 3) showed how domestic service acted both as a point of incorporation into wage labour and as a method of subordinating the indigenous population. This acted on a formal basis through restrictive laws such as the Masters and Servants Acts as well as the exclusion of domestic workers from protective legislation enacted after 1900 (forms of control). The process of subordination was also experienced through the racist and sexist attitudes of employers. Sexist attitudes only became more explicit though towards the twentieth century when domestic work became more commonly defined as female work. Sexist attitudes often led to control being exerted over female domestic workers' lives. Employers were able to place great restrictions on their employees' lives and family lives through controlling living conditions and free time.

As a result of the process of subordination as well as the lack of alternative sources of survival (whether from the land or from wage labour) domestic workers lacked bargaining power and this restricted the amount of control which they could exercise over their lives. Domestic workers lacked the ability to demand certain wages or conditions of work because of their powerlessness and their isolation from each other has made domestic workers notoriously difficult to organise. Unlike other countries where domestic work may have been a temporary period of a

person's working life,¹ most domestic workers in South Africa have seldom had opportunities to move on to better jobs.² The lack of power domestic workers experience over their lives results from class, colour and sex oppression.

The work performed by domestic workers partly serves to reproduce both their own and their employers' families. Thus a continued supply of cheap labour as well as the dominant classes are reproduced. Racist stereotypes of Black servility are reproduced as is the stereotype of women being the only sex that can perform housework. Ideologically, these elements are reinforced in the children of their employers as well as their own offspring. This ideological reinforcement contributes to reproducing class, sex and colour oppression.

Based on the theoretical choice cited earlier, this chapter will discuss experiences in the following order.

- (i) Forms of control which impinged directly on workers' lives will be discussed first. Two examples relating to Cape Town were
 - (a) Attempts to control the movement of workers (which will not be discussed here as it was discussed in other chapters).

¹In her book on domestic service in 18th century England, Hecht wrote that one of the rewards of domestic service was "social advancement" (1956 : 177ff). Employers could help servants attain better jobs within domestic service, they could help ex-servants find jobs outside service or help them set up their own businesses (apparently servants frequently chose to open public houses) (Hecht, 1956 : 188). Hecht believed that domestic service acted as a link between strata wherein people could learn the manners of the next stratum in the ladder (1956 : 203,206). Although this is the approach so beloved of bourgeois sociologists whereby one attains social mobility through one's own efforts and by learning how to "act like a lady" like Eliza Doolittle, domestic service does seem to have been a temporary measure for people who moved on to other sectors of the economy. This probably has to do with the process of proletarianisation in England whereby people were separated from their traditional means of support : with no technical skills, many people found wage labour as domestic workers. However, having obtained domestic work in the towns, they were able to explore options in other expanding sectors of the economy.

²This excludes white domestic workers who because of their dominant class position were able to move out of domestic work (see Chapter 3). Black male domestic workers were coerced into mine labour in the 1930s, but this cannot really be regarded as "upward mobility"!

- (b) Attempts to bring in stringent health ordinances after a venereal disease scare. This seems to have been related to the swart gevaar/black peril scare in the Transvaal.
- (ii) Secondly, ideological aspects of racism and sexism towards domestic workers will be discussed. This highlights attitudes towards domestic workers and illustrates two of the constraints within which domestic workers experienced class domination.
- (iii) Thirdly, conditions of work will be explored through describing the duties of domestic workers as well as examining the poverty which was a constraint in many domestic workers lives.
- (iv) Although domestic workers have been and are one of the most oppressed groups within the working class, there has always been resistance of some kind against their oppression. This is the fourth aspect which will be discussed. A specific example was a victory won by washerwomen when they resisted Cape Town municipality charges at a washhouse.

In practice, it is impossible to make absolute distinctions between the above topics. The venereal disease scare might have been related to attempts to control domestic workers, but ideological aspects of the way Black people and domestic workers were seen as "dirty" and "immoral" cannot be ignored. Similarly, the black peril scare might illustrate ideological elements of class oppression, but it also illustrates domestic workers' resistance when domestic workers formed groups to oppose employers. As a specific case, sexism does not operate only at the level of ideas but affects the way people see themselves and the control that is exerted over them. Thus, although distinctions have been made for easier discussion, they should not be seen as theoretically absolute.

There is a further problem with the topics suggested in terms of the variations within the period 1841 - 1948. One cannot expect that racism

in the early period applied in exactly the same way in later periods; other topics are even more specific to a particular time. Class relations changed with different imperatives. Through lack of comprehensive information, topics cannot be discussed chronologically through each period. The illustrations must be seen within the context of their times and should not be seen to apply in a generalised way to the whole period.

2. Forms of control over domestic workers

Chapter 4 gave detailed information on formal control over domestic workers via laws such as the Masters and Servants Acts, Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts. Laws forced people into wage labour and sought to keep them there once they were in. Entry to Cape Town became progressively more and more controlled for African people as municipal authorities became concerned with the numbers of people flowing into the town. Early pass laws applied to various groups of Black people, towards 1948, the concern was mostly with controlling the movement of Africans. Laws controlling movement were probably the most intrusive form of control because they could control whether a person was forced into wage labour (closer to 1841) and later whether a person was able to seek work in Cape Town or to seek alternative employment. The fact that most domestic workers lacked this choice accounted for the lack of power they had in setting wages and terms of employment, let alone their place of residence.

Control over movement was a very obvious example of class domination. There was also control exerted over domestic workers by their employers which was possible because of the relative "intimacy" between employer and employee in the nature of domestic work. Domestic workers may have control exerted over their private lives in several ways. Their social activities may be restricted - for instance, domestic workers may not be allowed to receive visitors during working hours or even in their living

quarters. There may be control over their dress.¹ There may even be control over supposedly personal aspects like religion - slaves were often forced to convert, for instance. These aspects of control contain both racist and sexist overtones whereby the worker is treated as a child. They also demonstrate the lack of power of the domestic worker in the class relationship. Long and irregular working hours already curtail social activities, other methods of control further limit life outside work. The bourgeois ideal of a nuclear family was, and is, seldom experienced by domestic workers.

The experience of class domination through control over minor everyday aspects of life like dress and major aspects like family life are particularly extensive in domestic service because of the nature of the job which enables an employer to exert this control and the powerlessness (in terms of lack of options, organisation) of domestic workers to resist. Detail of an attempt to control through compulsory medical examinations in 1914 will be discussed as an example of the constraints domestic workers lived under.

2.1 Public Health Amendment : Domestic workers accused of spreading syphilis

The attempt to force domestic workers to undergo compulsory medical examinations discussed in this section was an example of the class, colour and sex prejudices which domestic workers experienced daily as well as an invasive form of control which would have affected them. It thus illustrates several aspects of the ideological framework within which domestic workers experienced their oppression as well as actual forms of control which were suggested out of this ideological framework. To introduce the topic, it is necessary to discuss the "black peril" scare which occurred mostly in Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand from

¹This could be related to two factors. Clothes can distinguish domestic workers from their employers. In some cases, livery will display the affluence of the employer. Secondly, women often face prescriptions as to what suitable dress is. The "suitable" dress need not necessarily be suitable for the work to be performed. Control over dress may become less prevalent as workers live away from their employers and work for several different households.

1890 to about 1914. Charles van Onselen related the peaks of the hysteria to times of economic adversity and hardship (1978). The hysteria revolved around fears of White women being sexually assaulted by Black men and there were indeed some vicious attacks. Van Onselen believed that some reported attacks were fabricated by ruthless female employers in order to avoid paying wages when times were hard. (He found that a 1913 commission on Assaults on Women confirmed this (1978 : 54).) Similarly, when there was competition for jobs in a household employing Black men and White women, a White employee could try to safeguard her job against replacement by a lower paid Black man by accusing the male domestic worker of sexual advances thereby getting him dismissed (1978 : 54). Van Onselen stated finally, "while it is impossible to prove such a hypothesis conclusively, further weight is lent to it by the fact that 'black peril' charges appear to be totally absent from those households marked by economic stability and security - the homes of the bourgeoisie" (1978 : 54).

Van Onselen's evidence of unscrupulous White women can undoubtedly be supported, but these economic motives were embedded in other complexities. Racism often surfaces in these very crude forms. The height of a White woman's fear of Blacks is that she should be raped by a Black man : a supreme humiliation from a man that she feels is inferior to her and whose "inferiority" is entrenched by legislation. For a White man, the antagonism he feels towards Blacks is bolstered by laws to protect his property (seen in the Masters and Servants Acts). This property would be dealt the ultimate blow by the violation of his most sacred "possession" - his wife. This is illustrated by the formation of White male vigilante groups to patrol the streets to safeguard White womanhood against Black outrage (van Onselen, 1978 : 51).

In this way, the oppression of women is mixed with conflict over property as well as racism towards a group regarded as inferior and retaliation against oppressors by striking at "their" women. Thus, although there might have been deliberate calculation in fabricating

some false reports, racist fears could have led to misinterpretation and over-reaction on the part of other White women.

There was not a similar black peril scare in Cape Town with its lower proportion of male domestic workers although the papers reported the Transvaal events with gusto. Papers in Cape Town agreed that the position of "houseboy" should be abolished

"Women and children, white as well as black, must be protected; but as long as husbands and fathers of families will employ houseboys as chambermaids, so long are they guilty of being the chief cause of what are known as the "black peril" cases. How any father who has the least regard for the honour of his wife and daughter can consent to leave them in charge of a big burly Native fresh from the kraal with unsubdued passions,¹ is incomprehensible" (APO 4 May, 1912).²

Not only were "houseboys" seen as potentially dangerous to women employers, but by this time there were also sexist assumptions that housework was women's work and attempts to replace male domestic workers with women (see Chapter 4).

"To impose upon such a "boy" the duties of chambermaid or nurse, or to call upon him to perform work which in every decent home in the civilized world, except South Africa, is undertaken by females only, should be made a criminal offence; for, undoubtedly, many of the so called black peril cases are directly traceable to this pernicious system" (APO 21 October, 1911).

¹There were continued sexist references to the unbridled passions of Black men living in enforced celibacy : crude racism saw Black people as more sexual than "civilised" people who had curbed their sexuality. This passage also emphasised the responsibility of "husbands and fathers" for their wives and daughters.

²The APO has been used as a source to illustrate the class nature of the racism in the black peril scare. The APO was largely a petit bourgeois "Coloured" newspaper. By 1914 there were far more cynical reports of trumped up and imagined charges in the general climate of fear (for example "Hysterical Women and the Black Peril" of 18 April, 1914).

The debate in Cape Town around a Public Health amendment to the Municipal Ordinance (draft Cape Municipal Amendment Ordinance) exhibited a similar racism to the black peril scare; it is probably more than a coincidence that it arose at about the same time (in 1914) and it too was concerned with the sexual habits of Black people, centering around the sexual lives of domestic workers. Both scares can be seen in terms of the sexual repression of the early twentieth century. The proposed amendment was¹

"For preventing the possible spread of infectious, contagious or loathsome disease by the carrying on of any trade, business or occupation and providing for the registration and medical inspection of domestic servants and children's nurses in any area where the Administrator is of opinion that such registration is necessary in order to prevent the spread of any contagious or loathsome disease" (Cape Provincial Council debate reported in S.A. News 28 April, 1914).

Despite sometimes euphemistically phrased reports, what was actually being discussed was the spread of syphilis. Employers claimed that syphilis was passed by domestic workers to the children they cared for and thereon to all the members of the employer family - the Rev J.J. McClure "knew of 12 white children who had become affected by this terrible disease through the agency of coloured females afflicted with it" and a member of the Provincial Council "knew of many cases where a baby infected by a nurse had infected the mother and a whole family" (both in S.A. News, 23 April, 1914).² People believed that the disease had reached epidemic proportions among Blacks³ and that therefore the

¹There were precedents for this type of legislation. In 1911, Pretoria women wanted African women over 14 years old seeking employment to have a medical examination "by a lady doctor" (among other demands) to show that they were free from any contagious diseases (reported in APO 21 October, 1911). Protests to the Municipal Draft Ordinance in Pretoria were reported in the APO of 6 April 1912.

²See also S.A. News 27th and 28th April, 1914.

³The Administrator of the Cape said that in Bechuanaland 30% of the population had syphilis and in Gordonias 75% (S.A. News 27th April, 1914).

disease had to be eradicated from Black groups and prevented from spreading to Whites.

It was believed that the disease was not spread solely by sexual contact

"The spread was from case to case by direct contact or by wearing clothes or drinking from the vessel used by a sufferer or even from occupying the same room. The general opinion was that the disease was spread in these areas by the coloured community in no other ways than these - innocent ways - and it was the general opinion that the disease was syphilis modified by climatic and racial conditions" (Administrator of the Cape, S.A. News 27 April, 1914).

According to medical opinion, there is no type of syphilis that could be passed on in non sexual ways¹ thus this scare was related to misinformation, prejudice and enflamed by general hysteria.

The extent of the concern was amazing in terms of actual deaths in Cape Town. As can be seen from Table 16, the number of deaths each year was low and the number of Whites who died was much lower than the number of Coloured people. Although the number of people affected by the disease was not reflected and must have been higher than the deaths, there does not seem to have been much substance in the fear of venereal diseases (although Cape Town was seldom referred to as a problem area). We are left then with racist feelings which surfaced at that time and were focussed on domestic workers. Because of their intimate relationship with employers, domestic workers are often the butts of generalised racism and class antagonism and as an occupational group they are an easy target for measures of control.

Meetings held to protest against the amendment noted the class nature and racism of the proposals. "What about the grocer, the butcher, the baker and all the persons who handled the foodstuffs of the community?"

¹According to a medical microbiologist and a medical doctor.

TABLE 16

Cape Town: Reported deaths from venereal disease

		Age in Years			Total	Grand Total	
		0-1 yrs	1-5 yrs	Over 5 yrs			
Syphilis	White	2	-	2	4	25	1909
	Coloured	15	3	3	21		
Syphilis	White	1	-	1	2	23	1910
	Coloured	14	1	5	20		
Gonorrhoea	White	-	-	1	1		
	Coloured	-	-	-	-		
Syphilis	White	-	-	1	1	19	1911
	Coloured	8	-	8	16		
Gonorrhoea	White	-	-	1	1		
	Coloured	-	-	1	1		
Syphilis no deaths from gonorrhoea	White	1	-	-	1	26	1912
	Coloured	16	2	7	25		
Syphilis	White	-	-	2	2	20	1913
	Coloured	11	3	4	18		
Syphilis	White	3	-	3	6	22	1914
	Coloured	12	2	2	16		
Syphilis	White	1	-	2	3	29	1915
	Coloured	21	2	3	26		

From: Medical Officer of Health Reports, Mayors Minutes.

(S.A. News 28 April 1914). "They were picking out the poorer section of the community" (Protest at YMCA under auspices of Church Council, S.A. News, 23 April, 1914). To which a member of the Provincial Council replied in debate that the "chief causes of the spread of syphilis today was by means of domestic servants and it was only right that that class should be subjected to vigorous regulations" (S.A. News, 30 April, 1914). The racism of the proposals was also made explicit in Provincial Council debates "The native mind was dark and suspicious, and anything he could not understand he attributed to witchcraft" - for this reason, medical examinations had to be made compulsory rather than voluntary (S.A. News 30 April, 1914).

As far as can be ascertained, there were no organised protests by domestic workers themselves. There were, however, protests by a number of organisations and a "combined deputation, consisting of some forty persons, the majority being ladies"¹ visited the Administrator to voice their disapproval of the amendment (S.A. News 27 April 1914). Some of the organisations (for example the Women's Christian Temperance Union) protesting against the amendment said that "sexual examinations" would not eradicate the disease and that more attention should be paid to medical ways of treating and eradicating the disease. Since compulsory examinations were "useless", "they objected very much to their women and girls being treated as criminals" (S.A. News 27 April, 1914). Other organisations seemed more concerned with the threat to the "modesty and self respect" (S.A. News 30 April, 1914) of the women and the unfairness of concentrating on women only. Others were concerned about how they, as employers, would be affected if medical examinations were made compulsory.

"Bishop Cameron declared that were they to adopt this course of inspection, they would get no decent girl into their

¹The deputation represented a wide range of organisations : the African Political Organisation (APO), Women's Guild of the APO, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Women's Citizen's Club, the International Federation for the Abolition of the State Regulation of Vice, the Cape Town Evangelical Church Council, the True Templars and the Social Reform Association.

service. He would recommend an inspection of the house from which the girl emanated" (S.A. News 23 April, 1914).

The protest closest to working class that could be found was one under the auspices of the African Political Organisation (APO) held at the Bethel Institute, Hanover Street (reported under "Coloured Citizens Protest APO 2 May, 1914). People objected to their daughters bearing the brunt of class discrimination.

"As to the proposed registration of domestics, Dr. Abdurahman said that it was proposed to register them like criminals, no matter how respectable they might be. There were respectable Coloured families who preferred their girls to go into domestic service rather than into factories. Some of these girls went into domestic service at a very early age; and were they going to allow them to undergo the very vigorous medical examination which would have to be necessary if a certificate were to be given as provided for in the amendments to the Ordinance? ... Again, why should the examination be on one side only? Did not other classes suffer as much from disease as Coloured servant girls? Disease affected white and black, rich and poor alike. The proposed legislation was very one-sided and was class legislation. (Hear, hear.) Were there not cases where a girl had come pure from her home and had become diseased in her employer's home?" (APO 2 May, 1914).

There were warnings that if the amendment were passed, the APO would see to it that Coloured people would not carry out the regulation. "A lot of people would look very foolish in a very short time, as they would have to do their scrubbing themselves" (APO 2 May, 1914).¹ As with

¹"Johnnie" the "Office Boy" commented, "I wouldn't mind losing a full week's wages to witness such a sight" ... "It was the grandest opportunity we have ever had of bringing these arrogant legislators to their knees." (APO 2 May, 1914).

previously cited protests, a number of the speakers protested at the affront to domestic workers' modesty and said they would not allow their daughters to undergo such a test.

Although various protests recognised the class nature of the proposals, there was also great stress on the violation of "modesty". Partly this was due to petit bourgeois sensibilities, but it was also probably in reaction to the way domestic workers were denied any say in the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment denied the humanity of the domestic workers : they were instruments in their employers' service and, because of the racist way in which they were perceived, they were blamed for spreading disease. They bore the brunt of colour antagonism because of their close contact with employers and because of the ease (due to the nature of domestic service) with which they could be victimised. The people protesting responded by affording some dignity to the domestic workers (although also in sexist and stereotypical ways) - they noted their "decency" and "modesty".

The extent of the protest may have given the Administrator of the Cape cause for reconsideration because he withdrew the proposal that domestic workers should be registered for 12 months.

In the end, the venereal disease scare blew over, but it provided an illustration of how domestic workers bore the brunt of employers' racist and class prejudices combined in the beliefs that Black people were "unclean". The sexual overtones of the black peril scare were also there and this represented racism in its crudest form. These prejudices had a great effect on domestic workers' experiences. Because of the intimate relationship between employer and employee, domestic workers were unfortunately an easily identifiable target for these prejudices, thus a compulsory examination for domestic workers was proposed. The rights of domestic workers as people were continually denied. In this particular case, they were seen only as instruments to serve their employers - employers felt threatened, adjustment and sacrifice were demanded of domestic workers without consultation. This also

illustrates the lack of control that domestic workers had over their lives. The registration of domestic workers would have provided a large measure of control but there were innumerable other aspects of domestic workers' lives where they lacked control : how they lived, whether or when they received visitors if they lived on their employers' premises, hours of work etc. etc. (discussed at the beginning of this section).

[Domestic workers are normally powerless to challenge the lack of control they experience. Their isolation, low wages and need for work all combine to restrict their ability to demand change to oppressive conditions.]

The powerlessness of domestic workers and the difficulty of organising anything more than individualised resistance is illustrated by the lack of any reported protest by domestic workers. The class domination embedded in the ideologies discussed here also had sexist overtones (although the measures should be seen as an attempt to control domestic workers rather than a focus on sexual oppression). Although domestic workers were mostly female, they were not afforded the same niceties that women of the dominant classes were afforded. Protests against the amendment to the Cape Municipal Ordinance exploited the contradictory use of dominant ideology about femininity. Appeals to the strait-laced sexual feelings of the time were apparently powerful. It may thus have been petit bourgeois sensibilities about "modesty" that saved domestic workers from such an invasive measure of control rather than working class resistance.

3. Ideology : Racism and Sexism

Racism and sexism had a profound effect on relations between employers and domestic workers since they were ideological constraints and aspects of control experienced by domestic workers. Because of proximity, the attitudes of employers towards their employees influenced day to day lives of domestic workers. Both racism and sexism served to subordinate and were informal measures of control acting alongside formal measures of control like legislation.

A certain degree of subservience has always been expected from domestic workers. This is usually more so than for other jobs and can have the added humiliation of subservience to employers' children. A creed for domestic workers seen in an employment agency included "to obey, to seek the love and respect of their employers, to be truthful, not to talk back" (Smith, 1975 : 176). This subservience encompasses class, colour and sexual oppression : a person who desperately needs the job cannot afford to demand respectful attitudes from employers; in South Africa, "cheeky" Black people are viewed with alarm and disfavour and a suitably subservient attitude probably made (and makes) a domestic worker's life easier; similarly, submission is a stereotypically "feminine" trait.

A discussion of racism and sexism has to be approached with care since neither are absolute concepts which can be discussed out of the context of their times. A simple example is the use of terms which today would be labelled crudely racist but in previous times were common usage. Nevertheless, it is possible to look at these attitudes, stereotypes or prejudices in terms of how they entrenched certain beliefs about colour groups or the two sexes and how they acted to subordinate the indigenous population thereby partly reproducing class, colour or sexual oppression.

3.1 Racism : "Spoilt natives"

The racism with which Black domestic workers had to contend has been referred to continually as this aspect was concerned with the subjugation of the indigenous population. Racism covered a continuum from the use of violence to subdue "barbarians" to "kindly" condescension. The racism existed within the class domination of the Masters and Servants Acts where the "servant" was disadvantaged compared with the "master" and where subservient behaviour for the domestic worker was enforced. Employers were deemed to have the right to control their workers and this often extended to violence; there were continual battles with Black people who resisted this definition and employer complaints of "insolence" and "cheek". A complaint about "spoilt

natives" encapsulates complaints "... he does not consider himself one of a subject race" (A12-'90 : 49). The complaint was expressed in the form of racial hostility, but from European studies these seem to be universal complaints about domestic workers thus encompass class hostility as well.

There has always been a surfeit of advice to employers on "how to handle servants" which influenced class relations at different times. Some advice was relatively humane and progressive - one woman who was "successful with servants" recommended giving the domestic worker a timetable for each day and once finished, the time was the worker's own (S.A. News 22 April, 1914).¹

Other advice fell right into the racist stereotypes. One was that domestic workers cannot be trusted

"The majority of servants in the Cape Colony are coloured women, neither very trustworthy nor accomplished, and with an absolutely stoical disregard for cleanliness in any shape or form" (Brown, 1902 : 140).²

"The Coloureds, I want to tell you something, didn't have a good name. The Coloured person, they are terrible liars ... Even the best of them. Now I speak from experience because I had Coloured maids. You can't believe them, you know you can't believe them" (Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, oral history project).

A second stereotype was that domestic workers were dirty. This was echoed by the crude racism of the venereal disease scare which extended to sexual promiscuity. The next most often repeated stereotype was the

¹This same woman purred condescendingly that her domestic worker "created a little social life of her own" because she was allowed to entertain a friend per week to tea in the kitchen (S.A. News 22 April, 1914). Such is the isolation of domestic workers.

²The book was called "The Guide to South Africa : For the Use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers".

reluctance of Black people to work¹

"In these regions labour is the great difficulty, and one needs to hold both patience and temper fast with both one's hands out here, so the navvies are slim, lazy-looking blacks, who jabber and grunt a good deal more than they work" (Barker, 1879 : 31).

The previous quote shows how Africans were arrogantly perceived almost as another species by a visiting Englishwoman.

However, it was deemed absolutely necessary to have a domestic worker and then (surprise!) it was better to have a Black worker than a White and a rural Black person rather than an urbanised one :

"Bad as he is, the native is more amenable to orders and less independent than the white man, who instinctively rebels at working alongside and on equal terms with his inferior" (Brown, 1902 : 135).

"In my experience 'the red, rude, and untutored Kafir' makes the better servant" since this kind of person has not yet "learned any of the evils of civilization" (Barnes, 1890 : 212).

The "untutored" domestic worker was obviously less aware of his or her rights and more pliable. The more westernised person was often seen to be "cheeky" - they were expected to "know their place" and not to imitate the lifestyles of their employers.

All the examples used to illustrate stereotypes were roughly of the same period, yet complaints have not changed much today. The racist stereotypes all denied the humanity of the domestic workers. The workers were seen as instruments of labour and they were assessed in terms of how they affected, satisfied or irritated their employers. The

¹"Work is for women : war or idleness for men" (Barker, 1879 : 61).

domestic worker was always the subordinate. Sir George Grey felt that employment of Black people was important for promoting "the co-operation of the two races". ... "Not, however, on the basis of equality". ... He "informed the Colonial Secretary that the industrial relation between European and Kaffir should be that of employer and employee". ... "Roads were to be constructed, farm labourers were needed, and household servants too, and by making use of the Kaffirs for such work the two races would be brought into contact with one another for their mutual advantage" (Henderson, 1907 : 136/7).

The racism of settlers and their descendants against vanquished indigenous people together with the legal provisions enforcing class subordination combined as a powerful force confronting Black domestic workers. The legislation placed real restraints on the choices of Black people; racism shaped class relations between employer and employee - the racism with which they were perceived added to their hardships and denied their humanity. Furthermore, racist stereotypes about laziness, inferiority and others mentioned, as well as reflecting class antagonism, served to perpetuate the oppression of domestic workers and the consequences of such beliefs often resulted in further extensions of formal and informal control over domestic workers.

3.2 Sexism : "good wives and good mothers"

Sexism¹ as well as racism influenced class relations between employers and employees. There were two aspects to sexism. When women were required to replace male domestic workers, there was concern with their morals and supposed impatience of discipline. The preoccupation with female domestic workers' sex lives must have placed great constraints on their lives. Employers wanted the same degree of control over women as they had over male domestic workers (see chapter 4). In this case, sexism compounded class domination and control over movement. The other aspect of sexism is related to the general oppression of women since

¹Sexism is the denigration of one of the sexes as well as assumptions of "correct behaviour" for men and women (these stereotypes vary through time).

attitudes that domestic work is women's work reinforce an inequitable sexual division of labour in the household. Sexual distinctions only became more explicit when women were suggested as replacements for male domestic workers whose labour was needed elsewhere. Attitudes towards women were very important for how domestic workers experienced control.

Since the first aspect of sexism (the concern with "morals") was discussed in Chapter 4, it will not be discussed here except to show how it was echoed by Charlotte Maxeke (a prominent member of the Native National Congress (later African National Congress) and President of the Women's Congress in the early 1920s) in an address on the problems faced by African women in towns. She raised the same types of problems as those raised by employers - that "immorality" was a problem for women coming to towns, especially cities like Johannesburg where large numbers of the domestic workers were male.

"In connection with the difficulty experienced through men being employed almost exclusively in domestic work in the cities, I would mention that this is of course one of the chief reasons for young women, who should rightly be doing that work, <my emphasis> going rapidly down in the social life of the community; and it is here that joint service councils of Bantu and White women would be able to do so much for the good of the community. The solution to the problem seems to me to be to get women into service, and to give them proper accommodation, where they know they are safe. Provide hostels, and club-rooms, and rest rooms for these domestic servants, where they may spend their leisure hours, and I think you will find the problem of the employment of female domestic servants will solve itself, and that a better and happier condition of life will come into being for the Bantu" (Karis & Carter Vol 1, 1972 : 346).

There are more examples of the way domestic service was seen as women's work

"Why is it that parents are so silly as to allow their daughters to take shop work instead of domestic service? The latter is, or might be, if mistresses knew how to apportion the work of the home aught, infinitely more attractive and more independent employment. It is certainly more remunerative" (APO 14 August, 1909).

This also shows how entrenched domestic service was as employment for Coloured women in Cape Town. Another example of the way in which domestic service was seen as an honourable occupation for women was provided by a paper read by Mrs C. Cressy. She said that although domestic service had many disadvantages it trained young women for their future duties in life and taught them discipline.

"Of course she would be under restraint, and to some extent kept out of harm and temptation. ... But there was no doubt that in the end she had better manners, and was infinitely better prepared to keep house than her sister"
"domestic servants as a rule made good wives and good mothers. Those, after all, were the chief functions of women" (APO 13 June, 1914).

These extracts from Mrs Cressy's paper provided strong reinforcement for domestic service as women's work and reinforced the notion that it is women's work to look after people who are perfectly capable of caring for themselves. The extracts also indicate that for some people at least, domestic service was regarded as an apprenticeship for young women to their life's work of wife and mother.

The job of domestic work itself is usually held in low esteem and the devaluation of housework has been chronicled by many feminist writers. The common attitude that domestic work is non-work must hamper domestic workers both in respect of gaining recognition and sympathy for demands for better conditions of service.

Apart from the low esteem in which the actual work is held, the people who perform such "lowly" work may also be held in low esteem. This attitude can serve as ideological justification for domestic workers' oppression. No respect may be afforded to people who have no choice but to work in domestic service and there is the attitude that domestic workers should perform any work asked of them. There are two aspects to this attitude. The first is that the limits of the job are not usually clearly defined and employers sometimes take the title "servant" too literally as that the "servant" should "serve" her or his "master" in whatever capacity the employer desires. The second aspect is a racist one : White South Africans are accustomed to demanding service from Black South Africans as their due, irrespective of the position of the Black person they are making the demands of.

Thus, the contempt in which the job is held is extended to and reinforced by the contempt in which Blacks and women are held and all three aspects feed on each other. In this way, racism and sexism are tied up with the lowly status of domestic service and racism and sexism are two ideological components of domination. As these attitudes were commonly held they were important for how domestic workers experienced their oppression.

4. Conditions of work

This section is largely descriptive in an attempt to give some examples of how each day was spent by domestic workers and the probable constraints which poverty placed in their lives.

4.1 Duties

It has been difficult to find descriptions of everyday duties because these seem to be the details which people did not set down. This relates to the low esteem afforded to domestic work.

The number and type of domestic workers which people employed must have varied according to the time and to their wealth. In the very early

period there was probably minimal specialisation except in wealthy households - workers would have worked where they were needed both in and out of the household or on the land or in the household if they worked on farms. There were also households where several domestic workers were employed and these often performed specialised labour - the nursemaids, housemaids, cooks, washerwomen of England's distinctions. Eric Rosenthal briefly described this pretentious kind of living by some people in Victorian Cape Town when "servants were still extremely inexpensive, there was hardly anybody who did not employ several" (1977 : 51) and when society women left their visiting cards with each other noting the time of their "At Home".

The variety of domestic workers in a single household was also described by interviewees who lived in Cape Town from the turn of the century in a oral history project run by the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies.¹ Although one of the informants said that poorer Jewish families employed no or only one domestic worker, several had more than one domestic worker. There was often a White governess or "mother's help" or nursemaid, then a Coloured woman cook or a general house servant and sometimes a male gardener/handyman. Many of the White governesses were German. One woman recalled their governess at the time of World War I "... she stayed with us until the war broke out ... being a German we didn't want to harbour a German so mother sent her back and said she could come to us after the war, well on the way there she met a man and she got married" (Mrs R). According to another informant, a lot more German Jews arrived in the 1930s. They were poor and desperate for jobs, often working as nannies.

Before the washing machines and other conveniences of today, domestic work was more arduous. Hildagonda Duckitt, famous for her recipe book and household tips, described the duties of each day of the week. (The

¹Thirty-three of these interviews were read at the end of 1981; there are probably more now since the project was still in progress. Since the anonymity of the informants has been guaranteed, no names can be given.

period was not made explicit, but it was probably the late 1800s.) On Monday the washing went out; water was obtained from some natural springs nearby. The "bleaching-ground and the big iron pot for hot water were by the washing fountain" (Kuttel, 1954: 23). (Washing was left in the sun to bleach white.) Thursdays and Fridays were ironing days and this chore was done by a different woman from the one who did the washing. The male cook, Abraham, baked on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Friday the dining room was turned out and the floors polished and on Saturday the drawing room was cleaned, fresh flowers were put in a basket hanging in the centre of the room, "innumerable vases filled" (Kuttel, 1954 : 23). Other activities also had to occur - the cleaning of other rooms, cooking and kitchen work. As can be seen, this was a busy week in which there could have been little spare time.

One of the Kaplan Centre interviewees recalled how a skilled neighbour made her furniture when she got married (in the first decades of this century) copied from the furniture shop D. Isaacs and how polishing used to occur :

"A whole house of furniture cost 205 pounds, solid black walnut, beautifully recovered, the table had Queen Ann legs, the sideboard had a mirror, I had 21 mirrors in my house, now you'll ask why I had so many. Do you remember those dressing tables with the mirrors and little cupboards and mirrors and the hall stand had a mirror. Everything had a mirror, the sideboard had a mirror, and all in all I had 21 mirrors in the house. And my maid used to clean it, we had no vacuums, no polishers, they used to go down on their knees, scrubbing brush and we used to make our own polish." <How?> "... candles, soap, paraffin, boil up everything - hot to melt - and the floors used to shine beautifully" (Mrs H).

All the cleaning of the furniture and floors naturally did not occur without a fair amount of elbow grease.

Another example of the arduous nature of domestic work was the coal

stoves used. One of the Kaplan Centre interviewees remembered as a child helping to clean the coal stove each morning (Mrs R).

Domestic work might have been more arduous in the past, but if the workers were lucky, they had help from other domestic workers. Several of the older domestic workers interviewed by third year sociology students noted that they had to perform a wider range of duties today when usually only one domestic worker was employed and that instead of duties being performed in rotation "people want cleaning every day now". "With new things we have to do the room everyday ... before the Hoover - only twice a week" (Sociology III projects, 1983). Perhaps there was not the same stress on impossibly high standards of cleanliness which sometimes exist today. It is thus difficult to make comparisons between different periods of domestic work.

A lot of Cape Town people sent their washing out to be washed by washerwomen and many of the Kaplan Centre interviewees noted that clothes washing was not a duty of domestic workers in Cape Town in the early part of this century.¹ (See section under resistance, this Chapter, for more detailed discussion of Cape Town washerwomen.)

Washing went out to local washerwomen and hawkers came to the door. Several of the Kaplan Centre interviewees remembered a Jewish man who hawked eggs and poultry by horse and cart. There were also vegetable carts (again Jewish hawkers were mentioned) and fish carts (normally Coloured hawkers). Shopping was, therefore, far more personalised and the number of goods brought to the door must have reduced the potential workload of domestic workers.

Apart from these small insights, it has been difficult to find information on the day to day lives of domestic workers. Presumably they carried out mundane domestic chores of no special distinction as

¹One exception in these interviews was a domestic worker called Becky who used to wash the second hand clothes that her employers sold as well as perform other household duties.

this comment illustrates

"In the morning I used to take the children out and she <the domestic worker> used to clean the house and in the afternoon she would get dressed and take the children to the beach and I would do the cooking"¹ (Mrs R in G interview).

The Kaplan Centre interviews intended to record everyday life, yet although almost all of the old people gave fascinating insights into their lives, few spoke of the domestic workers they employed in a way that made them come alive. There were some workers who came to life in the descriptions. There was Katie who looked after the grandmother of the family and who spoke Yiddish (Miss H). There was Johanna who waited up for the young women of the house

"We'd go out and come back and find Johanna sitting in the kitchen. She was waiting around to make tea for us. We had to have tea because she sat there. Well, frankly, it was a different kind of people in those days, you don't get maids like that today so there was a different relationship" (Ms D).

There was Becky who joined a family at 11 years old and stayed for 20 years

"Becky got married, she and Pole, Pole was her husband, stayed in the yard in a room and every Friday Pole used to go a bit tipsy" (Mrs Z)

and when Becky stopped work, her 12 year old daughter Steeny took over her job. There was another domestic worker with a fretful baby

"I remember one servant, the servant had a little baby so mother couldn't stand the child crying so she nursed the baby and the shiksa did the work" (Mrs F).

¹Many of the Jewish interviewees did the cooking themselves because of religious rules.

There was Aimee whose father was English and mother African who entertained in her employers' home

"I remember she used to have her friends up, they were awfully nice friends who were in the Army I can still see them in this house here, I was in bed and they were all sitting round after they had had supper, chatting there"¹
(Mrs W).

Yet, we do not learn much about these women² and often what we do learn is aspects of their lives which somehow affected their employers' lives. Apart from the Friday drinker, Pole, what of the men in the other women's lives and how did Becky get on with Pole anyway? Apart from the woman with the crying baby, how did the domestic workers cope with their own children? One woman, at least, brought her son with her to work, but what of the other women?

"We had a maid called Maria and she had a son called Frankie; Frankie used to come to the house; the boys used to play with him and wasn't exactly the best quality - but it was nothing - there was no question of being white or black - it never entered our minds" (Miss C).

Ⓐ domestic worker could work for a family for twelve years in one case and the employer still would not know where she came from (Ms A) or her surname. Another respondent replied "We were not interested" when asked whether he knew anything of the private lives of domestic workers. They were easily replaced "If she went another one would come, there was no problem" (Mr W) "... And we just looked upon them as labourers" (Mrs Z). At best, domestic workers did not impinge too much on their

¹This was an unusual family since the domestic worker seemed to have a lot of personal freedom and respect and ate with the family - "We treated her as she should be treated" ... "And we didn't put them <domestic workers> under a table on a mattress to sleep. I mean that sort of thing did happen quite a lot amongst, well, Afrikaners probably."

²Apart from Aimee whose father "made quite a lot of money in the diamond diggings; they were all very well educated; she had a brother who was principal of a school and another brother who was a teacher and she eventually finished up as a maternity nurse".

employers' lives "They knew their place. They had great respect for us and we treated them very well" (Mrs R).

Employer attitudes to domestic workers were reflected by the use of the insulting word "girl" to refer to adult women (reflecting both racism and sexism) as well as the use of first names for the women. Since the same tactics exist of addressing bourgeois women as "girls" and by their first names, it seems to be part of a power play of keeping the "subordinate" in her place. Further, the domestic worker was often expected to call the employers master and madam. A general lack of respect towards Black people would also be indicated by the assigning of names which were easier for the employer to pronounce.

(A problem that domestic workers experience with their work is that their workplace is someone else's home. Thus domestic workers may not have freedom over how and when to perform their work and this is an example of why domestic workers may have a more personalised type of control exerted over them than other workers. Because they work in someone else's home, there is a greater degree of intimacy with and supervision from their employer. This intimacy is, however, contradictory for even while an employer can boast about the servant "being one of the family", the employer ultimately has the power in the relationship and the domestic worker is seldom afforded the same liberties of address and familiarity towards the employer. The intimacy towards domestic workers is usually false as the lack of knowledge about the domestic workers' lives outside employment demonstrated.

This attempt to describe everyday life reinforces what has already been said about the domination and control of domestic workers. Employers held the power in the relationship and this was demonstrated by forms of address and lack of knowledge of domestic workers' personal lives. Employers were normally only interested in how they were personally affected by their domestic workers. Domestic work was probably more arduous in the past but if domestic workers were lucky there were other domestic workers to share work.

4.2 Poverty

Some of the experiences of domestic work paint a rosy picture of the past - washerwomen washing at Platteklip, food vendors visiting householders to sell fish, fruit and vegetables, poultry and eggs and these ways of living certainly appear attractive. It is necessary to counteract this picture by referring to the constraints of poverty which affected many domestic workers. This section looks at wages, prices and rents to show that domestic workers have always received low wages which would have resulted in extreme hardship when the wages were related to prices. There have never been legal minimum wages for domestic workers and several aspects of domestic service reinforce the possibility of low wages : laws forcing people into wage labour allow them no alternatives, the lack of other jobs available or of other means of survival, their powerlessness within the job due to unequal power relations supported by the Masters and Servants Acts, their isolation, a large supply of other potential domestic workers : all these restrictions reduced domestic workers' bargaining power and inevitably resulted in ultra low wages where families struggled to survive. This aspect of class domination obviously played a vital role in domestic workers' day to day experience of life and poverty perpetuated and reinforced class oppression.

Infant mortality rates for Blacks especially were high in Cape Town as this table of selected figures shows. Poverty was a contributing factor in high infant mortality rates.

Infant mortality rates (per thousand live births)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	
1895 - 1900	180,0	290,3	(Mayors Minutes 1910, Appendix
1900 - 1905	135,1	261,2	Appendix 8 :
1905 - 1910	102,8	225,3	xiii)
1911 - 1912	97,9	186,4	"
1917	96,2	226,8	(MM, 1913, App. 8 : xxi)
			(MM, 1917, App. 8)

There is a great deal of information in the Blue Books, Statistical

Registers and various cost of living reports on wages and prices, but a comprehensive analysis of all the information available would warrant a lengthy chapter on its own. Since the period 1841 - 1948 is too broad to cover in any detail, random indications of wages and prices will be given; this section is merely intended to refute idealism of a golden past and to show the life and death reality of low wages in a class society. The struggle to make ends meet that the figures indicate was representative of the entire period. (All the food prices, rents and wages come from the Blue Books or Statistical Registers of the relevant years until 1903.)

The 1861 return of wages gave the following average monthly wages with board and lodging for domestic workers in Cape Town

		pounds	s.	d.	
White	men	2	5	0	
	women	1	10	0	(Blue Book, CC1 - 3)
Coloured	men	1	10	0	
	women	1	2	6	

As can be seen, there was quite a large difference between male and female wages. These wages were much lower than those for skilled workers such as carpenters, masons, tailors and smiths whose daily wages ranged from 6s. 0d. to 7s. 6d. The average monthly rent for a labourer's cottage and garden in Cape Town was pound 1 1s. 0d. which meant that if domestic workers had to maintain families they would have had difficulty in doing so.

According to the prices of the time, domestic workers would also have had difficulty in supporting their families on the wages just given. These are some prices per pound (weight) of foodstuff in 1861.

	s.	d.
wheaten bread		3 3/4
beef		9
butter	3	0
coffee		9
sugar		4 1/2
rice		2 1/4
milk per bottle		3 3/4

pair of shoes	7s	6d	
pair of trousers	4s	6d	(figures from Blue Book, 1861)

If a bottle of milk were bought five days a week, a person could expect to pay 6s per month (remembering that the average wage of a Coloured woman domestic worker in Cape Town was pound 1 2s. 6d.). Since other food provisions would also have to be bought, a domestic worker would obviously struggle to feed a family.

The wages of domestic workers in Cape Town fell after 1861, but began to climb again after 1878 and this led to an even larger differential between male and female wages, because male wages rose at a much faster rate.

In 1900 average monthly wages for domestic workers in Cape Town were¹

		pounds	s.	d.	
White	men	4	10	0	
	women	3	0	0	
Coloured	men	3	5	0	(Wages and Rent, Statistical Register, 1900.)
	women	1	10	0	

and the rent for a "town lodging" was about pound 3 10s. 0d. which was obviously out of the reach of most domestic workers many of whom would have had dependants. The wages of domestic workers were again much lower than other wages. A bricklayer earned 11s. 6d. per day (amounting to pound 11 10s. 0d. per 20 day month). A White dressmaker in 1909 could only expect to earn from 3s. 6d. to 10s. per day. Wages did not rise much in the next ten years. Even in 1920, one of the interviewees of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies was paying a domestic worker pound 1 10s. per month (Mrs G.) though another remembered 2 pounds (Mrs C.).

Only a few prices were given for Cape Town in the first three years of -----

¹In his advice to new settlers, Brown quoted much lower wages for domestic workers of pound 1 ls. for men and 13s. 5d. for women per month with food for 1897 and 1898 (1902 : 140). A White woman coming to South Africa to work in domestic service could expect to earn 23 - 28 pounds per year, a man about 30 pounds (Brown, 1902 : 140A).

this century and they included

bag of potatoes	7s. 0d. to 28s. 0d.	
dozen eggs	2s. 0d. to 3s. 0d.	
a fowl	3s. 0d. to 5s. 8d.	
pound of butter	1s. 3d. to 1s. 9d.	(Statistical Register, Table No. 54, 1903.)

Again, these prices would have been exorbitant to a domestic worker and poverty and disease would have been more rife among the poorer people. In 1896 there were two reported typhoid cases among domestic workers (Mayors Minutes, Medical Officer of Health report) and in 1901 bubonic plague wiped out large numbers of people. Although the plague was blamed on the large number of Africans in Cape Town, this group in fact had the lowest number of reported cases - reported cases were 134 White, 214 Coloured and 80 African (Mayors Minutes, Appendix 10 : cxlv).

The report of the Economic and Wages Commission of 1925 calculated that the purchase of food and fuel and the paying of light and rent at current cost of living was 6s. per week higher than an average weekly wage for all male occupations in the Cape Peninsula (UG14-26 : 19) and thus must have been higher than most domestic workers' wages. An interviewee of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies remembered paying the following wages after her marriage in 1926 - 5 pounds for a White "nanny" and 4 pounds per month for a Coloured cook (Mrs S.) but these were high compared with wages quoted in the Economic and Wages Commission. Most of the working class struggled to survive. Domestic workers had always got lower wages, with other desperate people also prepared to work in domestic service because of the depression, conditions and wages for domestic workers must have worsened (see Chapter 4).

At this time, rents were regarded as being a major component of the high cost of living. The average rent per month per room in Cape Town worked out at pound 1 2s. 1d. sometimes going as high as 2 pounds (UG14-26 : 184). In the survey of rents undertaken by the commission, whole

families occupied these one rooms. Store rooms were let at 10s. per week and in three examples these store rooms accommodated two adults and 3 to 7 children. The largest room was 8 feet x 12 feet (UG14-26 : 304).

Conditions for the working class were still bad according to the Cost of Living Commission of 1932 and poorer families were having great difficulty in making "ends meet in spite of the strictest economy" (UG36/1932 : 15). Families were generally in debt despite going without eggs and butter and minimal amounts of milk and vegetables, "the family can make no provision for clothing and other necessaries essential to the barest standard of decency; and for 3 pounds per month, ... it can obtain shelter only in slum quarters - a fact well known to all acquainted with housing conditions in the larger South African towns". There was no provision made in budgets for recreation - "Yet in spite of obvious drudgery the family runs into debt" (UG36/1932 : 15). Apart from rents which were absorbing 25% to 30% of an average worker's earnings¹ (slum rentals sometimes approached 50% of earnings (UG36/1932 : 19), government policy to protect sugar and bread meant that these prices had not fallen to the same extent as others affected by the depression (UG36/1932 : 17) and bread was a basic foodstuff.

The 1937 Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union (UG54-1937) has already been referred to in Chapter 4. It recorded how Coloured people were beset on both sides - by cheap African labour on one side and by the Whites on the other. Wages for Coloured domestic workers in Cape Town ranged from pound 1 per month with food and accommodation to pound 3 10s (UG54-1937 : 280). These wages were obviously very low for anyone with dependants to support.

All the previous examples indicate a continual struggle for survival on

¹This was way above similar proportions in other countries. In Germany rents accounted for 14,4% of total expenditure, in Manchester 14,3%, Netherlands 13,7%, Sweden 16,3%; the highest outside South Africa was Detroit at 22,6% (UG36/1932 : 19).

the part of large sections of the working class. This section serves as a reminder that many domestic workers' lives were circumvented by poverty in which each day was a struggle for survival. Domestic workers normally received low wages; their plight became worse in times of depressions when workers who had lost their jobs in other sectors of the economy entered domestic service in an attempt to survive. Domestic workers often lived in a cycle of poverty in which they had few options. The cycle of poverty was one of the ways in which class domination was reproduced. People who have such a struggle to survive are unlikely to be able to "better" themselves or their children's options as the bourgeois ideal would have us believe. Similarly, people in this situation are unlikely to present serious challenges to the system (although this can only be a generalisation since political conditions vary).

5. Resistance

Throughout the previous sections, it has been a problem to obtain any information about domestic work from the workers themselves. Domestic workers were continually seen only in so far as they affected the lives of their employers. Their whole being was denied. Resistance to conditions of employment is one of the ways in which workers try to reassert their humanity. Yet although resistance is sometimes the only voice of oppressed people, assigning resistance too much weight is also a problem, given the lack of information available on resistance of domestic workers in Cape Town. A possible source of information on resistance is from police reports on people appearing in court though this represents a very narrow type of resistance. Only a small number of domestic workers might have resisted in this way and of those who did, few were likely to have had a political understanding that by contravening a section of the Masters and Servants Act they were resisting the nature of their oppression! It was not apparent in the information available that there was developed political consciousness

which could make connections between immediate problems and the position of domestic workers in the colonial class structure. Some might have acted with intent, others might have been desperate to escape a harsh employer, still others might have been people who got caught out when they took a chance. Of course, the Masters and Servants Acts defined as "criminal" actions or behaviour which for non servants often would not be criminal. On available information, Cape Town saw no organised resistance on the scale of amalaita groups described by van Onselen in Johannesburg. The most formal type of resistance was that of the washerwomen who refused to pay the fees proposed by the Cape Town City Council for wash houses.

This section will look at court and police reports to see whether they give any insights into domestic workers' resistance and then at other written sources of information such as newspapers for some individualised examples.

It is difficult to use police reports in any informative way. There are summaries of summonses, arrests, discharges and convictions in the annual Blue Books, Statistical Registers, Annexures to Votes and Proceedings and Mayors Minutes over the years for both the Cape and Cape Town. Although these figures give general indications of how strictly a law was being enforced, there is no indication of which section of an Act someone was charged under. This information is vital when the Masters and Servants Act had such a wide range of offenses. There are also summaries of convicted persons' occupations but these were not related to the type of offence they committed, so one may know what number of those convicted were domestic workers but not what their offence was. The Cape Town total figures were broken down into districts, and on two occasions the number of arrests under particular acts in these districts (1899 and 1900 Annexures to Votes and Proceedings). Here one finds that most arrests under the Masters and Servants Act occurred in Woodstock and the least in Sea point (was this because people were arrested in their homes?); whereas the vast majority

of arrests under the Vagrancy Act were in Cape Town itself (was this an attempt to keep Black people out of the city area?). If the same detail had been available for all years, more firm conjectures could have been made. Thus one is always faced with tantalising deficiencies where one lacks the connecting information which would allow links to be made between the various summaries. The required connecting links have not been found (if they even exist), so this section is deficient in that it veers from broad generalised figures to particular instances of reported cases without being able to particularise the broad figures and without being able to see the individual reported cases of assault or whatever in context. However, without being able to make generalisations about domestic workers as a whole, each is able to throw additional light on the experiences of domestic workers.

One of the categories listed for the Cape was "thefts by servants and clerks" and the number of convictions between 1880 and 1909 was surprisingly low. On two occasions the convictions went over 100 (in 1890 and 1895), but generally the convictions were under 50 and sometimes in the 20s - for the whole of the Cape (Blue Books and Statistical Registers). One must assume then that domestic workers either did not commit theft in great numbers because of the comprehensive control that could be exerted over them and confined themselves to petty thefts which often went unnoticed, or that they were convicted under the Masters and Servants Act if they did steal. Over half of those accused in this category were Black men, followed by Black women which indicates the class nature of this crime.

Throughout the Cape as a whole, the Masters and Servants Acts were always well used by employers. There was, however, a drop in 1904 and convictions, although still high, never really maintained the old heights. The overwhelming majority of the accused were Black men, usually about 80% of the total. Until 1898, White men were the second largest number of accused (at around 10%), but after this, more Black

women were accused than White men (although they never amounted to more than 10% of the total number of accused). Thus, the Masters and Servants Acts were used almost exclusively against Black people which indicates its colour bias. If Black men formed the majority of those accused, it may have been that the Masters and Servants Acts were used more to control farm workers than to control domestic workers. (Since domestic workers were predominantly female, if the Masters and Servants Acts were being used to control domestic workers then women would presumably have predominated in, or at least formed a larger proportion of, the numbers of accused).

It would be useful if convictions for Cape Town were able to support the hypothesis that the Masters and Servants Acts were used to a greater extent for farm workers. Unfortunately, figures given in the Mayors Minutes and by the Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police (in Annexures to Votes and Proceedings) for each year are widely divergent. Figures given in the Mayors Minutes indicated that the Masters and Servants Acts were under used in Cape Town compared with other legislation which could have indicated that convictions were low in Cape Town because these Acts were used to control farm rather than domestic workers and there were proportionally less farm workers in Cape Town compared with the population of the Cape. However, this neat explanation was destroyed by the other (much higher) figures which showed that convictions in Cape Town under the Masters and Servants Acts as a proportion of all Cape convictions were much the same as other convictions. In the absence of more detailed information, one cannot say which group of workers was most affected by the Masters and Servants Acts. This is an area that could fruitfully be pursued in an attempt to find the links between the figures available.

There was a break down of the occupations of accused people, but again without much meaning because this was not linked to the type of accusations. Domestic workers and washerwomen (among other types of domestic service workers) were represented of course, but their numbers were small compared with categories like farm workers, peasants, miners,

labourers and vagrants¹ despite the fact that they were a major component of the Cape labour force (see Chapter 3). In 1884, for example, the number of domestic workers and washerwomen as a proportion of the total number of accused in the Cape were both below 2%. The majority of accused domestic workers were Black of which men were usually in the majority. Thus, even although women predominated in domestic service, they usually were not convicted of offences as often as male domestic workers were.

It is difficult to know of what offences domestic workers were accused. If one looks at the offences Black women in the Cape were most accused of in 1896 (Statistical Register), these are the figures one gets. The highest number of offences Black women committed was drunkenness (nearly 2 000 women). This was followed by theft of property (about one quarter of the previous figure) then assault (slightly lower). These offences need not necessarily have been committed by domestic workers. Other figures were extremely low. According to tables printed in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union (UG54-1936) convictions under the Masters and Servants Act were always much lower for the women of each population group despite the fact that there were more women in domestic service. It may imply that women were more law abiding - it may also imply that the Masters and Servants Act was less used for actual domestic workers or it may illustrate the extreme powerlessness of domestic workers. These were probably all important. As they exist, however, the figures do not

¹ Numbers of accused in selected occupations in 1884 - Cape

	White		Black or Coloured	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Domestic servant	56	35	483	751
Washerwoman	-	21	-	961
Farm labourer	195	-	4 768	41
Peasant	-	-	2 346	16
Herd	13	-	2 086	27
Miner	371	-	5 480	-
Labourer	2 060	-	14 437	61
Vagrant	1 191	84	2 246	457
No occupation	255	33	1 205	364

(Source : 1884 Blue Book : Table V, page 471)

allow us to reach any conclusions about domestic workers' resistance. The figures are merely able to confirm that measures of control were indeed used.

Even newspaper reports of court cases do not tell us much about domestic workers themselves. They reported crimes and punishments but little about the circumstances of the crime and the person involved. Most of the reports involved petty theft and desertion, desertion being a crime under the Masters and Servants Act.

Punishments for petty theft always seemed to be harsh. Massiet, who stole "Fat from his Master" was sentenced to 6 days' "solitary confinement on rice and water" (Sam Sly's African Journal, 9 November, 1843). Two sentences of 1876 can be compared. Florence Davis was a 17 year old domestic worker who bought goods worth pound 5 6s. 9d. on her employer's account at a shop. She was sentenced to 6 months with hard labour. A man who assaulted a cripple was sentenced to a 2 pound fine or one month's hard labour (Bradlow, 1977 : 29).

The APO also called attention to two cases "Is it prejudice or incapacity or what?" (1st January, 1910). A Coloured domestic worker, Maud Frances Petersen was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour for stealing 3s. 7d. from a house in Green Point. This was compared with a sentence of 2 months with hard labour for a White youth of 18, William Johannes Fourie, who stole "a shirt and a serviette" worth 14s., having been convicted of theft on three other occasions. The APO believed that on the basis of the "hardened criminal" Fourie's sentence, Maud Petersen should only have received two weeks. The APO suspected colour discrimination and brought Maud's case to the attention of the Attorney General. Another Coloured domestic worker, Clara Alexander, was found guilty of stealing two gold pins and pound 3 10s. cash from a bedroom (S.A. News 21 April, 1914). A trap was set and she stole a marked half sovereign. She received a sentence of 6 weeks' hard labour. The S.A. News commented :

"As a rule these girls are set on by some loafing coloured

boy, though nothing was led on this occasion. ... She preserved quite a different attitude from that of the generally callous coloured delinquent, so many of whom are daily brought up for riotous behaviour and bad language".

Considering these sentences, little mercy was shown to domestic workers resorting to petty theft. This could have been because employers were more threatened by theft by domestic workers given the nature of their job and ample opportunities provided for theft to occur.

Desertion was also harshly punished. In 1884, Dala who deserted was sentenced to "12 cuts on the posterior" (Sam Sly's African Journal 9 November, 1843). Another domestic worker refused to work and threatened to run away. She was given a month's notice but ran away the next day saying that her employer's sister had thrashed her. Far from receiving sympathy or having her claims investigated, the magistrate remarked "that servants were latterly becoming more impertinent, and he regretted that the law did not allow him to punish them more severely".¹ She was fined 2 pounds or 14 days hard labour (S.A. Spectator 22 March, 1902). This gives an indication of the degree of coercion workers were expected to tolerate without complaint.

Some workers resorted to more violent forms of resistance. The S.A. Illustrated News reported that a cook's "young man" while waiting for the cook "amused himself by pitching her master off his own stoep and breaking his arm, for which he has got two month's of durance vile" (13 December 1884) (which was not severe compared with the sentences for theft cited earlier). The same issue of the S.A. Illustrated News reported the murder of an employer (but no sentence received at the time of the report). The worker said

"I am guilty and murdered my master. I was sitting on the wagon with my master, and he told me to get down and drive

¹The editor, F.Z.S. Peregrino took the magistrate to task for not following up the worker's charges.

some oxen. I said I would not, and the master knocked me off the wagon and I came down on my feet. I did not kill the master with a spade, but with a stone. I walked alongside the wagon until I came to some stones, I then threw him and he fell on his side, I got on the wagon and saw blood come out of his nose and head. I left him on his bed. I told Andries I had killed my master. I took a spade and made a hole to put him in. Andries helped me to pick him up; but he had nothing more to do with him. I had my jacket off when I did the deed. I did not wash either trousers or shirt afterwards. The master was not asleep when I killed him. I did not want to kill him. All the money is the master's" (13 December 1884).

This confession illustrates the violence inherent in the master - servant relationship, the unusual feature being that the servant in this case retaliated.

Despite the fact that no detailed accounts exist of domestic workers' resistance, apart from a few sensational events, there is no doubt that they did show their displeasure at conditions. A file of letters to the Resident Magistrate of Cape Town contains a number of requests from employers to cancel domestic workers' contracts (1906-1913, CT/1 11/98). One woman complained that she could not "manage"¹ her domestic worker. The worker had absconded twice and her employer became "afraid" of her and asked for the contract to be cancelled. Another employer complained of his employee as follows

"Her insolence is unbearable; and she does what she is told to do very unwillingly; also we have no peace in the house with her"

This contract was cancelled just fourteen days after the letter was written.

¹This word evokes the control to which domestic workers are subject.

Although the employers might have been exaggerating for their own ends, the letters could also indicate the type of non co-operation which domestic workers used to oppose their employers. This type of class conflict is illustrated by the following newspaper report entitled "At the Police Reports"

"The usual batch of coloured women who indulge in screeches in the public courts, and colour the atmosphere with language of a lurid nature, was again in evidence, as was the daily contingent of unhappy women.

One of the noisy ones expressed her opinion that it was no good asking policemen questions, as they "lied more than ever" (S.A. News 28 April 1914).

Some domestic workers found ingenious ways of tormenting their employers. Van Onselen wrote of attempted poisonings (see also S.A. News, 2 April, 1914). Manuel et al reported a case of a couple who had mistreated their domestic worker who were woken by a pair of shoes that walked from room to room. When they hid under their blankets, these were pulled from their heads. They consulted a "doekum" who advised them to keep some boiling water handy while they slept and when the supernatural events began, they were to pour the boiling water around the room.

The "next day the servant was missing. He was found in bed, in the house of friends, suffering from severe burns all over his body. He admitted that he had been responsible for the disturbances and that the shoes that he walked through the house had been his. He added, so the story goes, that his feet were inside the shoes, but he never disclosed how he had become invisible" (Manuel et al, 1967 : 96).

Because of their extreme oppression and isolation, domestic workers had few avenues of resistance open to them. Although there are now, and

have been occasionally in the past¹ and overseas, domestic worker associations, domestic workers have always been notoriously difficult to organise. They usually work without contact with other workers or with their own community and have little time for organised resistance or anything else. Within the employer/employee relationship, domestic workers are at an extreme disadvantage (exacerbated by the Masters and Servants Acts) and this also reduces their ability to resist. In the end, domestic workers are often left with classic forms of resistance such as non co-operation, insolence and petty theft. These may not be conscious forms of resistance but merely the way domestic workers react to unequal power relations.

The court reports merely indicate that available measures of control were used against domestic workers; very little other detail can be constructed from the available information. From press reports, we know that theft was harshly punished as this was obviously a threat to employers. The press reports also illustrate the violence inherent in master/servant relationships and the coercion to which domestic workers were subjected to maintain their subordination. Since the reported cases formed a small proportion of all domestic workers, they may not reflect common forms of resistance. The types of resistance which were not reported like insolence and non co-operation may have been more common given the extensive forms of control which could be exerted over domestic workers.

The only formal resistance which was found was that of washerwomen who were opposed to Cape Town municipality charges at wash houses. Because the situation of washerwomen was different from domestic workers proper, this is discussed separately.

¹See reports in Izwi Labanthu, Ngolwesi-Beni from July to end November 1901 for reports of the "East London Native Servants Registration Association". Although this Association was supposedly to protect domestic workers, the African delegates were not sympathetic towards the "rabble" who refused to accept the lead of "the more intelligent and educated men and property holders" (6 August, 1901). Class interests were very apparent.

5.1 A Victory for the Washerwomen

Washerwomen were a feature of Cape Town's domestic life for a long period. According to Manuel et al women used to wash clothes in Platteklip and Capel streams and others that ran through District Six from Devil's Peak (1967 : 47). Clothes were rubbed with green pine cones and left to bleach in the sun on stones. In Hanover Street a pipe sunk into the ground provided a continuous supply of water. This was called Die Oude Pypie and the water was said to have medicinal properties and was used to brew remedies (Manuel et al, 1967 : 50). (This spring still exists in the now devastated District Six.) When the Cape Town municipality built a wash house in Hanover Street in 1905, it was built over the original spring. The use of public streams for washing was outlawed by Act 27 of 1882 so washerwomen were more and more forced to use other places to earn their living by washing.¹ Municipal wash houses were a logical alternative.

The Mayor's Minutes gave attendance records for the Platteklip wash house from 1897, the Hanover Street wash house from 1905 and from 1919 for wash houses at Mowbray, Claremont and Kalk Bay.² Wash houses opened at Hout Bay in 1928, in Wynberg in 1930 and Salt River in 1937. The wash houses never had a full complement of customers, but there was a steady stream of users. The use of some wash houses dropped off over the years, but the use of others actually grew towards 1948.³

¹To give some idea of the harrassment washerwomen received, in 1895, 15 people were summonsed and convicted of washing clothes in public streams; 66 were summonsed and convicted of hanging wash-clothes in the streets under municipal regulations which were incorporated into the Cape Municipal Ordinance of 1912 (Mayors Minutes, 1895 : Police Report).

²The Platteklip wash house was built by the municipality in 1876 (Bradlow, 1977 : 21). Mowbray, Claremont and Kalk Bay wash houses were mentioned in 1917 but it is not clear when they were built. Those suburbs were incorporated into the City of Cape Town after the Unification Conference in 1913 so they could have existed before then.

³Platteklip had a daily average of about 60 - 35 users to the early 1930s (there was accommodation for 204 people) with the maximum number in one day ranging from 82 to 184 people. Hanover Street had smaller annual averages from about 36 to 15 but grew to well over Platteklip's averages after 1928. The use of Mowbray, Kalk Bay and Claremont wash houses grew, Claremont dramatically, which indicates changing living patterns in Cape Town.

Regulations for laundries had been framed at various times and in 1922 regulations for wash houses were framed under the Cape Municipal Ordinance No. 10 of 1912 and these give some idea of what the wash houses looked like. There were lists of ordinary regulations regarding tickets, waiting rooms, care of equipment (tubs, troughs, copper or boiler, conveniences for drying and ironing). With the exception of Hanover Street there was cold water with drying and bleaching done in the open air. There was to be no disorderly conduct, indecent or offensive language, drinking, smoking, or dogs. Clothes that had been exposed to any infectious diseases could only be washed if the washerwoman had a certificate from the Medical Officer of Health that the clothes had been disinfected. A further regulation (that may attest to the variety of uses for a wash house) stated that no fish, game or poultry was to be cleaned in the wash houses or the grounds surrounding them (Mayors Minutes, 1922).

There were always battles between the washerwomen and the municipality. The S.A. News reported that although in 1898 the average attendance per day had been 55 at the Platteklip wash house, in 1903 the average was only 46. The Water Engineer believed there were laundry facilities elsewhere and this resulted in the fall off, despite population increases. However, S.A. News had been told of other problems - "the regulations and restrictions are vexatious; that some days the doors are locked, and that generally the women are treated as if there was a desire to drive them elsewhere". In the interests of people hiring the women rather than the washerwomen, the S.A. News urged the municipality to sort the problem out "because clothes washed in a cleanly-kept wash-house, and dried in the open air on the mountain side, must carry to the houses they are delivered at less danger of infection than do those washed and dried in rooms and backyards" (6 October, 1903 : 4).

A brief history of the Hanover Street wash house can be used as an illustration of conflict between washerwomen and the municipality. The wash house was built over the original spring in Hanover Street and opened on 14 December 1905. It seems that the municipality might have

been slightly churlish about washerwomen using the wash house for commercial washing since there was a strange attempt by the municipality to find out whether the users were washing their own clothes or those of others. However, the washerwomen would not divulge this - "the information gleaned was of little value, as they stated they were utilising the place on their own behalf, although many use the wash house almost daily" (Mayors Minutes, 1906 : 99).

When the Hanover Street wash house was opened, no charges were imposed for the first ten weeks to attract users and women flocked there - there was a daily average of 47 women. As soon as charges were imposed, the average daily attendance dropped to 2 women (Mayors Minutes, 1906, Appendix 4 : xix). The resistance of the women to the charges cost the Council dearly and in 1906 the Hanover Street wash house made a loss of pound 858 11s 3d with receipts of only pound 27 18s (Mayors Minutes, 1906, Appendix 10 : viii).

As a result of the losses, the Council tried to get a private company to take over the running of the wash house. When this failed, the Hanover Street wash house was closed in 1908 but re-opened in 1912 when the Cape Town municipality immediately ran into problems over charges again. The women objected very strongly to charges of 3d for the first hour and 1d per hour thereafter and said they would not use the wash houses under those circumstances. The women proposed a fee of sixpence per day which would allow them to remain for the whole day if they wished to. (This seems to indicate that most of the women did stay the whole day and earned their living from washing.) When the council stood firm on the fees they wished to charge, the washerwomen stayed away. "Under the circumstances, the Committee felt that they had no alternative but to recommend the Council to direct and authorise that the charge in future be at the rate of sixpence per diem" (Mayors Minutes, 1912 : 65). After this small victory, the use of the wash house was reported to be high - occasionally there was insufficient accommodation for all who wanted to use it.

There were differences between the conditions of work of washerwomen and domestic workers despite the fact that they both performed domestic tasks. Census reports reflect low wages for washerwomen - they might not have declared all their income, but they were unlikely to have received high wages. Unlike domestic workers, however, they had a degree of independence in their working days - they organised when and how they would work although they could not have been too flexible if they wanted to keep regular customers. On the other hand, the work was heavy, they had to fetch and carry and they bore the loss of income if they were ill (as did many domestic workers) or could not find a full complement of customers. Their flexibility, however, allowed them to challenge the municipality by going elsewhere when they were unhappy with the charges. In this way, they were unlike domestic workers because they had alternatives and they had weapons which did not threaten their livelihood. The successful resistance of washerwomen highlights the lack of options that domestic workers had. The extent of the control over them and the lack of alternatives meant that in order to survive they had to submit to the domination. This was one aspect of the extensive oppression of domestic workers.

With the mass production of washing machines and the proliferation of commercial laundries, washerwomen have now sadly disappeared from Cape Town's domestic life.

6. Conclusion

This chapter set out to describe the lives of domestic workers in terms of how they experienced their oppression and how they reacted to this oppression. It was intended to place the emphasis on domestic workers instead of employers.

The difficulty of writing up this chapter on the experiences of domestic workers has been the contradictory situation of the fact that large numbers of Capetonians employed domestic workers yet there is little

information about this large body of workers who worked in so many homes (see Chapter 1). This relates to the nature of domestic service - despite the fact that so many people work in domestic service, their existence is largely ignored, they carry on their work almost invisibly. Even the small amount of information available was usually from the viewpoint of the dominant class so this was used in order to understand some of the constraints within which domestic workers experienced their oppression. Although the information was personalised to the domestic workers as far as possible (as opposed to discussions in more macro terms) the choice of topics was theoretically appropriate to the major themes of this thesis so far.

Domestic service has been discussed as a point of incorporation into wage labour into a subordinate position as well as a job which helps to reproduce class, colour and sex oppression. Numerous measures, already discussed, forced people into wage labour where laws such as the Masters and Servants Acts severely restricted the amount of control they could exercise over their lives. Control over movement of domestic workers was a major limitation; the attempt to register domestic workers because of a venereal disease scare would have been another legal way of limiting their freedom. Racism and sexism were two informal measures of control which served to subordinate domestic workers. Because of the proximity between employer and employee, the attitudes of employers would have been a major aspect of domestic workers' day to day experiences. There were two aspects to sexism. One was the definition of domestic work as women's work which related to the oppression of women in general. The other was the desire to replace male domestic workers with women and then to have the same amount of control over female domestic workers. In this case, sexism compounded class domination. The preoccupation with women's sexual lives and the ability of employers to control these would also have placed great limitations on domestic workers' lives.

The lack of control over their lives was exacerbated by the nature of domestic work as a job; because it was located in someone else's home and because employer and employee were in close contact with each other,

the domestic worker could have a large measure of control exercised over the way the work was organised as well as over their personal lives. The conditions of work of domestic workers were described to try to give insight into everyday experiences. Employers knew very little about their employees which emphasises domestic workers' "invisibility" and how they were seen almost only in terms of how they affected their employers.

The subordination of domestic workers was partly due to the laws which restricted them, the nature of the job which allowed restrictions and the racism and sexism to which they were subjected by employers. Although it has been stated that domestic service is seen more as an example of class subordination and oppression, this is a matter of emphasis rather than a matter of diminishing sexual oppression. Domestic workers were open to abuse as women : they were seen in limiting stereotypical ways (for example housework is for women), they were subject to more restrictions than male domestic workers were (the concern with their morals for example), yet they were placed in this position because of their class : it was due to their class position that they had no alternative sources of survival so that they entered domestic service. Similarly, colour oppression cannot be discounted. Again, it is a matter of emphasis. The section on racism showed that indigenous South Africans were seen as inferior and subjected to abuse because of their colour. Racism was thus a major part of their daily experiences, yet they were especially open to this racist abuse because of their position as a class of cheap labour in South Africa.

Because of its nature, domestic service helped to reproduce class, colour and sexual oppression. It helped to reproduce class oppression because domestic workers were so restricted that they had no other options available to them and the low wages they received meant that they lived in a constant cycle of poverty. Domestic work helped to reproduce colour oppression because the perceived inferiority of Black people was constantly reinforced by the nature of domestic work which

maintained domestic workers in an inferior position and the laws which served to legalise this subordination. Domestic work served to reproduce sexual oppression because the majority of domestic workers were women and the idea that housework was women's work was reinforced; furthermore, the nature of domestic work allowed a greater control to be exercised over female domestic workers than other wage labourers. Since the work of domestic workers reproduced both their own and their employer's families, relations arising from class, colour and sex oppression were reproduced both in the dominant and subordinate classes.

The isolated nature of domestic work meant that organised resistance did not occur in Cape Town. Cape Town might have been different from Johannesburg because there were not large numbers of male domestic workers and women may have been more passive, law abiding or afraid to resist. There is no cause and effect relationship between oppression and resistance, yet resistance is one way domestic workers could have given voice to their feelings. Although formal measures of control were well used the police reports were not detailed enough for statements to be made about resistance of this nature. The numerous restrictions faced by domestic workers meant that their resistance was probably often limited to passive forms of non co-operation and "cheek". Petty theft and desertion were relatively heavily punished. This could have been due to the fact that domestic workers had ample opportunity to steal thus employers wanted to warn domestic workers against this path. Desertion was punished because those domestic workers had attempted to avoid the process of incorporation and subordination into wage labour. The only successful example of resistance that could be found was that of washerwomen against wash house charges. Their success was partially due to the fact that their conditions of work were different from domestic workers proper since they were less isolated, had more control over their working day and had alternative sources of survival (i.e. they could do their work outside of the wash houses).

Although sexual oppression was an important part of domestic workers' experiences, as just stated, they were placed in a vulnerable position

in domestic service because of the demand for cheap labour, because of their class. This chapter confirms previous chapters that domestic service was an extensive source of class domination and control, both formal and informal. The labour of women working in domestic service was not needed elsewhere which made them vulnerable as their class position meant that they had to sell their labour power in order to survive. The limited options people had both in an economic sense and in terms of their experiences described in this chapter forced a degree of submission and this too was part of their unique oppression.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Domestic service has been a major source of employment for large numbers of people in both the Cape and Cape Town from early on in their colonial history. Despite its obvious importance in working class history, there are large gaps in our understanding of the social significance of domestic service in Cape and Cape Town class relations. This has been an empirical investigation which has attempted to fill some of the gaps in knowledge especially with regard to Cape Town and can hopefully be used to complement contemporary information and historical studies of the Eastern Cape and the Witwatersrand.

Although there was no discussion on historical materialist methodology, the framework used to try to understand domestic service was historical materialism. Historical materialism allowed an examination of the class character of domestic service as well as the link between class and gender. The composition of domestic service within the wider economy was used to provide an index to the Cape and Cape Town class structure incorporating colour and gender divisions of labour. Historical materialism provided the tools for understanding domestic service within the class structure as well as the forces that gave rise to a particular composition of domestic service in the process of proletarianisation.

Contemporary structures can only be understood in terms of their historical development. Thus, an historical investigation was undertaken in order to examine these major sociological questions :

- (a) the position of domestic service within the class structure, particularly in terms of which groups predominated in domestic service
- (b) an analysis of domestic service within changing class relations

(c) an examination of domestic service as a mechanism of class domination.

The approach taken in this study was that domestic service has been a major form of domination and control. The oppression of domestic service applied to both sexes and it was because of the class structure and way capitalism developed in South Africa that domestic service became a female dominated source of employment. This emphasis on class oppression has attempted not to diminish the importance of women's oppression. The specific examples given of women's oppression were additional burdens for female domestic workers to bear. However, they were put in that position because of their class and because of the demand for cheap Black labour. It was the empirical data that led to the conclusion that domestic service should be analysed in terms of capitalist development and changing class relations as forms of labour control changed. A focus on the oppression of women would have required the posing of different questions; domestic service would have been only one aspect of women's oppression.

The study found that domestic service has been a pivot in establishing and maintaining class domination and control. The process whereby people were forced into wage labour was examined and domestic service was found to be a point of incorporation into wage labour for many unskilled people. Domestic workers were subject to stringent forms of control through legislation such as the Cape Masters and Servants Act and through informal measures of control : the racist and sexist attitudes of employers helped to shape their behaviour towards domestic workers and the close contact between employer and employee allowed a great deal of control to be exerted over all aspects of a domestic worker's life. Formal and informal measures of control enforced a subordinate and powerless position for domestic workers. Class relations were often violent. Domestic workers had few options in avoiding the control : people were forced into wage labour and had to work in order to survive; people convicted of vagrancy could be forced to enter domestic service; the Masters and Servants Acts exerted strict control through enforcing

rigid standards of behaviour and making many actions criminal offences; the class and colour bias of legislation disadvantaged domestic workers; the power held by the employer enabled a great deal of personal coercion to be wielded over domestic workers. In the absence of access to land or demand for their labour in productive labour, although some people were able to move out of domestic service to other sectors of the economy, the largest groups in domestic service were those most disadvantaged by class, colour and gender divisions.

The time span covered by this study went from 1841 when the first Masters and Servants Act was part of a new form of labour control until 1948 when the forms of control discussed in the study were becoming unsatisfactory for the ruling class and stricter control over movement was demanded.

The subject matter of each chapter was linked to tracing changing class relations and changing colour and sexual division of labour.

Chapter 2 looked at the period before 1841. Many slaves performed domestic work and class relations were coercive and violent. The slave labour force was not self reproducing and the colonists had increasingly to look to the indigenous population to supply their labour needs. Contracts and passes were established in this period and the code of behaviour for slaves laid the basis for the Masters and Servants Acts. The abolition of slavery led to pressures to find new forms of control for a formally "free", mostly indigenous labour force. It was necessary to understand these pressures so that the forms of control discussed in Chapter 4 could be placed in context.

After the abolition of slavery, labour had to come from the indigenous population. In Chapter 3 census reports were examined in order to see the end point of the process of incorporating the indigenous population and changing colour and sexual division of labour. Examination of the census reports was intended to create a sociological "index" to the

class structure and to point to changes in this class structure.

The extent to which groups of people were able to take advantage of employment opportunities depended on how early they had been incorporated into wage labour, their class and gender. Groups closest to the settlers were generally incorporated into wage labour first (usually people who were later reclassified Coloured). A lot of people were incorporated into wage labour via domestic service, but more privileged groups were able to move out as new opportunities for employment arose. The more privileged people were able to move out of domestic service and into white collar or higher skilled industrial jobs. The groups incorporated into wage labour first were also generally able to move out of domestic service first. People left in domestic service had no other options - they were the most disadvantaged of all groups of workers. Groups that predominated in domestic service were thus the most disadvantaged in the class structure.

Over the years of the census reports, domestic service increasingly became the preserve of women as men were absorbed into other sectors of the economy. Most domestic workers in the Cape were African women and in Cape Town Coloured women (although towards the end of the period there was an increasing movement of African women into domestic service in Cape Town). As an indication of their relative disadvantage, domestic service was more important as a source of employment for African men, especially in Cape Town, than for any other group of men.

There was a demand for cheap Black, mostly male, labour. Class measures to force people into wage labour affected both men and women yet there were not large demands for female labour; sectors of the economy apart from domestic service did not expand enough to absorb all the people forced into wage labour and domestic service was an important source of survival for Black women. Although other groups might have been incorporated into wage labour via domestic service and then moved on, Black women, particularly African women, were trapped in domestic service and, as they had lost access to land, domestic service was their

only chance of survival. Black women were disadvantaged by their class position, they were generally incorporated into wage labour after their menfolk, there were few other job opportunities available because of gender linking of unskilled jobs and all these factors led to domestic service being a major source of employment for Black women. Measures by the ruling class to obtain cheap Black labour resulted in the majority of Black women being trapped in domestic service.

There were differences between the Cape and Cape Town. Africans were far slower to move to Cape Town, and domestic service was more important for African men in Cape Town than in the Cape reflecting their greater disadvantage in Cape Town in the absence of agricultural work. Class differences were accentuated in Cape Town's figures: White women were even more involved in commercial jobs, in the absence of agricultural jobs, African women were even more trapped in domestic service. Despite the predominance of women in domestic service, it was stated that the starting point for understanding this predominance had to be an analysis of domestic service within class relations.

The abolition of slavery had resulted in two problems related to labour: large supplies of labour had to be obtained from the indigenous population and new forms of control had to be developed. Chapter 3 examined trends of employment which partially illustrated the incorporation of the indigenous population into wage labour; class relations resulted in the most disadvantaged predominating in domestic service. Chapter 4 examined ruling class measures to stimulate labour supply and to control labour. This chapter explained how domestic service had acted as a pivot in class domination and control.

Unlike slavery, the new forms of control were concerned with formally "free" labourers and with the indigenous population. Apart from measures like taxes, loans and the results of wars which forced people into wage labour, unemployed people were also forced to enter service by legislation such as the Vagrancy and Trespassers Acts. Once in service

they were controlled by the Masters and Servants Act which entrenched the subordinate position of domestic workers. Agricultural work and domestic service were major points of incorporation into wage labour and the Masters and Servants Act applied to both. People were thus incorporated into wage labour at a disadvantage and in a servile status. Standards of behaviour were imposed which did not apply to other workers. Discussion of how the Act worked in practice showed that the Masters and Servants Act was both class and colour biased. Domestic service was thus a pivot in the domination of a formally "free" labour force from the indigenous population. People were often incorporated in violence and subjected to violent and racist forms of control. The large numbers of Black people in domestic service influenced the way Black people were seen in the rest of the social formation.

The nature of control changed between 1841 and 1948. In the earliest period until about the turn of the century, the major emphasis was on stimulating a supply of labour, the next period focussed on maintaining an existing supply of labour and the last period (towards 1930) was concerned with reallocating the existing labour force. In this last period, an emphasis on domestic service as women's work became explicit when there were demands for women to replace male domestic workers and domestic service became even more dominated by women. Employers wanted greater control over the movement of women and this led to demands for passes for women. The nature of domestic service also allowed employers to exert sexist surveillance and control over personal lives of domestic workers.

Towards 1948, larger numbers of Africans were moving to towns, as evidenced by Cape Town employment figures. The ruling class called for stricter monitoring of this process and this was to lead to the laws of the apartheid era.

It was noted that the majority of people working in domestic service were trapped in this sector due to lack of other options of survival. Chapter 5 elaborated on the experiences of domestic workers by examining

their duties, the poverty which circumscribed their lives and informal measures of control including racist and sexist attitudes which influenced the way domestic workers actually experienced their oppression. The nature of the job with close contact between employer and employee allowed a great deal of control to be exerted over domestic workers. There was an attempt to introduce compulsory medical examinations for domestic workers because of a venereal disease scare. This was related to the Black Peril scare on the Witwatersrand and was an example of the crude racism to which domestic workers were subject.

No information on domestic workers' resistance was found; it may have been that there was no organised resistance among Cape Town domestic workers because of their extreme oppression. In the absence of records written by domestic workers themselves, reminiscences of employers illustrated earlier remarks about the "invisibility" of domestic workers - they tended to be seen only in the way that they affected their employers. The limited options people had both in an economic sense and in terms of their experience of oppression forced a degree of submission which was another facet of their unique oppression.

Domestic service helped to reproduce class, colour and sexual oppression. It helped to reproduce class oppression because domestic workers had no other options of employment open to them (and thus reduced their ability to resist) and the low wages they received resulted in a cycle of poverty. Legislation helped to maintain class domination. Domestic service helped to reproduce colour oppression because the perceived inferiority of Black people was constantly reinforced by the nature of domestic work which helped to maintain domestic workers in an inferior position and laws served to legalise this subordination. Domestic service helped to reproduce sexual oppression because the attitude that housework was women's work was entrenched by the dominance of women in domestic service and employers were able to exert a great deal of control over female domestic workers' lives. Relations of class, colour and sexual oppression were reproduced

in both the dominant and subordinate classes.

Conditions for domestic workers in the 1980s have worsened. Any attempts to dismantle domestic service would have to consider domestic service within the class structure as well as why domestic service has become so entrenched as a form of wage labour for Black women. The emphasis on domestic service within class oppression has implications for strategies of resistance : to focus only on women's position within domestic service would deny the complexities of domestic service within Cape and South African class relations. The demand for cheap Black male labour, which has been so central for shaping class relations, resulted in Black women having few opportunities of employment outside of domestic service. Through the demand for cheap Black labour, the preponderance of women in domestic service has theoretical links to the homelands policy and the enforcement of influx control. Struggles against the oppression suffered by domestic workers must therefore be fought in terms of the general class struggle.

As with any piece of work, suggestions for further research arose out of the material. A search could be made for additional material to allow interpretation of court records. Other material on resistance could be sought out as could further material on the experiences of domestic workers from their own position. An investigation of dominant ideas about femininity applied to the working class and the bourgeoisie could be undertaken in order to explain sex-typing of jobs, especially unskilled jobs. Anthropological research on groups within the indigenous population could be undertaken to explain why certain groups entered wage labour when they did and why certain groups entered the jobs they did. Other suggestions were made in the chapters concerned. Hopefully, this will stimulate further investigation in this or allied fields of interest. Strategies for change can only be formulated with greater knowledge of the forces that shaped the present class structure.

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This is by no means a comprehensive bibliography. This merely lists references cited in the text as well as any other major references used to prepare the text. References which gave general insight but were not cited are not listed here. The list of references is organised as follows :

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- 1857 For more Effectually Preventing the Improper Introduction
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Act No. 7.
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- 1884 To Provide for the Better and more effectual Supervision and Management of Native Locations, and for the more easy collection of Hut-tax.
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- A31 - '59 Petition from sheep farmers and others of Somerset East.
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- CP2 - '66 Petition for Amendment in the laws relative to Masters and Servants, Passes, etc. from landowners and others of Albany.
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Cape of Good Hope.

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Cape of Good Hope.

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2.2.1 Acts, ordinances, bills.

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Ordinance 10.
- 1912 Cape Municipal Ordinance.
- 1913 City of Cape Town Unification Ordinance 10 of 1912 To
Consolidate & Amend The Law relating to Municipalities.
Act No. 19
- 1914 Workmen's Wages Protection Bill.
Act No. 15.
- 1914 Workmen's Compensation Bill.
Act No. 25.
- 1952 To amend the law relating to Masters and Servants in the
Territory of Griqualand West.
Act No. 23.
- 1967 Repeal of Vagrancy Act by :
Pre-Union Statute Law Revision Act.
Act No. 78
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Second General Law Amendment Act.
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2.2.2 Reports (with identification numbers)

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- UG12 - '14 Report of the Economic Commission.
- UG16 - '21 Interim Report of the Unemployment Commission.
- UG17 - '22 Report of the Unemployment Commission (chair H. L. Lindsay).
- UG47 - 1925 Report of the Cost of Living Committee.
- UG14 - '26 Report of the Economic and Wages Commission, 1925 (chair S.
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- 4/1930 Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Labour
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- 1932 Report of Native Economic Commission 1930 - 1932.
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- UG54-1937 Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Cape
Coloured Population of the Union.
- 7/1939 Report of the Native Farm Labour Committee 1937 - 1939
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- UG18/1943 Report of Committee of Enquiry Appointed to Enquire into Conditions Existing on the Cape Flats and Similarly Affected Areas in the Cape Division, 1942 (chair H. Britten). Department of Social Welfare.
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2.2.3 Miscellaneous

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2.3 Other official publications

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Cape Town

1906 - 1913 Resident Magistrate - letters received from private individuals. CT/1 11/98

A P P E N D I X A

Problems with using census reports

Some of the general problems about using census reports were raised in the body of the thesis. For instance, census reports reflect the ideological bias of the government commissioning the reports, undercounting for Black people and domestic service in particular should be borne in mind.

There were numerous more specific problems concerned with the census reports. The boundaries of both the Cape and Cape Town were extended due to natural growth as well as colonisation of further parts of the Cape Colony. Thus geographic boundaries differed from census report to census report, but this may not be too important since there was a steady increase in size. Extension of the Cape, however, was by land incorporation and this would have strengthened the importance of agriculture rather than urban based jobs. Occupations sometimes differed over the different census reports; occupations may also have been grouped together differently (or not grouped together) so that the broad categories of industry, commerce etc. could vary from report to report. (The tables in the thesis use what the census reports define as industry or whatever; it seemed hazardous and sometimes impossible to make alterations to attempt consistency between reports.)

Some of the problems of using colour classifications were referred to. Added to the ideological problems of using these classifications are practical problems. Sometimes the reports provided detailed classifications, sometimes they grouped people only into Black or White and sometimes they gave figures for Whites only. This made comparison difficult as well as making identification of trends less certain. The population groups themselves varied so much geographically. For instance there were not many Africans in the Western Cape until later census reports, which made it difficult to make statements about Cape Town from data based on the whole of the Cape. Furthermore, colour classifications were altered after Union. The earlier census reports classified people into the following six groups: "White", "Malay", "Hottentot" (which the report noted included "Bushmen", "Namaquas" and "Korannas"), "Fingo", "Kafir and Bechuana" and "Mixed and other "Coloured". The 1911 census report noted that "Mixed" included "Malay, Griqua, Mozambique, Bushmen, Hottentot, Chinese, Indian and Namaqua". By 1921 there were the four main groups which would remain to the present although the naming of Africans changed. These four groups were

- (a) "Whites"
- (b) "Bantu"/"Native" or "African" which included amongst others "Fingo, Bechuana, Xhosa, Zulu and Mozambique"
- (c) "Asiatics" which included amongst others "Indians, Singalese, Japanese, Syrians, Chinese"
- (d) "Mixed" (later renamed "Coloured") which encompassed "all those other than Whites, Asiatics or Bantu" (!) and included most "Cape Coloureds, Bushmen, Hottentots, Grikwas, Korannas, Namaquas and Cape Malays".

Thus, earlier classifications were amalgamated after union. The compilers also recognised the difficulties caused by these complex classifications - one which was noted was that the enumerators required a fine ideological sense of colour classification in order to classify people "correctly" and this great ability was rare!

The early census reports before 1921 included "wives" in the broad

classification of "domestic". While one might approve of the labour of housewives being awarded recognition in such official tomes, it made it difficult to identify wage earners (which was necessary for this investigation) in the few cases where the "domestic" category was not subdivided.

Earlier census reports did not qualify what ages of people were enumerated in the occupation tables, but in 1921 for "Asiatic" and "Coloured" people only those over 15 years old were counted; in 1936 all groups contained only people over 15 years old; the same happened in the 1946 report except that all "Natives" over 10 years old were counted. These differences also make exact comparisons difficult within and between years. This probably accounts for the fact that the number of wage earners in the Cape apparently dropped in 1911 (see Appendix B).

Sometimes there were inconsistencies within one census report and there would be variations in figures given in different tables and summaries within the same reports thus figures in different tables in Chapter 3 might not always tally.

It is useful to examine the numbers of people who were economically active so that one can identify what proportion worked in certain jobs. The economically active population is usually more informative than looking at the total population which included children, retired people and housewives. Since not all census reports gave this figure, the economically active population was always calculated by subtracting "dependants" (which included children, wives) and "unspecified" from the totals in the occupation summary tables. This should have left adult potential wage earners.

As explained in Chapter 3, economically active population included peasants, bywoners and farmers' wives i.e. people that supported themselves from the land but did not necessarily earn a wage. To try to get a more accurate reflection of wage earners, these three agricultural categories were subtracted from the economically active population to get a smaller category of wage earners. Variations in census classifications would have caused variations in the numbers of wage earners and economically active population even though the calculation was done in the same way for each year.

The gaps between census reports were large, thus blurring finer changes which might have occurred in employment trends. Furthermore, the census reports did not start early enough for the information required for the topic. The first report in which one can find sufficient details about occupations is in 1891 although 1875 has partial information.

The 1921 census figures have to be treated with greater caution than the other years for an additional reason. Other census reports grouped occupations into general categories like commerce, industry, agriculture etc. The 1921 census merely listed occupations without grouping them. Some of the categories listed were "metal workers (employers, managers, skilled and labourers)"; "workers in wood and furniture", "commercial, finance and insurance occupations (excluding clerks)"; "clerks, draughtsmen and typists (but not civil service or local authority)". There were new categories like "public administration", "entertainment and sport", but some of the new categories were to change in the next census report. In order to group the occupations in the 1921 report, the categories of previous and subsequent census reports were taken and the listed occupations of 1921 were grouped into the larger headings according to how they seemed to have been grouped previously. Although there was no alternative, this may have resulted in inconsistencies.

There were specific problems with the category of domestic service.

Domestic service category

Before union, there was a category of "farm servants" as distinct from general agricultural labourers. After union, this category was lost in the broad category of agriculture. For this reason, "farm servants" were not added on to the category of domestic workers (their duties and experiences were probably different as well).

Until 1911, two broad categories were listed under "domestic" : "wives and mistresses" and a category whose label changed but included people providing board and lodging and personal service. It was thus always possible to identify wage earners.

1875

The category within "domestic" of "persons engaged in entertaining and performing personal services for man", roughly equivalent to personal service in later reports, was used. The category was not broken down further.

1891

The wage earning category was labelled "persons engaged in the supply of board and lodging and in rendering personal offices for and attendance on man". This category was further broken down into six categories.

1. housekeeper, steward
2. domestic servant (including grooms and coachmen) and hotel, inn, club-house, eating house servant
3. laundry keeper, assistant, washerwoman
4. others engaged in service
5. hairdresser, barber
6. office keeper, caretaker, cleaner, porter

It was thus possible to identify domestic workers proper from within the broader category which was called "personal service" in the tables of Chapter 3. A distinction between personal service and domestic service appears in the tables of Chapter 3 whenever possible.

1904

The same broad category with subdivisions appeared except that to move with the times, motor car drivers were added to the domestic service category (number 2).

1911

The same broad category with subdivisions appeared.

1921

Different colour classifications were now used. The category used was "persons engaged in personal service" which included people working in institutions, clubs, hotels, hairdressers, beauticians, firefighters. There was no further breakdown which would have enabled domestic workers to be isolated. The classification for Africans was not the above, but "domestic service". Thus there were inconsistencies between colour groups.

1936

This census report contained no figures for Africans at all. For the other three groups there was a classification "personal service" within which domestic service was not isolated.

Categories used were consistent for all colour groups. Personal service was used and this was broken down further into domestic service which referred to domestic workers only.

Cape Town

Figures for Cape Town were less comprehensive than for the Cape as a whole so it was difficult to make the same detailed comments. In 1875 and 1904 no employment figures were given for Cape Town. The 1891 and 1911 census reports classified groups only as Black or White thus one lost the finer distinctions of peoples' incorporation into wage labour. The 1921 census report gave figures only for White people in Cape Town. The reports of 1936 and 1946 were good for Cape Town giving a detailed breakdown into population groups as well as a distinction between personal service and domestic service.

The census reports for 1891 and 1911 listed only the broad category "domestic". From the Cape figures one knows that this is a wide category of which one subdivision was "wives", but the Cape Town figures did not provide a further breakdown. One way of handling the problem of how to exclude non wage earners from the category was to look at the percentage which wives formed of the "domestic" category in the Cape as a whole and then apply the same proportion to Cape Town. This presents enormous problems as wives may have formed a smaller proportion of the domestic category in Cape Town than in the Cape as a whole because more jobs were available in the towns. Then again, this might only have been true for Black women who experienced more economic pressure to enter wage labour - maybe White women in towns were relatively less inclined to enter wage labour unless absolutely necessary. There is no way of checking these hypotheses. However, a straight application of the proportion wives formed of the domestic category in the Cape to the figures for Cape Town will give some idea of relative proportions involved though this should be viewed critically.

Figures for Cape Town were less consistent than for the Cape as a whole in other ways too. Although there may have been inconsistencies, Cape tables always listed total population figures above the figures for employment for example. Total population figures were not always given for Cape Town and when they were, there were often variations between different summaries. When total population figures were not given, I have had to use the total figure on the occupation tables (after the list of occupations, pensioners and dependants were also listed and then included in the total figure). The supposed total population figure obtained from the occupation tables was always lower than the figure given for the total population in Cape Town where this was given separately. To be consistent, I have always used the total from the occupations tables even when the total population of Cape Town has been given separately elsewhere because of the differences and because of the times when the total population of Cape Town has not been listed separately. Sometimes the differences in population totals could be due to the fact that some occupation tables only referred to people over 15 years old. Often there was no qualification of the ages being included in a table of occupations, on one occasion, occupations and marital status were listed together which could have meant that only older people were being referred to, but this was not made clear.

An estimated economically active population has been worked out in the same way as for the Cape. Since less than 50 Capetonians were classified as "peasants" and on other occasions none, the economically active population can be regarded as equivalent to wage earners. It seems unlikely that there were no people living off the land in Cape Town, but undercounting of groups such as these in census reports is a constant problem.

APPENDIX B

Cape: Economically active population and total number of wage earners as a proportion of total population

		Total population	Estimated economically active population	Economically active population as % of total	Estimated wage earners	Wage earners as a % of total
1875						
White	M	123 910	64 000	51,7		
White	F	112 873	32 288	28,6		
Black	M	245 718	124 056	50,5		
Black	F	238 483	78 320	32,8		
1891						
White	M	195 956	116 881	59,6	115 108	58,7
White	F	181 031	32 851	18,1	24 408	13,5
Malay	M	6 713	4 161	62,0	4 154	61,9
Malay	F	7 191	2 304	32,0	2 297	31,9
Hottentot	M	26 248	17 914	68,2	16 467	62,7
Hottentot	F	24 140	10 608	43,9	8 613	35,7
Fingo	M	108 566	72 504	66,8	10 766	9,9
Fingo	F	121 114	78 453	64,8	3 573	2,9
Kafir & Bechuana	M	306 635	224 488	73,2	62 917	20,5
Kafir & Bechuana	F	301 821	202 746	67,2	19 285	6,4
Mixed	M	123 209	75 112	61,0	72 147	58,6
Mixed	F	124 597	41 820	33,6	38 065	30,6
1904						
White	M	318 544	209 299	65,7	206 488	64,8
White	F	261 197	67 984	26,0	45 664	17,5
Malay	M	7 882	4 921	62,4	4 916	62,4
Malay	F	7 800	2 081	26,7	2 069	26,5
Hottentot	M	47 027	30 867	65,6	29 437	62,6
Hottentot	F	44 233	17 108	38,7	14 686	33,2
Fingo	M	147 286	90 745	61,6	20 334	13,8
Fingo	F	163 434	99 402	60,8	6 959	4,3
Kafir & Bechuana	M	545 442	376 009	68,9	114 017	20,9
Kafir & Bechuana	F	568 625	367 756	64,7	38 414	6,8
Mixed	M	152 759	96 397	63,1	94 781	62,0
Mixed	F	145 575	43 573	29,9	40 158	27,6
1911						
White	M	301 268	182 814	60,7	182 372	60,5
White	F	281 109	32 733	11,6	30 747	10,9
African	M	721 441	443 036	61,4	128 411	17,8
African	F	798 498	467 811	58,6	40 976	5,1
Mixed	M	232 962	143 950	61,8	140 265	60,2
Mixed	F	229 687	62 920	27,4	58 108	25,3
1921						
White	M	198 655	187 986	94,6		
White	F	205 056	42 453	20,7		
Asian	M	4 707	4 508	95,8		
Asian	F	1 058	142	13,4		
Coloured	M	141 618	136 388	96,3		
Coloured	F	140 507	51 820	36,9		
African	M	769 947	590 643	76,7	185 537	24,1
African	F	870 205	685 687	78,8	185 405	21,3
1936						
White	M	268 495	225 257	83,9		
White	F	272 095	54 002	19,8		
Coloured	M	197 695	180 986	91,5		
Coloured	F	194 833	62 998	32,3		
Asian	M	4 795	4 145	86,4		
Asian	F	2 171	339	15,6		
1946						
White	M	301 248	248 196	82,4	244 493	81,2
White	F	308 329	70 194	22,8	67 860	22,0
Asian	M	5 611	4 914	87,6	4 910	87,6
Asian	F	3 742	852	22,8	852	22,8
Coloured	M	237 490	218 786	92,1	217 922	91,8
Coloured	F	236 897	90 689	38,3	90 159	38,1
African	M	722 545	618 709	85,6	309 990	42,9
African	F	921 694	355 131	38,5	172 708	18,7

Source: Calculated from Census Reports cited in Tables 2, 3, 4

Cape: Percentages of economically active population working in different sectors of the economy

Census year	Agriculture	Industry	Personal Service	Commerce	Professions	Transport	Indefinite/other	Total %	Total economically active population
1875	70	12	10	4	4	-	-	100	298 664
1891	76	9	9	3	2	-	1	100	879 842
1904	72	13	7	5	3	-	-	100	1 406 142
1911	73	11	9	4	2	-	1	100	1 333 264
1921	68	6	10	3	2	2	9	100	1 699 627
1936									
1946	53	14	13	5	4	5	6	100	1 607 471

Source: Calculated from:

Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table V, 1891 (for 1875); Part VII, Tables I and IX, 1891; Part VII, Tables I and III, 1904

Union of South Africa Census Reports: Tables VII and VIII, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26 of 1921; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13 of 1946

- Notes:
- 1 These figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.
 - 2 Economically active population was calculated by subtracting the following categories from total population: wives (who were listed in occupation tables until 1911), dependants and unspecified. People surviving off the land who were not wage labourers are included under agriculture.
 - 3 Some categories have been reamalgamated for consistency, for example when "public administration" appeared separately in 1921, it was added to "professions" where it usually appeared. When "clerks" appeared separately, they were included in "commerce". Although "transport used to fall under "commerce", it was shown separately after 1921 to demonstrate its growth.
 - 4 See Appendix A for problems with 1921 figures.

PERSONAL SERVICE

Census year	WHITE			MALAY			MIXED			HOTTENTOT			KAFIR & BECHUANA			FINGO			Total Male	Total Female	Total domestic workers
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
1875	1 732	2 789	4 521	240	476	716	2 181	6 626	8 807	2 469	8 113	10 582	1 822	3 902	5 724	362	631	993	8 806	22 537	31 343
1891	2 235	5 153	7 388	360	2 009	2 369	6 001	29 032	35 033	1 478	6 408	7 886	5 153	13 198	18 351	681	2 486	3 167	15 908	58 286	74 194
1904	4 547	9 304	13 851	175	1 824	1 999	5 457	32 910	38 367	1 575	11 912	13 487	4 490	25 016	29 506	652	4 034	4 686	16 896	85 000	101 896
COLOURED																					
AFRICAN																					
ASIATIC																					
1911	3 721	7 463	11 184				11 423	51 798	63 221				11 879	34 607	46 486				27 023	93 868	120 891
1921	3 903	7 405	11 308				6 510	44 072	50 582				25 352	76 599	101 951				36 435	128 120	164 555
1936	4 620	9 130	13 750				10 156	52 373	62 529										608	123	731
1946	5 030	7 361	12 391				9 282	59 521	68 803				22 774	110 410	132 584				689	167	856

DOMESTIC SERVICE ONLY

Census year	WHITE			MALAY			MIXED			HOTTENTOT			KAFIR & BECHUANA			FINGO			Total Male	Total Female	Total domestic workers
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
1891	1 232	3 602	4 834	331	393	724	5 847	22 717	28 564	1 473	5 531	7 004	5 098	11 733	16 831	671	2 141	2 812	14 652	46 117	60 769
1904	1 398	5 840	7 238	141	341	482	4 235	24 271	28 506	1 522	9 644	11 166	4 192	20 191	24 383	604	3 154	3 758	12 092	63 441	75 533
COLOURED																					
AFRICAN																					
ASIATIC																					
1911	1 184	5 040	6 224				10 168	43 207	53 375				11 624	31 768	43 392				22 976	80 015	102 991
1946	66	1 280	1 346				7 165	57 779	64 944				20 304	109 746	130 050				27 558	168 952	196 510

Source: Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Tables V and IX, 1891 (for 1875 and 1891); Part VII, Tables III and IX, 1904; Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part V, Tables VIII and VII No 2, 1911; Part VI, Table 5, Part VIII, Tables 24, 25, 26, Part XXVII, Table 2, 1921; Vol 7, Tables 4, 12, 17, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13, 1946

Notes: 1 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation Chapter 3, Cape Colony, section 5).

Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years.

2 The large number for Malay women in personal service in 1891 and 1904 was made up mostly of laundry women and their assistants.

Cape Town: Total population figures

CENSUS	POPULATION	PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION			
		WHITE	COLOURED	AFRICAN	ASIATIC
1865	38 791	54	44	2	-
1875	44 688	56	43	1	-
1891	79 055	52	47	1	-
1904	174 447	60	34	4	2
1911	162 298	53	45	1	1
1921	211 461	54	41	4	1
1936	344 223	50	44	4	1
1946	325 055	51	38	10	1

Source: 1865-1936: reproduced from Batson (1942:12)
(References: Reports SS1, SS1)

1946: Union of South Africa Census
Reports: Vol V, Tables 2, 7,
10, 13

APPENDIX F

Cape Town: Estimated proportions of economically active population

Year	Colour group		Total population	Estimated economically active population	Economically active population as a % of total
1891	White	M	26 008	17 197	66,1
	White	F	22 536	4 114	18,3
	Total Black	M	23 824	14 764	62,0
	Total Black	F	24 915	8 393	33,7
	TOTAL		97 283	44 468	45,7
1911	White	M	43 696	28 605	65,5
	White	F	41 746	7 014	16,8
	Total Black	M	35 938	21 425	59,6
	Total Black	F	40 199	11 662	29,0
	TOTAL		161 579	68 706	42,5
1921	White	M	38 616	36 634	94,9
	White	F	40 719	13 484	33,1
1936	White	M	60 478	49 483	81,8
	White	F	67 417	20 846	30,9
	Asian	M	1 980	1 769	89,3
	Asian	F	623	87	14,0
	Coloured	M	41 356	37 823	91,5
	Coloured	F	49 376	19 980	40,5
	African	M	9 068	8 770	96,7
	African	F	3 285	1 343	40,9
TOTAL		233 583	140 101	60,0	
1946	White	M	78 524	63 036	80,3
	White	F	86 538	26 638	30,8
	Asian	M	2 680	2 356	87,9
	Asian	F	1 592	364	22,9
	Coloured	M	56 597	50 974	90,1
	Coloured	F	68 258	29 686	43,5
	African	M	22 172	21 141	95,4
	African	F	8 694	4 190	48,2
TOTAL		325 055	198 385	61,0	

Source: Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1891
 Union of South Africa Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1911;
 Vol 7, Tables 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Vol IX,
 Table 14, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 7, 10, 13,
 1946; Part V, Table 6, 1921

Notes: 1 Population figures have been taken from the tables of occupations in the census reports which often give a lower total population than given in other tables. This could be because the occupation tables are based on people over 15 years old, although this is not stated. For comparison, see Appendix E.

PERSONAL SERVICE

Cape Town: Total numbers of domestic workers

Census year	WHITE			TOTAL BLACKS			COLOURED			AFRICAN			ASIATIC			Total Male	Total Female	Total domestic workers
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
1891	735	732	1 467	1 652	7 037	8 689												
1911	1 284	1 116	2 400	1 817	9 962	11 779												
1921	1 506	2 425	3 931															
1936	1 738	3 122	4 860				2 061	14 417	16 478	1 910	1 132	3 042	208	38	246	5 917	18 709	24 626
1946	1 841	2 331	4 172				2 482	16 097	18 579	4 300	3 552	7 852	309	91	400	8 932	22 071	31 003

DOMESTIC SERVICE ONLY

Census year	WHITE			TOTAL BLACKS			COLOURED			AFRICAN			ASIATIC			Total Male	Total Female	Total domestic workers
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
1921	176	1 560	1 736				1 386	12 706	14 092	1 664	1 086	2 750	17	31	48	3 110	15 058	18 168
1936	43	1 235	1 278				1 558	15 221	16 779	3 705	3 507	7 212	11	82	93	5 296	19 203	24 499
1946	22	393	415															

Source: Cape of Good Hope Census Reports: Part VII, Table XX, 1891;

Union of South Africa Census Reports: Table XX, 1911; Part V, Table 6, 1921; Vol 7, Tables 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Vol IX, Table 14, 1936; Vol V, Tables 2, 10, 7, 13, 1946

- Notes:
- 1 Personal service is a broad category which includes the supply of board and lodging, hairdressers and others (see explanation in Cape Colony, section 5). Domestic service refers to domestic workers only and is a sub-category of personal service. This breakdown was not available for all years.
 - 2 Since the 1921 and 1911 census reports did not separate wives and wage earners, the number of wage earners in personal service for these years had to be estimated; similar proportions to the Cape were used. (See Appendix A for method.)
 - 3 Detailed information was not available for all years.